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LANTERN

URSINUS COLLEGE
WINTER — SPRING
1967



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Editor's Note: I would rather not encumber you with another editorial that, after all, just takes up valuable space. This, we feel, is the best we have to offer. We wish to give no less.

Sincerely,
Craig Bender, Editor

New Editors:

L. Barry Erb
Tom Miller

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Wendy Billet
Lance Diskan
Jeffrie Ann Hall

Sue Hartenstine
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Vicki Van Horn

THE IMPLEMENT

The same cool breeze that ruffled the surface of the lake was shaking apple blossoms from the trees and making the grass of the spacious lawn waver like a magic carpet. Dark campus buildings contrasted greatly with the mood of the clear sky. So many windows of the same size, some shape made the dormitory's facade monotonous to look at; while burdensome ivy gave the auditorium a melancholy complexion. The most hateful structure was Administration Hall. With its warped boards, dingy finish, and empty flower boxes it detracted from springtime beauty. It repulsed every visitor. Nearer to the waterfront, seesaws, jungle bars, swings, and merry-go-rounds dotted the green. And beside the quaint beachhouse were moored yellow, peach, and blue prams. Beneath the huge rose trellis, just beside a flagstone walk, there rested a shiny red marble, a ball, four jacks, and the crumpled form of a little boy. The usually rosy-cheeked lad with sandy hair was now as pale and lifeless as the gray stone lion that guarded the auditorium entrance. Visible to the most observant eye were the mendings of his green-striped polo shirt. Now no ball rebounded from the wall. No spurs clinked. No child giggled. From behind wet lashes tiny eyes pleaded to the furry ball that lay in his lap, "Ya'll see, Scamp. Things'll be just like before. Swimmin', runnin', wrestlin'. Just set still now. Ya'll see . . ." The lad rambled on, but no twitching ear or whimper responded. Every limb of the pup's small body remained limp and motionless. Breath was indiscernible.

Stroking the still animal, the boy pondered about the past, about the time before their friendship. Sure, the place with its trees, birds and eels was beautiful. He always appreciated nature. Mrs. Briggs' games were also great. And the mess hall food never really tasted too bad. But, after all, since he had come to the orphanage when only four months old, he had nothing to compare it with. Yet, in his imagination conditions weren't the best. There were mass instructions as to how to brush one's teeth, daily lessons on stacking-away toys, and bedroom self-inspections. Everyday required a trip to the chapel with an hour of silence -- or as the nuns insisted, prayer. Not quite knowing how to define prayer, Andy spent his time admiring the elaborate garments of the priest and studying the candles' flickering effects on the altar gold.

From what several other boys who had been on trial said, he guessed life fared differently on the outside. Their stories of soft hands that fondle, having a choice of a breakfast meal, and watching cartoons on television made him envy the normal. To be tried just once by any family would satisfy all his dreams; yet he knew they'd never accept him. At least a hundred times Sister Sheila told nervous couples she had just the boy for them -- "gentle, loving, just perfect." But when they saw his ear, they fidgeted, looked askance at each other, and hesitated to speak. Recovering from shock, they asked his name, age and how he'd like to have a home of his own. How hateful it was to watch them try to be nice and feign interest when in their hearts they considered him a freak -- couldn't wait for him to leave the room! Always when he turned away, the whispers came flying back to him. "Did you see his ear?" "Yes; it's a shame." "Somehow I just couldn't be comfortable with him in the house." Some more polite than others, the negative replies were inevitable. However, these ordeals were bearable. The worse part came when he descended the office stairs. The boys crowded around the entrance. Their snickers and "How'd it go, freak?" hurt him deeply as he admitted failure to his few friends. Then he ran away to



the sheltered cove of the lake. Knowing all the while that next time he'd re-enact the same scene, he resolved to never again let a refusal disappoint him.

The routine hadn't changed very much in the last five years. Dreading each call (Will Andrew Early please report to the office") he sat alone in class, went fishing with bait as his only companion, and never had the pleasure of joining in the nightly pillow fights from bunk to bunk. Yes, he admitted it was ugly; yet somehow he couldn't understand why it made him so different from the other boys. Hadn't he a common desire to challenge? Didn't he display the same spirit when their ball team beat Rigley's orphans? Didn't he dress like them? Still, his few friends were the little ones who ignored his deformity. They were the tots whom he loved but in whom he couldn't confide. In but a few years, circumstance transformed a typical, whoopin'-and-hollern' youngster into a shy, reticent misfit.

Then Scamp arrived. An ordinary day and a commonplace hike became the turning point of Andy's dull, fruitless existence. He'd only begun walking when, about a hundred and fifty yards from the orphanage driveway, he noticed a small cluster of the older boys. Why they had congregated would ordinarily been none of his concern. Had he not heard a tiny whimper amid the shrieks of laughter and the mock "If it don't look like Ear," he would have turned in the other direction. But at such sound and mention of his odious nickname, he rushed toward the action. Sure enough, in the center of the circle there lay a six-inch pup with one deformed ear. And pushing his way to the core, collected the mongrel in his arms, and headed for the campus. Stupified by his aggressive actions, no one tried to stop him.

