

BACHY



3 1974



BACHY

THREE · 1974

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A READING EDITION

*It is better to
shave toothpicks
than to
seek the favor
of the great
with
literary works.*

*Robert Burton,
The Anatomy of Melancholy
1621*

THE MAGAZINE

Publisher

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Editorial

John Harris, *poetry*

Bob Mehlman, *prose*

Gary DeGalla, *photography*

Patricia Washington, *art*

Robert M. Aber, *sports*

Production

Michael C. Ford &

Rick Lowitz, *consultants*

Julie Logan, *layout and design*

Jerry Fredericks

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BACHY is a semi-annual journal dedicated to the discovery of previously unpublished artists of worth. A major portion of our pages is reserved for relatively unknown contributors. We publish all kinds of material — except sentimental, academic, or metaphysical-bullshit. We are interested in all literary and graphic art easily reproducible in black and white (no color). Poetry, fiction, essays, reviews, plays, photographs, line drawings, cartoons, musical compositions, costume and set design for the theatre — all are acceptable. Payment is \$2 per page plus author's copies. Reporting date is 8 weeks. We are not responsible for return of submissions unless they are accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscription price: \$3.50 per year. Single copy price: \$2.00.

ABOUT THIS EDITION

— This is a complete reading text of the third issue of *Bachy*, published in 1974 by the Papa Bach Bookstore on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Los Angeles. It was made from a scan of the copy held by the UCLA Library, transcribed page by page from the page images. The page follows the magazine's own arrangement — the contents set as Papa Bach set it, the heavy display face of its section titles, its habit of spelling page numbers out in words, and its Bach device, lifted from the masthead of this very copy. The reading text departs from the original in one respect: *Bachy* was composed in Helvetica, and this edition is set in a serif, which carries verse better over a long sitting. Each poem begins on its own page.

Words in teal brackets are editorial reconstructions — a character or word that could not be read from the scan and has been inferred from context, from the facing page, or from the magazine's own back matter. There are 343 of them. [?] marks something illegible that could not responsibly be guessed. Everything in black was read directly off the page.

The UCLA copy is tightly rebound and will not open flat, so the inner margin runs into the gutter: right-hand pages lose the first few characters of a line, left-hand pages the last few. Most were recovered by magnifying the sliver of the facing page caught at the edge of the previous photograph; the rest are marked.

Bachy was a magazine of pictures as much as poems — portfolios by Lisa Bruce Jay Kapson, William David Tumpowsky, Lenka Stewart, Wilton David, Geoffrey Montagu, Sandra Goodwin, Blair H. Allen and others ran through it. The artwork is not reproduced here. In its place, each image is described in an [*editorial note set like this*], so a reader knows what stood on the page.

One leaf is missing from the scan this edition was made from. Printed pages 123–124 were not captured: the end of Blair Allen's portfolio and the opening page of John Harris's review section. The review resumes here in mid-argument.

Printed typos, eccentric spellings and compositor's errors are kept as they were set. Beyond the bracketed reconstructions, no editorial matter appears once the text begins.

This edition was set from the UCLA Library copy in TeX Gyre Pagella, with contributors' names in Bonum after the magazine's own display type. The Bach device is the magazine's own, taken from the masthead page of this copy.

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THE ARTWORK

——— *Bachy* was a magazine of pictures as much as poems, and none of the pictures is reproduced here. What follows is a list of the 33 images the issue carried and where each one stood, so that this reading text can be held against the object. Page numbers are the magazine's own.

Front cover

, printed in black on a flat grey-olive ground: a bold brush-and-ink portrait head of J. S. Bach in his wig, reduced to thick contour and hatching, filling the upper three-quarters. Beneath it the magazine's name set large in a serif face, "Bachy 3". No other type on the cover.

Page 11

Brush-and-ink landscape, printed small in the lower half of an otherwise empty page: a tall spire of fir on a rocky knoll, scrub and grasses in the foreground, a still lake and low ranges behind. Credited in italic at the lower right, "Steven Louie".

Page 24

Section title page for the first photography portfolio, carrying two names in large sans-serif type: Bruce Jay Kapson William Tumpowsky Folio at the foot, lower left: twenty-four

Page 25

Full-page black-and-white photograph: three Black boys on a sidewalk, the smallest staring straight at the lens, the tallest leaning on a stick; behind them a white man in a suit crouches grinning and an elderly woman watches from a yard. Credited "Bruce Jay Kapson" at the lower right.

Page 26

A landscape photograph printed sideways, filling the page: a heavy-set carnival worker sits amid a shooting-gallery of hanging plaster dolls and toy planes. Hand-lettered signs read "ALL TARGETS VOID AFTER LEAVING GALLERY" and "...WAYS T... OUT PLANE - CUT... RED MUST BE C...", with "10¢ for" above. Credit "Bruce Jay Kapson" runs up the left margin.

Page 27

Photograph of a flea-market sidewalk: an outsized doll in a ruffled blouse and dark trousers lolls in a ladderback chair, legs splayed, while an elderly woman in a knitted jacket turns away to inspect the stall. Sunlight and hard shadow. Credited "Bruce Jay Kapson", lower right.

Page 28	<i>At a greyhound track, a young handler in a beret kneels beside dog number 2, cupping its muzzled head. Deep black background, the animal's ribs and legs picked out in raking light. Photograph fills the page; credit "Bruce Jay Kapson" set in italic at the lower left.</i>
Page 29	<i>Group portrait on a stoop at number 56: women, a dozen children in Sunday clothes and two men in suits arranged over the steps and pavement, most of them looking into the lens, one girl laughing with her eyes shut. Full-page photograph, credited "William Tumpowsky" at the lower right.</i>
Page 30	<i>A man in denim overalls, dark glasses and a knitted cap stands against a stucco wall between two concrete bollards, walking stick propped on his shoulder, cigarette in hand; a payphone hood marked "phone" hangs behind him. Photograph, credit "William Tumpowsky" lower left.</i>
Page 31	<i>Photograph in an institutional room: an elderly man in a singlet stands behind an armchair holding the hand of an equally aged woman slumped in it, radiator and blank wall behind. Fills the page. Credited "William Tumpowsky" at the lower right.</i>
Page 32	<i>Studio portrait, likely of a writer: a grinning middle-aged man tilts back in a slat-backed chair in shirtsleeves, cigarette raised, a desk lamp swung behind his shoulder. Photograph occupies most of the page; credit "William Tumpowsky" in italic at the lower left.</i>
Page 58	<i>Lenka Stewart [Section title page. Below the name, in single unbroken contour line, a nude seen from behind sits with one leg drawn up, the drawing running the full depth of the page; signed at lower right "L. STEWART". Prose from the facing pages shows through.] Folio at the foot, lower left: fifty-eight</i>
Page 59	<i>Pen sketch across the lower third: a Mediterranean cove seen through dark cypress and scrub at the right, a domed church and terraced houses at the water's edge, a steamer offshore and headlands stacked behind. The upper half is left blank. Signed illegibly in the shrubbery at right (Lenka Stewart).</i>
Page 60	<i>Surreal pen-and-ink by Lenka Stewart: a plumed bird-fish with a dappled belly and streaming tendrils hovers over a picket-fenced</i>

	<i>ridge and a hatched cliff, while a cascade of open, banded boxes tumbles down the left. Sits in the upper two-thirds of the page.</i>
Page 61	<i>Loose pen study of small animals scattered across the upper half: a stippled lizard rearing at right, several hares or dogs in bare outline, a fallen creature at centre, all against a scratched mound with a solid black shadow. Signed "L. STEWART" beside the lizard's foot. Folio at the foot, lower right: sixty-one</i>
Page 62	<i>Densely hatched pen drawing of an eroded cliff face, ledges and crevices worked in fine parallel strokes with tufts of grass sprouting from the ledges and a deep black cave mouth at the bottom. Occupies the middle of the page; unsigned. By Lenka Stewart. Folio at the foot, lower left: sixty-two</i>
Page 63	<i>Botanical pen study filling the page: a single pinnate frond of sumac or ailanthus drawn leaflet by leaflet in outline, veins ruled in, one lower leaf shrivelled and cross-hatched black. Attributable to Lenka Stewart; no signature visible. Folio at the foot, lower right: sixty-three</i>
Page 67	<i>Bold brush-and-ink mountain scene occupying the lower two-thirds: a firred slope falling to a lake, a waterfall dripping from a dark ledge, a big spruce in the left foreground. Signed "Louie" within the image and credited "Steven Louie" in italic at the lower right.</i>
Page 83	<i>Pen drawing by Wilton David inside a dashed border: a figure with an animal skull for a head, longhorns spreading behind and a hatched disc holding a single eye set on its brow, sits wrapped in patterned cloth against banded clouds. Signed at lower right "DAVID: sleep!!" with a circled glyph. Folio at the foot, lower right, overlapped by the signature: eighty-three</i>
Page 84	<i>Wilton David again: a striding woman in a long basket-weave-patterned coat, her face a hatched disc with one eye and a matching eye-halo behind her curls, black discs floating around her. A dashed outline shadows her silhouette. Fills the page; unsigned here. Folio at the foot, lower left: eighty-four</i>
Page 96	<i>Section title page for the second photography portfolio, two names in large sans-serif type: Geoffrey Montagu Sandra Goodwin Folio at the foot, lower left: ninety-six</i>

Page 97	<i>Photograph of a grocer in an apron behind a heaped melon display, grinning as he holds a crenshaw up to the camera; a Toledo scale and a hand-lettered card, "CRANSHAW MELONS 29¢ lb", stand at his elbow. Credit "Geoffrey Montagu", lower right.</i>
Page 98	<i>A concessionaire in paper hat and bow tie leans over his popcorn and ice-cream counter, arm raised, mouth pulled into a comic pout, while a boy watches from the left; stacked tubs and a price tag ".98" crowd the frame. Photograph, credited "Geoffrey Montagu" at the lower left.</i>
Page 99	<i>Seen through a boxcar door: a man asleep on flattened cardboard in the doorway, rails and ballast beyond, a freight car lettered "...EE" filling the far side. Strong black frame of the door surrounds the light. Photograph, credit "Geoffrey Montagu" lower right.</i>
Page 100	<i>Tracksides still life: a burst-open shoe and a boot lie among cinders and wire between a raised pipeline and a line of freight cars receding to the horizon under a blank sky. Photograph fills most of the page; credited "Geoffrey Montagu" at the lower left.</i>
Page 101	<i>Photograph in a butcher's cooler: a smiling man in a stained white coat stands beside a hanging side of beef, one hand on a tray of sausage links. Credit "Sandra Goodwin", lower right.</i>
Page 102	<i>A counter woman in a pale uniform smiles over a tray of tacos garnished with chiles; behind her a stand window carries the words "HOMEMADE TAMALES" and, further off, "TACOS" and a "30" price sign. Photograph, credited "Sandra Goodwin" at the lower left.</i>
Page 103	<i>Head-on photograph of a Santa Fe diesel locomotive, its nose numbered "304C", the warbonnet lettering "SANTA FE" curving across the front, couplers and air hoses spilling out below. Fills the page. Credit "Sandra Goodwin" at the lower right.</i>
Page 104	<i>Five men, workers or drifters, pose in and around a dark doorway: one seated at the left, one bare-chested at the centre, the others in work jackets and a cap. Photograph occupies the lower two-thirds; credited "Sandra Goodwin" at the lower left.</i>

Page 120	Blair Allen [Section title page. Beneath the name, a pen drawing: a pointed Gothic arch filled solid black, two slit eyes glaring out above a curving rank of white organ pipes, a tiny organist silhouetted at the console. Signed "B. H. ALLEN" under the image.] Folio at the foot, lower left: one hundred twenty
Page 121	Silhouette drawing by Blair Allen : a black flame-like ridge crowded with tiny hooded figures raising cups, a winged homunculus flying out of it toward a spiralled sun in which a second winged figure hangs. Occupies the lower half; signed "B.H. ALLEN" at the right.
Page 122	Blot-and-blow ink work: two spindly dancing figures conjured out of poured black ink, limbs drawn into whipping threads and spatter, set over the ghost of the arch drawing showing through from the previous leaf. Signed in script at lower right, "B. H. Allen". Folio at the foot, lower left: one hundred twenty-two
Pages 171–175	Deborah Eddy's portfolio, five pages. These leaves were not captured in the scan this edition was made from, so the work cannot be described; the contents page is the only record of it.

Michael Wilding

[TH]ING FOR THE TENTACLE LADIES

['If]you want it so much why don't you just take it?' she said to the tentacle [alo]ng his arm, its suckers sucking on at regular intervals, 'just break it off and [tak]e it away, don't just sit there sucking at it.' [T]he tentacle lady looked through the inevitable fringe of her seaweed, [ope]ning her mouth to blow up little kissing bubbles. And as the tentacle moved [alo]ng further little bubbles of trapped air rose up dizzily from beneath each [suc]tion pad. ['If you want it that flipping much why don't you just cut it off?' she said. ['He]re take this oyster knife.' [S]he put it in one of the tentacles. And the translucent green of their aquarium [red]dened with a spreading dusty cloud of blood. Like drifting powder.

[Do]wn at the beach she nursed him with his severed arm. Without his severed [arm]: the tentacle lady had that, to take away and gnaw at. They walked over the [bitu]minous rocks beside the dark pools with other eyes watching them, [tent]acles withdrawn. She supported him in his uneven balance, dizzy a little [fro]m blood loss and his eyes clouded red from the stains. They collected shells [for] him to put on his fingers, but needed fewer now.

[H]e had had another friend who had rescued him, dragged him out of the [gian]t clam. It had meant the loss of his toe-nails, and the giant clam had stuck [ther]e with so sad a smile, a smile that no longer smiled, once with happiness and [hop]e and appetite, now just vacuously registering the loss. Beginning to register [the]loss. Retaining only his toe-nails. And he and his rescuer walked along the [bea]ch and trod on the cunjevoys till they spurted. His rescuer carried a knife [too,] he liked to prize oysters off the rocks and cut the eyes out of seagulls.

["H]ere," she said, 'he said, "stand in this bowl of alligators while I write you."' [']If you think that,' she said, 'the alligators are all in your head.' [B]ut inside the alligators' heads there are little birds that live off the decaying [flesh i]n between their teeth, he told her. [H]e liked to reveal to her his menagerie.

[Oh], you get let off do you?' she said, 'you can't be a very good writer then, the [writ]er never gets let off.' [A]toenail less and one armed, he did not feel let off. They sat high on the cliff [and] watched the waves beating beneath them. He loved her very much then. If he [cut] enough off, he would always stay there. A headless limbless trunk on the [basa]lt rocks. There would be no pain. He would like to feel the tentacles of the [tent]acle ladies wrapping round him but unable to move he would not feel any possibilities. Or see them.

Old Aeschylus died when a seabird thought his white head was a chalk rock a[nd] dropped a shellfish on it. And all the unwritten words spilled from his bra[in] across the blue black surface of the sea. Crabs can strip the flesh from a body [in] a matter of hours. Those are pearls that . . . Oh my ever renewing tentacle lad[ies] which of you comes to take another limb, over which of the seven seas will I [be] scattered next? Across the grey landless surfaces beneath the low clouds, wh[at] solitary bird will be my dying cry?

[W]RITING AGAIN AFTER A WHILE

[W]hen I find out her address I go round and see her. I've been to a doctor about a [ur]inary infection and she's living in the same suburb. I hope it is only a urinary [in]fection. The same suburb the doctor's in. She's not in, no one's in; bricks in [th]e yard, shovels with cement caked on them. Someone has been building a wall; [m]ay be digging a swimming pool in the straggly grass. It is an old suburb. I go [ro]und to see her another time after I've been in a pub which is also quite near. [Th]e antibiotics make me feel sick and I don't want to stay there drinking. At the [ho]use they tell me she's moved, living with Angela.

[W]hen I see Robert Z. again, I say I went round to see her, about those stories, [bu]t she's moved to Angela's. He tells me where Angela lives. I go round to see her [at] Angela's but I can't find the house. I go to the pub. I'm losing my taste for [be]er. I ask someone where the house is. I go round to see her.

[I s]eem to see a lot of people before I see her in the back garden, sitting on the [wa]ll at the edge of the harbour. I talk to two people in the house and two [pe]ople who come from the garden before I get to see her. She expresses surprise [at] my visit.

[I s]ee her for new idioms. Her idioms are different from those I've been amongst. [I']m not seeing her to fuck her. She doesn't use fuck or screw in her vocabulary. [Th]e only expletive she uses is flipping. I stopped saying flipping fifteen years ago. [I I]earned to say fuck and screw and idiom and expletive. I say she expresses [sur]prise at my visit. 'What a flipping surprise visit this is,' maybe she says.

[It's] an old house. Next door is a seven storey block of units. In the grounds of [the] units people swim in the swimming pool. In the waters of the units maybe [wo]uld be better. In the grounds of the old house we sit on the grass and the sea [wal]l. She leans against the wall in her bikini. I sit on the wall in my shoes and [soc]ks and

trousers and underpants and singlet and shirt. I roll up the sleeves of [my] shirt in the sun. The water is too polluted to swim in in this part of the [har]bour.

[So]metimes I look across into the grounds of the units and look at the bikini'd, [ma]scara'd, hair-done sunbathers. They do seem to be of a different world. We all [see]m to be of different worlds. I do not feel in my world sitting on the wall. I [hav]e not felt of my world since I sat on the wall.

[I r]ead a new story she's working on while she gets dressed when the sun goes [do]wn. I don't want her to screw somebody like she's setting out to at the [beg]inning of the story. She comes back dressed and brushed and combed and [sm]iling at me there waiting for her to come back. She did screw somebody. We [tal]k a lot like neither of us has been talking to anybody for a long time. We get stoned. We keep on smiling and talking. I take away a folder of her stories t[o] read.

I go round to tell her how fantastic they are. Later I show her what I have be[en] writing. "Despite her protestations," she says, "it's insane, what an incredib[le] thing to say; 'he insisted on accompanying her, despite her protestations that [it] was not worth his while.'" I seem to be getting stoned a lot. I don't wr[ite] 'despite her protestations' or 'insisted on accompanying her' or 'not worth h[is] while' any more. I don't write anything any more for a while. 'I'm living in [a] very dirty house,' she says, when she goes to see a doctor about this infectio[n.] 'Move,' he says. On Saturday we drive down to pick up her bed.

William Pillin

[T]HE INTELLECTUALS

[1].

[L]ord, I'm fed up with the busy spiders
[a]nd their tenuous spit of thought,
[w]ho, lacking the stuff for a quarto,
[l]ose tenure and lecture appointments.

[T]hey fatten their purses
[b]y spreading confusion
[a]mong wide-eyed gudgeons.
[T]hey see nothing

[b]ut their own grimacing faces
[i]n a delirium of mirrors.
[M]ost of all I suspect
[t]he rarely sincere ones:

[t]he pale moon-masters
[w]ith eyes like well-lights.
[W]hat on earth are they saying?
[T]heir whispers faint in the distance.

