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AURORA

Vol. 5

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A CIRCLE IN TIME

J. Hirst

The last time I was there everything was the same, and everything was different. The house was smaller, the street not as heavily shaded by elms, and there were fewer squirrels that summer. The corner park swings squeaked and squawked protesting my weight, and the rust of clammy metal came off on my palms leaving its peculiar odor to linger all evening. Dusk came as softly though, settling down through the leaf-laden branches like a woolly blanket, catching me unaware, smothering all shapes and forms in humid darkness.

Grandmother as always was quick-eyed, pert and vivacious; hands never still, she darted here and there, her lips moving constantly in chatter. Her entire house was testament to an every-wish-fulfilled existence; Grampa had always coddled her. He seemed to sense her need for ever-growing heaps of things. It was as though some essential fact of life had eluded Grandma. She couldn't quite discover or admit it to herself and no one who cared could bear her finding out, so they banded together to keep it from her by filling her life with things: lots of things, old and new.

The rooms were chockful of all manner of these things, collected and hoarded against a winter of want that could never come for Grandma. Her living room was dominated by a cherished slab of marble table and enclosed by highly-varnished bookshelves that held remembered stacks of well-thumbed True Confessions. These were jumbled together in a battle for space amid framed family photographs and innumerable newsclippings of births, deaths, weddings, and other such accidents Grandma liked to keep track of. In the dining room familiar deposits of glass and silver condiments were packed cheek by jowl with paper-maché knickknacks from Mexico. The china closet gleamed with all imaginable (and several unimaginable) shapes of salt and pepper shaker; cupboard windows allowed an ample view of more than one set of sparkling best china. Gleaming fragile crystal reflects the light there, and chests of silver are stored against possible future employment at her own table or as a handy wedding gift for a suitable someone.

Grandma throws nothing out, and never gives away some thing she could conceivably want or put to use herself at a later time. Seizures of regret and a new paroxym of hasty purchasing follow any such back-sliding and lightening of the load she must bear alone. Certainly nothing is given to a stranger, for she likes to keep track of her things. Every visit involves an inventory and follow-up inquiry on that "little apron I won at a raffle and sent you three Easters ago...do you wear it much?"; that "Indian blanket from Grampa's fishing trip up north that I gave you two years ago...did you wash it good like I told you?...it was still all right, wasn't it?...I thought you could take it on picnics ...do you?" As Grandma plunged on, record-keeping often yielded to the relief of ever-new disclosures.

"Look darling, look at this watch...real gold. It belonged to my pa. He left it to me -- he knew I wanted it -- even though I was the youngest. Someday dear, someday it'll belong to your dad. I told him one time that when men started wearing vests again I'd have the watch -- you know -- hung on a chain with a fob, just like my pa wore it. But..." and here she laughed in near self-recognition, "...then, do you know, last year vests came back into style. I saw them in a catalog. And I was afraid I'd have to give up my watch. You know, it's all I have of my pa's -- he wore it every day -- and I'm just not ready to give it up -- not even to your dad."

Momentarily free from these constant queries and confessions, and wandering into the bedroom, my eyes fell on Grandma's jewel case. It had held uncounted wonders for that child I had been, padding quietly in - sneaking - to try first the luscious topaz lozenge (on my thumb), then the garnet cube, now the yellow sapphire drop, gesturing with fine flutters of wrist and be ringed fingers in front of the dressing table mirror, until a footfall on hall tiles sent rings tinkling into their velvet bin and me scampering out the side door into Grampa's vegetable garden. There his treasures lay enriching the eyes of all. Squash yellow and green, bulbous kolrobi and turnip, tomatoes ripening, tender, and grapes glistening, growing heavy on their vines -- jewel-like enough when seen early, coated with morning's moist breath, the sun just beginning its mid-western turn of duty.

Now I seated myself deliberately in front of that more guarded treasure chest to test again its spell on me. Before lifting its heavy leather lid, I wound the gold paper and pastel enamelled music box

for the additional magic it had always lent my private shadow shows. "Golden Earrings," its gypsy-like dissonance racing triple time, sprang into being when I released the winding key, blending with the deep and shallow lights reflected from fifteen fingers'-worth of rings, twenty-five heads of ear ornaments.

I got no further than the rainbowscent pearl, still virginly alone and aloof in its high old-fashioned setting. That it could yet glow in this quiet dark enclosure I wondered at. Like some eerie miniature moon it seemed to crave a larger light; it absorbed and refracted so readily, so eagerly. Just as readily, I recalled, had I come to love it the summer I spent with Grandma when still three months shy of fifteen, and shy of much else besides. Grandma in her always impulsive bounty, her eagerness to please an only granddaughter, promised - promised it would be mine on my sixteenth birthday.

"Listen now darling. Listen. My own pa gave me this ring when I turned sixteen. My, how I loved my pa...I still miss him. He was so good to me. Well, if it fits you and you'll wear it, I'll send it to you on your sixteenth birthday. O.K.? Now, sweetheart, I wouldn't give this ring to no one but you, or maybe your ma. But now I want you to have it... you'll wear it I know. And treasure it, darling, keep it and wear it -- it's a family heirloom now -- and remember it belonged to your grama...even if I am a silly old woman." And here she had laughed her quick girlish laugh and kissed me wetly. Carried away then, she further impressed upon me that I should pass this pearl of great price on to my own daughter when that imaginary creature reached her own sixteenth year.

A promise to me then was a thing accomplished. The idea of beginning a tradition encompassing both past and future an ideally romantic vision. And if a hint of potential immortality for herself, however small, was in Grandma's eyes then, I didn't see it. My own were riveted on the ring, soon to be mine.

The long-awaited day arrived, wished into being by my impatience and a thousand years of imagining what had come to seem a magic ring upon my finger. This I fancied was to be the talisman which would somehow abash my homely mass of freckles into a more reasonable show of numbers. Puberty, like old age, is so unreasonable and demanding that I felt safe and strangely confident that the ever-prayed for transformation (to what I wasn't sure) was now imminent. Everything hinged on the pearl "heirloom" and

I dawdled home to savor a bit longer the thought of what surely was to come. Iroquois...Ladoga, Monogram, Napomo, as the streets of that California beanfield-turned-subdivision had been so cleverly named, were slowly passed. Then, my own of Ostrom Avenue reached, the pastel boxes passed familiarly on my left as the daily alphabetic lesson neared its end and I walked now faster toward my tiny dream.

The package was there all right and ceremony waived in the urgency of claiming what was to be mine, at least for a time. That Grandma had remembered the essence of her promise was evident, but I couldn't then, or for a long time thereafter, believe that the birthday box contained pearls to be sure, but pearls of a very different kind - not in the tradition-making mold. There were many instead of the one; strung together they held in suspension a silver-coated shell with a still larger bead clamped between its lips. All these were false and flat to the eye, and much else as well it seemed to me then.

The fairy tale powers my daydreaming had come to ascribe to the pearl were denied me. The conjured transformation didn't take place and the freckles - all of them - stayed. Disenchanted, my illusions lost along with the promised pearl, and fallen flat on the minor realities of life, I adopted "that selfish old woman" as my scapegoat for adolescent failure to win contests of beauty and talent and generally succeed without trying. Even beyond graduation into a larger world I challenged Grandmother inwardly and fiercely to "try and give me that pearl now...just try!" She didn't. Her eagerness to please had met the resistance of her own unadmitted nature, and the ring I wore was one of resentment which held in bounds both affection and forgiveness.

