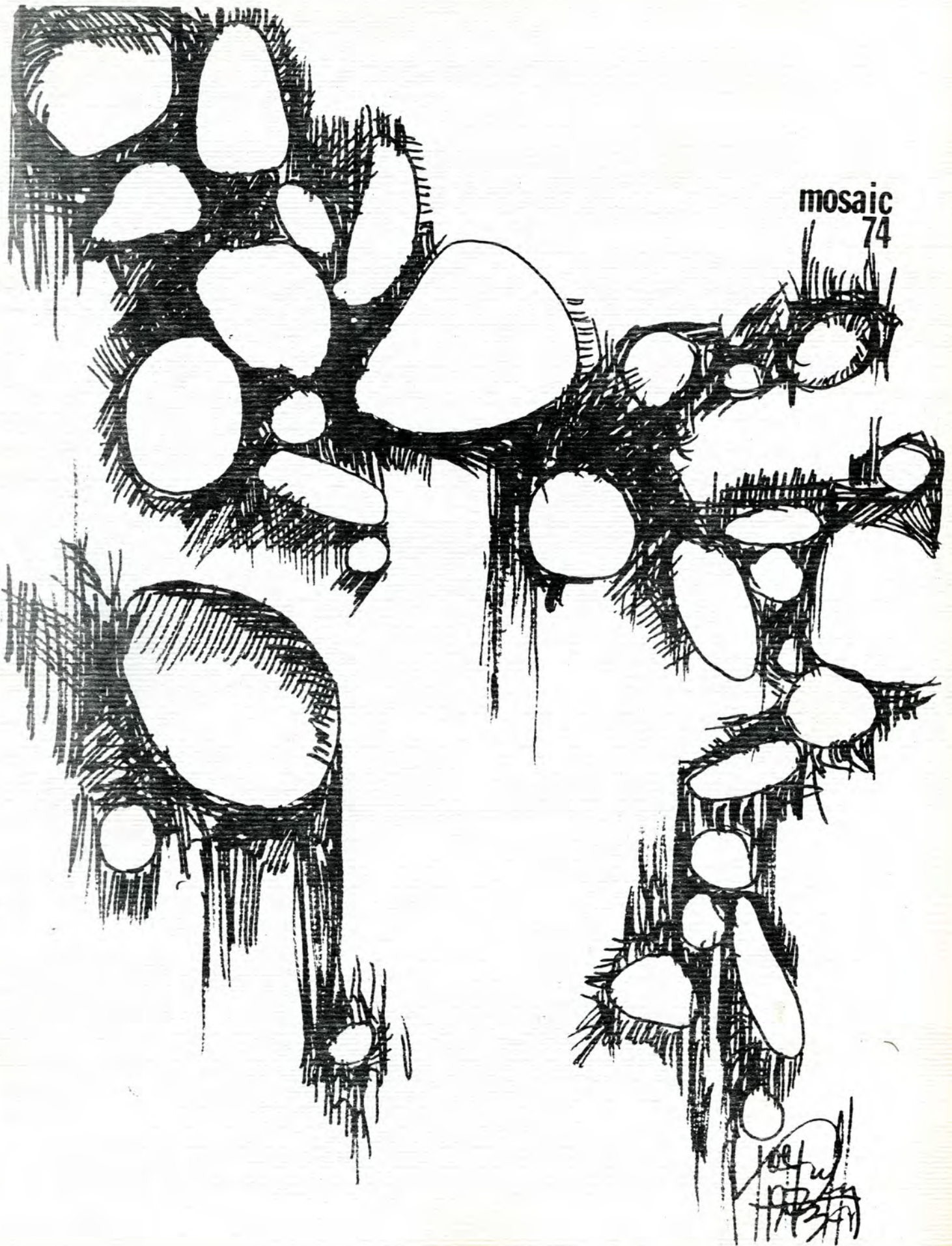


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MOSAIC

SPRING 1974

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Writing is a long, hard process, often commencing in frustration and chaotic uncertainty, leading to brainracking search, surprising discoveries and much revision. Although writers will admit that perfection is impossible, fortunately a point of contentment can be reached. The writers of the pieces in this issue of the Mosaic did not jump out of a deep sleep at 3 a.m. with a sudden inspiration, complete their story, poem or essay by four and return to bed. They had to sweat it out, but were finally able to find a satisfaction in their creative efforts. We hope the reader experiences something of the satisfaction in reading these works that the writers experienced in creating them.

We would like to thank Dr. Milton Teichman, our faculty advisor; Ms. Linda Scorza, who typed the manuscript; and all the students who submitted their work and supported our efforts.

Signed,

Jeff Burdick
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Patricia Jameson

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ESSAYS:

Pattie Jameson
James Michael Naccarato

This issue of Mosaic is dedicated with love to all those who have ever struggled with the creative process. May your future struggles be fruitful ones!



The sand runs through my hands.
A child's game, you say.

Perhaps.

But it serves to remind me
of other lovers, other times,
other places...now gone.

Today too will soon be gone
like that sand.

But there will be other days -
other sands,

And we must remember
and not give ourselves over to sadness.

Pattie Jameson

So you say you're
Dynamite.

I nod.

Green-eyed fuse

Touches off:

Leaving a million bits
Shattered.

Pattie Jameson

she Paints

Art is her life she says
god that's the truth
she'd cut her wrists
if she ran out of
Rose Madder
and keep right on Painting
drying in her Studio
she squeezes herself
back into the tube
whenever there's any love
left over

Paulette Guay

POLLUTION

Another hype from Bio-degradeable soap -
to the garbage the tourists leave.

Getting away from it all, means:
going some other place to make your mess.

Stuart Gross

THE SECOND SON

by Carmine Pirone

I had a brother who was far away at war. I remember very little about him, only that he was a boy who was always energetic and who always wore a smile which accentuated his rosy cheeks all the more. When he was eighteen and I was half his age, the terrible news came: the ship was bombed. The most depressed face seemed merry compared to that of my mother. She set off to get between death and her boy. We trooped with her down the hill and then across town, four blocks to the station where casualty statistics came in daily. There she stood, oblivious to us, with a resentful fighting face when my father came out of the telegraph office, a tear rolling down his cheek, and said "He's gone!" She had anticipated it before he said it. We turned away quietly and went home, crossing the four blocks and then walking up the small hill.

That is how my mother got her soft angelic face and her pathetic ways and the large charity and love which overflowed from deep within her heart. It was why other mothers ran to her when they had lost a child. She became very delicate from that hour on, and for many months she was very ill.

It was shortly after that climactic day that my sister came to me and told me to go to my mother and remind her that she still had another boy. Being only nine, and thinking like a nine-year old, I excitedly went to her room. When I heard the door shut and no sound coming from the bed I became frightened, and all I could do was just stand still. I suppose I was breathing hard and perhaps even crying; for after a time, a time which seemed endless, I heard a voice that sounded drained of all the energies of life, a voice that had never sounded so listless before, say, "Is that you?" I thought it was the dead boy she was speaking of, and I said in a lonely, neglected voice, "No it's not him, it's me." Then I heard my mother crying, and she turned in bed; and though the room was dark I knew she held out her arms and clasped them in a prayerful mood.

After that I sat a great deal on her bed trying to make her forget him. If I remembered or saw anyone

do something that made people laugh, I immediately came in and went right to my mother's dark room and did it for her. I suppose I seemed very odd and different to others. I had been told that my perseverance to make each day a little brighter for her gave my face a very strained, tense look. I realize now I grew up before my time from this. I would do anything and everything to make my mother smile and laugh again. I would do tumble saults and ask my mother if she was laughing. Perhaps what made her laugh was something I was unconscious of, but she did laugh suddenly now and then. When she did, I screamed and ran for my sister to come and see what was for me the happiest sight. By the time my sister came, my mother's soft face was wet again. I was deprived of the full glory of my accomplishment. I can only remember once making her laugh in front of witnesses.

At this time in my life, the one thing I wanted to accomplish was to make my mother the woman she once was. I kept a chart of her laughs on a piece of oak-tag paper, marking a stroke for each time she laughed. There were six strokes the first time I showed the doctor the paper. When I explained their meaning, he began laughing. I cried within myself wishing that it was one of her laughs. The doctor knew how I felt, and said that if I showed the paper to mother now and told her that these were her laughs, he thought I might win another. I did what he told me, and sure enough she laughed; and when I stroked the paper, she laughed again. So actually, although it was only one laugh with a tear in the middle, I counted it as two.

My sister told me not to sulk or get depressed when my mother lay thinking of him, but to try to get her to talk about him. Inside me I could not see how this would bring back the vivacious mother I once had. But I was told that if I couldn't do it, no one could; and this gave me the stamina to remedy her illness.

At first, jealousy overcame me often. I would stop her fond memories by asking her if she remembered anything about me, but that didn't last. Soon I desired intensely to become so much like him that even my mother should not see the difference.

I hid myself for a whole week while I was in the process of practicing the characteristics he once attained, but after a whole week I was still rather myself, a reflection of my own experiences. My

brother had such a cheery way of whistling, Mom said. He would stand with his legs spread apart and his hands in the pockets of his worn-out blue jeans. I decided to go after this trait which he possessed; so one day after I had learned his whistle from boys who had been his friends, I secretly dressed in his clothes, which fit me only years later, and went into my mother's room. Nervously, yet pleased with myself, I stood still until she saw me. "Listen" I said with a glow of accomplishment, and I stretched my legs apart and sunk my hands into the pockets of his worn-out blue jeans, and began to whistle. She smiled.

ANOTHER FAILURE

the womb
that is my heart
miscarried
my tiny, fragile love for him
and now it lies
unbaptized
with all the others
in the graveyard
of my soul.

Jamie

What's that wet, warm
Liquid
Running down my face?
A teardrop,
Reflecting a depth
I thought I'd forgotten.
I thought I'd managed to
Hide that pool,
And I'd never give myself away
Again:
Until you came - and
Shattered the glassine
Cover
And made
My tears
Run
Once
Again.

Pattie Jameson

A little critter in the grass
Smiled at me as I went past
I looked again--to my surprise
Something familiar about his eyes.
Then suddenly I realized
That he had been a friend of mine.
When I had known him long before
He stood beside the cottage door
Six feet-three and tall and thin
He used to let the critters in.
He'd give them bits of food to eat
And on his doorstep they would meet
Grandfather used to feed them crumbs
And now to me the job has come
It's funny when I look and see
My Grandpa still crouched next to me!

jef

THE WAKE

by Johanna O'Connell

Pat Flannagan stepped out of the taxi on 25th Street, paid his fare, and watched the cab disappear in the foggy night. He pulled his collar around his neck to protect himself from the drizzle and ran under the canopy of the front entrance of the funeral home. He looked at the entrance disdainfully. He really didn't mind going in, it was more the place of business that intrigued him. "Savastano and Sons," he read out loud. Surely this was no place for a proper Irish funeral.

If one looked at him closely, Flannagan was a man of seventy-four who could have passed for ten years less. His eyes and ruddy complexion easily told the story of his life as a farmer until he came to the states. Now, here he was, forty years later, calling on a deceased cousin--Old McCarthy by name. Pat didn't know him that well, but at times like this, "civilty doesn't cost," as his mother would say.

While he quietly rehearsed his lines of sympathy for the widow, another cab pulled up directly in front of the home. A short, bandy-legged man of Pat's age or thereabouts, stepped under the canopy. Although some years had passed, Flannagan remembered the little man.

"Seamus Lynch," he called heartily. The man named Lynch squinted at Pat and remembered. They had come over on the boat together and lived as neighbors for some years.

"It's been long," Seamus said. "But I didn't think you knew Old McCarthy."

"Oh sure," Pat answered. "He was a cousin on me mother's side. What was he to you?"

"My father's cousin's brother-in-law."

Both men walked slowly toward the entrance. They passed conversation about the five odd years they hadn't seen one another. It turned out that Lynch and the missus lived with a daughter. Pat had stayed in the old neighborhood with his wife and the last son

of ten children who wasn't yet married.

"Did Old McCarthy have a first name?" Pat asked.

"Well, before he was Old McCarthy, they called him Young McCarthy because his father was then Old McCarthy."

"Granted," Pat retorted. "But I doubt they'll put 'The Infant McCarthy' on his tombstone."

"Tis true, tis true," Seamus said thoughtfully. Pat held the door for his friend who was reading the name of the funeral home out loud as Pat had done a few minutes before.

"Savastano and Sons," he said. "I don't know, Pat, the Iye-talians has the country overrun."

Both men stepped into a blazing front hall. Their feet sank into the plush red rug and they were almost blinded by the light from the chandelier.

"Very, very elegant," Pat whispered.

"Very Iye-talian," Seamus said out loud. Above the first door on their right, a sign read "McCarthy." Both men were very dismayed. They were hoping to solve the mystery of the missing first name.

The room beyond was the place of mourning. Not many people were there. Lynch and Flannagan took their places in line to view the remains of Old McCarthy.

"This is the part that bothers me," Seamus whispered. "I feel like I'm waiting in line at the World's Fair."

Pat smiled. Finally their turn came. Both knelt down to say their "Hail Mary" and "Glory Be." Seamus tilted slightly toward Pat and whispered indiscreetly: "Me foot is asleep."