[2]. *after Moishe Leib Halpern*

[L]isten, my beloved son:
[I] worked all my life like a dray-horse.
[T]his house and a measure of savings
[w]ill cushion your future;

[b]ut if ever I see you moon-struck
[w]ith a notion to write a paper
[o]n Whither This? or The Future of Something,
[s]o help me, I will leave my possessions

[t]o a Society for Simplified Spelling
[o]r some such fuddle. Dear offspring,
[t]ake up wine, venery, gaming--
[n]ot theorists, not dialecticians!

NOCTURNE WITH A ROOM

He haunts this room,
its lamplight,
its books, paintings,
floorplanks, rugs, curtains.

On these walls he scribbled
the diary of his presence.
On these walls he pasted
his dreams like old posters.

Centuries of his silence
drown in an old mirror.
Nothing changes
except by arrangement.

The moon rises like clockwork.
Punctual as steeple chimes
the recorded piano
whispers each evening.

At the open window he watches
people walking under the streetlights.
We must presume him
to be happy. Only rarely

does he brush the walls
with weeping fingers.
Only rarely does he hammer the walls
with raging fists!

[N]OCTURNE WITH RAIN

[T]he bare branch weeps
[o]ver its thousands of wet leaves.

[C]rows of black mist
[p]ress on my window.

*

[W]hy is this always
[a] mournful weather?

[A]re we not also
[m]ostly water

[l]ike those moon-tears
[g]leaming on tips of leaves?

*

[W]hat should I fear?
[l]ike a sea-gull

[I] managed a dry cliff-nest
[f]or myself and those I love.

*

[R]unning after life,
[s]tumbling and falling
[a]nd running again--

[a]ll those crazy leaps

[f]rom a kitchen window
[t]o the remote and shining stars!

*

[D]rip, drip, drip.
[I] latch doors and windows.
Let it be a long time
before I lose the key

to this house where my love
expands to the walls and ceilings,

where my love is larger than anything else!

NOCTURNE IN AN ABANDONED MUSIC ROOM

I lay quietly listening to some musical rabbi
expound his angelic lore
when I heard a conflicting piano
from an abandoned music room.

From this room, for ages
the silent refuge
of moths that fly into houses at night,
I heard a haunted mazurka
as if an ancient player piano
started up
after decades of silence.

I entered the vast room with its odor of moist loam.
Three women I saw whom I've loved,
still handsome but with faces tired and lined.
Four men were there whom I counted as friends
and they had a bewildered look in their hollow eyes.

The crystal chandelier was dull with insect droppings
and dust.
A single candle
flickered on eroding walls.
I pushed aside the rotting curtains
hoping to see children playing on the lawn
but a thick fog
concealed and silenced the world.
Pianos lost in memory,
a tremor
in a room vast and empty.
The desire
for yet another dawn!

I wept and I cried:

"It can't happen, not now, not like this!"
and my words were a mist on the wind.

I lay silently, waiting, waiting...

WISHES

How often have I said this?
how I long to run, run to where the pepper grows!

I finally did it, I came to that fabled land.

There I heard a man whisper:
how I long to run, run to where the pine-cones grow!

Christine Zawadiwsky

Hiding in Public

I am standing up inside my mother's stomach, wearing patent leather shoes and a starched blouse and a navy skirt with a wide, bolted belt. If I flex my muscles and my arms as if I were exercising and stand up as high on my toes as I can, sometimes I can push aside the curtains of blood hung on golden rods and look straight past the prison bars out of her eyes. That's the world, she says.

I am six and I am sitting on a sidewalk in Chicago, my tricycle turned upside-down and resting on its handle-bars between my spread legs. I am pushing the pedals with my hands and shouting, Ice cream! ice cream! I am making ice cream with my red and white tricycle; the sweetness of autonomy.

Outside I am lying on my father's fat stomach; he has a handle-bar mustache. I can hear his heart far away inside, though I know his heart
should be somewhere else. Through miles and miles of flesh I think I
can
hear it faintly ticking, and I become as anxious as a geiger counter. My father is sleeping.

I am twenty-one and lying flat in bed dressed in nothing but a big man's sweatshirt. A man is lying beside me sweating blood and
telling
me a story about a girl who ran for President and made ice-cream
with
her tricycle during the campaign. In the kitchen my mother is
screaming,

Soup? How can I make soup? Do you want me to cut off my leg to
have a
bone to make soup with?

Two brothers walked out of my father's loins. One had his index
finger
bitten off by a racehorse. The other had scratched glasses and talked
as if he were a gyroscope.

Suddenly they are all in a circle, pointing at me. I am lying under
the skins of six thousand mute kittens. I can only answer them with
my eyes.

Herbert T. Schmidt, Jr.

right-handed/heavy hitter

poets possess three virtues

drunkenness

impotence

& suicide

i am two for three

& looking to sacrifice a man
home

GREAT POEM

some guys i know sd

we've got a GREAT idea

GREAT i sd

we'll set up sort of a vanity press

and charge \$12

to publish the work of a lot of GREAT

undiscovered

poets

GREAT i sd

and we'll use one of your poems

as a joke

one of the really offensive ones

GREAT i sd

so i went to work writing a really offensive \$12 poem

a GREAT \$12 poem

(fuckshitrapescREW)

as a part of the GREAT american rip-off of 1973

a GREAT

really offensive

\$12 poem

(pissonyoucuntlappers)

but i stopped

whatthehell do i get for the \$12?

we'll send you a copy of the book

they sd

with your poem and your name under it

and everything

GREAT i sd

but i'd rather have the \$12 and the poem

GREAT they sd

(cocksuckingsonofabitch)

it's assholes like you

who ruin books like this

GREAT i sd

GREAT

keep the money

publish the poem

(GOFUCKYOURSELVES)

Annabelle W. Bergfeld

IMMORTAL TURKEY

The woman got up and began pulling on her gloves. Suddenly the doctor thought he might have misjudged her. Some people can be told — some can't. He began to worry the pad in front of him.

"If I cry," she said, giving meticulous attention to a finger, "it's not for myself but for a little pepper and salt colored baby that's been dead these sixty years or more."

The doctor's pencil stood still and he looked up.

The woman smiled. "I was two — maybe three. We lived on a twelve acre farm. That twelve acres was always dangling under our noses and we were poor so I put the two together and blamed those twelve acres. I'd never heard the word poverty but I suppose if I had I had probably blamed the twelve acres. Twelve acres with a house on it and barn and cost us six hundred dollars — taxes, interest and some off on the mortgage amounted to less than a hundred a year. No one had ever heard of amortization, either. You can see where we'd have stood in a city. There was woods all around us but a road ran in front of the house. Mother picked and sold wild berries in the summer and chestnuts in the fall. Dad did his own farming and some farming on the shares and worked in the woods in the winter. We were far better than share croppers.

"We had one cow but that's all one could manage on twelve acres. Mother kept a few chickens and sold the eggs and set the hens to raise more — occasionally. She traded hens' eggs for duck or turkey eggs—two for one—and managed to fool a hen into hatching them. There's nothing lovelier in all this world than a baby turkey and nothing so homely as an adult unless it's the turkey buzzard. That ugly red thing on a grown turkey's head is only a dainty little grey knob on the baby

or poult as they're called today. That thing seems to be a sort of barometer on the turkey's emotions."

"Talking herself under control," the doctor thought and glanced at his desk clock — well she had a right to try and he admired her for it considering what he'd told her — there were other patients but — but they could wait awhile —those other patients out there.

"They don't take to cuddling like baby chicks do so Mother'd take them from the hen as soon as they were hatched. She said they had blisters under their wings and if these were broken the babies would die. I tried finding that blister when I was older but I never did so I guess that was just an old wives' tale. When they were all hatched Mother'd put them back with the hen and put them in a coop. In the hatch I'm speaking of there was a dauntsy one.

"I don't think there is such a word as dauntsy," she went on, "but everybody used it when they talked about sick turkeys. Turkeys are such imitators yo[u] could be sure if one got sick they'd all copy him maybe even to dying. So [a] dauntsy one was always segregated. If it got better, it went back with the hen.

"I don't know what Mother did during the week but I stayed with Grandmother Sunday night till Saturday morning. I didn't care much excepting for that Saturday home going. All day Friday I'd sing "I'm going home tomorrow Saddleday." This particular Saturday, Mother had a dauntsy turkey in the house in a shoe box. There's nothing lovelier than a baby turkey and I fell in love with him on sight and couldn't keep my hands off him. Mother'd take him out of my hands, talk about the blister and put him back in the shoe box.

"The house had no closets—only nails behind the doors where we'd hang our clothes. Rubbers, boots and special clothes were piled on the floor under the coats. You have to hear all this if you're going to understand what happened next.

"Suddenly the little fellow got out of his box—all by himself and started across the floor. There was something so dignified in the way

he carried himself something so final, I cried out that he was better—was going to get well. "Now I can hold him," I exulted but Mother said, "No, he's going to die." When I think of that I can't see anything of Mother but a restraining hand but I can feel her body against mine—soft and warm. I've watched little children and they seldom look up so I think they're only conscious of legs and feet and maybe a lap to sit on—as if we're all personages maybe like God or His holy angels about whose feet we cluster around. Anyway that hand is a very definite part of that picture with that dignified little fellow marching out so bravely to meet his fate.

"He's going to die," she said, "and he wants to be alone with his death."

"And he walked, with such prideful dignity across the rough boards that made up the floor not only in the kitchen but in every room in the house, as if drawn by some invisible string toward the corner and its pile of shoes and rubbers. Meeting the first one he clambered over it and the second and so on and we watched in silent concentration—empty headed concentration on my part for I didn't know what lay at the end of that march. And then, with the last shoe behind him and the apex of the corner ahead, he was gone! Even now it's amazing to me how a thing so small can become so infinitely less in the fraction of a breath. I broke from the restraining hand and ran across the room and picked him up. He flopped, limply, in my hand.

"I don't know what all I said then but I was probably as near to hysterics as I've ever been since and I had to know why—why he had gone so quickly and Mother said something told him if he didn't go quickly I would run and pick him up like that and bring him back to his box and he would have to make the long march all over again and he just didn't think he could.

"I was still upset when Grandmother came for me but I was keenly aware of what they were talking about the gist of which was that I was old enough to be told the mysteries of death and the resurrection. She got a box and lined it with red flannel and made a little pillow for

the tiny head. Then she got the baby from wherever Mother had put it. Another bit of flannel served for a covering. We went outside and dug a grave under the rosebush and I learned about digging graves.

"In the house again, Grandmother played she was the minister and she read a bit of Bible verse, said a prayer and sang, 'Shall we Gather at the River'. Next we were pall bearers and carried the little box out to the mound beneath the roses. Once more we had a prayer and then we covered the box with dirt. Assuring me that God would come and get the little creature he loved so much he just had to take him back home again—or else He'd send some of his angels for it.

"Then we went back to her place for the mysterious in-between times I spent there. I don't remember much what we travelled in but there was a horse and it would be a long time till people with as little of this world's goods as twelve and a half acres would have any sort of motor conveyance.

"Acute as my perception was of small things like the turkey, bigger ones like a house or a conveyance were more like an extension of myself. When we came back the next Saturday, I sprang from whatever we'd ridden in, peeling off the blankets to free myself. That motion is one I've been aware of so many times, I think it must be tied in with the act of being born — with an act I must never quite forget since I must divest myself of things at the end even as at the beginning. I ran to the rosebush! I clawed away the earth and brought up the box. God hadn't come for my baby though and he'd forgotten to send even an angel to get it for him and worms were busily engaged in plumbing the tiny breast.

"I was sick after that for a long time. I can remember hearing people tell Mother it would be all for the best for things would take me hard all my life. I know now they'd given me up but something changed my mind and I got better."

The woman smiled and ran her fingers through her grizzled hair which she wore well. The doctor smiled back, and the woman finished pulling on her gloves. "Ever since then," she said, "whenever

the subject of death has come up, I've thought of that little pepper and salt baby and I've cried. Sometimes the subject has been touched upon so lightly that people have thought me teched. They'd have been sure of it if I'd told them I was crying over any sort of a baby dead a half a century. Of course it isn't just the turkey but that for which it is a symbol — The cute little bit of fluff which could face eternity with such sublime dignity".

And with that she was gone like — he finished the thought later.

The receptionist opened the door, "Mrs. Johnson," she said, "Mrs. Carr had to leave and made her appointment for tomorrow. Bridge."

"I have to be there, too," Mrs. Johnston flustered, "could you maybe?" The nurse said they could and the doctor reached for his hat in the closet.

"I've about had it," he said. "I'm going to walk a bit before I go home." B[ut] fate had other things in store.

A man bounded up the steps as he opened the door. He was out of breath an[d] panting. "Doc," he cried, "come quick. I hit a woman". He pointed down th[e] street to where a big truck leaned against the curb at a crazy angle. "But I didn'[t] mean to, Doc. Honest to God, I didn't. I wasn't going fast. It's a town with ligh[ts] every block or so and these things don't stop easy. And I see this woman comin[g] down the sidewalk. She's an old Jane and us guys don't notice old Janes but th[is] one was — odd. She was all lit up like she's swallowed an electric light bulb an[d] then she's under my wheels and I don't know how she got there". He waved hi[s] arm towards the truck where a crowd was beginning to gather. "I tried to mi[ss] her but it was too late even before I tried." He started on a run toward the truc[k] calling back over his shoulder, "You will come, won't you, Doc?" but the docto[r] was going back into the building. The man ran back and seized the other's ar[m.]" For God's sake, Doc, you wouldn't — not just like that you wouldn't."

The doctor reached down and pried the fingers that held his arm like a vi[se] apart. "I have to get my bag," he said.

When he got to the truck, the man was clinging to the arm of the young polic[e] man who seemed to be trying to get some notes. "Honest to God, Officer," th[e] man was saying.

The crowd had increased — was increasing with the passing seconds. A prie[st] was there ahead of him and crawling under the truck to where the doctor coul[d] see a shoe and a bundle of rags. He joined the other, dragging his bag in with hi[m] but there wasn't anybody there and the bag was useless. He began backing ou[t.] As he got to his feet, he faced the sky for a minute or two for a strange proce[s-] sion of cloud animals were arching down the horizon — a bear, a ship, a giant turkey. Suddenly it all became a part of a play in which they were the cast an[d] he finished the sentence he'd left hanging in the air back there.

"Turkey," he said, "immortal turkey." The man saw him and released th[e] officer's arm and ran to him just in time to hear his words.

"Doc," he said, "you nuts or something? I kill a woman I ain't never se[en] before and you start talking about whacher gonna eat. I'm in a pinch, Doc, an[d] you gotta forget yourself and help me. I killed a woman I never seen before. I['m] on the street and she's on the walk and I think she's a dame what looks like she['s] swallowed an electric light bulb and then she's — she's — there," he pointed to th[e] shoe "and I seen I couldn't do anything myself and I run for you." Sobs bega[n] to tear at his throat. "You gotta believe me, Doc."

The doctor glanced skyward and with a start saw the turkey was still ther[e] — still — like it was waiting, "I believe you, Sir," he said and he looked the office[r] full in the face. "This man wouldn't have been so careless, Officer," he said, "an[d] for that part, neither would the woman. You see, I gave her a bit of a shock just now. Ordinarily I'd have handled it differently but she seemed so — powerful. I misjudged her though and she wasn't powerful at all".

"For that matter," it was the officer's turn now, "few of us are". He started to put his pad away but the wind ruffled the pages and he had to smooth them down. "There'll be a few formalities of course."

Something made the doctor look skyward where a grotesque hunk of clouds which resembled nothing much but with a little imagination one might just see a turkey in it as it gathered speed and galloped off into nothingness. "Turkey," he whispered, "Immortal turkey."

But the others didn't hear him. They had their own problems to resolve and the man saw a way had opened to him. "Thank you, Officer," he said and, "Thank you, too, Doc. I guess you're like the rest of us. You've had a bit of a shock yourself." His eyes were on the truck and those gathered about it whose grim job it was to right it and get that mess out of there. The others faded away like the cloud had done but with a little less speed and the man's remark went unanswered. Perhaps they'd regale the family at home with what they'd seen — taken part in, in fact, and if they embroidered this last a bit who could blame them, but as for now there was nothing left to be said.

Paul D. Brooks

**FIRE FEVER FLAME FUME TUMULT STORM
TEMPEST
BURST FIT PAROXYSM EXPLOSION**

(For Patricia)

mouth lit up like candy in a valentine box
tinted eyes slick as a live wire
eyewords a questionmark & hands a
 dance across panels of plywood

lady
your face hits me
like shrapnel

KATHY, ERICA, SUE, & YOU

On close inspection you find the sun has gone nova the
leaves which were red & gold are mushroom clouds the
wineglass tastes salty the
mocking bird you've known my heart gone crazy &
you're informed by reliable sources that goldenrod will
give you heart attacks

Dragons are crawling up your toilet seats & looking
for trouble call
the plumber you'll find
swans & goldfish swimming in the piss & shit & you
can be sure they're not looking at it poetically
they're looking for a
way out

FOR MY SON SEAN KEVIN ON HIS FIRST BIRTHDAY

this poem is dying inside
it is about 32 ounces
of slick fingers caressing your face
it is made of a red-coated wind
playing and clotting
your groaning feet

now
you have been detached
from certain regions of yesterday
and you are running around
biting my eyes

WESTMORELAND, TENNESSEE (1945)

mama boarded up my eyes so i couldn't see
the shack pasted in the sky the clattering
knuckles against her heart & all those
paul revere's who made her into a whore

a nickel's worth of dahlias made her face into
scurrying sounds until she got laid in a hole of
screams & let the death ooze down her chin
but the day they buried my baby brother under
the retching sound of prayer it was my mouth said

you can all go straight to hell

DIVISION 80 SLAMMER

Old men wearing loose-fitting bodies picking up alleyways from the floor stained with nowhere & cops with dirty eyes. Black dudes trying to beat the jailer's shuck with dimes of anger & faces swollen & filled with the taste of courtroom raps. 8 hours of sitting, waiting for the curtaincall & the Jesuschrist judge to hand out the candy—in a jammed tank rustling with piss & shit & the stink of P.D.'s perfumed & pressed suits, hustling plea bargains, smooth talking the choo-choo on some dude's arm so he can break it down to possession of a stolen soul. The clank of all-day keys on Mr. Yessir's hip. Bored handcuffs handed out with baloney & cheese sandwiches. Invisible bums with poems no one can figure out, hitting everyone up for a feel of city street.

The judge comes in handing out guilt. 30 days for drunk
———no O.R.

Cut'cher throat for you Mister?