I was still staring down at the pearl remembering - and forgetting - when I became aware that Grandma's tiny feet shod in shiny new shoes had entered the edge of my field of vision. I raised my eyes to her face, a surface remarkably fresh and free of wrinkles. She had been looking at me looking at the once silently-disputed ring. Her always moist jewel-like eyes glowed now with apology and actual tears. "I'm sorry Jude. When the time came I just couldn't part with it...I couldn't give it up."

The music box had long since wound down to silence and now I carefully replaced the lid. A kaleidoscope of thought and image filled my mind for as long as it took to pull that very old dream from the knuckle where it had lodged. I had been halfway around

the world and back, and the sights and sounds, the places, the people - these had become sharp diamonds of memory. I recalled, too, that tiny circlet of gold, a band that wouldn't pass beyond the nail of my smallest finger. And the final sting of reality is that the merely precious metal should remain eternally intact while that sweetest of all flesh departs, and decays.

Her hand was small and warm like a child's as I pressed her ring into it. "Don't be sorry, Grama. It doesn't fit me now."

WILLIAM BLAKE IN A B. F. SKINNER BOX

The four Gods rotate as one
in the circle of the sixth heaven
(matter to mind to order to infinity).

Psychology
Physics
Mathematics
Philosophy

I, too human to see
fool with the humanities
settling for brief glimpses
settling for death.

-Peter B. Schilling

the world had been, and the rights and wrongs of
the people, these had become sharp divisions
of territory, not of necessity. I
to SUMMER HEAT IN A CITY OF STREETS had a blog
filled to with final and the final
summer heat in a city of streets
and no money left for bus fare.
i don't care if i look like i'm scared,
just give me a map, i'll go anywhere.

the difference 'tween me and this city i flee
is one has a soul and one doesn't.
five's the time for women to chime
and pretend to love paperback husbands.

if only we knew what an A-bomb could do
maybe then we'd be less artificial.
key-punch blues through to our socks and shoes,
our brains, like jelly, superficial.

WILLIAM BLAKE W. & F. SKINNER BOX
the sound of home is an airport's drone
or whenever jets float by overhead.
we're victims of roads,
there's no offering bestowed
in the name of our lord: Day's End.

for all the myths they debunk,
and answers spelunk,
one cannot escape electronic funk,
computers, rebukers, revive us again,
send us The Message, we'll all sing Amen.

T. G. Moore

-Peter B. Schilling

FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN HELLOS

four score and seven hellos they carry around
now watch

now days you seen one you seen'em all
now watch

back doors and front doors they all
close too tight

want no more of this monkey business
or i'll call the landlord

don't you people ever get tired of playing
games i guess

did you ever see the sun coming up of a
wet dewy
morning

or walk where the air smells like it's just
been washed for company

or see the stream flowing like it's really
having fun moving on so

they can all tell you stories but few can
tell the truth

once in a while you find one who seems to have
stood up against the weather unharmed

they all sing in chorus for the earth and
rhyme beautifully

ask them to come and visit some time perhaps
you'll think of something to say i'm sure

turn the tube off and let's forget the world
it won't run away that soon

only passages from books will make it right
while the rest of us lay sleeping

if the phone rings just let it go and let's
be off to the forest

(before the sun begins to move away)

before the darkness ends the day.

T. G. Moore

DARKNESS FALLS

darkness falls, night comes by surprise
for this black light there's no excuse
to land on time disguised.
footsteps on the pavement
are heard with more respect
eyes notice that the uncrowd
was once so neck and neck.
bodies take on murky form
under streetlights of despair
comes fear of someone creeping up
when darkness fills the air.
you walk with apprehensiveness
you're glad you know your name
bordering on the brink of consciousness
the crime is just the same.
light off in the distance; home's not far away
for some a home's no real place; it's just
another day.
no flash allowed to miss the thoughts
your harried mind construes
no sound is left to chance, by God
with luck you'll make it through.

T. G. Moore

A MOST RECENT TONE OF YES

she speaks in a most recent tone of yes, and reverse
is not inverted order for only times pure sound is
floating in a barrel, yesterday's a preface to the
sun

in a green leaf she said that when she knew better
but says

it still i've been around too long to know the
difference.

what if they all said things like that and then the
ones

who knew the difference realized the truth?

Time is not an infinity, it is just a sound,
that stays

around while other things die out, he lives without
death.

No death can erase a life that is born to he who lives
without death, for death is no companion, it is a
sometimes

visitor who brings no gifts.

T. G. Moore

I KNOW TWO
Keith F. Carroll

We sat apart from one another. I had come home for another boring day and night with the parents--my father in particular.

"Do you want some coffee, son?" he asked.

I said, "No."

"How are your classes this semester?"

"They're O.K."

The thirty years of selling tires had taught him little in how to communicate with his own son. Three decades of smiling, shaking hands, and making small talk with his clients had yielded my father no profits in understanding me.

He looked at me from behind his stylish glasses. I noticed his eyes had that tired look one receives from countless hours of writing reports to the boss in Detroit. Tomorrow he would write again at his desk in the basement.

Yes, tomorrow he would spend most of the day and night writing to Detroit, answering the same monotonous questions. Who had he made contact with during the past week? What new clients, if any, had he developed? What was his total volume of sales for the week?

Glaring lights on white paper marked upon by a wrinkling hand had awarded the old man his tired eyes. He had written so many reports to Kappler over the years that his hazel eyes had almost taken a blue hue to them from the reflection from the papers with the blue ink he always used in his gold Cross pen.

"Will you be here for dinner tonight?" he questioned.

"Yea. I promised Mom I would," was my reply.

Thirty years. Thirty years of good service to the company had beaten my father's voice from the youthful fullness into a weathered, almost rustic rasping. Business talk. Small talk. Talk of the P.G.A., Casper, Palmer, and Trevino. Talk of the Bengel's and the Super Bowl. All these had taken their toll upon his voice over the years.

It's rather sad, I thought, to know that his voice will never again be rich and mellow. Nor will

his hair blend into that natural blackness of his youth that I barely remember. Nothing can change his receding temples; graying monuments saluting his long, faithful service to the company. All this and the stained teeth from smoking Chesterfields had changed his appearance.

I had to leave the house after dinner. I had to get out and away from the dull grayness of all that resided there. I simply didn't want to be near what might make too much of a bad impression upon my life.

Shortly after midnight I returned to his house. I heard the television whispering softly in his den and thought that I could save myself a trip back downstairs to say goodnight to him. I walked into the den and found my father resting in his over-padded easy chair. He rose slowly to turn off the T.V. and spoke.

"Hello, Son. It's time for me to go to bed. I'll see you tomorrow."

"O.K. I think I will too. Goodnight." With this reply he walked past me, saying nothing more as he trudged towards his room; then I turned to go to mine.

I walked up the stairs, went into my room, took off my clothes and draped them over a chair, then slid between the clean sheets of my bed. I could no longer see them in the darkness, but I knew they were all there: my desk and chair, tables and lamps, and the nine drawers in the dresser that I only used during vacations from school.