Pat nudged him with his elbow but smiled inwardly to himself. Pat and Seamus rose simultaneously as they did years ago in Communion processions. Pat lingered on a moment longer, studying the corpse. Well, you still have that ugly look plastered on your gob, he said to himself. Seamus was already presenting himself to the widow.

"Ah, missus," he said in a somber voice. "Your husband was a grand man. Just grand he was. Him and myself graduated from the Christian Brothers together. God rest him."

The widow nodded a tearful thank you. Pat spoke his usual short speech that he gave at wakes: "Deepest sympathy," he said and went to seat himself with Seamus. "That was some speech you gave her," he remarked to Lynch. "It was nice, but we both know McCarthy doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell."

"True, true," Seamus sighed.

"Besides, I thought the Christian Brothers threw you two out."

"That's what happened. When I failed all my subjects, the Brothers sent the report to my father. Do you know what he wrote back? He wrote: 'I am very pleased with the progress my boy is making at your school.'"

The two laughed. Then both of them realized that they hadn't yet asked or even found out McCarthy's first name. Pat tapped the fellow sitting next to him who turned out to be McCarthy's nephew.

"Well," the nephew explained, "he was Young McCarthy and his father was Old McCarthy, and the father died; then he was Old McCarthy."

"Oh, I see," Pat remarked and slumped into his usual silence.

Meanwhile, Seamus looked around in discomfort. The interior was much too lavish for his taste. "Remember," he said to Pat, "how much fun the house wakes were."

Pat nodded. "And when they went out of style, we had them at Dolons."

"At least you felt that you were among friends," Lynch added.

Gradually, the room filled up. Seamus and Pat knew none of the people arriving. "Think we should stay for the rosary?" Seamus asked. Seamus never stayed for rosaries anywhere; there was no reason to make this an exception.

"I don't think so," Pat retorted. "I think the rosary went out with Barry Fitzgerald. What do you say we hit Noonan's across town for a few drinks?"

Seamus was convinced. As the two friends stepped out into the night air, they sang quietly.

"Twas down the glenn, one Easter morn, to a city fair rode I..."

"That's a good old song," Pat said.

"Tis," Seamus said. "They don't write old songs any more, just new ones. Did you ever find out about McCarthy?"

"Well," Pat began, "he was Young McCarthy until his father died..."

And the two friends hailed a cab to take them to Noonan's.

ROMANCE DEL EMPLAZADO

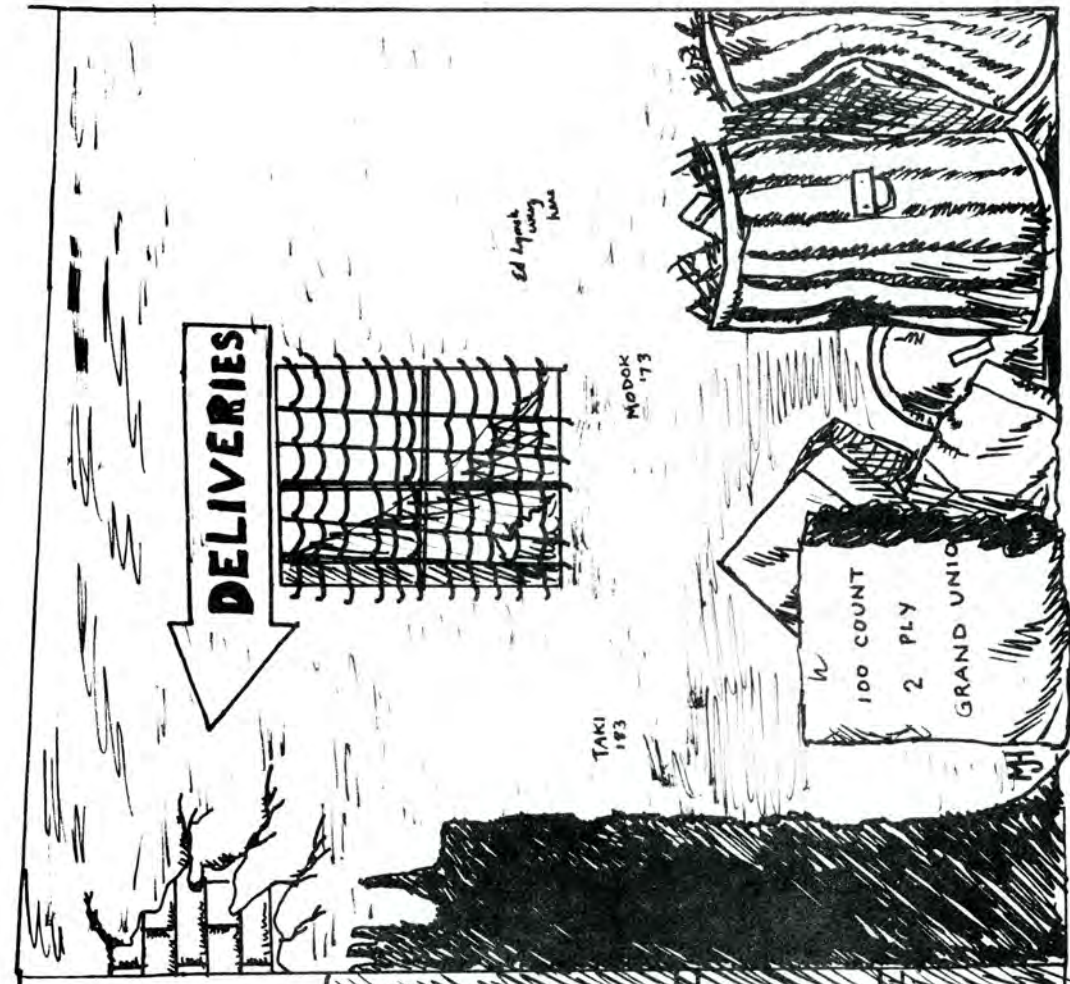
¡Mi soledad sin descanso!
Ojos chicos de mi cuerpo
y grandes de mi caballo,
no cierran por la noche
ni miran al otro lado
donde se aleje tranquilo
un sueño de trece barcos.
Sino que, limpios y duros
escuderos desvelados,
mis ojos miran un norte
de metales y peñascos
donde mi cuerpo sin venas
consulta naipes helados

Los densos bueyes del agua
embisten a los muchachos
que se bañan en las lunas
de sus cuernos ondulados.
Y los martillos cantaban
sobre los yunques sonámbulos,
el insomnio del jinete
y el insomnio del caballo.

El veinticinco de junio
le dijeron al Amargo:
-Ya puedes cortar si gustas
las adelfas de tu patio.
Pinta una cruz en la puerta
y pon tu nombre debajo,
porque cicutas y ortijas
nacerán en tu costado,
agujas de cal monjada
te morderán los zapatos.
Sera de noche, en lo oscuro,
por los montes imantados
donde los bueyes del agua
beben los juncos soñando.
Pide luces y campanas.
Aprende a cruzar los manos
y gusta los aires frios
de metales y peñascos.
Porque dentro de dos meses
yaceras amortajado.

Espadón de nebulosa
mueve en el aire Santiago.
Grave silencio, de espalda,
manaba el cielo dombado.
El veinticinco de junio
abrió sus ojos Amargo,
y el veinticinco de agosto
se tendió para los cielos.
Hombres bajaban la calle
para ver al emplazado,
que fijaba sobre el muro
su soledad con descanso.
Y la sábana impecable,
de duro acento romano,
daba equilibrio a la muerte
con las rectas de sus paños.

Federico García Lorca



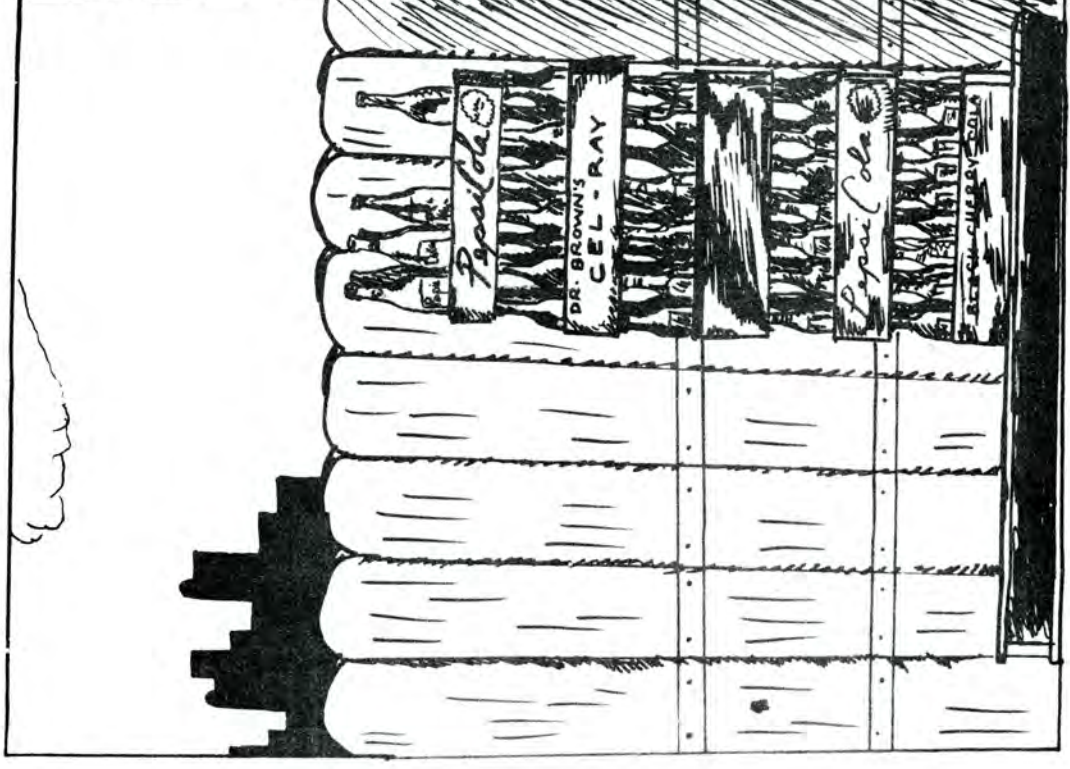
DELIVERIES

Ed Lynch
Caring
Nurse

MOBOK
'73

TAKI
183

100 COUNT
2 PLY
GRAND UNIO



Pavida

DR. BROWN'S
CEL-RAY

Lepa Cola

SUN-CHERRY SODA

BALLAD OF ONE DOOMED TO DIE

Loneliness without rest!
The little eyes of my body
and the big eyes of my horse
never close at night
nor look the other way
where quietly, a dream
of thirteen boats disappears.
Instead, clean and hard,
squires of wakefulness,
my eyes look for a north
of metals and of cliffs
where my veinless body
consults frozen playing cards.

Heavy water-oxen, charge
boys who bathe in the moons
of their rippling horns.
And the hammers sing
on the somnambulous anvils
the insomnia of the rider
and the insomnia of the horse.

On the twenty-fifth of June
they said to Amargo:
-Now, you may cut, if you wish,
the oleanders in your courtyard.
Paint a cross on your door
and put your name beneath it,
for hemlock and nettle
shall take root in your side
and the needles of wet lime
will bite into your shoes.
It will be night, in the dark,
in the magnetic mountains
where water-oxen drink
in the reeds, dreaming.
Ask for lights and bells.
Learn to cross your hands,
to taste the cold air
of metals and of cliffs
because within two months
you'll lie down shrouded.

Santiago moved his misty
sword in the air,
Dead silence flows over
the shoulder of the curved sky.
On the twenty-fifth of June
Amargo opened his eyes,
and on the twenty-fifth of August
he lay down to close them.
Men came down the street
to look upon the doomed one
who cast his shadow of loneliness
against the wall.
And the impeccable sheet
with its hard Roman accent
gave death a certain poise
by the rectitude of its folds.

Tana Webster

THE GREAT BOTTLE ROBBERY

by Jeff Burdick

This morning was typical of most of my mornings--dragging myself out of bed, going through the motions of washing and dressing, sleeping through breakfast. I went through the usual routine before leaving: feeding the cat, washing a few dishes, packing a small lunch. Once everything was in order, I found the back door, managed to get on the outside of the house, and headed for the garage.

Suddenly, I noticed something about the air I was breathing. It was like drinking an ice cold glass of water; I could feel it go down. It was crisp, cool, and refreshing; and it filled my lungs, my head, and my entire body with an overwhelming sensation of being alive. I looked at my shoes wet with morning dew. I noticed some of the leaves in the trees had turned to orange and gold. The sky was clear, like still rain water in an old barrel, and the sun shone brightly but softly, trying to penetrate the coldness that night had left behind. All of these things gave me a strange feeling that I could not place. As I walked to the garage, I kicked an empty soda bottle from my path. An empty soda bottle? All at once the new morning was an old friend. I was ten years old and my best friend was standing in front of me.

"Did you get in trouble?"

"Will you shut up, Mark!" I whispered, like a thief in the night. "My parents could be listening at the windows."