Ken McCullough

NOCTURNE

in the darkness of the car
 before I start the engine
the wings of a luna moth
 brush my arm

SUMMER COMES TO JUDITH GAP, MONTANA

three flies

in a square of sunlight
on the parquet floor

AFTER A SUMMER STORM

one by one

my three black cats

jump from the kitchen window

go thru the hole in the hedge

& stop to drink

from a yellow plastic bowl

left

between 2 rows

of Swiss chard

George W. Smyth

WHAT HAPPENED?

I first heard it in the seventh grade. What happens just happens. It was the best advice, I call it advice now, I received in ten years of schooling. Words failed me, and so did numbers and history and the cutting of numerous crayfish, innocent victims. What happens just happens. I overheard one teacher say that to another, and after I left school during the tenth grade my life seemed to consist of moment-to-moment things brought on by over-hearing words that did not directly, just indirectly, concern me, times of indecisive trial initiated by some vague but perhaps improper interference, overt or not, on my part. Eavesdropping, however, has not been without its rewards. It became, and is becoming, my higher education, and displaced, and is replacing, the lower. Something to do there with common curses, or blessings. Nothing to do with categories. I'll have none of those. I'll have chance, its role, its very own revelation, and I know why.

I was sixteen and I wanted to ship out to South America. I don't know why. In New Orleans I went to the steamship company that had routes there. They said they were hiring for their passenger ships and their freighters, but since I didn't have papers I would have to go to the seaman's union place and inquire about the papers. I went, and a guy there told me I had to have a job lined up in a very definite way before I could get the papers. I went back to the steamship company and they shrugged and I went back to the union and they said sorry. In their outer office I heard a man tell this old guy the railroads were hiring. I said, What?

In St. Louis, a week after hopping off the freight train, perkiness overcame me and I got married. I know the reason. She said she loved me. She also liked to travel, and a bit of traveling was getting into my blood. She sensed it. That was one girl I've known who knew that what happens just does. Her girl friend must have believed that, too,

because I heard her tell my bride that I was one of the no goods who would come to be a nothing, if not worse, if I already wasn't, but she would probably do the same thing my pretty bride did. Cry her eyes half out and leave me after a week. Leave me for what? This is what I asked both of them. They looked funny, then looked at each other. I said, What do you see? They said nothing. I said, Why? I said it again. Nothing.

I caught a ride in a very slow truck to Chicago. The driver, an old guy with manicured nails, said he could go faster, but he just didn't want to. I don't know why. I asked him his philosophy of life. I was eager to learn things like that, from other people, and told him so. Things like what? he said, and I thanked him. That night he had a heart attack at a truck stop and I drove him into the city and the police took over. I got a ticket for speeding but I saved the man's li[fe.] The doctor at the emergency room said he would fix the ticket and I listene[d] while he told a nurse about his wife's brother, who had just returned in terribl[e] shape from the Northwest Territories. I had no idea where that was, and I wante[d] to know, and I said, Where?

In Detroit, I helped assemble automobiles. About four, until they caught o[n] to me. I had this thing about dash lighters. I know the reason. They were total[ly] useless, by themselves, and that's the way I felt. In a coffee shop, I heard thi[s] guy say to a waitress he was going to California to make some money and stu[ff] and I thought that's for me, and I asked him if I could tag along. He said o.k. [but] the waitress couldn't. She didn't. He had a brand new Ford, and when we got t[o] San Francisco I gave him the dash lighters, three I had managed to hold on t[o.] What're these for? he said. You're really dumb, I said, and I'm not going to te[ll] you. He said, What? I told him to forget it. He said, Why? I told him I want[ed] out of the car. He said, Where? I said, Here. He stopped the car and I asked hi[m] where he was going. He said, I don't know, and I liked him a lot for that, but i[t] was too late. He was off to make money and stuff. I stood on the sidewalk an[d] said, Well?

I couldn't find a job in San Francisco, I don't know why, since I was willin[g] to do anything. Maybe that's why. I got in with a group of carefree people an[d] that took care of food. But I wanted to do something interesting, and I overhear[d] two girls talking about Mexico. I knew where that was and got on a freight tra[in] to San Diego. Customs stopped me, before anyone else did. Who are you an[d] why are you going to Mexico, they said, and were very polite but firm. I did[n't] know what to say. I said, What?

Here in Texas where I started out I am going to celebrate my forty-second[d] birthday in a few days. It will be a grand, oh a very glorious occasion. Hundre[ds] have been invited. Workmen are erecting a tent on the first back lawn. A[n] orchestra is coming in from New York. A splendid time will be had by all. I wou[ld] have liked to have invited some of my early acquaintances, but twenty-six ye[ars] have gone by since I left home and went to New Orleans. What happened [in] those years? What happened just happened. My life is a complete success. I [am] totally happy, as are my family and friends and employees. My life has bee[n] innocent of any real wrongdoing as my poor tenth grade crayfish, pure victim[. I] am happy just waiting for events, what will happen. Common curses, blessin[gs,] chances, I'll have all of those, because they have something to do with learn[ing,] being taught. I don't know why, but I know why. What happened? It just ha[p-] pens. Someone is just now talking to someone. There is some advising in proc[ess.] I must listen and know why. I must see that what happens just happens. Bu[t I] must see that I am part of it. I must follow my calling, even in matters that wou[ld] seem not to concern me. But they always do. I make certain of that now an[d I]

know why. I am not a director of truck and railroad and shipping lines for nothing. It didn't just happen but it wasn't exactly planned, either. I don't know why. Experience perhaps. Or else I'm lying and why, in these days for me, for us, would I lie?

Martin Laarakker

WHEN A MARE FIVE MONTHS FULL

When a mare five months full
grazes ahead of the cows she
will have a colt with pearl hooves.
If she grazes behind them
the colt will be born a day late and
graze all its life behind cows.
When a mare six months full
grazes four circles around her stallion,
two before and two after the midnight
between a day when flies start a war
with bluejays and the next day,
silkworms will come a week before she foals
and spin wings inside the mare.
When the colt is born it will spread
and dry its wings and fly away before
the mare can show it how to walk.
It will ride the whirlwinds in a comet's tail,
race them to be first around the sun.
It will follow the trails down that are cut
by falling stars, to land at night when
none can see it cannot walk.
But if at the midnight of the mare's walk
her stud stands across the line between
those days, his front feet in the new day, his
hind feet in the old,
and she walks without grazing,
the colt will stay with her for a week.
It will drink her milk
and its wings will turn mother of pearl

and instead of a falling star
it will ride the sunlight down
and feed on grass
its mare has kept from the cows.

INDIAN

Burned out by acid, some say,
but no one knows after
seeing you stand all summer in
a closed store-entrance between
two empty windows. Your eyes
your eyes.

Behind the windows some old newspaper, a
rag, dust, nothing that will mirror
the sky's blue, the shiny colored cars, our
faces, my face, who
feel akin to you, to the sadness which
died in your face and never was buried,
to the no sorrow, no joy, no anger, no
hunger line of your mouth.

All day you stand, only rarely moving:
your hand quickly chasing a fly, or moving your
hair from in front of your eyes.

And the store that once was behind the dead windows
never even sold cigars.

THERE ARE NO OTHER JOBS IN THE HALL

I fall
all the way down, ninety feet.
My head hits a plank,
my body flips around, hooks
a foot in the scaffold.
At the bottom, rods stick
out of the concrete,
through my ribs, my belly,
through a thigh and one
through my head.
The pain is short,
too short to hurt.
It is quiet now.
I don't hear the crane
and the bulldozers anymore.
"Can you handle it?"
my partner,
on the plank below me.
I open my eyes and see my hands
tight around a scaffold brace.
It's a tube, rusty with
some paint left on it.
Green. This company paints
everything green.
I hang on, look at my safety belt.
The chain is hooked solid
into the scaffold,
it's safe to let go.
But I can't,
the scaffold might fall over,
a guywire might break.
But I must

let go,
I can't stay here like this.
I have to work,
keep this job.
I look at the leg
that slipped off the plank.
My eyes bounce
from plank to plank down
to the thick iron rods
that stick up out of the foundation.
I hang on
to the green scaffold.
But it's the only job to be had.
The column we are building sways,
I swear it does.
Mother, why did you ever let
me grow up?
God, Mother.
Her arms are around me,
safe, warm.
"You allright?"
It's my partner again.
I look at my hands,
pull my leg back up.
There are no other jobs in the Hall.
One hand lets go of the tube
then
the other.
I stand up
straight.
I raise one hand
put my hard hat right.
I pick up the double jack.
I must swing it.
I must work.

I must
 swing
 this heavy
hammer.

TWO BY FOUR

Straight, clear grain,
the whole two by four,
no bend, no warp.
Some sawdust on it.
I wipe it off.
I measure, mark, sharpen
my pencil and square
a thin sharp line
across the lumber.
I cut it by hand,
the teeth of my saw against
the edge of the line,
the first stroke along my finger
to keep the saw from jumping,
slow and short. It always is.
In light even strokes
sharp teeth slice
tight soft fibers. "Well
Jesus Christ, what do you think
we got power saws for?"
The foreman is right.
Skill saws are faster.
I measure, mark, ram
the howling saw through
clean straight spruce.
Soon the first piece
is lost in a pile
of square cut two by fours.

THE SKIN GREW BACK

On the parapet next to the ladder
I stay out of the way of
men laying felt paper, pouring
tar, floating
big sticky mops.
Others carry rolls
of paper, buckets of hot
tar. It doesn't look hot.
It stinks. Mainly it stinks.
I knew a guy who fell in it.
Took a long time to cool.
His skin grew back.
Beyond the roof, beyond
the men with sloppy buckets,
is the Sound.
The water is dirty this close in.
Farther out,
over the clear water,
the Olympic mountains,
one clean sharp broken line.

Frances Dean Smith

UNTITLED

Where is your mother?

Out in the alley.

What is she doing?

Watching a red fence.

Will she return?

There's no telling.

What will you do, then?

I'll watch this blue
postage stamp
until I drown in it.

HEARING POETRY

to Alice Benson

Think of yourself as learning to use ears.
Think of your ear as fitting to get words.
Think of the words as soaking dry nerve
until, like a sponge, it swells to a new use.
When the ear lies drunk as a bell, hearing begins.

David Cole

Final Indignities

My ginger baking lover makes mistakes too, as I once pointed out. She knows eggs and saucepans and can count to five fifty on her cold electric stove, but what's she really know, say, about campfires? She should never take her own misunderstanding for a feeling of contempt.

That's what she did though, putting it exactly wrong as I kissed her so-long at the door. "I feel nothing but contempt for you, Jason," she said. Lies, lies.

But even ginger baking lovers and homemaking courtesans can learn humiliation if they try. It's admittedly made harder by their gleaming, stainless sinks. And the chrome handled refrigerators don't help much either. But all that flies must fall and, finally, Waring Blenders can't think for you.

So it was "Bye, bye, Sugar Cookie." I would've hung around LA one more day, explained myself in detail, left a short bibliography, if it weren't for what was on my trail. The Law was nipping heels now and way back when in Albany The Law'd told me, "You better run, boy, cause we're *really* after *you*." So that's what I did and am doing. Cause I *always* obey The Law.

Later that day, on the six oh five bus to Stockton, three thousand weaving miles from where I once came, I'm suddenly struck by the thought of being chased by automatic washers, all on rinse cycle, clanking their murderous insides at me like jungle drummers scaring jungle cats out into the open. Oh, we live on envy. How very far, far, far I could go had I the parts of a Whirlpool. But instead, I'm given the measly entrails of a fatigable biped, wholly undependable and

completely without warranty, as if my very heart itself had been bought under the counter at a flea market. Thus equipped I'm supposed to elude Justice? Crap. My thoughts well up inside me. I have to relieve my tensions in the swaying little room they stick in the backs of these things. Uuuhhhggg, down the dry bus toilet. Must've been something I ate. Too much of Lover's ginger bread. "Bye, bye, Sugar Cookie," I say. Bus toilets never talk back.

Buddy Mike waits for me in Stockton. He'd hide you out in the worst of times. In fact, the worse the better for Mike. He used to be just a plump, bright Jewish kid until he joined the Socialist Workers in college and now he's the hero of his own little Stockton Revolutionary Movement For Peace. Has some fine enemies in high places. Is passionately hated by some of the town's most influential citizens. He's what they're talking about when the Civic Action Group makes demands to "Clean Up Stockton."

Buddy Mike sits in the depot in between two of his hirelings. Even the local mobster chieftain walks unhampered through this dull burg but good old Mik[e] has two body guards. Now, that's cool. Mike and his boys look around the room for Feds before they rise to greet me. They know every Fed in central California, these guys, and Mike's got a subscription to the FBI Newsletter. But it's all clear. All cool.

"Hey, man."

"Hey," Mike says. "Got your lunch?"

No, blessed virgin of the bus stop, I don't have a gun. Jesus, as if I don't hav[e] gum machines full of trouble already, he wants I should be fully armed and considered dangerous too. Me-thinks Mike, the well intentioned revolutionary, may be no more than a redone nineteen-fifties shitkicker, prowling among alleyways with bicycle chain and zip gun.

"You heard from Polly yet?" I ask, climbing into the getaway car which ha[s] been parked dramatically outside the depot with its

engine running.

Mike doesn't say for a minute. He pretends to be giving directions to the thu[g] behind the wheel. "What's that?"

"You heard me. What about Polly?"

Consoling hand on my shoulder. "Easy. We'll talk about it when we get to m[y] place."

Jason, the running fool, has second thoughts about this foot stop. Annals o[f] Absurdity, Entry Two Oh Four: Stockton, California. Diminutive crook, in a[n] honest attempt to elude the attentions of the authorities, sails on into the area'[s] hot bed of sedition where out of work bouncers and one time losers grapple wit[h] politics and local government. Here in the fray, he stumbles stupidly, dreamin[g] of quiet orchards and fallen leaves. And of Pollyanna who hates to flee.

How was it going, and all that? Oh, can't complain, Mike tells me. Life's lik[e] an elevator with the doors stuck open. It has its ups and downs and it'[s] dangerous, but as long as you don't try to disembark between floors you'r[e] bound to make it through. Whatever that was supposed to mean. He's heard [a] little from home. His father's failing but his mother's still strong as a wate[r] buffalo. The neighbors still speak of him with disgust. "Where'd he go wrong[?] Where was the young doctor-to-be now?" He misses the old place but he can'[t] anymore go back to Albany than I. Anyway, socialists don't have hometown[s] this year. Hadn't I heard?

He has a dark, mildewed cellar for a command post with jars of peac[h] preserves up on shelves. His front? No, the peaches are for The People. Neve[r] mind that, he wants to know about me.

But I don't know about me anymore. I know a lot about cross town subway[s] and all night truck stops but even that would lose a lot in

the translation. I v[e] met my share of waitresses who chew gum and even had a ginger baking love[r] up to twenty four short hours ago.

"Treated me well, that woman."

"Oh, yeah?" He's not interested.

"There's something to be said for modern appliances. I would've liked to have stayed in that house, though I never learned to trust the color TV set."

Naw, Mike tells me, I'm growing soft. I should watch my edges, cut down on my reading, stay out of places with fancy doorbells. Victory goes to the tough and the brutal. You don't even have to be meek. Just shoot for the back. But Mike must have me mixed up with some other party because I could never even grit my teeth well.

"Gotta prowl," Mike tells me. "Give the town its nightly check."

Okay. He can do that on his own. Better I should be seen with the mayor's pubescent daughter than this king of the Comsymps. But I can't be stuck alone in this cellar with the peach preserves either. I leave in search of a bar. A quiet drink would be beneficial. Best to find a dim, panelled tavern somewhere with well padded booths and dark upholstery. Old love songs on the radio. Bartender to match the woodwork.

The Danny Dee is Stockton's only rowdy bar. People get thrown out for trying to get in. I shuffle through the kitchen with an empty garbage can and leave it for the hamburger scraps by the dishwasher. Nobody even looks twice. One of the many sneaky moves I've accumulated along the miles.

"Snuck in through the kitchen, huh?" It's a tart little blonde waitress whose face has appeared on the cover of candy assortments. Be my valentine? "That's okay. Everybody does it. What'll you have?"

She brings me my drink along with a note. The note's written on the cocktail napkin beneath my glass so that when I look deep into my gin and tonic, as if it were a cynical gypsy's crystal ball, my drink says back to me: "Jason, meet me by the phones." Terse, to the point, no excess verbiage, no mention of an author. My quivering heart tells me that Miss Valentine wrote those loving words. My limping mind suggests not.

Mind over aorta. Some skulking hang-head of a man leans leeringly against the wall. His eyes are small as newsprint. As a young kid he used to do this in malt shops and grocery stores, now he's moved up to go-go joints where he never buys a drink. But he's not The Law.

"Got news from Albany," he confides to me. "An old friend. Wants to see you tomorrow. Nine A.M. Corner of Woloff Street and Twelfth."

Crud on a bun. Where do I get involved in this Sneaky Pete business? I try to be a law abiding fugitive despite the contradictions. Is this what I get? Must my life and times be turned into melodrama? Is nothing inviolable anymore? I make note to watch less television and not to bother with movies.

But facts must be faced and certain eternal questions must be asked of myself in this case. Like: Where can I go that no one will know? Can I trust itinerant messengers? And: Could I hope to make the waitress? I give up thinking about all the friends I don't have in Albany and try to pick her up.

I'm on the run, I freely admit to her. My father left me his textile mill but [I] wouldn't sell out to Mafia elements. Now they've got this contract out on me. They need the place as a front to manufacture amphetamines. I only live from day to day. She says I should sell out. She doesn't believe a word of it. I swear that I'm a clean man, don't smoke or curse abusively. Hardly ever drink. She doesn't believe that either. To show my good will I proceed to get drunk. Life is full of ironies and you never get anywhere by pretending it's not.

When I come back that night, empty handed, Mike's very vague about wha[t] he's heard of Polly. "She's been sick," is all he'll say. I believe that. She was frail. And jail doesn't do much to discourage our weaknesses. I just made that up, [I] realize, since I myself know nothing of penal institutions except for their poo[r] public image. I know roads though, and all the white and yellow lines they pain[t] down the middle of them, if that's any help. Roads don't do much to discourag[e] our weaknesses either. So where are we now? I realize I'm still drunk. Stupi[d] thing.

Mike knows little about the punk at the telephones. "He's part of [th]e seamie[r] element of this town," is all he's sure of. "So don't worry about him bringing i[n] The Law. He was probably hired by your friend." I resent being tied in wit[h] seamy elements though. I have a reputation to maintain.

I'll have your rendezvous watched tomorrow," he assures me, his evil min[d] no doubt considering point of attack, ready reserves and flanking movement[s.] "We won't let him pull off any tricks."

It's nice to have friends with military initiative, but violence makes m[e] nervous. All this slinking about is making me sick. I begin to think of liftin[g] Valentine's lucky skirt. Maybe tomorrow night. I'll only drink cola.

