

1990

1990

Valparaiso University

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L.H.O.O.Q.



LIGHTER

Beneath the Bistro

Marjorie Thomas

I'll never forget our first time,
though it was your idea
to drive to the cobblestone castle
hung with pink neon,
flashing Bar
and Grill next to each other,
the lights grinning
like school friends
in an old photograph.
My steps were two behind yours,
timid, at what waited below us.

Down the dark, paisley steps,
we fell into a room
of maroon velvets and muted brass
with small wooden circles for tables,
and chairs with satin cushions
wrapped in plastic.
Sneaking to a table,
we tried to play casual,
speaking about all the times
we had been there before,
but then you took charge,
dragging me to the bar to get our drinks.
The bartender seemed shyer than we did,
so I ordered a Zombie
and walked back to our seats,
a tall blown glass,
full of ambrosia nectar and six different alcohols
in my right hand.

We sat for a while,
sipping our potions,
and talked a little
about me, and then Mark,
my brother, your husband—
how we could never tell if he loved us
or how much
which upset me
whenever I thought about it,
"You know the way he is," you said,
"He doesn't really show his affection."
I smiled dumbly,
thinking of the other person in the family
who had trouble showing affection,
but no problem
displaying disappointment
or rage.

I smiled
and kept that secret to myself,
while the bartender brought me
a Laughing Dragon,
free of charge,
because my childish curiosity
had charmed him in some way.
My brother would have paid for the drink
out of honesty or spite,
even though he never would have come
had we asked him.
We both knew this;
we both refused to admit it.
He was in our hearts then
and mine now:
A man who was once a boy
A boy I loved long ago.



Diane e. nehring

Fertile Epitaph

In burnished cherry I shall not lie
Nor on velveteen fields be left to decay.
Don't conceal my worth in a concrete vault
For from there I'll suffocate in my own putrescence.
I spurn a pillow on which my wayward head should rest
Please don't leave red marble as a symbol to my bereft.
For in that cherry prison solemn,
No fertile plants will ever sprout.
Rather...

 lay me in a field of green
Naked to the earth,
I will sleep much better there
On worms, and roots, and dirt.
I want to make it easy to remember
Not a chore for Sunday after church.
So when my grandchildren find a cocoon,
I'll be the plant from which it hangs.
And I will be the butterfly too
That spreads its wings to the skies of June.

Daniel youngren

The silver clouds pass
the crescent moon.
I must convince myself
this is no planetarium
with pinprick stars.
I try to fathom
a firmament
holding tiny flashlights
in a dome of glass.
But quickly sweeping,
a falling star rides
a charcoal rainbow,
arching in descent
through the velvet sky.
Had I not seen
this falling light,
the dome would seem,
to me, complete.
But in concern,
I roll my last cigarette
and add the missing pinprick
to the clever night.

Mike chasar



The Spires

High ,
above the crucifix
sound the bells,
twisting through the barren life.
From lofty towers,
ring solemn sounds,
bringing joy to whom,
on a darkened night?
Hear, from the ground,
the unfaltering monotone;
to what end?
Does joy return to the earth,
or shall the lofty spires
draw what joy it may,
only to sing to the eternal heavens,
who no longer seek
mortal comfort.

Len Hansen



Tracey Fletcher

The Prairie

I now have walked
the prairies,
in the morning hours,
feeling the chilling dew
between my naked toes.

Once too, I ran these plains,
at the height of noon—
the merciless sun
scorching my adolescent skin,
and the concealed thorns
of the perfect flower,
biting at my ankles.

In days and years past,
I make love to the falling day,
catching my face in the outreaching
branches of a nearby tree,
for a glimpse of nature's perfection.

Now, I lay to rest,
the day and days behind me,
against the tree, I lay for sleep—
in the cool night breeze,
my spirit will be freed.
Tonight there is no dawn.

Len Hansen

East Chicago, Indiana

I.
Distant Mobil
oil refineries blow
white smoke into the air,
whispering
the will of God.

II.
A heavy smell
hangs and
stagnates
around houses tidy
(with trimmed grass),
the people inside
apply lipstick and
dusty suits
for Sunday morning Church outings.

Keith Nipper

It appeared to be an average straw hat. Milky cream in color and very supple in texture, it could be molded into many different shapes. Each formation cast a different mood on its surroundings and changed the face beneath its brim into a different character. No matter what new contours the hat acquired, it always possessed the same smell — the pleasant scent of an old-fashioned hayloft.

"I'd give anything for a camera...I mean some film right now," he said to her as his fingers, far away, formed a square and framed her face, mimicking what he would have seen if he were looking through a lens.

She laughed and replied, "So, you are a picture-taker."

He cocked one eyebrow casually in slight confusion.

"Um...a photographer," she stumbled.

"Yes I am a photographer. I take pictures." It was said through a smile.

"Did you run out?"

More confusion. "Run out of what?"

"Of film."

"Ah. As a matter of fact I did. On my last shoot. Quite irresponsible really."

He judged that she was nervous because all the while she was sitting on his rug, in his living room, with her golden arms wrapped tightly around her raised knees, she rarely met his eyes. Those captivating blue eyes fell on many objects in his room, but not on he himself. He was unable to shift his gaze from her face. She was so beautiful sitting there wearing the straw hat.

"I feel like Annie Hall with the rim turned up like this," she said, as her eyes shifted to his face and then danced away.

He laughed, "Annie Hall, huh?"

