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Eastern Kentucky University, English Department

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AURORA



A U R O R A

1 9 8 5

Staff

Linda Mims

James Warren

Patrons

Bonnie Plummer

Shelby White

Martha Grise

Marcia Crawford

Kathleen Smith

Isabelle White

Charles Sweet

Sylvia Burkhart

Peter Remaley

Robert Burkhart

Barbara Sowders

Robert Witt

Walter Nelson

Harry Brown

James Libbey

Dorothy Sutton



Walsingham Ford

Mary Rudersdorf

Sometimes at night I dream of Walsingham Ford standing dark, brooding and alone on the dusty hill high above the rushing brown waters of the Donegal River. The river is narrow at this point but widens downstream like the mouth of a puff adder snake getting ready to strike. There is always a memory of bewhiskered brown catfish that Grampa Walsingham would catch with his wiry cane pole after spending hours sitting on the red clay bank planning his well-constructed strategy on what type of bait to use in hopes of snagging the wily fish.

The house is empty in my dream, and empty save for Great Aunt Bedelia who will continue to be a household relic until Walsingham Ford is eventually washed away by erosion. The house is a smaller yet almost identical model of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage and at one time was a very impressive showplace. Bedelia doesn't keep the place up - she is too old. The old lady is also in mourning. To put it in a truthful light Bedelia is still mourning and will always continue to do so as long as the frayed photo of Uncle Edward remains yellowing on her oak dresser. Warren, my cousin of sorts, second or third I can't remember, writes letters informing me of Bedelia's negligence. I could care less whether Bedelia's bout of gout is better and I know when she comes out of mourning for old long-dead Uncle Ed who passed on in 1955 after a tragic helicopter accident that it will be the coldest day hell has ever seen. Warren is a nose for needless news.

My cousin Warren is a loud and blustery man who reminds me of a thunderstorm in mid-April. Warren sells sporting goods - tennis balls and deer rifles - he is also the Rona Barret of our family. If it wasn't for Warren I'd never know what was going on with the great Walsingham clan.

When my grandmother died she left me a photo album. An heirloom of sorts which contains a multitude of ancient yellowing photographs of long-dead Walsinghams and the Greyburnes, MacManno and Todds that they married. Most of the photographs show smug-faced forebearers sitting in large oak straight-back chairs looking just that - straight. In fact they appear as though someone, the photographer I imagine, took a board and slid it up the back of their coats and then said "Smile!" It is no wonder at all that these old poker-faced people look as though they would like to bite the flash.

One photo is of particular interest. A short, dumpy little man with smiling eyes and strong shoulders sits in a velvet-covered rocking chair, not an oak straight back, looking quite confident and content knowing that he is one of the few people in the county to have a real bonafide photograph of himself. This picture is of the first American Walsingham who wasn't even a Walsingham to begin with.

This little man's name was Zedekiah Ignatius Gritt and he was a farmer from a small village in Yorkshire, England called most appropriately Walsingham. Zedekiah saw America as an impressive and bountiful country, so he changed his name to Walsingham which he considered to be equally impressive as his newly adopted country. In

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40 I can't really imagine that it would have
uttered what your name was, but I am truly satisfied
that he changed his last name. I would be abhorred
to the utter core of my being if Christina Gritt
appeared boldly on my Visa. Thank-you most sincerely,
Zedekiah.

Walsingham Ford is located on W-Ford Road,
a thin strip of black pavement crumbling into
waters between sheltering oaks and the sour
down slope that leads down to the edge of the
rift Donega. Great whatever Walsingham (alias
Gritt) had made a considerable sum of money in
the lumber and cattle business. Through monetary
worthiness a road, such as it was, had been named
after Zed. There was one other Walsingham landmark
located right on the outskirts of town which
I regally read:

"In the year 1860 one Zedekiah
Walsingham, one of the Bonnette
County pioneers, imported the
first herd of purebred Scottish
Highland cattle to the state of
Tennessee only a few miles from
here. One bull, Zachary Almighty,
became an important foundation
sire for the Highland breed in
the United States and his blood-
line can be traced through the
breed today."

Alas, our only real claim to fame.

Back to W-Ford road. W-Ford was once the
only highway for travelers in this part of the
country. It has long since been rendered redundant
by the new super highway 74 which races and roars

only a mile away. Now the only traffic that ventures down W-Ford are the puzzled, angry out-of-staters cussing and carrying on after they realize that they have taken the wrong turn at Exit 36. Every once in awhile, so Warren tells me in his letters, a roadside romeo with his teenage temptress by his side comes rattling down the road in an old jalopy looking for a place to park and fumble one another. I wonder how Warren knows?

Then I come into the picture. In the dreams that is. I'm standing in the middle of the road gazing longingly up at the tall and foreboding house when the memories of my childhood come flooding back to me like the Donega after a good rain. The clapboards gleam with an almost metallic silver shine in the glossy moonlight of my dreamst. The shuttered windows are shut tight like the lids of a frightened child. Was I the frightened child?

Back to Warren's loving correspondence. He tells me that the road is cracked and potted with holes that would cripple a bulldozer. The county won't do a thing about it which is very typical in Bonnette. What Warren wants to do is have a family reunion, open up the estate and give an old college try to bring Bedelia out of mourning, renew family ties and have a barbecue on that God-forsaken hill. I suppose I'll have to go to Warren's reunion.

I haven't seen Warren or Walsingham Ford in almost eight years. What brought me to Chattanooga was a silver Greyhound bus that roared through small towns strung along the highway like crows on a telephone wire. Whenever we

topped I awoke from my dozing state only long enough to peer out of my tinted window at what seemed to be the same bus station that we stopped at twenty miles back down the road. Glancing tiredly about I remember seeing the same generic candy machines with the same candy-bars slotted so perfect in straight lines like little soldiers behind glass. Bus station faces loomed behind every destination sign with the same "I'm going somewhere" look stamped on their pallid faces.

By morning the scenery had changed and rumors of a city lurking on the horizon perked my sagging morale instantly. I boarded that bus bound for the big city after a dreadful argument with my mother who claimed I was making a big mistake by dating a Walsingham and that my sins would catch up with me sooner or later. The grief that woman gave me! Following me around with her Bible and thumping her hand vigorously across the black leather cover she would lament, "You're gonna' burn in hell, Chrissie, for your wicked ways! That Warren is blood-relation an' its sin you're committen' hear me girl?" No matter how - mother had developed other problems according to Warren.