It was through Sister Sheila's influence that Mother Superior consented to let him care for his dog until he recovered. Andy knew he would forever be indebted to her. For weeks he nursed the dog including feeding him warm milk with a doll bottle, washing his recently opened eyes, and quieting his nightly yelps. But as time progressed, the pup grew ten times stronger and infinitely more playful. The fact that Andy knew Scamp's ear was responsible for his owner's attempt to dispose of him strengthened their relationship. The pair became inseparable.

By the second month, they had become the center of attraction. No longer did the boys shun him. They praised him for is fine job, begged him to join their pillow snafus, and loved his dog with all their hearts. Now, nature shone more brilliantly. Food made the lad's mouth water. Even office calls and the innumerable refusals were easier. When he left the building, his Scamp and his buddies were sure to be waiting. Life was new, exciting, a side of existence he had never seen before. Now also, he recognized prayer. Assured of God's presence beyond the shine of the gold tabernacle, Andy offered all his sufferings and extended never-ending thanks.

Yes, it had been that way for a year and a half. Surely, it couldn't change. Paradise is forever, isn't it? Not transient, always . . . A glimpse of the caretaker interrupted his thoughts. He knew what the approach meant. "Oh, Scamp, if only ya had watched. Ya -- you're so small compared to . . . We had a great time. I was going to tell ya all 'bout it. Ya should've stayed . . ." But he knew it was senseless. Tears streamed down his peaked cheeks. He clung to the limp form one last moment, stroked its fine fur, then faced the white-clad figure. "Ya'll see, Scamp . . ." As he placed the pup in the box, muffled sobs came from behind. Turning toward the cove, he met the little-ones, the elders -- all his red-eyed friends.

Barbara Ann Bald

A broken backstop, partly standing,
Tells the story of old times,
Happy times.
When looking on it, I'm not sad;
For it can be built up (like many things)
And made new again.

That funny game had worn a path,
A square of earth in the playing field.
And now, partly covered over with grass,
It looks ready to be worn again.

Come with me.
We'll play an old, old game.
Let's call it what we want.
Let's call it "the old, old, game."
We'll build up all our broken memories
And wear down paths in wild fields of green.

Tom Miller

City

Glass-eyed and brass
Stainless steel beating like the heart.
Polished marble glimmering and eye-burning
In the morning's first light.

Wild wind whistles through the steeled women
Of the fountainhead.
Water splashes,
And pennies corrode in the black bottom.

Sword lifted to heaven
Invoking mighty damnation on the enemy.
The horse and rider about to dash
And proclaim their heroics.

The green coat
Flakes to show more green oxide.
Sword lifted and invoking

Steam and the smell of french fries
Rise from the exhaust of the diner.
The stainless of the fan
Is blackened with a thousand fires.

The glass-eyed stores look out upon the street.
They see the scuffle and hurried pacings
Of the uncaring and ignorant mob.
In fractured silence they endure the peering.

The perforated grate resounds with each step
The pretzel vender with no legs
Shouts his wares above the clatter
Of nothing accomplished.

G. Miller

My Friend Is

Oh God!

No! No!

Not him. I can not
hold any face to
credulity. A candle-
barren night, you say,
as calmly as death, a
heel-pocked night, an endless
street into Oh God,
what now? They cut **him**
down, too; among the nameless
tombs unguarded. After
the roses had been thrown, the
hands stopped clattering, the
stage cleared, the last scene definitely
ended, he fell among . . .

a last great dissonance of
skittering stones, clotting heels, brass,
belts, pipes, and a thick
sudden fog of silence. Oh
God, God! No!

To die so uncommonly common
in a non-existent alley of
fears and nightmares. To have
no chance for last words and
consolations. To die
truncated as he was. To die out
of context in a heel-pocked loneliness
and blathering numbness. To die
now. Oh God!

No!

Craig Bender

August 1966

MEDITATION ON EIGHT DEAD NURSES
AND A MAD AUSTIN SNIPER

Sniper
I feel sadness
In bucketfuls
Over my head
Swirling frenzied, mucky
Around my feet
Standing in a
Stinking sewer of gloom
Straining the white dots
From void to life
Blinded
The burning spray
From the torn and
Twirling drains of
A heartless heart.

I feel fear
In a slow enstranglement-
Of billiard-ball bodies
Bouncing and braking
Falling cracked and packed
Into a shrinking web of doom.

And I see Paladin
Hero with his derringer
Shooting Bulls' Eyes
Into falling stars.

And I see so faintly
The clouds and dust,
The ensuing dust of Hiroshima's population-
(For I was there and threw the switch
Direct from employ at Auschwitz)

And tho I killed
And tho I died
Here I am again
Alive

Burning a long-scorched soul
In boiling blood
Of some man's
daughter
My own brother
And my own
Life.

