



Fall 1982

## The Lantern Vol. 49, No. 1, Fall 1982

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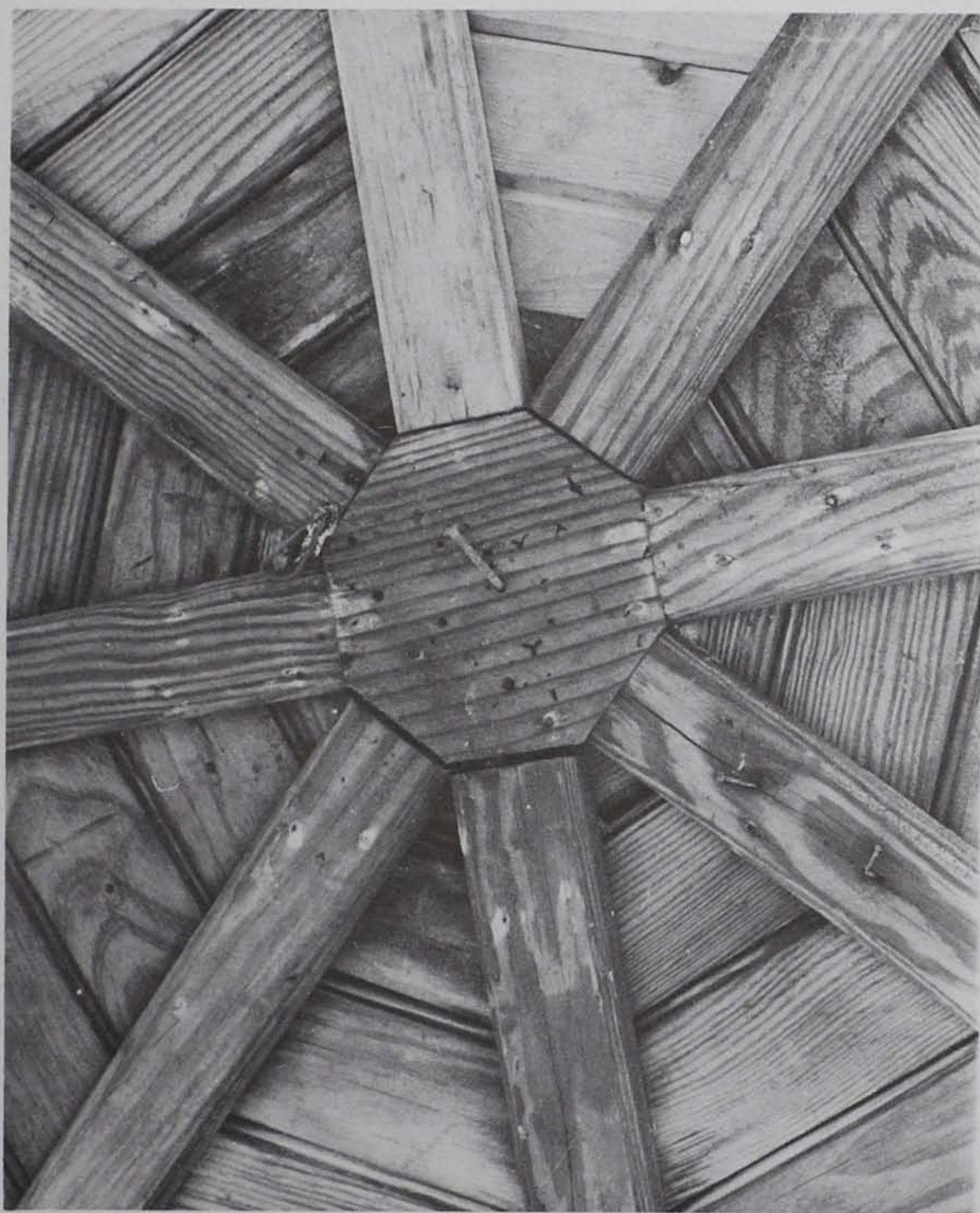
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the Lantern

**Vol. XLIX, No. 1**

**Fall, 1982**

*A collection of poetry, prose, photography and artwork composed for the Fall Term, 1982, by the students of Ursinus College.*

*The Lantern, the literary magazine of Ursinus College, symbolizes the light shed by creative work. It is named after the structure on Pfahler Hall, which has the architectural design not of a tower or spire, but of a lantern.*

## The Dormant Tree

O, dark, bare tree  
bereft of all  
your golden leaves,  
you stand naked  
in the winter wind,  
your sap unflowing  
to your limbs,  
unadorned  
by spring's sweet buds,  
each line exposed,  
leafless in your  
time of sleep.  
If it were not for  
the promise of  
tomorrow,  
an inner knowledge  
of the time of flowering,  
hope would die  
and you would face  
a lifeless spring.

*Diane Newell*

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## **Les Maîtres des mots seront épouvantés**

Les maîtres des mots seront épouvantés  
Si je Détruis ces sots vers.  
Je ne peux pas écrire dans cette langue,  
Mes talents ne sont pas pas si divers.

On doit avoir un esprit agile pour  
Manipuler les lettres.  
Ce n'est pas très facile un grand  
predicateur d'être.

Les messages seront obscures si on ne peut  
pas créer  
Les vrais combinaisons pour transmettre  
les idées.

Las, je suis déprimé, ce n'est pas juste  
Je ne possède le cadeau des écrivants rusés.

Les muses et les maîtres seront très contents  
Si je cesse cette lutte pour de produire un mouvement.

C'est très tragique que je me borne à l'anglais.  
Il y a beaucoup d'apprendre avec le beau français.

*Regina Ciritella*

# THE BARTENDER

"I probably won't be back until around five o'clock in the morning, so don't wait up for me."

"I won't, dear, and since I won't see you, happy New Year."

I gave her a big hug and kiss and walked out to the car. She stood at the door and waved good-bye. As I leaned back in the bucket seats and began driving down the snowy streets, I wondered why I was in such a pensive mood. I guess it was the fact that it was the first day back to work after a week of vacation; and that it was the last day of the year. Perhaps it was simply the idea of turning thirty in a few days. It seems like only yesterday I was a single guy, cruising around in my Corvette. Now my wife and I have been talking about selling the car. It's too expensive and impractical. What a gas guzzler! You just can't fit a wife, three kids and four bags of groceries in a Corvette. Even so, it's the only really classy thing I own.

I'll never forget when I decided to buy the car. My high school friends and I used to gape over the cars at the local chevy dealer's. One time we went in to check out the newest line of Corvettes. I hadn't told any of my friends, but I had saved a good bit of money from my previous jobs.

"I think I'll buy that car," I said, pointing to the red Corvette. My friends just laughed. I'll never forget their faces when I drove it home.

When I got that car, I was an instant sensation at school. Nobody had a car like it. The car was one small part of a big plan that I had. I guess that's why I haven't been able to sell it. It's hard to give up something that's part of a dream.

Selling the car is really only one small part of a whole bunch of things I've been thinking about lately. You know sometimes a guy gets to the point where he has to stand back and take a look at where his life's been going so far. Hell, I'm going to be thirty! Have I really made a good home for my wife and kids? The kids seem happy enough, but they don't know any better. How am I going to pay for their college education? I want them to be able to become what they want to be; to go to college if they want to. They shouldn't have to take a job like mine if they can do better. I don't want my kids to have to start at the bottom and work up from there.

I had to work at a sleazy neighborhood bar for a few years before I could get this half decent job at the country club. I can still remember my friends' reactions when I left Klinger's Bar and started working at the club.

"Boy, you're really moving up in the world" and

"Will you still associate with us now that you're working for the bigwigs up at the club?" they would say. They said that they were just kidding, but I knew there was a bit of truth in what they said. I really thought this was a step up. At least the pay was better than at Klinger's Bar. What a dump! I still remember that sickening smell, coming out of the bathroom, where some drunken bum had thrown up. The place was so dark you could hardly make out where to sit. It was a hole alright, but the drinks were cheaper than anywhere else in town, and so they came.

I really wouldn't have minded working there so much if it hadn't been for Harry. Harry was the owner and main bartender at the joint. He didn't know as much about bartending as I did, but since he was the owner, he ran the place just as he pleased. Harry was a true businessman in the worst sense of the word. "Anything for a buck" was his unspoken motto. When I started working there, it was a half decent place, but by the time I quit it was a front for one of the biggest drug and prostitution rings in the area. Harry would mix the alcohol with cheap moonshine. That's why the drinks were such a bargain. Besides, the moonshine really gave the drinks a "kick."

I began to think about leaving the place when it started to really go downhill. There were just too many creepy looking people starting to come around. Harry tried to get me involved in his underworld activities, but I just wasn't interested. I sure could have used the money, but I guess I'd rather just earn it honestly.

I used to dream about having money; then I could own my own restaurant and bar - a real classy place. I'd be the best bartender in town. People would come from all over just to be in such a nice place to eat, drink and talk. I always enjoy talking to the customers, and they seem to like talking with me.

Even when I was just a kid I used to have buddies come up to me and say,

"Man, I've really got to talk to you," and it was never just the usual stuff, you know, the weather and all, but it was always the deep stuff, the really important stuff. It's not that I ever gave such good advice or anything; I'd just listen and hardly say a word. But, I guess that's what they needed; having someone who would listen.

I never minded listening because I always kinda felt that we all have to watch out for each other a bit. I guess that's what finally made me leave Klinger's Bar. One snowy night, Mr. Grimes came up to the bar and asked me for a drink. Now I know a drunk man when I see one, and this man was definitely plastered.

"Are you sure? You don't look so hot. I wouldn't want to drive home in your condition. Why don't you just take it easy for a bit?" I suggested.