Surrounding me on the walls are over a dozen pictures, mostly of myself taken during high school. My awards and ribbons that I earned while in high school were there too. Yes, everything save one.

I have no picture of my father tossing a football or baseball to me, nor any other picture of him--with me or not. It's all most evident in the three pictures taken on Parents' Day at the Lake Michigan Boys Camp. Most of the parents were there in each of the pictures, usually with at least one parent beside his or her son at the camp. But never my mother, or more importantly my father beside me.

Yes, he has thirty years of faithful service to the company. But I don't even have one picture of my own father.

I lay in bed that night thinking of all the times I had asked Dad to do a few of the things that meant a tremendous amount to me at the time. I asked but was answered by either silence or by a few

distant words.

It was my sophomore year in high school when I asked Dad about the annual trip with the local Boy Scout Troop and Explorers. "Dad, can you go with me to Canada this year? Mr. Thompson, the Scout Master, says that everyone should have a good time canoeing, and fishing, and camping-out. Bob Reiley and his dad are going together this year. It's their third time. It's only for eight days. Do you think that we might be able to go together this year?" I had asked.

"No. I have to go to Florida for a convention," was his only reply. He didn't even bother to ask exactly what week it would be. Nor did he even look up from his desk when he answered. Then he asked if I had anything important on my mind because he was busy writing a report to Kappler. I just said no and went back upstairs so I wouldn't disturb him any more.

Then I began to think of another frame, another bad memory, that hung on the wall above my bed. "Best Offensive Lineman of the Year, Mariemont High School. Achieved All-League and Honorable-Mention All-City. Best Wishes, Coach Lyons."

Dad had never missed one of my football games in high school or the spring game during my freshman year at college. It was nice that he came to watch me play, but for the wrong reason.

One night after a football game during my senior year, he said to me after our weekly discussion on what I did right and wrong during the game, "You know I tried out for Tennessee and went through hell, but I didn't make the team. Maybe you'll be able to play ball when you go to college." He didn't understand that it was he who wanted to play football in college. That was his life. And I had mine.

Then I remembered that he had only seen me wrestle three or four times while I was in high school and only once when I wrestled for three years at college. That was a memorable occasion. He came that one time because we wrestled the University of Cincinnati at Cincy. I guess it was a good thing that the match was held on a Saturday, otherwise he wouldn't have seen me wrestle even that once.

Slowly those thoughts slid by only to be replaced by others: of fairways and greens, of irons and clubs. I remembered all the times Dad would take me with him on Saturday and Sunday mornings to caddy for him and stopping in the Pro Shop before

leaving for home. I never did like to caddy for him, but I went anyway. At least we would be together for awhile. But he would always become very angry if I would lose one of his balls due to my neglect. Somehow I stuck it out and even tried playing nine holes with him one Saturday.

"That's still not the way to hold the wood. You know better than that. Now get the grip right," he said.

Somehow, every time I'd hit the ball it would fly off to the far left or right--never very straight. And when it did fly off like that I was always afraid to comment on the hook or slice because I'd always get them mixed-up.

"Why can't you hit the ball straight? Don't you know that's the third set of players I've had to let go ahead of us because you're too slow?" he said on the fifth tee.

Even though that was a disastrous day, it was well worth it. The idea that I didn't like to play, talk about, or watch anyone golf finally sunk into Dad's head. And that went for caddying too.

More thoughts swirled through my mind as I lay in bed surrounded by the comforting darkness. One thought finally began to materialize in my mind. It was the cool impression of my father as I was to leave for college.

"Here are a few checks, Son, to cover your expenses. Don't forget to write or call home once a week to let your mother and I know how you are doing. It's time you went off on your own for a change. Study hard. Good luck," was all he said. Then I very happily got into the car, started it and took off. I knew it couldn't be any worse living at school. And as the years have gone by I found out that I was right in that assumption.

Dad had taught me well about life and the business world. All those football games and wrestling matches seem to matter very little now that they're over. Though I may never have been a star athlete as Dad may have wished, maybe I can do one thing for him--attain one understanding with him; teach him one thing about the both of us.

Maybe I can teach him that whoever said, "No man is an island," just might be wrong. In one sense at least, I know two.

WAS MARS THAT HARD TO KEEP

Night,
when sidewalks glow
and doors gently close,
Venus cries out her stars.
Far in the sleep of darkness she weeps,
Was Mars that hard to keep?

When lights change slow
and two shadows fold
then settle into night jars,
and melt so deep, on ships of sleep,
to Love knows how far,
Was Mars that hard to keep?

Mars warred against the stars.
only Venus gave him scars,
Falling out of heaven he cried into
our dreams,
He woke Love's slumbering head,
Love left the shadow's bed,
and fled outside where Venus bled,
in a halo, a cluster of screams.

Now Mars is dead
And lies at the side of Venus's head.
She clawed her eyes,
her hair is shed.
And in that stillness, Love turns
in bed,
cries to a shadow instead of a street,
Love warred in defeat,
Was Mars that hard to keep?

Iver Standard

NIGHT WALK

Dusk wind

dusk sky

Hushed streets and their signs

lonely walks with thoughts in my mind

just one more step

for one more time

lonely walks leave things behind

Night stars

night lights

Moon-lit lawns placid sights

where Silence plays unto the street

then lingers by on whispered feet

Then midnight comes

and from her sleep

Love rises

to her window she goes

to watch a shadow

play by the street

upon a walk below

where Self turned away

rose from his pillow

and cried on the street below

Iver Standard

THE TWILIGHT MEADOW

Too far off Love rose
tripped upon the grass
and left me stranded in the twilight

When I turned from the cold night
for warm Love
I turned to an empty street

When my step was light
and danced through a butterfly meadow
I treated Love
But time caught up

Then like a flowering seed in
in a twinkling meadow
Love rose up
a blooming bud
a dying petal
and fell to the tracks below

I wept upon the tracks
thought of the meadow
Ran back
buried a face in shame
But Love just laughed
ran in shadows ...
and never returned again

Then quietly shutting the door of the booth
Resounds the ringing line
I cry out lowly and break for the night
to raise up weeping for one more time
for eyes still sleeping
and the womb of wine
I raise tears stooping
to a forgotten shrine
where Love rose up and-
making time

broke from the nightlight
and traced upon...
*some distant twilight
of my mind...

Iver Standard

PERSPECTIVE

Relected
stain glass images
distort life and
introduce Silence.
Peace
unlike Silence
is found
in the falling of
brown, orange, and yellow
October leaves.
Death
is an awakening
from the silence of life and
a jolt from the peace
of seasonal grace.

EN ROUTE

This road is sure long
and the left lane
 is for passing only.
I'm no lefty and
Hey, don't pass me up.

That farm is aging
though the skeletal framework
 will never fall.
I've a weak foundation and
Hey, don't breathe too hard.

Susan Nelson

PAIR TANGLED BUNGLE

a short history

John P. Begley

PROLOGUE:

There I was, every day, minding my own little world, taking census of the populations, sweeping streets, and setting up parades for the weekends. Doing anything and everything, trying to live through another hour of "Cultures of the World 301," still ignoring the toneless dronings, the book murmurings.