Mother was going crazy so I gathered from Warren's cheery letters. Not crazy enough to be committed, just a mild form of lunacy. Warren says she prowls around Bonnette in a pair of C Penney galoshes declaring to each passerby that the flood of Noah is coming and the Donegas going to rise like some troubled spirit and sweep them all away in a matter of hours. She wears a life-jacket at all times and has bought a glitter green rowboat which she keeps in the backyard and hops into whenever a sprinkle of

rain whispers across the windowpane. Pastor Bob of St. Agnes Catholic Church and Warren have both tried to tell her that God isn't going to destroy the earth a second time by water. Yet when it rains mother sits in her boat in the backyard under a blue and white Bonnette National Bank umbrella waiting to set sail. Warren has a way of writing the most depressing news with the most gruesome detail imagineable. What would I do without Warren to keep me informed on the trials and tribulations of the Walsingham clan?

Sometimes I feel as though Warren is trying to lure me back to Bonnette. Maybe his safe and conventional lifestyle is beginning to bore the hell out of him. I know that my lifestyle doesn't bore me so I thoroughly hope this is not his intent.

I do wonder if Warren keeps the entire family informed about all my woes that I feel obliged to tell him in my returning letters. I am spontaneous in answering his letters. They have been scribbled off in the wee early morning hours when most people are asleep, in restaurants and bathrooms, once I even wrote to him on the back of a napkin in an Irish pub on 34th street. I remember once I bought an old faded yellow postcard at a rummage sale depicting a very volumptuous and scantily-clad lady of the evening called Sally of Storyville, in New Orleans if my history is right, and I scribbled wildly on the back, "What a time we had last night - orgy at 9:00 and film at 11:00!" I'm sure those crazy notes really make him wonder. It really pleases me to think of him standing at the mailbox, rubbin' the card between his thumb and forefinger, staring first at the plump, wily whore in the photograph

and then shaking his head shamefully at the wild and sinful message printed on the back in bold red Bic.

My life is rather tame and laid-back in all honest confession. I rarely go to parties and I haven't had a drink of anything alcoholic in months. The thought of an orgy and a film of it at 11:00 chills my blood! After all I was raised a good Catholic girl. If I've become an infamous legend at home just let them think so - it gives all the relatives something to yammer about.

Almost nine years ago when Warren and I were both eighteen he asked me to elope. Our relationship by blood was far enough removed to make the union feasible in his eyes, but all I could see in the years to come were half-wit children and shouts of incest after the wedding. Not only did I leave Bonnette to escape mother but also to escape Warren's weary wooing. To put it in perspective I was simply tired of being pursued - by everyone - so I left.

Subsequently, Warren married Margaret Leigh Tyler Spence, a strong and strict Irish Catholic blonde with a terminally round face and short thick legs made for pushing a plow. Mag as she was called became the ever dutiful wife. She bore Warren three blonde boys, Warren Jr.; Kelsey Bob; and Ryan, she was president of the Andrew Jackson Elementary PTA and baked apple pie every Sunday. Warren's life is safe and seriously good. I received photographic proof last Christmas.

Yet in Warren's letters there is a note of boredom. Before Warren married he was considered

quite the catch. Handsome in his country way and an heir to a vast kingdom of sporting good stores having one in Caliban, Nashville, and Basin Forge besides the one in Bonnette. Who would ever think Warren would become bored - even with the sporting good business he loved so much? Just small hints dropped in the letters that he might not have even been aware of made me think he was becoming a bit restless. Can life become too storybook perfect for a man?

Warren thinks that June would be a good month to hold this far-fetched reunion. He'll make all the arrangements, bear the cost and repair the parts of Walsingham Ford that Bedelia hasn't seen fit to take care of in her state of eternal mourning. Walsingham Ford will be where I stay unless I hole-up with mother and that sounds like a horrible idea. Maybe we'll bring her to the estate where I can watch her and be with her in consideration of her condition and all.

I have to admit it, I wrote to Warren and I'm going to Walsingham Ford in June. I'd like to stay in my grandmother's old room with the blue marble fireplace and the seductive bay window overlooking the muddy Donega.

In grandmother's room there was a window seat covered with royal blue velvet cushions fitted into the bay window. When visiting the estate as a child I used to sneak away from the ritual town talk and tea to curl up in the window seat with my treasured photograph album. The album is bound in red plush and fitted with an ornate brass catch and hinges. The album must be as old if not older than the headstone of

our founding father Zedekiah Walsingham. On those lazy afternoons I would hold the album so carefully in my lap and turn the pages slowly, studying each family face and name until I knew them all my memory. Great so and so son of Zed and Gracie named Rance-Michael who had been a captain for the southern cause, brave Troy killed tragically at Gettysburg when he was only nineteen, the beautiful Emma Jane who found sin and success as a theatre star on Broadway, I could go on and on.

The men in these old faded photographs had a softer look about them than the women did with their hair pulled back over their heads as tightly as skin stretched over a drum and faces as cool as granite. The men were mostly young and their mouths were sensuous yet strong with that firm, square Walsingham chin (I have it) set stern and hard yet smoothing into the gentle curves of the rounder portions of the face.

The children, products of these long-dead unions, seemed stunned and not inclined to play. All of them except Suzanne. Suzanne was in a picture by herself circa 1914. She was mounted on one of my great-grandfather's hunters. The horse was large and black with the only white being a small half-moon shaped spot in the middle of his broad forehead. Suzanne was seated precariously on a side saddle which was the in-thing for women riders in those days. She wore a plumed black hat and a high collared black riding habit with black buttons sewed neatly down the front of the close fitting jacket. Her long chestnut hair flowed over her shoulders from underneath the frumpy hat and one white gloved hand rested on the neck of the black horse

so named Tarbaby according to the scrawled handwriting on the back of the picture. But it was her face, that laughing child face that made me think she would have rather been riding Tarbaby bareback and galloping through the rich Tennessee fields than posing so prettily for the photographer. Bright eyes gleamed and in them was an impish twinkle. I felt a kinship with Suzanne for I had always felt that she must have been a free spirit like myself.

Suzanne had been my grandmother's youngest sister who had died from a fall during the hunt when she was only fourteen. I suppose Tarbaby had been the horse who failed to clear the fence sending Suzanne to her death, but my grandmother had never said. Suzanne had seldom been mentioned in our day-to-day conversations. If by some accident something was said in reference to Suzanne tears would well in the corners of grandmother's eyes and she would leave the room. After all these years I never could figure out why grandmother couldn't talk about Suzanne.

