

1969

## The Fat Giraffe, volume 1, number 6 (1969)

Fat Giraffe

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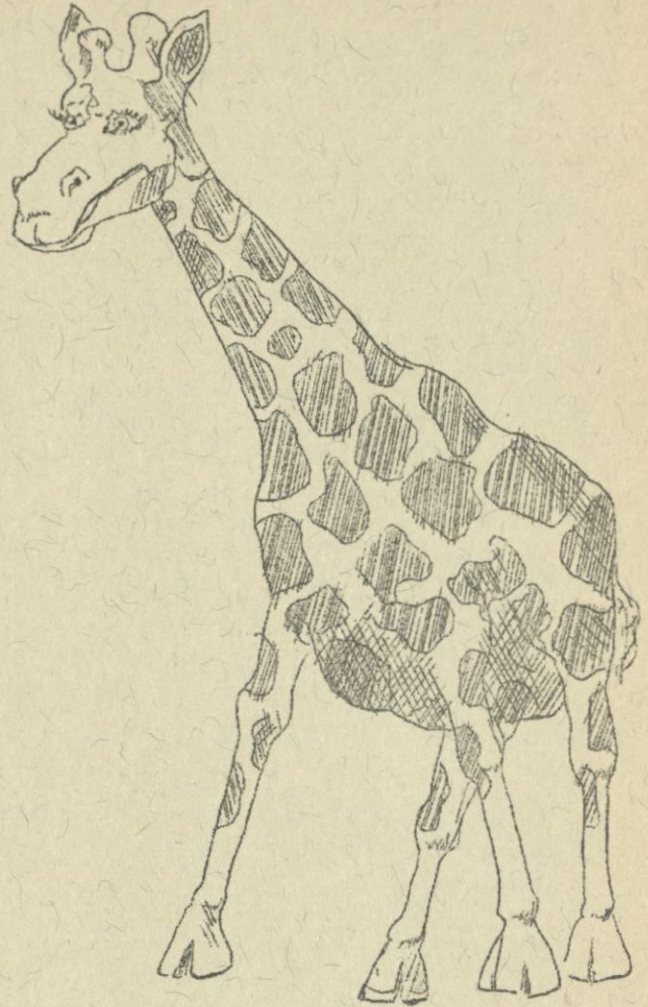
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# THE FAT GIRAFFE

ONE  
DIME



The Fat Giraffe is an independent, non-profit creative writing publication, issued twice per quarter by a group of students and faculty at Moorhead State College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Manuscripts (poetry, short stories, and short essays) may be submitted to any member of the editorial staff.

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NEW LONDON WATER CARNIVAL

Three down-home musicians  
singing, "The Eden Valley Fox Hunt"  
floating on a pine raft  
near the bank of the Crow River.  
Wide pelvised women  
slice fresh bread and home-made liver sausage  
for farmers in blue denim coveralls.  
Like Neanderthal witches,  
they whisper to one another  
about an old man having an epileptic seizure.  
The reflection of railroad flares  
and brown-furrowed, Minnesota faces  
on dark, algae-blooming water.

In Vietnam,  
Buddhist monks in saffron robes  
burn themselves  
in hope of leaving the war behind.  
In Biafra,  
children fill hungry stomachs with dust  
before sleep.

- Michael Moos

PASSING OF THE SUN

The light has gone  
Past the ruins of the city,  
Past the forest's twisted fingers  
Gathered up to the sky.

Upon the mountain face  
A tear of snow  
Reflects the red horizon  
Slowly bleeding.

- David Rudesill

## COLD

All the trees have died and become skeletons,  
 rows of skeletons along the streets  
 with only their shadows growing  
 over the cold-white snow.  
 The silence gathers in the streetlamp  
 while the cat shivers in the shelter  
 of the window sill.  
 The old man walking by  
 licks the viscid thread of mucus  
 from his upper lip.  
 All the windows of the city  
 are trying to outstare  
 the cold eye of the moon.  
 Here the night is like a cold, quiet storm.  
 Here all dreams meet,  
 dreams of young children,  
 of old and young men and women,  
 all dreaming of grey, wind-ripped coats  
 hanging limp on the long bone-branches of trees,  
 all gathered together around a dead fire  
 on the barren plains of snow  
 that stretch into the heavy darkness.  
 And the frigid air,  
 the cold that must possess everything,  
 like an invisible needle,  
 moves into the bone marrow of the fingertips  
 and touches the corners of the eyes.  
 Here, the long minutes are frozen  
 into the eternity of rivers of ice.