And what the hell! The Gipper's paying me to stay off the streets, out of the factories. So I lived in a day care center. I took my food and blankets and slept with others of my kind. Nursery schools can be an easy way of life, I'd decided. But even nursery schools can fade away with time until all the walls are only so much stone, until only a number distinguishes difference between those who live within. No, I had no legitimate complaints. I only wondered why every day was everyday, why the daylight had become so usual. So intolerably USUAL!

Maybe that was part of why facts happened. At least, part of why facts happened to me. God's way of breaking the monotony.

I.

JUST THE FACTS

Professor Klapper was an old-fashioned man. "The trouble with the cultures of North America is one of equality," he would say. "Societies everywhere maintain successful patterns of survival only when there is an identifiable system of class. You destroy the class distinctions, you destroy the culture."

Klapper was also decidedly anti-women. "Woman was the first beast of burden known to man. Before the ox, before the mule, even before the dog, there was woman to do the work." If you could arrange to get Klapper to pursue the subject, he would bombard you with facts and figures which proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Earth was in a state of rapid decline, and he would date the beginning of

the end of the United States of America. Klapper's classes didn't have many women in them. Few would stay in the class once they discovered Klapper's old-fashioned ways. I stayed in for two reasons: I needed the course to complete my minor in Anthropology, and I knew that Klapper would give me a good grade. The fact that I was a male also helped.

So, there I was, and there he was. Good Old-Fashioned Professor Klapper, prattling away in his Johnny-one-note voice. The class was not yet five minutes old, but already he was wound up and droning like a snow-tire on an interstate highway. I promptly retired to my estates in Connecticut and counted lighthouses. I thought a ship had wrecked, but when I looked over the cliffs beside my house, I saw the Marines landing. Looking closer, I discovered that the source of the noise was a troupe of women who had just barged into the room. Out-numbering us in the class by at least a dozen, the women proceeded to shove and maul their way into every last inch of available floor space. Accompanied by thick stacks of pink and blue leaflets, they tonsiled and trampled their way down the aisles until all of us were surrounded.

Poor Old-Fashioned Professor Klapper was thoroughly addled by this interruption of his lecture. So rattled, in fact, that he made an error in judgment which he was not soon to forget. He grabbed one of the women closest to him, and tried to bodily throw her out. Immediately, the ladies reacted. The five who were closest to Klapper began pommeling their fists into his body at ever-increasing speed.

"Let go of her you son-of-a-bitch!" yells came from throughout the room, until finally Klapper was forced to release his captive. Once done, the ladies released their captive, and a black-haired sweet thing from the back of the room began to talk. "For too long have we been held in bondage. We, the Woman of the World demand that you stop your sexual repressions! We, the Women of the World..."

"You, the Women of the World had better get the hell out of this classroom!" Klapper cut her off. "Get out! This is my class! I will have order!" Klapper was screaming so bitterly that his voice broke. All that was left was a hoarse, dry whisper and a lot of coughs.

"Show him who's class this is, girls!" The dark-haired lovely shouted. The same five women who had earlier communicated with Klapper, once again be-

gan their sign language. Slowly, and painfully, Klapper was extracted from his classroom. One of the ladies returned from the hallway with Klapper's pants. She waved it like a flag. This was apparently a signal of some sort, for once this was done, the rest of the invaders began passing out leaflets and conversation to those who would accept them. To those who didn't, they passed out fists, and more fists. This one-hour-a-day colony was in trouble.

II.

AND DON'T CALL ME CHIEF

Me? I'm sitting safely in a corner at the back of the room. I'm awake again. I'm laughing. I'm feeling horny from my daydreams.

"What the hell are you laughing at!" The black-haired one wanted to know. But before I could answer her, she slapped me with a surprising amount of strength.

Being courteous by nature, I replied in my own red-blooded American way. I slapped her back. Like Klapper, I too was going to realize the folly of pride. Somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty thousand of the goddam bitches jumped on me. My bod was being pounded from all conceivable angles. One of them (and I am still pretty sure that she was the black-haired one) kicked me in the balls, and I lost all interest in furthering the battle. I tried to mentally skim through my old Boy Scout Manual on how to breathe when PAIN+++++++!!!! so very much overcomes the bodyo. I said hello to Jimmy Olsen while the stars slowly faded into the brightness of the neon lights which hung on the ceiling. The ladies were gone, and I found my breath again.

I recovered my fantasies after a moment and stood up. I felt more confused than anything. There was a tightness in my chest and stomach. A tightness which does not come from being kicked in the balls. It was an older feeling. One which I hadn't seen in months. Certainly not since I had moved into this rest home. I held my hands tightly against my crotch and smiled. Had Kaiser been in that room, he would have won the war. Oh the Gipper would be proud of me before the week was over. The next few days would be hours would be anything but USUAL.

A real live girl! One with spirit! Not one of those chicks who would trip you and then beat you to the floor. Someone I could spar with. I had no choice! I began my search.

"I must find her..." I kept repeating to myself as I journeyed along. Over burning desert sands, hoards of screaming toothless barbarians, ice-covered mountains, and lava-spewing islands did I travel until finally, crossing the greens and entering the student center I found her. She had not changed much. Her hair was still smooth and dark. Her skin unblemished and lightly tanned. Modestly dressed in shirt and slacks which neither accentuated nor detracted from her figure. She was arguing most bitterly with the Dean of Student Affairs over some crap or another. LIBERATION@@@+! pamphlets were lying all over the floor in chaotic little piles of pink and blue. Ahhh but for life I would have then simply raped her and been done. I could hear the cheers erupting from the fraternity boys and the screams and insults from the members of the Femme-Fatale (all of whom would be secretly admiring my technique). But, since there were no reporters there to record my triumph, I let the moment pass unused.

While I surveyed the situation, I wondered why fate had chosen me to be attacked by that sweet thing. Why did she pick on me? What cold castration plot was she trying to lay my body into? Well, the victim would soon become the victor!
OBVIOUSLY*****!

III.

JOHNNY QUEST

"What's your name?"

"What's it to you?"

"Let's just call it academic curiosity."

"Fug off!"

"Well, yea, that's sort of what I had in mind."

Much too tired to press the issue, I sunk off into the dormitory sunset. My ear was throbbing from someone's teeth, my guts were still turning over from their unwarranted treatment.

"Hey Jim, you know everybody around here, what's that broad's name? The one walking across the street over there."

"The one with the bundle of papers?"

"yea."

"Lisa."

slept well for a change. Had something to do tomorrow.

"Uhhmmh, hello Lisa."

"You again?"

"Actually, you had only to be there. And you were. It's amazing the disease and starvation that an entire culture can amass once the old Gipper gets senile. I remember how just last week we would cry for hours just to pass the time. I mean, it's eerie the way time sometimes lets a person..."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"You see, you're captivated..." I was going to add the phrase, 'by my charming wit', but she caught her cue and immediately launched her three-hour-lecture-on-Woman's-Rights missile.

"Hey, let's talk about it over a cup of coffee."

"O.k."

first base, man!

IV.

MISS KITTY, DOC NEEDS YOU

"Would you like to go dance?"

"Not particularly."

"Buy you a coke?"

"No thanks."

"How about a bowl of chili?"

"Where?"

