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Connecticut College Literary Journal

Connecticut College

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**The
Connecticut College
Literary Journal**



May 1981

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
JASON LAUM

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ARON ABRAMS
PATRICIA DADDONA

John Terenzi

Pictures

1

winter trees
are
summer trees
in
bikinis

like women
are
empty forms
in
nakedness

like women
are
unnoticed
un
-til the spring

2

the blinking lights
repul
se the eye. the tree
now d
ead only regains its
essen
ce from the mechanic
al pu
lse representing one
birth

3

he died for truth
and was just about done
rearranging the pillows in his coffin,
when the one who had slain him
found solace in the adjoining cubicle;
he'd died for justice
too.

4

the black and
white
photographs
smothered you in
gray;
the contrast
in your life is slight;
you are the mediocrity in life
of middle-
gray.

5

Man, his Cosmic Human Condition

boat

Patricia Daddona

A Funny Vision

(for three students, after our
first poetry reading together)

It cannot be the truck is
coming through night air
to lodge its wheels- right-
angled, rubbing- against the
chrome, and sit astride
the bus I ride and wonder in.
Michael writes surreal poems;
Maddy, not I, would picture
this. I stare out past my
window: gulp and watch. And
smile, then, at the self I leave
behind the bridge the truck flew
over, wingless.

Kaci Kinne

Two Strangers

We have folded the road map
and placed it on the seat
between us.
The headlights carve into the highway night;
we drive in silence.
Occasionally,
I feel you glance at me;
your velvet gaze suffocates,
and though I want to cry out in anguish
and pull into the emergency lane
(for surely there is no greater emergency in the world
than the swift, slipping, loss of love
between two people)
and talk,
the words stick in my throat,
and I grip the wheel white-knuckle tight,
and fix my eyes on the road ahead,
blink them clear of tears.

How was it that we came to this?--
two strangers running in the night
from an ending neither wants,
but that neither is strong enough
to prevent, if even we knew how.
When at yesterday's dawn
I watched the first hesitant tendril of morning light
slip down your sleeping profile,
and finally I woke you with love,
how can it be that now we find
nothing to say to one another,
no other recourse but to flee
from something unnameable
and, because of our fear and weakness,
unarrestable.

We pull into a rest stop,
and have a cup of coffee
in a bouncy-bright room of orange and blue;
our silence stains the sparkling tabletops
and bitters the steaming brew.
The waitress smiles and chatters about
how refreshing it is to see a couple in love
in these days of drifters and abusers.
You tip her heavily;
when you turn to put on your coat,
I scoop up the money
and slip it in my pocket.

We return to the car and this time
you get behind the wheel, and I realize,
now that I do not have the sheer mechanics
of driving to occupy my mind
and obliterate the congealed silence,
how utterly alone one is
riding in a car at night
with a stranger one used to love.
I do not know how long I have been crying
when the man at the tollbooth
asks if your "pretty missus" is all right;
you curtly reply that I am fine,
for there are simply no more alternatives,
and no more words,
as the tears continue to roll down my cheeks
and we continue to roll down the highway
into the heart of our own night.

for MJL
1981

Kitty Keith

Teacher's Pet

Mr. Lyons taught English at the Quaker high school where he had graduated ten years before. He worked hard, so diligently that he somehow never had enough time to work on the book he had planned. Two years ago they had given him a raise and, after much thought, he decided to save the money rather than visit his sister in Greece. On Sports Day, he had pitched for the faculty team and, although they had lost, he felt he had played well and had been congratulated on his arm. Clinton, the school's star player, had told him that his curve ball was deadly, and Mr. Lyons was glad that he hadn't lost the touch. He was only vaguely aware that during the course of the years his dreams had changed and those that had not, he had forgotten about. He would have said that he was happy, well respected. "I have found my niche," he told Dirk one night. "Yes. I believe that I will stay with the school." And then at the beginning of the second semester, everything changed.

He had always believed that he maintained a good rapport with his students. He was young and handsome and they liked him. It was easy for them to talk to him about their problems and, if he gave advice a little too frequently, at least he listened. He remembered what it was like. He passed out the books and counted one absent student. As he was explaining his grading system to the class, the vice principal motioned to him from the corridor. Katy had been caught smoking in the bathroom. She was with the dean now and would be in class shortly. He shook his head with frustration. "I don't know what's happening to kids these days." Mr. Lyons nodded sympathetically.

