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TYGR 1997: A Literary Magazine


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TYGR



TYQR

a literary
magazine

1996-97





THOUGHT
MAYBE
WE
REALLY
LIKE
OUR
MEDIocre
MINDS

NOT ME.

MARK CHARON

ABANDON

ALL HOPE

YE WHO

ENTER HERE

- DANTE'S *INFERNO*

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The Tiger

Once a Tiger was brought to the celebrated animal tamer Burson, for him to give his opinion as to the possibility of taming the animal. The small cage with the tiger in it was pushed into the training cage, which had the dimensions of a public hall; it was in a large hut-camp a long way outside the town. The attendants withdrew: Burson always wanted to be completely alone with an animal at his first encounter with it. The tiger lay quiet, having just been plentifully fed. It yawned a little, gazed wearily at its new surroundings, and immediately fell asleep.

Franz Kafka

Meditation

Recently, on a well-lit evening, I found myself escaping outside campus limits. As I walked into the churchyard, I felt somehow that I had accidentally slipped into a lonely dimension. It was a majestic hall of scattered graves; the colors of grey swallowed me up in silence. I had spent random moments there before, but on this night the monuments pried open my heart. The thick blanket of cotton sky spread slowly into a thin sheet of fog. I stood cold and wet among the speckled piles of snow. I noticed with tearful clarity the iron bars that served as dividers between this sanctuary and the sidewalks outside. My eyes burned holes into the frozen ground, while straining to see the face of the fragile girl that died before her twenty-fourth birthday. Some of the greatest stories dwelt among the dead; I listened closely to hear them. One soul had lie down to rest beneath a tree, and became entangled in its roots.

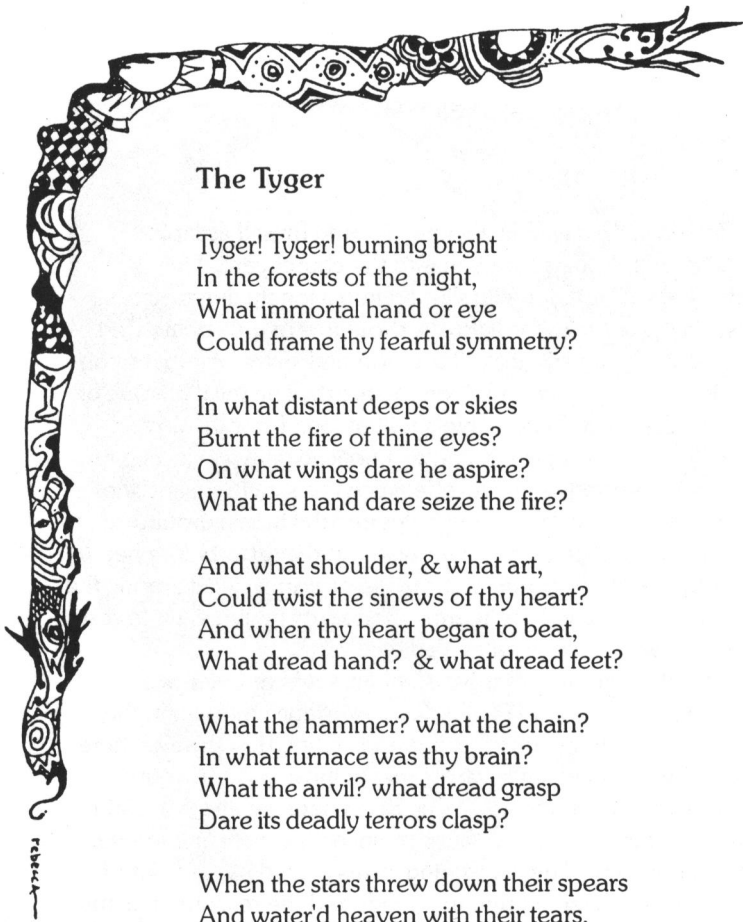
I stood motionless in front of an altar where I met two women. One was praying. I felt a deep familiarity with her in the night air, or perhaps it was pure admiration. Every day she was there on her knees, worshipping her Savior beneath those same towering trees. It must have been the flaking paint on her face, the porcelain representation of true devotion, that convinced me once and forever, that faith is one's own. The wandering saints placed me in front of the cross of Christ. There I hung my needs and the reason for all my striving.

As I lowered my head, I allowed my hot, chapped lips to melt the snow. Although I wanted to believe that I was suffering, the voice that echoed through the churchyard said, "Eat the snow, but you will never die like me."

I am the luckiest person on earth to get off so easily...

*This book is a ball of sparkling, midnight snow formed by the hands of others. Here, they share what has been gathered along the way.

Laura Beth Archer



The Tyger

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who make the Lamb make thee?

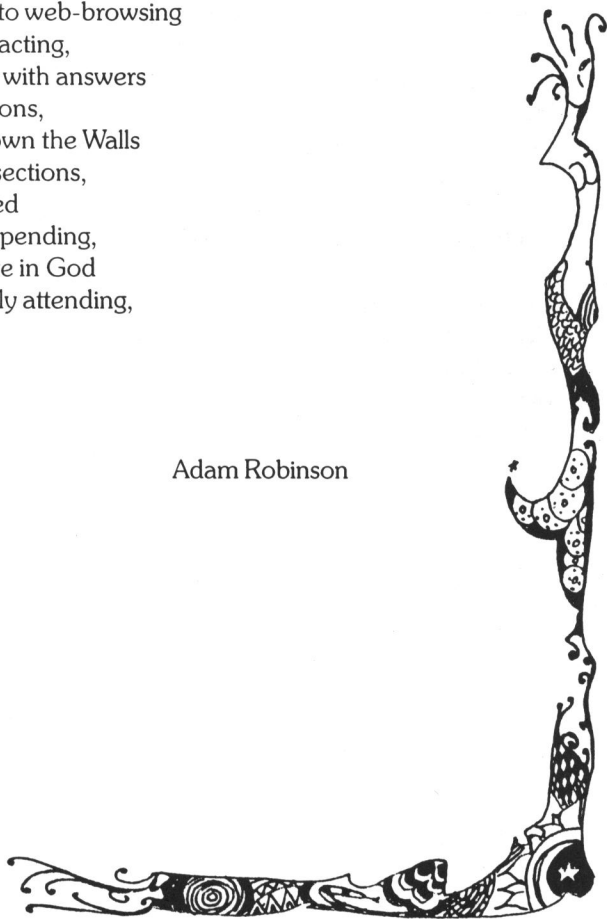
Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Kill the Dead

When I don't believe in relatives
but I believe in relatives comedy,
When I don't believe in values
but cling to validity,
When I disagree with plum-lines
but aspire to contracting,
When I lose myself to web-browsing
but find books distracting,
When I am content with answers
but don't ask questions,
When I say Tear Down the Walls
but leave Them in sections,
When I hate all greed
but am often seen spending,
When I don't believe in God
but am complacently attending,
kill me

Kill the dead.

Adam Robinson



I Have Two Feet

I have two feet,
I love them both.
Floyd is on my left and Filbert is on my right.
It may appear that they are exactly the same.
However, this is just not so.