"My room."

"O.k."

Snuck through the window and turned on the hotplate. That was about all I turned on. Good chili though. Gassed all the next day and didn't dare go near Lisa.

GRASS*****!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"like it?"

"Uhhmmmmhmp."

"In with I'm it."

"What?"

"Hard on the world for."

"Me too."

Decided to play cool. Turned on the curtains and turned off the lights. I undressed. Feel my muscles sending out signals. Cool, seeping away... I like my bod.

"Hey, not tooooo bad. Not bad at all."

"I could have told you that."

"My turn?"

"If you want." Hope hope hope!*****!
"Fair's fair."

She undressed (and very calmly I might add under the circumstances. Me sitting across from her so goddamn cool). Then we start playing the staring game. S*T*A*R*I*N*G*! Hours and hours of it. Eyes glaring at eyes. She won't break, but neither will I.

"Hey, you've got a hard on."

That got her. She giggled. Something I had never heard her do before. "You ought to too."

I gazed down at my lap. Plenty of time I think. Don't even begin to feel scared. Lit up another pipe. Got up and checked to see if the blanket was pressed tightly against the bottom of the door. God forbid some smoke might find its way out into the hallway for some junior gee-man to flip out on. Blanket was secure. Sat back on the bed and took a d e e e p draw. The smoke burned my lungs but I stayed with it. Drew it all in. Passed the pipe. She took a really d e e e p drag. I watched her eyes. They opened a little wider, and then they closed.

"Are you getting hot?"

"Maybe..." Oh mannnnn, is SHE smiling. We played some more Amanda Blake-Jim Arness eye games. Now my chest was thumppinamileaminute! Reached over and touched her hand.

"'mazing ain't it."

"Don't you want to..."

"Yea..." I got the message. Pulled lightly on her arm, and overshecame!*!

Lips, man! Lips are living wanting owning giving taking breathing winning losing loving people. I just wanted to fall into them. But no man. Not me, Jack! Nosir! I have to be Tom Terrific and His Electric Gonads! All American stud, right? Me, I'm gonna bring Her to a screaming, biting, flesh-tearing, climax, Right! Her fingernails will end up in the ceiling, Right? W*RR*O*N*G*****!
I moaned. I jumped. And I Pulled out. Parked the car, and went out, like a light! The Gipper would not be pleased. It hurt just a little too good.

V.

WHAT'S MY LINE

"I wouldn't have done it if we hadn't smoked."

I took a long, deep pull on my Camel. Watched the smoke as it twisted its way into the ceiling.

"Then you shouldn't have smoked."

"I didn't say that."

"Look, it doesn't matter."

"Yes it does!"

"I don't take the pill."

"I don't either."

"Look, don't be stupid." She took the Camel from my hand and borrowed some of its smoke. She scooted over to the edge of the bed, and drew her knees up under her chin. Then she wrapped her arms around them and started looking into the wall.

"Can I have my cigarette back?"

"Light another one."

"Hey!"

"What?" She turned her head and looked at me for the first time since she got up.

"Let's try something." I reached over and took her hand. I held it firmly, but there was no pressure being returned.

"You wanna go again?"

"No, I just 'wanna' hold your hand for a minute."

"Oh hell!" She pulled her hand away. I got up and opened my government-issued refrigerator and took out a Pepsi. When I woke up, she was gone and the wind was flapping the curtains against themselves and the opened window. Got up and ate a bag of potato chips.

VI

SERIOUSLY FOLKS

Sat on my University-owned cot and lit a Camel. Let the smoke curl its way deep inside of my lungs and smother the slight tremor in my hands. It's strange to be back to work. No more pigs for awhile, anyway.

am I truly in love with thee?

Beautiful, beautiful, Lisa McCree?

"Why?"

"I don't care why."

"All you want is a piece of ass!"

"Not all..."

"Prove it!"

"Go to hell!"

VII

DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

"What's the matter with you?"

"What do you mean what's the matter with me?"

"I mean what's the matter with you. You won't touch."

"Not you."

"You a lezzie?"

"Just particular."

"Absolutely no taste. tsk tsk tsk."

"My god, what an ego!"

"Let's go get drunk."

"Welllllll..."

"I'll buy."

"O.k."

So, we got into a fight and I got my balls busted again. I bruised her eye. By morning, it would be all black and blue. A tiny drop of moisture had begun skiing its way down her cheek.

"Hey, you're crying."

"Well, so are you."

"What, uhhh, yea..."

VIII.

WHERE SO PROUDLY SHE NAILED

I tried to think and got headaches. Wanted to get out! Wanted to run down the world! Couldn't read! Couldn't work! Couldn't drink! Couldn't do nothing but get those goddamn headaches!

Lisa walked over to my table at the student center. She sat down and I got up. Walked over to the food machine, put in my quarter and spun the Wheel of Fortune. I hit the JACKPOT, and walked back with two plastic cups of instant coffee.

"I've been thinking."

"'bout what?"

"You and me, dip!"

"And..."

"I'm almost gonna miss you."

"You'll get over me."

"No, I'm serious now."

"Period."

"Uh huh."

"No way?"

"It won't work. I can't. You won't."

"C'est la vie!"

"C'est la mort."

"O.k."

"Yea..."

She got up and began walking away. I watched her legs. They had a little of that Lana Turner motion to them, but not much. Right then, they were simply moving themselves further away. They were almost lost among the other nylon eating pillars.

"Oh, by the way!"

"What!"

"I'm pregnant!"

Everybody in that grill looked up. They all stared at Lisa, and then me. Some froshmen who figured that we were married-types applauded and whistled. Lisa just stood there looking across the room at me.

"Hey, I'm pregnant too." She stared quietly.

IX.

HIGHLIGHTS: LAST SCHEMING

Went downtown and saw three flicks in a row. Bought some comic books and walked back to the dorm. I stared at my phone for several hours before finally picking it up and dialing.

"Hello, listen. I just called to tell you that I lost the game and the kid died."

"...for in these troubled times there is a voice which comes from within. A voice which will carry you through all that life can bring. Accept Jes..."

"Look, can't you understand. I lost the game. The Gipper's dead."

"...day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those..."

"Well, nice talking with you. Goodby."

X.

BOMBS LURCHING IN AIR

I picked up His eye and carried it with me to the top of the dorm. The damned thing weighed close to fifty pounds. I stood at the edge of the building and waited for a space to clear. Then I heaved the tube-filled box over the edge and watched it tumble through the air.

"Now you're really on the air!" There was a hell of a noise as the picture tube exploded. The ground was sprayed with glass and bits of metal.

Maybe I couldn't kill the Gipper, but I'd be damned if I'd let him watch me anymore.

Went over to the grill and bought a cup of coffee. Walked outside and sat on the wall. It's always quiet on the South Lawn. The squirrels were rummaging through the waxed-papers splattered with chili-sauce and yellow-green mustard. Some carried pieces of bread to the trees and disappeared in the leaves. Others, played in the army-green trash cans.

CHORUS:

Who is the Gipper?

He's Mom!

He's Dad!

He's apple pie!

He's that doughboy in front
of the courthouse!

He's you!

He's me!