Scuffling in the hall, the door knob turned slowly and the class one by one shifted their eyes from Mr. Lyons to the door. "Come on in," he said impatiently. Katy closed the door behind her and Mr. Lyons looked into the most beautiful eyes he had ever seen. "Sorry I'm late," she murmured, walking towards the chair to which he pointed. Clinton

looked at her unabashedly. Several girls tittered in the back. Katy looked down at the book which was passed to her. Mr. Lyons thought her eyes lit up when she saw the cover. So she likes Conrad, he thought.

She would not look at him. As he lectured the class, she looked down at her book, across at Clinton. After class he watched her carefully fold her notes and put them between the pages of her book. "I'm sorry," she said as she walked towards the door. He nodded. His hands were moist.

He didn't call on her in class for two weeks. There was something about her striking beauty which intimidated him and he realized that he felt protective of her. He moved Clinton to the back of the room.

He saw her eating lunch with Tracy and it bothered him. The two took their trays outside, laughing as they passed the long tables crowded with students. Katy self-consciously raised her hand to brush the hair out of her eyes. Her breasts swayed slightly as she walked. Clinton had once told him that Tracy was loose. "Likes to sleep around," he said and grinned. Mr. Lyons found it hard to imagine anyone sleeping with Clinton and, when he thought of Katy, he quickly lost his appetite. He remembered the whispers in the faculty lounge. Mr. Simon, the eleventh grade Latin teacher, had left suddenly in mid term and it was rumored that he had been involved with Tracy. Mr. Lyons wondered how any teacher could be so foolish.

She came to class without her book and he felt he had to say something. "Share with Tracy but see me after class." Was his voice sterner than usual, did he imagine that the room became more quiet, that Clinton coughed in the back row?

With one arm supporting her weight, she leaned against her desk and waited. "Come here," he said. "Come here," he said, more gently. She had lost her book and he offered her his. "Remember to bring it next time,"

he said. Katy sighed. Her chest rose and fell. She dipped her head and hair fell about her face. "I'm sorry, Mr. Lyons," she said again and was gone.

The next day after class she thanked him, handing him the book. "Clinton has lent me his," she volunteered.

He and Dirk sat on his porch and drank beer. They basked in the afternoon sun and flipped bottle caps off the railing. From the kitchen they could hear the thin voice of the radio announcing the plays of the baseball game. "Are you up to your ears again in work, Paul? Moving mountains with that magnificent mind of yours?" He laughed. He enjoyed being with Dirk. "Or just thinking about Katy?" He winced.

"What?"

Dirk smiled. "Oh, you know. You must have seen her. I had her in my class last semester. The one with the great body."

"Oh, her!" he said and this time they both laughed.

"Nice girl, but a bit of a trouble maker, I think," Dirk went on.

"John tells me he caught her smoking the first day of class. Funny, the things we feel compelled to punish these kids for." The radio crackled. Home run by Reggie Jackson. "Feel like whipping up some burgers?" Dirk asked.

He liked using the grill. It had been a Christmas present from Maria, but two months later she had called the whole thing off. Not that he really minded, he just had more time to put into the school. But he kept her picture faithfully on his desk and then one day she had called. "Do you ever miss me?" she asked and he surprised himself by saying yes. Since then they went out occasionally, to the Fellini films she liked. And he bought her the big buckets of popcorn she always said she couldn't eat and then between them they would finish it, even the uncooked kernels.

Sometimes, after a particularly good movie, they would sleep together.

Used to each other by now, she woke first and began the coffee while he lay awake in bed, listening to her opening cupboards in the kitchen. And then he pulled on his bathrobe and shuffled to the shower, clean and ready to make the eggs. It was a comfortable arrangement. He had given her an umbrella and a box of chocolates for Christmas and she had looked him in the eye. "What makes you think I want an umbrella?" she asked.

Dirk stood by the grill, spatula in hand, poised and ready to flip the hamburgers. He looked out over the railing, watching the people come and go from the apartment building. Mr. Lyons stood beside him and watched a Lincoln pull up. "My Gd," he said when the car door opened. Dirk looked at him.

"What's wrong?"

No, it wasn't Katy, but for a minute, it might have been.

"Nice tits," Dirk mumbled.

Mr. Lyons picked the sesame seeds off the bun and threw them over the railing. "Sowing your oats?" Dirk laughed. The Mets were ahead and Mr. Lyons was glad. Dirk played with the ketchup, holding the bottle upside down until the ketchup appeared on the rim, and then righting it again. He taught English also, the A.P. section in the eleventh grade and the required senior course. Although they sometimes argued about the books they read, Mr. Lyons found it hard to stay angry with his friend. And he suspected that the other was probably a better teacher. When it grew dark, the two moved inside to correct papers in front of the TV.

"Listen to this," Dirk said. "Thomas Hardy spelled H-A-R-D-E."