After ten pages I came to the photograph of a person I knew and loved very much. The photograph was of my grandmother as a girl, grandmother as Catherine McMann Walsingham. I would have recognized that slender, pretty doe-eyed woman anywhere with the ash blonde hair pulled back so simply with a satin ribbon. Within the simplicity and innocence of the Catherine McMann Walsingham face of 1919 there was about her an inner hardness, a burden that she had carried in her soul for many years.

Grandmother told me that the photograph had been taken shortly after her marriage to

my grandfather Coy Walsingham and that the reason for the troubled look on her face was due to her insecurities about married life. She always said that the transition from carefree girl to married woman had shocked her somewhat due to my grandfather's demanding ways. Somehow I had always felt that the troubled look on her face was due to some other more mysterious dilemma, but as I grew older I banished the thought altogether.

As carefully as I turned those rustic, fragile pages and familiarized myself with those fading faces of yesteryear, it always shocked me to come face to face with my father, Coy Jr. In one photo he stood leaning against a new 1955 Chevrolet that glared with metallic blue brilliance in the high noon sunlight. Coy Jr. had been a tall big-boned man with broad shoulders and long well-muscled legs. In this particular photograph his hair was slicked back onto his head in the famous ducktail style of the fifties and around his eyes were numerous patterns of crowsfeet crinkled from smiling and laughing once too often. And then there was that square family jawline that each and every Walsingham possessed, even me, I had inherited that stubbornly set jaw from Coy. Prepotent Walsinghams always stamped their offspring with that infamous trait.

There aren't many pictures of mother in the album. It is almost as if she had an aversion toward having her picture taken. Three or four of the pictures are of mother with me when I was four or five. But there is one picture of mother and Coy Jr. after their honeymoon and mother appears to be dreadfully ill. I find it hard to believe that she didn't even smile for the photographer. Grandmother said that

she had been carsick all the way home from Myrtle Beach, yet I still find it hard to believe that mother couldn't have at least managed a smirk with my handsome father hanging on her arm.

I am in the album quite a few times toward the end. There is one christening picture depicting a very pinched and red-faced baby with a smattering of russet curls on the tiny head. One that I particularly like shows my grandfather holding my first blue ribbon that I won at the Eyre Downs Riding Club show in one hand and the reins of my Connemara pony Fallow in the other. I am seated on the grey Fallow looking quite proud of my accomplishment. I suppose I must have been all of ten years old. My white gloved hand is resting on Fallow's silver neck and the smirk on my face is like my father's smirk.....like Suzanne on Tarbaby.....the white glove resting so confidently on her mount's neck. So confident in her horse.....my father so confident in himself a mix of the two? Ironic you could say but of any two people in our family I have always associated myself the most closely with them. And yet I never knew them.

I never knew my father really. He is a shadowy figure to me. I really don't know what happened to him yet I think that by now he must be dead or he would have turned up somewhere. He left when I was two years old and the only incident that stands out in my mind is my second birthday. The candles danced in front of my eyes like two tiny nymphs and father pinched my cheek and rubbed my tiny hand lovingly. With so much love and warmth he rubbed that small hand, so why did he leave when I needed him so much? "Blow hard Chrissie," I can hear him saying

You're two now, a big girl. I want to show you the world little girl and give you everything." Father never showed me the world because he left for parts unknown only weeks later. How could he do that to me if he loved me so much?

Mother told me he was killed in a car accident in Caliban. This was the first lie. I still don't believe her. His grave is not in the traditional Walsingham graveyard with all the war heroes, matriarchs and patriarchs. Even Emma Jane made it back from Broadway to be buried here. But not my father.

I made up my own story when I was little about father's disappearance. He had met a beautiful trapeze artist with the Mt. Olivet Circus Train and had run off with her. I hated to think that he was dead so I manifested the whole story to tell my classmates when they teased me about not having a father. It seemed plausible at the time because mother never told me the truth and the things that she told me were bitter and awful. I can still hear Billy Mike Tabor teasing me in the cafeteria when I was in fourth grade. Children can be cruel and insensitive to another's pain and suffering.

"Hey y'all did ya' know that Chris Walsingham's mama got plugged by a salesman comin' to er' school an' that's why Chris has' ta lie bout' having a dad."

"You lie Billy! My daddy married a glamorous woman an' is doin' real good. He an' my ma just didn't get along well that's all."

"Lookit ol' illegit Chrissie that don't have a dad!"

"You're a damn liar!"

By this time I was fighting mad and on the verge of tears. With clenched fists and squinted eyes I would continually tell my story.

"Daddy married a trapeze lady with the Mt. Olivet Circus train. They got hitched an' now he helps her with her routine and he rides elephants in parades and is bein' teached how to be a lion trainer. I sees him once a year when they come into Bonnette so you hush yer' mouth Billy Mike!"

My story worked up until the time the circus came into town and then I'd have to explain why he wasn't in the parade with all the other performers. It was a deadend story that soon disappeared from my mind as I grew older. I began to accept the fact as did everyone else that Coy Walsingham was never coming back.

Mother told me different lies at many different times as I grew up. She must have thought that I would forget one lie or like another one better. Among the assorted tales I heard was that he had been a gambler and had to leave the country due to insurmountable debts, he had contracted leprosy in Mexico and had died a painful death, and the best one yet was he had robbed a bank in Georgia and was rotting in jail somewhere. I was beginning to think he wasn't dead at all but had given mother some cause to feel such an intense hatred that she felt she had to invent these crazy stories.

"He always loved you though," she would say with a callous tone, "He loved you because you were a Walsingham through and through. He

could see that in you." The tone of voice that she used, so sharp and judgmental, made me wonder if her bitterness stemmed from a love she had never received from my father.

Looking through this album I see more recent relatives staring blankly at me from the confines of Kodak paper. Assorted aunts, uncles and cousins I haven't seen in ten years. There will be new married faces, new young faces and old weathered faces somewhat familiar at the reunion. They'll pity me for living in the dirty city and talk in their awkward country way about why I'm not married yet. Back in Bonnette if you're not married by the age of nineteen the whole town suspects you have a social disease or you're just plain "quar." Maybe before the week is out we will all be able to pry off our disguises and act like adults. And on the other side of my curious theory perhaps not.