L. Barry Erb

Fact and Fancy

looking glasses break
dreams turn to dawns
what seemed to be the king and queen
are really only pawns

bright rainbows fade
faiths turn to fears
the flaming stars that light our way
are others' funeral biers

gold rings are brass
joys turn to jeers
the crystals of life's necklace
are someone's salty tears

time marches on
songs turn to sighs
and really they are funeral hymns
that sound like lullabies

Jeffrie Ann Hall

Valhalla

From behind garbage cans, beaten and rotten from years of service, large sad eyes peer out at every passer-by. Each mouth rests wide like that of a squawking baby jay. Each hand extends for every worthless scrap from those who are lucky enough to occupy tenements above. "And who is your mother little urchin?" There is no time here, no established code of behavior. A frayed polo shirt and hole-specked jeans are high competition for mother's crusty aprons and sister's ankle-length sac.

Sights are different, squalid, perhaps repulsive, yet sounds pattern those of a Fifth Avenue playground. Laughter bursts from crevices. "Home-free-all," "You're it," "Ready-or-not" cut the stinking air. Here, an old shoe substitutes for the ideal red rubber ball that lies in Valhalla. And if you're wary of the rats, mounds of debris afford excellent look-out towers for guarding home-base. "You're happy, aren't you, young man?" "After all," chimes the park commissioner, consider the durability of an old shoe!"

Barbara Ann Bald

A Blandishment

Old men, do not touch my youth.
You have had your pleasures,
Seen the early dawn,
Reflected in love's eyes,
Touched a touching hand
Surpressing love's desire;
Spoken soft words that
Flowed as pinking ribbon,
Cried the tears of pity
Less than those given.
Do not bother me, my aging lovers
For you have your loves and
The fruit of that union,
With all; you have a life
That has been molded
Without me.

Dottie Kimmel

You say you were a name so sweet,
And now you're just a number.
Go to sleep; forget it now.
Progress works in slumber.

Inactivity marks our day:
 freedom wanted,
 hunger screaming,
But a thousand and one conservatives beaming
With a bold pride unwarrented,
 for a child cries,
 and the streets are restive.

Tom Miller

Preview Rerun

It didn't seem that they hadn't gotten married but that they had when they met in the freeling glade with an accustomed toothbrush glance. Unwary eyes held, deepening fire escapes to fern clotted imbecility. "How are you?" she asked irrelevantly corroding the mist to Instamatic clarity. "It is because the serious sounds absurd when not expressed in accepted phrases," he explained. And the light revealed it again skulking awkward and hesitant to any good books lately. The blush surfaced from once upon a time but he said, "I'm fine. How are you?" and his fingers worshipped her hand *et tu Astarte*. She the mirror of the shattered glance and fires of spring to check yet dared feast the image. The lid of a hell unfroze to an iron virgin of would have been.

Vicki Van Horn

To Lynne

I

We walked aimlessly along
hand in hand
Shaking the best wetness
From the trees
Laughing -- and them running
As the rain, the beautiful purity
Fell from everywhere
But mostly fell into our
Faces and made them fresh
And made them clean.

And we climbed a noonday
Mountain avoiding busy spiders
Climbing steadily to the barren
Peak talking of love and sharing
Of death, funerals and caring so much
And many tears
But none of them now
For the sun was
High
And an azure sky beamed Friendliness
Walking down the meadowed other side
With perfect butterflies -- like seagulls
I said
and you liked that.

And then it rained Aloneness
For a while
And need and love were
Mixed in apple pie
And much we talked
But little trusted or not at all
And little elves died
And bubbles burst as they always do --
And
Sadness was a morning breakfast.

II

For we are different
You and I --
And a friendly orange sun
Rose on two worlds --
You like to skip along
From cloud to cloud
Leaving not a trace
And you can; I'm glad,
For I fall through and
Stub my soul on
Mountain peaks or
Land in a nest (my own) of
Unfriendly birds with
Pointed beaks.

And the rest, I guess
Is nothingness
Silence or
Restful oblivion.

L. Barry Erb

Shards

Once upon a time
in rose crystal days of once-upon-a
weekend, we
miraculously made love
in the intimacy of hands,
standing on
hillside fields
in the cricket's slow silence,
which was really our hearts, you said.
And the cows below had eyes like you,
I said. And the trees beyond were carpet --
or even better,
quiet for dreaming future once -
upon-a-times (and
sometimes etceteras) and
everything was eggshell china
perfect
waiting for the
bull.

Craig Bender

The Initial Error

Her soul I tried to hold,
To mold into the boundless limits
of the ideal
To fire with the torch of purity,
Striving evermore to hand her
The star I cannot grasp myself.

It comes slowly, serenely,
With Spring-zephyr gentleness,
The light of this star.
The world becomes not bright
but clear;
The goal becomes not joy
but calm;
As Self is shattered,
Scattered in blissful Nirvana-search.

But soon the light begins to fade;
Soulless self grows strong and proud,
Remembering only painful aloneness
And polaroid-shielded throngs.

I gaze into her eyes,
Happy, dancing, laughing;
Fixed on a different star
Illuminating a different world
Both bright and clear, gay and serene--

And I shudder at Fate
Which made me glimpse a star
So eternal, so distant.