He was frequently annoyed by bad spelling. "Dont you teach these kids anything, Paul?" Mr. Lyons grinned and sorted through the other papers to find Katy's.

He had wanted to read it objectively, without even looking at the name printed in the bottom corner. Dirk sat cross legged in the big arm chair, and Mr. Lyons felt a little self-conscious but reassured himself that Dirk couldn't possibly know the queasy feeling he had in his stomach. He felt a chill pass through his body, but he was already growing used to the excitement which the thought of Katy could bring. WHAT IS THE HEART, by Katy Davis. Conrad's Heart of Darkness sweeps over the reader with the vibrant pulsations of jungle drums...

"What time is it?" Dirk repeated.

"Oh, ten o'clock."

"Better be on my way. Squash tomorrow?" he said. Mr. Lyons walked him to the door and, after waving goodbye, was alone again with his stack of papers. Katy's paper. He felt as if he knew her better for reading it, almost like looking into her soul. He was intrigued and read quickly. It was more than her writing style which appealed to him. He was touched by her romanticism. To him, she seemed like a flower, the frail beauty of youth which opened for him. Dirk had not prepared him for that. He read the paper over several times, wrote an "A" in the upper corner and then changed it to an "A-". "Please see me," he wrote in the margin.

"Very impressive paper, Katy," he said on Monday. She blushed. The color rose quickly to her cheeks and then disappeared. Beside him, she looked so timid, so young that she had probably not yet discovered the beauty of her own body. He wondered if she had ever guessed at her own womanness, that part of her which made her classmates look pale and angular in comparison. He found it difficult to be so near her. My God, she's half your age, he told himself.

When she was absent on Tuesday, he felt somewhat relieved. But the class passed slowly, time droned on and he found himself easily annoyed with the other students. When Maria called him during lunch, he couldn't remember later what they had said. Something about dinner, but he had to

phone her back to make sure. "Yes, Paul. this Friday at seven o'clock." She paused. "Is something wrong?" He assured her that he was fine, busy with school. "Well, I don't envy you, having to spend all day with a bunch of seventeen year olds. They're so precious at that age." He was a little irritated with her by the time he hung up.

He didn't have the energy to make dinner and didn't feel like going out-- so he skipped eating. He tried not to think about her, but his body got hot all the same. Closing his eyes, he could imagine her smiling at him. He had seen her running to the hockey field, kilt flying in the wind. Long legs, a bruise on one knee. Her cheeks were red and he could almost taste the salt on her skin. He brought himself back to his room, looking at the clutter around him. He had been able to put her out of his mind before he read her paper. Now he told himself that he was attracted to her mind. He wanted to touch her, to feel the warmth of her breath, and he wanted Clinton to stay away from her.

From behind his desk, it was hard not to look at her. He knew that he was obsessed, but the thrill was so new to him that if he wanted to control it, he was not even sure how. Her voice excited him. Slowly he lured her out of herself, gently probing her to speak in class. And she became more confident, looking him in the eye, sometimes smiling. Occasionally she waited for him after class, standing close to discuss a book they were reading or what someone had said in class. He doubted that she knew the power she had over him. He told himself that she thought of him as just another teacher, perhaps a handsome one who encouraged her to think for herself. She might even idolize him. As he watched her write on the black board, he felt himself harden and he thought she trembled slightly. When Clinton licked his lips and clicked his tongue, Mr. Lyons had to stop himself from throwing the boy out of class.

He spent less time in the faculty room, feeling all eyes upon him. The gossip annoyed him. He was impatient with their stories of student

problems and complained to Dirk. Although sympathetic, his friend did not quite understand the urgency of his voice as he proposed more and more walks, lunch in park nearby. "You're getting a bit rugged, Paul," Dirk joked. "All this outdoorsy stuff. It's too much for a meek English teacher like me." But more often than not, Dirk joined him.

"How's Katy?" he asked one afternoon.

"She's a very fascinating girl, Dirk. You didn't tell me she was such a good writer."

"Is she? I don't remember." They smiled and opened up the paper bags with their sandwiches inside.

When the principal revoked the teachers' parking permits, Mr. Lyons considered storming his office. He imagined yelling, this school's a piece of shit, I don't have all the books I need, you should pay me double what I make! Slamming doors and pounding on the top of his desk, he fantasized the old man begging him to stay. Frankly, Mr. Lyons, you're the best teacher we've got.

He had to park in the lot across the street.

One day he noticed Katy looking at him. The class was supposed to be reading, but she looked over the top of her book, directly at him. He felt the heat fill him, rising from his stomach, and he gazed over her head at the rest of the class. "Finished Clinton?" he said. "No sir." When he looked at her, she met his eyes for a moment before looking down again.