The album stops with one last picture of me at sixteen. I'm going to the Bonnette County High School Prom. My dress is an embarrassment in blue tulle not quite mini and not quite maxi (skirt styles of the 70's - horrid skirt styles). My hair is a weak attempt at a Farrah Fawcett winged look but my tangly natural curls hardly allow it. The harsh color of the photograph has turned my mother's living room into a titled orange box filled with homely plastic-wood furniture and large clunky K-Mart lamps. I remember right before the picture was taken I had teased and tortured my bangs into a whirly, curly sweep over my head in an attempt to make "feathers." I had coversticked and powdered one persistent pimple beyond recognition except for one glowing red dot.

Soon afterwards a Warren Chase Walsingham had arrived, clumsy in his Roy's-Rent-a-Tux, ruffled shirt, and carrying a white florist box containing a big purple orchid. I let him pin that disgusting orchid to my blue dress which only contrasted with my outfit worse than my cloddy yellow pumps. In the process Warren pricked my right breast with the flower pin and I let out an unGodly yelp thinking that surely he had deflated everything I had in that stretchy brassiere although it wasn't much. To hell with adolescent Warrens and contrasting orchids of this world.

Warren's reunion is during the second week of June. Now that I think about it there is still plenty of time to write and decline his precious invitation. I can't make up my mind. In these reoccurring dreams of Walsingham Ford it feels as though the old place is asking, no begging me to come and unlock some hidden door to the past. I am more concerned about the future but these dreams are peculiar. Yes, maybe so, there are a few misunderstandings I need to look into. Quite a few.

The past and present wilt-I have fill'd the
emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the
future.

Walt Whitman, Song of Myself

The Well

A creaking crank
A broken rope
A bucket no longer
 needed.
A dark unknown
 deepness
And a curious reflection
 at the end.

Harold E. Elliot, Jr.





Delusion

The night descended on dooryards
and the prowling fog smothered
the avenue of discarded sentiment
Cautious women no longer chattered
over carefully correct drinks

The pieces on the mahogany are
spared the intrusion of admiration
oh what a lovely miniature
The guests have departed or are asleep
and the ashtrays filled with civilized chat
are the lonely watchers of faded scenes

The Silence asks the purpose
and is rewarded with its own presence

The burdening Question
screamed from implacable eyes
(how i do detest cheap music)
died in ashes and half-empty glasses
left in the hallway

Memories of defeats and humiliations
flung aside in valorous ardor,
the eyes cast the Question
as a colored lamp signals passion
from behind faded curtains

Gleaming white arms and smoky lashes
opening to admiration blood-red lips of attitude
(Flashing red nails claw blood from the rippling s
and the perfect smile defends
the curve of silk from the indignity of the Questi

The watery drink gone warm in sweaty palms
accepted the familiar crush of despair
The Question hung like a pallor
after the turn
of golden hair and a fading smile

She left with the Actor in pleated herringbone
who read Dante, and understood dead writers.
The eyes turned to ashes
with the slowing of the pulse,
liquor extinguished passion and humiliation

Dawn greets him
with the taste of stale scotch
and the lingering odor of expensive perfume.

Joseph W. Shofner

Le Voix D'Artiste

A drop of water
Falls
From out of the sky,
Stands boldly on the
Thick cloth for a moment
Announcing its presence
And is quickly and carefully
Absorbed.

Joseph W. Shofner

In The Waste Land (with liquor)
for terri

I enter the ashes
Ashes no longer with hope
No hope to begin with,
All carcinogenic dreams without color

Cigarettes stale and leaving a taste
As of oil and wood's death
Dry with color:pale browns
Hope is an elusive breeze
Felt by men with bored eyes and flat stomachs

Wishing
For you
Dying
For the briefest taste of lips
No earth can contain

Chrome steel engines
Thundering 1200cc's power
Are the answer
Unthinkable machines carrying tough men to Parad
Two-wheeled ways to oblivion

The logos are too far gone to matter much,
The designs of men with dead dreams

Black headband tight,
T-shirt screaming Death,
Vest loose under leather jacket covering
A straight-on fire-finding death-dealing
Tough son of a bitch
Faded jeans walk on heavy oil-soaked boots

And the heart cries
Missing you
And no one understands

Joseph W. Shofner

Pan's Flute
Paula Fountain

A sharp wind threatened to tip our canoe as Kate and I pushed away from Lake Hera's muddy shore. The lapping waves and swift current swept up quickly across the water and soon we were a great distance from the tree-lined bank. Around us, the overlapped hills formed an arena, the shivering trees appearing as cheering spectators. The weekend outing we had promised ourselves all summer had finally materialized although now it was mid-October with the usually lush green landscape a hundred subtle hues of red, orange, yellow, and brown.

Lake Hera is located in the Eastern Kentucky foothills. The area is isolated and feral, and for a distance of twenty miles the only signs of civilization are a few indistinct shacks scattered along the domed ridges. The shacks are built from rough wood, without windows or doors, giving the impression of an act of nature rather than human influences, as if the earth had heaved them from the ground.

The people who live in the shacks are poverty-stricken and of interest to Kate and myself as we are both sociology majors. Although I had only seen those sad, dirty people from our jeep, I hoped someday to study and perhaps help them.

Now, I gazed at the huge rock cliffs, beautiful in the dim light. A rumble of thunder sounded in the distance, a somber sound. Suddenly I felt like an intruder, small and insignificant, surrounded by the impenetrable rock.

But I did not have time to pursue the thought as I saw that we were quickly coming to a hazardous area of the lake where dead, bleached trees jutted above the water like sharp spikes.

"I'll row and you brake," Kate said, the wind whipping her blonde hair around her face.

Soon we were among the sunken trees and, looking over the side, I saw below an uprooted tree. The tree resembled the hull of a wrecked ship.

"Jenny! Watch out!", Kate yelled.

We were almost on top of one of the jutting limbs and I quickly braked.

Clearing the trees, we moved deeper into the lake. Kate leaned back, smiling and lit a cigarette. "I love this place," she said, "so wild. Look at those woods. I'll bet they're filled with frolicking nymphs and satyrs. Here, have a cigarette. You look tense."

As I was reaching for the cigarette, a lonely, eerie sound invaded the air. We both sat up, causing the canoe to pitch violently.

"A flute?" I asked Kate.

The sound seemed to come from everywhere, weaving in and out of the swaying trees, going from low range to a piercing upper limit - then silence.

We gazed at the quiet hills, trying to see who or what had made the sound.