"This is a great room I really like that reading area with all the throw pillows." She waved one arm to a far corner of the expanse room.

"It was my roommate's idea. He's into books."

He was also into late rent, noisy girls, and cheap wine. Lots of cheap red wine.

"So," she switched topics, "have you lived in

this neighborhood long?"

"Not really, only for a few months actually."

"Do you like it?"

"Yes, I can picture myself here for a couple of years at least."

The conversation drifted and he decided that it was safe to move in a little closer to her. She appeared comfortable in the hat, comfortable with him. At one point, she took the hat off and played with it in her hands, but he crawled toward her, took it away from her, and without touching her, he placed it on her head. She eyed him coyly.

"This is a nice hat. Is it yours?"

"No, I borrowed it from a friend and never returned it."

"I see."

Their eyes licked briefly, and then she glanced away, still able to escape him. She was still herself.

He excused himself, "I have to go to the bathroom," and got up and disappeared into a door behind her.

She took in a deep breath and wondered why she was here, sitting in his room, on his floor, with her toned arms wrapped tightly around her raised knees. It was just polite conversation, and yet she had wanted the company. He unsettled her always trying to ensnare her gaze. He wants me, she thought to herself and swallowed hard. She took the hat from her head and likened it to a gangster's, with the side rim flipped up. Then she put it back on.

He returned from the bathroom and walked up behind her. Seeing the shape of the hat askew, he again took it from her and this time, reshaped it before lightly dropping it onto her head. She half-smiled.

Walking over to the stereo, he changed the record to Robert Palmer. He thought of Robert's videos with all those women exactly alike — beautiful clones dancing in unison. He sat back down, facing her.

"I Didn't Mean to Turn You On" flowed into the room. She thought of Palmer's videos with all those women dressed exactly alike, moving

S traw Hat

behind him like programmed robots.

"Do you mind the music?"

"No, I get into Robert Palmer."

"Why did you move out of this neighborhood?" he questioned.

She replied, "I needed a change of scenery."

He leaned forward, "But, you came back..."

"To visit."

"I see," he said while moving toward her again and settling down cross-legged, closer than before.

He reached out and touched the brim of the hat and she smiled sweetly at him. She was finally getting comfortable even though he had come closer.

"Would you like anything to drink?" he asked as he motioned to a mini-refrigerator which was near him against a wall. He opened its door and revealed two shelves and a door inset filled with rows of bottled beer. She looked around quickly to see if she had missed spying a poster of a scantily clad woman. She hadn't.

"You can tell a guy lives here," she pronounced and then declined, "No thanks."

She watched him take a sip from a tall plastic cup that had always been beside him. Nice hands—smooth. Boyish face.

"Do you dance?" he inquired.

Shaking her head she answered, "No, I work at a newspaper."

"No. I mean do you like to dance?"

The blue eyes slid downwards to her lap and then darted back up to rest on his face. "Uh yes...I mean sometimes...when I'm in the mood."

"Well...?" He gestured towards open floor space.

"No, I couldn't"

He saw that she seemed embarrassed at the prospect. He already felt as if they were dancing. The music moved them and they tried to keep the rhythm. He was determined to lead.

The conversation had faded but she was unwilling to let the silence decide her fate.

It was not yet time.

"If you'll excuse me again," he looked at her

apologetically.

She exhaled, "Of course."

Once the door to the bathroom had shut, she got up on her hands and knees, crawled the short way to his cup, and smelled the contents. Water. She returned to her original sitting place.

The door opened and she heard his footsteps behind her. He stood directly behind her and she tilted her head backwards, looking up at him. Her beauty struck him again and he reached down to trace her chin, lightly brushing her fine cheekbones.

When it was over, this beginning, he moved around her and sat directly in front of her. She was rubbing the back of her neck as if sore.

"Would you like me to rub your back?"

"Really?" She looked surprised. "Usually you have to twist someone's arm for a massage."

"Or pay them."

She turned around and his hands found her shoulders. While artfully pushing his thumbs into her muscles, he told her how his mother used to rub his back. Her only reply was an occasional soft moan when he struck a particular nerve.

His hands traveled slowly down her back. When he had reached the base of her spine, his hands disappeared under her shirt and worked their way back. His fingers hovered momentarily over her bra clasp and then moved on again.

Her muscles were beginning to loosen and she felt much more relaxed. When he reached under her shirt she stiffened instinctively, but forced her body back into calm. His fingers were velvet tentacles, sending her into a dreamy trance.

"Feel better?" he asked.

"Feel good."

His hands stopped.

As if to cast off suspicion he said to her, "You know...when I saw you sitting in that bar I didn't realize that later, you'd be sitting in my apartment."

"Oh really...?"

An eyebrow had to be raised.

"I'm not saying I didn't plan anything, but one is never sure."

"No, I suppose one never is."

She seemed to have come to some conclusion and he watched her as she turned to face him, tilting her chin invitingly. The straw hat balance securely on her head.

He welcomed the advance and kissed her lips lightly. Fearing that she might draw away too soon, he put one palm on her neck.

She let him kiss her. When his hand supported her neck she felt wanted and yet somehow trapped. Unable to break herself away, she sank into his kiss, his arms, his desire.

He interrupted the moment.

"Once again," he shrugged in the direction of the bathroom.

She nodded.

He rose and left.