At first I dream nothing, the alcohol fend[s] off those vindictive thoughts whic[h] come around in Halloween masks asking for apples and my attention. But towar[d] morning I begin to thrash with the sharp corners of broken memories. The[y] arrive without embarrassment, flashing onto the screen with the precision o[f] home movies that someone's kid once attacked with sewing scissors. No[w] reassembled out of sequence and incorrectly spliced, the film documentation o[f] my jagged life's being shown back to me so I can see how really cute I was ba[ck] then . . . except that you know it has

quite a different effect on me. Until finally, when I can take it no more and the popcorn's all sold anyway, I fall into a deep, pleasant sleep that hides in itself a deep, troubled dream of lying on the floor of an orchard with the fallen leaves.

Buddy Mike shakes me awake in the morning. We're lying on mattresses spread across the floor of the cellar, surrounded by strange bodies also lying on mattresses. Only Mike and I are awake.

"Why meet these people?" Mike asks in a whisper. He's secretive because he shouldn't care. "There's no way you could ever go back. They can only offer you tricks." I have the feeling he's holding something back. Something he knows and I should.

"No way," I agree. "But they might have news of Polly. And they went to a lot of trouble to find me." I shrug. That's all I know about my ways. It'd be nice to have thoughts as orderly as street maps which I could hand out to tourists like a gas station attendant.

"Why don't you stay in Stockton? Work for The Movement. Make a stand, Jason, we'll protect you."

I smile. "Would The Movement allow my crime if this were its country?"

"There never would've been the war. So there never would've been the need to commit it."

"That's not what I'm asking."

He nods. "I know what you're asking." But he doesn't have an answer.

Nice wind comes in off the fruit trees of central California this morning. The sandy streets and pickup trucks of Stockton are fresh and wide awake. It's the kind of morning for bacon and eggs, fresh coffee, slippers and your newspaper. Sorry to see that dry bagel and

powdered orange juice. I'm missing my ginger baking lover more than I thought, though I think less of her than of her clean kitchen and the sun on her breakfast table. There's a whole, changed world of things to say about a morning that's begun well.

Without the matutinal pleasures which soften the blare of the day, I stagger out into the sunlight from a cellar full of revolutionaries and peach preserves. My blood has stubbornly retained the bulk of alcohol consumed the previous evening and vengeful Stockton, with its farming community morality, taunts me with its billboards and run down pool halls. I pretend not to notice. "Wanna fight?" it keeps asking and I just keep repeating that there's no contest. I admit to being a punk.

There's a peeling bus stop bench at the corner of Woloff Street and Twelfth. A well dressed man who only peels at night in the privacy of his bedroom, is seated on the bench's right end. He's Polly's lawyer. Long time, no see.

"How's Polly? She alright?" I ask, sitting down next to him.

"Hello, Jason. Polly's doing fine." He pauses, thinking that it's a long wa[y] across the country from Albany and wanting me to take that into consideratio[n] when I hear what he has to say next. "Have you thought about giving yoursel[f] up?"

"I haven't thought well of it, if that's what you mean."

"The DA's willing to make certain concessions. And people's attitudes toward[d] the war changed too. Things might not be as severe as you think they are."

I don't know about these guys in their chestnut colored sport coats, handin[g] out free legal advice on lonely benches three thousand miles from their offic[e] space. Makes you kinda wonder if they've run out on their lease.

"Why'd you come out here?" I have to ask him frankly.

He nods as if I'd answered a question. "The DA, Polly's parents, a lot o[f] people in Albany, everyone would like to see all the loose ends brought togethe[r] in this thing. I think they're ready to give you a reasonable break just to sew th[e] case up. Whatever they do, it's got to be better than this running."

Yeah? "What kind of breaks do they give you on murder charges? Reduce i[t] to cruelty to animals? I doubt that they'd be prone to such compromises in [a] murder as obviously premeditated as this. And what about Polly? She get a[n] early parole yet? What kind of breaks they give her?"

He's nodding all this time I'm talking to him as if I'm telling him he's [a] vagrant and, though he wears those dandy clothes, he knows in his heart that I'm completely correct.

"Do me a favor," he says. "Think it over for twenty four hours. I'll meet yo[u] here tomorrow, same time. Okay?"

I don't like the sound of it. He's got some other snaky deal covered u[p] beneath his snazzy shirt, something he's going to suddenly produce with [a] flourish tomorrow morning if I turn this one down. I know these magic attorney[s] and their rabbits. I just wonder what it is he's holding back on me.

"Do me that favor, okay?"

Yeah, sure. Anybody who wants to ship me off to prison as badly as you d[o] has got to be my friend, right? You and your loose ends. Loose ends leave peopl[e] thinking the thing's undone, that they shouldn't rest yet, that their lives can't b[e] complete until every strand's imprisoned in the pattern. They never stop t[o] think that prisons can be made of roads and bus stops just as easily as they ca[n] be constructed with a lot of concrete and steel bars. Hand me some more of you[r] horseshit, Lawyer Man. But I tell him I'll be there anyway because being [a] murderer doesn't preclude my having good manners. And being an agnostic, [I] wouldn't miss his last trick.

"Well, what'd he have to offer?" Mike inquires. We're riding in his bullet proof 55 Chevy. One of the few around. Every other 55 Chevy you see is jacked up in the rear and driven by a snide, young delinquent. But this is the model for the revolution.

"Same old inventory," I sigh. "He had a discounted sentence in exchange for a cold, hard surrender. That, and he'd throw in a little public support."

"He came all the way out here to sell you that?"

My question, Buddy Mike. That one's mine.

"Well," he says, "if that gilded lawyer bird found you here, some more aggressive enemies may be showing up directly."

Agreed, agreed. Neatly dressed federal agents would be catching on in no time. They'd be prancing around town with folded newspapers, looking like they needed something to do. They'd have reason to believe this and that, eyeing all the freaks and runaway farm boys, dropping catchy phrases like: "Unlawful flight to avoid prosecution." Yeah, then I'd have to don my lensless glasses with the Groucho Marx nose and mustache, slink from doorway to doorway, and keep out of well known bars. I'd give them another day though. I couldn't go without saying goodbye to Polly's attorney and I'm sure I can make successful approaches to Valentine the waitress tonight.

But Mike has information. The attorney isn't alone. One of Mike's pushy bully boys happened to find that out by utter mistake. While attempting a minor holdup of the Emperor Hotel lobby safe last night, he stumbled upon the occupation of "Policeman, Albany, New York," scribbled next to a name on the registry. Polly's attorney is also staying in that hotel.

"Ah well," I say. It doesn't surprise me much. What can you expect from a surly old lawyer who probably wants to carry his very own

gavel some day? Justice is for nitpickers anyway, approximations come closer to the spirit of humanity.

It's nice to have friends who care, even when you don't share concerns. I can see no reason to search the Albany Policeman's hotel room but if I go to a bar at this time of day, I'll just get too tired to fire later tonight. So I agree to accompany Buddy Mike and his boys in the rifling of this man's drawers and closets. There's always a lot to be learned in a man's belongings. And even the proper authorities should have their suitcases checked from time to time.

Mike stations a small militia at either end of the hall. They mill about inconspicuously like lost doormen while we pick the lock and break into the policeman's room. I'm relieved to find the room unoccupied since no one has thought to knock first. Mike works largely by intuition and apparently perceives that Albany policemen, even when traveling a long way from Albany, don't hang around their rooms at this stage of the day.

The policeman has mundane tastes. Jockey underwear, the baggy type, and untailored suit coats. He also reads True Detective magazine and carries prophylactics when traveling.

"Hey, look at this." A couple of Mike's hall guards have drifted into the room to see what they could pick up. One's found a warrant. Mike takes it.

"It's a warrant for your arrest, Jason. This guy's all set to pick you right up on murder charges."

"Murder?" the finder says, obviously slightly awed.

"Yeah, nobody you'd know," I say. "Bring it and let's leave."

We leave the room like we found it. Neatness is a virtue. A family of four ha[s] just stepped out of the elevator, amazed to see all the people in their hallway. W[e] say hello and take the stairs.

I have thoughts of carrying the warrant around with me to facilitate m[y] arrest when and if it ever occurs. I picture being searched for weapons by [a] member of the constabulary and having them instead come up with my ow[n] arrest warrant. Style's the important thing. I could bring it out at dull parties, show it off at annual dinners. It might scare off muggers or pushy guys in bars. [I] decide against it though. If it were a warrant for armed robbery or something [I] might keep the thing, but the word "murder" would frighten too many people, [I] think. It's even a bit offensive. So I pick up a hotel envelope in the lobby and send the warrant back to the Albany Police Department. It seems the prope[r] thing to do.

"I was supposed to go back tomorrow morning again to meet the lawyer," [I] tell Mike.

He nods. "That's when they were going to make the grab then."

"I'd still like to go . I think the guy has something else to tell me."

"Call him up before your meeting. Talk to him then."

"Yeah, okay," I say, feeling a little sick.

I have this notion of impending horror about tomorrow, though I can't sa[y] what it is. It might just be seeing that policeman's room. I don't know. Becaus[e] it kind of scares me at times to think of being chased by these men in baggy underwear who read detective magazines. These men have an unreachable qualit[y] about them. I don't know any people who read detective magazines. All m[y] friends read The Evergreen Review and the Los Angeles Free Press, though I onc[e] knew a guy who subscribed to Reader's Digest. But the point is that the men o[n] my trail are alien. I have visions of their real faces being scarred and misshape[n] like maps on the moon. These faces come to me from time to time with eye[s] like traffic lights and lips like curbs. They're horrible faces with "violation" written on their foreheads and locker rooms on their breath. I want to becom[e] part of the woodwork so badly. Possibly turn into a trash

container or [a] doorway. Anything so that these people will give up and pass me by.

Pretty Polly. Polly Pure. The poor, pale-eyed innocence of the girl. I kind of liked it then and the image of her has since settled down into one of the many recesses of my mind in the form of a soft ache. But soft aches and sharp pains must be kept in their rightful places — under control in soundproof rooms.

I have a theory that life's sorrow tends to take you over. That you absorb the stuff as best you can until one day the accumulation of it incapacitates you. From there on it's senility and death. Your length of stay on this earth is governed by your ability to control the sorrow that's entered your system. When the sadness is too much and there's no more holding it back, your being is taken over by it and all that you'll ever do has already been done.

Pretty Polly is such a sorrow, though she's actually part of a much larger grief that concerns itself with what we had to do to someone else. But she has the right to claim her own separate space since what we did affected her as well as the victim. And who knows but that the damage done such a frail, naive young woman may have been worse than the fast death of that man. My mind bends and doubles over at my imaginings of her now. I can't dare to wonder what that murder and subsequent imprisonment does to her clear eyes. It's the damn eyes that prick me the most. I try to find them in other sockets because I'm a haunted sort of man, at home with silly quests for perfection and Christmas past. But time and circumstance have made her eyes much, much clearer than they really were that day on the floor of the orchard when she said to me, so softly, that she couldn't flee. And the eyes I see now are muddied as rivers, carrying their silt so grimly to the sea.

Mike and I talk things over in the afternoon. I have to be going, I tell him, probably tomorrow morning after I call the lawyer. If he could get me a ride over to the coast or somewhere . . . I'd be afraid to use the bus with all these people knowing I'm in town. I also have the feeling that something will go wrong, though I don't tell him that.

"You going to lay low tonight?"

"No," I say, "I figure I'm safe until I give the final 'no' on surrendering. Thought I'd go over to the Danny Dee."

He says he sees. No doubt he does. Probably knows all, what with his hundred spies creeping around the city. Like being in a zoo here for me. That's one reason I've got to leave. Although I'm just an inept fugitive, I have certain standards I like to keep up. Playing Creepy Clyde is not my idea of a dignified game.

We drink to it. Mike's the only guy I know who likes to swill cheap gin straight from the fifth. It must be proletariat. I have to mix mine with some of the juice from the peach preserves, not as disgusting a combination as would first be assumed.

"Tell me something, Jason," he says after a while. "Do you think you ca[n] keep running forever?"

"Oh no," I assure him. "Certainly not."

"Do you think you're making things better this way, back in Albany?"

"Oh no," I assure him again. I have no grand delusions, I never dance for rain. Of course he couldn't understand that — not with his Organization for Change. Mike shakes his head. He can't quite believe that men all run a treadmill. [I] disturb his theories.

"Want to run with me for a while?" I ask. "Make a nice vacation for you. W[e] could take in the Northwest."

"Shit," he says and I wonder if he considers it. I know they'll never go, but [I] always like to ask.

"You really are on the run," my valentine waitress says to me that night. A[s] if I could've ever lied to those sulking breasts. My mind's on seduction, I have n[o] shame.

"Yes, but I have to confess that it's not from the Mafia." She already know[s] that so there's no sense wasting credulity on insistence. Honesty is the leas[t] trodden but most direct path to a woman's heart, I've found. "It's from th[e] police," I confess. "You see, I worked for the Cleveland Zoo and one day I se[t] all the animals free. The authorities are desperate to get me back to Cleveland so that they can make an example of me."

"No!" she exclaims. I give her a little background. My sympathy for trappe[d] animals etcetera. My secret, welling desire to give the animals just one day's freedom so that they can terrify all those muddling gapers who come around all week long to act superior to them. She seems impressed. I slowly coat my stomach with Danny Dee gin and tonics as a hedge against the after effects of grain alcohol and peach preservative.

Yes, she thinks I'm cute. A little eccentric, perhaps, for disregarding futur[e] fortunes in the service of wild animals, but she has a deep rooted weakness fo[r] men so blindly sincere. It could be the famous mother instinct which, I'm told, is a prerequisite for bar waitresses. No matter. She's too dazzled by the unlikelihood of the story she's begun to believe, to notice inviting me to her house for the cold, dark night. Danny Dee's is closing.

All the way across town I admonish myself for this blatantly selfish act. Love 'em and leave 'em — really, Jason, at your age? I stammer. I blush. How can I take this sweet-filled chocolate to bed with the knowledge that I'll be on th[e] road out of town first thing in the morning? I really don't know how I can do i[t,] but there seems little doubt that I will.

Ah, she has a cozy room in a dilapidated tenement. She apologizes for th[e] humbleness and the messiness but I see a glowing room full of creature comfort[ts.] that make me swoon. God of Pursuit! If I had a clean smelling place like this to retire to after each day's run, why, I could set a pace for eternity. I could. I wouldn't care. A cracked clock radio by my sagging mattress, a hot plate and iron stored atop the radiator. Stacks of creased magazines, and my toothbrush in a cup by the yellowing sink. I can hardly take it. It's too much. I quickly turn off the light. But in her creaking bed I feel the snug fit of the room all around me like a warm tent in the Arctic.

Safety, that's what I'm receiving like heavenly bounty from her. Makes me wonder what she gets from me. Is it the unsaid promise of future love on which I'm so deceitfully reneging? I hope not and imagine instead that it is a mixture of other things, all of which I can give with enthusiasm this solitary night, none of which will be unduly soured by my inevitable disappearance. A mutual exchange of gifts is what I hope for because that, in the end, is all any of us can expect. I realize, with disgust, what a philosophical bend my thoughts take at times like these.

This night my dreams take on a quiet glow as if someone is doing them in candle light instead of using the floods. Before I know it, I'm in my orchard again and crying quietly on the dead leaves. In bed beside me, my valentine sighs so beautifully that I'm sure she doesn't know my pain. I could write sticky poems to her silence. Say pious prayers in that relaxation. I've fallen brashly in love with her slow breaths.

Attorneys and meddling law enforcement agencies rap confidently on the door to her room. I've never seen a cop without his assurance on. They get up out of bed with it while everyone else struggles to put theirs on after coffee. Five o'clock in the foolish morning and there they are catching the worm like good early birds. Found this night

crawler in carnal pleasure, all the better. No one's easier to handle than a man with his pants down.

"Oh, Jason, they've discovered you," she says, her pretty head full of pretty concern.

"Relax. Get dressed. It's probably just about a parking ticket."

They can't wait, assuredly don't want to. The ancient door jamb gives with a small display of flying splinters, revealing the half clad criminal and his braless harlot. Aha. Just like an illustration from a detective magazine. Cover story in the making.

"Jason Thomas?" a man in neat blue demands, barely able to keep his eyes off the suspect who's not in question.

"Never heard of him." I finish dressing while a kinky little guy starts to frisk me.

"You're under arrest for the murder of Edward Sims. Do you know your rights?"

"Murder?" the shattered girl wants to know, but she's lost in the background of the other excitement. The man who must be from Albany is waving a new warrant like a military banner. Polly's attorney is standing embarrassed behind him. The other two men must be from Stockton's finest. There're several extra in the hallway in pajamas, all looking very impressed.

"You have the right to remain silent . . . " the local cop begins, snapping his eyes back and forth between me and my barely clothed companion. He temporarily loses the next line.

"I know my rights," I tell him, more interested in buckling my belt. "What I don't know is why my lawyer friend changed his mind about meeting me at nine o'clock."

Polly's lawyer is fidgeting in the doorway. He motions toward the cop from Albany as if this gesture will explain something.

"It's a little late to give yourself up now," the Albany policeman replies, relevant of nothing at all.

"Jason, did you really murder someone?" my waitress says from some corner of the tiny room. I almost tell her it was no one she knew but I don't. She'd only asked the question as a goodbye and didn't really want it answered, especially with a smart remark.

"Let's go, let's go," the impatient director of this operation commands.

I have to tie my shoes though. A well dressed man makes a good impression. Hate to be indicted with my fly unzipped.

We edge out of the packed little room and into the corridor. The hall crowd has grown into an admiring throng and they part in my path like the Red Sea. The word "murder" has been muttered and they keep at a respectful distance as if I were collecting for the March of Dimes. I suppose there was the danger of my escaping, maybe taking hostages or something. I stop in front of Polly's lawyer.

"Is this your final enticement for getting me back to Albany?" I ask him.

He shifts his weight, realizing that I could still hit him if I cared to. "I didn't want it this way," he says with prearranged sadness.

"I had the feeling that you had something else to offer," I say.

"Let's talk about it later this morning," he says. "We'll discuss the whole case. Then, if you wish, I'd be glad to represent you."

No thanks, legal wonder boy. I read about the great down-home job you did for poor Polly. And with all the things she had going for her too. Polly had sincerity and an incredible just-born look about her. She even voluntarily gave herself up to the police. With that to work with, you finagle her twenty years in prison? That's a high recommendation you come to me with. I hate to think what bargains you could strike up for a disheveled hobo like me. Not only do I have the cynical bad looks of a common chicken thief, but instead of

surrendering myself when I have the good chance, I prefer to be discovered half naked in the arms of a bar girl. And in Stockton, California, home of my long time buddy and ardent revolutionary - Mike the Commie. No, I'll hire a mute leper first, thanks. Stick to selling advice on bus stop benches. This fool can ruin himself without your help.