"Pan?" I said, and we both laughed, but I was left with an uneasy feeling.

Checking my watch, I saw that it was twelve. We had been on the lake for three hours, and I realized that I was hungry.

"Let's stop soon and eat," I said.

"Sounds great. I believe that's our spot just ahead," she said, pointing at a large sandstone rock to her right.

Our spot is a clearing in the woods where, on our first trip, we had built a rock pit for cooking. Others used the pit because one year we found the pit still warm and a dried bouquet of violets and golden rods lying near by.

We jumped from the canoe, guiding it ashore until half of it rested on the sandy bank.

"I'll gather some wood," I said, "while you unpack."

Walking up the short trail leading to the clearing, I looked for small, dry sticks. Turning back toward the lake, I was almost overwhelmed by the misty beauty surrounding the lake's flowing water.

I placed the few limbs I had gathered into the pit and lit a fire. Kate came, lugging the knapsack up the hill, and we sat down in our cozy forest room, rubbing the numbness from our cramped legs.

A few minutes passed and I sat up to light a cigarette. "Jesus," I exclaimed, pointing

toward the lake. "Look, Kate."

She sat up quickly, her mouth dropping open at the sight.

Standing immobile, submerged to the waist in the murky water were four people. Deliberately and slowly, they walked out of the lake.

Two were men, tall, wearing muddy cutoffs hanging low on thin, pallid stomachs, though their limbs were muscular. One man had black-matted hair and was clean shaven, the other had long, dirty-blond hair and a stringy goat-like beard. The other two, women whose hair was the same dirty-blond, were overweight, greasy fat abulging through tears in their dirt-streaked bathing suits. All four stood grinning on the slope with long, yellow teeth.

"Do ye mind some company?", the bearded man asked.

The others grinned even more, as if trying to promote themselves.

"No," I replied, thinking just the opposite.

"That your boat?"

"Yes."

"It's real nice," the man said, rubbing his hand along the canoe.

They stood there smiling, expecting a response but I could not think of anything to say.

After standing a few minutes in silence, the man who had been talking sat down, facing the lake. The others, as if following their leader, sat down also.

Kate looked at me with a "What should we do?" expression on her face, but I shrugged my shoulders.

My heart was beating furiously. I remembered the stories I had heard about the hill people: Inter-familied marriages resulting in insanity, and people who killed for sheer pleasure.

"My God," I thought, "they could be planning to steal our boat. They could even kill us and dispose of our bodies." A chill went through me. "What if the men raped us? We couldn't fight them."

I glanced over at Kate who was watching the people sitting by the lake. Then I carefully reached into the knapsack, and slid out a bowie hunting knife, given to me by my father. I laid the sharp weapon in the dirt beside me.

The four seemed to be oblivious to us, laughing and talking amongst themselves, but the words were incoherent.

Suddenly, the bearded man jumped in the water.

"Come on in," he called pointing to us.

We shook our heads no.

He turned and swam across the lake and back quickly, his hard arms pumping fiercely. As

he came back to the shore, he yelled to the other three, "I see three big, ugly things sitting on the bank."

He laughed so hard, he swallowed some of the green, slimy water, spitting a stream back into the lake. The others laughed too. He crawled out of the water, and grabbing one woman's foot said, "I've got Zoe's toe. Now she's gotta go!"

He pulled Zoe into the lake, trying to dunk her. She yelled, "Quit," trying to swim back to the bank. Finally she jerked away, and lay heaving on the shore. He followed on his hands and knees with an amazing amount of sand and leaves clinging to his body.

They lay in each other's arms, kissing.

He began looking toward us with a quizzical expression on his face.

I couldn't look at the man. His face was so strange, his eyes deep and searching. I could almost feel his rough hands touching me. I shiver

The fire in the pit had died down, and the wind picked up the gray ashes, scattering them through the trees.

"I don't think they're going to leave," I whispered to Kate, who was watching the scene as if mesmerized. "Let's go."

"What are you going to do with that knife?" she asked.

"I'm just going to keep it out in case, you know, they try to hurt us."

"They haven't tried to hurt us. I think you should put it away. They haven't done anything."

"Are you stupid?" I asked, "Just because they haven't, doesn't mean they won't. Haven't you seen that man watching us?"

"He's probably just curious. They tried to be friendly, Jenny."

"Just shut up. I'll hide the knife. Now let's go. Get the knapsack."

I stood up, holding the knife by my side. Taking a deep breath, I walked toward the canoe while Kate followed.

The bearded man released Zoe and stood up.

"Leaving so soon?" he asked.

"Yes, we have to go," I mumbled, edging past him. He started to say something, but then he saw the glittering knife in my hand. The words died on his lips and an angry scowl spread over his face. Suddenly, his hand shot out, grabbing my wrist tight. Muscles bulging, he yanked my arm upwards and wrenched the knife away with his free hand.

A huge, gaping slash, deep and red, appeared across his palm.

Splatters of blood began to cover his white stomach, and stream down his elbow, falling at his feet.

He shook my arm, growling "Slut, rotten slut!" while bits of foam flew from his lips.

He released me so abruptly that I fell backwards.

With a menacing flick of his wrist, he threw the knife violently, end over end, toward the middle of the lake. A flash of silver gleamed in the air, and then it was gone.

Kate grabbed my arm, and we scrambled into the canoe.

The four people formed a little group, close as if to comfort, watching us leave. Behind them, the tall pines were bending and swaying under the force of the howling wind. The bearded man looked like a raging, wild god as his hair flowed high about his head.

I felt sick.

Turning to Kate I said, "I hurt that man. Tell me I wasn't wrong."

But she only looked sadly at me.

I looked back to shore, where the receding figure of a blonde, bearded man stood. Using his bloody hand, he reached deep into his pocket pulled out a flute and began to play.

Dreams

I wish I were a writer,
Or a poet, or a bard.
I've often thought about it
And it couldn't be that hard.
For countless men
Have earned their bread
By writing down
What's in their head.

I've read Faulkner, Blake and Cather,
Plus at least a million more;
And I've tried to soak their magic in
Through each and every pore.
But though their words
Have brought me hope,
Their vision lies
Beyond my scope.

So, I envy them their talent
As I strive to find my own.
And seek within, that common thread
With which writers' hearts are sewn.
For most of all
I long to know
The joy of
Smooth, creative flow.

But for me, it's not so easy -
I can't seem to get it right.
And though the writers' soul is in me,
It may never see the light.
Still, I struggle on
And hope to free
The masterpiece
That waits in me.