Without him sitting in front of her, she had the chance to get away. Instead, she got up from her place on the floor and walked over to a small bookshelf that she had noticed earlier. It was handmade with designs of stars and moons engraved in the shiny, dark wood. Perched on the shelf were some large hardcover folders — maroon, navy, beige, and gray — all etched in gold. Grabbing one and pulling it down, she opened it to discover that it was a photo album. The pages, one after the other, sported only 4x6 pictures of women each wearing the straw hat.

There was a photo for each woman — each got her own space. The three other albums also held the same photos. The last two were not entirely filled.

She shut the book and put it back on the shelf. He returned from the bathroom and she returned to her place.

"As they say in those corny movies — where were we?"

She just looked at him and started to remove the hat.

He put his hand up to stop her, "No, leave it on, it's you."

And he was right. The hat flattered her, so she was willing to remain on the floor, ready to find out where they had been.

And he was wrong. The hat changed her, making her stay.

He smiled confidently. She is mine, he thought to himself as he leaned forward to kiss her. He met her lips and found them softer than before. He involved himself in the kiss. Harder. Faster. Deeper.

She melted into his arms again because it was better than being alone.

So they made love. And it was good.

So they had sex. And it was better.

Later, after she was sure that he was asleep, she rolled out of his bed and crept across the floor into the living room. It was dark. She remembered that there was a switch by the front doorway, so she crossed the floor and turned on the overhead light. The straw hat was sitting on the floor where she had been only a few hours before. She walked over to pick it up.

She thought about asking him for it, because she realized that he was hers as long as she was the only one who wore the hat. She imagined becoming his companion, his woman, his many women, for the hat would change her whenever it itself was changed. And, she imagined feeding off that change and letting a relationship nurture itself on such a change. She almost convinced herself that the hat could be the solution to a wide variety of marital problems.

With the hat in hand, she walked into the bathroom. After turning on the light and closing the door, she stood naked in front of the three-quarter length mirror that hung on the backside of the door. She scrutinized her body and tried to see what he had seen — what had pleased him. Then she remembered the pictures of the women, the other women, and she knew that without the hat, she was not special to him. It was a depressing thought.

In his bedroom, a chilly breeze had pushed itself inside and he got up to shut the window. When she had left his bed he had immediately awoken; he loved the presence of a woman sleeping next to him. But she had not been sleeping and it had made him a bit nervous. Still, after the lovemaking he had been able to drift off to sleep, despite her restlessness.

He wanted to go to her and cajole her back into his bed. Unfortunately, he couldn't remember

when or where the straw hat had fallen off of her head. Without it, he was not sure he could put her at ease, so he returned to bed and slid under the covers hoping that either she or sleep would come to him.

Outside the apartment, the world oblivious, moved forward with a certain freedom that could not be contained. People, with no more than the usual amount of ignorance, were eating and working and playing and sleeping.

Across town, a house, owned by an old couple who were vacationing in Florida, was being robbed. While Frank and Lydia played bingo, Charlie, that sweet young man who had tried to sell them a vacuum cleaner, was helping himself to a bag of their cheese puffs and a beer.

On Jennings Street, a teenage boy named Elroy, who had been looking for his dog, Arfy, was lying dead near a gutter — another victim of the Sleepwalking Strangler. Elroy's body, which would not be found until the next morning, was already cold and stiff. Arfy's body was lying a few feet away.

Down the block, Rodney's hand muffled Charlene's screams as he plunged into her again and again. Charlene had been seeing Rodney for a short time and Rodney felt that they had waited long enough.

In the adjacent apartment building, Regina had awoken from the short nap she had allowed herself after working eleven hours straight that day only to find that Lisa, her little girl, had dropped a stack of plates onto the floor. Lisa had been washing dishes and was returning them to their proper places when the dishes fell. Regina got up, grabbed the old leather belt that was hanging in its usual place behind her bedroom door and went into the kitchen where Lisa was already cowering.

Right next door, Richie handed Ellen her medication and a cup of water. Since the illness, Ellen had lived with Richie, her favorite son. Now, Richie watched Ellen swallow the pills that the dealer had sworn would put her heart to rest.

She had left the bathroom and was looking out the open window in the living room into the night. The brisk night air filled her lungs, clearing

her head, yet she was unable to determine whether or not it would be best to steal away before morning. The hat lay forgotten in a corner in the bathroom.

In the end, it was sleep that came to him.

Marjorie Thomas



The Sun is Harsh

The sun is harsh,
beating down on my
back.
Though I sit along side
of a pool filled with
icy blue water,
I find myself unable to
immerge myself into
it's depths.
I sit and watch
the water and it's
gentle waves,
yearning to dive into it
to cool off.

The sun is harsh
as I feel myself
grow weaker with
each passing
moment.
Soon I will perish.
I sense the spirit
and the body
separate into
two different entities.
Sparks shoot out
from my eyes,
the flesh bursts
into flames
while a wave
pulls my soul
into the pool
and engulfs me.
I have been set free.