Floyd leaps in front of me raring to go. . .
Anywhere.
Filbert drags along behind, half asleep.
Floyd wants to skydive, ski, mountain climb, and
Do all those things we've never done.
Filbert tries to slow down and take things easy.
No exertion,
Anything that might cause a sweat.

As I travel the pathways of life,
Floyd and Filbert will always be with me.
I must learn
When to follow Filbert and
When to let Floyd blaze the trail.

Katherine Owens

Reflections of London

Shuttling through space
Speeding on steel rails
London's tube
Shaking, clickety-clack, shuddering
Into dark tunnels
Stations fly by
On and off
Strong flux of bodies
Tight and confined,
Too many socks in a drawer,
We fly out when the door draws open
Pushed along salmon fighting current
Reaching for freedom above ground
Finally stairs ascended we find
The crisp misty night
Deep breath of brisk air I gaze up at
The majesty of Big Ben
Shrouded in the filmy flannel of fog
Perfect chimes echo out as
The hour is struck,
Pure, sweet, louder
Than any grandfather clock
The notes break free from the bell
And hang like icicles in the air.

Amy Brown



1930 on a New Orleans Evening

She goes to meet them,
black in layers of lipstick.
The wind blowing through her heart.
Nina Simone softly croons
in smooth tenor.

Her rich voice seduced the woman
as she walked strongly, alive with the
knowledge of her movement, her stockings legs.
Movement. The click of her heels on the pavement
announcing her presence on earth.

The wind blew her hair, caressed a face
lacquered with makeup.
The red layers of her thin dress made a
canvas around her.

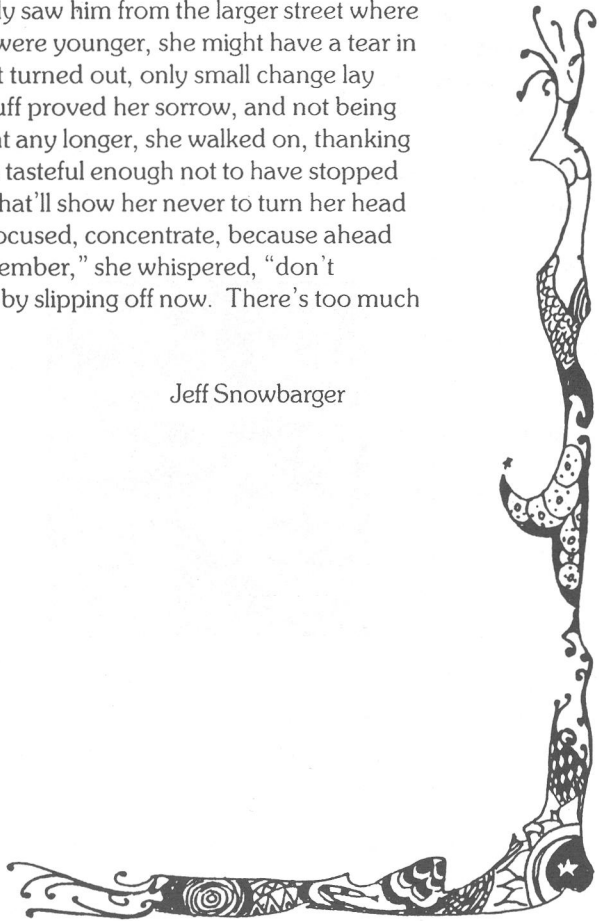
The street was crowded with people
Singing of freedom and imprisonment.
Soulful, painful
cries from the lips of men
sitting on the hard pavement admiring
the vision before them
and waiting.

Anonymous

She

Jesus came to her in a dream last night-- She saw an old man wedged between two hundred-story monsters, crouched and covered in burlap. He huddled in a ball gasping for something as a shadow split him in half like a mere apple. The lighted half cast a wrinkle or two and some dirt, while the dark half ran away screaming at perfection. She only saw him from the larger street where she walked. If she were younger, she might have a tear in her pocket, but as it turned out, only small change lay there. A muffled huff proved her sorrow, and not being able to take the sight any longer, she walked on, thanking herself that she was tasteful enough not to have stopped or even slowed. (That'll show her never to turn her head in the city.) "Stay focused, concentrate, because ahead lay the plank. Remember," she whispered, "don't embarrass yourself by slipping off now. There's too much at stake."

Jeff Snowbarger

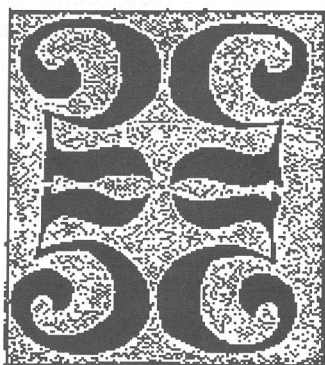


Raining Free

Somedays I wish I could be as
indifferent as the rain;
Ruin people's plans at my whim,
Be the answer to other's prayers.

Somedays I am the rain without realizing it.

Nicole Given



The Journey

Lisa Watson

I sit in my dimly lit corner, my assigned space. I draw my body close as we prepare for takeoff. I long to press my legs to my chest, but I am prevented by the restraints. Soon it happens, and I am engulfed by the all-too-familiar sensation of being ripped from my home.

The roaring of the engine eventually subsides into a quiet droning, and we have reached it. This is the essence of the plane ride; this is nonexistence. The world in which we dwell for these few hours is silent and dark. There is little motion. As in a sealed tomb, the air is stale and artificial, almost nauseating. It isn't the smell of outdoors, yet it isn't the smell of indoors. It doesn't have the quality of action--of purpose--to give it vitality. I feel warm and drowsy, yet cold. The atmosphere entices me to sleep, but will not allow the peace necessary for sleep.

Although this journey is intensely personal, I realize that it is shared. There are people all around me. There are many of them, but it seems they are so few. I see the ones closest to me, their heads, and parts of their slumbering bodies. I know there are more of us, but it doesn't matter. We are all the same in our separateness. Each of us is locked, paralyzed in a personal impotence.

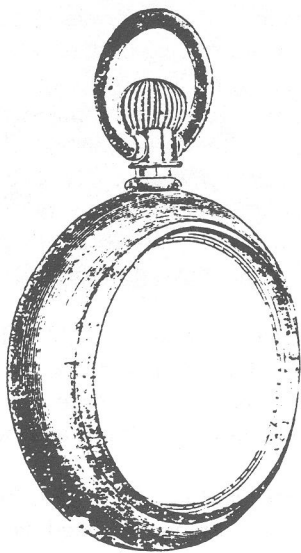
Our environment stresses conformity. The chairs we sit in are lined together in perfect symmetry. The dull white trays in front of us, like the chairs, are identical. There is no personality here. We stare at signs telling us what we must do, and we all comply, buckling ourselves in and putting our belongings in the correct space.

I look at our attendants on this flight. They are models of submission. They all exhibit the same dress, the same smile, the same personality. They feed us hard, tasteless food, not meant for nourishment, or even enjoyment. It is just another attempt to fill the void on this journey.

Outside the thick windows, far below, the world lies bright and active. We pass it at a tremendous speed, yet it is slow and drowsy inside. The world awaits, beckoning to us. We have no union with it for now; we have climbed far beyond its grasp.