Erin Combs





Dad

As sleep eludes me I lie
Alone here with the turbulence
From the glass - I need to know why
But the question's never asked.

Words bounce off the walls -
I cannot decipher them.
I strain to hear a name
Or a clue to the real him.

Fear surrounds me as I realize
I could become the same
Oh would I only sleep
And lose thought of the day?

And tomorrow I'll witness the ritual
And never speak a word
My thoughts forever to myself
My question never heard.

Lucy Bennett

The Paradox

Jesus H. Christ
with an eagle tattoo
leather lace on your skin
and eyes of dove blue.

Dangling cross
hangs from your ear
stealing the moonlight
reflecting it there.

Born out of wedlock
in violence and pain
an alley in Harlem
a grey New York rain.

There's wine on your breath
and thorns in your smile
come all ye faithful
let's worship awhile.

Your garments are rent
the lots have been thrown
crucify, crucify
switch-blade through bone.

Jerusalem calls
they're praying to you
in the neon-lit bars
so many, so few.

And yet they delight
to sneer in your face
as you thumb for a ride
to a sanctified place.

Anita Marie Hagan

The Fetus

Drifting alone

swaying in a universe

of blood and water,

fastened by a rope of plastic skin

that tugs the belly

with every rhythmic step

Tadpole eyes

blink behind closed lids

at worlds filled

with starless skies

and beating seas.

All is life.

All is the sweetness of living;

a silent doll

tearless and content,

rocked to sleep

by the wonder of itself

Anita Marie Hagan

The Fear

The Fear buried itself inside her,
and stealthily coiled its small pink body
around her ambitions.
The Wound bled sullenly
sweetly
And soon The Fear grew fat
and sluggish on her desires.
Lying and stretching,
fed by distrust and disapproval,
it ingested everything she had been;
leaving her
with the wastes of discontent
and unhappiness.
It was then that The Fear
became something more,
and emerging from its decaying shell,
perched on the edge of her trembling lips,
and took flight;
a sleek, glittering Lie
falsely brilliant
in the darkness of her despair.

Anita Marie Hagan





One Wolf

She came down from the mountain
Falling softly like a warm summer rain
Sniffing the air
Her head poised skyward
Searching for the scent
Of innocence
That only the wild ones
Can understand
Moonlight gleaming
On her grizzled coat
Flecked with silver splinters
Not a worldly soul
Knew of her presence there
As she hunted
Not lurking or prowling
In sheltering shadows stalking prey
She hunted
For a place to call her own
The last of her wolf-kind
Driven from the mountain
Civilization permeating, devastating,
consuming,
Her wild domain
Trekking down darkened highways
Less light of morning give her identity away
Passing towering metal mountains
Unlike her mountain
Not fertile and green with marathon streams
Cold and hard they stood
Padding on bleeding flesh, once earth-worn paws
Edging limits of so-called city
She throws back her silver muzzle
And howls a mournful lament of mankind's mounting
The call of the Mohican is lost
Drowned in shrieking car horns,
The blast of a whistle

The wolf is never heard
Her cry for salvation lost
To the wind, becomes dust
Is dead
In the arms
Of the dying.

Mary Rudersdorf

Inner Pursuit

There is a season for every soul,
A goal for every heart
A finely chiseled image
Like a Michelangelo marble man
That reaches inside a soul
With a relentless grasp
Attainment of this vision
Can be well-constructed in the mind
For a future time
Yet most pass through life on the wind
Moving like an ominous thunderhead
On the storms of time.

Mary Rudersdorf

Seasonless

The songs of jubilant summer
Faded into the rusty warmth of fall
I couldn't find time for the winter
It doesn't really matter anyhow
I wear my boots all year long

My eyes are too dark and careless
Circles that lie deep under lashes
Smudged liner disguises me—alias chimney sweep
Insomniac extraordinary
The real color of my eyes
Is blue without any circles

When I call out to you
Will you walk through my darkness
Shining like a lantern through the storm
The ones you always dream of
Are the ones who walk away
Like mad demon shadows dancing by in the night
A macabre passion play
The actors are emotions in jigsaw disarray
Scattered on my heart sets the stage for old p

So I guess winter is really here now
Curled in the blankets that I love
Secure surrounded by blankets
Insecure when surrounded by too much love.

Mary Rudersdorf

The Method Writer

Eric Cash

A crisp brown Cuban cigar that Ramsey held in his off hand sent dancing trailers of bitter blue smoke to the ceiling. He sat behind a massive ash-colored desk in a padded black chair, contoured elegantly by the weight of aging and his slightly chubby frame. The room was lit by a flickering fluorescent desk lamp, causing ice-white stars to form in his tired greyish eyes.

As he gazed at the Army issued pistol before him, Ramsey could feel a broken frown weeding its way, almost rebelliously, onto his face. In reply, the wrinkles on his forehead drew downward to a point.

Silently, he rose, crossed the office, took a leather brief case from the corner, and retook his seat. Ramsey snuffed the Cuban in a brass tray to his right, and pressed the snaps, opening the case with a resounding clunk. It contained only two items, a roughly typed manuscript and, in a traditional hiding place in the upper compartment, a half-full bottle of Jim Beam.

Ramsey was never one for collecting senseless brochures and other such paraphernalia as did most executives. No, not he, the "master of organization." He kept things simple, clear cut, and above all, his brief case uncluttered. In a sense, he saw it as a status symbol that he could not corrupt.

He removed both items and placed them on the desk just before him. Ramsey then leaned

back far into the chair, cradled his neck between interlaced fingers, took into his lungs a deep, yet stifled breath of stuffy air, and considered the first order of business. If he played the game with logic he had to find the right answer. He had to, too much was at stake...perhaps everything...and more.

Echoing throughout the large room, a miniature grandfather clock chimed nine times atop its perch on the filing cabinet, forcing his eyes to the photograph above. The picture displayed Ramsey and Kaye, oh lovely kaye, in an embrace among a stand of frosty maples in Newcastle Park. God, how beautiful she was on that day.

Ramsey could still smell the fragrance of her perfume. He could still see the stupid twisted smile that his friend Johnathan had made as he tried to capture the, then casual, now priceless, moment on Polaroid print.

Reluctantly, he drew his sight from the picture and removed the cap from the bottle. Ah, another familiar olfactory remembrance!

Ramsey tipped the Beam, taking a long pull. Patiently, he waited for the accustomed dullness to overtake his throbbing, confused, and hurting mind.