L. Barry Erb

Daniel

“Shoot! Shoot!” Skitter of stones. “Here.” Confused shuffling of sneakers. “Pass it.” Distant cries like a crowded beach. The tump of the basketball lost beneath. Silence only for the short suspense of a jump shot. In and out like water poured too fast in a shallow glass. Sound renews like a change of altitude. “Pass it. Hurry!” Jughead Reed upcourt shakes plaid arms to make his plea. “Throw it, Gary!” A boy wheels and heaves, the ball side-whirling like the world past the second story windows of a box brick schoolhouse. A flock of boys race up court, following the world. Two boys waiting. They leap. Three. The world is lost in a surrealistic tangle. It bounces free, “Get it, Steve,” leaving the tangle behind to unravel itself. Steve (yellow shirt and dungarees) retrieves it.

“Steve! Steve!” Pleading cries like startled crows.

“Don’t hog the ball.”

“Shoot!”

“Steve, over here.”

“Go on, shoot.”

“Watch it, Steve. Watch it.”

A silence of cries suddenly blanket the playground like upturned leaves/ silence/ hush/ before a thunderstorm. Jughead runs into Steve at full speed. Steve slides on his knees, stops quickly. The ball has bounced to the box brick schoolhouse, off, over to the wire fence, off, over to Jughead, like a billiards shot. Jughead throws it now into play.

“Hey, it’s our ball.” Steve lifts one ugly red knee, picks out the pebbles care-full-ee.

“The heck it is.”

“You pushed him out.”

“He’s just clumsy. Play ball or quit.”

“You pushed . . .”

“Go ahead. Shoot! Yay! Two points.”

“Those are our two points. It’s not you ball.”

“Oh yeah.”

“And besides Steve deserves foul shots.”

The blood is drooling toward a sock; Steve starts taking off a sneaker.

“Steve isn’t taking any shots.”

“Come on, Steve. Take your shots . . . You hurt, Steve?”

Steve slings the sock aside, shooting out, parachuting, down. “Hey, Steve. Can you still play? Lifting himself with his good leg, he hops now for balance, then wiggles his toes into his sneaker.

“Yeah. I’ll play.”

“Look at his knee.”

“Oh, you drip. Didn’t you see it before?”

“Shut up, Jughead.”

“Hey, that’s pretty bad; you’d better see the nurse.”

“Playing is better than getting iodine on it. Thanks anyway. I’ll be”

“Who said to shut up?”

“Pipe down, Jughead. we”

“Who you telling to pipe down?”

“You know what Adams says about fights. Calm down.”

"Nobody's supposed to tell me to shut up."

"Calm down, will ya?"

"Man, that knee looks bad! He is bending low, heron-like, to tie his sneaker. Distracting pain numbs his ineffective fingers.

"I want to play. One thing. Jughead, you owe me a pair of overalls."

"Says who?"

"Me. Who else?"

"That's what I want to know. You and who else? I ain't paying a cent for those overalls."

"You owe me a pair of overalls, Jug."

"You s. o. b. They're not worth toilet paper. You just better shut up about it before I clobber you one."

Steve swallows phlegm, reshifts his uncomfortable balance. "You owe me a pair of overalls."

"Shut up!"

"You owe me a . . ."

Jughead moves forward and slams the palms of his hands into Steve's shoulders. Steve stumbles jerkily like a walking toy down a ramp, and falls. Holding his knee stiff, half bent, he lifts himself. A shower of pebbles mocks his rise, stings into his knee. He picks out a small stone/ care-full-ee/ tucks stone in hand and lifts himself into a wall of faces. He hobbles. One quick flick of the hand sends the bloody pebble dancing gnat-like across Jughead's cheek, leaving one bright red dot. "You still owe me a pair of dungarees." He turns and walks to the schoolhouse. Jughead crooks a quick foot around Steve's ankle and pulls. A few snickers. Steve hops twice, walks on. Tears milk over his vision--school, swings, children are distorted. (How can they just stand around and watch Jug pick a fight with me? Doesn't anybody have any guts? At least I stood up to him. All by myself. Why must I always be all alone? Nobody even gave me a hand up. How can people just stand and watch like, like I was a martyr fed to the lions, like a Daniel. Yeah, that's who I'm like--Daniel. Daniel against the whole world, the whole)

"Watch out!"

Steve wheels to face Jughead / belligerent shadow. "What do you . . . ?"

Jughead shoves him again, and again. "Tattle tale! Stool Pigeon! Thought you'd blab to the principal, didn't you? Think you're smart because he gives you A's? Think old Adams will paddle me for a favor to you? Huh? Well?

Steve feels himself falling/again/always pushed, falling each fall deeper down into some mental well deep, moss stone, dripping darkness down. He reaches up in desperation to Jughead's shirt. A pocket rips, hangs, exposing a slice of white.

"Now you've asked for it. Now you're going to get it. Brown-noser. Smart ass."

Scuff of sneakers. Tangled bodies. Slight, half-pleasant pain like a good hard tackle Squirming (Oh. The knee!) Turning.

"Get him, Steve!"

"Yay, Steve!"

"Come on, Jughead!"

"Get up, Jughead!"

"Smack 'im in the mouth, Steve."