He studied his face in the bathroom mirror. Maria had once told him that he was one of the handsomest men she had ever seen. He stared at his reflection and tried to figure out why. Occasionally he had heard some of the high school girls talking about him, and he knew that they found him attractive. At the time, he had been a little amused.

She half sat on the corner of his desk and fumbled for the words to explain why she had cut school and missed his test. She was nervous but also strangely relaxed. For an instant he thought she knew, that he had betrayed himself somehow. Then it passed and he breathed more deeply. Her body molded to the desk, her hip to one side like a softer edge. She was close to him now and he heard the quickness of his own breath. He wanted to keep her there so he asked her questions about the reading, as if to be sure she had done the assignment-- and he listened to her talk. Shy at first and then more comfortable with him, he thought she seemed to like him. When there was a pause, she made no move to go-- lingering there, near him.

He didn't mean to but his arm reached out and his hand touched her hair. She looked away, but did not move her head. He knew her skin would be soft and white. He guessed he smelled baby powder.

Once they got to the car, he wasn't sure where to take her. She was too young to drink legally and somehow his apartment didn't seem right. So he drove her to the park near the school where they sat in the grass. He had to persuade her to share his lunch, a mouthful at a time. It was his suggestion and, watching her eat, he wondered if he'd been crazy to think it was anything more.

They sat close together on the grass and he listened to her talk about her family. Her tanned legs curled beneath her and she played with blades of grass as she spoke. She's articulate, he thought, but every once in a while she would use a phrase or giggle in a way that reminded him of her age. "Now tell me about you," she said shyly. "Do you like teaching?" He shrugged and then he kissed her. Her mouth tasted of cheese sandwich.

Dirk was talking fast. He had not waited for an answer to his knock and paced as he spoke. "Paul, I don't know, but somehow word got out. Maybe it's not true but Mr. Phillips says he pried it out of Tracy and she

said you were seducing Katy. The principal is with her now, and you'll be called in soon. Paul..." he said, but didn't finish. He looked puzzled, as if he wanted to ask something, but then he left. Mr. Lyons sat alone in his tiny office. He looked at Maria smiling on his desk. He looked at the stack of papers in the book shelf and he thought about Dirk. He appreciated his friend's discretion. And he realized that Katy had made him feel more alive than he had in years. He sat very still and straight, so frozen that he did not even know he was crying.

He had thought about it, but he still didn't know what to say when the principal questioned him. "No," he heard himself. "I don't know where Tracy gets her ideas." Katy, he realized, had not betrayed him and he felt a wave of tenderness rise up inside of him. He hoped they would leave him alone.

He watched her chew her pencil during class, distracted but her eyes remained fixed on him. She waited for him in the parking lot, looking a little lost between the cars. He wondered if she had her license yet, and realized with a jolt, that he was glad she had come. "Don't be scared," he said "It'll be alright." They stood there and just looked at each other. Her eyes were moist. He wanted to reach for her hand, to keep her from crying or to have her cry on him-- he wasn't sure which. He leaned towards her and then back again. "I'm sorry," they both said at once. He wanted to laugh, but couldn't. There was nothing else to say. He looked at her through the car window. She stood straight and then moved back to let him pass.

He barely remembered the drive home. Once inside the apartment he was shocked by the mess. Wit the TV on in the other room, he pushed the vacuum cleaner across the carpet. He had to force himself to sit down and plan the lesson for the next class. On the phone, Dirk's voice sounded:

cheerful enough. "Squash tomorrow?" he asked. "We've got to get your arm in shape for this year's soft ball tournament." Mr. Lyons grinned. The thought of beating Clinton appealed to him.

Patricia Daddona

The Gift

What do you do
when a man gives you a rock?
"Marry him!" you say, diamond-eyed.
"Is this a proposal?" I ask,
as he hands me the small, black
stone beached in his palm.
He laughs, diamond-eyed,
and takes it back.

Steve Cloutier

For Karen

She sits,
with memories like a stale breeze
stirring a curtain.
Closes her eyes
to look in at the sound of a voice,
the touch of a ghost hand.

How far the stars are
in a moon streaked sky.
The cool night air smells empty,
and the scent of dying hurt is on the breeze.
And if it is all a dream-
the unreality is hers.
This is what it means to be alone.

She knows now
starved shadows don't die.
And in this corner of the night
there is only she, and backward glances.

Julia Hewitt

Yield

The tomatoes, we found, refused to grow unsupported.
You led us through the woods to find our stakes.
We marked
and chopped
and pulled the bushy cedar trees through dying wood
and stripped them of their bark once in the field.
The promised purpose of the day?
Tomato poles, they said.
Yet clearer to me was the purpose unpromised,
your penknife, your wisdom, your gift
of spruce gum.