Erin Turner

Mark Nielson

At the bottom, looking up

The light echoes through the green glass
filter of leaves
sifts out a whisper
that falls to illuminate my upturned face
I see the crumbling walls
stacked upward in a black tunnel
of mortar and stone
almost closing below the far away branches

Denied me is the clear air in which they gently sway
I inhale, instead, the ancient breaths which issued
from the mouths of those
who worked to burrow into this earth
stopping
at the point I now stand

In time, the leaves above
turn brown, shrivel and fall
their branches left to clatter together
like old man's fingers
bare and bony

The snow settles around my collar
and I begin to draw out
clear, refreshing draughts
savoring each drop
from the bottom
of an empty well



Gretchen Beck

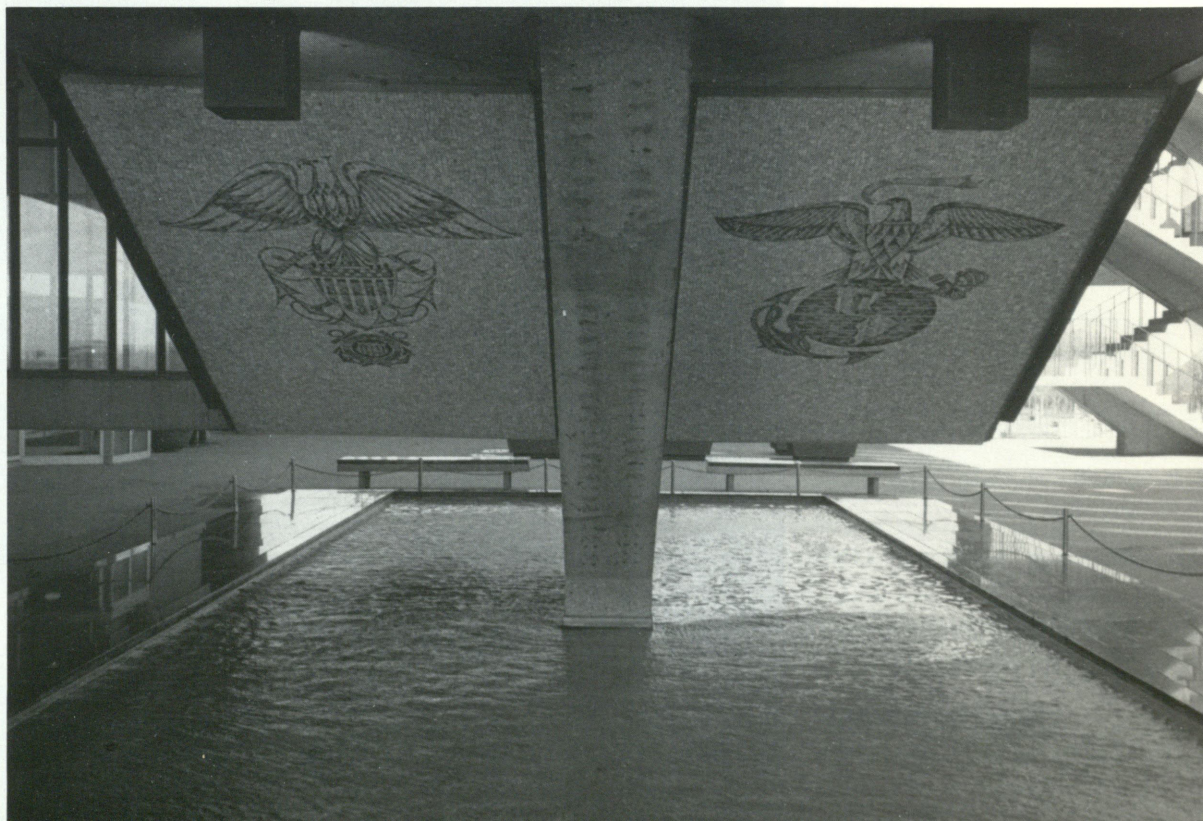
The HOME OF THE BRAVE

beside the house of white and gate
of cold frame, claws of razor-sharp steel
opening not but for limousine wheel
and driver, passenger - pride of the state-
closing quickly, excluding the free
of the land from the home of the brave.

ruler's, covered consultant's eyesights to save
from visions failed through bar and tint to see
crouched, bare, bundled man in fatigue-
frozen tear to cheek - feet from where They are-
colorless save for the stripes and star
tattered - torn in deathless intrigue.

gritted grates for warmth and love,
laughing at pigeon in Eagle-like flight
"i fought for you - you fight against me?" night
time sees tossed crust crumbs taken from above
as he's starving, dying, perfectly free
by the white light of the home of the brave.

Kevin LINDAMOOD



Lisa NUSS

Excuse me, kind sir,
But were you born with
That white picket fence
Around your head?
With rusted gate
And weathered finish?
Not signs of age,
but of neglect.



Tracy FLETCHER

Inside
A cluttered lawn,
Faded ceramic geese found
 in yards of old maids
 who never went to the zoo.
Tall weeds and brush
 reminiscent of jungle documentaries
 prohibit most movement these days.
The corpses of the Greats, no doubt
 slaughtered by a resident supine sloth
 never to be resurrected by this present
religion.
Pink and yellow neon styro strew
 McThought is every repast
 brought by Meals on Wheels.

So tell me kind sir,
What do you suppose we do?
I just hate to see another
Lost in the wasteland.

CHRIS HANSEN

PART FOUR.

Hi!
No, no, Fine.
Yeah, yeah. I, uh-
Hello.
Um Hum.
Yeah.
Nooooo! No! Because...
Right.
I had-
Hum?
Never had, uh...
Yeah. I know, I know...That's interesting, I-
Uh huh.
Yeah.
Uh huh.
Yeah.
Uh huh.
Yeah. What?
No....But-
I did....
That sounds great. It does...
Seriously. I tried and I-
Uh huh.
Yeah.
(Pause.)
Well....
No.
The thing is... I really-
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Sure. Anytime.