"Jason," he says, putting his judicial hand on my shoulder. He looks down in hesitation. This is probably characteristic of the forceful manner he employed so effectively in Polly's defense. He takes a deep breath for his dive. "Polly's dead."

I nod. I know. He's been afraid all this time to tell me and I've been just too scared to ask.

"She committed suicide," he continues. "A week ago."

Well, why don't you go on, lawyer man? Give me the touchy details. How'd she do it, with a rusty razor? Open her veins with a sharpened mess hall spoon? Or did she hang herself with a bedsheet until that soft, white neck, always vulnerable anyway, went *snap*?

But he looks up to find me unmoved.

What did he expect, utter astonishment? A good fence post lawyer like him should've known better than that. Surely even the most matronly old juror, with her attic full of photograph albums, had seen what jail would do to that girl. Did he think me blind?

No, but he expected sympathy. To him, tears aren't cheap and he never crosses his sorrows until he comes to them. But that's irrelevant. He, of all people should know. A tender, young girl and I kill her very own brother. This lawyer defends her. Then in the end, blind as the jury that judged her, he finds her merciful death sadder than her life. Yeah, Time's full of its little jokes though, and you never get anywhere by playing the straight man.

"Let's go," somebody says. A gun is waved for me to start down the hall. I turn back for a glance at my lovely little waitress.

Bye, bye, Valentine. Things are always worse than you think. And even zoo keepers are full of lies. Watch out for notes on napkins and don't take in any more shifty boarders. I start down the steps.

But even the faithful don't get decent burial nowadays. Out on the cold, morning sidewalk we're surrounded by dawn phantoms waving submachine guns, stockings pulled over their heads, looking for a bank to rob. But no, they're there for me. Fully pledged revolutionaries holding up the police with enough armament to take Moscow. Oh, my god.

The regulation service revolvers drop embarrassed to the ground. More spooks ooze out of cracks in the walls to tie up officialdom. I, too shamed for words, am ushered into a stolen Buick whose license plate is being frantically memorized by those being tied and left behind.

"Jason," the lawyer calls out to me. "Don't do it. Come back with me to Albany. Attitudes have changed. Polly's parents are ready to forgive."

I stop at the last item. I lean out the window at him.

"People are more sympathetic now. Mrs. Sims will plead your case."

"Polly's mother?" I ask.

He nods. He's very nervous but telling the truth. "She wants to help you. It was she who sent me out here. Do you see what I mean now?"

Yes. The mother forgives when her daughter's dead. That's nice. She understands nothing about why a best friend and a sister would murder her son until Polly proves her sincerity through suicide. Polly stood her ground. Now she's dead. And I would benefit.

"Let's go," I tell the driver. The lawyer drops his jaw. I've told him even murderers have higher ideals than he.

"I didn't want to tell you," Mike explains in another car, one bound for Sacramento and probably beyond. "But I was going to show you the obituary before you left."

Certainly a poor showing for a hardened socialist, but I say nothing.

"Jason?" He pauses. "Did you love her?"

I don't know. That's almost beside the point. "Probably," I say.

He says he's sorry and he is. It's just that we both know there isn't now, and never was, anything that could be done.

I sleep badly, stretched out in the back seat under an army blanket. The dream isn't fragmented this time, it runs uninterrupted, as clearly as the day it ran as reality.

Eddie. Edward Sims, sergeant E-5, returns home from the war to shake hands with his friends and family. Except he hasn't any hands. Or arms or legs, for that matter. He's a hideous stub of a being, not the young man we all knew playing basketball. I, his best friend and now beau to his sister, stand mutely by while the world of Albany exchanges pleasantries and hopeful words. He pees through a tube and lives on morphine.

Sister Polly, a nurse in the very same hospital, is the only one who sees him alone and when he's undrugged. She tells everything to me. She tells me about his nights and the things he's tried to do. She talks about the ideas he's resigned to and the tears he'll never cry. And she whispers one afternoon that he wants to be killed.

I cannot accept it. I ask her about herself. We wait. We talk. She reasons with him. Who could ever know the hundred million thoughts and tears which went into our final decision? I can't even begin to duplicate a significant part of them in my wildest hours. And they stretched on and on over four months, watching my friend and her brother suffer. Listening and listening to him plead.

And even when it is madly decided, Polly, the nurse, has to have my dumb hands administer the injection which will go straight to Eddie's heart. She shows me exactly where to place the needle. I'm calm as something dead. The dead killing the dead. That's all it is. Of course, it's not.

But we're no sooner done than there's an intruder. Eddie's gladly ready to die without a trace of why when in comes a white smocked fool who calls himself a doctor. Frightened, we run, leaving this perpetrator of legal torture to unsuccessfully try bringing his victim back. Eddie finds peace in spite of him while Polly and I stumble numbly over the hospital grounds, into the orchard that lies on its perimeter.

There, late in the fall, under the naked branches, Polly and I spend the night pouring our salty essence out and onto the summer's cracked and withered leaves. A hopeless gesture, but the best we can do. In the morning, Polly goes her own unchangable way and I, equally unable to be someone else, go mine.

Mike pulls the car over to the side at my urgent insistence. Oopps, uugh, into the ditch. Another night's glory revealed to the day. My cup runneth over. I feel good in the fresh air and stand by the car door for a minute. The automobiles of the Great West rush by us in a frenzy. Humm. Maybe I should go back to see my ginger baking lover again. A real American hero, making his stand among the appliances. No, there must be better ends than that. Ah, had I the dignity of this bulletproof 55 Chevy waiting here beside me. What a long, powerful way I could go before the madmen of creation could get their itchy little hands on my jugular. Yes, who could put a stop to me then? It'd surely take airborne infantry and well planned maneuvers. Perhaps some light tanks. And even if they were to get me cornered with all that, I wouldn't like to think of the protestations that'd be raised by the hot-rod hoodlums of America when they got the news of my imminent destruction.

I place my trembling little body back in the seat. The door shuts itself with a resounding "whack." We're off and long gone. Bye, bye, Candy Kisses.

Joseph Bruchac

OLD MOHAWK WOMAN

Your hands
and the coolness of cedar wood
are from the same nation

A scent that touches the blood
a warmth that goes deeper
than the fires of the flesh

FOR CHIEF JOSEPH

Where beacons burned
a hundred years ago
there are ashes

we stumble the roads
still following
the memory of their light

SOUTH

for Po Chu-i

Alone with the forest stones,
pine-needle wind in my face;
words may go where feet cannot,
but I drink this night,
the cold moon my only companion.

Faces enter and depart,
the dream goes on alone —
a cloud over old mountains —
and my words are as empty
as the space I create beside me.
The empty bottle of Thunderbird
glitters like an emerald,
eloquent as the last bird
singing on a November morning.

Farther than the flight of geese,
you have passed into the land I cannot know.
Here the rivers begin and the mountains rise.
The solitary moon is a mirror.

Dirk Kortz

THE COVE

Dawn. A mist lies across the water and licks at the shoreline. A small wooden rowboat with red paint peeling from its sides, moves slowly across the cove. The old fisherman's brown leather hands pull easily on the oars. His face is a translucent mask.

He is not in a hurry this morning, nor any morning, for he has been doing this since time began and he knows that he will be doing it until time ends. His nets are piled by his feet in the stern of the boat.

A door opens in a low stone hut perched on the side of the hill. The hut seems to be balanced on the edge of something - about to lie down but able to stand up again by its own will - as if it were not held up against gravity but in conspiracy with it.

A woman carrying a water pail comes out of the door and starts down the hill toward the well. Her long black hair is pulled back from her forehead and tied with a scrap of red cloth. Her high bronze cheeks are slightly flushed. On the hill above her a snowwhite goat raises his head from the grass and absently watches her descent.

Her loose skirt flutters in the first morning breeze like a curtain at an open window and her dark eyes sparkle beneath the long black lashes as she draws water from the well and fills her bucket.

She retraces her footprints in the dew back up to the hut where smoke curls from a hole in the roof. From within the voice of a child is heard. A crow, as if in answer, calls from the nearby wood.

The woman puts her hand on the leather strap that opens the door. Then she turns for a moment and looks out across the vast and - to her - unknown ocean that separates her from the rest of the world. Below her the fisherman is disappearing around the edge of the cove.

The mist has begun to recede and the woman turns and goes into the hut. Another day has begun.

Just beyond the horizon, where this woman will never see and this fisherman in his small wooden boat will never reach, I tread water between two worlds writing this down.

The woman puts a pot of water on the fire.

The fisherman is setting out his nets.

Richard Martin

GIFT

I change the spark plug, bleed
Every gas, water, oil line I can find,
Kick the only two tires she wears,
Pray and swear,
Both in vain, finally wonder what
One whole quarter century's worth of poet
Is up to——nursing a sick grass cutter
So to cut grass better
Watched growing.

Sudden as Creation

The thing rattles loud
Alive, don't ask me how,
And I feel as empty and warm
As if I'd just wrapped up a poem.

FOUR LATE REFLECTIONS

Couple across the street.
Their door's open.
It's warm but not hot.
They're fighting.
Or she's howling at the walls.
All I hear is her side.
"Leave! I mean it!" ——
her thirteenth curse.
He must need to stay.
He may have nowhere else to be.
Too suddenly it's quiet as snow.
The door winks shut.
She may have heard my mercy thought.
Or they're over there peacefully
murdering each other now.

My big gray cat jumps up on the sill
of the window I'm by.
He peers radarly at the door
silence is roaring behind,
or maybe at the warped pecking
echo of a ghost my candle
builds of me in the window.
He detects nothing
spectacular enough to feel,
so he leaves.
They must be making up
or even love, though my cat
claims stoic lions for ancestors
and long ago got used to bloodshed
of every sort, including the brand
he can study through doors.

In the mud-blurred mirror
a cadillac hubcap makes,
the golden blinking
of an intersection signal
half a mile away warns:
Proceed With Caution.

My cat's unconscious
on the bathroom floor already.
He has asthma.

I HAVE BEEN TO THE RED MOUNTAIN

When I put the pistol
necked bottle
down, its hard butt on the rug, the wine level
settles lower, its pooltop black
and seesawing in the middle of a scream
of candles
like a lake under moons in an earthquake.

Jesus,
if this bittersweet serum
oiling my soul's
got one drop to do with you,
I am the happiest vampire
your old Dad's sagging jugular
could ever donate to.

BECOMING WHAT YOU LISTEN CLOSE TO

Your own voice reading
my words
to yourself

listening for a rainbow
to emerge from the night
of letters, and it did

expecting the ribbon
on her dear hair
undone, her hair singing

like wind through your hands

NOSTALGIA

A small brown girl, her blue skirt
brief as a jay across the sky
on her hips, explores garbage cans
for a toy to punctuate
the run-on sentence of July.
Sunshine Gatling-guns
litter in the alley around her,
ricochets rays off a beer can
to my brain.

One orange rhinoceros
of a garbage truck, barnacled
by black men,
hauls them toward the girl.
Like an emotion morning warms the men
from scum-caked boots to the clear
puddles of their eyes,
eyes that remember her
brown nine-year-old thighs
as long as she remembers her toys.

BUBBLE

Barely time to be, to begin,
To be a balloon blown alive
And I'm gone.

A drop's left, of breath, tumbling.
Dime of blue for free, a bargain
Of humbling babble.

Apple core, crumbling tower,
Naked stem. A brick of red words
Through the window.

Barely time to add my senses
To six
And I'm struck senseless.

A ball of sprawling headseams.
A rib, missing.
Rage, dreaming.

Scarcely a rhyme to read scanning
And I'm broken,
A bubble, raining.

Chuck Lustig

INTRUSIONS

"All the ice is freezing. It's just a beautiful evening," came my mother's voice from the kitchen. I was at the dining room table with my father who was paying his bills.

"So when do you fly outta here?" he asked me.

"Tomorrow morning. Early. You make it sound like I couldn't make it out on foot."

"And did you notice? The poinsettias are blooming," my mother continued.

My father executed little flourishes with his pen over a check before actually writing. I remembered those flourishes. They and the bills arrayed in neat piles before him were all part of what he at one time had called his "system."

"I'll wake you up," he said, then wrote an address on an envelope, placed the check inside and carefully tore a stamp from a sheet of stamps. "I get up early now."

"The poinsettias are so beautiful this time of year."

"They only bloom this time of year," he said, but there was no impatience in his voice. He was wiping dry a postage stamp by dabbing it with his handkerchief and the thought seemed to flow from those light brushing noises.

"Oh, that's what I mean. Whenever they bloom, I think of this time of year, and puff! It is this time of year!"

He sealed the envelope, rubbed that with his handkerchief, and then held the envelope up to the chandelier light, examining the white shadows inside. He was reasoning, I knew, that if he could see the check, so could mail defrauders.

"I'm going out to mail this," he said, ambling to the kitchen and putting on his quilted green coat and gray cap with earmuffs.

"Be sure not to catch cold, William. I mean if you did catch cold this time out, we wouldn't be able to get the rest of the bills mailed on time."

My mother was at the sink. She was wearing blue rubber gloves and was holding a dinner plate in one hand and a brush in the other. As she spoke, she was staring in front of her at a blank wall framed by geraniums — the space where the calendar usually hung. Hot water was rushing out the nozzle, steaming up in her face.

"Let's go for a walk, Gretel!"

Gretel sprinted into the kitchen and my father clipped the leash on her collar. When he took a moment to put on his red knit mittens, the dog barked.

"Don't be in a hurry," he said. "No body ever accomplished anything by rushing."

Gretel barked again, and my mother said, "Certainly not William Kirkus."

I put on my coat and went out the door after him. He showed no surprise at my presence, as I knew he wouldn't, and we walked along the gravel driveway out to the sidewalk and down the hill to the mailbox on the corner. The gravel crunched, the rain hadn't frozen, but the night air closed in and hurt my face and legs. My father showed no discomfort. He positioned the single letter in his pocket so that it wouldn't wrinkle. Gretel pulled us down the hill and it occurred to me that this was when I felt closest to my father, when I most felt we were two men, apart from the house and my mother, two men who had absolutely nothing to say to one another.

He walked with his shoulders folded over, his cap shoved back — exposing the first wave of curls — and his brown eyes nearly closed.

"You naughty girl, you," he said to Gretel after she had decided upon her spot. He didn't like her to go on the sidewalk, but then he never did anything to stop her from going there, either.

At the corner, he dropped the envelope in the mailbox, and a picture came to mind of him holding me when I was a small child and speaking authoritatively as if he were quoting from some U.S. Post Office Manual, "Open and close the door twice and make sure the letter's gone down." We were starting back up the hill now. I told my father what I remembered and he replied that he had no such recollection and that he never bothered opening and closing mailboxes twice. A wind gusted, he pulled his hat down to the tops of his eyes and said, "It always goes down the first time, anyway."

When we reached the driveway entrance, he tied Gretel's leash to the lantern post and disappeared into the garage.

If he never taught me how to mail letters, then what did he teach me, I asked myself, and in the same instant recalled that it was my brother, Norman, who had been my teacher. who had taught me electronics in his laboratory with his audio oscillator and oscilloscope. And it was Norman with whom — after a few days of relative calm — I would have terrible fights. They would erupt over minute details and never end until nose or gums were bleeding. I'd get the worst of it, he was four years older and stronger.

After the fights, I would avoid my brother and establish laboratories of my own. If Norman was to be an electronic engineer, then I would become a mechanical engineer or an aeronautical engineer. I would go to my father with questions of pneumatics or hydraulics and when he would tell me to ask Norman, I would demand that we build a rocket together, fly an airplane, anything. We did go bicycling once. We arrived at a lake in a park where my father fell asleep on a bench.

The trees above were cracking in the wind, the rain was beginning to freeze, and I looked on as my father returned from the garage with

a spade, balanced the steaming turd on the blade and tossed it in the gutter.

"You'd rather shovel than teach the dog . . . "

I had always seen him do this and had always accepted it, and yet now was astonished, incensed. I started toward the house, but he called to me, shouting over the wind.

"Hey, don't run away! Gretel's trained, aren't you, Gretel." And he knelt on his haunches in front of the dachshund and twirled his outstretched finger. "My son shouldn't come home and think . . . Com 'ere, Gretel. Roll over, now. That'sa-baby!"

Gretel exposed all ten tits to the North Wind while my father scratched her belly. Then they both resumed their normal stance. My father threw back his shoulders for the sake of posture.

We went inside and Gretel continued napping on her favorite couch. My father began writing out a second check, but this time I sat at the kitchen table and said to my mother, "You're right, the ice is freezing."

"Don't make fun. It can happen, you know. It gets harder and harder, the colder it gets."

She was still turned away from me, toward the sink, but I didn't need her face to tell me she was speaking of other things beside ice. People, love, age, habits. I recognized in her voice those harmonics, unspecific, unexpressible. And I understood that perhaps she had heard them in my voice, too. There seemed no way to grasp at them, no way to grab hold of my mother and ask what had changed and what was wrong. In the years I had been away, she had become like a child who in the midst of a temper tantrum stops and becomes dumbly fascinated by some blurry thing.

"I meant to tell you," she said, "Norman has been writing regularly. He's fine, you know, just fine."

"Good. I thought he would be."

"He writes and tells me about all the activities they have him doing."

"Is he still making pottery?"

"Oh, pottery, yes."

"He likes making pottery."

"He does. He's very artistic. I guess we never knew that, but they say he's very artistic."

She had finished the dishes. She was wiping the counter, her head was bent and strands of hair jerked back and forth before her eyes.

"I'm going out to mail this," my father said, getting his coat from the closet. My mother continued working.

"Let's go for a walk, Gretel."

When I motioned for him to hand me the letter, he did so without hesitation, and I examined it, saying, "Stamp positioned? Check. Address legible? Check. If I can see the check so can mail defrauders? Check. This one's okay, Dad, but watch the saliva on the flap next time."

"Wise guy, huh?" He took back the envelope.

"I was just talking."

"Don't talk unless you've got something to say," from my mother, and I remembered when Norman and I were setting up an intercom in my father's liquor store; he was on one end, I on the other, and he wanted nothing more than that I speak words into the microphone, just words.

"Oh, yes, his doctor says he's very artistic," my mother repeated after both the jalousie and the aluminum storm doors rattled closed behind my father. Through the jalousies, I could see an opaque shape receding down the darkened driveway in the direction of the lantern. "He's very artistic, and they took him out of 'two' and put him back into 'one.'"

"That's terrific," I said, pretending enthusiasm for my mother's sake. Norman was always about to get an outside job or come home when he'd wolf down a handful of something and go back to what my mother called "the bad ward." I supposed he wasn't ready for any of that, particularly coming home. I supposed coming home scared him just as this night was upsetting me.

"Well, I told you he was fine, didn't I?"