"Damn it," he yelled, as he fell off the barstool. "Give me the God damned drink! He pulled himself up and slumped his head on the counter. Harry, hearing all the commotion, came over and said harshly,

"Give the man a drink if he wants one."

"Look, Harry," I argued, "this guy is in no condition to drive home as it is. He has no idea what the hell he is doing. He'll probably go out there tonight and freeze in the snow or run over some old lady in the street. The last thing he needs is another drink."

"I'm the boss here, and my job is to sell drinks, not to be a babysitter for every guy whose been hitting the sauce," Harry yelled. It was obvious Harry just wanted the money and didn't care at all about the customers.

"You know what your problem is, Harry, you don't give a damn about anybody but yourself." I yelled back.

"You, buddy, can either shut your mouth or haul your ass out of here!" he said, putting an end to the argument.

I grabbed my winter coat off the coatrack and stormed out the front door into the snowy night. Fortunately, the cool air had a calming effect. As I walked, I lifted my head to the snowflakes like I used to do as a kid. I began walking faster and faster as my spirits lifted. Soon I was running down the streets slipping and sliding as I went. And so I made my way home, laughing to myself and not even noticing the cold and wet. For the first time in my life, I was really proud of myself.

I often wondered why I left that day, and why I didn't walk out sooner. I guess I finally realized that money wasn't a good enough reason for staying in a dump like that for the rest of my life. Things did get tough after that. It was nearly impossible finding a job without a college education. None of my folks had ever gone to college and yet I dreamed of getting a degree of somekind, but I always was a dreamer.

I guess that's why I bought the Corvette; to fulfill a dream. When I graduated from high school, I gave up all this senseless dreaming. I went to a local school for bartending and got down to the serious business of being a working man.

My only job offer was at Klinger's Bar. The only good thing that came out of the whole experience was meeting my wife. One day, a short while after I started working there, a young girl came in and sat at the bar. She was a plain sort of girl; not like those flashy, sleazy broads who came here and waited for some guy to buy them a drink and take them home. This girl had a sweet way about her. She looked like a real lady. I couldn't help wondering what she was doing in a place like this.

"What do you have, Miss?" I asked.

"Um, I'll have a gin and tonic," she said nervously. She looked around anxiously at the people who wouldn't stop staring at her. One by one they came up to the bar and surrounded her.

"Leave the lady alone!" I said giving them a cold stare. They slowly retreated back to their tables. I put the glass of gin and tonic in front of her.

"Are you waiting for somebody?" I asked slowly.

"Yes, I mean no!" she said uncertainly. She sipped her drink, wrinkling her nose and coughing a little. She made a conscious effort to relax, leaning her back away from the bar and crossing her legs. She swished the drink in one hand and watched the stirrer go round and round. She got up abruptly and headed for the ladies room. After a while she came back and sat at the bar. She was sniffly softly.

"Is there anything I can do, Miss?" I asked.

"No!" she blurted out. Just then she got up and ran out of the place.

"Hey, lady, you forgot your pocketbook!" I yelled, but she was gone. I ran after her and caught up to her a block or so down the street.

"Here's your pocketbook, Miss, you left it on the counter."

I'm so sorry," she sobbed. "What a fool I've been, trying to be someone I'm not."

"Hey, it's no problem," I said, trying to calm her down.

I'm not sure what came over me, but just then I took her into my arms.

"Don't let those creeps at the bar bother you, You're too good for them. A girl like you deserves to be taken out to a really nice place," I reassured her.

"I was just so tired of sitting at home," she said. "I just wanted to go out and meet some people, do something exciting. Now I just want to go home."

"Look, I'll tell you what, I'm off work in fifteen minutes so I'll walk you home then. Just stay here until I get back."

We walked to her small apartment, and she invited me in. Darn if we didn't have the best time. We just talked and watched TV. I went over there a lot from then on. We never really went anywhere, we both enjoyed just sitting at home. Well, as you know, one thing leads to another and after a year and a half we were married. That's one day I'll never regret.

That lady I met at the bar started changing me from day one. She's so contented with life; just letting it flow along. We bought a small house, with a tiny yard and had three kids in four years. We had a lot of bills, but we always seemed to get by, even when I wasn't working. We didn't have many luxuries, but we always had all the necessities, and most importantly we had each other.

Reminiscing sure can make time go by quickly, already I was at the gates of the country club. I drove past the gates and up the long hilly drive leading to the clubhouse. I parked my car in a prominent position, and walked through the grand entrance of the clubhouse. I entered the main dining room and went to my usual position behind the bar.

Tonight was goind to be a long one. The busboys and waitresses were busy setting the tables in the adjoining dining rooms. I wiped the glasses, making sure they were spotless, checked the ice supply and unlocked the liquor cabinet.

The members all started arriving around seven o'clock. They all looked very classy. Across the room I spotted Doctor Feldman, one of the best doctors in the country, and his exy young wife. They both seemed a bit distant. You could see something wasn't right between them. After a few minutes, he came up to the bar.

"Doctor Feldman, it's so good to see you, what'll you have?"

"The usual, John, and a Bloody Mary for the lady," he said with an obvious odor of alcohol on his breath.

"I haven't seen your around lately," I said.

"We've been having some troubles, John, that's why we haven't been around. I finally talked her into coming here with me instead of staying at home. She's been quite upset. I

did something stupid, and now she can't forgive me. It's partly her fault, too. She just doesn't understand men." Dr. Feldman leaned over the bar and looked around to see if anyone was listening before he continued whispering, "You see, whenever my wife wants something, whatever it may be, she, uh, withholds herself if you know what I mean. Here I am, a middle-aged man, with a lot of life left in him. So, for the past few months I've been taking a little drive down to South Street every now and then. I guess she had to find out sooner or later, but I really didn't think she'd react so vehemently. She's afraid I've contracted all kinds of diseases, even though I told her I made sure the girls were all clean beforehand. She keeps saying, "How could you, a man a medicine, associate with that kind of cankerous street trash?" I don't know why she can't understand. Ever since she found out, she just sits at home. She says she doesn't want to be seen with me, but I don't think it's entirely my fault. What do you think?" He asked.

"Doctor, if I were you, I would try to talk it out. Let her know how you feel. Keep pushing for her to talk, eventually she will. And most of all, let her know she's important to you. That's the best way I can see to settle the problem." I explained as I handed him his drinks.

"Thanks," he said, "I just needed to talk to someone."

"Yeah," I said, "everybody's go to talk to somebody. Listening is probably the most important part of my job." As he walked away, I thought of my wife.

I'm glad she has never acted like that. She never uses sex as a tool to get what she wants. Come to think of it, she doesn't want too much, no fancy clothes or jewelry or anything like that. She just likes to take walks and wants me to make sure I spend time with her and the kids. Thank God my wife doesn't expect me to be perfect. Bartenders are just supposed to be flawed human beings like everyone else.

As I looked around the room, I noticed Mr. Gross and Dr. Kramer meeting at the edge of the bar. I recognized them as two of the bigwigs here at the club. Their parents have been members for years, so they both practically grew up here. Now they were both on the club's executive board. Dr. Kramer spoke first.

"Hello, Jack, I'm surprised you're not in Canada."

"Well I'm usually up there this time of the year, Al, but I could only afford to go up for three weeks this year. I can't leave the business any longer than that.

"That's too bad, hey, I wanted to thank you for telling me about Rob. He's a financial wizard. He really knows how to utilize loopholes in the tax laws. I hardly paid a cent in taxes this year." said Mr. Gross.

"I say this, Al, let the other guy pay the taxes; he can't get out of them like we can."

"I don't know about you, but I'm tired of having our tax money go to those welfare recipients who just don't want to work. At least we work for our money."

"The world's full of dishonest people, so you have to take advantage of them before they can take advantage of you.

"You know, Al, there are a thousand small guys out there, wishing they had what we have, and the only way to keep them from getting it is to be one step ahead of them at all times. Money is a responsibility, and part of that responsibility is making sure you have the guts to keep it. A lot of blood and sweat went into making that money, the least I can do is to have the wits to keep it from being taxed away by those damned bleeding heart democrats."

As they continued, I thought, it's funny but I really used to envy people with money, but now I don't. They can never fully trust anyone. I didn't have to make enemies to be where I am; besides, who needs the bother? In many ways money is a burden I'd rather not bear.

I watched the dancing couples and wondered, do they really have it so good? I used to think so, but they don't seem to be happier than anyone else. Sure, everyone has problems, but money doesn't seem to help solve them like they thought it would; as a matter of fact it seems to just get in the way. Marriages break up, people grow old and life gets really lonely even if you have money. Sure these people always get dressed up and go

to classy places. They have the best cars, homes and they get the best service wherever they go. But as soon as they start drinking all that ugliness comes out. Not that they're all unhappy; some of them really have their act together; it's just that money doesn't seem to have anything to do with true happiness.

Frank's having to leave the country club isn't really so horrible. After all, he has plenty to eat, a nice car and a warm place to sleep. What does he need the club for? As far as I can see, he only wants to belong because it's the upper class thing to do. I'm sure he could easily afford one of the cheaper clubs, but then he couldn't rub shoulders with the richest men in the city.

Come to think of it, my Corvette is the same kind of thing. I really don't need it. I can hardly afford to pay for it, and the only reason I keep it is to hold onto that senseless dream. You know, my wife was right, I would be better off selling it and buying a station wagon. I'll never be one of those classy people, so why should I try to act like one?

It really makes me wonder how I got so damned lucky. I've got a wonderful wife, great kids and a decent, steady job. I can look back over the years and say that I have really been happy. Not everybody can do that.