"yea..."

conversations with myself
while drinking beer with bill's girl
in the third booth at the Steak Out

my pants are too tight
so
how about that red-haired honey over there?
do you think she is a fool?
no body is going to come in here tonight
it is raining
outside
and i am dry and drinking
beer

three years ago
i left home for the first time
and drank with louise
who worked at the Sam Houston Hotel
every night
she had those gold-plated slippers
on
and she told me how she would
accept Traveler's Checks
but no personal ones
that night
i beat up a fire extinguisher
and several bottles of ginger ale

four years ago
i changed schools
and fell in love with several
letters from Ruth
and i was complete
even if i was alone
i had my right to exist
i had something in common
when i wanted to
i would tell the principle
about his deeds at my neighbor's
house
and i would go away
from the brick building
and sit in my car
and watch the bells ring
and the other inmates
pass me by
going home
or to their cars

two years ago
i hitchhiked to classes
thirty odd miles away
they would keep the doors open
for me
and for others
they would try to offer classes
which would interest them both
and each semester
at least one of them would leave

long ago
in a book i read this morning
during the depression
the railroads began
to add an additional
flatcar to their trains
for the men
who found themselves
unable to pay their way
out

John P. Begley

THE CONVERSION OF A COLLEGE IDEALIST

Here I sit,
A perpetual scholar.
I've majored in English,
Not bowed to the dollar.

I've polished my prose
And mastered my Keats,
But that's not what a human
Usually eats.

Now I feel ready
To alter my aims,
In favor of income
And a diet that's steady.

David Siereveld

MIME TO YOUR MIRROR

Mime to your mirror,
Not to me.
My eyes give no reflection.
(As reflectless as the deep, green sea)

You cloy with affection
 what you can't surmise.
So mime to your mirror.
Leave to me the deep, airy skies.

You mock things laid hidden.
You cheapen what's meant dear.
"Oh, life gives such lasting pleasures,
 please pass the frothy, warming beer."

If we were all a trumpet
You'd blow us few notes.
Our better selves left dangling
 (a precipiced, dumb mountain goat)

Like a bird full plumaged,
 (able to fly beyond the fare)
you'll be shot down incredulous.
 (Heart of nowhere)

Mike Buzek

CLAY HALL 1972

I

Oh! this wretched
this wicked
this life
in a dorm.

Needles applied to record and arm.

II

Needles applied to record and arm.

Needles-sap

Needles zap.

Need O! Need!

NeedO!zap(plied) to record and arm.

III

To record and arm, to record and arm.

To rec--

To wreck

To wreck her damn arm.

IV

NeedO!zap(plied) to wreck her damn arm.

To wreck her damn arm? To wreck her damn life.

heyjustaminuteI live in this dorm, too.

andshesabadinfluenceonme?

But then, maybe I wreck my own life

By asking too many questions...

V

Whoever her is, let her high her way

And I'll high my way

By asking questions...like...

Does "Marcus Welby" really mean

"Make Us Be Well"?

Or--

Did Adam and Eve have Belly Buttons?

VI

Oh! this wretched

this wicked

this life

in a

Needle the arm or Needle the Brain, Baby
dorm.

Jennifer Daniel

JACKIE'S FRIEND

Paula Moore

Jackie stood in the first-grade hall with the other kids waiting for the home-room bell to ring. It was a rather dreary Wednesday morning, with a little rain falling and a misty closeness in the air which promised another hot humid Indian summer day. She stood alone, looking out one of the hall windows waiting for Barb's bus to arrive.

She and Barb had been inseparable since Barb transferred from a grade school in another part of the county in her sixth-grade year. At that time they were both quiet, easily embarrassed, awkward, and self-conscious in their early adolescence. Because of this similarity in personality, they were naturally drawn together as young girls often are before the onset of an interest in boys. Strangely enough though, their backgrounds couldn't have been any more different. Barb was from a rough, poor, and not too well respected family. Somehow though she had managed to reach adolescence without too many scars, though her unfortunate situation at home had caused her to fail two years in early grade school, making her fifteen instead of the usual twelve or thirteen for the average eighth grader. But, she had adjusted very well to the situation. Jackie on the other hand, who was from a very good family, had been extremely sheltered and disciplined, and repeatedly warned against the pitfalls of youthful curiosities and judgment. Because of this she had become afraid of associating with anyone else her own age, anyone that is but Barb. Barb was her best friend.

But Barb didn't come that morning. Jackie lingered at the window for a couple of minutes after the first bell had rung, hoping that perhaps Barb's mother would bring her, but no one came, so Jackie slowly walked to home-room knowing that the day would be long without her companion.

"Atkins?"

"Here!"

"Brawner?"

"Here."

Mrs. Lee was calling roll and Jackie listened as each student answered.

"Henderson?"

"Present!" Jackie had been listening for this

name. She loved to hear Garrel answer in his new-found manly voice. But, this time his voice cracked, sounding like that of a half-boy, half-man. Jackie found herself reddening with embarrassment for him as some of the other kids in the room giggled.

It was only day before yesterday at lunch that Jackie had told Barb the secret she'd dared not even put in her diary. In truth, she hadn't meant to tell her, but was unable to hide her feelings from her very best friend.

"Did you know Garrel Henderson didn't make the basketball team this year? They said his grades weren't good enough and that he'd have to bring them up if... hey, Jackie! What are you so red for?" Barb asked looking at Jackie with that knowing look of a fifteen-year old woman of the world. "I bet I know! Jackie's in love with Garrel! Jackie's in love with Garrel!" Barb sang accusingly.

Jackie sat very still, a half-smile on a face that was as red as the baked apple on her plate.

"Come on, Barb. Not so loud!" she begged, hoping no one had heard Barb's little song of playful accusation.

"Oh, don't be so touchy," Barb retorted, once again taking on her worldly airs. "I know what it's like to be in love. Jimmy and me, we been goin' together four whole months now. He says he loves me and of course I love him too...or at least I guess I do. I must if..." Barb trailed off into one of her strange reveries as she'd been prone to do lately.

Jackie frowned at the mention of Jimmy's name. Since they'd been back at school this fall, all she'd heard was, "Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy."

She couldn't believe it the first time Barb told her about him. She had met him right after school was out last spring. Jackie had never really thought of Barb having a boyfriend and going out on dates. She also thought that Jimmy at seventeen was much too old for Barb. But Barb didn't think so and apparently spent every spare moment with him. Now all she did was sing his praises. But what bothered Jackie even more was the fact that since Jimmy came along, she and Barb weren't as close as they had been before. Barb had stopped sharing all her secrets and didn't seem to need Jackie as she had before.

"Whiddon?" "Whiddon!" "Jackie, where are you? Pay attention!"

Jackie snapped out of her day-dreaming and answered "here" in a voice barely audible above the giggles from the back of the room. She ducked her head

in embarrassment at having so much attention drawn to her.

Jackie stayed to herself all the rest of the morning. Then right after lunch, Mrs. Lee divided the class into groups for spelling drills. Jackie, much to her disliking was put with a group of the "elite" of the eighth grade of that rural grade school. The three of them, Sharon, Patty, and Mattie asked Mrs. Lee in their false sweet tones if their group could study in the cloakroom. Upon the teacher's affirmative answer, Jackie knew there wouldn't be much studying done.

"My cousin goes out on dates all the time!"