"Yes, you did, Mom. He'll be okay."

She draped the wash rag over the water spout and turned to face me. She blinked and her nostrils dilated, her mouth-ends twitched and all her wrinkles conspired to a smile.

"He's just fine."

I put my head down on the table, cushioned it in my folded arms and she sat across from me.

"I want you to write to him," she said, placing her hand on my arm.

"What should I say?"

"You'll know what to say."

"I'll say, 'Dear Normie, There's no calendar in the kitchen now, but Mom stares at it anyway.' "

It occurred to me that Norman's problem was that he had never learned how to spend a good deal of his life on the verge of drifting off, as my father had. If he could only learn how to sleep, I thought, and nearly smiled until I remembered. That was what the drugs were for.

"Don't be funny. Your father's getting us next year's calendar tomorrow." Her lips began to quiver now and for a moment I indulged myself, let myself think she was upset over something I had done. "You know, I can always depend on you," she said and to my chagrin she was right. She could depend on me, for example, to always let Norman have his way when she was around. When she

wasn't, I'd punch him all the harder, and even with the blood, I learned there was no small solace in punching.

"Yes, Mom," I replied, "you can depend on me until Norman comes home."

Irony was intended, but she didn't get it, and perhaps that was why she began crying. There was some solace there, too. If she hadn't felt she could cry with her hand gripping my arm, she might have kept her freezing ice and beautiful evenings forever.

She lit a cigarette now, puffed on it, blotted her tears with a tissue.

"I'll write Normie. It'll be okay."

She stuffed the tissue in a pocket as soon as the jalousie door opened and Gretel scampered in, dragging the metal leash behind her, making a terrible racket. My father came in after the dog, and my mother stared at him.

"I went out to mail a letter."

He sat beside me and clasped his hands together. My mother's face changed, all at once she smiled, and in a moment she was on her feet, stretching a dish towel between her hands.

"Did your father tell you what the doctor said? It seems that your brother's doctor thinks your father was an exemplary parent."

"Honey, all he said is we're fine people. Don't talk nonsense."

"Am I talking nonsense?"

Again, I recalled the time I had spoken to my brother over the intercom. Norman hadn't cared what I said, so long as they were words, nonsense words, raving words, it didn't matter.

My father took his handkerchief from his back right pocket and wiped his brow. He had been sitting in his quilted green coat but now he stood, struggled out of it, and hung it up in the closet.

"What did you say?"

"I asked if I'm talking nonsense? Can't you hear me? Maybe you should have your hearing checked if you can't hear me."

"I can hear you. What's nonsense?"

The bickering seemed to continue on endlessly, and when my mother began insisting she had a better memory than my father, when she said, "For example, I remember the night we brought Norman home from the hospital, I mean after he was born" — then once again she seemed like a distracted child, and I felt a great warmth for her. I went to her, told her that what had happened to Norman was nobody's fault, and then hugged her the way I had wanted to grab her and ask what was wrong. I couldn't say anything, though. I was feeling more than solace for the first time.

Soon she held me away from her and gazed at me and said, "I love you, Dear, but I had so much faith in Norman and his electricity, and he knew I believed in him, he knew it. He was going to be great, just great."

"He still may be, Mom. They found out he was artistic, didn't they? We never knew that."

"Oh, I can always depend on you," she said and broke away; she walked to the refrigerator. "Would you like some lemon meringue pie now? You didn't want any dessert after dinner, and I thought you might want some now."

"No thanks."

"I think I'll have another piece if you're selling it," my father said, and my mother cut and served him a slice. I tried to imagine what a strain it must have been for Norman, always knowing he was going to be great. And a few moments later I told them I'd better sleep in the City, "so I can get an early start out to the airport tomorrow."

Gretel barked while my father and I put on our coats and I got my valise.

He and I didn't say much to each other in the car. He was careful driving on the ice. That was what I had always respected him for, his ability to drive, just as I had always hated him for never being able to handle people, particularly my mother. But I was no longer sure he was handling her badly. I no longer knew one way or the other. I was cold and tired and I didn't want to think about it. I thought about my father lifting me up to a mailbox and telling me how to operate it. I didn't care any more if he remembered teaching me or not. I remembered him teaching me. and the warmth that remembrance always had for me came back and I felt better.

"I'll go and wait on the platform," I said when we pulled up in front of the station.

"You want to get mugged? Stay with me. Here. I'll put the heat on full blast," and he gunned the engine and I thanked him. "Don't worry," he continued, "I'll pay the bills tomorrow night. Nobody ever accomplished anything by rushing, right?" I nodded and we sat in the heat and listened for the train.

In a while, I stopped shivering and began to feel reasonably content, reasonably accepting of what I would never be to my parents, what they would never be to me. But when the train pulled in, and I started saying goodbye, all of that disappeared — my stomach went bottomless and I found myself getting out of the car, closing the door, turning and speaking to him through a window he was rolling down.

"You know, Dad, one thing I've always wondered. You know so much about the liquor business, you've been in it so many years, how come you never thought to teach Norman or me about it? You never even wanted us to work behind the counters."

"Ah," he said, waving his hand dismissively. "It's a crappy business."

After I found a seat on the train, I watched him, sitting in the car with the engine idling, until my train pulled away, and it reminded me of a habit mothers of my high school friends had when dropping

me off at home at night. They would wait outside until I had turned on a light and waved them on. I always wondered what would happen if, after the car had pulled off, I would find myself confronted with an intruder. Well, it had never happened that way, I thought. The house was always empty (my parents often worked late at the store) and I would be alone with Gretel who usually kept to her favorite couch. And the intruder. He would emerge from a darkened bedroom and move into the light. That was always as far as the high school fantasy would go.

I had been in high school when Norman was first admitted to the hospital, and I had been able to accept it easily because with him in college he had only been home for vacations. With him in the hospital, he never came home at all. And yet, that didn't account for all my feelings, because although we had fought and fought brutally, to a large extent I had been Norman's trusted bringer of tools and toolboxes and his man-on-the-other-end of, yes, intercoms, but also of wires, pipes, furniture, car ignition systems.

The train was moving through rich suburban countryside now, and I found myself remembering a story I had once heard of an elderly couple whose son had died in a plane crash. This couple kept spotlights atop their mansion, and every night the lights were left burning, pointing at the clouds, in order to guide the son's missing plane home — or so the story was told to me. There were other details, too, that the son's room was kept exactly as he had left it, and that every evening the couple set a place for him at the dining table. I remembered being both frightened and deeply saddened by the story.

And then an odd thought crossed my mind. I wondered how the elderly couple would react if one night their son appeared before his place setting at the dining table. Considering how well they had adjusted to living with his memory, could the actual person be anything more than an intruder? But I thought further. The son would quickly sense how his parents felt and not stay long.

Gretel Ehrlich

FROM A SIERRA JOURNAL: MT. WHITNEY

I. The Ascent

land-locked. we climb out of desert valleys and
find the Whitney portal.
above the waterfall the trail starts.
already there is snow.
step. breath. step.
easy steps at first. careless city steps.
then *breath*.
then step, then *breath*,
plunge step as snow thickens around trees.
a clearing. we see peaks crowding and
folded together.
here, the trail travels under snow
coiling deep into granite.
we no longer see which route to take:
99 switchbacks that lead to the cornice
or the trails that fan out from peaks like roots.
we climb straight up.
adjust speed to breath...stop more frequently.
use ice axes. they hit rocks: "dic". rest. "dic".
plunge step. "dic". and a breath on the rest step
the ribs lift and spread like fingers
enclosing thin sharp air.

II. The Summit

we sign in: Ehrlich, Rosenberg, Pepper, the dog.

5:30 pm. March 1971. temp: 23 degrees.

strong wind gusts. snow banners on Lone Pine Peak.

We each find places to rest.

I choose a cave that looks west

watch how a snow-storm moves up that valley

blinds me. then continues north.

count 45 peaks

wait for strength. knowing it must come.

a blackbird who has also made the climb

passes. circles. stops mid-air.

looks at me.

we know it is time to leave.

III. The Descent

By moonlight. down-trail.

snow speared by ice-ax falls in thick curds

we take long exhausted steps

starting small avalanches on either side

and in the 19th hour

a last look at radiant peaks

before snow gives way

to desert.

May, 1971

Maxine Rothberg

I MUST LEAVE YOU HOUSE

I must leave you house
kitchen heart face down pots
wet mop threads from the wall
soap suds cupped in glass shimmer
suspended bubbles mirror my face
over-ripe bananas side-spent
pre-mature tangerines rotting
green honey-suckle leaves on new moon table
my nose burrows through thick brown child hair
sweet warm
my children stuff buttered popcorn into fat cheeks
my feet can't carry the weight of the moment
I sit think about covering the couch with brown velvet
to erase memories
the dog licks my knees fur against my toes
I see popcorn spills on red vinyl floor
squares
faded squares where a body rose from my feet
morning noon . night forever
more regularly than moslems called to face mecca
I face my desert oasis of modern plumbing
put dead flowers into the garbage disposal
fertility
sacrifice May 20, 1973

I see, go through wine glasses, jars, through windows,
flower vases I pull down the window shade
erase my shadow & the wall bounces me back to myself
again I MUST LEAVE YOU HOUSE

THOUGH SOME UNKNOWN PART OF ME SHALL REMAIN
some memory of foot sounds on your sod
 voices trapped in corners you broke the pot I slammed
on your tiles in self defence against my beast
 my gentle fierce rubbing bruising of your innards
now your dishes stacked cleaned to bear witness
 to other life echoes
I will leave you house with your garden of weeds.

Elliott Stewart

POET MONK

(Written after the death of John Berryman)

The monks of the Holy Order of St. Barsarmo employ themselves continually in the weaving of woolen girdles, which they place upon the altar of their saint. These girdles are said to have a curative effect on persons afflicted with Rheumatism.

——paraphrased from
The Travels of Marco Polo

I wove two woolen girdles yesterday
And one today. I consecrated them,
And on the altar, with both hands, I laid
Them, my devotion stitched from finger into hem.

* * * *

No verses bend this monastery's beams.
A moving silence swallows us down halls.
I lack a vision. In my dreams,
I dream of wooden bed, loom, and walls.

. * * * *

This bridge affords a welcome view
Of dark waters. A weaver forty years.
My bones ache. God receive his due.
I'll tap dance for deaf ears.

Michael Ranney

THE SURVIVOR

Cold the morning and alone he walks. His shoeslaps echoing in the still. A smooth and happy smile upon his face. And watches lonely allnight lights over black closed buildings playing glitter and chameleon in the dark. Each one of them haloed, each so beautifully cold alone.

The cool full air embracing lifting him.

All too soon gone.

He stops in the driveway for a last chance look. A few cars parked, windows silversheathed and bright. A few muted stale lights, glowing from within the high black building. The stars so far away above. A faint outline of the mountains. He looks over toward the entrance. Cruel bleak glass and old yellow light, a gaping hole, someone's yowling mouth.

Familiar the feeling with the runaway wish come nibbling inside. Away to nowhere but the same. To leave himself behind. He shakes it off, moves on. And feels no need to check a clock to know he's right on time.

Into the lobby, soiled oiled room, with chairs and couches to hold the sighing. And here an old woman lying limp alone and mussed. Lifts her head to see his sudden passing. Her eyes sour black with tears.

And he looks away, unable to fake to say itllbeallright.

The woman at the switchboard. Shrill ratty shrewish bitch, serene and dignified, her position. of position, tonsils at the throat to pass judgment. Her highblown look upon him.

Yipe!

Sticks out his tongue, wet with spittle collected. Quickly her insulted snort. He laughs away down the hall.

His foot upon the rubber and the kitchen doors part hissing open. Walks into the bowels of the hospital. All night streams eternal acids jetted hosed sprayed over everything to drip and foam and lastly drain away. Leaving chrome and white tile and stainless steel to dazzle with brilliance. Come morning.

Blinded he stands, waiting for eyes to adjust.

"Goddammit, Warren, come on get in here 'n make the coffee!"

By voice he knows. Tall Bernardette, grisly giantess, head cook, hovering high above the coffee urns. Pictures her always in coonskin and leather leading prairie schooners into the future.

"For that," he says, "I should have stayed in bed."

"Good thing for you ya didn't. Hurry it up now. I cain't cook 'thout my coffee."

"You cain't cook with it, either."

She laughs, sound of cracking walnuts. "What you make's so bad, it spoils my cookin'." And turns to stride away, prizing the last word.

Around the room the women stare with evil feeling. Where's our coffee, you lazy bastard? Hard brittle sleep-torn eyes. All but Linda, the salad girl, her eyes adrip with love, slow honey from the pot.

Jesus!

Slips off his jacket, starts the urns filling with water. Starts his day, a pain in the ass.

The foodcart rumbling over linoleum ridges. Sweat collecting above his eyes. Must keep the thing in motion, to stop and try to start again so hard and harrowing. Down the hall, sustenance coming. Slight pull of braking power to keep the thing from escaping and breaking through the endhall wall to fall six stories.

Head for the plugger there halfway down. Stench of the dying, moans and groans, grunting of someone trying to turn himself in the gripping bed.

Time to stop. Apply the brakes. Whoa, you big silver bastard! Cart bouncing into the wall to stop. The only way. Set it where the scrapes and cuts of other stoppings are hidden for a time.

He reaches down, inserts the plug. Cart humming again. Opens doors to check. hot side hot, cold side cold. Breakfast. And the traygirl, fat Bertha, roiling down the hall toward him. Slip away, slip away.

But voices raised, loud with age, echoing from a nearby room. A discussion in progress.

"I was in the big war. The first one. Know about that?"

"Not a thing. I'm too young, hee!"

"183rd Massachusetts. That 'as my regiment. 250 men strong down boardin' up in Boston harbor. Got pinned down in the Argonne. Know about that?"

"Never studied 'em. Battles and the like."

"Should have. Should have. Great things. Machine guns it was. Terrible. Crossfire. Off to fight the hun. Know about that? War to end 'em all. Men droppin' all around us, droppin' like flies. Only seventeen comin' back. Kinda thing you think about all your life. Creeps back at ya. Know about that?"

"I'm never bothered. 'S all nonsense anyway."

"I think about it most nights anymore."

"You said you was with Pershing yesterday."

"Yesterday! How the hell could that be now? Yesterday? That 'as 191[6] Down chasin' Pancho Villa. Know about that, do ya?"

"Where's the coffee!!!" Fat Bertha's shearing screech. All sound ceases.

"What?" he says.

"Some idiot forgot the coffee." Trim buttoned eyes upon him.

"It's all right, I'll get it."

The twin elevators away to lower floors. Leans his already tired back against the wall to wait.

Sixth floor, terminal cases, all dying. Deathrow they call it, all criminal to di[e.] Take up so much time and space. Hidden in the trees, behind the hedgerows o[f] Europe. Hearts failing, watching to see invisible bullets fly, waiting to die. And spared, strangely, and his voice quavering with the wonder. The other's high and sharp through the nose, to sneer and say so what? Sad lifecut face, with a power in his eye to know enough to wonder why.

The bell and one door sliding open. Out comes a sheetdraped gurney with a corpse, attendant daydreaming, pushing away. To suddenly open his eyes.

"Oh my God!"

The hideous horror.

Sitting away from others in the long diningroom. Long empty tables between. Clatter and ring of plate and utensil with eating. Humming muddling jabbering knot of women, big whiteassed cooks. Keep away. His sweat damp back toward them.

Breakfast poor as usual. Milky scrambled eggs creeping across the plate toward dry black and brittle bacon. He tries wolfing it down, avoiding the tastes, hoping not to gag.

"May I sit down?"

Looks up to see sweet Linda. Large of bosom, tight and round of ass, white full figure above stockingdark legs. Preserving the sights of

her youth in chalks and paints. Smelling today, a faint scent, of chicken salad.

"All right."

Drifts around to sit down opposite. Shy coy smile, leaning toward him on smudged pudgy elbows.

"Chicken salad today for lunch?"

"Was it awful?" she says.

"What awful?"

"The dead body on six. Everybody knows about it. It's all over the hospital. They said you were there."

"Hell no, it wasn't awful. Just a stupid sorry mistake. Those elevators never work right. That kid was scared to death. He almost passed out."

"Well, he'll probably get fired. That's what Bernardette said."

"Oh well Christ! Bernardette runs this place, doesn't she?"

Linda looking away, shaking her nutcolor poised coiffure. He sinks teeth into spongy toast.

"Have some," he says. "Very lively this morning."

"I know. Isn't it awful."

"Normal."

"You ought to come for dinner again." Eyes supplicant and damp.

"Yes . . . it was nice . . ."

The fantastic spread. Nuts and drinks and wellcut steaks. A salad green high crisp and cold. Trim and bright in a lush long dress. Bowls brimming of buttered cauliflower. Potatoes baked the size of canteloupes. Eating through the eyes. Stuffed to the immobile. More drinks and then to bed. With devilish practices in mind.

"That can opener you fixed then is broken again."

"I'm pretty busy, Linda."

"With what?" Eyes hard and bright demanding answers reasons why.

Jesus Christ!

Sits tongue-tied and empty minded, nothing new to bring to bear and always unable to lie.

Linda suddenly standing, huge bosom swelling, face faintly crimson, trembling wringing hands.

"They said you would too! Prick!"

And she rustles away. To miss the sight of his eyes so wide and high.

Each woman coming by to add another to the climbing stack of muddied pots and pans. Averting their eyes. Leave the mess for someone else to clean.

With steam teasing his eyes. Water pouring fresh hot from the spigot. To renew the stale already in the sink. Testing with one hand and thinking to let the heat reach pain but knowing he will not. Pain enough in his red raw hands.

He moves to his right. To scrape away the garbage. Remains in the pots of pudding stew thick beef gravy. Some beets cabbage wet summer squash. Crushing it hands pushing down the rubberlipped hole to churn grinding away. And pitch the caked cold pots across the water. Where they float a while and slowly sink.

And washes them. Hands plunged through flotsam. Peas, kernels of corn, limp lettuce leaves, swirls of mayonnaise, strings of beef. Scrubbing with bits clinging to his arms. Wishing he had a machine like they do for the dishes from the floors.

Each one then through the rinsewater through the layer of drifting grease. Half clean when set out to drip and dry. With the stack of

them to be toweled as well.

Sweat itching down his face. His nostrils shriveled at the stench. An ache glowing in his lower back from the bending. As he curses everyone who now has time to idle.

In this afterlunch time the idiots coming in. The college children. For the afternoon shift. Loud raging freakish boys. Young lust rearing girls. With time to play before cartfulls of debris come down.

Old man what a lousy life!

"Hey, Warren, what's all the sweat about?"

"God, lookit him work! Just like a machine, goin' like hell."

"Whatta ya workin' so hard for, Warren? Buckin' for a raise?"

To be done with this mess.

"Couldn't you find a better job? Didn't you ever go to school for something? What do you wanta work here for?"