Prying a piece of what seemed crusty sap
from the tree,
you forewarned it's first bitter and hard.
"Takes some getting used to, but's
well worth the trying," you said
as the delicate lump reached my lips.

As I chew in delight,
I don't want to believe
when you say the spruce gum cannot last.
"Hardened past hope by tomorrow," you said,
unless I could chew through the night. I fight
against the very words which lead me
to this truth,
yet know somehow that you're to be believed.

You whose calloused hands have known
that two-by-fours do not last long as such,
that the house recreates the lumber
as the lumber makes the home--

You are believable, who have heard the shotgun
and the scream of the boy who had loved
the raccoon.

"Rabid," the warden said,
and left before your boy became the man
who rarely writes
or calls.

Yes,
you're one to be believed.

Tonight the last tomato poles are grounded in the earth.
Sturdy, steady, they'll remain to weather,
and support our ripening vines.
Come fall, we'll can the fruit produced
and praise our cedar stakes.

We'll wish that words could validate the spruce gum, unpreserved.

Steve Cloutier

Since You Probably Already
Think I'm Strange

Thanks for sleeping in my chair.
I talked it over with the chair afterwards
and we both agreed.
It made us somehow feel-
well-
useful.

It's useful to sometimes feel useful.

Julia Hewitt

The Frog and the Ox

Inops, potentem dum vult imitari, perit.
(The helpless, wishing to imitate the powerful, perish).
-- Phaedrus

Bulging eyes emerge at the surface.
Urgent, they scan their world.
No longer can the stagnant pool suffice.

The bank begins where thick green water ends.
Beyond the shore, the oxtail whips off flies.
Your hungry tongue's known no such luxury.
You hold full breath, desiring oxen size.

Your wrinkled skin then smooths, expands, and bursts.
A frog soft soul cannot contain the ox.
The August skies begin where fields leave off.

Cathy Sponagle

Building Up Destruction

The castle is falling down.

The princess melts the strong stones

With her sighs.

Secret tears silently seep into the mortar

And crumble the cloudy happiness

Down to its foundation.

An act of will for lack of faith.

Viewed from afar, the admirer cannot see

The fragile cracks.

He fears the attractive order of each room

And the sweet mystery of her darkness.

He visits her only briefly

In her chambers of delight,

Preferring to meet her in the wilderness

Where he must build a castle of his own--

Must he? Will he?

Her castle is falling down

And no one knows.

Repair. Retreat into the wilderness--

And build again?

Must she? Will she?

An act of will for lack of faith--

Maybe in the wrong thing.

Not even Ernie Rupert's death stopped Louie Goldenfarb and Curtis Rabbald from going to Belmont Park.

"He would have wanted it this way," Rabbald said to Louie as he stepped up to the window. He placed a 200 dollar bet on a horse named Law of the Land. "The only death that will stop me from going to the races is my own." Rabbald craved the sound of beating hooves and the taste of foot long hot dogs. Doc Goldenfarb couldn't have let Rabbald go alone. He might have bet every penny he owned. Rabbald pocketed his ticket and they headed for the foot longs.

"Foot long and a large Michelob, please. Louie, how about you? My treat."

"Not hungry. Had a big breakfast."

"The race track, today?" Louie's wife had said at the breakfast table. "It's pouring out, dear."

"A sloppy track brings in the longshots," he told her. She fried some eggs. He read the charts in the paper.

Rabbald slapped on the mustard and topped it with sauerkraut and relish. His mouth snarled open and he sunk his teeth in. Mustard got into his greyish mustache. He chewed the footlong and washed it down with beer.

"Let's watch outside, Doc. We can stand underneath the overhead."

It had been a damp October. Not a very cold one. They watched the horses warming up, Rabbald chewing and drinking. The wet brown bodies glistened. Hooves pounded against the soft muddy turf. The mud flew about and landed in the mud.

Rabbald listened to the horses plodding through the mud. Majestically. Heads high. Mud darting. Up from. The track. Horse hooves. Soft thud. Missed my putt. What the...Jesus Christ. Flat out. Just cut. Green. Mouth to. Mouth to...Sirens whining. Trumpets signalling ten minutes to post time.

"Who'd you bet, Doc?"

"Number 2. A little Night Magic. Cordero's been riding well, and that horse is due for a win. Came in second two months ago on a sloppy track. I forgot who you bet."

"Law of the Land."

"Come off it, Curtis. He's 20-1."

"Sloppy tracks bring in longshots, to quote a reliable source."