- Dale Jacobson

Grass, Dylan, War, and Zen. . . .all fine  
 words to head a verse, especially a really free  
 verse. Which is to say, that is why these  
 lines lack rhyme, and the title Sandra (after  
 a raven-haired woman I have known) lies strangely  
 in the body  
 unlike an altogether proper title. Some may charge  
 sophistry, or others sneer ego-trip, but  
 closest are those who would tell an impressionable  
 young woman she was inspiration to a poem.  
 And that's not to mention her gypsy eyes.

- Kent Scheer

## WITHOUT WORDS

In a greenhouse sitting,  
We sleep long and naked.  
The sun warming us  
Through the mountain air,  
Over the white river.

Waking,  
I breathe slowly,  
Casting my new eyes forth  
On a line as thin as a girl's whisper,  
A minnow of sunlight for bait,  
Bitten by the wind,  
Reeling in a supper of summer love.  
The dust in the shining air  
I inhale.

My mouth to yours,  
Dust to dust.  
Your body,  
Waiting and resting,  
Lying beside mine,  
Dreaming.

We have come through fire  
And the loss of green words  
To this house of glass.  
We are the only ones alive  
Anywhere.

Suddenly  
The river breaks into water.

And the silence is lovelier than a man can understand.

- Keith A. Heller

## THE MASOCHIST

I explained to her (with illustrations) my clever phrase: Water is just water until you touch it. Real verbiage.

She told me of getting propositioned in a pizza pit. Of pursuing cars and screeching tires. Of a desperate note to a service station attendant. Of her escape.

I thought of marrying her, so that she wouldn't be lonely any longer.

- Kent Graves

## THE MADONNA OF THE POTATO FIELDS

There is a wonder in  
this God-forgotten land  
where even rivers take  
the hard way home  
and nordic winds can snap  
a brittle mind as easily  
as heartless boys  
at play with icicles. . . .

The story goes that  
when the dreary spring  
at last allows the fields  
to crack and thaw,  
a lonely figure rises  
from the earth and stalks  
the windrows up and down  
and bangs her ancient armor  
with a weary fist, aching for  
the heft of Thor-forged steel.  
But now, forsaken  
to a world of curious rabbits  
and a farmer's musing cow,  
each spring her moans for  
all the vikings born too late  
convulse the harrowed ground,  
and finally, in rage  
she flings again the seeds  
of reticence and scorn  
into the northern air  
and sinks beneath the earth  
of those cold fields once more.

- Mark Vinz

## REMEMBER ME

Now I am alone  
 naked on Bank's Square  
 thumbing my way to the fields of Elysium.  
 Forgetting my goose-  
     bumps along the banks  
 of streaming silt,  
 of onrushing sludge,  
 I climb with Charon  
 aboard the barge  
 that will take us past the Styx  
 and down  
     the dying Mississippi.

Charon alone will not forget me.

- Dave Gustafson

## SOUTH OF HAWLEY, MINNESOTA 1969

1.

August. Slender cloud streaks.  
 Before making our evening camp,  
 we pack a leather bag  
 with fresh vegetables and red meat  
 and wash the city's nervous film  
 from our bodies  
 in West Cormorant lake.

2.

Driving south on gravel roads.  
 Mallards  
 heavy from northern grain fields  
 setting their wings  
 above Cuba marsh.

3.

Bass fishermen. Corn fields.  
 White farm houses with stained glass windows.  
 I have lived for nineteen years  
 in a farmland valley  
 that was once the dark, clay floor  
 of an ancient glacier lake.

- Michael Moos

WHILE WALKING MY DOG AT RIVERSIDE CEMETERY

Ancient ravens and  
 Iron Jesus  
 Above  
 The silent city

Warm arms of the sun  
 Clutch me  
 (I have each moment)  
 But the muskrat skull in my hand  
 Frightens me

In the corner of my eye  
 A quiet messenger  
 The great mother of next moments  
 Clad so nicely in snow robes and wind  
 Did move naturally to the river  
 (The ice must know about spring's fresh children)

Sparrows sing of January  
 My dogs dance among the graves  
 As I lie on my back  
 And breathe

- Jim Fawbush

WHAT IS YOUR COLOR, MY LADY?

I was born in a scorching wheatfield  
 in summer  
 Bluebirds were strong, lacing overhead.

My mother was the wheat I laid in,  
 My father was the ray from above,  
 My woman was the weed nearby.

Black vultures hung listlessly, screening the sky,  
 The dead grass took me away.

I died in a cold room in the city.

- Howard Samson