"Oh I like it here," he says, smiling happy idiot faced, scraping hands through cold creamed corn. "It's all right." And to say the same again, to make them laugh. "Besides, there's a future in it."

Haw haw!!!! Wildly spinning away, bright colored tops of joy. To run down and be still. Sometime.

His grin is faint and wry. Because someone must.

Running. His feet pounding the clay, slap of his tennis shoes. Around this indoor track. Around to the clock again, high on the wall. The time after six. Over an hour now with the legs in motion. To look higher yet to the windows above near the parabolic ceiling. Evening outside. Colors of dusk laid still against the glass.

Running. Staying outside the line, white two-inch strip. Wondering is it paint or tape, for in places it overlaps. Always there below the falling left foot. Seven laps in this outside lane to the mile. The stripe to follow and to guide.

Running. With clangs from the weight machine and the pop of tennis balls. Six courts packed tight within the oval. Pingpong at one end, trampoline at the other. And couples wandering in to play. Slap at the little air ball. Or swat the furry one, after the wait for a free court. Or she to simply sit and watch his muscles ripple proudly under weights too great to bear.

Running. With sweat stinging his eyes. He reaches up with a jittery runner's arm to wipe it away, push it over into the hair on the back of his head. And then feel it trickling down his ribs.

Sixty-one laps as he passes the finish again.

Wanting to run just ten tonight. And not fifteen. With his back worn tired from lunch. Too many pots and pans. Already the sharp ache along the tops of his thighs. And a pulling where the tendons slip under the knee.

No, fifteen, all the way.

The work not worthy if you cannot push toward limits.

A young one streaking by. Quartermiler's speed. Meteoric. On around the far turn and suddenly out of gas. Slowing awkwardly to sink upon the three-tiered bleachers. And lie there gasping like a fish thrown ashore.

Running. The rhythm, the speed, the pace. Never changing. Right foot hitting slightly harder, the foot to push with. Legs never ceasing. All the others who come maybe once a week, tired old men, executives, heartcases, professors, accountants, to trudge around the track and reach a mile and feel proud. They call him *the piston*. Incredible. Unreal. Unbelievable. How does he do it? Their envy much less than the thought that he's crazy.

Someone beside him. He turns to look. A boy, about seventeen. Smile on his face. But already stretched with strain.

"Mind?" he says.

"No."

His rhythm off, stride poor, each foot with a different sound coming down. He can't last long.

Running. Drifting. Time to think and dream.

Of tracers streaking red and bright through the dark. Cries of death. Youths losing all, seeping blood among the trees. And one who sits watching, waiting for the hot yellow rip of pain. Which never comes. Each one's going a horror to be felt again. To walk through years and ponder why he had to live atop the ones who died. An echo to line the face with scars, to trim his voice's edge, to ring spasms in the nerve. To wake him in middle night to face the black. Something to always feel. Something to be jeered at?

He glances aside. The boy is gone. Where? Looking about. Vision jumping. There supine along the bleachers, his weak chest heaving.

Sweet Linda. Full meals and a wellmade bed. Clothes clean and fresh. With an order to the rooms. Flowers set around and a presence nearby.

Stood there unveiling her real figure. Bulky and slightly sagged. Huge breasts hanging, nipples pointed down. Belly flab in the pubic hair. Reaching for him, undoing his clothes. To drag him to bed. Saying this way, this way. To be sure of her own success.

To end the running and the walking. To ride in her car and be home in time for a tumbling turn in the sheets. Performance guaranteed. Somehow the kept man.

The angry fisher. Hook rebuffed. Will try again.

Running. Seventy-five done now. Only thirty more. His face of pain and surprise when he pushed the body out. Something unforgettable to last him all his years.

And a tennis ball comes bounding. Into his feet to tangle them. So he stumbles and nearly falls. All stride lost. He stops.

The whiteclad youth loping after his ball.

"Sorry about that."

He shakes his head and turns toward the lockers. The ease and peace and floating freedom gone. Stolen again. To go now home for dinner alone and a fullnight's deathlike sleep.

Morning again. With a soft fresh rain falling. With the streets so slick and bright beneath the lights reaching toward him. A sky full of black. His shoe sounds hidden within the rain.

Trees limp and loudly dripping. Watch it fall streaming through the lights. And the glow of them in spirals on collected gutter pools. The morning cold alon[e] and wet this new day.

Taking deep breaths and feeling the damp clean air caress his face. His ear[s] filled warm with a falling sound. Rainwater dripping from his head into his eye[s] along his nose to his lips. Where he greets the sweet sweet taste with a smile.

Comes a car, hissing in the wet along the street behind him. Wishing it would hurry past. To leave him be alone. Away from too many other lives.

A pistol flashes bright yellow quick from the window. Crackle like a broken twig. A bullet whistling through his brain.

Roderick Bradley

RAIN INSOMNIA

I tell you I heard it
dancing on a harpsichord
a hundred-miles-a-minute

and Bach was there
on a low flying organ
drunken and tittering
holding out his cup
made of reindeer testicles
calling:

"Damn this is fine rain!"

It went on like that
all night
keeping me awake

and this morning
the grass was a green sonata.
1818——1883 . . .

I met a die-hard Marxist
who wore a revolutionary beard
fifty years yellow
a faded photograph.

He resided in a garrot
with a Persian tom named Lenin,
worked nights for Xerox
paid the punch-card dues,

printed surreptitious overthrows
on the bitter side.

When he smoked
those hand-rolled cigarettes,
his nostrils felled tyrants
right and left.

And when he spoke
Utopias! galloped from his throat
fell on empty air, while Lenin
snatched a cockroach
scuttling up his chair.

TEN YEARS SINCE....

Ten years since my mother's voice
told me out of bed, and that was a visit.
Now a late riser faces coffee and smoke,
the raising of shades to the sun's
dependable felicity, but how do I buy
my time? Back worn thin with
accidents, lies admitting themselves
and where do you sell a preacher who rants:
don't buy this shit. My mother was right,
over and over, you've got to do
things you don't like, got to compromise.

The morning drags its feet, I mumble around
mother in every crack, under every door.
Then out the window of this temporary house
I see that scrawny tabby whisker boldly through
the weeds...pause...pounce—and a white
cabbage butterfly disappears! My eyes applaud
he strolls about his work, mother far away.

SHE MUST'VE ALWAYS BEEN COLD

She must've always been cold
anklets, coat, black shawl
summer and winter——
 she was sweet
 she loved the children,
 they said——

I didn't know her
except once to carry groceries
and sometimes watched her rest
an enormous weight on the corner
fifteen minute pause
two blocks to the Safeway
two blocks back

and my thoughts skipped her by
an old woman heavy, resting——
 she loved the children,
 they said——

She ended up alone
lumped under the kitchen table
lots of beercans in the corner
the deputy coronor said,
lots of beercans
tapping shiny black shoes
crew-cut, death-every-day
his discreet Dodge blinking,

he sat in her one chair
made out the papers, lots of beercans
and the children skipped by curious

for a glimpse of a lump between
chrome legs of a yellow formica-topped table——

And at last they came
not a lot of fanfare,
but clean sheets,
a blue blanket,
a hard time getting her out
wearing white gloves,
the deputy coronor checking
his watch for overtime,

the curious mothers scolding a path
through the children, of course
she ended up alone, a lot of beercans
her path to the Safeway empty
for rent \$80 a month——

And I have no business in this matter
I didn't know her,
just to watch
and once to carry groceries
afraid to stay for praises
no way to warm this lumpy old woman
always cold, always resting,
and the children won't miss her at all.

NYMPHET

She's twelve and sucking
on a peach, a brass key dangling
between her thighs, the gold hairs
arch like miniature rainbows,
the mist around her legs
warm as cartwheels——
and I'm a dirty old man
harmless at twenty-nine.

Betty Healy

BLACKBERRY PICKER

Roga Nelson flops a haying hat
on her Scandinavian head.
It casts a warm shadow
on her practical breasts
covered with words
stenciled blue
on the Grange flour sack apron.
A milk bucket
swinging barn smells
hangs around her waist
to drop in picked blackberries.
Two leftover hot cakes
spread to the edges with molasses
stick in her pocket
to fill the holes of noon hunger.

She passes the morning pasture
feeding tail-switching Guernsey cows.
Thick berries dangle on the bushes,
ripe enough to fill 15 Mason jars
before Hank wants his supper
on the table.
Roga hurries her feet
through last year's burn
before the sun molds dew
on the bushes
and sacrifices her berries
to beaks of crows.
After the chickens are fed,

she'll scrub juice spills
from the woodstove lids,
push a polish on the Royal Monarch
until it shines
like the dollar in the coffee can.

Michael C. Ford

A TOME (to Eloise Healy)

*They are all gone now, the days
We thought would not come for us are here*

—Kenneth Rexroth

Clara Bow you never knew I know
may never know how now I see
you like in a dream last nite
tells me you are like
you were on late late show TV
when they'd call you "savage"
in 1932 epic West how yr troubles
compounded with tears how you began
to mean more to me than my own
life how I wanted to tell you
this now it's too late somebody sd
yesterday the way you died alone
in Culver City in 1965 no it can't
be too late you're still alive I'll
be able to see you touch you kiss
yr spangled hair drive yr car backwards
to a compatible year all this altho
I know you must know I know everything
is still okay know you're only a few
miles away because I believe what I
see in the movies

Joseph Hansen

THE SMOKE OF THE COUNTRY

The doors with latches broken
hinges broken
doors themselves broken
the tiles glazed animals
glazed birds and flowers
slick underfoot with semen
the reek of semen heavier
even than the perfume of the oil
cloudy as semen in the chainhung lamps
the heavy tallowed wicks
lying like penises
wrung out but still aflame
flickering impotence
along the surface of the perfumed oil
as spent lechery itself
lies burning
along the perfumed and anointed flesh
of boys plucked clean of fleece
as melons without rinds
whose rectal vents
are openings to gardens
musky with bloom and fruit
who sprawl with tallow limbs
black adder nests of hair
heavy with perfumed oil
on cushions semen soaked
or crackling with dried semen
the flowers painted on them
flaking off the purple satin

golden satin rose
idly chipped by gilded fingernails
of boys waiting beyond
the doors with latches broken
hinges broken
doors themselves broken
in soot domed cabinets
of striped and shadowed hangings
rugs dusky silknapped
sparkling with dried scaled
of semen like fish scales
from the kitchens of a king
or spongy underfoot
with semen
the boys eat grapes
lazily masturbate
sleep and if no lover
has stolen their finger cymbals
sing in false girl voices
of nightingales and waters
and dance without rising
dance where they lie
chew dates figs tangerines
with teeth regular as numbers
white as lambs
and thrust the sugared mash
with honeyed tongues
into the mouths of merchants
who twist fat fingers
deep in ointment bowls
send one perhaps three
a whole hand if the boy is marvelous
or dead
into that perfumed paradise
between his petal dunes

their better messengers
grown fat and flaccid
the blame belonging to
the doors with latches broken
hinges broken
doors themselves broken
the master of the house
fallen across an empty wineskin
every day by noon
face down flies at the vomit
underneath his face
but lustfully naked grizzled rump
puckered by years thrust up
as if to substitute
a vertical grimace
for that his cankered mouth
equally toothless
in its frame of grizzled beard
offered in shalom
one year ago perhaps three
the blue baths swim
with milky clouds of semen
overflow
men slip on the stairs and curse
a boy slits another's throat
a black man drowns a leper in a drain
the roses in the courtyard
hang on canes
taller than olive trees
bloat and strew cankered petals
on paths where mangy dogs and beggars whine
the doors were sound
one year back perhaps three
kept in repair
the boys in strictest secrecy balancing

the testicles of camel drovers
priests money changers
sailors on their tongues
or in the crimson aspics of their mouths
drowning the thrusts and lunges
of weavers tailors sandal makers
pressers of olive oil
potters schoolmasters
storks have broken many tiles
above the great bath
the ceiling is stained
with maps of rain
and no one sweeps
and no one scrubs
but one year three ago
there was less laughter
grapes tangerines heap up
on brass trays sticky in the cabinets
and trade
 was never
 better
though the soft hands of lust
have broken all the doors
with the gentleness of water
and watchers splash the tiles
with storms of semen
when a boy
cries out in simulated ecstasy
under the leanflanked thrusts
of some handsome newcomer
the streets will break your ankles
stones have sunk
or been torn up
do not go near the park at night
if you would be

happily masturbated simply stand
close against another listener's back
when a crowd gathers
around the storyteller on his mat
in the lower market
or in the temple square
under the three palms
but do not go near the park at night
where you will be not may be
flung down among the rushes by the spring
and raped and left to drown
if you are still alive
when twenty men have finished with you
no do not go near the park
also do not go alone
at night from one street to another
the watch keeps to his tower
with his squinteyed boy
there are fewer torches
than one year ago or three
they have been torn down
or have fallen
like the doors of the brothel cabinets
neglected like the roses and the drains
but there is more laughter
except for a few old women
no one squats in the markets to sell goods
men eat from cracked plates
or from their hands when the plates
are shattered hobble in broken sandals
and the city's looms trail strings
and in the tailor shops
citizens themselves hack lengths
from the few bolts remaining
and wrap the lengths around them

the tailors drink in the wineshops
and loll with the boys
as do the weavers and the sandalmakers
laughing
there is much laughter
one year ago perhaps three
there was more shadow movement
in narrow lanes and alleys
if you chose to lean
any time after moonrise from your window
you could glimpse naked limbs and hear
the grunts of love
the waterslap of flesh
wet smack of sucking mouths
and could if you chose
masturbate from your window
and rain your semen on the boys below
this year every mouth has known
every other mouth it wants to know
and many mouths it does not care to know
hands crotches feet armpits smiles
they must change
the brothel boys often
this year they must bring
new boys from farther off
strangers to lie behind
the doors with latches broken
hinges broken
doors themselves broken

an old man up country
in a hairy tent
with more sheep than all the brothels
of Sodom have boys
sent me two strangers

fortunately by daylight
they were young men limbs lean
and muscular flesh burnished
hair blowing like lamp flames
in the wind outside the city gate
beautiful
and I led them to my house
a mile through back streets
but still one noticed
three followed
calling out what they wanted
of the strangers
and others came down from rooftops
and from the broken doors of wineshops
and from the blown courtyards
of brothels some naked
pronged like the antelope
at sight of the young men
two knew me and asked the strangers' names
who had no names
and filth was pitched at me from the gutter
when I said so
and when we turned in at my street
the boldest in despair
tore the garments from the two young men
who gleamed like idols of brass
the lane was narrow
I placed myself between them and the mob
and thrust them through my doorway
and dropped the bar
the men of Sodom would not go
peering through the sunshot shutters
I could see them fighting
for the fair woolen cloth
the young strangers had worn

and frantically masturbating into it
while those who could not get a scrap
pounded with angry fists upon my door
rattled the shutters
asking that I release the young men
to them I went out
and told them no
and they prized paving stones
out of the lane
and raised them to hurl at me
I said that I would send my daughters out
each one a virgin
that they might have my daughters
but not these strangers in my house
and they jeered
having no use for women
and a heavy stone struck the doorframe
and I went back inside
when the young men came out
a cheer arose
they stood naked yet no one could
touch them
and once they had come back indoors
it seemed as if they had blinded the mob
for they pawed along the walls
crying out for my door
but could not find it
and the young men told me
Yaweh would tumble Sodom in the dust
so that not one stone should be left
at rest upon another
square miles of white buildings
markets streets temples exchanges
the high walks of the sunlight on the roofs
all of it would lie flat upon the earth

none would survive
jackals would prowl here
and the young men told me
I must take my family to the mountains
my door was not broken
not the latch
nor the hinges
nor the door itself
my wife turned to look
she had a weakness
for the catastrophes of others
and she died with the laughter of the baths
and I hid deep in a cave in the mountains
and the night before last
my eldest daughter thinking me drunk
came and roused the man in me
and sat astraddle of me
and got deep into herself
the seed of my loins
and last night my younger daughter
and though as the young men did not
they do not laugh
they smile to themselves
and stand among the dry brush
at the cave opening
and look toward Sodom
and behold
the smoke of the country
goes up as the smoke from a furnace

each other—Robert Bly says: "I must admit that I don't think it is an accident that this 'mind mingling' should exist in the work of a man who has made his living working with his hands. In some way the mental powers are freed to move about when the hands are working . . . If a man does all mental work—like the office worker—or if he does

not work at all—like the city acid head—the mind often stretches out horizontally . . . So surely Pillin's labor all day—for he is not rich—in his home, with his wife only—labor as in some medieval cottage from morning to night, has a part in the slow but powerful growth of his art". Bly observes further: "If a man works with clay all day he becomes a man of few words, because the light, frothy words that fill so many American poems seem ridiculous compared to the clay. The clay has to be 'centered' before it is useful as a pot or as a cup to drink from". And he concludes: "(Pillin's) vertical poems are the Hasidic tree, with the bark still on, every branch strong, not crowded in its forest".

Like most small press books "Everything Falling" is not easy to find in the bookstores, but it is worth hunting for. Published with the assistance of the National Endowment for the Arts and illustrated with eight stunning color prints by Polia Pillin, "Everything Falling" just might be the best buy in poetry since "Howl". And if you are lucky enough to find a copy, his "Pavanne for a Fading Memory" (Alan Swallow Press, 1963) gives you another generous, nourishing serving of poems from a poet who observes the stars from a kitchen window.

—John Harris

A leaf is missing here. Printed pages 123 and 124 were not captured in the scan this edition was made from: the end of Blair Allen's portfolio and the opening page of the review section. The review resumes below, already in mid-argument.

Joseph Hansen

Review

MOCKINGBIRD WISH ME LUCK by Charles Bukowski, Black Sparrow Press, 1973

SPECIMEN 73 edited by Paul Vangelisti, Pasadena Museum of Modern Arts, 1973

GOLD COUNTRY by Shirley Kaufman, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973

WINDINGS, Poems and Fragments, 1962—1972, by Dennis Holt, published by the author, 1973

LADY IN KICKING HORSE RESERVOIR by Richard Hugo, W. W. Norton, 1973

Orestes in the Greek myth was pursued by furies. So is Charles Bukowski. But Orestes had murdered his mother. All Bukowski did was "with one punch at the age of 16 and 1/2" knock out his father, "a cruel shiny bastard with bad breath" (bad breath figures in Bukowski's poems as often as on commercial television). Orestes's furies, the Eumenides, had sprung to life from the blood of a father murdered by his son.

Bukowski's furies are landladies, fags, cops, the rich, blacks, whores, race horses that run fourth, jailhouse guards, ex-wives, ex-mistresses, present mistresses, men younger and/or bigger than he is, golfers, ants, ingrown toenails, broken toilet chains — the list is long. But trivial, even if it includes beer and hangovers — and there is no honest way to leave those out.