As we walked away from my house through the tall grass, I felt the morning dew beginning to seep through my shoes; and I knew that it would eventually saturate my socks, leaving me with wet, clammy feet until mid-afternoon. Soon, I could feel the sun gently warming my back through my worn-out corduroy coat and Mark reopened his line of questioning. "So, what happened?"

"Nothing. She never even called."

"Same here. Think she called the police?" Mark

constantly worried about being handcuffed and thrown in jail.

"For painting a stupid speed limit sign? I don't think so."

"She said it was against the law."

"I think we were in the woods before she had a chance to see our faces," I said, hoping I was right.

"Yeh." Mark seemed somewhat relieved and began patting us on the back. "That was pretty good. I bet no other kids would dare do that in broad daylight. And with real paint, too!"

"I could have done better," I said, knowing that Mark would begin praising me.

"Are you kidding?" he said. "It looks like a real eight, now. Instead of cars goin' thirty on Croft Road, they'll be goin' eighty. All 'cause of you!" We were always proud whenever we pulled off one of our daring escapades and got away with it. The spirit of Halloween entered us weeks before the day itself.

Mark never walked; he bounced, letting his untamed, straw-colored hair jump about on top of his head. The hand-me-down clothes he always wore hung loosely on his skinny frame, giving him the appearance of a small scarecrow. He was a loud-mouth who was not afraid to say anything to anybody as long as he was at a safe distance and had somewhere to run. Even though I was a year older than him, I always looked up to Mark. I often wished I could be as completely boisterous and obnoxious as he was; but I never spoke out, except to Mark, for fear that the words might come out wrong. I could not bear making a fool out of myself. Mark would be the one to stand out in the middle of the street and shout, "Shove it, lady!" I would be busy running from the scene of the crime and having fits of hysterical laughter.

After walking through golden fields and fallen leaves for awhile, we found ourselves in the vicinity of the Grand Union Supermarket. We always hit Grand Union first thing in the morning on Saturdays. As we entered through the automatic door, leaving the autumn air behind, I felt my body tense up. My eyes darted to every corner of the store in search of

neighbors and relatives who kept my parents posted with information concerning my whereabouts and what I was up to. Grand Union was off limits by orders of my mother.

First, a general tour of the store was in order to check the whereabouts of most of the personnel, after which we headed for the cashier where they kept the cigarettes.

"Aren't these the kind your mother wants?" Mark began, selecting a pack of Parliaments. He had a tendency to speak his part louder than necessary.

"I think she said Winston," I replied, illustrating my point by picking up and displaying a pack of Winston cigarettes.

"No, she said Parliament."

"Why don't we take both of these over to her," I suggested, "and ask her which one it is?"

"I'm sure it's Parliament, but if you insist."

We casually found an empty aisle where we put the cigarettes in our pockets. Before leaving the store, we also collected a few pounds of chewing gum and chocolate which we stuffed into the linings of our bulky coats like squirrels filling the pouches in their cheeks with food.

Once out of the store and around the corner, we made a mad dash for a grove of trees that were just beginning to lose their summer colors. Though the day had grown warm, the moist coolness of morning still lingered on in the shade. As soon as we were sure of our safety, we looked at each other and let the laughter pour out into the air and the booty pour out onto the ground.

Cigarette smoking was enjoyable mainly because it was forbidden; but it also made us feel equal to our elders both in power and wickedness. We both sat on blankets of fallen leaves pretending to inhale large quantities of smoke.

"You're not inhaling!" Mark charged.

"I am too!" I said, acting rather insulted at such an accusation.

"Let's see you inhale."

"Why don't you?" I answered, fully aware of Mark's usual reaction when challenged.

"Okay." Putting the cigarette up to his lips, he drew in enough smoke for ten lungs and held it in his mouth looking similar to a bullfrog about to croak. Just as he was turning blue, he exhaled, filling the grove with a cloud of smoke, and with a triumphant look, said, "Now, how about you?" But my attention was elsewhere.

"Look at all those bottles!"

"What!" Mark looked at me as if I had gone mad.

"There must be hundreds of 'em."

"Jeff, what the hell are you talking about?"

"Over there," I pointed. "In back of Grand Union."

"Big deal. Grand Union has a lot of bottles." Mark leaned back on his elbows, angry because I had missed his fantastic smoking demonstration.

Mark sprang up. A shaft of autumn sunlight, that found its way through the trees to Mark's face, gave his wicked smile an even more devilish glow. Thoughtfully and slowly, the words oozed out of his mouth as if he was savoring each one. "Two cents apiece. Let's do it."

After loading our mouths with ten sticks of gum to cover up any cigarette breath that mothers could detect within one hundred yards, we left the cool shade and headed for the bottles that were about to make us rich. We acquired two cases and walked across the highway to Food Fair which was a convenient short distance away from Grand Union.

Inside, we unloaded our cargo on the counter and smiled with our baseball size wads of gum stretching our cheeks out to abnormal proportions. The man said, "Forty-eight bottles. That's ninety-six cents." Mark pocketed the change and we left for a second trip during which I relieved my jaw and probably saved myself from choking to death, by discarding my rubbery wad. Gum chewing was quite necessary

though; having a dislocated jaw was better than being sent away to reform school for first degree tobacco breath, anyday.

When we got back to Food Fair, the man looked at the bottles, studied our smiling faces, and looked back at the bottles.

"We're cleaning out our basement," Mark explained. I turned my head to hide any laughter that might escape from inside.

"Why doesn't your mother or somebody bring all the bottles at once in a car?" the man suggested.

"She's got a headache and wants us out of her hair. You know how it is. She works hard and we like to help her out once in awhile."

Mark kept such a straight face as he lied that I had to excuse myself and wait outside so that I would not give us away when my laughter overflowed. Soon, Mark appeared, jingling the change in his pocket.

On the way back to Grand Union, we took some time out for laughter and self-congratulation. The afternoon was gradually becoming too warm for wearing coats; that was typical for fall: cool mornings and warm afternoons.

Mark reached for another case of empties.

"What are you boys doing?" The deep, authoritative voice left us frozen like manikins in a showcase. "Have you been taking these bottles?"

"Yes, sir. Why?" asked Mark.

"That's stealing, you know."

"Stealing?" Mark sounded shocked. "We thought these bottles were here for anybody who needed them."

"You need them?" He gave Mark a quizzical look. Even I wondered what Mark was up to. The man, whose nametag read 'Mr. Alfred Breen,' continued his questioning. "What could you possibly need bottles for?"

"To decorate our basement," Mark said, naturally

enough. I was too scared to even think of laughing.

"To decorate your basement," Breen repeated in amazement.

"Yeh. Haven't you ever seen soda bottles with crayons melted over them? They're very colorful." Once Mark got started he was hard to stop. "Well, we were thinking of lining the walls of our basement with these bottles. It's gonna look really good when it's done. A friend of mine once--"

"Okay," said Breen, "Why don't you boys just come inside with me and we'll have a talk with Mr. Wilcox, the general manager."

For the first time since we met, Mark was speechless. His lies had failed. I was convinced that we had had it. It was all over for us.

As we followed Mr. Breen into the store, I felt my world crumbling down. I would be sent away for sure now and would have to spend years in a pitch black cell somewhere. Visions of my parents, who loved and trusted me and gave me anything I wanted, filled my head--my mother crying, my father yelling. If I ever came back from reform school, nobody would want me. Who cares about a criminal? I had ruined my entire life before it had even started, and for no good reason! "Oh God!" I thought. "If I ever get out of this one I would never steal anything again. I wouldn't smoke or swear or anything."

"In here." Breen directed us into Mr. Wilcox's office where we expected to be chained against the wall and interrogated. After a short conference with our captor, Wilcox addressed us in a tone that was pure gas chamber. "Boys, what you have done is wrong. You have committed a crime."

I was thinking, "Here it comes. Jail for sure!" when the tone of Mr. Wilcox's voice suddenly changed. "Now, you boys must learn to respect other peoples' property. I'm sure you wouldn't like it if somebody took something of yours. If you had asked, we would have probably gladly given you some bottles for your basement. In fact, you can keep the ones you have already taken. But if I ever catch you stealing again, I will have to call the police and there will be no questions asked. Understand?"

We nodded. My body became so relaxed I felt faint. Mark's relief was obvious. "Well we didn't think it was stealing, sir," he said. "We wouldn't ever steal on purpose. We know better than that."

"Yes, I'm sure you do," Wilcox smiled. "Now what are your names?"

"Charlie Bronson," Mark answered, with a face as honest as Abraham Lincoln.

"Bill Creed," I said, following Mark's lead.

We spent the afternoon, intoxicated with relief, lying on our backs in a field, watching the clear autumn sky. Feeling the soft sun on my face, I smiled and enjoyed the freedom I had almost lost, until Mark sat up and said, "If we go into Stop 'n Shop and buy a pie for twenty cents, they'll give us a receipt. Right?"

I just stared at him.

"Now, if we take the pie outside and eat it, we'll be able to go back and get another pie for free because the receipt will prove that we paid for that one, too. It's gotta work and there's no way we can get caught! Let's go."

As the sky began to blush, I followed Mark to Stop 'n Shop. After all, the plan was foolproof.

This morning as I got into my car, my boyhood filled my head with the most glorious feeling. The sun was warm on my face as I turned the key and let the engine roar as I pushed the accelerator to the floor several times. I had a feeling of wildness; it was a fresh feeling.

Suddenly, a window flew open in the house next door. "Just because you have to go to work so early in the morning doesn't mean you have to wake up the rest of the neighborhood!"

"Shove it, lady!" I shouted at the top of my lungs as I sped out of my driveway, leaving my neighbor hanging out of her window with a very stunned look on her face.

YOUR EXPRESSION

Smile.

Make me happy.
Come, sing a joyful song,
Dance to the pipers tune.

Laugh.

Tiny crystals of ice shatter,
fall musically in snow covered tombs.
Their sounds die before they are quite heard,
Playing a thousand melodious notes in one resounding
chorus.

Cry.

Sharp needle pains, silver pearls roll upon your
cheek,
Cleansing skin and soul both at once,
Leaving salt on the wounds, never to be rubbed in.

Shout.

Tones of gladness,
Surprise visits of those you love and love you.
Tones of sadness, over one too young to die, who did.

Regret.

Days long past.
Unchanging days you want to change,
Bring new before the old, erasing memories of yester-
year.

Innocense.

Beauty of you, being yourself.
Keeping good qualities. Qualities of younger days.
Children days.
Real beauty, real expressions. You being you.

Vince Carfora

THE HAMILTONS

by Philip Petrosky

The house around the corner is one of the most beautiful homes in town. The Hamiltons had fixed it up years ago when they moved into the house. It is the type of house one finds in Better Homes and Gardens or in American Homes. The large slanting roof with its dormers gives the house a warm appearance. The beige clapboard and white shutters blend into the surrounding green shrubbery. There is still a mark underneath the number on the large white door where the name Hamilton used to appear.

The Hamiltons were an average, middle class, suburban family. Mr. Hamilton was a stern looking man with greying hair. He was always dressed conservatively for work as well as for leisure. Mrs. Hamilton was a good looking woman with dark hair and shiny blue eyes. She was a busy woman involved with shopping and with many community activities. She was out most of the day except for the times that Karen was home. Their only child, Karen, was a bright and pretty young girl. While she was the same age as I was and would have been in the same class, Mrs. Hamilton insisted that she attend the private school in town instead of the public grammar school.

Every morning Mrs. Hamilton would drive me, Karen, and Mr. Hamilton to our destinations. First she would drive Mr. Hamilton to the train station; next she would let me off at my school, which was five minutes from Karen's school. Mrs. Hamilton felt that it was no problem driving me to school because she had to drive past it on her way to Karen's school.

By seven o'clock in the morning I could hear Mrs. Hamilton pulling up the driveway in the Country Squire station wagon. She would blow the horn lightly to remind me that she was waiting. I would quickly grab my lunch and dash out to the car. I always sat in the corner of the back seat, behind Mr. Hamilton, while Karen would sit behind her mother, who was driving the car. I was greeted with a quiet "good morning" from everyone in the car. Mrs. Hamilton would add, "Do you have everything? Alright let's go." During the ride to the train station there were

short segments of discussion, which seldomly included me. Inevitably Mrs. Hamilton would say to Karen, "Karen, do you have everything: lunch, books, sweater, homework?" Karen would interrupt saying, "Yes mother" in a sophisticated and almost condescending tone of voice. While these short exchanges occurred, Mr. Hamilton was usually occupied in his daily newspaper or watching the passing scenery. Occasionally he would interject a few words into the discussion without turning his head.

One cold day in the beginning of November I got into the car and found myself in the middle of a disagreement. Mrs. Hamilton interrupted the conversation to quickly greet me. In the same breath she continued, "What do you mean by that?" in a rather strong voice. I quietly retreated to my secure corner in the car. Mr. Hamilton in his deep voice said, "You're spoiling the damn child; she doesn't have to get everything she wants." Karen responded "But Daddy, it's important. I've got to have it." Mrs. Hamilton sharply interrupted saying, "Brian, this is important. You are never able to see what's important. You don't even think about it. All you care about is the money." Mr. Hamilton answered in an annoyed tone of voice saying, "Oh, that expensive bicycle that she had to have was important also? Well, I haven't seen it out of the garage for weeks. Come on, who are you kidding?" Mrs. Hamilton became visibly upset and quickly turned her eyes to the road. When we arrived at the train station, Mr. Hamilton left the car without saying goodbye. Mrs. Hamilton made no effort to say anything to him either. Her facial expression had changed to one of frustration and almost anger. Karen remained quiet throughout this entire discussion. After Mr. Hamilton had left, nothing else was said.