"Come on, Jug. You can do it."

"Get up. Don't let the fat ass sit on you."

"Go, Steve!"

"Hit him one. That'll get him off."

"Pulverize him!"

The bell rings. End of round.

"Hey, let him up, Steve. Adams will get mad."

"Get off him quick."

"He might punch me if I let him up."

"Gees! It's time for class."

"Listen, Barrows. Whaddyawantado? Get us all in trouble?"

"Steve, get your fat ass off my chest."

"Had enough?"

"No. Get off me, or Adams will beat us both."

"Had enough?" Steve jumps heavily with his behind.

"Yes!"

"You won't hit me?"

"No."

"You'll stop fighting?"

"Yeah."

"Call it even?"

"Yes! Now get off, will ya?"

"Pay for my dungarees?"

"No. You smart ass."

"I'll just sit here then."

"Listen, the principal"

"PAY!"

"Yes. O. K. I'll pay for your lousy dungarees."

"You won't fight?"

"Get off. I told you I won't."

When Steve dismounted, Jug ritually punched him in the mouth and scuttled away. "here's your pay." (It's unfair.) His eyes watered.

"Bitch." Whispered. (It's so unfair. I didn't even hit him. I coulda really mashed him. Like this. And that.) Vengeance shadow-boxes the air. "Bitch!" he spits out to hide his tears from himself.

"Hey, hey! Did you really say that? What was that you said?"

(Coulda knocked his teeth out. Why can't I hit a guy in the face? I coulda really mashed him. But no. I trusted him. I had mercy. Mercy. That's the word. Mercy. And he turns around and smashes me in the mouth. Just turns right around and)

"Hey, Barrows. Steve, don't take it so hard."

"Did you see it, Tommy?"

"Yeah, punched you right in the mouth."

"You saw it?"

"Sure, you really had him beat. Then he punched you in the mouth. Dirty lousy trick to pull."

"Yeah."

"You really had him though."

"You think so?"

"Aw, did you ever! Why the heck didn't you bash **him** when you had the chance?"

"I didn't want to hurt him, I guess. You know. If he got a bloody nose, what would Adams say? So I had mercy on him, and bam."

"Your eyes are clearing."

"You're not crying anymore."

"Huh?"

"Oh, I wasn't crying because he hit me. It didn't really hurt much at all. It's just that he hit me when I wasn't expecting it. I let him up. I trusted . . ."

"Yeah, I know. Jughead's a real coward."

"Yeah?"

"Sure, and he's really a weakling, too."

"But he's pretty big."

"The bigger they are the harder they fall. Bigness doesn't mean anything. He even fights like a girl -- kicking and scratching."

"Yeah?"

"Sure. Hitting from behind."

"You're right. He does hit from behind. He can't even play basketball right."

"Heck, no. He's no basketball player . . . Here. Let me get that door for you."

"Thanks."

"Naw, he can't play basketball. The only good one in the bunch is Gary Willard."

"Chuck is pretty good, too."

"Yeah, but . . . well, anyway, Jughead would never win if he couldn't play with Gary and those guys. He always has to win, too. He's really a bad sport."

"You know, if I could get into Gary's team just once . . . Sometimes he really gets a bighead winning all the time. The other day he almost started a fight just because I kept blocking his shots. Talk about him being a poor sport! Listen, I havta tell you about this . . ."

"Hurry. I'm late already."

"Well, he was going up for the shot, and I already had my arm up like this, see. And he ran right into it with his shooting arm. I can't help it if he runs into my arm. If he can't shoot under my arm, it isn't my fault. He'd just go up like this, see. And bam! he'd run right into my arm. Then he'd yell, 'Foul!' That's no foul, is it?"

"Well . . ."

"I can't help it if he can't shoot under my arm. Boy, did he get sore! What a poor sport! Well, I'll see ya. There's the bell."

"Yeah, see you."

"Oh. Thanks a lot, Tommy."

"Sure. Just vote me for President."

"President?"

"Yeah. 1988."

"Oh. Yeah. See you."

"O. K. see you. Slugger."

Silence like a dull pain. The wooden floor now complains underneath Steve's weight, whining into the silent, stern halls. Three doors to the Nurse's Office, three frames of puzzled faces staring toward his movement. Squeeeeeeayuk! The sound drills at the nerves in his knee. As he catches the outer smell of rubbing alcohol surrounding the Nurse's Office, he recognizes the components of the air he has just breathed -- old apple, old wood, pencil shavings. He remembers when he buried a pencil lead in his palm. "How could you put a pencil in your palm?" Mr. Adams had reasoned. ". . . It slipped? . . ."

(Mr. Adams? Oh yes. I forgot. I hope he doesn't know. I never got a licking off Mr. Adams. They said he even made Clay Vernon cry, and he's as tall as Mr. Adams.)

"Hello, Miz Palmer", uncertain of her marital status, "Miz" passes for either.

(Billy Jacobs said he puts holes in the paddle to make it sting. He broke a

paddle on Clay. Even Clay said it, even if he wouldn't admit to crying. Boy, Clay crying -- he's as big as Mr. Adams. Man! I bet that old Jughead is going to blame . . .)