The party lasted several more hours, until finally everyone went home. I wiped the last glass and set it upsidewind on the counter, took off my tuxedo and walked through the darkened room and past the tables now stripped of their elegance. I said goodnight to the parking attendants who were waiting for the last few cars to leave. I felt a growing excitement to tell my wife of my decision. I drove down the dark, empty streets and entered our driveway. I went in the house and quietly crept into the bedroom. I saw my wife lying there fast asleep under the covers. I turned off the small light that she keeps on for me when I work nights. I touched her shoulder lightly to waken her, and I whispered softly in her ear.

"I just couldn't wait to tell you, I've decided to sell the car."

*Mark Wingel*

## TIME

Wild geese fly from the cold,  
The wind blows and summer grows old.  
I must learn to be content  
With dreary days and winter's lament.

*Shirley Brynan*

Small, Silent creatures  
consuming the serenity  
of a stormy summer evening.  
Creeping lowly to the ground,  
the creatures steal into cracks  
and crevices in the  
watered ground and musty wood.  
Little by little the creatures  
construct caskets of decaying  
nature and man's debris.  
Soon,  
the creatures crawl into their  
tailored caskets and say  
goodbye  
as the ending season  
snaps  
out their lights.

*Shannon Emery*





## Appréciation de la vie: Ode à l'imitation de Ronsard

*Lés étudiants qui s'inquiètent  
Des notes et de leurs ceasses  
Toujours ont du regret  
Pour la jeunesse qui se passe.*

*Ils pensent aux temps quand toutes les choses  
Était tranquiles et calmes,  
Mais comme la beauté de la rose,  
La jeunesse meurt et laisse les âmes.*

*Quand les problèmes d'amour  
Passent aujourd'hui,  
Les examens et les devoirs  
Rendent difficile ta vie,*

*À la jeunesse tu penses  
Quand la vie était simple et vraie.  
Mais dans quelques ans,  
Tu penseras aux bons jours de l'université.*

Karen Dalzell

### **Mon Seigneur, Mon Ami**

*Longtemps passé tu m'as choisie, sauvée j'étais.  
Surtout pour ton amour, que je te remercie,  
Car tendrement pour moi tu m'as donne ta vie.  
Je me promène seule mais ne le suis jamais.*

*Dans notre monde il y aura des temps mauvais.  
Si humain, imparfait, je suis ta chère amie,  
Utilize-moi pour ta gloire je t'en prie.  
C'est là où je veux t'aider avec c' que je fais.*

*Je suis ta bonne enfant pour la plupart des cas,  
Parfois je fais des fautes -- mais ne me punis pas  
Mais mille pardons et ouvre-moi grand tes bras.*

*C'est à moi (qui ne le mérite) que t'as donné  
En plus c'est moi qui t'ai si peu recompense  
Ma vie cassée j'ai donnee, tu l'as réparée.*

Christi Lynne

## In Gratitude

I walk the halls alone,  
Accompanied only by the hollow echo of my footsteps.  
Doors are closed to empty rooms,  
Out the window is a world, milling and churning,  
Yet full of nothingness, vast and barren,  
Now that you are gone.

And I am afraid.

All that is left me is a memory.  
But be that memory so great,  
If saved and nurtured, it will give me life.  
Walls will come crumbling down,  
Doors will be forced ajar,  
And sound will flood the earth.  
I will know that you are with me.

Unafraid I will venture forth.

And I, in turn,  
Will give you life,  
In me.  
And each person that I touch, you will touch,  
So that all may share your life  
And know your love.  
I will make you eternal.

*B. M. Cosh*

## Cathedral

HERE, in silence sit

And watch

And wait

And pray

While tongues of flame flicker forgetting

The passionate breath which lit them

Here, so still

STRIKE

And break the burden-blocks

Above

Behind

Within

And in rending

Mend.

*C. E. H.*

## CHILD

Child,

They've rented me to mind you, but I don't.  
I don't mind you in the least;  
in fact, I should be paying them,  
just as I would pay to behold any work of art.  
You transfix me as the Impressionists do.

Child,

Your usual aura of calmness soothes me.  
The rocking chair my mantra,  
nirvana is close at hand.  
Perhaps you radiate some sort of cosmic Valium;  
so addictive, I am a mere junkie.

Child,

I envy your innocence - you know little but love;  
your largest problem being near-perpetual dampness.  
They say you dream, but of what?  
Do you laugh as you did when you sprayed me with  
warm globs of rice cereal?  
Do you smile as you did when I smoothed powder  
on your orientally-petite feet?  
You must; you know no nightmares.

Child,

I pity you.  
For when realization inevitably touches you,  
all of these, your virtues, will be gone  
And I will call you Child no longer.

*S. J. Galle*

## Grow Old With Me

Grow old with me; it's not a sad thought.  
We'll have years in which to share memories  
that can't be bought.  
Our youth and spirit will send our souls  
through the clouds soaring high,  
Descending again to find us embraced wherever  
we may lie.  
Holding hands we'll drench ourselves in the  
warm rays pounding on the beach.  
At night we'll gaze at the moon and sparkling  
stars so far from our reach.  
If we should create images to honor our  
youth we'll have lots of love to spare.  
As they grow we'll teach them that happiness  
lies in knowing that life was meant to share.  
And when they are gone, we'll view the warm,  
rich colors of the fall from our porch where  
we rock.  
The memories we treasure from life's changing  
seasons make us smile as our hands  
gently lock.  
The things we did and the reflections of our youth  
will live on forever,  
And only because we decided to share our lives  
and grow old together.

*Anonymous*

## To Keep the Land

Grandfather was a tall, thin man,  
Living by the sea,  
Working on a wall,  
To keep the water back.  
And he, as dependable as the waves,  
Each day on the beach,  
Mixing the sand, pebbles and cement,  
Pouring in a form  
Did keep the land  
away from the sea.

Playing in the sand  
Making castles,  
Or just feeling the coolness of water on my feet.  
Watching the trees get smaller  
As I got taller  
And walking along the wall--  
Strong and patient  
Like the man who made it.

But--like all the old sailors say  
The sea will take the land . . .  
Here the tall thin man is laid as ash.  
The form is broken and  
The wall stands no longer strong  
And after me there will only be  
The sea.

*Stephen C. Arnold*

# Lesetta

High up the mountain upon a jutting cliff, the great house stood overlooking the thin pass below. Over the years the house had grown so massive that the entire cliffhead was covered and it began to taper up the mountainside. Perhaps this camouflage of stone blocks over the cliff had been intentional for the house had been built long, long ago as a fortress to hold the pass against northern invasion. A watch was still traditionally kept upon the highest point, but the sentry usually kept an eye out to the western horizon for unrest in the Warring Duchies or watched the frozen North for a Wanderer who might come to trade and thaw his bones or the sentry slept. Danger was not in the North.

Lesetta stood almost on tiptoe, looking out over the window ledge. Her toes curled and uncurled in the cold drafts gusting through the ancient fortress, yet she never noticed them. Her gaze was riveted far, far up into the dazzling blue sky where gleaming, snowcovered peaks pierced the bright blueness here and there. It was the playground of the silver eagles, and Lesetta never tired of watching them or feeling their hot passions pass through her mind.

She was the middle child of five and the murmuring of thoughts from her siblings' minds had been present from the very beginning as they unconsciously broadcast into the channel until they grew older and learned control. Only those of the same genetic background-- full siblings-- have similar enough mind-patterns to be understood directly by each other and even then one sibling must think directly to the other. Only in the most powerful witches, the Lords of the country, was this talent commonplace.

Yet as they grew older, the murmur of their minds still rang in Lesetta's thoughts, another sign of the decline of this forgotten branch of the Lords of Oscorn. Therefore it was with little or no alarm that Lesetta began to feel the rustle of animal minds and complete understanding of that rustle in her own mind. Unconsciously, it had started when she was younger--a thread of birdsong suddenly became understandable as the boasting about a territory--then as she grew older she could either understand or not by force of will. However, the others in the fortress found this talent quite unsettling.

Lesetta's father walked down the hall, a weak, nervous, undersized man, easily frightened by shadows and that which he did not understand. He saw his middle daughter gazing outside with rapt attention and shuddered as he heard the piercing cries of the fierce silver eagles and saw her eyes flash with understanding. More nervous than ever, he tiptoed past her, then quickly on. She was his daughter, there was little doubt of it, but she scared him more surely than anything else. There was nothing fearsome or different in her appearance from his other children: Lesetta as were they, was small, pale with light brown hair and grey eyes. It was her Talent. Her father knew himself for what he was: a man with magic as weak as his character. There were knights said to have more magic than this thin-blooded lord of Oscorn. His second cousin, his wife, he knew to have as little. Their children had reflected this general decline in the isolated fortress, except Lesetta. Her Talent, the ability to understand and communicate with any and all forms of animal life at will was one of the most powerful and rare of all Talents among witches. Usually it was found in only the most powerful of the powerful---the immediate family of the Lord of the province itself. Even there it was so rare that history had never recorded more than two of such witches living at the same time. The Talent could disappear for centuries, then just as suddenly appear again. No one of the Lord's families could claim it was common to their line; it ran among them all as equally and rarely. And at this time no one in the fortress knew of any witch with this powerful, coveted Talent except Lesetta. "Why me? Why us?" thought her father continually. And because he knew not why, he feared greatly.

"Setta, come play," said a small cousin who had peeped around the corridor. There was a sharp, piercing scream. An eagle had found its prey. Lesetta watched, heard and felt the thick pulse of power, passion, and hunger of the great bird and was oblivious to all else.

"Setta!" wailed the little girl.