The next morning there was an air of hostility in the car. Mr. Hamilton was staring out of his window silently while Mrs. Hamilton drove in silence as well. Karen asked, "Daddy, can we get it tonight?" He sharply answered, "No Karen, not tonight!" She answered in a whining voice, "Why not Daddy?" Mr. Hamilton, trying to restrain his annoyance and anger, said, "Because we are not going to and that's final." Karen slammed her hand down on the car seat and looked out the window. Mrs. Hamilton did not join in this time. After Mr. Hamilton had left the car, Mrs. Hamilton mumbled, "That man...sometimes...." Karen interrupted her

saying, "Mommy, I forgot my Geography notebook. We'll have to turn back for it." Mrs. Hamilton asked, "Is it really that important that we must go back home for it?" Karen nodded and Mrs. Hamilton reluctantly said, "Well if you think it's that important, then we'll go back." Mrs. Hamilton turned the car around at the first opportunity and went back to their house for the book.

The rides to school in the morning became quieter, and I began to feel more uncomfortable each day. One Thursday, however, I could hear Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton arguing as I ran up to the car. As I opened the door, Mr. Hamilton was saying, "When are you going to stop this? She's not an infant any longer; can't you see this yourself. We have our lives and she has her own. How much longer are you going to let her control our lives and you dominate hers?" Mrs. Hamilton retorted, in a condescending tone of voice, "When are you going to accept your responsibilities as a father?" Karen seemed to ignore the whole conversation and occupied herself in some of her books. I sat in my usual corner trying to ignore what was being said. The disagreement quickly ended once I was in the car and not a single word was said afterwards. I was able to see the anger in the faces of both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton.

The following morning I asked my mother if she would take me to school herself. I told her about the uncomfortable situation of the previous morning. She insisted that it was nonsense and that I shouldn't let it bother me. When the Hamiltons arrived I was sent out of the house to go with them to school. I sat in a car that was utterly silent. Neither Mr. or Mrs. Hamilton looked at one another. Both their faces carried expressions of anger. As Mr. Hamilton left the car he sharply said, "I won't be home till Wednesday." Mrs. Hamilton mumbled, "Good, go, why should I care?..." Karen asked, "When will we go shopping?" And she continued in her whining voice, "But Daddy said he would take me tonight or tomorrow." Mrs. Hamilton quickly responded, "Stop the whining. I'll take you tomorrow."

The ride to school on the following Monday and Tuesday were more pleasant than they had been in a long time, but they were far from enjoyable. Mrs. Hamilton said very little. She seemed to be preoccupied with something. Karen sat where her father usually did. She was more talkative than usual.

However, on that Wednesday the cold silence returned with the presence of Mr. Hamilton. I began to grow accustomed to it and occupied myself with school work during the ride.

I was eating my breakfast on a cold February morning when my mother walked into the kitchen saying, "Today I'll take you to school. Mrs. Hamilton and Karen aren't feeling well and Mrs. Hamilton said that she will not be taking Karen to school today. So get ready quickly and we'll leave." I quickly rushed my breakfast so as not to keep my mother waiting. On the way to school she said, "I'll pick you up this afternoon. And by the way, stay away from the Hamiltons and don't disturb them."

That afternoon I was having my cookies and milk before going out to play. I could overhear my mother talking with one of the neighbors on the phone. As I listened I heard her saying, "Oh my God! What a shame. I knew that there were problems but I didn't think this would happen. No, that's not what I heard from Julie. Julie saw it happen from her kitchen window. Liz and Brian Hamilton have been arguing for the longest time over Karen. My Richard rides with them to school everyday and he tells me about some of their disagreements. Anyway, Julie was telling me that she saw Brian running out of the house while Liz was following and yelling at him. He didn't turn around when she yelled at him. She saw him quickly leave in the car. She was surprised that the screeching of the wheels didn't wake up any of the children. This morning the police found the car smashed into the cement wall on that sharp curve near Bryant's Highway. What a shame. Oh, I'm not sure what they are going to do with the house. They could get a nice price for it. As far as I know Liz and Karen have moved over to her mother's house or one of her brother's. Isn't that awful? Such a shame. Well, I've got to go now. Goodbye."

When my mother walked into the kitchen I asked, "What happened to the Hamiltons?" She was surprised that I had heard her conversation. She quickly replied, "Oh, I think they're moving or something. Now go out and play. Make sure you are back here in time for dinner. Alright, go ahead."

AN OPOSSUM'S TALE

by Mary Beth Pfeiffer

It was a bright, shiverous winter day one January long ago, and the sun reflected so brilliantly off the glistening white snow that Herman had to turn away from it for just a moment. He would stick his head in and out of his little hole in the ground trying to adjust his lazy eyes to the change. They squinted involuntarily, and he used his long, tiny claws to fluff up the fur around them as he shielded the sun.

Herman spent the greater part of his winters beneath the ground. He didn't like the biting wind that crept underneath his fur, nor did he care to get his four dainty legs wet trudging about in snow that was deeper than he. His long, hairy tail also swept along the snow so conspicuously so as to advertise to any predators that a rotund, old opossum had just passed through. At this stage of his life, Herman wasn't much of a challenge to any would-be 'possum hunter; so he knew how to play it safe. From the way that tail dragged in the snow they could probably even tell that by now the old opossum's whiskers were long and gray and his voice had grown deep and raspy.

Herman had quite a large progeny so he never worried much about food or digging himself out of the next blizzard. His daily ritual of popping his head out into the sunlight was for the purpose of clearing his lungs with the frigid winter air.

"Works wonders, hub, hub," he'd mutter, coughing in his old familiar way and then retreating to his cozy burrow.

At least once a day one of his brood would stop by to visit Grampa, usually bringing him some nuts and berries from the family storehouse. Herman, too, had prepared himself a storehouse of nuts and berries, but as the years went on his capacity to collect them had slowly been diminishing and so had his store. It was for the young to care for the old. He had well been taught this and he had taught this very well.

Today Mirabella decided to visit her grandfather, and she filled a basket with the juiciest edibles she could find. Mirabella was the oldest of all the

grandchildren, and what she lacked in the fine, rich, brown color or the graceful saunter of her ancestors, she made up in the sweetness of her voice and the touch of her warm paw. Her fur was a mousy brown color, and she had whiskers where she should have had none. Her claws were short and ragged as was her coarse, lifeless tail; but nonetheless Herman took pride in this, the continuation of his bloodline.

Mirabella was especially excited today for she had good news for Gramps. She held her front paws close to her chest pondering exactly how to tell him, and she squeaked with delighted laughter as she thought. Grampa was the head of the clan and he must hear the news first, she thought. She knew she was doing something to please him and that pleased her.

As soon as she filled the basket to overflowing, she tied a garland of pine needles around the top as a special touch. Out in the wintry sun, she held the basket close against her round belly and headed on two paws to Gramp's place.

Two of her brothers were busy pawing the snow away from their grandfather's path so he might be able to come out and exercise his legs a bit. Fester and Thompson hurled balls of snow at one another and met Mirabella with one right smack on the snoot. She snorted, looked at them crossly and continued up the path.

Herman was curled up in the furthest corner of the burrow when Mirabella squeezed through the tiny opening.

"Hello, Gramps," she said, greeting him out of his peaceful slumber.

"Oh, hub, hub, hub," he coughed, "hello, Mira my belle. What have you for me today?"

She proudly held the decorated basket out before her. "Why, thank you, child. Quite nice, hub, hub. Quite nice."

Herman quietly set about digging into the treasure as Mirabella stood by nervously. She knew what she was going to say first. She'd said it to herself all the way over there. But somehow, the words didn't come as easily now.

"Gr-Gramps," she finally said. "You know that I'm getting...uh...uh...getting of mating age." She blurted out the last few words faster than the first few.

"So you are," said Herman in his raspy voice. Something told him to put the basket down and listen closely to his granddaughter's words.

"Well, I've...I've found me a mate!" She squeaked and clapped her front paws together once.

"Calm down, child, calm down." He scratched his whiskers. "And tell me of him," he said definitively.

"His name is Abraham and you'll meet him Saturday evening at the feast. No one knows but you, Gramps, and no one will know till then. Will you announce it for us?"

"Well, uh, yes, I think I could," said Herman glad to be of service and never being able to refuse a request of his belle.

Mirabella kissed him on the cheek quickly and scurried out the opening. She popped her head back in, said, "Oh, thank you, Gramps," and followed the path home.

Herman sat pensively thinking about his first granddaughter mating and having a litter. "How absurd," he chuckled. "Was I ever that young?" he muttered and thought no more of it.

On Saturday, the clan gathered within the huge hollow oak to share a rare winter feast. Fallen leaves were scattered about to make a warm cushion of the cold earthen floor. When Grandfather Herman entered, the grandchildren warmed about him anxiously.

"Calm down, children, hub, hub, calm down," he said patting a few on the hind.

When Mirabella entered, Herman suddenly recalled the request made of him for this meal. She ran up to him and said, "Is it alright to bring him in now, Gramps?"

"Yes, Mira. Now will do fine," he said, but she only heard the word 'yes' and was gone.

Mirabella returned a few short minutes later and Herman eyed the doorway cautiously to see what this Abraham fellow would look like. He had no doubts that his granddaughter had made a wise choice.

What emerged from the round oak doorway caused Herman to gasp in horror and a hush to fall over the feast. For there behind the small sweet Mirabella stood a gaudy, striped racoon with short fur and a scroungy tail!

The children ran innocently over to Mirabella to inspect her beau while Herman and the other adults pondered to themselves what to do. The children took immediately to the stranger, climbing all over him and pulling his black and white tail. Abraham laughed and said that his brothers and sisters always did the same thing.

Mirabella left Abraham to the children and crossed the floor to her grandfather. She sensed the tense air that had befallen the festivities.

"Grandfather, don't you like Abe?"

"Mirabella, he is not one of us. He is not an opossum," Herman said straightening himself up.

"Yes I know that," said Mirabella. "But one can love other animals besides opossums, can't one?"

"But your children, they will be half-breeds. Not opossum, not...not racoon." It pained him to say this.

"Being a little of each, Grandfather, means they'd be free to love either kind. They would have twice as many animals to love," said Mirabella, not a nervous child anymore, but a matured female.

"But no one will love them, Mira. No one will love them. I won't hear of it, hub, hub," said Herman raising his voice and coughing.

Abe looked up with the innocence of the children about him.

"I have chosen a mate and I would like everyone to meet him," Mirabella said, stretching out her paw for Abraham to take. He broke through the crowd of youngsters and stood by Mirabella. He towered awk-

wardly above her.

Herman realized he had been defied and lowered his bushy eyebrows and pursed his lips to greet the 'coon.

"Child, I won't let you do it," he said in an unusually low voice. "And if you decide to, you will be alone in that decision. You will no longer be part of this clan."

Mirabella, awestruck, fought back her tears. "But Grandfather..."

"I will hear no more." This word was final and Mirabella straightened herself up for what she knew would be her last words with her family.

"My love for my family and my love for Abraham are fighting one another, but it is not a decision of which one is stronger. When I leave here with him," she sniffled intermittently, "I will leave still loving each and every one of you. I have a family of my own to build and a life of my own to lead. Please forgive me." She grabbed Herman's arm and kissed him quickly.

Mirabella's sweet voice, her squeaking chirp, and her warm paw passed through the oaken doorway followed by her husband.

A tear appeared at the brink of Herman's eye but he dared not let it fall. The children, the grandchildren all looked to him.

After a long pause, he said, "Now we won't have any more of that, I hope, hub, hub. We won't have any more of that."

IL SE PEUT

Il se peut qu'un rêve étrange
Vous ait occupée ce soir,
Vous avez cru voir un ange
Et c'était votre miroir.

Dans sa fuite Eléonore
A defait ses longs cheveux
Pour dérober à l'aurore
Le doux objet de mes vœux.

A quelque mari fidèle
Il ne faudra plus penser.
Je suis amant, j'ai des ailes,
Je vous apprends à voler.

Que la muse du mensonge
Apporte au bout de vos doigts
Ce dédain qui n'est qu'un songe
Du berger plus fier qu'un roi.

Max Jacob

IT MAY BE

It may be that a strange dream
Seized you tonight,
You thought you saw an angel
And it was your mirror.

In her flight Eleonore
Undid her long hair
To rob the dawn
Of the sweet object of my desire.

You should think no longer
Of some faithful husband.
I am the lover, I have wings
I will teach you to fly.

May the muse of falseness
Bring to the end of your fingers
That scorn which is but a dream
Of a shepherd prouder than a king.

Tana Webster

The Last Winter Sunday

(for Pat Jameson)

The view from her room is of train tracks
and winter trees--yet it is spring,
and she tells me she will be
gone in 41 days.