Down below on earth we all have people, possessions, and lives on either side of the journey. I have a home and parents that I just left. Until I stepped through the door, I was just existing in their realm. I lived for them, because of them. Then I stepped in here. Here no one knows me. I am alone; therefore, I am in the way. I do not matter here. This is just transition. Now I ache for the ones I left; as I near my destination, I long for those waiting.

I used to despise those who waited for me. They called me to leave my home and who I was. Now that is past. These new ones have given me a vitality also, acknowledging me, needing me. And I need them. I need one of the two sides. In this transition I do not exist. I anticipate the moment I will bury myself in the embrace of those waiting and find a new birth. Then I will live for them. They will give me what I have lost in the flight. Then I will forget this awful, isolated travel, and the pain of transition.



Not a Motion

When approaching the sacred altar
Recognize that faith
Is supposed to make you stronger.
It exists as a humble post
Where you sorely bow your head
And crash upon your knees
If you loose only tears
And do not die there
Your doubt
Will bleed from your heels
When you leave.

Laura Beth

Thwarted Triumph

within every victory...

from the pits of throats,
cheers hail the conqueror.
enraptured in the glorious feat
emotions soar out of boundaries and
egos sail to heights unreachable.

within every victory, a tragedy....

in a choked ball too hard to swallow
praise forgets the humbled warrior.
ripped down into the den of defeat
identity falls softly by the curb and
confidence tries to find breath.

within every victory, a tragedy lies at the surface.

the trophy gleams from a fresh dusting.
the shelf remains empty; not from lack of trying.
beyond the statistics and factuals,
fragile humanness longs to be heard.
the shouts seem as expensive crystal,
obtuse perspectives block the blinding glow.
hopefully not for long.....
not for too long.....

Aimee Copley

Tarry With Me A While

Tarry with me a while
share a bottle of trouble
and allow it all to just
Linger.

Unpack the suitcase of my
soul, and it too shall
Linger.

Time weathers me and surely,
I erode. Deep; dry,
deep within
separate the wheat from the tare.
what stands is I-- raw
and unfiltered. Have another
but follow me still.

You see, I am a Lonely soul.
In good fortune my friends
were countless-- I think it
not be wise to place much
stock in them or your fortune.
For when the Rain Falls that
of unrighteous origin
rinses away. Yes-- those burdens
weigh my soul heavy. My appetite
For pain and Loneliness has
drunken its fill. So go
ahead and spill it again,
Because in this glass is my
Sea of Forgetfulness
and daily I wade.

Shannon Swilley

Satin Girl

Satin girl,
Parish exile.
Chiffonned, walking wedding cake.
Smiling, icing, under silken sheets,
Rose-painted teacup cheeks.
Ingenué-sequined lady

Moving through a soft and cashmere
Quiet,

Wordless,
Watched and Loved

Donald Swafford

Virgin Mary
Mother of Christ
We willingly take from the Blessed Saint
Tender Woman
Mother of God
We shape your face with Holy Paint

Intertwined

Danielle Repay

I stare with swollen eyes at the open letter lying on my lap. It is his last letter to me. The words are blurry, but I do not need to see them. I know what they say. I can still hear his voice whisper them to me, "Dear Dani, we've had lots of fun. I love you tons." My tears spill over as I sit back and remember.

The door to my grandma's apartment opens and the smells of turkey and pumpkin pie greet me. "Hey Dani," says my grandpa as I stand on my tip-toes to kiss his cheek. Despite his eighty-one years, my grandpa's dark skin is smooth and his jet-black hair is only slightly streaked with gray. Grabbing his hand, we escape to the back porch. His eyes sparkle with laughter as he opens his wicker chest filled with toys. Perching on the cold, wood floor we play with the cardboard animal farm, drink tea from china cups and draw flowers and trees and houses and bees. And as we draw, he tells me stories. Stories of his childhood, of his homeland--the Philippine Islands. They are stories of his adventures: running from anacondas, climbing banana trees, swimming in jungle ponds, surviving devastating typhoons. I love these stories, for as he tells them, he becomes young once again. He becomes a carefree Filipino boy. He becomes my playmate.

Grandpa loved to play with his girls. First, he played with my aunt and mother, and then with my two older sisters, and, finally, he played with me. My sisters and I shared different relationships with grandpa. To my sisters, grandpa was not just a playmate, he was also a father. When their father had stepped out, grandpa had stepped in. And until the time my mother remarried, and her husband (my father) adopted my sisters, grandpa fulfilled many of the fatherly duties. Everyday, after work, grandpa would watch my sisters while mother was still at work. Together they would explore Chicago, sharing adventures, stories, and ice cream cones. They were the "Three Musketeers." My sisters had a special relationship with grandpa, one that I was never a part of, and that made me sad.

My sisters and I reacted differently to the news of grandpa's cancer. When I first heard about his cancer, it didn't really bother me. I knew my grandpa would not let the cancer rob him of his joy. He was strong. So I decided I was going to be strong too.

During his sickness, I only cried in front of my family twice. Once I cried in front of him. It was the day he told me about his dream. . . .

The door to my grandma's apartment opens, and silence welcomes me in. "Hey Dani," whispers my grandpa as I walk into his bedroom. The room is thick with the smell of medicines and disinfectant; the windows are shut tightly. I sit beside his bed and clasp his frail hand within my own. He manages a weak smile as he gives my hand a gentle squeeze. The cancer has eaten away at grandpa's ninety-one-year-old body. His tiny frame is barely visible beneath the covers. I try not to look at his diminishing body, or at the brown, plastic bottles of pills standing guard on the bedside table. I try not to look at the bars surrounding his bed. I look instead into his eyes. Grandpa is staring at me lovingly. "I had the most beautiful dream last night," he finally whispers, "I dreamed all three of my girls were young at the same time, and we were all playing together." Grandpa's eyes have lost their sparkle now. And as I stroke his hand, a tear slides down his cheek.

I know now that there will be no more games. There will be no more stories. We sit in silence, holding on to one another, holding on to the old days. Knowing this is my final opportunity, I search for something meaningful to say to my grandpa. I begin to thank him for all the fun we've had, but I stop mid-sentence. My words do not seem fitting. As I look into his tired eyes, I see courage and strength, not stories and games. What could I possibly say to him, I wonder as the tears slide down my cheeks. I knew nothing about his struggles, his victories, his defeats. He had never told me those stories. I had never asked to hear them.

It was my sisters that finally told me about grandpa's struggles. It was Beth, not grandpa, who told me about the prejudice he had faced when he came to America, the times he had been spat upon, the times he had been kicked out of buildings. It was Laura, not grandpa, who told me about his dreams of becoming an author, his stories, his journals. They had asked to hear these stories, not me.

When I thought about all the things I had never said to grandpa, all the things I had never asked, my heart was broken. That night, away from my family in the solitude of my room, I sat and cried for the grandpa I had never known.