Aside from not knowing the difference between "lay" and "lie" Bukowski writes well. He seems to be angry much of the time but he controls it, uses it. It's often a tired anger, more like disgust, in this book. And almost always it's directed at flimsy targets. But at fifty, it

looks as if Bukowski has learned his limitations. He keeps inside them most of the time, making the poems work on their own terms, as in "Moyamensing Prison," "An Interesting Night," "One with Dante," "A Day at the Oak Tree Meet" — and a handful of others.

He tries for something grand and wild in "The Big Fire" and misses horribly. He tries for honest sentiment in a small poem to his small daughter "Marina" and ends up sentimental. There are some really embarrassing lines in the book, but none to surpass the last one in "Consummation of Grief" — "I was born to hustle roses down the avenues of the dead." Hemingway mimicked to death — or is it Nelson Algren?

If you want to live in Bukowski's room and look out Bukowski's window, drink his beer, type at his "typer" and fight with his women — those aliens he hates and fears (says he hates and fears) but needs (says he needs), then these 97 poems should be enough. The drawback is that they're rarely about anything but Bukowski and the Bukowski of the poems is not a very interesting man. His subjects are boring and predictable and marred by mean little habits like envy and self-pity.

The two best poems in the book aren't about Bukowski at all. One is about a fat old woman and a child, the other about a cat and a mockingbird. Which raises a question: what kind of poems would Bukowski write if, for a while, he stopped writing about himself, didn't let himself into the poems at all? Or even — unthinkable! — if he wrote not about the brawling, beer-guzzling, vomiting, whoring, horse-playing, jailbird cult figure he has let others make of him, but about the real man. Or has he thought of himself for too long as a dirty joke?

A few of his poems crop up again in the book *Specimen 73* Paul Vangelisti readied to accompany a series of readings at the Pasadena Museum. Bukowski comes out on top here. Almost all the others are lost in his shadow. This is not in all cases their fault. On some of them he simply has the advantage of years —Ronald Koertge and Barbara

Hughes. They will be strong as he is when they've lived as long and written as much. Koertge is cleverer, Hughes is more human.

Two mature, established professionals, Robert Peters and Charles Wright have respectable and expectable poems here. But Ammons long ago wrote a shattering and beautiful poem about hog killing. Peters on the same subject is only adequate. And Charles Wright on the birth of his child does not sear the mind as does Galway Kinnell in *The Book of Nightmares*. Isn't the option to do a thing better or not at all?

Specimen 73 also prints poems (if that's the word) by Vangelisti, Stuart Perkoff, Jack Hirschman, Gerda Penfold, Holly Prado and Alvaro Cardona-Hine. Luckily John Thomas's poems (and that is the word) are also here. With Bukowski's Koerge's and Hughes's, his work makes the book worth its price. In his "Apologia" Thomas voices a point the book makes otherwise only by inadvertence:

These desperations
are not unique I
don't say that
I only make affidavit of their solidarity
only testify to the reality
of a certain kind of sullen rage
that grows out of having only such
trifles to work with as
 the twentieth century
 squirmings of two people in a bed
 that mountains are big
 that pain hurts
 that friends die
 — such things as these
& I tell you
all that keeps me at it is
that to form a living poem
of such flimsy material
to make it breathe and sing

is so preposterously difficult that
 it is an undertaking
 not unworthy of a man

It is an undertaking not unworthy of a woman. And now and then Shirley Kaufman manages it in her new book *Gold Country*. I think the poems "Head," "Apples" and "Giving" fill Thomas's prescription. So, by and large, does the eleven-part "Jerusalem Notebook." But the second book of Kaufman's probably came too soon. There isn't enough material in her head to fill a book. The jacket blurb says "she pays careful attention to the most interesting details of what she is writing about, knowing the importance of saying just enough." But the details are too often the same.

On page three "our skin still/shining with water." On page five: "memorized each muscle/how the skin/shines over them." On page seven: "turning brown/our skin in summer." On page 11: "I lay the fragrance/to your skin." Page 19: ". . . turning down sheets/at night, the skin/shines on the knuckles." Page 36: "the peaches soften/in their skins/sun/on my mands like silklined gloves." Page 38: "And nights/the child who climbs into your skin . . ." Page 40: "Juices locked up in the skin." Page 42: "She could drown us in the lake of her soft skin." Page 46: "The mound of your hand on my skin/is the newest one." Page 52: "Our skin/is luminous." And on page 79: "Heat/begins to shimmer/on your skin."

We are also treated to a good many "bones," "shells," "cups," "birds," "wings," "feathers," "stones." "Water" flows a lot and prisms break light more than once and *Encounter's* reviewer was right about Kaufman's poems being "glassy structures" — the word occurs often. She writes "cleanly," all right, but she doesn't write about much that seems interesting — either to her or for that reason to anyone else. "That pain hurts" may be a truism to John Truism but Kaufman might have touched on it once or twice to let us know she is aware of it. Gentleness is lacking in our world and she is gentle and we need her for that. But unsparing honesty is also lacking. To build "glassy structures" is not enough.

Dennis Holt (*Windings*) has trouble with puns. He is young and his book mirrors a mind amiable, a little too diffident, bookish at times. But there are interesting poems here, interesting fragments of diary, and there is promise of harder, sturdier work to come. The promise makes itself evident in the final poems. The book has an engaging modesty that keeps one reading and after the longeurs of Bukowski and Kaufman its variety of subjects (while they're none of them very large) is refreshing. Refreshing too is Holt's quietness about his drunks and madneses, in contrast to Bukowski's braggadocio.

The poems in *The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir* are mostly about lost places in Montana. I like "The Only Bar in Dixon," "Camas Prairie School" and a half dozen others, like them as one likes parts of one's self. I was born in Richard Hugo's west, a country whose history went off and left it after staying only long enough to learn this is no fit place for man.

Hugo gets everything right — the broken and abandoned farms, the rusty mine machinery, the weedy railroad tracks, the Saturday night Indians dead drunk on the plank floors of lonely taverns run at the sides of endless highways by leathery men and women who know better than to wonder how they got there, why they stay. Hugo crafts very well. But he is probably not loud enough. Bukowski could do with more manners, Hugo with fewer.

—Joseph Hansen

Contributors

BLAIR ALLEN was born in Los Angeles on Hermann Hesse's birthday. His poetry has been published in BACHY 1, *Cafeteria, Our Own Thing* (an anthology by Prentice-Hall) and *Assembling*. His artwork appeared in BACHY 2. He has just self-published a tongue-in-cheek avant-lit/art gallery book titled *TELE-VISUAL PO-UMS FOR BLOODSHOT EYEBALLS*.

ANNABELLE W. BERGFELD has had stories published in *This Issue* and *Christian Family*, and poems in *Spirit*, *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald Tribune*. She was educated at Rutgers and was a public school teacher for many years. She lives in Bricktown, New Jersey.

RODERICK BRADLEY writes: "Born in 1943 I started writing poems in 1972. My early childhood was spent in Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, New Hampshire — later childhood in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, North Dakota. Still later I built an encyclopedia of disastrous careers - mostly having to do with movie making - in Boston, New York, Washington, D.C. Los Angeles caught me in 1968. I live in Venice and make toys, ride a bicycle and drink Red Mountain. My ambition is to discover a wet girl in a nude mackintosh playing Satie on a blade of grass." These are his first published poems.

PAUL BROOKS, a native of Tennessee and made up of spare parts from a Sherman tank, is "an outrageous misfit and accepted by very few people." He is not only proud of his status, he is quite happy among the rejects. He has appeared in 23 *California Poets*, *Bear*, *Energy West*, *Statement No. 27*, *The Citadel*, and most currently in *The Last Cookie*. He is at present working on a poetry anthology titled *The Witches On Mariposa*.

JOSEPH BRUCHAC reports: "I live in a house built by my grandfather on the foundation of another house owned by his

wife's parents which was burned down in a feud. I share his Indian love of the land and grow crops and raise chickens. I lived and taught in Ghana from 1966-69 and I've just completed a novel about Ghana. Part of an earlier novel which revolves around the Ghost Dance religion will appear in an anthology from Emerson Hall called *Dues*. I teach a writing course at Comstock Prison and am living this year on a New York State CAPS grant for poetry."

DAVID COLE lives in Carmel Valley, California. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and has worked briefly as both newspaper reporter and information officer. He is presently writing short stories and novels and free-lancing non-fiction to several West Coast magazines. *Final Indignities* is his first published piece of fiction.

WILTON DAVID'S artwork appeared in BACHY 2. He studied at the University of Southwestern Louisiana at Lafayette and UCLA, and spent 2 years at Central Louisiana State Hospital. He has illustrated several small-press poetry books and is presently doing poster work for Cablevision Three TV in Alexandria, Louisiana. GRETTEL EHRLICH writes: "I live in a shack in Topanga which didn't burn down. I climb summer and winter in the Sierras. Studied to be a dancer but couldn't adapt to New York. For a living I make films - documentaries for NET, features, educational. There's one book of my poems *Geode/Rock Body* published by Capra Press, and I'm now finishing another called *Counting on Breath*. I'm twenty-eight and hope that in my next life I'll be a composer of music and play the cello or the piano as intimately as Scriabin did".

MICHAEL C. FORD was born in Illinois, migrated to California at age 3; many high schools in Los Angeles and college in Santa Monica. Was living between Idaho and Redwood City, Calif. (1970-72) where he produced a quick anthology of West Coast verse called *The Mt. Alverno Review* in honor of Kenneth Patchen. Publications of personal work include a broadsheet of poems

called *Boise/Faces* (Image, 1969) and a long songy fragmented poem around the inland suburban districts of Southern California called *Sheet Music* (Anacapa Press, 1972). Currently maintains a poetry and prose journal called *The Sunset Palms Hotel* in a room behind a barbershop.

JERRY FREDERICKS was born in Los Angeles 34 years ago, is 6 feet tall and has black ink. This is his first publication.

SANDY GOODWIN — is a free - lance photographer in Los Angeles. Currently she is experimenting within new areas of silk-screen printing.

JOSEPH HANSEN lives in Los Angeles surrounded by books, trees and animals. His poems have been printed in *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *Saturday Review* and other magazines and in *The New Yorker Book of Poems*. His published books include a collection of short stories and a dozen novels, all but two under pen names. He has edited a magazine, written TV scripts, sung for radio and records, reviewed books, painted pictures, taped for broadcast the readings of many other poets, and heads the Venice Poetry Workshop. His latest novel, *Longleaf*, will be published by Harper and Row this year, under the pen name Rose Brock.

BETTY HEALY writes: "I am married to a sympathetic husband who lends me stamps, fills my car with hi-octane gasoline, and hides my cigarettes. Four children, two in and two out of college. Left at home to guard the silence in the house, a ratty airedale and a cow-hocked schnauzer. I am an editor at the Office of Publications, University of Washington. Poems have appeared in *Assay*, *Release*, and *Spring Rain Press*.

BRUCE JAY KAPSON was born in Chicago 22 years ago and grew up in one of the city's many neighborhoods. He attended the University of Arizona and the Art Institute of Chicago, and is currently enrolled at the California Institute of the Arts. He lives in Manhattan Beach, California. DIRK KORTZ writes: "I was born in

Penang on the Malaysian Peninsula where my father was stationed at the time with the RAF. I did a lot of moving for the first 15 years. Then I ran away from home and settled down in New Mexico where I worked in a mine until I was 21. In 1965 I joined the rodeo and followed the circuit for 3 years. Then I got married, divorced, married and divorced again. I'm presently editing a contemporary anthology of left-handed poets living in the Bay Area (S.F.) where I've been living and writing for the last 5 years. I like it here." A piece by Mr. Kortz has been discovered in *Gallimaufry* no. 2.

MARTIN P. LAARAKKER reports: "Born in Germany in 1928, raised in the Netherlands at the far north end of a brick-paved highway built by the Romans and re-discovered by the Germans digging trenches at the end of World War II. I spent four years in France, four years in Canada, and I came to the US in 1961. The last three years I have lived in Topanga". These are his first published poems.

STEVEN LOUIE is a senior at UCLA - a Fine Arts major concentrating in urban design. His works range from architectural designing to pictorial arts. In the past 3 years he has experienced a transition of life style in LA since leaving Boise, Idaho. — reflected in his pen and ink landscape drawings. While attending school, Steve is a designer and student manager at the Bel Air estate of Jack Ryan - the inventor/designer for Mattel Toys. Through this experience he has been exposed to landscaping, architecture, car design, and management. At an art festival earlier this year, Steve exhibited 5 works of which 4 received ribbons including the Grand Prize.

CHUCK LUSTIG has had a story in *Proteus* (Alexandria, Virginia) and has another coming out this spring. He is living in Iowa City, and writes that he is at work on a novel called *Loveslick*. "All the rest (degrees, colleges, jobs) doesn't seem worth mentioning."

RICHARD MARTIN reveals: "Uh, I was born in Seattle. Uh, I'm somewhat crazy, Uh, I do what you call write. Why no one knows.

My story 'Substitutes' is visible in the summer issue of *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. A play will soon be performed on Connecticut Public Television. Santa Monica and Olivia and Graymonde form homes. Magic is cold water on your face". These are his first published poems.

KEN MCCULLOUGH writes: "Born Cancer '43. MFA Writer's Workshop, Iowa. *The Easy Wreckage* (Seamark Press, 1971), *Migrations* (Stonemarrow Press, 1972). Recent poetry in *Triquarterly*, *Doones*, *Granite*, *Saltlick*, *kamadhenu*, etc. Teaching now at Montana State after several years of heavy construction, Merchant Marine, baseball. Working in Poets-in-the-Schools program for National Endowment for the Arts and active in writing program at Montana State Men's Prison. Decided to leave the comfortable predictability of the Iowa landscape for Montana, where the environment is threatening in the sense that it makes you wake up, come to terms with the fantasies in every facet of your life". **GEOFFREY MONTAGU** is a free-lance photographer who lives in Los Angeles. He was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, raised in Princeton and schooled in New England, principally at Hawthorne College, where he received a degree in anthropology. Mr. Montagu claims to be self-taught in photography, though he has had some formal training at Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. His work ranges from portraiture and fashion layout to still life and advertising. He is currently involved with a group of photographers who are studying new techniques in photo-silk screening.

WILLIAM PILLIN was born in Russia and came to the United States when he was 14. During the Depression he participated in the union struggles and was employed on the WPA Writer's project. Later he farmed and worked in bookstores and libraries. His first book of poems was published in 1939 and since then he has appeared in *Poetry* (Chicago), *Nation*, *Kayak*, *Coastlines*, *Prarie Schooner*, *Poetry Northwest* and in many magazines and anthologies.

He lives in Los Angeles where he and his wife Polia operate a pottery studio.

MICHAEL RANNEY lives in Pomona, California. *The Survivor* is "his first legitimately published piece of prose fiction."

MAXINE ROTHBERG works with words and clay. After graduating from the HS of Music & Art in Manhattan, she migrated to Los Angeles. She graduated from UCLA, a fine arts major, english minor. Her current passions include the making and teaching of ceramic sculpture and pottery and watching her two girl-children sprout. She lives in Santa Monica, usually works at home, but occasionally escapes to a small studio called CLAYDANCE in Venice, Calif. This is her first published work.

HERBERT T. SCHMIDT JR. reveals: "I've lived long enough to have a past and to know it doesn't *mean anything*. Granny Hamner hit .262 lifetime. I'm still at the plate. I like being alone, but I'd rather have a good woman. I live in Palms by choice, am not in the phone book, but am listed on the operator's line-up card. I'm old enough to know who I am and what I want. However, I still have trouble with a well-thrown curve ball up around the ears".

FRANCES DEAN SMITH states: "I wish I could define myself. Like you, I used to ask my mother, 'What are we?' and like your mother's answer hers was too dull: 'Americans'. After a while I made up my mind to embrace what I could not escape and thought of myself at thirty and at forty-five as the embodiment of my nation, not just 'American' but America herself — born in California, raised in New England, child of a cowboy's daughter and a Harvard man, a psychic amputee with dreams of glory, my cells full of genes not only of the English, Irish and Scotch-Irish that shows, but also of black African and red American Indian forbears never acknowledged. But now at 51 I know I am just myself, a bearded waitress on the Municipal Pier, a single mother, friend to a few friends, unwilling poet. When the time comes a coffin may define me — but not yet. . GEORGE W. SMYTH has

published fiction in *North American Review*, *Four Quarters*, *Southwest Review*, *Works*, *Trance*, and *Arlington Quarterly*, among others. Stories are scheduled to appear in *California Quarterly*, *Confrontation*, *Descant*, *Oui*, and *Spectrum*. He teaches writing from time to time in San Antonio, Texas, where he lives. He has just finished playing a bit part in a new film 'The Great Waldo Pepper' with Robert Redford, directed by George Roy Hill.

ELLIOTT STEWART reports: "Raised in Indiana, boarding school in Massachusetts where I gave up the notion of being a physicist for the notion of being a writer, little knowing what that entailed but rather liking the smell of it somehow. College in Los Angeles during which I actually began to write poems, to study the craft. Graduated from Occidental, presently attending grad school at UCLA"

LENKA STEWART is presently studying at San Jose State University, having also attended the University of California at Berkeley, Santa Cruz and Los Angeles. She is a self-taught artist. This is her first publication.

WILLIAM DAVID TUMPOWSKY is 22 years old and lives in Hollywood. A graduate of the University of Arizona, he is currently attending Los Angeles Art Center. He is a photographer for Animedia Productions.

MICHAEL WILDING teaches at the University of Sydney, Australia, and is an editor of the remarkable publication *Tabloid Story*. "I have been writing and living fiction for the last fifteen years, and my first collection of stories *Aspects of the Dying Process* was published in 1972. I come from a working class family but I have never found that my fiction effectively relates to my emotional political commitments. I worried about this for some years but the fiction takes its own way. I wonder about some of the ways it's taking me. But I think it's best just to let it go ahead without theorising or conceptualizing or abstractising about it."

CHRISTINE ZAWADIWSKY writes: "I'm 23, Ukranian, was born in the Bronx, and have lived in a score of East Coast cities. Will be getting a BFA in June. Was first published when I was 18 and since then have published in over fifty magazines, including *The New York Quarterly*, *The New Orleans Review*, *The Southern Review*, *West Coast Review*, *Poem*, and *Stone Drum*. I somehow taught myself to read from comic books and fairy tales before I went to kindergarten, which is strange since my mother spoke primarily Ukranian and my father, who speaks five languages, was always away on business trips."

As we go to press we learn that Joseph E. Bruchac, Joseph Hansen and Kenneth McCullough are recipients of 1974-75 creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. James Holmstrand, William Matthews and A.G. Sobin who appeared in previous issues of BACHY are also among the 154 individual grantees. Each fellowship is for \$5,000. Our congratulations to these and all other winners.

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