She talks of living and growing

We can speak of our growing now
and listen to a train pass below,
pushing northward and away

I know, although we are still
new and she will soon be
leaving here, that we
plow the same field

We are tilling what we were,
breaking into the good earth of what we are,
thrusting up our lives
toward each other

Gently, we press the renewed bulbs of
other times and feelings
into that earth, while talking of
pain and poetry

Before I leave, we
catch the first glimpse
of a bud on a spring tree

Paulette Guay

DAWN

Sparkling colours of blue
Shoot from the sky
Showing an all encompassing hue
Which fills the eye.

With each new moment comes
A brighter blue as the sky
Becomes the colour of some
Unfathomable ocean.

With each step it grows deeper,
The great sea covers all,
And the great keeper of the clouds
Unleashes his lofty hounds
On the silent shafts of sky,
Chasing them around the world.

The bark of the hounds screams out orange-red,
Awaking their prey, who were just playing dead,
In the darkness,
Because they had nowhere to go
instead of that cold, airy bed.

The dark frozen walls
become blindingly bleak and bright,
Solemnly facing all that surrounds them
In the increasing light;
Replacing the reverence of what once was night
With the confusion of a universe come to life.

Thomas Gill

THE LIFE OF A WHEELCHAIR

by Angela Y. Davis

Hi! I'm Angie's motorized wheelchair. I arrived in N. Y. C. before Angie returned from eleven days at camp. Angela tells me you want to know what it's like being a wheel chair. Well, to tell you the truth, it's not easy, especially when you belong to Angie.

Angie is a rough and inconsiderate person. She drives like a maniac. Of course, she doesn't mean to. You see, no one took the time to teach her how to drive me. She jokes about that by telling people to watch out for their toes because she's not insured for toe accidents. Angie says if she doesn't learn how to drive me soon, she's going to end up racking me or killing herself, whichever happens to occur first.

The only possible way I can make you understand my rough existence is for you to spend a day or two with me. I'm going to back-track in time. We are going back to last Monday. Last Monday was unique because it was the first day Angie and I had a heavy schedule. Angie had four classes that day.

In the morning I awoke before Angie's alarm went off. I sat there with my battery recharger hooked up in back of me. Angie had hooked me up to it the night before to make sure I was ready to go when she wanted to. Angie went through a ritual every morning. First you hear the alarm, then Angie lazily gets out of bed to shut it off. She next runs to the ladies' room to get washed. After this, she comes back, turns on the radio and, finally, gets dressed. She has some pretty clothes, but they seem to lose their beauty when she wears them. After she's dressed, she unplugs my recharger. She puts straws in her pocketbook and piles her bag of books on my back. Ouch, does that HURT! We wheel around the room and out the door.

Here we are at breakfast. How can Angie stand to eat that food? She has to cut off my power so I won't decide to take off without her. People say hello to Angie. She returns their greetings. I say hello too but no one hears me. Wheelchairs aren't supposed to know how to talk. (I'm not talking now; it's just your imagination.) Aren't you glad you have an

imagination which lets you hear my voice? Angie has just finished her breakfast. It's time to get underway. First class, Biology.

In Biology, Dr. Turley discusses the principles of life. He tries to define "LIFE." It is almost impossible to find an appropriate definition. Isn't this something? Here I was just made and I'm attending college classes. I'm learning about life and I don't completely understand my own "life." Angie seems to be falling asleep. Wake up! You should be listening to this. After all, you're the one who's got to take the test on this stuff, not me. Ah, nine-thirty, time to split this class.

Angie and I have an hour to kill. We drive over to see the nurse. Hey nurse, how's about checking my water temperature? Angie has to sign a release note saying that she gives the hospital permission to transfer her records to the nurse's office at Marist. Angie questions where could she get her medication with her old lady's medicaid card. As usual, the nurse doesn't know. Typical nurse, right? Being a very polite girl, Angie thanks her and we leave. Ten-thirty, time for Psychology.

Today, we have to watch a film. It has something to do with psychology. Here's a lady asking her kid what color his hair is. A man appears on the screen, talking a lot but making no sense at all. Boy, I'm glad Angie's the one who wants to be the psychologist, not me. The film has ended. Angie seems to have comprehended all the materials presented in it. I sure hope she did. Dr. O'Keefe starts to discuss the film. Someone objects to brain surgery. Another wants to know about that man. Still another questions the difference between a schizophrenic child and an autistic child. Dr. O'Keefe goes through a long, involved explanation which I don't understand. Sure pray Angie does. Well, it's eleven-twenty. Let's say ADIOS to Dr. O'Keefe and psychology.

Angie and I head for the cafeteria to eat lunch. We sit at a table full of nuts; namely, Toni, Don, and Robbie. Little does Robbie know that Angie has a huge crush on him. Of course, I try to tell him but all he can hear is a squeak. You see, Robbie's imagination isn't as advanced as yours. My opinion is that Angie should go for Don. He is much cuter than Robbie. Toni brought Angie that garbage to eat. Angie was so dumbfounded by Robbie that she didn't say

anything through the whole meal.

Boring, boring, boring!

Twentieth Century Music is next on our Monday schedule through Marist College. Dr. Sullivan, an expert in the field of music, conducts the class. We listen to old-time music. I don't like it. It clogs my batteries. I dig good old Rock 'n Roll. Eric, an old summer buddy of Angie's, keeps playing around with me. This annoys Angie. I suppose if there weren't this many people around, she might curse him out or throw a book at him. I might forget myself and run over his toe. Thank God, it's the end of class. Angie and I have both managed to keep our cool.

Angie drives around the campus in circles, making whirlpools in my batteries. Marist has some pretty odd-looking art forms.

After psyching me out totally, we proceed to English. Since this is the first time the class has met, Angie and I are absolutely and completely frightened. And, as usual, we are late, which doesn't help matters any. First we can't find the room. Second, I'm giving Angie a lot of trouble getting through the door. I keep pulling and she keeps pushing. Unfortunately man, or shall I say woman, over machine wins. We go in zooming. Angie notices that Chip is in the room. She doesn't feel terrified any more...meanwhile, Dr. Teichman is playing a name game. Angie is all for it until they come to her name. I get the feeling that she wants to say some weird name such as Tisha or Tenni. But she has overcome the temptation, saying simply Angie. Dr. Teichman discusses the class requirements, marks and stuff like that. I glance at the clock. The time has come for dinner.

There isn't anything exciting happening at dinner. In fact, nothing exciting happens for the rest of the night. Angie sits at her typewriter and writes letters and a poem. I love her poetry. One of these days, she might write about what a lucky girl she is to have someone like me to travel in.

The sun is setting and my recharger is hooked up to me again. I think it's time for you and me to rest our minds and go back to my non-speaking existence. Just one more thing before I go, I love Angie for she's my only friend. Angie loves me too, only she has a weird way of showing it!

GROVER KIMBALL
GAS STATION OWNER
by Mike Harrigan

PROLOGUE

GROVER KIMBALL, GAS STATION OWNER, 46

Grover Kimball, 46, of 1712 Route 10K, owner of Kimball's Route 10K Bolt Service Station, Rosetown, died Thursday evening at his home.

Born in New York City, May 2, 1928, he was the son of Wilbur and Eunice (Bentley) Kimball. He had resided in this area for the last sixteen years. He left the Army in 1958 where he had served for eleven years and had attained the rank of Sergeant. His wife, the former Jane Wellington, died in August, 1961.

Mr. Kimball was a member of the area Gas Retailers Association, and a member of the Rosetown American Legion. Surviving Mr. Kimball is a son, Michael.

Funeral services will be Saturday, at 10 a.m. from Wilson's Funeral Home. Burial will be in the Cedaridge Rural Cemetery.

Do you remember the last time you drove past a funeral home and saw a large number of cars outside? Didn't you think to yourself that someone important must have died?

They were all there, the blue '65 Chevy that burned oil, the Cadillac which guzzled exceedingly large amounts of gasoline, the white Ford that lost its brakes during that large snowstorm last year. Even the motorcycle which only Grover knew how to fix came to Wilson's Funeral Home that evening. All of them were his 'regulars'. They all knew him and they loved him.

"What amazed me was that Grover knew every road in the county, including the ones that ain't on any maps," said the '65 Chevy.

"Yeah, I remember a time when I wanted to go someplace in New York City on business," said the Cadillac, "and Grover told me exactly how to get there and back, and even where to park!"

"He useta live down the City a long time ago. I remember some of his friends coming up when his wife passed on years ago," replied the '65 Chevy.

In another part of the small room with the uncomfortable wooden chairs, off to the right of the coffin, stood the '73 Impala with the dented right fender. He was speaking to the motorcycle.

"The energy crisis didn't seem to affect Grover, did it?" questioned the motorcycle.

"Well, he did close up on Sundays, but one time he opened up special for that doctor from over Carlton's Ridge. Seems he had an emergency case or something," answered the '73 Impala.

"You know," said the motorcycle, turning to look at the figure in the coffin, "he doesn't look natural with his hair all combed like that. I remember him with it all messed up and flopping around in the wind."

"Yeah, and he always wore that greasy old cap. Yes, he was a real good man, Grover Kimball, best mechanic in the whole damn county," offered the '73 Impala. "He could tune up a car and it'd get fifty percent better mileage."

Then Mr. Wilson, director of the funeral home brought in a wreath of flowers and placed it at the head of the coffin. He exited quietly without making a sound, almost as if noise would disturb someone. A Volkswagon seated in the back smiled at his offering and wondered what to do with the check for the lube job that Grover had done only last week.

"Didn't Grover have any relatives?" asked the school bus.

"Someone told me that he had a son somewhere, but I really don't know. Seems he had saved enough

money himself to pay for the expenses here. But I don't know," replied the Ford with the repaired brakes.

"Costs so damn much to die these days. When I go I hope they just cremate me and keep my ashes in a can," said the school bus seriously.

"Didja know that they charge you a tax when you die nowadays; they call it a Death Tax?" said the Ford.

"No, I didn't know that. What will they think of next?" the school bus asked rhetorically.

Then a 1972 Gremlin, dressed in a black dress came in. She paid her respects to Grover quietly and quickly. She then moved to the rear and sat next to the Volkswagon. Then she said, whispering,

"I don't know...why did this have to happen? He loved that place, and...I think he may have loved me...I don't know." She began to cry.

"Look, Sis, control yourself," said the Volkswagon. "Everything's gonna be all right."

"Everything was all right. But then when those...those...idiots at World refiners sent him that letter. Imagine...'The cost of supplying rural gas stations has risen beyond acceptable levels.' They told Grover to find a new supplier. Who the hell would start supplying someone now?" she asked, wiping her eyes with an already soaked tissue.

"He still would have had his repair business," offered her brother.

"He made peanuts from that and you know it. If all the people who owed him money paid up, then maybe he'd have had more than barely enough to pay for his own funeral. Besides, he only charged a little bit over what it cost him," blurted out the Gremlin.

"Well, whatever, but that didn't cause his death. He died of a heart attack. He did smoke a lot didn't he? Come on, take it easy, please Sis."

The next morning at 10 a.m. the coffin carrying the late Grover Kimball was loaded into Mr. Wilson's 1970 hearse. It was the only official car, but it was followed by a procession of others.

The procession crept along Route 10K, past the late Grover Kimball's Route 10K Service Station, which was all closed and locked, and past the small home next to it, where a blue 1968 Chevrolet sat in the driveway. It reminded the 1972 Gremlin of a riderless horse.

DESCRIPTION

Searching for the glitter of a single stone
As the shallow water wades by in the wind,
And the sun shines,
One singled out from many,
Like a favorite pine, silhouetted
with the snow,
Sparkling against the dim morning,
And the gray sky.

Thomas Gill



AN APOLOGY FOR ME

In small questions facing down,
Looking up, I am dumb.
So end the hall before the last door.
So wake up assisted by the jamb.

Oh, you nasty jamb,
Clog cog of creativity,
Dripity on my blood filled molars,
Moling through speared heart of marks.

Spelled so close, yet wrong,
Sew the skulled image I almost had.
But you stopped me.
Why am I sorry?

Under love of rack and screw
I showed my hate for you
And never let you to my side,
For fear that some outside have died
For what I said or tried
To kill the pain you caused inside,

A past that's come and set again.
To and fro you sung
And swung me in your arms.
I am sorry you did not drop me.
So are you.

My trail like that of a squirrel's
Pissed in the snow
Will vanish at loves first blow.
Put now, with love,
Imprints slashed on my wrists,
I come closer to your strangling grip,

And smile,
Then cry
For not being aborted as you wished.

Joseph Ahearn

PHILIP ROTH'S GOODBYE, COLUMBUS

-A COMPARISON OF NEIL AND THE YOUNG BOY

by James Michael Naccarato

In Goodbye, Columbus, one of the reasons why the minor character of the nameless black boy has been created by Philip Roth is to illustrate to Neil, and to the reader, this main character's own desires and the means by which he has attempted to attain them. Roth has carefully prepared a parallel development of these two characters.