As I stood in the cold at the cemetery, my memories hung heavy in the still and solemn air. I stood, frozen, snow seeping into my black boots, staring at the casket suspended over the ground remembering my playtimes with grandpa. I heard his voice calling to me. I felt his soft cheek beneath my lips. Closing my eyes, I escaped once again to the back porch with grandpa. And I was happy. Grandpa had taught me how to be happy. Through our playtimes, through his life, he had taught me that nothing should ever rob me of my joy. It had been a simple lesson, but it was my lesson. And it was my memory.

Finally, I kissed my icy palm and laid it upon the casket. Suddenly, I felt warmth on my hand. Looking down, I saw that my two sisters had placed their hands over mine on the casket. They were saying goodbye to the grandpa they had known. They were clinging to their own private lessons, their own special memories. But in the cold of the cemetery we had come together, and our memories melted with our hands into one beautiful celebration. Together we stood, three hands intertwined, three lives intertwined.

On a Strong Sunday Morning

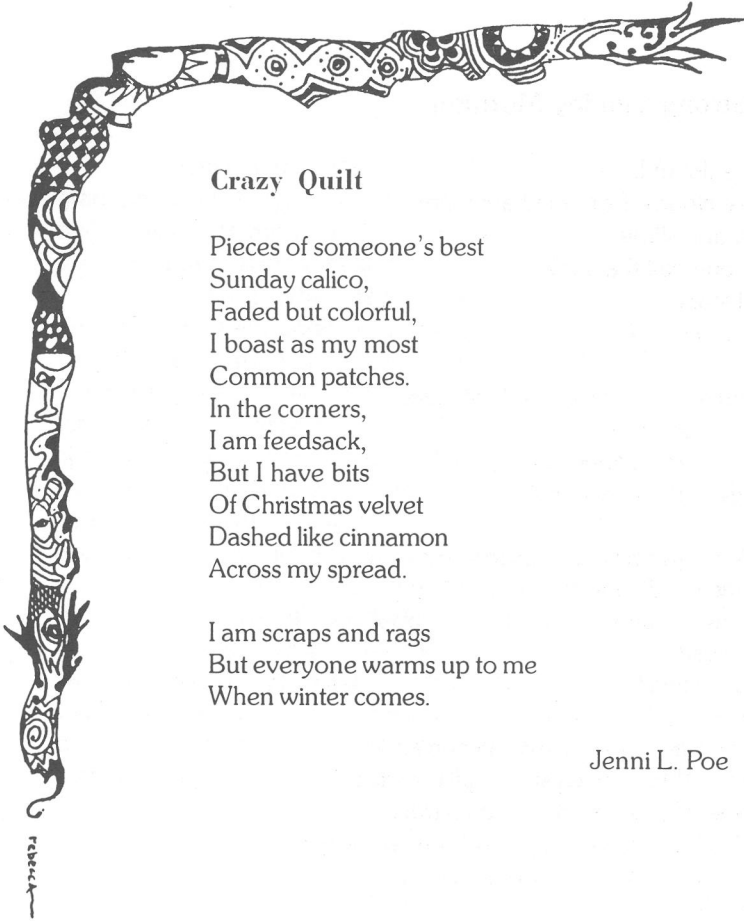
His songs floated,
like moist clouds, from the bathroom.
Air, spit, and slime
roll into one ball that looks
like glad tears
or squeezed cheeks.

This short, dense man guided the razor
as it wheezed with a
loud drone. It moaned and whined,
bleeding nonsense syllables.

He patted the muscular bronze scent
on his neck and let it strut
around me. Everything being a whirlpool
in that house
deluged my head.

“Amazing grace, how sweet” it spun and
wrapped. “What can wash away” the sticky
mucous and butter residue that I hardly
noticed? Grandpa held my hands under the water
and squeezed the fluffy purpose out of
a pink shell.

Russ Elliott



Crazy Quilt

Pieces of someone's best
Sunday calico,
Faded but colorful,
I boast as my most
Common patches.
In the corners,
I am feedsack,
But I have bits
Of Christmas velvet
Dashed like cinnamon
Across my spread.

I am scraps and rags
But everyone warms up to me
When winter comes.

Jenni L. Poe

Mr. Frank's Epiphany from the Annex

Listen: we have to part--
they are waiting past the battered door
for our human condition.

Impetuous girl--my Anne
close your precious diary
and face society
wielding the power of

Your words.

Our hearts--prevailing over suffering,
prevailing over hopelessness,
will change yet still endure.

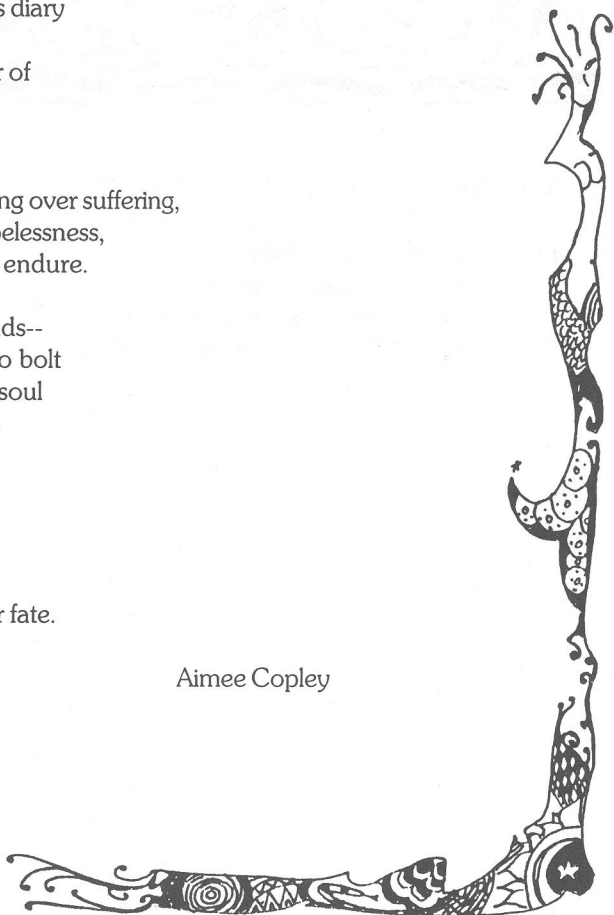
Be careful my friends--
the locks they try to bolt
on your mind and soul
can only dismantle

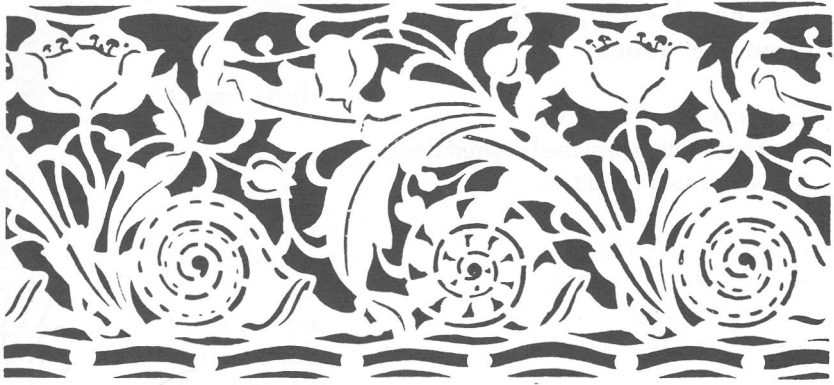
Your Spirit.

come along . . .

we must encounter fate.