Sung to tune of "Ode to Joy" or "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" or Whatever

Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
Calculus class "straight from hell".
Integration does not phase me,
Graphing functions - really swell.
Differentiate that cubic, do it with respect to x.
Why don't more folk like these classes? MuMath is more fun than sex.
F of x converges nicely,
Ideal beer can - max and min.
3-D vector, space curve, partial,
Four dimensions make heads spin.
Chain rule, sine curve, Fund'mental Theorem, approximate that area please.
Exponential functions kick butt, Newton's Method is a breeze.
All these men for whom we're grateful,
Leibniz, Pascal, Newton, too.
Dez-car-tez and Ahmes were brilliant,
Without them what would we do?
Hooke's Law and Pathag'rean Theorem, my pals Taylor and Lagrange.
That's our domain, English major. We're just looking for our range.
"I hate math, it's really stupid,"
That is what most people state.
Yes, we math freaks sure are crazy,
Slide rules don't help us get a date.
I'll just hole up in my office, but I'll give you one last tip:
Learn to love your Calc professor, or you'll lose your scholarship

Eric Varness

Great talking to you.

Joel Jeske



Kellie Day

Unto Me!

Love is dope
Sex is high.
Erotic Medicine
makes me fly.
Life so good
makes the end so
great.
Kiss mine ass
in hot debate.
Unto my soul
what can thou bring?
Oh, just that hairy
phallic thing!
Chalkboard spoons
out
intellectual junk,
removes my brain
chunk by chunk.
Once the sail is set
to ambiguity,
this dream shall
exceed
its reality.

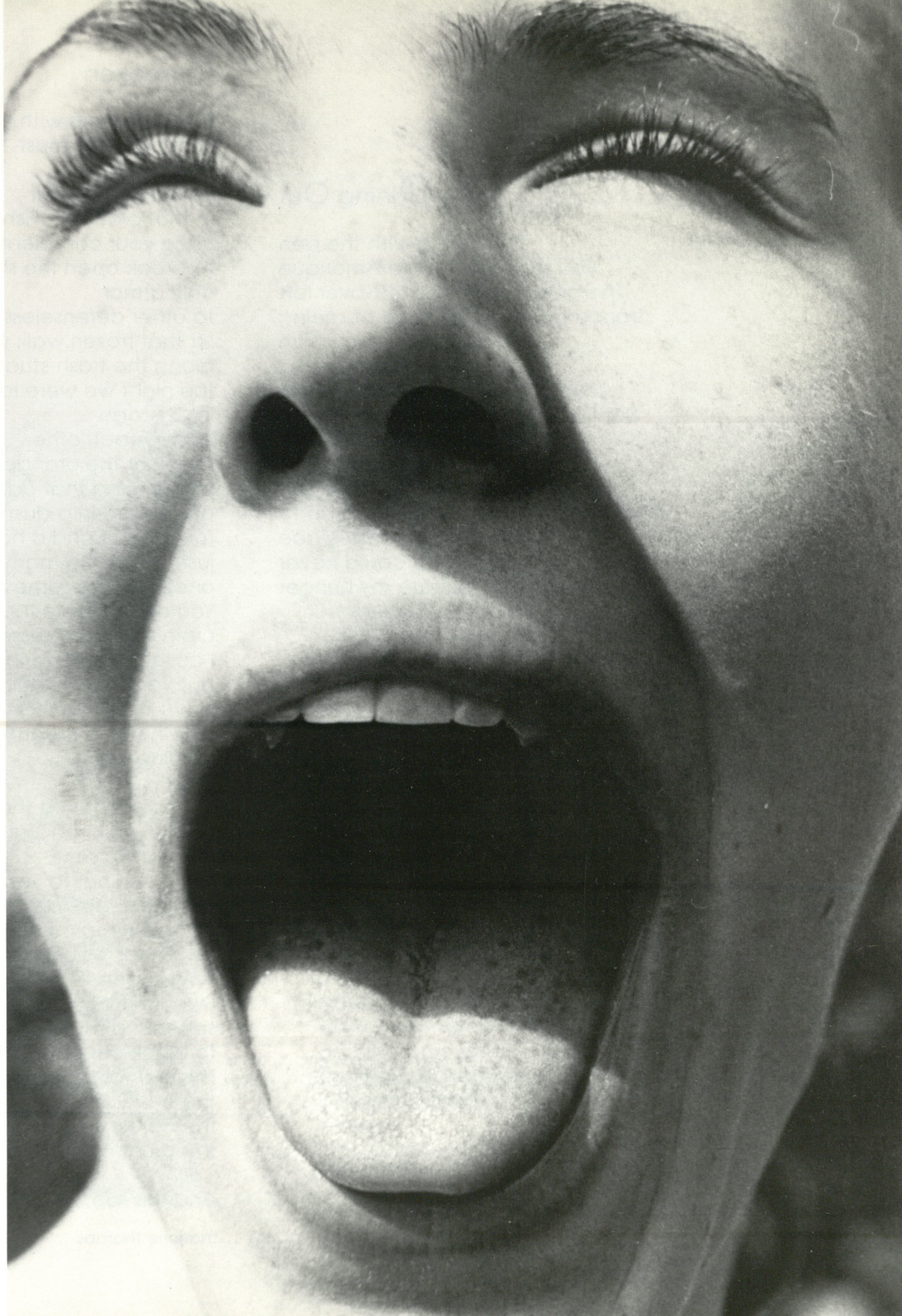
Daphne Pettaway

I started crying
today when I was
brushing my teeth.
I was just standing
there, older
than I've ever been,
but younger
than I'll be, looking
at a zit growing
out of an on-coming smile-
line. I wasn't thinking
of anything really.
Just brushing
my teeth, bawling away.