The first time we are introduced to the black boy, he is standing outside the library apparently with the intention of taming the large stone lion which guards the steps. He is growling at this emotionless beast, calling it a coward, but of course, receiving little satisfaction from these taunts. At this point in the story, Neil too is attempting to tame an "emotionless beast," only his is embodied in the Patimkin family. He is "growling" at them, sarcastically ridiculing their way of life--their having their noses fixed, their automated home, and their sporting goods trees. He is challenging them, through his relationship with Brenda, to step down from their pedestal. But like the boy, he is not experiencing an overwhelming success.

Both characters realize that they need this accomplishment, even if they themselves must compromise--which in fact is--what each one does. Although the boy hasn't as yet tamed the stone lion, he makes his way around it and into the library, where there is, he feels, a promise of something better than he has. Neil also forces himself to accept the Patimkins, though retaining his sarcasm, with the hope that he may escape the Aunt Gladyses and the Newarks.

At first boy and man seem successful in this compromise. The boy finds Gauquin and Tahiti, while Neil finds Short Hills.

The comparison between these two dreams is first indicated by a remark of Neil's on his first trip to Brenda's house. "It was...as though the hundred and eighty feet that the suburbs rose in altitude above Newark brought one closer to heaven," he thinks to

himself. He repeats the number "one hundred and eighty" again only a few pages later. It is not until the appearance of the boy that the reason for the distinct mention of this figure becomes clear. "He (the boy) stood for a moment, only his fingers moving, as though he were counting the number of marble stairs before him." Both characters, it seems are aware of the physical distance to their respective paradise.

The Tahiti-Short Hills identification becomes a more concrete image when Neil says "I started up to Short Hills, which I could see now, in my mind's eye, at dusk, rosecolored, like a Gauguin stream."

Once they have identified them, Neil and the black boy find little difficulty in achieving these dreams. In the days which follow Neil's scoring of his "twenty-first point," we find that the boy too has finally tamed his lion. Neil begins to find the boy outside the library each morning, sometimes on the lion's back, other times beneath his belly. Almost sexual in description, there are indications that both Neil and the boy have found a degree of satisfaction in their Gauguin painted Short Hills.

But of course this is to be short-lived, and it is Tahiti which is the first threatened.

In the absence of the boy an old man attempts to withdraw the book by Gauguin. Neil protects the boy by lying to the man, saying the book is on hold. It seems doubtful that Neil did this because he was aware of the relationship between his own dream and the boy's, but I feel certain he came to realize this soon after. For it is immediately after this passage, that the reader finds Neil and Brenda engaged in their game by the pool. It is here that, for the first time, Neil begins to feel insecure about their relationship. He does not want to be away from her, doubts that he'll find her when he returns from the pool. He becomes very aware of the possibility that he might lose, and that, perhaps not in guise of an old man "smelling of Life Savers," someone else could withdraw his "book" from Short Hills.

When the old man returns to the library to inquire about Gauguin's book, Neil finds himself lying again. But he does not seem as calm as he did before: "I said it with a finality that bordered on rudeness, and I alarmed myself..." He tries to convince the boy to take the book home, but this is just as impossible

for him as it would be for Neil to take Short Hills back to Newark. "Fancy-schmancy," Aunt Gladys would say. And of course, someone would "dee-stroy it."

Neil leaves on vacation that night, fairly certain that during his absence the old man will return and withdraw the boy's book. And although it is not expressed, he must be fairly doubtful that his own paradise will continue much longer. This is demonstrated through the dream he has in which both he and the boy drift away from the paradise, blaming each other, but still losing their dream worlds. It is not explained, but the reader, and Neil himself, understands that when it docks the boat will be in Newark.

The weeks at the Patimkin house and Ron's wedding pass, and now Brenda returns to school. "Already we had sent our first letters and I had called her one night," he says, "but in the mail and on the phone we had some difficulty discovering one another..." It is now that Neil turns his attention back to the boy. "I wonder what it had been like that day the colored kid had discovered the book was gone? Had he cried? For some reason I imagined that he had blamed it on me, but then I realized that I was confusing the dream I'd had with reality. Chances were he had discovered someone else, Van Gogh, Vermeer... But no, they were not his kind of artists. What had probably happened was that he'd given up on the library and gone back to playing Willie Mays in the streets. He was better off, I thought. No sense carrying dreams of Tahiti in your head, if you can't afford the fare."

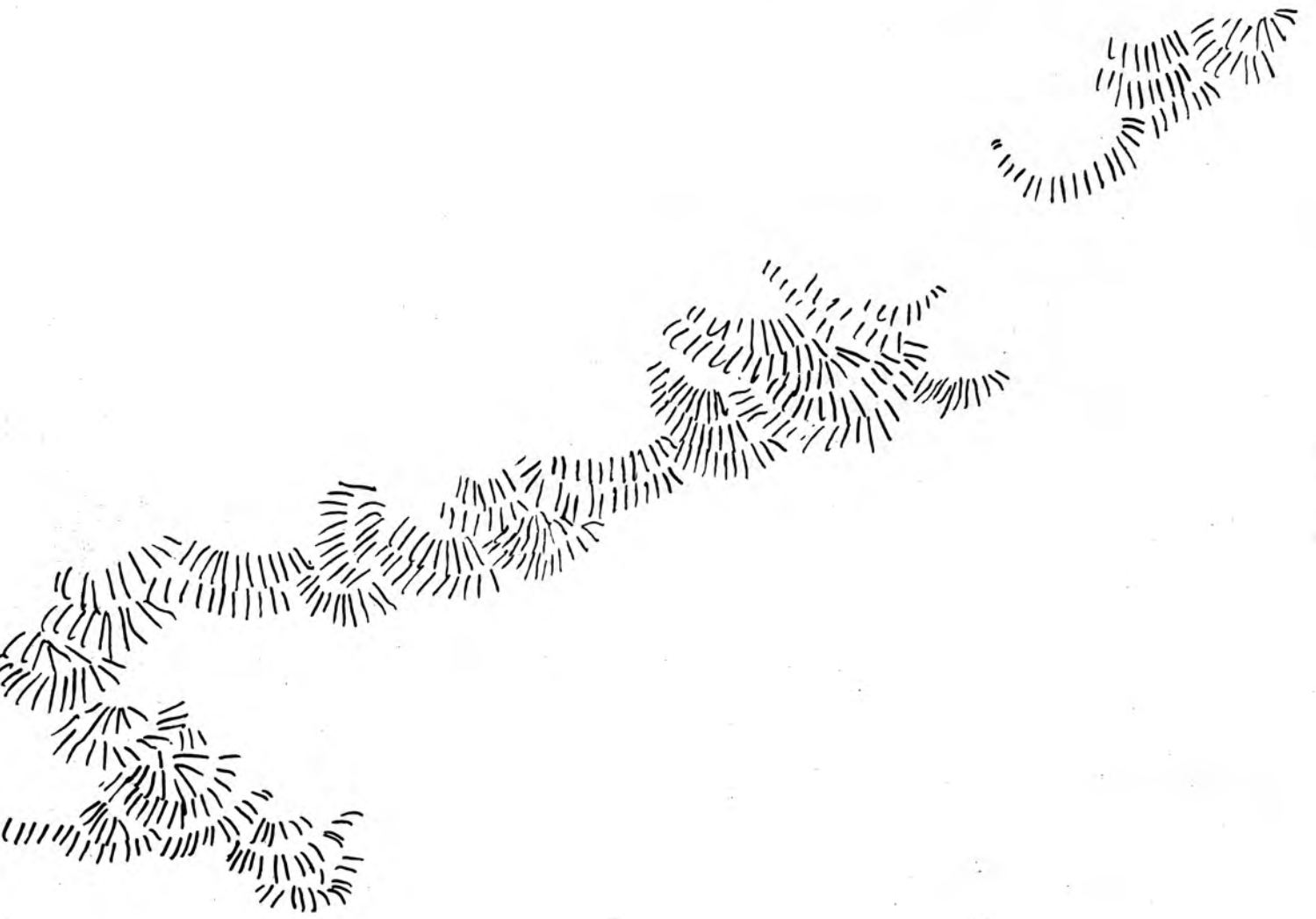
By the end of this passage Neil is no longer talking about the child, but about himself. The dream of Short Hills was all over, and he was back in Newark. What would happen in Boston would be a post-script. Neil knew he still wanted to get out of Newark, and that he had no other dreams, but he had given up on Short Hills. Like the boy, he couldn't "afford the fare." He couldn't be a Patimkin, or anyone like that--he saw too much of the distortions in their lives.

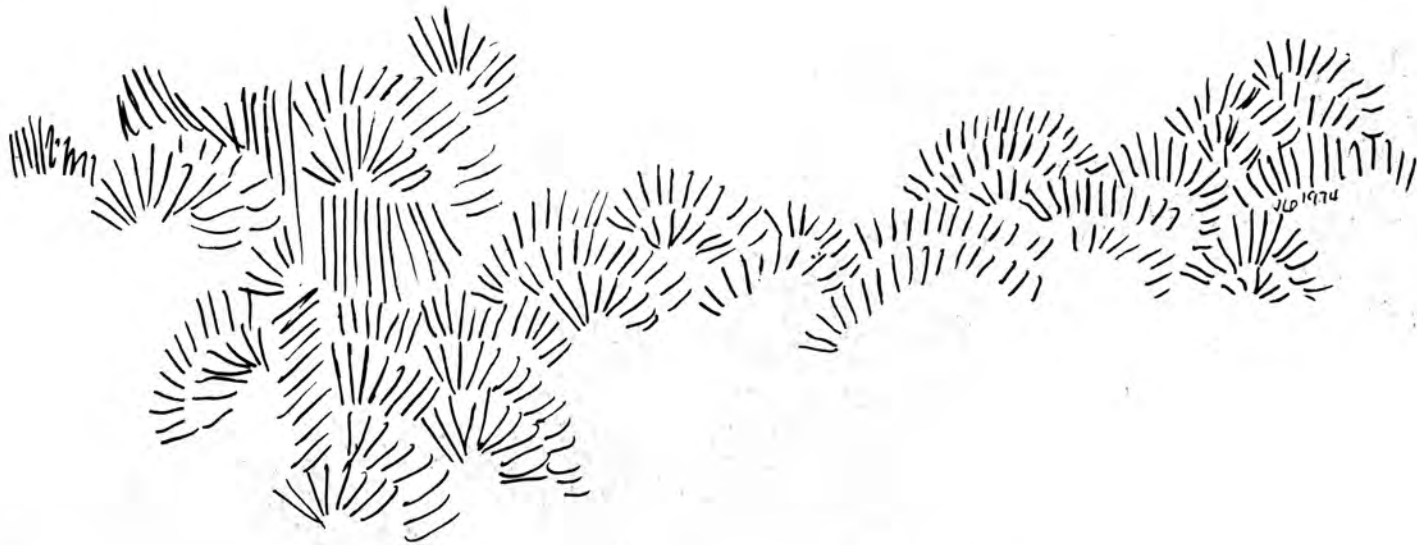
As for Brenda and her family, I don't feel that Roth saw much hope for them. I think the lion continued to be made of stone, and that Short Hills remained a paper dream.

UMBRELLAS

We saw lavender and pink umbrellas
as we ran out from the building
down the path that was edged with trees
sagging with mid-summer laziness.
We saw a table set for two
with lacy coverings under the umbrellas.
We touched the umbrellas, and the table and sighed.
We watched the sun fall from the sky
turning from yellow to orange,
painting the world.
We sat a long time
imagining the madness of summer magic.
From the building on the hill,
we see them come for us.
We run, but they catch us and bring us back.
We remember how soft it all felt
and cry when the lock is turned
and we can only look at it
through barred windows.