Aimee Copley





To the summer:

I remember the dirty details
Down in spaces like those
Under the trees, places I chose
To remember the tiniest snails.

Julia Roat

The Path

The other day I heard a dull thump,
What was that? I had wondered,
For the cause had escaped my eye,
Then I saw it, though it was blurred.

The culprit was a small fly,
Banging against my bedroom window,
Trying to reach the open sky,
Why it was failing, it did not know.

As the fly's death grew near,
I thought, 'This fly is not unlike me,
Though its path seems so clear,
Something blocks its way, something it can't see.'

Still it fights and fights,
Until a great hand lifts the glass,
Finally clearing its path,
Just as I know He will do for me.

Dan Wojcik

Cave Life

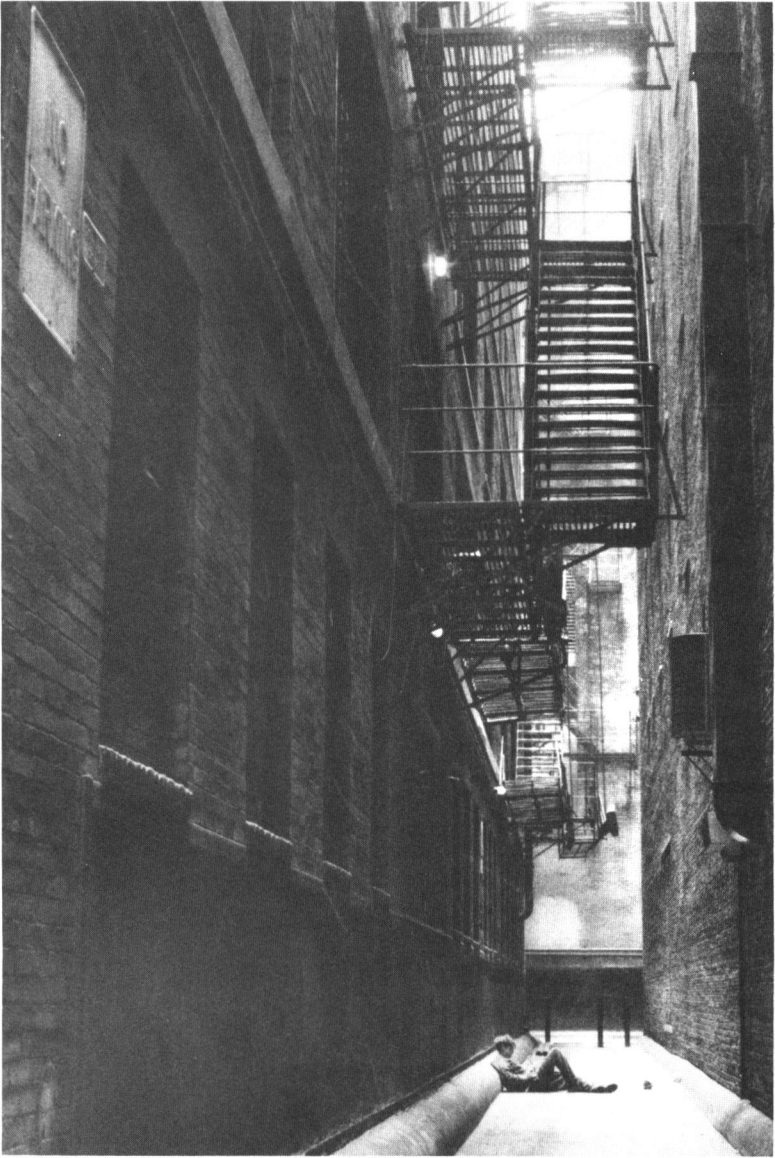
Insane am I, nearly crazy
With a faulty connection to Reality
The simple remedy is common sense
(Large masses of Americans must be right)
But 'sense' doesn't seem so common to me
And I don't trust the majority
For 'much madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye'

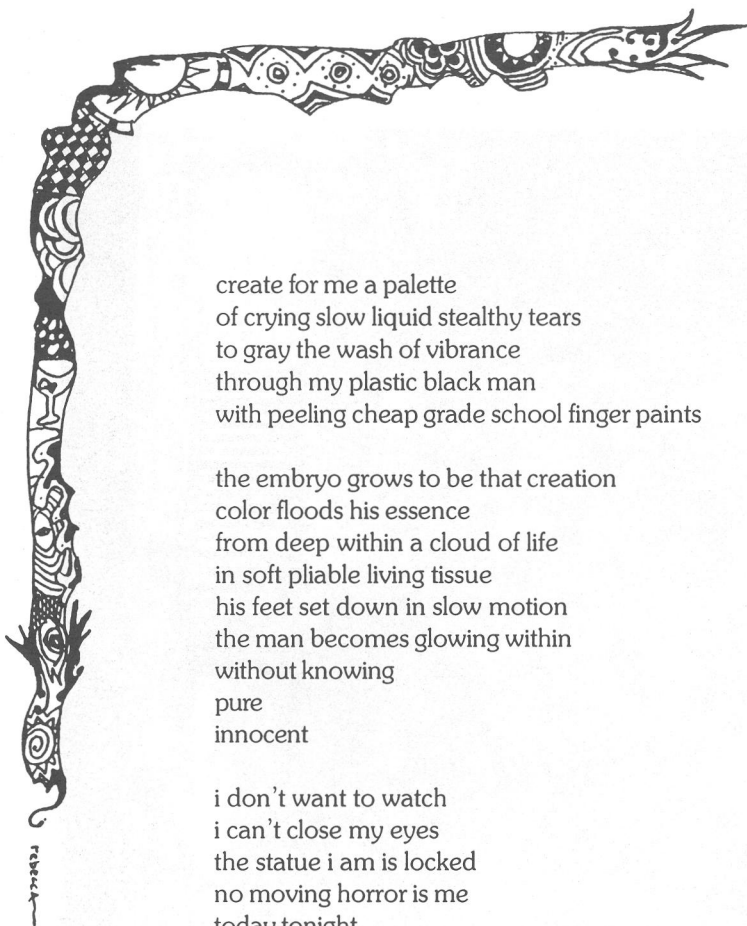
Flickering shadows been in my eye
For so long they start to make sense
Maybe it's only illusion. . . .
I seek the sun
But I'm pale, a fragile fungus
In this cave's insipid light
Feeding on rich humus,

The remains of searches gone by
Trying to cram the Universe
Into your exploding head
Absurdly trusting finite minds
Expecting God to stay inside the yellow lines
Of a gray systematic theology
But God is wild and free
And our pathetic rationality
Is crushed by the wonders of Reality

I watch the shadows on the wall
They weave and swerve and leap and fall
And when I abandon analysis
And get caught up in the dance
My brittle skin, thick and rational
Loosens and I crawl free
To breathe in deep the Mystery
In the wide open of this tiny cave