Jennifer L. Andrews

I lost my virginity when I was sixteen. It was horrible, really. My ass still has dents in it, left by the ripped vinyl back seat of the Sebring Satellite. We practically killed each other, my little boy lover and I, not out of hatred or anger, mind you, but out of the sheer stupidity and that clumsiness I lost along with firm thighs and perky tits. We sat on the hood for years before entering that sacred beast of a car. The act itself was, well, disappointing. Bells ringing? Feelings of immortal unification? Souls colliding? No... just pain, mean new unexpected and uninvited pain. Kind of like being dragged behind a semi on a dirt road for five miles. Bump, bump, bump. Ouch, ouch, ouch. So I looked into his face, watching him turn from boy into man, like on a single sitcom episode, and grunted through my braced teeth, "I love you. Uh... are you enjoying this at all?" I never heard the answer to that one. So I stared at the ceiling of the Sebring Satellite, focussing and unfocussing my eyes to make those little dots jump and dance.

Jennifer L. Andrews



Lois Marie Young

Dining Out

I'm writing with the pen
you stole from Cafe Amerique
The only untouched left-over left
from a destructive game of seeing
who could devour whom
Dinner was wonderful
and you were oh so palatable
But the predictable weekend fare
(as delicious as it was)
became unbearably bland
Now I'm hooked on Beaujolais
and white chocolate raspberry torte
with creme glace
But you could never
sate my hunger