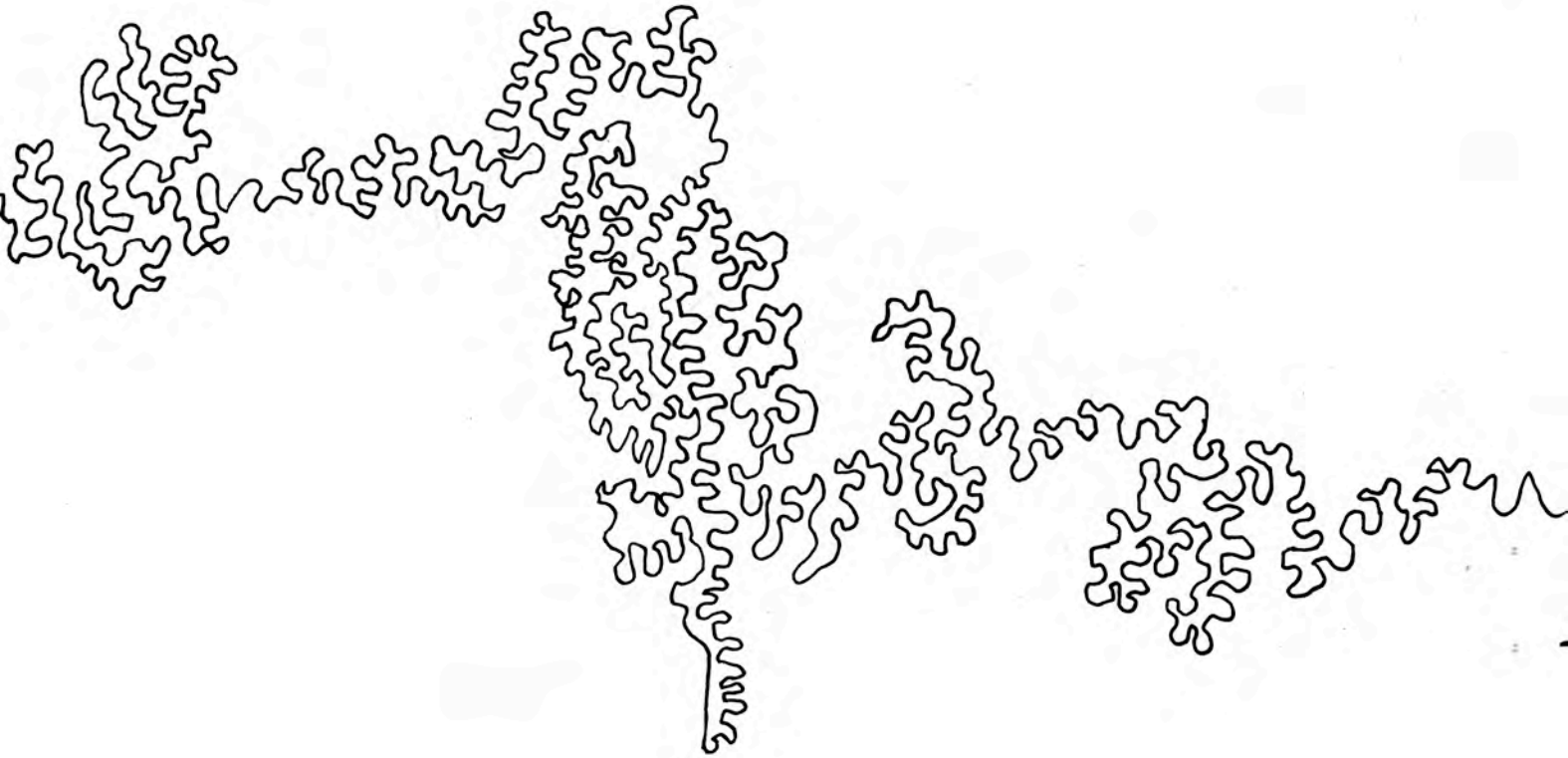
Claudia Caglianone





poem in the moon
flickering lights
dense grey cold
ballerina opossum
and golpherless shadows
two stars east west
a faded moon
is sunrise

Joseph Duffy



ma you taught me how to brush my teeth
i haven't had a cavity now in 3 checkups
ma you taught me 2 and 2
i haven't gotten 1 and 9 mixed now in 13 years
ma you taught me of souls and heaven
i haven't had a soul now in 15 years
ma you taught me right from wrong
i haven't been right now in 17 years
ma you taught me wrong
ma don't cry, i'm right, and you taught me

Joseph Duffy



The Last Winter Sunday

(for Pat Jameson)

The view from her room is of train tracks
and winter trees--yet it is spring,
and she tells me she will be
gone in 41 days.
She talks of living and growing

We can speak of our growing now
and listen to a train pass below,
pushing northward and away

I know, although we are still
new and she will soon be
leaving here, that we
plow the same field

We are tilling what we were,
breaking into the good earth of what we are,
thrusting up our lives
toward each other

Gently, we press the renewed bulbs of
other times and feelings
into that earth, while talking of
pain and poetry

Before I leave, we
catch the first glimpse
of a bud on a spring tree

Paulette Guay

story in the grass

i am in a field by a river
watching eskimos weave baskets of wild grass
it is morning and almost spring
when i write this but i feel
the traces of some time other than now
years ago when i was another yet the same
when i wove with such grass
writing poems with it as i sat by the river
sometimes i would dye the grass with my blood
my fingers coming to smell like those red stains
which finally wore through
and colored my soul
flavored my lives
that soul and this the same
that soul the poet of me
that soul which feels most at home
in the past and waits
to return to the time before white men
to when people were always dark
and did what they had to
only for food or love
when i wove grass and my blood into poetry here
never knowing the place would have me again
so that i could look up and see
eskimos dying grass and weaving baskets
to tell of some old victory

paulette guay

I AM AS YOU - DIFFERENT YET THE SAME

In the picturesque village of San Miguel,
where people move about quickly, and
bright colors grasp my pleasure emotions,
individuality irks me.

Everything seems united on the surface
of daylight, and the nights,
each one being separate of each other,
the subjective lies at the
bottom of the ocean.

Even I, who is as close as I am to you,
am apart from you.

I am me, my flesh, from my epidermis to
the innermost cells circulating in my
bone marrow.

A mind, I can think and write my thoughts,
bury them inside me, preconceive what I
want to, and taste what I eat.

Within me, as you, lies the secrets of life,
both made up of a highly developed system,
both products of our environments.

Using criticism as part of the creative
process, in relation to nature.

The villagers surround their lives around the sun,
some around the moon.

A New Yorker surrounds his life around clocks and
time,

some around depression and darkness.

Each person's interpretation different,
while the power of nature, be you East or West,
creates a universal common abstraction.

In my case being born in an inferior environment,
made me think of myself as an inferior person.

Not that my parents were alien fools in a
foreign country, where the ocean is black
from exhaustion, and no palm trees grow.

They adapted to the new ways because of
the materials the new life had to offer.

I'm only sorry they're trapped now,
she alone with her pains and prayers,
and he completely speechless, like a
living vegetable. Deteriorating with the
rest of the ghettos, waiting to die, if
the Empire State doesn't fall first.

I also have a spirit that moves me, an
internal code that pushes me forward, the
sign that shows its presence in the silence
of my heart.
My guider, he is that special line in a poem,
the jungle call of a parrot.
Though the sun shines here my mind dwells in
the east,
wondering what awaits me in the dreary north.
Will I be strong enough to take it?
Will the village people sleep instead tomorrow?
Am I not as you, you as me--different yet the same?
Only humans, who need love yet prefer isolation,
eat salads maybe lemons, and enjoy the blood of
animals.
Are we not alike?

Ruth Marquez

and to be within the whole,
within life and as a witness:
(it was early and the old were awake)
i was left alone to myself down by the people's lake.
if i were any younger i might not have known,
but i understood the aged faces, and how they've
grown.
perhaps it was an inspiring thought,
could not yet have been the spoken,
not yet the written words i sought.
for a moment,
an instant of creation, of birth,
the reflections of life
unflowered their worth.
two, the love and nature as being,
orange under-sided, and swift shadows over flight,
at silent seeing,
fought against the marrow's night.
an act of lovers,
a pair of frolics,
the two lake-birds
and the distance they've covered.
and here i attend the morning's breeze,
the gift of endless song,
and an old man of please and ease,
following my rights and forever a wanderer...

Chip Kennard

judy

despite the fact that
 she converses very well
the tone of her monologue
makes it clear that
 she really doesn't identify
with petunias--
 she just cares--
which makes it all right

paulette guay

Ed watched him drive off, noticing that Merv seemed to be talking to himself while pounding the steering wheel with his fist. Then, deciding that it must be about time for coffee, he turned and went inside.

A mountain;
 belonging to nobody?
 free from everybody?
All night long
 it squats on its hams,
 jutting out its crag of a chin
 bristling with pine-tree whiskers.
And as dawn
 draws a pink frown
 across the forehead of the night,
One can hear
 a child's laughter
 running at the crest of that hill
And suddenly
 the mountain belongs
 to somebody,
 is free for anybody.

Jamie Misiuta

THE THEME OF RENEWAL IN MALAMUD'S THE ASSISTANT

by Pattie Jameson

One significant line in Bernard Malamud's The Assistant occurs when Helen Bober, the daughter of Morris Bober, was talking with Morris' assistant, Frank Alpine, when they were first becoming acquainted. Alpine was speaking of his previous life and of a girl he had once loved. After he told Helen of this girl's death, Helen said in sympathy, "Life renews itself."¹ Her sympathy is not what is important here; the theme of renewal is paramount in this work, and Malamud uses Alpine to illustrate this.

Alpine made his first appearance early in the book, as a stranger to all who lived in the neighborhood. The area was an old run-down ghetto in New York with some interesting inhabitants: Sam Pearl, the owner of a candy store, who spends most of his time pouring over racing forms; Nat, his son, a law student and one of Helen's suitors; Julius Koop, slumlord and proprietor of a liquor store; Louis, his son, a would-be suitor of Helen; and Morris Bober, a grocer. Morris was a Jewish immigrant who had come to America hoping to make a way of life for himself and, later his family: his wife, Ida, son, Ephriam, and daughter, Helen. However, fate does not deal kindly with Morris; Ephriam died at a young age, and the Bobers stayed poor, although Morris worked hard. "He labored long hours, was the soul of honesty--he could not escape his honesty, it was bedrock; to cheat would cause an explosion in him, yet he trusted cheaters--coveted nobody's nothing, always got poorer. The harder he worked--his toil was a form of devouring time--the less he seemed to have. He was Morris Bober and could be nobody more fortunate."² Yet Morris' suffering in the end did prove fortunate for someone--Frank Alpine, his assistant; and, to a lesser extent, Helen.

¹Malamud, Bernard, The Assistant, from A Malamud Reader, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Inc., New York, 1967, p. 168.

²Ibid., p. 88.

Alpine became the assistant as a direct result of Morris' charity. Caught sleeping in Bober's cellar because he had nowhere else to go, Alpine eventually confessed to Morris that he had been responsible for stealing milk and rolls; Morris, instead of calling the police, fed the young man and permitted him to sleep in the back room for the night. The next morning while Morris was dragging milk cases into the store, he passed out; he had been injured during a holdup which Alpine, ironically, had participated in and still was weak from a head injury. Alpine called an ambulance, alerted Helen, and took over the store. This was the first step along the road to becoming Morris' assistant, a son-figure, and then taking over Morris' role as provider--and maturing in the process: "All through Malamud's stories runs this persistent theme: man is his brother's keeper because it is only in keeping one's brother that one really becomes a man. Thus all of Malamud's heroes mature in the same way: they learn to see...an inimical viewpoint...and then embrace it in an overt or implicit act of love."³ Alpine's "act of love" consisted in working for Morris at subsistent wages and then carrying on as breadwinner after Morris' death.

However, there are many similarities in the two men which help us to see this development even before Morris' death. Both men are somewhat out of place in their environment; Morris is a Jew in a basically Gentile neighborhood and Alpine is a Gentile in a Jewish household. The Jews in the neighborhood, Pearl and Karp, possess none of Morris' wisdom or integrity; the Italian neighbors, the Fusos, although kind people, are not portrayed as sharing either Alpine's lifestyle or his growing insight into himself or the human condition. Both have been close to the future they wanted; Morris wanted to become a pharmacist but was pushed by his wife into a grocery instead. Of his life, Alpine said, "I've been close to some wonderful things--jobs, for instance, education, women, but close is as far as I go.... Don't ask me why, but sooner or later everything I think is worth having gets away from me in some way or other. I work like a mule for what I want, and just when it looks like I am going to get it I make some

³Tucker, Martin, "A Pluralistic Place," *Venture III* (1959), pp. 69-73. Quoted by Rita N. Kosofsky in *Bernard Malamud: An Annotated Checklist*, The Kent State University Press, 1969, p. 38.

kind of a stupid move, and everything that is just about nailed down tight blows up in my face.... With me one wrong thing leads to another and it ends up in a trap. I want the moon so all I get is cheese."⁴ Malamud underscores the similarity shown here: "...Morris was thinking, I am sixty and he talks like me."⁵ The incongruity here is that Frank was twenty-five.

As the story progresses, it becomes apparent that both were incarcerated in their own prisons; Morris was imprisoned in his store, his ill health, and his poverty-stricken life just as Alpine was in his poverty, the guilt he felt for his crimes, and later, his unrequited love for Helen. Malamud comments, "He could see out but nobody could see in" as Alpine suffered when Helen broke up with him. The inability of other people to see good intentions is yet another similarity between Morris and Alpine. Another parallel which can be drawn is the compassion both felt for those less fortunate. Morris' charity toward Alpine is one example and his trust in the store toward his customers is another. Alpine tried to collect one of these bills while Morris was severely ill, but felt such pity for the family that he ran back to the store to get his last three dollars to give to them. On the way back he met Ward Minogue, however, who looked "as if he had escaped out of a morgue"⁷ and Mirogue pleaded sickness. Alpine gave him the money instead.

Perhaps the greatest similarity between Morris and Alpine was their ability to use suffering creatively; both grew from their suffering, Morris into greater tolerance and Frank into a man. Morris said while explaining the Law to Frank, "'If you live, you suffer. Some people suffer more, but not because they want. But I think if a Jew don't suffer for the Law, he will suffer for nothing.'"; earlier he had defined the Law as "to do what is right, to be honest, to be good. This means to other people. Our life is hard enough. Why should we hurt other people? We

⁴Malamud, Bernard, The Assistant, p. 106.

⁵Ibid., p. 107.

⁶Ibid., p. 250.

⁷Ibid., p. 253.

ain't animals.... This is what a Jew believes."⁸
Frank still did not understand.