"Well I can anytime I want and..."

"Oh, you know your mother wouldn't let you go."

"Hey, I found a book in Daddy's closet an' you know what it was about? It was about this girl that got raped an' it told all about it an'..."

Jackie sat there on the floor of the cloakroom, a little distance away from the other girls, feeling more miserable by the moment. The smell of the hot cloakroom with its floor and walls retaining the odor of soggy boots and dirty coats of last winter was sickening sweet and stifling. Jackie didn't like to hear when they talked like this. But they went on talking and Jackie, becoming extremely embarrassed at some of the words they were using, looked down at her book.

"Decision, D-E-C-I-S-I-O-N, decision."

"Definition, D-E-F-I-N-I-T-I-O-N, definition."

"Elementary, E-L-E-M-E-N-T-A-R-Y, elementary."

"Hey!"

"Effective, E-F-F-..."

"Jackie!"

"Huh?" Jackie looked up and blushed. She hadn't realized she'd been spelling aloud.

"Look at the bookworm," Sharon teased. "Don't you ever do anything but study?"

"You're Mrs. Lee's favorite already. What're ya tryin' to do anyway?" Patty demanded.

Blushing furiously, Jackie looked back down at her book, trying to ignore their remarks. It had become suddenly unbearably hot in the cloakroom.

Familiar, F-A-M-I-L-I-A-R, familiar...this time silently.

"Teacher's pet..."

Fanciful, F-A-N-..."

"...Barb Jennings..."

At the mention of Barb's name, Jackie's head

snapped up. Sharon, Patty, and Mattie, sitting very close together as if to obviously exclude Jackie were unsmiling as they all stared at Jackie with that cold, cruel stare only one thirteen-year old girl can give another. Then Mattie snickered and they all started giggling.

"What about Barb?" Jackie ventured. "Do you know why she didn't come to school today? Is she sick?"

"You might say that," Mattie said with a side-wise glance at her friends.

"Yeah you might!"

"Yeah!" "Yeah!"

They all laughed again. Jackie was confused and embarrassed at their laughter, thinking they were laughing at her, but not knowing why.

"Well what's the matter with her?" she ventured again.

"Let's say she's swellin' up!" Mattie laughed.

At this they all began laughing hysterically, their mouths wide disgusting caverns with their disgusting tongues and their disgusting eyes bright with mischievous glee.

"Girls!" It was Mrs. Lee.

"I sent you in here to study. Can't I trust you to do anything? Now come out of there. We'll have a quiz and see just how much you've studied!"

Jackie, in all her confusion fumbled with her books and papers and was the last one out. As she passed her teacher, Mrs. Lee said, "I'm particularly surprised at you, Jackie."

But Jackie didn't hear. Her mind was trying to sort out the implications of the girls' words in the cloakroom.

That was the only spelling test Jackie flunked in all her eight years at Bald Knob grade school.

Jackie sat by a window near the back of the school bus. She stared out at the passing landscape, not really seeing it except when the bus stopped to let off a child or two. Her thoughts were confused and at the same time her mind seemed to be empty, almost as if she were afraid to let her brain function, afraid of the conclusions it might draw from the conclusions it contained. "She's swellin' up!" kept flitting through her thoughts. The looks on the faces of the girls which said, "I know something you don't know!" were vivid in front of her, and she could still hear their jeering laughter. Then, as the bus pulled up at the drive of her house, she put all these thoughts out of her mind. Barb would be back at school

tomorrow and everything would be back to normal.

By supper-time Jackie had forgotten all about her worries. When her father asked how her day at school had gone as was his custom, she left out the ugly scene in the cloakroom. But, tonight he wasn't listening anyway. He had one of those looks on his face which meant trouble. She'd probably have to do the dishes or some other unpleasant chore. Sure enough, after the meal was finished, Jackie excused herself and was almost out of the kitchen when...

"Jackie," She knew it. "Stay and help your mother with the dishes."

"But..."

"No buts. Come on."

Jackie knew that tone. Just shut up and do it anyway. Her father sat in the chair next to the radio where he always sat after supper, while he smoked cigarettes and drank coffee. Jackie rinsed and dried the dishes her mother was washing.

"Jackie, there's a matter your mother and I need to take up with you."

Here it came. In that business-like tone, Jackie knew it had to be bad, though she couldn't think of anything she'd done or failed to do. She concentrated on drying a glass while he continued.

"Sometimes because of youth and lack of experience, Jackie, your judgment isn't always wise. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, Daddy, I understand," Jackie fibbed, confused at his statement, but hiding her confusion so her father would get to his point.

"Your mother and I want you to be very careful about the friends you choose at school," he said then.

"I don't have that many friends Daddy. Just Barb really. She's my best friend." She smiled thinking of all the talks they'd had and the secrets they shared.

"Well, that's who I was bringing up, Jackie. We don't think it's a very good idea for you to associate with her. People tend to judge you by the people you're with and..."

He went on, but Jackie had stopped listening. What was he saying? She looked at her mother who had been scrubbing nervously at the same pot for the last three minutes, but got no reinforcement.

"But Barb's my best friend!"

"Jackie you really aren't able yet to judge best who..."

"But, Daddy!" Jackie cut him off short. "Barb's

a nice girl!" Jackie's voice broke and hot tears began spilling down her face.

"Her family isn't exactly the best..." her father ventured.

"But that's no reason why I shouldn't be friends with her!" Jackie was by this time openly crying, her body shaking with the sobs she was trying to control.

"There are other reasons, Jackie, very good ones, but I don't have to give you a reason. I want you to stop associating with Barb Jennings." His tone was decided and final.

"But, Daddy!"

"The subject is closed."

With that, Jackie threw down the dishtowel she'd been wringing in her hands and ran to her room.

She cried herself to sleep that night, what little sleep she had. For the confusing thoughts of that afternoon had returned. And now these thoughts were made suddenly more important by the words of her father.

She thought of Barb's lately being secretive with her, and the strange thoughtful moods she'd been falling into the last few weeks. She thought again of the episode in the cloakroom, "She's swellin' up!", and the other comments of the girls. And finally she thought of her father's words, "There are other reasons, Jackie, very good ones..." Her mind wanted to put two and two together, but she wouldn't let it happen. Once again she pushed everything out of her mind. She refused to draw any conclusions yet. Barb would be back at school tomorrow. Everything would be fine.

The next morning Jackie once again waited in the first grade hall. It had dawned a beautiful fall morning and Jackie now felt all her worries were probably for nothing. Barb had just been sick or maybe her father had been on another drunk.

As for her father's request, Jackie had decided to ignore it. Her disobedience bothered her a great deal. She'd never disobeyed her father so rashly before. But, the idea of school without her best friend bothered her even more. She knew she'd never be able to make new friends so she'd decided to take Barb home with her one afternoon soon, and let her father meet her and see for himself just how nice a girl she really was.

Once again, Barb didn't come. Jackie frowned as the home-room bell rang, wondering what could be wrong with her friend, and trying to push back those

thoughts that suddenly began crowding back into her brain.

It was during the English lesson that there was a knock at the classroom door.

"Yes?" Mrs. Lee answered.

The door was opened by Mr. Ison, the principal, who stepped just inside the door and said, "Mrs. Lee, take Barbara Jennings' name off the role; she won't be coming back to school."