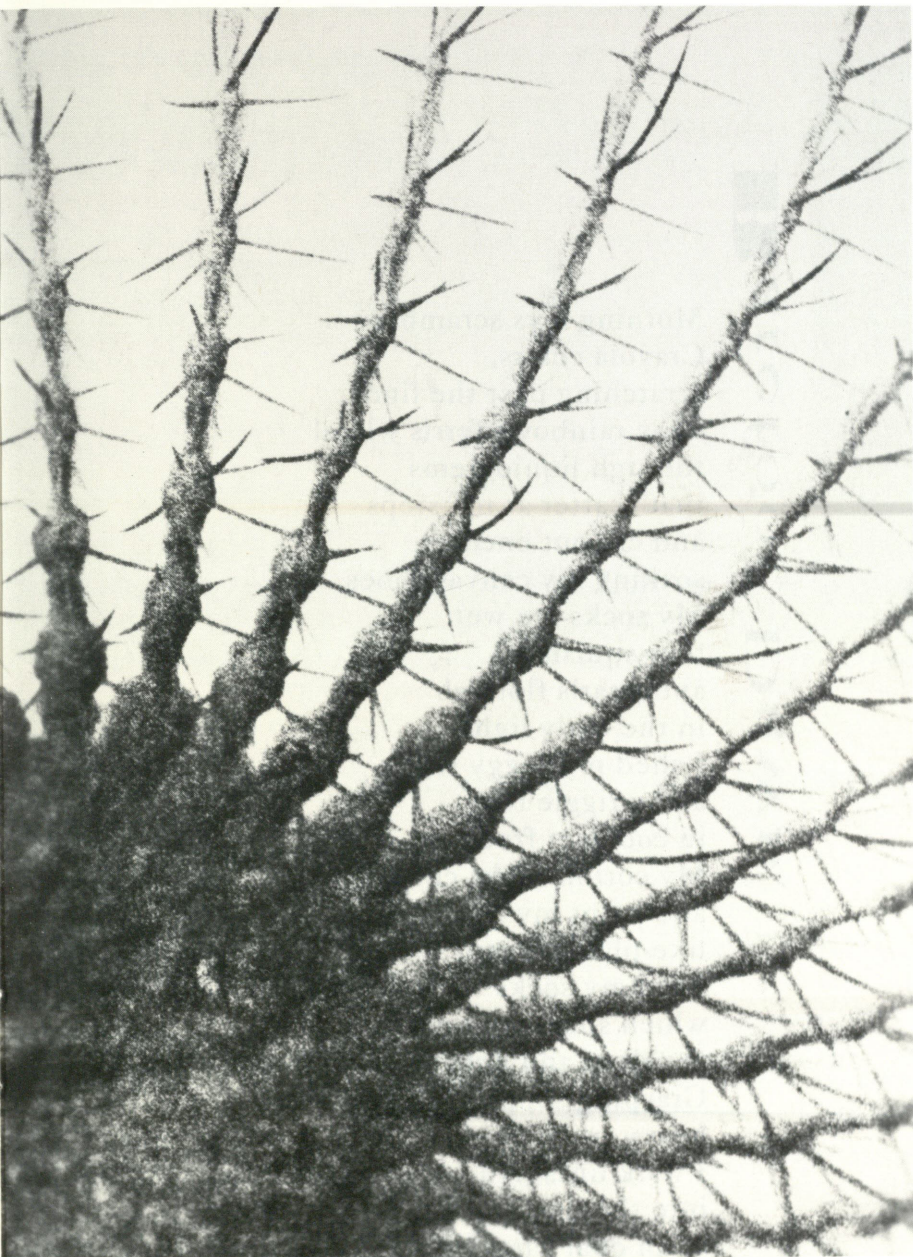
heather myrick

Unspoken

It's what stays with you
that hurts the most.
The lobster
you used to order
in that place on Fishermen's Wharf,
using your conscientious fingers
to break open the shell,
only armor
to other defenseless sea creatures.
Or that frozen walk we took
along the trash-studded streets
the night we were lost
in Chicago
and in each other.
I think of the orange floppy hat
as the thing that came between us,
purchased in a dusty dime store
for a dollar and a half,
just one of the many discarded treasures,
once dear to some faceless soul.
You always wore it,
even after I expressed my disapproval.
I called it unflattering,
but you said it would build character.
Now, I'm not sure
whether you meant your own
or mine.
Mostly,
I concentrate on the memory
of your hair, too long for words,
the way it fell,
neverending, to your shoulders,
and past, down to the middle of your back.
I would wrap my arms around your body;
my hands would dive into your hair,
slow fingers entwining the curls.
I would think to myself then,
squeezing my eyes shut
to block out any light,
This is what love is:
the dusky smell of skin,
the caress of warm breath,
the drumming of a soul.

And this too, is madness.

marjorie thomas



Art

Preliminary:

Gather in a large cookie bowl
the vitals for your creation.

Predawn:

Mix water, dirt and wind;
Simmer over low heat and stir
until sufficiently steamed.

In the Beginning:

Find a divinity of sorts
(They're not too elusive).
Buy a spirit and an angel,
add a pair of goshawks
and a young northern hemlock
(for roosting purposes only).
Mix well and bake slowly
until slightly crusted.

Dawn:

Form man out of crust
and woman out of man.
The rest will happen,
a crystal world,
Amen.

mike chasar

Homecoming

A slight breeze carries to me
the scents of poverty.
Smoke seeps out of homes
of mud and straw packed together tightly,
each a crutch for its neighbors.
Dung covered with spiced foods,
exhaust, goat and cow, drifts
in the stale air.
I close my eyes.

A peacock's wail cut short
by the blare of an impatient motorist,
several curses and thumps
followed by protesting MOOs,
the shouts of the street-vendors and beggars
join the shrill cries of mothers
admonishing their playful children.
The sun drains the fluid
from my body.
Dust and sweat sting my eyes,
the cries blend,
a shrill chorus spiraling
up on waves
of heat to be consumed
in a ball of flame.
I readjust my seat and look
down a long black road.

Across the asphalt,
she writhed in a sinewy dance.
Silently I watched her.
Dark hair whipped across her
face, dust clung to her
dress, stinging my eyes,
congealing the brine
running down my cheeks.
I rise and stumble
forward only to be scorched
by the black road between us.
Legs tingling, waking,
I seek that phantasm which is no more.

The pounding of blood in my ears,
my heat twisting with breath
weak and trembling,
I pull out a white

Shoe Vyas

hankkerchief, and try to wipe off the grime.

Barefoot Dawn

Morning rays scramble
Crayola colors,
scratching past the lines.
Tiny rainbows ferris wheel
through liquid gems
that scatter at my steps
and cry out encores,
soaking my canvas shoes.
My socks are wet,
toes squish,
and pearls flourish
in the early light.
I shed my soggy shoes
and wriggle toes
in cool wet freedom.
My cotton socks cling
and paint my feet
like plastic wrap.
I tug my socks
which suck in vain
at calves and heels.
Grasping sopping socks,
heavy with dew,
I walk untamed
into the dawn
of an opal earth,
crayon scratches,
and magic markers.

Mike Chasar

Lois Young



Tender touch from skilled fingers
tickle and tinker the keys, picking locks
of melody amidst silence, pure
perfectness needs no cure
of the day's past rambunctious;
Treble and bass prove a worthy conjunction
for the night's last smoke cloud. It lingers,
rising, combining, a perfect shroud
for the day's depression. Down by the docks,
sharing driftwood with the gulls of the sea,
in clothing proven gossamer by the breeze:
there's a shivering man-

with weathered eyes he sees
unusually keen through spectacles frozen
in balance, they've chosen
the tip of his nose-

and I suppose
he smiles selling poppies and luke-warm tea
to passing lovers bouncing their moon
from the waters to the skies,

and his eyes
show the sadness content
and off an ocean's mirror he knows soon
his time will come, his life is spent,
and from here

I can scarcely hear
his lulling hum
filling in the harmony...

kevin **lindamood**

summer **melancholy**

Yearning for slumber, I submit to the humidity of a hot summer night,
sheet draped over me like a shroud.