"Hush!" said her brother, dragging her away. "She's listening to the eagles again. Who knows what she shall do if disturbed! Maybe she will set them upon you." He screwed up his face and made talons of his fingers. "They will come flying in the window and attack!" He made a grab for his sister with a talon. She screamed and darted down the corridor she had come. "You can't run away from me!" he yelled. "I shall fly after you and tear you to shreds! Amlar says this happens if the silver eagles are incensed." He smiled at the word he had only just learned, then shivered. Lesetta was still staring, oblivious to all. "Brrrrrrr, must she stare at them so? Lesetta, if you don't wish to practice with us, you can just sit indoors while we play outside." He left and Lesetta never knew he had been there. The eagle was ripping into its kill and its fierce joy in the hot raw meat filled Lesetta's senses.

The mountains of Oscorn were rumored to be almost vertical and sharp enough to slice flesh. This was more truth than fiction. With the decrease of magical ability there had been a great increase in progeny, however, the old belief of Lords that talented children were an asset prevailed. No child was permitted to leave the fortress until a complicated test of balance and flexibility was passed. The test was assembled in the dungeon and was available for practice at any time. Most children passed by about age six.

Lesetta passed and in the spring of the next year was taken outside with the others for the first time. The others quickly clamored around the steep mountainside with their older relatives close behind to steady them and make sure they didn't get lost. She did not run after the others, but tilted her head back and looked up into the bright blue sky to the peaks of the mountains and strained for sight or sound of the eagles. The sky was empty. Lesetta dropped her gaze in disappointment and trailed after the others. She had been so sure that on one of the high peaks just hidden from sight inside the fortress was a nest of silver eagles.

She did not see the eagles at all that day, but one of her relatives found a tail feather lying on a high sunwarmed outcropping of rock and brought it to her. It was long and rounded and perfect and glittered in the sunlight as did the metal which gave the eagles their name. Laid beside one fashioned from silver, no eye could have distinguished a difference in the two feathers. Lesetta took it back inside the fortress with her and laid it on her wooden chest beneath the high slitted window that the sun might glitter on it.

Days went by and Lesetta learned well the outdoor life, but there was no sign of the silver eagles. Then one day while in the fortress a flash from outside the window caught her eye. She raced to the window just as the eagle began to rise toward the sun. Its mate rose from the opposite direction and together they began to circle over the cliffs. Excitedly, Lesetta threw her mind wide open. The raw power of the eagles filled her completely. Oh, better to live high and free, to be great and powerful in vast sunlit places than to be small and weak, overshadowed by older relatives and cold, gloomy corridors. She could see freedom straight up above her and feel it running through her fingers in the wind but though her mind could soar with the eagles, her feet were rooted in solid, shadowy stone.

"Lesetta! Where are you, child?" Giltra, the old aunt who taught the children their lessons in decorum came puffing down the hall. "What are you doing, staring out those windows like that when there's work to be done?" "Oh!" she squawked, catching sight of the eagles' ascent. "Come away from there immediately!" she said, grabbing Lesetta's arm and dragging her down the hall. "Nasty, vicious things those birds, tear you apart as soon as look at you, they will. My son lost the use of his arm defending the sheep against one of them. All was quiet, he said not a sound anywhere. Then out of the blue came one of those awful things, fancying a bit of lamb, I suppose . . ." So Lesetta went to her lessons.

Siltra had been to Stokad and learned manners there. Now she taught them to the children so that when they went to the capitol they could not disgrace the family. No one had gone to Stokad for many years and Lesetta doubted that she would ever get there, either. It was much more fun to dream about the silver eagles than to listen to long, complicated rules, so she dreamed. She often wondered if there was some way to communicate with the eagles. Perhaps she could fly with them and break free of earth! She



could communicate with them mentally as with her brothers and sisters, but they were so far away they would not know where such alien mental invasion originated. She doubted she could guide them from the onset. Yet just how could it be done?

"In Stokad, among the politest society of which we are a part, when a member of one family wishes to make the acquaintance of members of another family, one goes to the house of the family in question and presents a card with one's name, family, and rank. If the other family is interested in the alliance, one is asked to make a personal introduction. Face to face contact is always very important in a first meeting. It allows people to realize exactly who the other is. Thus embarrassing mistakes are eliminated. The correct and polite process is as follows . . ." Giltra's voice droned on.

Lesetta heard no more. To make proper contact with the silver eagles, she must personally introduce herself. Her child's mind drew no difference between meeting the member of a different family in Stokad and a member of the silver eagle family. Of the two, the eagles seemed much more real. When Giltra released the children, Lesetta trotted off to make her calling card.

A few days later, Lesetta stood at the edge of a cliff looking at the rope bridge that connected it to the next mountain. It had not been so difficult to find the silver eagle's aerie after all. She had found her oldest brother practicing with his slingshot before returning to the sheep meadow and had asked him. And he had told her. It was that simple. She reminded herself rather strongly that she had never fallen off the rope bridge in the dungeon. However, there had been so tremendous a drop below her toes. She concentrated on the ropes, ignored the deep chasm as well she could and she was across.

The sheer sides of the other mountain rose above her, but she was too young, too sure of her climbing ability, and the mountain looked too solid after the airy rope bridge to consider the possibility of falling off the mountainside. She climbed up and around and did not look down.

Slowly and painfully, Lesetta pulled herself over an outcropping of rock and collapsed on the ledge. The sun was high in the sky, but the wind blew chill. It was cold. Every inch of her skin seemed scraped raw. She groaned. Suddenly, above her head came a frightened squawk. She looked up and saw an ugly scrawny bird with an oversized beak shrieking at her from a tangle of branches and leaves. Lesetta had found the aerie.

Lesetta reached for her calling card when up over the rocks in a brilliant flash came the anxious parent to calm its chick, One glance at Lesetta and . . .

Trespasser! Danger! Outrage! Attack! They flew like a flood into Lesetta's open mind. With a wild cry, the silver eagle launched itself into the air. NO! screamed Lesetta's thought as it resounded in two minds, but the eagle did not comprehend and was driven to greater fury. It did not connect the figure before it with the noise that exploded in its head. It knew only intrusion and its response was attack.

Dampen, dampen, cried instinct within her as she saw the talons and claws driving towards hers. Assert yourself! Yet she could not think with those cruel claws coming ever closer and the great emotions of the eagle pouring through her at such close range and her own thoughts so tangled in them that she was overwhelmed and could not sort herself out from the silver eagle. The claws raked her and she screamed with pain aloud and in two minds which only confused and maddened the eagle still more . . .

Kratar settled back in the comfortable pile of pillows that had gradually accumulated in the high, cramped watchtower. A few seedlings shyly pushed their way out of the pots in the corner. Kratar snorted at them and uncorked the wine bottle. His wife would have windowboxes hanging all around the watchtower if Amlar had not put his foot down and insisted it looked unprofessional in a fortress. Not all her pleas of the benefits of improved sunlight had persuaded him for which Kratar was glad. Some tradition must be kept and the pride of guarding an almost forgotten friendly pass was almost all that was left in the decline of this far-flung, forgotten branch of the Lords of Oscorn.

In the days of his youth it had not been so, he thought, but then a flash of silver caught his

eye. Eagerly, he grabbed his slingshot, hoping to avenge lost sheep and remove boredom. The eagle was hovering on the sheer side of the mountain peak before him, poised to strike something small and red huddled on a small ledge. Kratar's eyes were nearly as good as the eagles. He focused and gave a sharp cry. A small child lay unconscious on the ledge, blood pouring from its throat and shoulder and over its body onto the rocks below. The eagle hovered above, screaming shrilly and ready to attack, but confused. Kratar aimed a stone at it, more a symbolic act of defiance than aid for the slingshot had not the range, then pulled the rope on the rusty alarm bell that had not sounded for years.

"Serna, will she live?" Amlar walked over to a small cabinet, unlocked it, and brought out a small decanter filled with a liquid as crystal clear as spring water from the mountain. Serna watched with alarm, but he took only one quick swallow and replaced the decanter. The Northern Wanderers distilled them from the arch moss to keep them warm in winter. There was no liquor so potent.

"For now, yes, unless infection sets in. The talons of the silver eagles are as sharp as Rayna's knives, but they are not as clean. She has lost much blood, perhaps too much, but the flow is stanching. The artery is visible, but whole, praise St. Wina. She is scarred for life, Amlar."

Amlar dismissed her concern with a wave of his hand. "A lace collar will solve that. When she recovers, I am sending her to the family in Stokad."

Serna turned pale and clutched the back of the chair. "Amlar, do you know what you are doing?"

"Aye, I know exactly what I am doing!" he thundered.

"You are sending a little girl to war."

"I am sending her to Stokad, the capitol to be with members of her family who are more talented than her family who are more talented than her family here. She will be trained to use and understand her Talent."

"You know Cosban, for all your disclaiming of correspondence for Lord Oscorn is as yourself--anything to increase the family's honor! It shall happen and you know it, else why your anger? What say her parents to your mad scheme?"

"Her father quakes at his own shadow, let alone a Talent shrouded in flesh and blood, supposedly of his making."

"I attended her birth. The child is theirs."

"Aye, but they fear her still. She is so different from others, all the others and the family knows it. How soon before her talent makes her even more strange? Such power in my house in one so young scares even me! Have you not heard the murmurs and seen glances when she passes? How soon will she be beyond our control? What mayhem can such a Talent unleash? And when? This time she was attacked. How soon before she breaks even their spirit and they do her will? She is fearful to live with."

"You don't know that she can! Men of the Northern Wanderers have died trying to tame eaglets!"

"The Wanderers have no magic. She does, and a rare, helpful one at that. Woman, we tarry too long. She is a menace to my house and a threat to my authority. Let her be sent far away from the eagles, where she is not an oddity and can be controlled. If that means the war, so be it!"

Serna closed her eyes in pain as Amlar stamped out and slammed the door.