Monica Bennett





create for me a palette
of crying slow liquid stealthy tears
to gray the wash of vibrance
through my plastic black man
with peeling cheap grade school finger paints

the embryo grows to be that creation
color floods his essence
from deep within a cloud of life
in soft pliable living tissue
his feet set down in slow motion
the man becomes glowing within
without knowing
pure
innocent

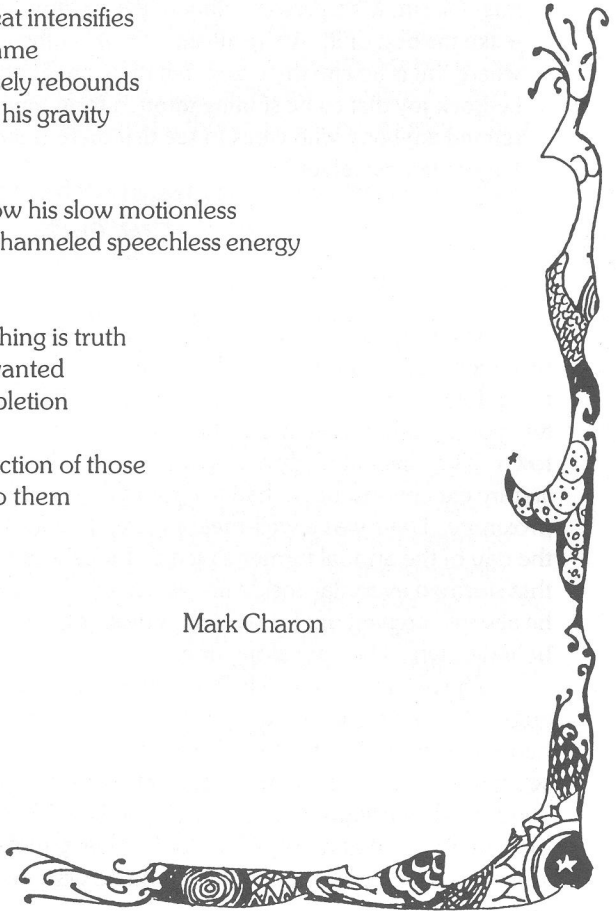
i don't want to watch
i can't close my eyes
the statue i am is locked
no moving horror is me
today tonight
ten billion years ago
he moves and is noticed
he grows and strengthens

an arrow sinks deep
he is dead but
not dead to the eyes that move
his paint is wet and moved and swallowed
madness flows
black shapeless heat intensifies
his non deathly frame
the universe inversely rebounds
pointedly towards his gravity

he is not stronger
evil mad eyes follow his slow motionless
as the wave of unchanneled speechless energy
becomes him

ab sense of something is truth
now he is what i wanted
perfection of completion
my desire
red ambiguous fraction of those
moved from me to them
he was freed
i am imprisoned

Mark Charon



Killer

Adam Robinson

“Just for the record, I would like it to be known by anybody who cares that I don’t think life is a perpetual dive. . . . I suspect every day that I’m living for nothing, I get depressed and I feel self-destructive and a lot of the time I don’t like myself. But I also feel that this precarious sentience is all we’ve got, and simplistic as it might seem, it’s a person’s duty to the potential of his own soul to make the best of it. We’re all stuck on this often miserable earth where life is essentially tragic, but there are glints of beauty and bedrock joy that come shining through from time to precious time to remind anybody who cares to see that there is something higher and larger than ourselves.”

-Lester Bangs
Rock ‘n’ Roll Critic

The noise was too loud to bear. Dave tossed his door aside and bellowed into the cramped hall, “Linus, if you don’t turn that, uh, thing down I’m gonna be, uh, pretty mad!” Dave and Linus were two young residents in one of those low-rent high-rise getups downtown. They lived directly across from each other, and with few very literary exceptions, never had two more different people lived in such proximity. Dave was a well-meaning rain that fell for the farmers on the day of the annual farmer’s picnic. Linus was a private monsoon that stormed everyday inside his own head. Dave never thought, and he always screwed up; Linus always thought, and he kept his act bolted down. They got along fine.

The noisemaker which Dave could no longer bear was Linus’ guitar. Linus practiced often, and played in a heavy metal band named Mortual Reality. Linus was pretty good, although he didn’t seem much like a heavy metal guy. He dressed the part well enough—black jeans, pierced nipple, no hair—but there was something in his eye that betrayed his look. Heavy metal guys were mean looking; Linus looked considerate, and he was; he put down his guitar.

Linus popped into Dave's room. This visit meant a taxing conversation to Dave, but he never minded because Dave enjoyed the friendship. Linus was always exposing him to something new, and Dave, if he didn't know it himself, needed some exposure. Dave's room was his entire universe until Linus showed up. Plus, Linus always brought him a blue popsicle.

This time Linus had a popsicle, but he also brought a record to play on Dave's lo-fi (which Linus had given him) and a book. The record was *Blank Generation* by Richard Hell and the Voidoids, and the book was *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. They played the record, and Dave said he thought it sounded crazy. They talked about the book.

"Man, I just finished this book today. It's really good. I want you to read it," Linus said, handing it over.

"All right. What's it about?"

"Well, just read it. But, wow, it's good. Especially the second part. I can really get into that stuff. I really associate with Quentin."

Linus became quiet and listened to the music. The song "Who Says (It's good to be alive)" was playing. Linus always quieted for that song. He stretched out onto the dirty wood floor. His face glowed introspectively. Dave's face beamed stupidly. It was impossible for him to understand anything like the Voidoids, and grasping what Linus was talking about with *The Sound and the Fury* was equally absurd. But he'd read it anyway. And he'd beam stupidly.

Half-way through the song Dave got up to use the bathroom. In order to get to the there (it was a public restroom down the hall) he had to climb over Linus, who had become entranced. As he struggled to get past him, Dave was impressed with how stately Linus looked with his eyes closed. He started to have a thought, but by then he really needed to get to the bathroom. He scrambled out the door.

When he got back, Linus was sitting up. The music was turned off, and Linus was peering through his book. "What'd you think of that song, man?"

"Oh, I liked it!" Dave said, like an eager dog.

"Did you catch the title?"

"Yeah, 'Who Says,' right?"

"Right. But the whole title is 'Who Says (It's good to be alive).'"

"Oh yeah. I think it's good to be alive, too."

"What? Oh, man, I think you missed the point. The song wasn't saying it's good to be alive. It was saying that nobody knows why it's good to be alive, or at least that no one thinks about it."

"Oh."

There was a pause.

"Don't you have anything to say ever? Anything your own? Can't you say more than, 'Oh,' and 'Huh,' and 'Um'? Don't you have anything to contribute?" Linus knew that deep down inside Dave was a spark of life, Dave's personal beauty. Linus had been trying for weeks to bring out some of the worth that was trapped inside Dave's stifled personality. Linus didn't care who the Dave emerged as. He didn't need to be brilliant. He didn't need to be fun. Linus just hoped that Dave would *Be*. Be alive, be himself, be an idiot, or a boy wonder—Linus desperately wanted Dave to puke out his insides and discover that he was full of flower petals.

"Well, I, um, don't know," Dave said. Linus couldn't have expected more than this non committal answer.

"What did you mean when you said it's good to be alive?"

"What?"