"Not that long, though. Who the hell is riding that thing?" He checked his program. "Molina? Never heard of the guy."

"Shit. He's already down to 18-1," Rabbald was looking at the scoreboard.

Louie stared at the board. 18-1. 18. 18th flag. Hole. Dropped dead. 18th green. Never even putted out. Curtis wondered whether the debt would be in the will. No mulligans in real life.

"He's a beauty," Rabbald said elbowing Louie in the ribs. "I got a winner. I can feel it in my bones."

Rabbald had followed horses for 30 of his 53 years. His uncle had shown him one Saturday afternoon that the odds were against you but that you could still win. And win big. Rabbald had charted horses on and off since that day. He followed the jockeys. Being a lawyer, many of his clients were stable owners. For the first time ever Rabbald had picked a horse by name.

The horses made their procession in front of the crowd. The jockeys' tailored jerseys with colors and the numbers on the sides of the horses usually looked clean and neat. But with the rain they became soggy and wrinkled. The horses were walking in order, led by a lady on a lead horse. This was the Fall Laurel Stakes. A race that sported a 50,000 purse.

Rabbald checked the odds again.

"She's up to 25-1. Rain, mother, rain."

Louie looked for his horse. 4-1. His 50 dollar wager could bring in a nice sum.

"There's two seats over there, Curtis. Why don't we take them."

"They're a few feet in front of the finish line, but they're seats."

They made themselves comfortable for the remaining minutes before the race. Their long silence was filled with the crowd's rumbling, the loudspeaker announcing the horses, and the drops of rain splashing into the muddy track.

The scoreboard flashed new odds every few minutes. Each time they came up, ooooohhhhsssss and aaaahhhhhsssss filled the Park. Louie gazed at the flowers on the infield lawn. They spelled out Belmont Park. Neatly trimmed. Pruned, ordered. Manicured by a caretaker. Inside there was order. Outside there was mud, and tons of brown hide jockeying for position. Pounding hooves. Hooves pounding. Pound. Ing. Pound. Ing. Pound. Pound. Pound. pound pound poundpoundpoundpoundpoundpoundpound pppppppppppoooouuuuunndddddd. POW-NED. POW.....

"Should we make a bet for Ernie?"

Rabbald was staring at his horse.

"I can feel it in my bones. He looks like a beauty, Louie. If this baby's a winner, dinner's on me. Ha. Ha."

Louie dropped his head and looked at his program. He didn't see a word.

"I gotta use the men's room. I'll be back in a few minutes."

"Grab me a foot long and a Mich on your way back, Doc," Rabbald said, reaching into his wallet for a few bucks. "And make sure the foot long isn't from the men's room. Ha."

"Sauerkraut and mustard?"

"Yah. What a beauty. 25-1. This is gonna be like armed robbery."

Louie moved through the crowd, his eyes scanning the ground. It was strewn with losing tickets. Ripped stubs. Lost dreams. Numbers of hope. Visions of glory. The horses were trotting. To their. Posts. So many. Losers. Paper world. Stock market. Shreds. At least confetti has its moment of glory.

Two minutes to post time. Louie stepped up to the side of the betting window and read his program. Ruffian. A Little Night Magic. Bold Step. Bullova. Ronnie's Run. Double Down. Law of the Land. Ready or not.

One minute to post time. Ready or not? Outside post. Horse has a prayer. What the hell. This is crazy, anyway...

The bell rang and the man behind the window pressed a button and started counting tickets.

"Number 2. 50 to show, please."

"Sorry, sir. Horses are off."

Louie looked into the man's face as he counted the tickets. He turned towards the foot long.

"...old Step jumps out to the early lead Double Down is 2nd A Little Night Magic 3rd. They make their way around the 1st turn of this 1 mile stakes race and its Bold Step by $\frac{1}{2}$ a length over Double Down a Little Night Magic is 3rd back 1 length, Ruffian is 4th by 2 lengths over Bullova Ronnie's Run Law of the Land aaaaaannnnndddd Ready or Not....."

Louie checked the odds on the video screen. Ruffian- even money. A Little Night Magic 3-1. Bold Step 4-1. Bullova 6-1. Ronnie's Run 10-1. Double Down 8-1. Law of the Land 23-1. Ready or Not 40-1. Son of a bitch shut me out.

"...Coming around the first turn its A Little Night Magic moving up on the outside to take the lead by a nose over Bold Step with Double Down behind. Ruffian is tucked on the inside 4th. Law of the Land makes his way up on the outside to be 5th by a nose over Bullova. Ronnie's Run and Ready or Not trail the pack...."

"Foot long and a Mich, please."