So it was, when the year had passed and the spring rains had washed the snows from the mountain passes, a small girl and a graying man were seen riding out of the ancient fortress down the road toward Stokad and still further east, the war. Lesetta knew better than to look back towards the aerie far on the mountain behind her, but tucked away in her skirts was the silver eagle feather from her cousin and around her throat was a fine lace collar, the first of many stitched by Serna. Although she was only seven years old, she would not forget. She was nine when Lord Cosban Oscorn sent her to the front to spend all her growing years in strange, unknown forests at twilight, communicating with deer, falcons,

foxes and moles to gather information for a war neither understood. She rarely saw another's face. As the years went by, she became less like men and more fay. Men saw the strangeness in her eyes and looked the other way. Amlar never sent for her return.

*Dorene M. Pasekoff*

## **No Answer**

A tear fell on a lonely face,  
It's wiped away without a notice.  
The sadness builds and overflows.  
Tears abound and can't we wiped.  
A heart is needed to cure this soul.  
Words are needed to dry the tears.  
Eyes are needed to say someone cares.  
A tear fell on a lonely face,  
Nobody answers.

*S. L. H.*

## The Hunt

The air above is cold and sharp,  
but passive, unthreatening,  
filled with a stillness of perfect silence.

The earth is a palette of gold and brown  
enveloped by a gray colored sky.  
But add a splash of red with a tip of white  
and the picture comes alive.

Man and beast pull tense, upon the hill.  
Then clear sounds the blast of the horn,  
shattering all spells that exist.

Tally Ho! Tally Ho goes the cry  
and with it all motion breaks loose.  
Baying hounds race quickly ahead.  
Hoofbeats thunder across the terrain.

Oh, the flash of red is swift and silent,  
but the pack is close, and is not patient.  
He must be sly! He must be sly!

Cross field and streams,  
He leads them through brambles and bushes,  
Over walls, under fences.  
Still, they are close behind.

Feel the hot breath of hounds excited,  
Smell the sweet smell of horses, lathered,  
And run for the freedom of life.

The tip of white, now weary,  
can no longer sail.  
One last trick to draw upon,  
Then, it's live or die.

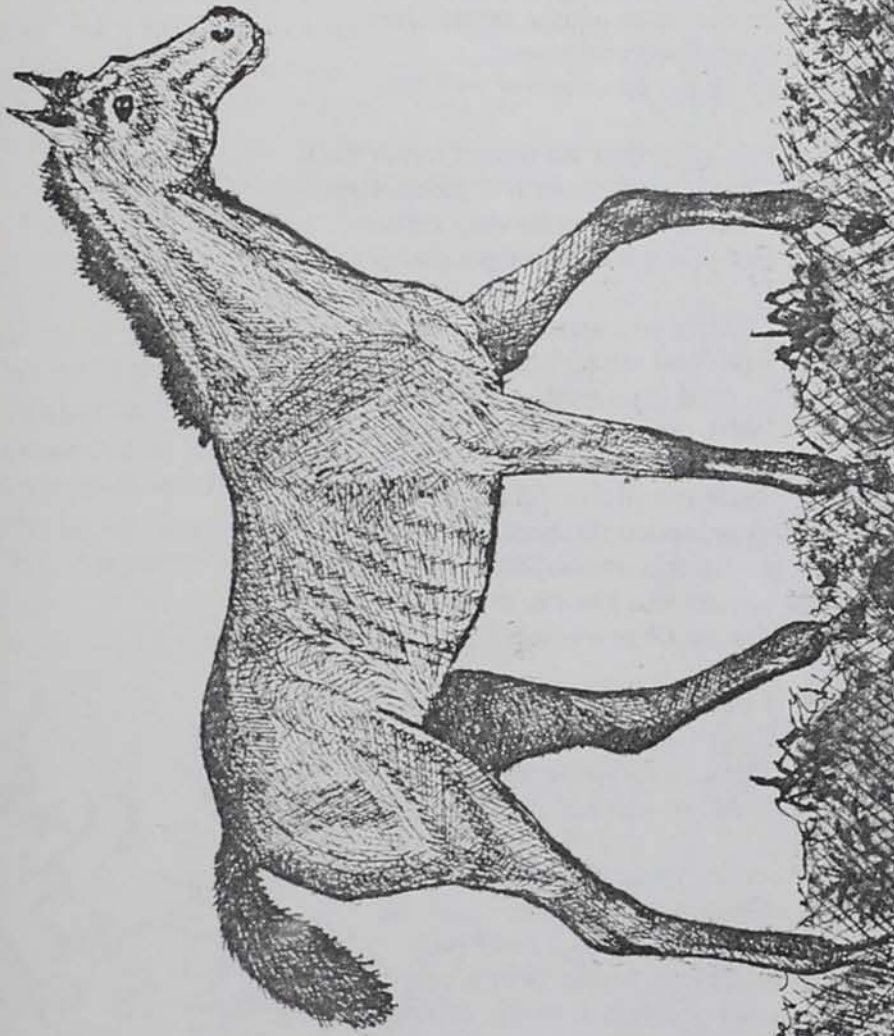
Through the hedge, covering tracks once covered  
Then cross the brook, where tracks are hidden  
From the brook to the thick of the woods.

The pack comes quickly in its pursuit.  
The hounds cross first  
Then the horses, and the men, and the guns.  
But wait! The leader of the pack is gone.

Bewildered dogs sniff in circles.  
Heaving horses hand heads low,  
Hand held to eyes, hunters search the ground.

Alas, another masterpiece by Renard.

*by B. M. Cosh*



## You Came To Me

You came to me alone and unloved,  
Yet I dared to make you mine.  
Against all odds I cared for you —  
I took you into my heart,  
dressed your wounds,  
kindled your spirit.  
In my care you blossomed —  
Like old silver whose tarnish has  
finally been removed.  
You began to shimmer with life.

I thought that we would never part,  
That I need never feel alone again.  
I was so certain, so very sure,  
But you left without goodbye, my friend . . .

So willing you were to follow me,  
And lead when I would not.  
You tried your best, gave your all,  
Were never half-hearted in any attempt.  
You did for me what no other could;  
Took me places I'd never been.  
You achieved my goals,  
surpassed my hopes,  
and let me live my dreams.  
No more of you could I ask.

I thought that we should never part,  
Together till the end.  
But you took me by surprise —  
You left without goodbye, my friend . . .

I couldn't reach you;  
Couldn't touch you;  
Couldn't share your pain.  
I could only stand beside you  
and watch you slowly slip away —  
Till you were only a shadow;  
A fragment of what had once been.  
I did all that could be done,  
Yet you stayed outside the grasp  
Of my panicked heart.  
There were no last goodbyes, just  
You Were, and then You Weren't.

I thought that we could never part,  
On you I could depend.  
I was so certain, so very sure,  
But you left without goodbye, my friend . . .

*Joanne Kohler*

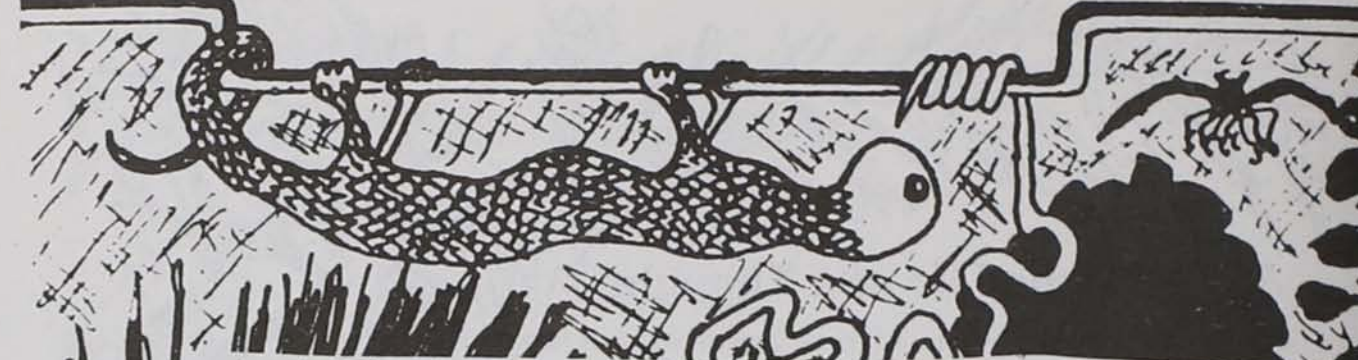


## A Day in the Life of a Thought

I really wish that schools required more geography. It is just too easy to slip into the suburban American bubble and forget about those parts of the world that are a little less than tame. The schools must have gone right somewhere though; I've made it my business to burst the bubble just enough to allow factual imagination to escape.