He was wet, tired, and pissed off. Driving on badly lit slippery roads at three in the morning was definitely not Ramsey's cup of java. Keeping his anger in check, he considered the man in his passenger seat.

Instead of his standard attire, Johnathan was wearing a scraggy Army jacket and torn blue jeans. His breath, highly noticeable, stank of cheap vodka, and his eyes were red and swollen.

Trance-like, Johnathan stared through the bubble window of the VW, droplets pounding the glass and streaming as uncontrollable tears from a giant bulbous orb.

I'm sorry Rams," he stammered, the words beyond his grasp, "I really owe you a big one, huh."

Ramsey exploded. "What in Holy Hell has gotten into you? Do you know that it costs sixty-two bucks to bail out drunks in Santa Clara? Do you think that I've got nothing better to do than to come pick you up at this hour. I've gotta go to work in less than four hours. So do you! What's the damned problem. Man!"

"Rams, if I explain, do you promise to listen to the whole thing. No interruptus, okay?"

"All right."

"Sure?"

"Get on with the damned story!"

"Okay," Johnathan said, "I was stuck on the ending to my novel. The one about the Viet-vet who comes back from war, only to lose his girlfriend and...well, sort of go off the deep end."

"Yeah," Ramsey said, "So what, I mean, are you out gettin' blitzed to think up a new angle?"

You and I both know that's plenty stupid, and it just don't work."

"No, you have it wrong. I was playing the part."

Ramsey gave no audible reply, so he continued

"Do you know what method acting is, Rams? It's where the actor sticks himself smack in the very scene that he is preparing for..."

"...and plays the part, the movie part, in real life," Ramsey interupted, taking his eyes from the road to catch his friend's expression. "They say it adds realism. It's a crock o' shit. So what's that got to do with anything?"

"It's...it's not a crock, Rams. It really works. You know how, say, you go to a car wash and come home, say, and write a story about a car, no, that doesn't make sense..."

"Look, Johnathan, what's the bottom line?"

"The bottom line is that I played the car...e the vet. I role played my character in real life. I was him. He was me. I know what he felt, or rather, would feel. Alone, in jail, drunk, the whole nine yards...I have the end to my novel. See?"

"No."

"Rams, I can write what I create...create what I write. It's the ultimate power trip."

"You're crazy," Ramsey said.

A few minutes later they arrived at Johnathan's place. Ramsey let his friend out. Johnathan mumbled his undying, drunken thanks, and entered his apartment.

It took Ramsey a few seconds to realize that he had been dozing. The dull glint of the revolver brought this fact to bear. For a long moment he stared at the weapon, considering.

Times seemed so much better in the old days. So much simpler.

Ramsey had just graduated college and expected to take the journalistic world by storm. Instead he found himself in a podunk town, the editor of the Newcastle Crier. The Crier was a local rag with an average circulation of seven thousand, and that was during a good year. He made seventy dollars a week, just enough to pay the bills and keep his basset, Chaucer, in Alpo. Ramsey drove a beat up fire engine-red Volkswagen that constantly reeked of stale pastrami, and broke down on every third month.

In fact, he was starting to consider throwing his junk and "Ole Chaucy" in his VW, and pulling the stakes, when Johnathan entered his boring life.

Johnathan (he never went by John) was one of those self-assured types who always wore a three piece suit and never sweat in August.

He started on the Crier, under Ramsey, as one of the "on the spot action reporters" whose job consisted of covering such penetrating and in depth stories as the average attendance of the Newcastle Holy God Reformed Catholic Church on Sunday mornings.

As Ramsey was about to make his big move to greater pastures, or whatever, Johnathan asked the editor to look over a few of what he called his serious fiction stories over lunch. His treat.

Ramsey agreed, they ate at his favorite deli, the one known world 'round for its pastrami on rye, or so he told the writer and found that Johnathan was nothing short of a misguided genius.

He explained that with his editorial experience and organizational expertise, that he, only he, could transform his colleague's material into modern day masterpieces. To this, Johnathan smiled, a bit of pepperoni dangling, and the two became friends.

As time is to seeds and flowers, the writer and Ramsey grew inseperable. The two played chess on Friday nights. Ramsey, the logical one, always prevailed. They attended little league games together on Saturday mornings, and doubled with the local girls at the two-show-a-night movie house.

The majority of their time, however, was spent with another. Kaye, as Johnathan would

ell Ramsey, had all the qualifications. She had long raven hair, dark and dreamy brown eyes, fair sized breasts, and long, also dreamy, milky white legs that were brought to the pinnacle of sheer art itself by stringy, jet black, fishnet stockings. They were the "in thing" in those days.

On one particular Wednesday, they met the illustrious Kaye at Ramsey's infamous deli. She waited tables there.

On this Wednesday, the pair were heatedly discussing the relevance of Dickinson's "Wounded Deer." Ramsey took the view that it was good, yet not totally leaps and bounds over other work produced at the time. Johnathan claimed the standard line, praising her in the same sentence as Jesus Christ Himself. As only two driven artists could, they began to cause quite a scene. At one point, Ramsey was shaking pepper on his friend's head, while arm wrestling to decide the issue.

Fearing that things might get out of hand, Kaye, in her Mr. Submarine outfit, sauntered over to their table and told them to pipe down. Besides," she said demurely, "Dickinson sucks."

Thus, the twosome became a trio...

Kaye lived in the Filbert Motel, a nice traditional building that overlooked the Newcastle docks. Kaye in the overstuffed Burka, Johnathan in the banister, and Ramsey in the green lawnchair, the three would sit for hours on the young woman's patio.

They would discuss politics and the pro's and con's of artsy literature. They would sip red wine and watch the lazy sails glide home. They experienced the pains of growth, and would speak of the wisdom of the old. Together they found true love. A love that most search for, only to find lust, so shallow, and rats in the cellar.

For three years the trio bathed in their Utopia...

...but, Ramsey screamed to himself, bolting upright in his chair, as things always happen, despite the conviction, the desire of the heart, and other such crap, entropy catches up, and perfection ends.

Damn you Johnathan, why?

Ramsey downed the remains of the whiskey and tossed the empty into the trash container beside his desk. The grandfather clock boomed eleven times, each tong of the striker sent electric jolts into the base of his skull and into the depths of his cancer-eaten lungs.

Johnathan had finished his novel, simply titled The Vet Story, two days after the Santa Clara incident. Proudly, he submitted the novel to his friends for inspection.