"Why do you think life's good?" Linus said impatiently.

"Well, I don't know, I guess." Dave spoke inarticulately, because his lips were numb from the icy blue popsicle.

"I've been thinking about life a lot lately. There's something about it that I think deserves our attention. I've been calling it Something More. It seems like there's Something More to life that is not what you see when you sit around in your room all day. You can never see it when you listen to the same records all the time. You can never capture it when you never think about it. What's your favorite thing to do?"

"I dunno. I like to laugh a lot, ha ha," Dave said. Linus forced a smile.

"Dave, there must be something that really gets your blood pumping. Girls, or fishing, or food, or something, right? I mean, everyone must have some emotional highs, right? Don't you ever feel so happy or so miserable you're going to explode?"

"The problem is, though, that there are so many distractions, so much stuff that gets you down. I saw this movie, *Drugstore Cowboy*, it was pretty good. There was this part, though, where Matt Dillon was asked why he had to do drugs, yadda yadda yadda. Did you see that movie?"

"Er, no."

"Anyway, Matt Dillon replies something like, 'Everyone needs some way to escape the pressures of every day life, whether it's dope, or running around naked, or putting a hole in your head. Everyone needs some way to escape the big pressures, like . . . tying your shoes.' Do you think tying your shoes is a big pressure?"

"Well, no."

"See! No one thinks that's a big distraction anymore. And consequently, no one realizes they're suffering. So everyone becomes a sleepwalker. They have no holes where life can shine out of them, they always plug them up with make-up, or TV's or something. They bow to this big idol, Comfort. They call it "Lord, Lord," but it's really death, and it's killing them. They suck the marrow out of life and replace it with morality. But, Dave, I'm not saying there is no God. I'm not. Okay?"

"What?"

"Sheesh, Dave, live! Be alive! Ignore the things that keep you inside your room. Ignore the fears that keep you inside your head. Come out and love life! It's a gift for you! Hold something sacred, for once. Find out where your own Something More lies! That's what I'm pushing to find. I'll call it All. I'm trying to find All. I've caught glimpses of it, or him, and I know you have too. Seek, you shall find. Don't ever let your search be discouraged by shoe-laces, or Wal-Mart bargains! When you cry at night, pour! Unleash the storms inside your head. Find All! Find All! Find All!"

As Linus spoke, he sat erect, and fixed his eyes on a vase of stale and greying flowers which Dave had neglected on his cluttered table (flowers that Linus gave to him). They had been beautiful flowers once, tall and stately. Linus had spoken quietly but passionately and expressively. He spoke as if what he was saying was good in theory, but his personal mission was headed nowhere.

"Um . . ." Dave said, "oh. Okay." Linus' face registered genuine disappointment at his inability to get through. It was the end of their conversation. Linus disappeared to his own room.

Today Linus is lying on his kitchen floor. He poked a hole in himself, but found no light shining through. Dave discovered the liver when he was returning the vase. He had decided to do some house cleaning. Dave was impressed once again by how nice looking Linus was when he was lying on his back. His body looked peaceful, but the look in his eyes had changed. They were filled with a profound blankness. Linus had endured a catharsis, and what he was left with was emptiness.

He left a note for Dave. "All is lost! All is lost! Help yourself to the blue popsicles in the icebox." He did. He left the one-room apartment sucking the cold flavor.

"Hmm," he thought, "blueberry."

He had figured it out.

Old Habit

Through time, his pain has been masked by bitterness,
Disguising his personality in a pitiful gray.
Gray like the prickly hair is growing on his head--
Gray like the pictures and memories of the Second World War.

Tears carve paths down the wrinkled geography
Of his face, often running into a valley, folds of skin,
Rolling numbly down his neck, one at a time.
He saves his tears for special days; not often does he shed them.

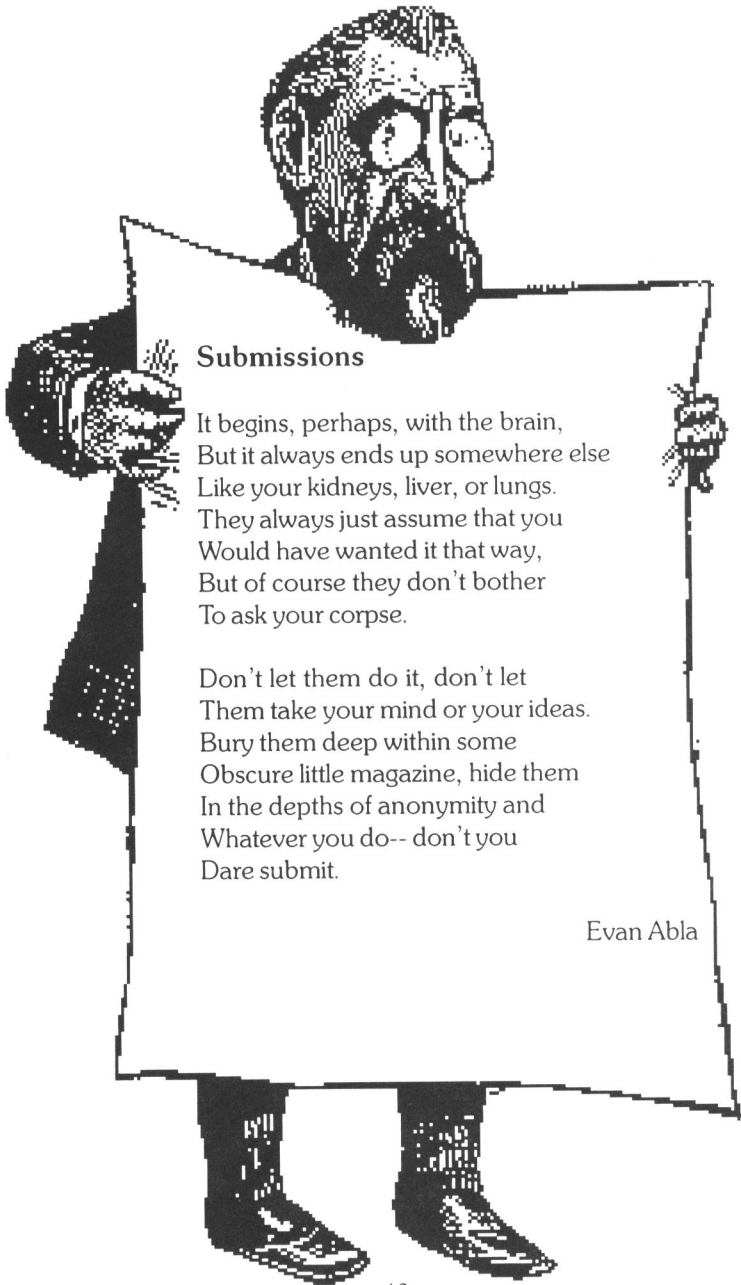
He isn't used to this disability.
Wearing his white tee-shirt, he rests in the chair, watching tv,
Wishing his family would come to stay always.
He can't pursue what he wants most- his children and their children

Watching baseball, basketball, birds, and bruises,
He needs oat bran and oxygen and Bic lighters.
Farbeit from her to ever upset him.
Although she is with him, he is lonely. They share loneliness.