I have two fears in my life: down escalators and snakes. Modern stores have forced me to face the former, but those snakes are a bit harder to handle. You may ask, "How could you be scared of a little bitty creature like a snake? The thing is probably more frightened of you than you are of it." Wrong. Did you ever see a snake faint? Hell, no! It'll bite you before it has time to get scared. Snakes are too omniscient to be intimidated; most people sense this all-knowingness and know enough to stay away from them. Then there are those of us who try to conquer our fears. Have you ever had an overzealous boa constrictor on your arm? You would have





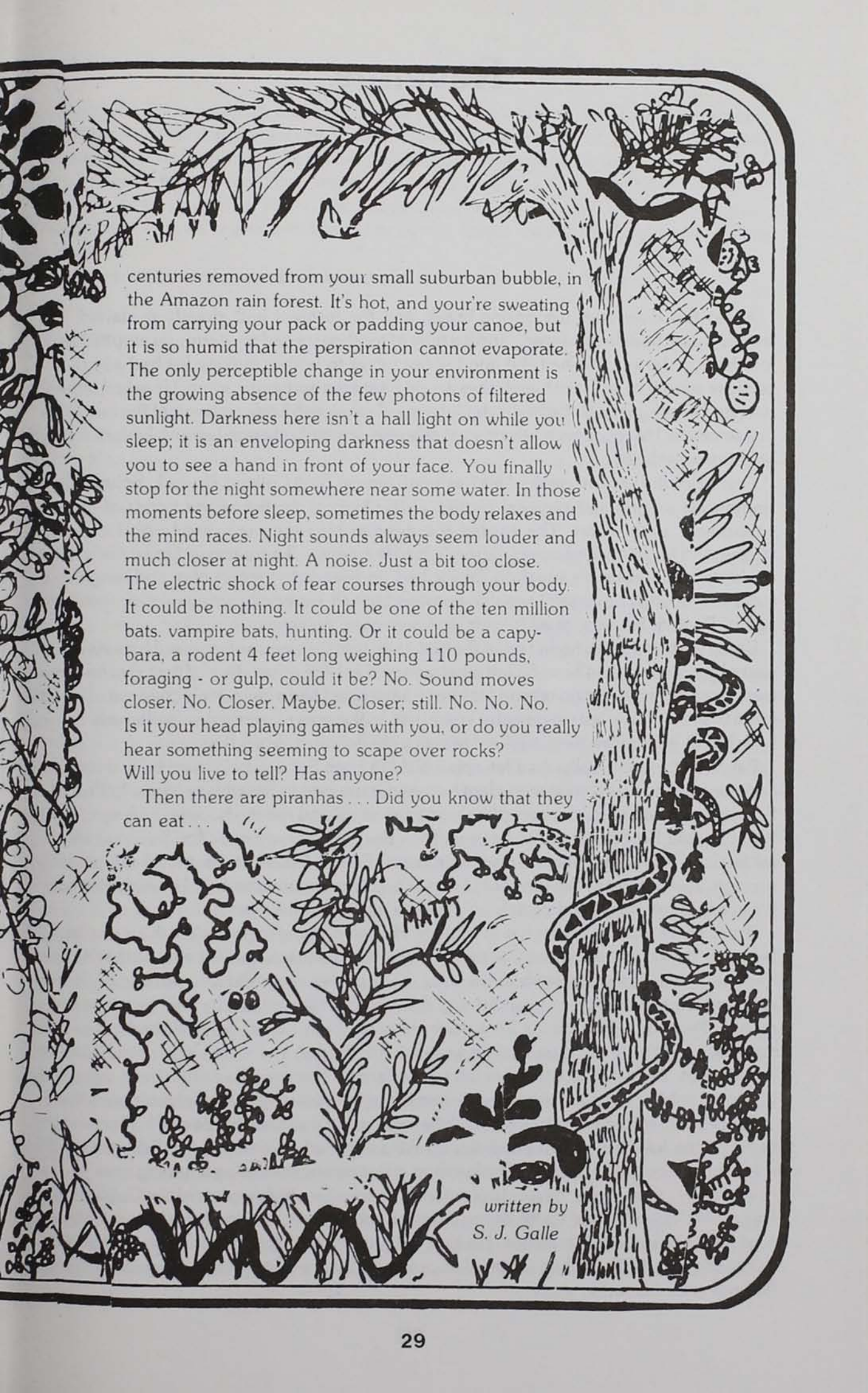
to be a little less than sane not to feel at least a little tingle of fear pass through your body. Even if it were only for a fraction of a second, you realize that maybe the snake has seen through your mask of bravery that your friends think is cool indifference and it is punishing you for your lie. That's only a boa constrictor. Consider the Giant Anaconda; that is a monstrous thing. The largest known is thirty feet long. That is a hell of a lot of reptile. Imagine the length of your bed, and multiply it by five and you have a pretty large snake. But that is far from the end; let's not leave out the thing's home, the Amazon jungle.

Now I don't know anyone who has been there, but I'm sure each of us has caught at least a glimpse of a jungle movie. I used to think that all those enormous trees, plants, and vines were fake, just for "effect" in the movie. Wrong. Those thriving plants and vines are not outrageously overgrown philodendrons, no such luck. They're immense and unbelievably dense. So dense and quick-growing that if a path were left with a machete, the next day there would be no trace of that trail. To say that the humidity is high is a gross understatement. You know how it is when fog looks like pea soup? In the Amazon, it's so humid the pea-soupy fog is humidity; you get wet walking through the air. As an added feature, the temperatures are unbearably high.

Most people don't realize how big this monstrosity really is. Picture the East Coast from the shoreline to the Mississippi River. At the northern-most point in the U.S., somewhere in Maine, imagine the same kind of small village about where Atlanta, Georgia is. These places don't have a McDonald's and a couple of gas stations either; the biggest thrill in these Indians' lives is probably posing for the National Geographic photographers next to their grass and mud huts. Between those two towns, and from the coast to the Mississippi, is steaming, wet, creepy, thick, dark, green, hot jungle and not much else. Those Anacondas live in there. "Well," you say, "They're so big, I would see one before I got too close." Wrong. You lose! The snake's one up on you. It lies in creeks, rivers, and ponds with only its head on the surface, the rest of its body hidden under the water, waiting for prey to happen by. Don't try to kid yourself; they're not like whales; they don't eat plankton. Anacondas enjoy crocodiles; they kill them by getting the crocodile up against a tree on the bank, wrapping itself around both, and squeezing. Hard.

Have you ever been camping, really camping, not any of this Winnabago-Ritz-on-wheels-B.S. I mean really roughing it; backpacking or something close to it. The only way to get into the jungle is by foot or by canoe. Now, with all of this previous information in mind, try to imagine this: here you are, miles and





centuries removed from your small suburban bubble, in the Amazon rain forest. It's hot, and you're sweating from carrying your pack or padding your canoe, but it is so humid that the perspiration cannot evaporate. The only perceptible change in your environment is the growing absence of the few photons of filtered sunlight. Darkness here isn't a hall light on while you sleep; it is an enveloping darkness that doesn't allow you to see a hand in front of your face. You finally stop for the night somewhere near some water. In those moments before sleep, sometimes the body relaxes and the mind races. Night sounds always seem louder and much closer at night. A noise. Just a bit too close. The electric shock of fear courses through your body. It could be nothing. It could be one of the ten million bats, vampire bats, hunting. Or it could be a capybara, a rodent 4 feet long weighing 110 pounds, foraging - or gulp, could it be? No. Sound moves closer. No. Closer. Maybe. Closer; still. No. No. No. Is it your head playing games with you, or do you really hear something seeming to scrape over rocks? Will you live to tell? Has anyone?

Then there are piranhas . . . Did you know that they can eat . . .

written by  
S. J. Galle

# Revenge

It was two days after the Spring break, and the torment had already re-started. His shaving foam had disappeared, and his tube of toothpaste had mysteriously emptied itself into his top drawer. He had the good sense never to bother making his bed any more, because sooner or later the bedclothes would be strewn across the room. He asked himself over and over again why he hadn't had the good sense to transfer schools at the end of his first semester. He could even have stayed at home, or simply changed rooms. Unfortunately he'd done nothing.

Ever since the second week of his freshman year at Bing College, Bruce L. Schmidt had undergone mental and physical torture of the highest degree at the hands of his two sophomore suite mates. They carded the door to his room, tampered with his things, played with his mind, and generally made his life a misery. There seemed to be nothing he could do to improve his situation. Bruce had no friends to protect him, and weighing a mere 130 pounds he certainly couldn't protect himself, especially not against someone the size of Burton. He was, to all intents and purposes, powerless.

Bruce wished that he hadn't cried the first night that they had antagonised him. As an 18 year old freshman in college, he felt that he should act like a man. Even if it was his first time away from home, it was no reason for him to have acted like a child. He'd cried out of anger more than anything, but no-one else knew that. In the eyes of everyone else, it made Bruce L. Schmidt little more than a joke. He was very definitely powerless.

Paul Burton was a bully. As a fat, spoilt child in High School, he'd been bullied himself, and now that he was a college student he was determined to have his revenge. In Bruce L. Schmidt he'd found the perfect prey; someone small and quiet who was unlikely to fight back. Should Bruce turn out to be more than Burton had bargained for, he could always fall back on his room-mate and partner in crime, Franco Vincenza, for moral and physical support. Just so long as Burton could keep Schmidt in the suite, he could start playing back for every taunt, insult and punch he'd had to endure in his youth.

Bruce spent most of his days in the library. He had nothing to go back to the room for, so he was better off where Burton was certain never to go. It was actually a miracle that Burton had made it as far as his sophomore year, because he never did any work at all. Bruce resented Burton's ability to push his way through college and life, backed by his parent's money. Even though he felt a little insecure away from home, Schmidt had never had much of a family life. He didn't get on well with his mother, and hadn't even seen his father in two years. Even before his father left home, family harmony had often been disrupted by his parents' squabbles over money - something of a scarcity in the Schmidt household.

Bruce's father had been an avid modeller and spent a substantial part of his income on construction kits of all shapes and sizes. Like a wizened adolescent, Mr. Schmidt would spend hours locked away in his den building, painting and mounting anything from planes of World War One, to his "piece de resistance," a four foot high replica of the Golden Gate Bridge. Mr. Schmidt had spent seven years on this project, making it entirely out of wire coat hangers and dead matches. He had indignantly left the Schmidt home when Mrs. Schmidt's poodle, Pepe, had urinated all over a freshly painted section of roadway. Bruce had not seen his father since.

April 2nd

*Well, today's my birthday and it looks like I'll be spending another miserable night in the library. One card, two presents. Today I became the world's most spoilt nineteen year old. I guess I'll be the envy of the school. If I get my work done easily tonight, maybe I can read the book mother sent me. Grandma sent me brownies, but I don't suppose I'll eat them all. If I leave them in the room, that fat pig Burton will somehow sniff them out. I should have brought a padlock back after Spring break, and then I could have locked them away.*

*I got my integrated paper back today; the only perfect paper in the class.*

"Happy Birthday, Jerk."