"What size?"

"Large. How much?"

"2.50."

"Thanks."

"...Coming up on the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile mark its A Little Night Magic by a length over Ruffian moving into 2nd 1 length over Bold Step with Double Down fading on the outside. Law of the Land maintains 5th with Ready or Not moving up on the outside 6th followed by Bullova and Ronnie's Run...."

"C'mon, Molina. Whip that hide. Ha. Ha."

He was on the edge of his seat. His program rolled into a tube, flapping in the air like a whip.

"...Down the back stretch it's Ruffian moving into the lead by a neck A Little Night Magic in 2nd by 2 lengths over Bold Step with Law of the Land on the outside 4th. Double Down and Ready or Not 3 lengths back with Bullova and Ronnie's Run trailing the pack...."

Louie made his way slowly so as not to upset the beer.

"Here you go, Curtis. Sorry so long."

"C'mon, Molina. Whip that baby. Ride that horsey," his program flailing wildly. "Just put 'em down. I'll celebrate later."

Louie put the dog and beer in a flimsy cardboard box on the ground between the seats.

"...Making the far turn it's Ruffian by $\frac{1}{2}$ a length A Little Night Magic is 2nd followed by Law of the Land 3rd Bold Step 4th and Ready or Not 5th. Double Down Bullova Ronnie's Run trail the pack...."

"Goin' down to the wire, Louie. C'mon, Molina. C'mon."

"That track's like soup," Louie said.

"...Coming towards the home stretch its Ruffian by a nose followed by A Little Night Magic and Law of the Land neck and neck. Ready or Not

moves up on the outside to pass Bold Step into 4th. The rest are lengths behind..."

Belmont Park was on its feet. The rain was pouring down. The horses were slapping their hooves through the mud. Pounding in soup. Pounding a violently monotonous rhythm through the mud. The jerseys were covered in slop. Jockeying for position. Heads bobbing. Like a massive drum roll picking up speed, the horses made their way toward the home stretch. The pounding getting louder. More thunderous. More exciting. A herd of wagers charging home. Animals betting on animals. Drum roll, please. Da, da. Da, da. Da, da. Da, da.

"...Down the home stretch its Ruffian by a nose Law of the Land 2nd A Little Night Magic fading quickly 3rd ready or Not moving up on the outside 4th Bold Step hangs on 5th..."

"Photo finish, Louie. Photo finish. Giddyap you son of a bitch."

Charging loud. With the. Mud flying. Whips flailing. Rabbald rocking. Louie thinking. Heads bobbing. Rain beating. People cheering.

"...It's Ruffian and Law of the Land neck and neck Ready or Not on the outside 3rd Bold Step 4th A Little Night Magic 5th. Heeeerrrrreeeee they come. Neck and. Neck I. Can't believe. I can't. Look. Too much. To bear. Win lose. One second. Like that. Your fate. Slam bam. Soft thud. Drop dead. Da, da. Da, da. Da,,da. Da, da. Splish, splash, c'mon, c'mon, ooooh, ooooooh, ooooooooh, yeeeeehhhhaaaaaaaaaa, aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh aaaaaaaaaattttttt ttttttthhhhhhhheeeeeeee wire its... Ruffian, Law of the Land, Ready or Not, and Bold Step..."

The crowd went limp. Tickets ripped. Winners rushed to the windows. Rabbald rapped his program against his thigh and kicked his foot along the ground knocking over his beer and sending his foot long onto the ground.

"Son of a bitch. A goddamned head. By a fucking head."

He sat.

"Well, Louie. He gave us a run for our money."

Louie sat.

"I guess you could say that A Little Night Magic was a nightmare, huh, Louie?"

Louie turned and met Rabbald's eyes. The corners of his mouth went up for a second, then dropped.

"At least you didn't lose a foot long and a beer, too," Rabbald said. "He was in there until the home stretch, Louie. Thought I had a winner, though."

They watched the crowd circulating.

"Who the hell was riding Ready of Not? 40-1. What a long shot," Rabbald said.

The scoreboard flashed the figures. It's Official. The crowd stopped to look.

Ruffian 4:00 win 3:20 place 2:80 show

Law of the Land 6:20 place 4:20 show

Ready or Not 10:00 show

Ruffian made his way back towards the finish line for the winning ceremony. The rain had let up. Velasquez, the jockey, sat proudly aboard his winner. He patted and rubbed his hide. The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Feller, came out onto the track for the victory photograph. A laurel wreath was placed around the horse's neck.