"What?" (it all on me.)

"Steve, I said 'How are you?'"

"Fine, Miz Palmer." (What a liar I am. Everything's going to happen to me, and I say "fine".)

"Steve?"

"Yes?"

"Steve, why are you here? You're late for class. You know how Mr. Adams feels about tardy little boys."

"It's my leg."

"Can't it wait?"

"I don't think so."

"Let me see it. You know you should be in class."

"Well, it hurts . . ." (Man! I hope she takes care of it. I don't want to see old Adams' face. Man, all the sixth graders last year told me to watch out he doesn't get mad. I hope he doesn't get mad. Gees, nobody . . .)

"Well, my goodness."

"Isn't it bad?"

"Well, I don't know. I have to wipe off the blood first."

(Nobody ever paddled me ever for six years. Just one little smack from Mrs. Browers in second. But that was nothing. Just a little love pat. My mom would skin me alive if she knew I was paddled. Oh man. I hope he doesn't know.)

"Ooach! Watch it!"

"Stevie, I can't get at it through your overalls. I'm sorry. I'll have to ask you to take them off."

"No."

"Now, Stevie, you've got to get this cut cleaned."

"No."

"I'm afraid we have no choice."

"But in front of a girl!"

"Listen, Stevie. Nurses see lots of things like this."

"Men with their pants off?"

"Yes, of course, now it'll only take a minute."

"No."

"Stevie, I'm getting impatient."

"God won't like it --"

"I'll have to apologize later . . ."

"It's a sin --"

"Stevie!"

"Oh -- kay!" He unbuckles the belt, staring intensely, carefully slides the blue denim down his child's legs, avoiding the needle-scratching pain of rubbing dungarees.

He watches her tweezers pinching a ball of cotton / a praying mantis holding an insect. He watches her opening different jars that glow mysteriously like candy jars in Reed's Country Store. The smell of rubbing alcohol purifies the air. "No. Not rubbing alcohol. Please don't use alcohol. I hate it."

"Stevie, I don't like boys to boss me around all the time. Now brace up, and be brave like a man. This will only burn for a little bit. . . . How did you hurt yourself?"

"Don't you have mercurachrome or something?"

"I have iodine. How did it happen?"

"Ooooo. Be careful."

"It'll only take a little bit."

"Oooo-ooo-wooo! Ah! Steve squints his eyes, afraid of some imaginary seared mess of flesh at his knee. "Oooo-wah!"

"There. Now I'll just wipe off this blood yet. How did you cut yourself?"

"Is it bad?"

"No. You'll live. Just a brushburn."

"Can I look?"

"Certainly."

He doubles over and gazes nearsightedly. Red furrows and gouges mark his raw flesh.

"Will it get infected?"

"I hope not. Here. We'll put this gauze over it. A little dab of salve and the gauze. There. Now a little tape to stick it fast. There. All finished You never did say how it happened."

"Oh (She'll probably learn anyway. That's better than facing ol Adams.)

"Can I have a pass first?"

"Oh yes. Just a minute Go on; you were going to tell me how it happened."

"Yes . . . (But if Jughead didn't tell, then I'll get everybody in trouble. But probably Jug did tell and got me in trouble. Well, I'll be darned if I'm going to be a tattle-tale. Oh, I hope Adams is feeling friendly. I hope he has mercy. Yes, that's the word for it. Mercy. Now I had mercy. So big old Adams ought to have mercy, too. He's much older and the principal besides, so he ought to know about mercy. I sure hope he has mercy.)

"Steve?"

"Yes?"

"Here." (The pink pass.) "How did it happen?"

"I fell, I guess."

"You guess?"