God, was it good. Ramsey could smell the
beer in the main character's voice. He could
touch the dirt on his jacket. The ending was
no less than superb. Even by his standards!

Kaye was unable to finish the story. She
was in tears.

Ramsey sent a copy to a publishing friend,
"Big" Dan Lester, in New York City. The publisher
sent a reply stating that it would be billed
as the next Great American Novel. Ramsey was
proven the authenticity of the reply by a check
for ten thousand dollars that was included in
the envelope.

The celebration that followed would have
gone on in the small town of Newcastle, and even Santa Clara,
for quite some time. It was not every
day that they had a "real writer" in their midst.
They had never had a "real" anything in their
midst.

The biggest stir occurred after the partying
was over, however.

Ramsey remembered what the paper, his property
now, after twenty-five long years, had said.
"All, he wrote the obituaries for both Johnathan
and Kaye. "Rising star and girlfriend go down
in flames when car skids on Newcastle Bridge."

Was it really that long ago? God, I miss
you.

With trembling hands, Ramsey raised his steel-plated writing instrument to his temple and began his own method piece.

The pain in his decaying chest was absent and they were waiting for him on the patio, both with a half-full glass of red wine in their hands. Ramsey sat in the familiar green lawn chair, and noticed with a smile that Kaye was wearing the black fishnets.

The sails were just coming into port. The waning sun washed the patio in piercing streamers of amber and yellow, warming Ramsey's heart. A gull swooped just below the horizon and the evening star was beginning to rise.

"So, how do you like my new story?" Ramsey's face took on a childish smirk. "Afraid I stole a bit of your style on this one Johnathan."

"Yeah," Johnathan said, picking a chive from his tooth, "but we aren't ever going to publish this piece...to think, you never really did believe in method writing."

Kaye giggled lethargically. The wine had gone to her head.

The grandfather on the filing cabinet chimed thirteen times, yet made no noise, for there

was no one to hear. A smoking gun, balanced and teetering on the edge of the desk, finally hit the floor.

The original copy of a once famous American masterpiece fluttered quietly in a gentle breeze that blew from an unseen open window, through which the lights of Newcastle Street could no longer be viewed.

Where the Wind Blows Softly

Where the wind blows softly
and the apple trees bend . .
Where the moments of yesterday
roll back in time . .
Where the flowers blossom
and no weeds grow . .
The garden, of flowers at Grandma's house . .
The place that I loved so.
Where the hands of youth
had gone . .
changed by years swift toll . .
Where the dreams are not forgotten . .
the days of long ago.
Where children laughing could be heard low . .
the sounds of playing .. I cherish so.
The playhouse door is opened
and the invitation is wide . .
whispering "come inside."
Up two steps I ramble in . .
I see my childhood again.
The wicker furniture, just my size.
The four windows seem to shine.
And in the corner the hutch stands,
filled with china dishes and tiny pans.

Eagle to Eagle Speak

Bear charge loosed
Breaking iron chain,
Rusted broken truce
Flee peace deranged.

Lolling necks craned
Walk idle youth,
Wandering naked crews
Towards justified noose,
Destined cannon shoot-
Eagle fly distained
Call stifled news.

Beware young child
Beast crawling free,
T'ward leafy wild
Hungriily stalking feed.

Distant thunder roar,
Bear claw flesh,
'tween gauzy mesh
Amber spikes stretch
Ripping maw fetch-
White wing soar
Steamy eye catch.

Streaking flurry disend
Bear paw enraged,
Shattered feathers pretend
Raging fighter encaged?

Shame burning hot
Your effort late,
Swallowed quills bought
Your Pacifist fate.

Eric W. Cash

Final Judgement

Shadow form, Shadow creep
Sacred walls stormed, standing steep;
Darkened wraith doth radiate
To first found Faith re-dedicate.

Perfection encrusted swing the gates
Ever lusted, the pearls of Fate.

Stretched and yawning, naked eye peering,
Peter-ole-sod blatantly jeering,
Fans in the bleachers, absently cheering...
The Book needs dusting, 'tis riddled by mice
A slight re-adjusting, just name the price.
Wipe away the purloined lies
Rid this stinging swarm of flies.

Sleeper fall to swollen crotch,
'pon tainted fields another notch,
Turn Shepherd eastward to silently watch...
Yea, cackling young wind-crossed raven
My tongue touch no fiery oven.
His sight lacking, His vision late
Fie, poor Hamlet, no soul to bake?

Oh, smiling Shamen with boots in Heaven
Add some yeast for bones are leavened;
Re-educate and shout aloud
We're decaying flesh under tattered shrouds.

The Earth devours, a wonting beast
Counting the hours, awaiting the feast.

Eric W. Cash

he table with two chairs, is set . .
y little children's special hands.
he wicker loveseat is painted blue,
he table matches too.
he electric light is over-head . .
uarding softly, the cradle (doll baby) bed.
he broom is in the corner,
nd just my size . .
he house is play..but filled with dreams inside.
nd beyond the doorstep . .
he apple orchard stands . .
rotecting all of Grandma's land.
rough the window I see the front porch . .
he railing surrounds the porch, as though a ring . .
side this tiny playhouse. .filled with my childhood
reams.
nd now it too, is empty . .
randma's house lives on . .
ut it will never be the same again,
nce I've grown up now, and Grandma has gone.
he sweet memories
. where the wind softly blows
. the day's of my childhood so very long ago.

Sherry Ann Davis

Waning Crescent

Withered away
our scrawling sticks
o'r endless pages
an emotion clicks,
as ink-blots
scatter lifelong ticks,
that a syllable drifting
left of meaning
can strike, can speak
can be inviting,
exploding as pillows
onto starched whiteness,
the single thought
of a dying ember
torching skyward
never caught.

Hope remains
as hands stretch
o'r mountain high
a sprig to fetch,
as walking canes
turn head and retch,
that a flat-bellied
nymph of raven mane
can grin, can laugh
can be profane,
casting with glistening
orbs a sentimental
fleeting glance,
at the words
of a waning crescent
turned askance.

Eric W. Cash

Janis

When the winter breeze carries the scent of
decaying flesh,
When messengers with violins come knocking
at my door,
When the evening cast the glint from
my eyes,
I set this creaking mass of bones into a
sagging green lawnchair and prop my feet
upon your headstone,
open a fresh new bottle of verse
and curse your gift.

Eric W. Cash