Bruce carried on writing and didn't look up.

"Who's a big boy now, Jerk? Nineteen years old are you? The world's oldest rodent." Burton shouted: "Hey, Vinnie, come and sing happy Birthday to the Jerk."

This time Bruce looked up, and asked Burton if he would leave and let him carry on with his homework.

"Ah, what's the matter? Am I bothering you?" Burton feigned concern as he shook Bruce, causing him to scrawl across the page he was writing.

"Hey, Vincenza, are you coming or not? We didn't sing Happy Birthday yet." Tired of tormenting for the time being, Burton wandered off to find out what exactly his suite-mate was doing. Bruce immediately gathered up his books, locked the door, and fled to the cafeteria where he knew he could study in peace. He always made sure that a window was left slightly open, so that he could slip in after dark and find some solitude. The cafeteria was closed at nine, and it was one place where he was sure not to be bothered. As Bruce left through the door, Burton shouted an obscenity after him, but was too slow to catch his enemy. Bruce hurried on down the steps, and didn't look back.

After a little more than an hour in the cafeteria, Bruce tired of learning anatomy for his Bio-test, and decided he wanted to write. He slipped out of the window and scuttled over towards the playing fields. Fifty yards from the football pitch, he came to the shed that college maintenance kept their tractor and gardening equipment in. He glanced around, saw that no-one was looking, and hoisted himself through another open window. Once his eyes were accustomed to the dark he made his way deftly to the back of the building and opened a cupboard. The shelves were apparently empty, but upon closer scrutiny a plastic bag could be seen in the top left hand corner. Bruce took hold of the bag, and in a moment he had nimbly left by his way of entrance.

Bruce didn't open the bag until he was safely back in the confines of the cafeteria. Once inside, he pulled out a thick exercise book, and perhaps for the first time that day he smiled. Although Bruce Schmidt was a science major he also had a great passion for writing. He liked to write anything: poetry, prose, he'd even tried his hand at playwriting. He was determined that one day he would have work published, hopefully with a certain amount of success.

The chef d'oeuvre of Bruce L. Schmidt was a novel he'd started six months previously. As a student in high school, Bruce had been an avid reader of J. R. R. Tolkien, and before he graduated from college he was determined to develop a world (or rather a universe) of his own, with characters every bit as intriguing as those of Middle Earth. Bruce's loyalties lay firmly entrenched between the realms of science fiction and Tolkien-like fantasy, two genres in which he was very well read. His familiarity with Asimov, Huxley and Orwell was matched only by his keen and deep grasp of scientific theories. The latter were already turning him in to an outstanding university scholar, and he hoped that the former would motivate him to be a successful writer.

By the time Bruce felt the urge to sleep overcoming his urge to write, it was 2:15 A.M. He climbed back out of the window, and after dropping his book off at its hiding place, made his way across to his room on the other side of the campus. By this time there would be no one to bother him when he got back. His room-mate had moved in permanently with his girlfriend a week after school began, and Burton and Vincenza rarely stayed up after one o'clock. Upon reaching the dorm, he climbed the stairs wearily, and fumbled for his keys once he reached the top. Once he was in the suite, he opened the door to his room, and fumbled for the light-switch. Before he found it he was hit hard from behind. Bruce gasped sharply as he was thrown to the ground, and 210 pounds of Paul Burton landed heavily upon him.

"It's not your birthday anymore, Weasel, but we thought we'd give you a present anyway."

Vincenza poured root beer onto Bruce's head, soaking his hair and face.

"Drink it, Jerk, we bought it especially for you."

Bruce choked as the beverage rushed down his throat, just as he tried to breathe in. He was powerless with all of Burton's fat bulk perched on his chest, so he just lay there, hoping that his friends would soon tire of birthday presents.

Finally after what seemed like an eternity of alternating pain and numbness in Bruce's chest, Burton stood up, and gave him a half hearted kick. Vincenza sniggered. The two turned and started for the door, but just before leaving Burton turned back and stared at Bruce lying prostrate on the floor.

"Don't people say 'thank you' where you come from," questioned Burton.

Bruce thanked him, feebly.

"Oh, and by the way. Thank you for the brownies, loser. G'night."

#### April 5th

*I'm sick of this place and the treatment I get. If only something could be done about it. The trouble is, Burton's too big for me to fight, and even if I could hurt him in some way he's bound to pay me back. Why can't they let me lead my own life. I bother no-one, so why do they have to bother me, it's not fair.*

*Perhaps I could get him back tomorrow when he goes to church--he might never know it was me. Going to church - that's a joke. How he can justify going to church when he behaves the way he does is beyond me. Then again, most of the hypocrites in this place are like that. They behave like obnoxious creeps all week, but so long as they give up half an hour of their Sunday, they think they'll be alright. Burton is only one of many, when I think about it.*

*Burton! I'll have to do something about him soon, because the longer I leave it, the less likely I am to act. Who am I trying to fool? There's no way I'll ever get even.*

"Jones?"

Jones raised his hand, took his paper, and a smile broke out on his face. He'd passed!

"Wilson?"

The paper was passed back, and Wilson just gazed skywards.

"Burton?"

Paul was not very optimistic. He was one of the few students to have the dubious distinction of having failed freshman composition in his first year at college.

"When are you going to think about what you write, Paul? See me after class please, we have to discuss your future as an author."

A scowl broke out on Burton's acne-covered forehead. At the same time it almost appeared that a smile appeared momentarily on the face of Bruce L. Schmidt. Burton scowled again.

"Schmidt?"

Bruce hesitantly raised his hand.

"Don't be shy, Bruce. This is a paper to be proud of. You really do have talent."

Bruce blushed.

"Yeah, he also has a talent for being a wimp," muttered Burton. The students laughed, and all looked at Bruce who turned an even deeper shade of red. The professor admonished Burton with a hard stare, but said nothing.

After the class Burton made an immediate bee-line for Bruce, but was stopped in mid-flight by Professor Stanley.

"Let's get this out of the way, Paul. There are a few things I want to talk over with you before my next class.

Bruce saw his chance, and dashed from the classroom to the relative safety of the campus outside.

Ever since the night before, Bruce had been giving his plan to stand up to Burton a lot of thought. There was no-one he could turn to so he had decided to go through with it himself. The risk of Burton's retaliating violently was immense but it was a chance he felt he had to take. The very thought of fighting made him feel a little sick, but the possibility of preventing this torture he was going through also made him tremble with anticipation. He decided to attack Burton when he was at his most defenseless, when he was asleep. If he could hit him just a few times on the nose, perhaps Burton would become the coward he very obviously was around everyone else in the school. The most propitious moment would be the early morning, preferably on a Saturday. That would mean two important factors were on Bruce's side: Burton would probably be hung over from the night before, and Bruce could then disappear for the rest of the weekend. If things looked really bad, he could always take a few days off, pretending to be sick. He reflected once more over his plan. Hopefully this would be the answer to his problems. If not . . . Bruce swallowed hard, and began to tremble again.

#### April 7th

*Mother called last night, she wants me to go home for the weekend. She said I could take the 9 o'clock bus on Saturday morning, and that Arthur could bring me back. It's hard to imagine my mother having a boyfriend, but I guess that's what you'd have to call Arthur. I suppose he means well, but let's just hope they don't get married. I'd rather have Dad bring his bride back than have Arthur move in.*

*If I'm going home, I guess Saturday would be the best time to put my plan into operation. I'm scared just thinking about it, but I have to go through with it. I can't stand things the way they are much longer; it's affecting my nerves, my studies, and everything else. I just hope I'm doing the right thing.*

The week passed fairly uneventfully. Bruce spent little or no time in his room in order to avoid Burton, although a nasty confrontation on Thursday night was only avoided when the R.A. came with a letter for Vincenza. To Bruce's delight, the letter meant that his suite-mate would be going home on Friday night, so Burton would be alone in the room on Saturday morning. Bruce felt that if he and Burton were the only ones aware of what happened, his suite mate would be less inclined to want to revenge himself than if everyone knew. He knew in his mind that it was a forlorn hope.

Friday came quickly for Bruce, but once it arrived the day seemed to drag endlessly on. Slowly but surely, the tension in Bruce mounted as night drew nearer. He had little appetite at meal times, and was even indifferent to the fact that he received the top grade on his Physics quiz - a class in which he was the only freshman student. In the hope of being able to relax a little, Bruce went to watch the film showing in the student union, before turning to his homework at around 9 o'clock. Since there was bound to be a party on somewhere in the dormitory, Bruce took up his favorite spot in the cafeteria.

By midnight Bruce was restless and unable to concentrate. He decided to return to his room and pack his bags for the weekend. When he got back, the light was on in Burton's room, so he made as little noise as possible. He could hear voices; one of them was unmistakably Burton's, but the other was female. Bruce Schmidt shuddered as he tried to imagine what sort of girl would visit his overweight, acne-infested suite-mate.

Bruce crept into his room and closed the door softly behind him. He switched on his bedside lamp in the hope that an absence of noticeable light would keep away any unwelcome visitors, but to his dismay the door opened almost immediately. In walked Burton, smelling strongly of beer, and accompanied by a rather homely looking girl.

"Hiya, Bruce, howwa ya doin'?" asked his suite-mate in a patronising fashion. Bruce eyed him suspiciously.

"Brucie, I want ya to meet Alice; she's in our English Composition class."

Bruce then realized that he recognized the girl, even though he'd never spoken to her before.

"Hi, Bruce, very pleased to meet you."

Bruce said that he too was pleased to meet her, and then started to pack his holdall in the hope that they would leave.