In comes lunch on a tray, carrying peaches
And grape drink, spreading the fruity smell throughout the whole, old
house.
He is hungry, but not for what she brings him.
His days speed by like racing inch-worms on their way to nowhere.

We thought that he was dying on Thanksgiving.
He was choking, gagging, and gasping for air. We just watched him.
Grandma wouldn't call the ambulance that day.
She said he is terminal and only wants to die at home.

Jenni L. Poe



Submissions

It begins, perhaps, with the brain,
But it always ends up somewhere else
Like your kidneys, liver, or lungs.
They always just assume that you
Would have wanted it that way,
But of course they don't bother
To ask your corpse.

Don't let them do it, don't let
Them take your mind or your ideas.
Bury them deep within some
Obscure little magazine, hide them
In the depths of anonymity and
Whatever you do-- don't you
Dare submit.

Evan Abla

Election Year

Hats thrown in the ring,
cautious hopes.
Delegates
holding their fate.

Big tents get bigger,
speeches create
the ideal candidate,
vilifying the other.

Hurling muck,
eroding image, placing
blame,
claiming immunity.

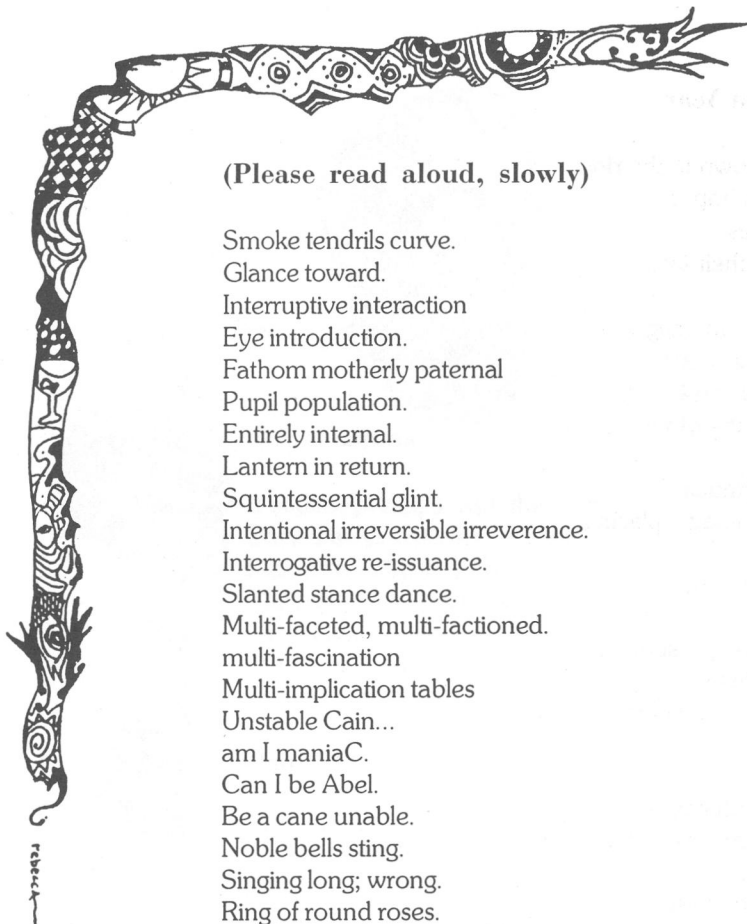
Promising prosperity,
kissing babies,
changing chameleon smiles
foolishly.

Public lethargy,
ignorance, suspicion,
recalling
sins of the past.

Four years later
another rides
the stationary bike,
going nowhere.

Oblivious to where
he began, went,
or finished.
Another election year.

Gabrielle Steinhart



(Please read aloud, slowly)

Smoke tendrils curve.
Glance toward.
Interruptive interaction
Eye introduction.
Fathom motherly paternal
Pupil population.
Entirely internal.
Lantern in return.
Squintessential glint.
Intentional irreversible irreverence.
Interrogative re-issuance.
Slanted stance dance.
Multi-faceted, multi-factioned.
multi-fascination
Multi-implication tables
Unstable Cain...
am I maniaC.
Can I be Abel.
Be a cane unable.
Noble bells sting.
Singing long; wrong.
Ring of round roses.
Supposes synergistic symposiums.
Signing sinning cities.
Imposiums spinning little.
Spitting statues spending.
Spatula-story, escape pending.
Hinder the Hind.
Beyond blind bond.
Kindest kind of kindness.
Breathe my best breath
At Death's breakfast table.

Numb to Now

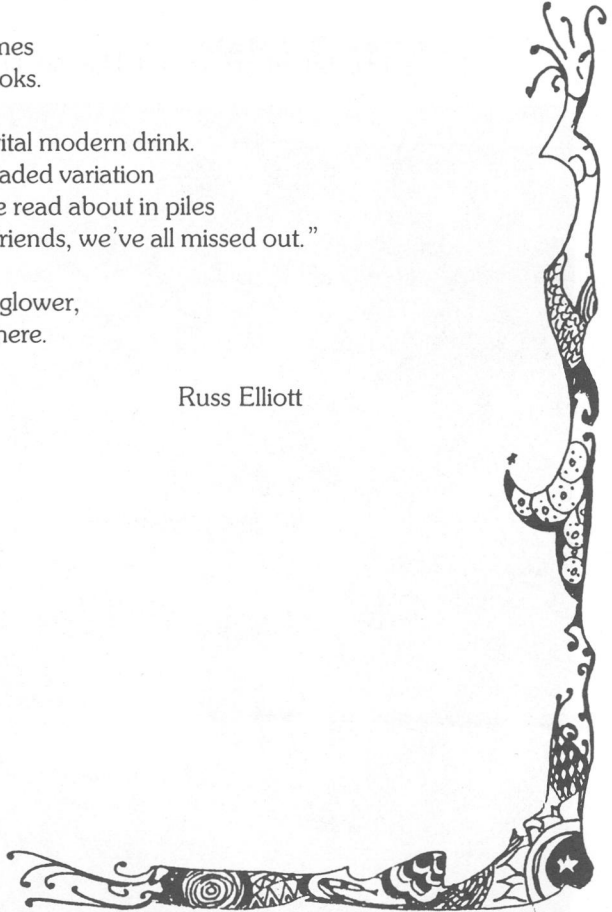
The shock of sockets tastes like sugar now,
but nothing here electrocutes me. Smell
the static in my room. It blocks the blood
that tries to slide through headstrong legs that stand
without a twitch and sneering hands that bear
dark claws to scratch whatever is alive.

I try to speak of times
that only live in books.

I say "I drank the vital modern drink.
The flavor's just a jaded variation
of better things I've read about in piles
of yellow paper. Friends, we've all missed out."

And all the while I glower,
no incandescence here.

Russ Elliott



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Inspired by four minds
that will be greatly missed...

. . . I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE
WORLD THROUGH A BABY'S EYES WITH
MY PRESENT VITALITY: I WANT TO
GLANCE AT ALL OF TIME LIKE A WAVE
OF PURE LIQUID IMAGERY IN A WARM
OCEAN OF THOUGHT

MARK CHARON