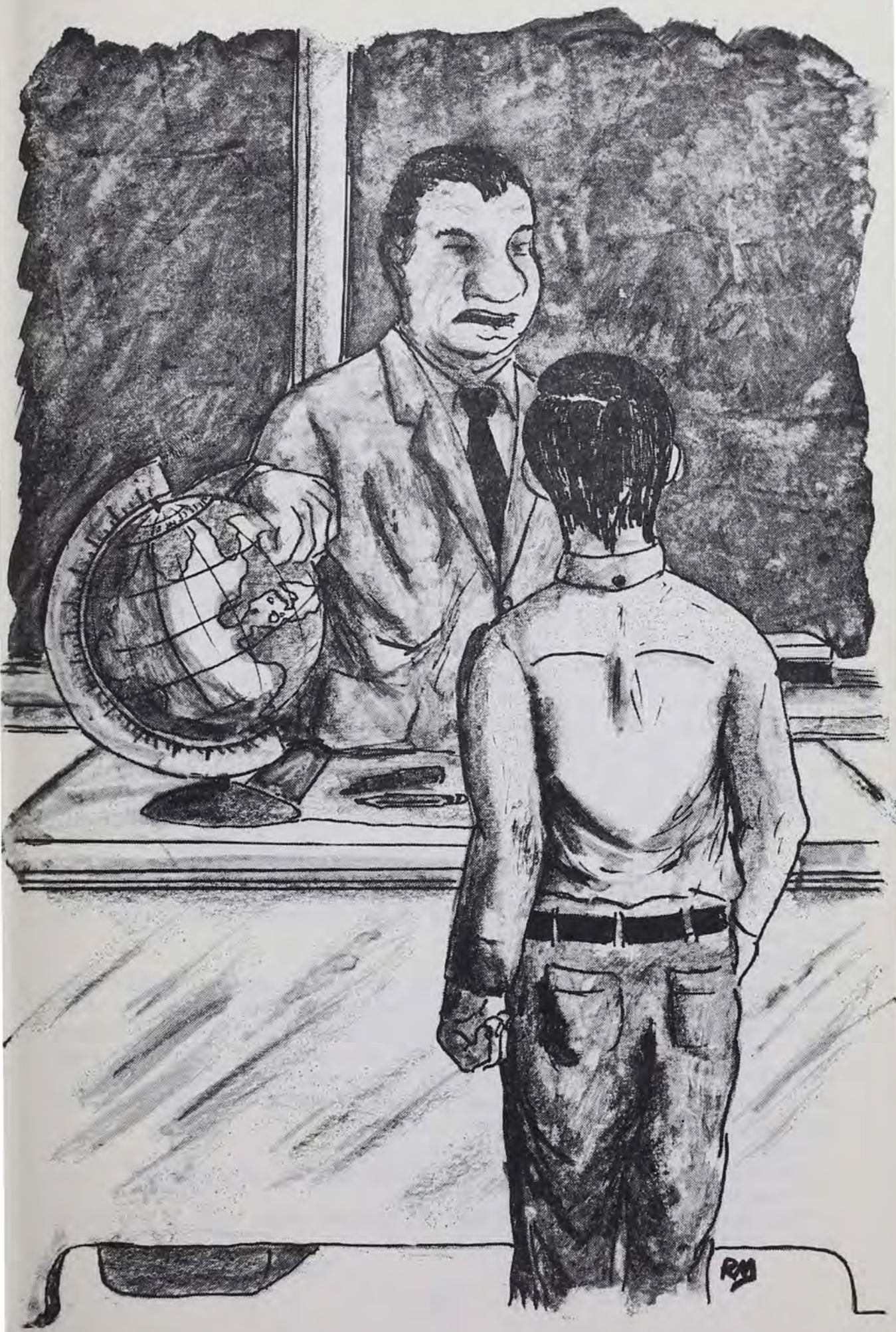
He turns to walk out, shuffling like an old man. His belt jingles as he trips over his pants. (Laughter, friendly.) He falls lightly on his hands, bearwalk position. "Oh mercy! I can see you fell, poor veteran. Someone ought to give you a purple heart. Now pull up your pants, and be careful going up those stairs."

"You sinned. You made me trip."

"Oh now --" Paly-pout. "Be careful, Stevie. Take care of that knee."

"Sinner!" (She gets to take down my pants and gets away with it. But just watch what Mr. Adams does to me. Oooch!) the gauze had gaped and pulled, pinching the wound. (He even breaks paddles on kids. Nobody's even come out not crying. It's not fair. I get a cut knee, alcohol, paddling, all because of Jughead. Ooooch!)

The stairs lie before him like an accordion, stretching, yawning dissonantly. Steep and wide into the glaring window at the first landing. Dusty. Trod into wooden puddles by years of children. (Oh that sun) glaring shield he the martyr Daniel sinned against by the evil queen Palmer staring boldly into the lion-colored sun. Steven turns his head from the light's steady gaze. Mr. Adam's stare tranfigures the burning window. The martyr's breath, like his knee, is hot and raw. One valiant step. Stiff careful leg. Another step. Valiantly higher. (Oh that sun! So darn bright. Man! There's got to be a reason for it to be so darn bright. It's just too I got it. It's the light of God! It's gotta be the light of



God. Like Paul on the Da-whatever-it-was road. Damascus! Yes! Damascus. I, Daniel, no. I, the faithful and good Steve Barrows. I, Steve Barrows, called by God to face the lions -- like a man. God's gotta reward me for having to go through all this suffering. It's got to be the light of God.)

Top of the stairs now. One more step. The golden window and holy inspiration glow down on the base of the stairwell. Destination. (Here I am. Steve the great lion-tamer. Daniel, move over.) Coats hang sparingly this spring day. One shirt declares the heat boldly. Bare hooks point dejectedly at Steven. To the side (above "Grade 6A") the back of Mr. Adams' head, braced solidly on either side by an arc of fat. (He sure is big. Even Clay Vernon cried. It just isn't fair. I didn't want a fight. Jughead started it. I'll bet he said I started it, and that I just got mad and tore his shirt. Lousy old shirt anyway. And Roberta Stoler said he hits with both hands, like a baseball bat.) Even the sides of his feet make the boards groan. The door handle rattles like chattering teeth. The door squeals loudly. (Why, when I just want to be nice and quiet. . .?) Every head turns.

"Well, what is this, Mr. Barrows? You're late Steven. That means you'll have to stay after school to make up that time. Would you like to tell the class why you're late?"