Immediately there were whispers and giggles at the back of the room. Then Jackie could feel all eyes on her. But, this time she didn't redden. She was too numb even to be embarrassed. She'd lost her best friend and in the worst way she could imagine.

Jackie walked around in a daze the rest of the day. The gossip was all about Barb, and whenever possible, it was directed at Jackie. But Jackie was feeling her loss too deeply to pay much attention to the sniding remarks of the other eighth graders.

That night, she stayed to herself as much as possible. She didn't want to have to admit to her father that he had been right in his judgment of her friend. But, no questions were asked. Her parents, sensing that she'd discovered the fact of which they'd already been aware, left her alone.

She spent another sleepless night, crying at the loss of her friend and dreading the next day, the first day without Barb.

Friday morning, Jackie stood in her usual place, looking out the window at the warm September morning. She looked at no one, spoke to no one, unconsciously forcing herself into the lonely existence she felt was destined for her.

"Are you Jackie?" There was a tug at her skirt and a small voice repeated, "Huh? Are you Jackie?"

Jackie looked down and found it was Barb's little brother.

"Yeah, I'm Jackie."

The boy pushed a piece of paper at her, then ran off to join his little buddies.

The paper was crumpled and torn, due to the carelessness of the little messenger who had brought it, but Jackie immediately recognized Barb's childish handwriting on the outside. She fumblingly unfolded the paper.

Dear Jackie,

I guess I won't be coming back to school no more. I guess by now you know why. Jimmy, he says he won't marry no 15 yr. old kid. Daddy says if he don't marry

me he'll kill him. Mommy wants me to go off somewheres or other with other girls like me. Anyways I'm sure going to miss you. But don't you go wandering around by yourself. You can have as many friends as you want to. But you got to be a friend first. I guess you can find another best friend easy enough. So that is what you ought to do. O.K.? So, don't worry about me. I don't mind. Anyway babies are so cute and my little brother was fun to play with when he was littler. So it will be O.K. with me.

Yours truly always,
Barb Jennings

Jackie folded the letter and carefully put it in her history book. She knew for sure now that she would never see Barb again. She'd heard it from Barb herself. As the bell rang, she walked to home-room with her head up but her eyes misty.

All morning she thought of Barb's letter and several times she pulled it out of her history book and reread it.

"You can have as many friends as you want to. But you got to be a friend first."

At lunch, Jackie took her tray and started toward the table in the farthest corner of the cafeteria. But this time it wasn't to be alone. Sitting there was Annie Rooney LeMay. Jackie guessed she'd never had any good friends, much less a best friend. She seemed nice enough, but nobody ever took the trouble to get to know her. Maybe it was her funny name, or maybe it was because of her red freckles and her hair the color of an orange Crayola crayon. As Jackie set her tray down, Annie looked up in surprise.

"Hi, I'm Jackie. May I sit with you?" Jackie was surprised at how easy it was. In Annie's obvious confusion she felt a certain confidence she'd never known before. Then, a slow unsure smile crossed Annie's freckled face and she returned a quiet "hi" before concentrating again on her plate.

Jackie knew she'd found another friend, perhaps a best friend. But, not an only friend. Annie Rooney, who reminded Jackie so much of herself, or rather her former self, would be the first of many friends to come.

"...you got to be a friend first."

Oh, the wisdom of a fifteen-year old woman of the world.

HALF A FORGOTTEN THOUGHT
BY A NIGGER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I (who was once me) resketched sadly a nigger-dark
Boy/Child/Punk
standing in the line at America
attempting to cop a eaten cake of a world
which was last over a shadow's shoulder
Like a forgotten face
barely there

I (whatever) was a devout earth monger
HungryFor TheDay
and not nearly weaned from My Country Tis of Thee
'til Malcom X and my 18th birthday stole the tits
from my lips
and put a cup in their place enabling sight to see
Power and Pigs
with fat eyes

I (post-hep) was but aint now that
The Spit Was Swallowed
to become a kiss for the virgin bitch, Hope
She brought the smiles beneath my belt, but
Cancelled Interruptus
now a pregnant hopelessness

I (now totally half hep) sit begging cake crumbs
From Unfed Pigeons

But what it mean
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
But what I mean
A NIGGER
But what I think
A HALF FORGOTTEN HOPE
But what it all mean
BUT A HALF FORGOTTEN HOPE
BY A NIGGER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Harold Greene

DYING IN THE UTILITARIAN

the selfish dead in their brass bunkers
weaning on our tears like indifferent deserts
apathy entombed
cold eyed
mute
lips mummied solemn
lids slammed tight

fish eyed fools all anxiously hung out
like this is the third day
watch wait at the wake
to watch waking?

No-dying

dying of hollow shadows and memories

Clamp 'em down

As tight as their faces

Haul away these mute mimics of the living

MONDAY MORNING SAINT

small coffee hours
souls of cigarettes drifting
drifting lonely in the neon silence

a mangled mind shows itself the sympathy
of Cutty Sark and a ten dollar street bitch
unlike the one at home and the beer that
sits warm on the bedroom dresser devoid

we all lay there in the quiet and stolen
sipping our scotches
relieving our crotches

we all

and all is very hep

Harold Greene

I'LL BE UP IN NO TIME

Our parting was ethical;
It was clean, antiseptic.

I felt you had studied the procedure.
A clean incision
Stitched nicely,
No malpractice intended.

The dismissal -
Another case
To be shared
With the dissecting drones.

Very interesting -
Complications of the carotid,
Inflammation of the auricle;
The oracle demands!
Why the failure of the heart.

Sleep brings dreams,
I have written of some.
Other brings nothing,
I have written of none.

I am better,
But I suffer from an
Inflammation of the auricle,
And haven't the heart to tell you.

Jim Webb

FROM THE PLANET OF SUNSETS

The bobbi pins spectreing my present,
I will throw away.
You have many more to lose.

The toothbrush, stiff and dried,
Is of use no more.
A partner to the empty after-shave bottles,
It died an early death.

You will have your shirt -
The turkey and Ohio State are alive and well.
If it fits
You can wear it again.

I'll return your books:
Cat's Cradle endlessly rocking,
The Little Prince returning
to his flower and sunrises.

Possessing you no more,
I set them free.

Prisoners of war, going home.

Jim Webb

A COUPLE OF BLOCKS AWAY

Yesterday, I went to a park up the street from
where I live.

The swings, teeter-totters, merry-go-round stand
like skeletons in the green.

Walking through the grass,
I got on a swing and kicked the sky.
The poles groped like stationary stilts,
Holding me back to earth.

I stood between both ends of a teeter-totter.
It balanced,
But balancing is hard
And one end dropped.

I ran to the merry-go-round
And grabbing it, ran as fast as ever I could and
Just as it was about to leave me I jumped on.
I watched the whirling arms of the trees
canopying me
With a point of sky in the center
(where the merry-go-round is).

Looking out to Lancaster Avenue,
I saw the same car pass three times before it
stopped at the red light.
Green and it was gone.

I didn't play in the sandbox.
Some of the sand might have gotten in my
pockets or cuffs
And fallen on my rug,
Uhcuppuhluh blocks away.

Jim Webb