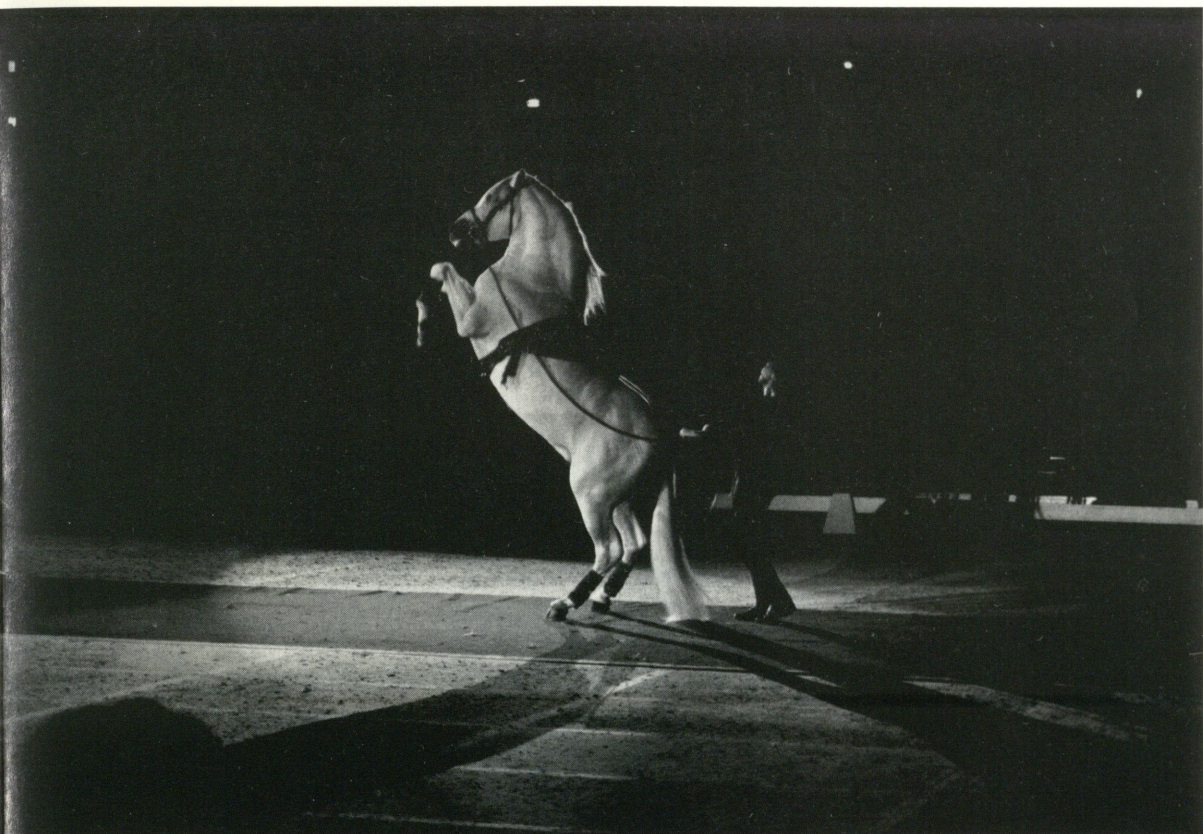
Through the open window, the sylvan symphony
drones its monotonous melody.

On the distant highway, trucks resentfully moan
about their midnight treks—
specks of loneliness without humanity,
without purpose.

Coming from no place and going nowhere.

I envy the trucks, and just lie there . . .

park **hunter**



tracey **fletcher**

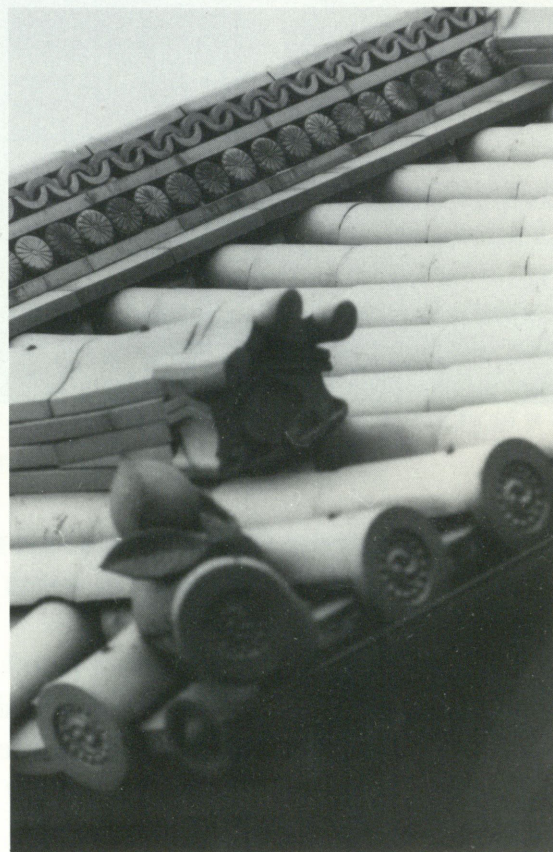
RF

i sit in my garden
gathering acorns
to set afloat
like boats on the water—
each mast reaching scarcely above
each oncoming ripple
from the stones i toss
on starboard side.

The pine shrub sheltered
a hundred lost ones
whole and untouched
by time or insect rot
and i gather them all
to keep them warm in my pocket—
turning their purity about
with my fingertips—
feeling their smoothness
on the skin of my palm—
treasuring their fragility
like great-grandmother's
last remaining holiday ornament.
these i set out as my private fleet
to face the ripples
on port side

and if the tide
had not been summoned
by the princess moon
from far away in her oriental throne
i know that soon
my vessels of leather
would fill and sink
as water would seep
through stringed portholes
and fountain fourth as i took a step.

but for fear of today
my feet lie dry-docked
high upon an oak's remembrance—
far enough so that the shoreline
remains but a pretty picture
marveled at from a distance
as a thousand ships
in spider-silk sails
toy with the winds of a different cloud.



jennifer prough

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All submissions remain anonymous throughout the selection process and are chosen by an unbiased group of interested university students. Each semester The Lighter welcomes contributors and members to its staff from all faculties of the university community irrespective of race, creed, gender, or orientation.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or if you would like to become a member of the Spring 1991 staff please contact Diane E. Nehring or Jennifer L. Andrews at (219) 464-5058.