"No sir," He swallows his hoarseness. "Here."

"What's that, Steven?"

"I said, 'Here' this slip."

No laughter. This unusual tenseness. (Will the lion eat the brave, bold Steven?) Eyes watch Mr. Adams' large head move his eyes deposited in piles of flesh belly sitting on pants' top painted tie three inches short of belt one thick hand toying with the globe (I wonder if it will dribble; I doubt it.) "All right, Steven. You may take your seat . . . Wait a minute. You didn't tell us how it happened first. I'm sure everybody is concerned. What did you do to your knee? Let me see. Oh, you have it bandaged."

The knee burns with the question. (He must know. Heck, nobody else tells how they get a silly little brushburn. I'll bet my behind will look worse than my brushburn even. He even puts holes in his bat, paddle. I'll bet that Jughead told on me. If he did, so help me I'll . . . Even if he didn't, the shirt would give him away. And if I lie, will Adams ever lay into me! Lying is worse than fighting . . .) Steve's eyes scan the class like a geiger counter, no reaction. (If Diane told . . . She always tells. She even tattled that time I swore last year. "Shit;" that's all I said, and I asked forgiveness for it. But she told. But if she didn't see us . . . If Jughead didn't tell . . . Yea, but he would. He would just do a thing like that. He . . .)

"Steven. The class is waiting."

He catches Jughead's attention, glares in tight-lipped contempt, harder than the window glare, harder than Adams' transfiguration. (Look at him. The poorest sport in the school. Even Tommy said so. He even has that stupid looking head --like a stupid egg. His stupid ears stick out, too. What a stupe! He even wears T-shirts to school. T-shirts! Nobody else is wearing a T-shirt. NObody wears T-shirts to school, but stupid old Jughead. Where's his shirt like everyone else's? Stupid old Jughead. Leave it to . . . Oh')

"Steven. You may go (Oh') to your seat." (Oh')

"No. Wait I'm sorry. It's just so stupid. Going up them stairs outside?"

"Those steps. Go ahead, Steven."

"Yes, those steps. Well, I fell." (That old Jughead. Well, what do you think of that old Jughead?)

Craig Bender

Gold on Gold

Autumn comes, cool greenery dies,
But, as King Richard told,
The dying leaves have brighter grown,
And streets are paved with gold.

Autumn comes, pink roses die,
But comes a flower more bold:
Gray walks are strewn with golden coins,
Small, fragrant marigold.

Autumn comes, and sweet love dies,
But ere the world grows cold,
Return the sun's soft, golden rays
To reconcile the old.

Jeffrie Ann Hall

If Morning Ever Comes

If morning ever comes,

I shall rise and bathe my eyes in the yellow waters,
And soon my heart will sing the praises of a new
dawn

If morning ever comes,

And the dew melts beneath my barefoot steps,
I shall raise my hands till my fingertips touch the
Treetops,
And whisper to the Gods of Beauty

If morning ever comes,

The palms of a child will reach to the thorny rose
And pluck it with no pain,
And she will lay in a strawberry patch, till the sun
Melts the fruits; staining the skin of babes

If morning ever comes,

The rays of a new day will beckon me on,
And I would walk upon the dusty paths, so as not
To disturb the grasses

If morning ever comes,

I shall seek no more.

Dottie Kimmel

THIRD POEM TO TONYA

She:

Like the mist
That floats upon the lake at dawn,
For a minute shimmered, shifted
In the beauty of the wind.

And vaporized.

Like the comet,
Burned across my heaven,
Lighting my moving corner of the earth
With fragmentary brilliance.

And vanished.

Like the lightning
Blinding eye and mind,
Sent current pulsing through my limbs;
Electrifying a new Self.

And darkened.

Like the note
That hangs in music's sky
Pierced my soul with Peace --
Thus opening my heart to Love.

And faded.

Like a moment,
Left Time's sequential grasp,
Enclosed me, and revealed
Life's only true eternity.

And died.

Lance Diskan

The Kiss

First kiss.

Shy search around the chin and places

Cooperation

coordination

contact

correct the aim

Tentative tangency

. never quite the same.

Again.

Sweet seeking, learning

Soft moving, turning against

And with

Discovery

In

Curves.

Now.

Parted yearning of themselves

Soft-veiled strength

Holding, breathless, panting

Tongues teasing passion

Passing formless

Rivulets of sensation

Harsh holy kiss.

Goodnight.

Poignant paradox

Knowledge

and

Neatness

Having known

But recombined.

Reluctant lingering

Post script

Til then . . .

I'll remember . . .

This

Tender

Trust.

Vicki Van Horn

Her soul was slippery
Hard to hold
And with her heart
Flipped eel-like
Back into the stream
To slide and glide along
Stopping but to dazzle
A few foolish fishermen.

L. Barry Erb

Quietly

The headlights cast two circles of light into
the distant trees.

the crickets scratch at the night, throbbing.

the headlights dim, leaving only the moon
to shed its tranquil haze over the pines,
brush and shadows.

silently the car rocks as two people learn the
inadequacy of speech.

quietly, the moon listens
to the intensity of silence.

Craig Bender