Louie and Rabbald watched the ceremony. Louie watched the wreath being placed around the neck. There were flowers on it. Flowers on the ground. Live flowers. Dead body. Testimony to presence. Bright flowers. Wet flowers. A white flash. The photo was taken and the rain began again. Mr. and Mrs. Feller raced indoors.

The late afternoon chill was setting in. Rabbald could feel it in his bones. Louie could see it setting in. The dirt settling in the well of hell. The mud was thicker than ever now. Continuing to splash as the horses for the 8th race made their way onto the track. Rabbald and Louie

sat silently.

Louie watched the crowd. He was taking it all in without trying to. Pound. Ing. Pound. Ing. Pound. Ing. aaaaaahhhhhhhh nice putt, Ernie. Right in the heart of the cup. Whew. We needed that one. Only one down, with two to go. Birdie on 16 made it possible. I'll walk. Nice putt, Ernie. Thanks, I'll walk. Pound. Ing. Pound. Ing. Pound. Ing. One more round before closing. It's on me.

"Whaddya say, Curtis. How about an early dinner. On me."

Rabbald was staring at his program.

"Ha. Ha. Wait a minute, Doc. I think we got a winner here," he said reading the chart for the 8th race.

"You can bet, Curtis. I've had enough for the day. I'll root for you though."

"C'mon, Doc. We're going partners on this horse."

"I've lost enough today, Curtis."

"You can owe me. I know you're good for it."

Louie sat thinking.

"Can you feel it in your bones?"

"Sure can. Cordero's riding. He's overdue." Rabbald folded the program in half so that only the 8th race page was visible. He put his finger under the horse's name and pushed it in front of Louie's face.

"What's Up Doc. Ha. Ha. 30 each, Louie. What's Up Doc to win for 10 each, to place for 10, and to show for 10."

"Just win and place for 15 each," Louie said. "Show never pays much."

"Partners," Rabbald said, shaking Louie's hand.

They left their seats and headed for the betting window.

"He would have wanted it this way," Rabbald said.

Louie was gazing at the betting lines: "Who?"

"Bugs Bunny. Who do you think?"

Curtis Rabbald rapped his program against his side a few times.

Louie was a stride behind him.

"These lines are pretty long," Louie said. "Why don't you get on the win line and I'll get on the place line."

"Meet me by the foot longs," Rabbald said. And they were off.

Cathy Sponagle

I Wake a Child

When from the land of dreams I wake to see
Painted boxes and bottles of perfume
Displayed with grace on dresser and lace,
I feel that I am in my mother's room
And more a child instructed not to touch
Than the young woman who arranged them there.
And though a woman, still a child holding
Innocence in a bear and fantasy
In the wealthy world of my solitude.
I wake a child in a woman's room,
Which with it's fragile permanance would ask,
Where did you come from? Where will you go?
Invited to stay, instructed not to
Touch, the child vanished when she saw the glass.

Julia Hewitt

Kindlers

i.

They come with eager hands and wood to burn.
You speak first.
You say the ground's not yet been cleared.
They lack a "safe and suitable place,"
and the steps must be followed
exactly.
Flat stones must encircle the earth.
A fire must be contained.

ii.

All summer you and I
have been gatherers of wood.
The pile's well stacked and high.
Tomorrow's tarp, though, can't keep dry
a store like ours.
Rain's forecast.
Tonight, we'll firebuild.

iii.

Before you leave, you cite clear facts.
All woodpiles are undone
by fire, or by rain.

You press your hand
(farewell)
to the pane of glass, Amtrack- installed.
We've chosen fire well.
But our ground's unclear. We lack flat stones.
A fire must be contained.

BEGINNING

(A villanelle)

Succeeding in life is a hard-fought game,
The rules confused; who knows which way to go?
When I have left will you recall I came?

Success and failure, who are we to blame?
Nobody--ourselves? When its over we know
Succeeding in life is a hard-fought game.

When you are gone nothing will be the same.
If I could give the love I have to you
When I have left you will recall I came.

There were times my life seemed to have no aim;
I lived too fast until you said go slow
To succeed in life. Its a hard-fought game

Alone; I stand incomplete,almost lame.
With you I change.Like grace,a dancer,I flow.
When you have left I will recall you came.

I know your love is now my goal,my aim.
Your love is my success,with you I grow.
Succeeding in life is a hard-fought game.
When I have left you please recall I came.

John Terenzi

In Poems

Words are things.
They are like ocean waves,
Butterflies
And children;
They dance, they fly, they play.
Tables, chairs, and refrigerators
Are also things,
Yet being symbols,
They have no innate energy to move.
Things, when left in alienation as such,
Becomes tombstones of
Before-thoughts
Which get
to be the abstract motion
Of ocean waves, butterflies and children
In poetry.