"'What do you suffer for, Morris?' Frank said.
'I suffer for you,' Morris said calmly. Frank
laid his knife down on the table. His mouth
ached. 'What do you mean?' 'I mean you suffer
for me.' The clerk let it go at that."⁹

Frank Alpine, the stranger and assistant, became the assailant and suffered as Morris did. Before Morris' death he had grown to take the place of Ephriam, although Morris did not realize this. Alpine was more than just a physical substitute; before Morris died, "He dreamed of Ephriam...Morris, in a rush of love for him...promised him a good start in life...Ephriam--a gentleman--averted his face as he snickered.... The boy disappeared in the wake of laughter...when the grocer felt himself awakening, he tried to get back into the dream but it easily evaded him. His eyes were wet. He thought of his life with sadness. For his family he had not provided, the poor man's disgrace.... He thought of Helen. It would be terrible if she became an old maid. He moaned a little, thinking of Frank. His mood was of regret. I gave away my life for nothing. It was the thunderous truth."¹⁰

Frank, already in misery because Helen has rejected him, suffered again as Morris died and grew from the place of Ephriam to take the grocer's place, "true to the spirit of our life--to want for others that which he also wants for himself."¹¹ He supported the Bobers by running the store, supplementing the small income with an all-night job, and gave Helen what her father had most wanted to give to both Ephriam and Helen--a college education. Frank's conversion at the end of the book symbolized his renewal; the fact that Frank, who had been hostile to the Jews, could voluntarily convert to Judaism is highly suggestive of death and rebirth and of his maturity. It also tells us that Morris Bober did not give away his

⁸Ibid., p. 190.

⁹Ibid., pp. 190-191.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 285-286.

¹¹Ibid., p. 289.

life for nothing; indeed, he played so large a part in influencing Frank's life that he and Frank merged into one.

TIDAL EFFECT

Like the tide, predictable
But different each day,
We make our lunar rounds
Bordered by a million shores.

No map is accurate more than a few hours;
Each tide changes the touched shoreline.
The sand it sweeps will never be the same!

Rocks tumbled with its strength
Are altered always:
Some smoothed, some chipped,
Some finally ground to granules.

Elizabeth Spiro

THE PENTEP

by Marideanne Blomgren

Merv Bray was driving as best he could considering the debate he was having with himself. How did I ever let myself get roped into buying another farm at this time of year? But then it was such a good buy, he thought, how could I pass it up? I could have bought some stock instead. No, what they say is true: "Buy land, they don't make it anymore," a sure investment, especially in the midwest. But what about that renter, Ed Rowe? He can't get organized enough to make the farm pay, and yet I can't let him go in October. He'd have no place to live or farm. I guess I'll have to let him stay this year; maybe he'll improve.

Merv saw Ed standing by his patched tractor. Ed was as patched as the tractor, but his worn clothing did cover his banty height and paunchy stomach. Ed hitched his thumbs into his coverall straps and walked to the new, blue New Yorker Chrysler, wondering about his new landlord.

Would Merv let him stay? He knew he never managed to get much, if anything, out of the farm. It was hard with a wife, six kids and out-dated machinery. How could Mr. Bray, who had several farms plus a couple of general stores, understand that? Ed knew he'd never had a chance. His parents had always been poor and had rented, and he had to do the same. But at least he was his own boss--renter or no. That's the way it had to be. There were no time-clocks to punch on a farm.

"Ka tog," he greeted Mr. Bray in Norwegian, as he watched him ease his tall, lean frame out of the car.

"Ka tog, ka tog," answered Merv, clearing his throat several times in the process. "Just thought we could talk things over, Ed. You'll stay, I guess?"

"Sure will," Ed answered quickly, much relieved. "How'd ya want to work it?"

Merv leaned against the car, watching the pattern his foot traced in the dirt and replied, "Oh, I guess like usual. I'll furnish the land and buildings;

you'll furnish the machinery and work, and we'll split everything fifty-fifty. Okay?"

Trying to hide his relief at not having to pay cash rent, Ed stuck a blade of foxtail in his mouth and moved it around until it found a place where two teeth met. Then he agreed, "Sure sounds okay. What about a contract?"

Merv Bray offered his hand, "That's my binder. Good enough for ya?"

Taking his hand and shaking it heartily, Ed sealed the bargain, "It's alright with me. I've heard you're a fair man, and I'll do my best. Come on in and have some coffee."

"No, no, never drink it; but I would like to see the house."

They walked in silence to the collapsing porch and adjoining wood room. "I been meaning to shore this up and organize the room," Ed said with a nervous laugh as he threw some broken toys out into the yard.

"I'll furnish the materials if you do the work," Merv offered. "Just charge it at Lyle Hardware, they'll clear it with me. Hey, what are these corn cobs doin' in here?"

"Oh, we burn them in the cook range to make the wood go further. If we keep that stoked up, we don't use as much fuel oil either."

They crossed the porch to the side door and entered the kitchen. Ed could see Mr. Bray stiffen at the disorder and knew he wouldn't appreciate the kids, having only one of his own. It was a short, quick tour with little said. Then, Mr. Bray sped off, his car kicking dust into the trees that lined the long driveway.

Ed saw little of Mr. Bray until just before Thanksgiving. He was strolling out the door when he saw the big car coming. "Rose," he yelled to his wife, "keep those kids in and keep them quiet." Mr. Bray was already walking up the path when Ed turned around.

"Here's a little something for Thanksgiving, Ed," he said, handing him a fifteen pound turkey.

"Thanks, Mr. Bray," Ed said with a nervous chuckle. He started to turn with it, then stopped, confused, not knowing what to do or what was expected. Finally, he turned and gave it to Rose. "I don't know what to say, Mr. Bray."

"Well, just enjoy it, and...call me Merv. Christ, we don't need to be so formal."

"All right, Merv. Say, I heard your daughter likes to ride horses. Bring her down some weekend. She can ride with my kids. We got some nice riding horses."

"Okay...yeh, she'd like that," he said as he turned to leave.

"This is marvelous, Ed," Rose exclaimed, trying to push her bushy hair into unknown order. "Who ever would've thought it?"

"Yeh, who would've?" Ed answered.

Lazy, cold November froze into December and thoughts of Christmas. Ed looked uncertainly for the big blue car. It didn't fail him. Three days before Christmas it plowed down the driveway. Ed extended his bare chapped hand to Merv's finely gloved one, and he sneaked a peek through the window of the car.

"I thought a little Christmas spirit wouldn't hurt none," Merv said, opening the back door of the car and taking out two large boxes. Wiping her hands on her apron, Rose came out to investigate. There was a large ham and fresh fruit for her and Ed, and a box of prettily wrapped gifts for the kids. She took the gifts in, leaving Ed to thank Merv.

The two men strolled over to the porch, kicking clumps of snow and breaking ice patches with their heels. "Thought maybe you'd have this fixed by now," Merv said, shaking the loose support post.

"Yeh, I meant to. Just have trouble finding the time, ya know. I planned on Jimmy, my eldest, helping me, but he's having a time with his studies this year. I didn't want to make it harder for him by using his time. Maybe this spring we'll get to it."

"I'd like to paint the house," Merv replied, "but no use doin' it till this is fixed. Do some work

on the barn and we could paint that too."

"We'll try to get to it," Ed said as they headed for the car. "Thanks a lot for everything. This will really make Christmas for the wife and kids." He waved casually as Merv left.

"How about this, Rose!" he exclaimed when he got inside.

"Well, he can afford it," she answered. "Besides, his daughter is down here often enough."

"I know, but he doesn't have to do this. And Bonnie does have a time here, what with being alone at home and having six kids to play with here. I do love to watch her ride, too. I can't understand why he doesn't get her a horse."

"I guess it is right nice of him after all," Rose agreed.

As usual, Ed was surprised by spring. He never could figure out how it got there so fast. As he left the house to do the chores one day, he heard the car coming. "Morning, Merv," he called.

"Morning, Ed. Heading out to plow?"

"No, not just yet. Got the cows to milk first."

"By God, Ed," Merv exclaimed, "it's ten in the morning! Did ya just get up?"

"Yeh, had a little pepsic stomach lately. Thought some rest would help."

"What about the kids? Couldn't one of them do it?"

"The older ones have their hands full helpin' Rose with the young ones and doin' their studies. I couldn't ask them to do more."

"Cows produce better on a schedule, you know that," Merv said incredulously.

"What the hell kind of schedule can I have?" Ed asked in a hurt voice. "What with the weather and

sickness to worry about, out-dated machinery and daylight savings time--my cows produce enough to get by."

"I guess that's your business. But I want the plowing done and the fields in on time," Merv said. "I'll leave you to your work, but I'll be back next week."

The following Tuesday afternoon, Merv found Ed staring at the old tractor from his tree stump vantage point. "How much plowin's been done?" he asked.

"Got the north forty done, but now I got a flat front tire. Tryin' to figure out how I might patch it up. Can't buy that size no more."

Taking a deep breath, Merv said, "Listen, I'll have my other renter, Pat, call you. He's good with machinery and maybe could help you out."

"I'd appreciate that," Ed said. "This here's got me stumped." He headed to the house for coffee as Merv drove off.

When Merv came back to check on the planting, he found Ed out in the field wrestling with the still-lame tractor. He watched the kids riding and playing, then left before Ed could see him and stop again.

Then came the Fourth of July. The corn was knee-high--except on Ed's place. Next day, Merv confronted Ed, "We've had all the rain we need for this sand base farm. That means we should have a bumper crop. We aren't going to get it though, are we?"

"Oh, it could catch up yet," Ed countered.

"Not unless you get rid of those weeds and give it room to grow. Even then I don't think it can fully recover."

Changing the subject, Ed said, "Thanks for all the garden goods you brought down. We sure enjoyed them. You must have a good crop on that truck farm of yours."

"Yes, but that's not our concern. I can't see a way to continue like this. If there's a decent harvest, then maybe we'll both be able to relax."

"Hell, there will be, Merv. I'll get the crops

out okay--I'm doin' the best I can," Ed combed his fingers through his thin hair.

"I hope so, Ed. I'm going to drive around and check things out now. See ya."

That fall, the harvest was late and meager, but Merv said little about it. Ed relaxed as the Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts came as usual. His only worry was whether the porch would hold under the last snow.

January second found Merv wrestling himself and his car down the snow-laden roads to Ed's. How am I going to tell him? Merv thought, and he heard the whole conversation in his mind. "Sorry to bring bad news with the new year, Ed, but I'll have to ask you to leave. The losses were just too heavy this year. You can stay till you find a place."

"Damn it, Merv, you can't do this," Ed will say. "Why didn't you tell me this fall? What the hell am I supposed to do?"

"Now, I told you I wanted a decent harvest and we didn't get it."

"I know, but...the gifts, the...Christ, this has been my home for ten years. I got no place to go."

"I'm sorry, Ed. You'll have to be out when you can."

Just thinking about the encounter sent Merv into a coughing fit.

"Who'll take me as a renter?" he imagined Ed asking. "I haven't got no decent machinery, and I got six kids to feed and clothe. How many places have room for six kids? It's January. They ain't no farms for rent in January."

"Why not try to find work in town?"

"In town? In town I'd have to punch a time-clock. Besides, I'm a farmer. What can a farmer do in town? What about my livestock?"

As he approached the farm, Merv resolved to stand

firm. I'll say: "Sorry, you'll have to be out. You can stay until you have a place to go. That's a fair offer."

Walking up from the barn, Ed saw the blue car blinking between the trees. "Ka tog, Happy New Year," he greeted Merv.

"Happy New Year, Ed," Merv responded, shaking Ed's hand.

"I can't tell you how happy all those gifts made the kids. You should'a seen 'em!" Ed beamed.

"That's all right," Merv answered, walking towards the collapsed porch. "It finally fell down, huh?"

"Yeh," Ed said in a small voice. "That last snow did it."

"Lose any livestock in that last blizzard?"

"One good milker got the cough and died."

"The heck."

"The others are okay though," Ed assured.

"Say, did you hear about the fire at Johnson's? Lost five head."

"Yep, read it in the paper."

"Well, listen, Ed, help me measure off this porch and I'll ask Lindquist if he can come fix it in the spring."

They worked in the silence of numbers, Ed thinking that Merv's silence was caused by anger over the porch. Finally, with resignation, Merv headed for the car.

"Say, Merv," Ed detained him, "I'm a little short of room in the barn. I'd sure like it if you'd take my Tennessee Walker for Bonnie. It's her favorite horse anyway. I'd like her to have it."

"Well," Merv coughed to buy time and wondered how he could get out of this. "Well, okay, Ed. Ah... ahem...have a good new year."

THE MESSAGE

I am rocking in my chair
when I hear a knock at the door.

I get up slowly and answer.
It is my son's captain.

He shuffles his feet, coughs, wipes his brow,
looks up with pity in his eyes.
Time grows on and he is still silent.

Vincent Carfora

November day,
how can you tempt us
with your signs of spring?
Warm, clear, clean the air flows.
The river becons for swimmers long gone.
All signs of winter you've covered over.
The cheeks on that pretty girl
are red and full of life
like your sister April's rose.
Why must you tempt us,
when tomorrow will be cold?

John Covell