"I was just tellin' Alice that you could help her with her bibliography for the paper we have to write." Burton turned and stared at Alice with a stupid grin on his face. "Me 'n' Bruce is always helpin' each other out with homework 'nd things. Ya know, Alice, he's a great guy, and he's pretty smart too."

Bruce stared coldly at the inebriated bulk, swaying before him. He despised this hypocritical game Burton was intent on playing just in order to impress this girl.

"Of course, a lot of kids roun' here, would pick on Bruce if it wasn't for me. It's 'cause he's so small, ya know." Burton sniggered and let out a loud belch.

"Oh, Paul." Alice stared at him in disbelief. "Don't be so disgusting."

"Aw, I'm sorry, Alice. It just slipped out. Anyway, you should hear the ones Bruce does, they're even worse." Burton sniggered again, and Bruce just kept on packing. A painful silence followed, until Alice nervously coughed and questioned Bruce.

"So do you think you could help me, Bruce? I'd be ever so grateful because . . . well, you see . . ." Alice trailed off nervously until Bruce looked up at her reassuringly. "Well, Bruce, it's all so very complicated."

She looked relieved when Bruce said that he'd be more than pleased to help her, and offered her a seat. He still refused to acknowledge the presence of the drunken Burton.

Bruce then spent the next half an hour trying to explain the rather simple process of writing a bibliography to the rather scatter-brained Alice. Burton stood there the whole time, saying nothing, but belching loudly every now and then just to remind them of his presence. At around 12:45 A.M., Alice tired of English composition and said she should be going home.

"You see, Bruce, I do have to be up early tomorrow . . . and well . . . oh, I'm sure you understand. But anyway, Bruce, thanks ever so much . . . er, for your help and all. I must say . . ." She trailed off again and Bruce wondered how she was going to make it through college with such a poor level of concentration, and without a pretty face.

"Well, what I mean is, thank you for explaining it to me. It's much clearer in my mind now."

Bruce wondered just how much of a mind she had, but then regretted thinking it, because she was actually quite a nice girl. He told her she was very welcome, and that he'd willingly help her anytime she had a problem.

"Do ya wanna stop for one more drink, Alice," questioned Burton hopefully. Alice declined, adding that she'd told him already she didn't approve of drinking. Burton didn't say anything at the end of the lecture. He just belched.

"Well, Paul, are you going to walk me back to my room now?" Alice seemed to speak with confidence and authority when it came to being bossy.

"Aw c'mon Alice, it's late, 'nd I'm tired." Burton looked horrified. "You don't have far to go y'know."

Alice didn't answer, but glowered at him.

At this point, Bruce pointed out that since he was going for a walk anyway, he could easily see Alice home if Paul was tired.

This time it was Burton who glowered.

"Hey, I was only kidding. I'll be pleased to walk ya home. I'm not tired really, ya know."

Alice turned, said good night to Bruce and walked out. As Burton turned to follow her, he kicked Bruce sharply in the shins.

"Stay away from her, weasel. She's mine, d'ya hear that."

Bruce turned away and carried on packing his bag.

Bruce closed the door behind him and swallowed hard. Out of the corner of his eye, he could make out the form of Paul Burton lying asleep on his bed. Bruce began to tremble and it took several deep breaths, and seemingly an eternity of waiting before he dared look across at the bed. Finally he forced himself to peer through the gloom at the sleeping, snoring figure. And he was almost sick. He pushed his jelly-like legs in motion and tottered like a child, across to the sleeping Burton. His stomach was in knots and his skin was covered in a glistening layer of sweat. It was 7 A.M., and Bruce pictured the sweat on his face like the dew forming on the ground outside. His mind began to wander, and he started to shake again. His concentration was going, and in fear the bile rose sharply again in his throat.

Bruce steadied himself. He told himself that this was the best chance he'd get, but once more his train of thought broke. Meet fire with fire . . . strike while the iron's hot . . . Actions speak louder than words . . . All these irrelevant and useless sayings went through his mind, doing nothing to reassure him. Once again, Bruce felt sick.

Suddenly Bruce's mind went blank, totally void of any thought, with one lone exception. Memories of the night before flooded back to him and his fear was replaced with anger.

"Stay away from her, Weasel." Burton's hypocrisy from the night before made Bruce realize what his only course of action could be. He clenched his fists into tight, hard, balls of steel and advanced the last few paces towards the bed.

Suddenly the stillness of the early morning was broken by the deafening peal of Burton's alarm clock. As a form of practical joke, Vincenza had set it the night before. Bruce vomited all over Burton's bed-spread, much to the horror of the awakening Kraken, who felt he must be in the middle of a most horrible nightmare.

"What the xxxxxxx do you think you're doing," screamed Burton upon realizing what was happening. In reply, Bruce shook heavily and wretched violently one more time. Burton seized him roughly by the shoulder and dragged him into the mire that had once been his bed.

"I'm gonna kill you," screamed Burton like a lunatic. He thrust Bruce's face into the pool of vomit.

"So this is your idea of revenge, huh! Don't think I don't know. I read your journal, you little bastard. You planned this, don't think I don't know."

Burton's face betrayed his horror at what had happened. He bellowed like a bull in pain and started to slap Bruce. Schmidt remained silent, although he did gag from time to time. With the fury of an imbecile who's power has been contested, Burton shoved, shook and slapped Bruce. He'd never expected him to carry out the threats he'd written in his diary, and this made it all the more difficult to understand. Determined to draw some form of reaction, he started to shake Bruce (although the latter needed no help at doing this) and scream at him in demented fury. Bruce remained silent.

April 10th,

*That damned alarm! I can't pretend that I'd have fared any better without it, but at least I'd have stood a chance. I'm just glad I didn't cry. In some ways I feel it was a moral victory, because at least he now knows that I intend to do something. Either way, I've achieved nothing concrete yet.*

*It took an hour to wash the puke out of my hair—let's just hope it takes him longer to wash out his bedspread. I think he's probably had his fill of retribution for the time being, but I'll still have to be on my guard. From now on I'll have to hide this journal in a better place, since Burton mentioned this morning that he reads it. That pig is determined that I get no peace at all.*

*Mom was pleased to see me for once, so perhaps this will be a pleasant weekend after all. Arthur has no work on Monday, so he says he'll run me back then. I'd like to stay away as long as possible, but running from the problem will not solve anything.*

Bruce looked furtively around, and seeing that the coast was clear, scampered down to the shed by the playing fields. After studying thoroughly for a physics test the following day, he felt tense and tired. Ten thirty was too early to go to bed, so Bruce decided that a few hours writing was just what he needed to help him relax. After collecting his manuscript in the usual fashion, he headed for the cafeteria where he planned to work on his novel, "Starman Schmidt." Some slightly narcissistic whim had prompted Bruce to use his own name in the title of the book. He intended to change both the title and the name of the principal protagonist before finishing the novel, but for the time being it suited him just fine.

Upon reaching the cafeteria, Bruce was dismayed to find that "his" window was closed. The only alternative at this time of night would be to work in his room, but Bruce was reluctant to go there with his book. He decided to go anyway, not wanting to be intimidated any longer, Burton or no Burton.

An hour later, Bruce was deeply involved in his writing. Burton and Vincenza were nowhere to be seen, so he could work in peace. Before long Starman Schmidt was winging his way fearlessly across the galaxy in search of hostile aliens, untrodden planets, and damsels in distress. In actual fact, Bruce's characters were very much more than soap-opera stereotypes, doing battle with green men from Mars, and demented megalomaniacs. He had succeeded in building up a set of well round individuals, involved in an intricate plot that was in no way pretentious or contrived. Although he would be loath to admit the fact himself, (even if he secretly hoped as much) this quiet, introverted young man was well on his way to becoming an accomplished writer.

At around 12:15 A.M., Bruce was in need of a short break, and a glass of water. He closed his book and made his way out to the bathroom. After pouring himself a glass of water, he was returning to his room when he heard the noise he'd been fearing all night.

"Hey, Vincenza, come and look at this."

Bruce's heart pumped faster. The voice was coming from his room. He dashed in to see Burton standing at his desk, grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Well if it isn't Spaceman Schmidt himself. Ready for lift-off, I'll bet."

Bruce moaned in anguish and asked Burton to give him back his manuscript.

"Vinnie, get your butt in here," roared Burton. He wanted an audience before he continued.

"Well, Mr. Spock, if you want this back, you'll have to shoot me with your laser gun. Or is that what you had in mind all along?"

The smile fell from Burton's face, and Bruce moaned again.

"You shouldn't have thrown up on me at the weekend, Brucie. That wasn't a very nice thing to do." Paul Burton dangled the book under his adversary's nose, but pulled it away when he tried to reach for it.



"Oh no you don't, you son of a bitch, you're going to have to work a lot harder than that to get it back." The sadistic look in Burton's eyes intensified.

At that point Bruce lunged at the manuscript, swinging wildly. Vincenza hit him from behind, knocking most of the wind out of him. He followed up by sitting on Bruce's chest and pinning his arms to the ground. Bruce screamed with fury, but was unable to move. Burton pulled out a pocket lighter, and coaxed the paper into reluctant combustion.

"Put that out at once."

Burton wheeled round, dropping the papers in fear. Whitlock, the R.A., stood in the doorway. Vincenza rolled off Bruce and stood up. As soon as he was free, Bruce smothered the flames that were slowly but surely consuming his manuscript.

"Are you alright, Schmidt?" asked Whitlock, showing genuine concern. "I don't know what's going on here, but I'll be reporting this to the Dean."

"We was only having some fun, weren't we Brucie?" Burton looked scared. Whitlock ignored Burton, and pushed past him to where Bruce was standing.

"Schmidt, are you O.K. Look at me, for Christ's sake."

Bruce slowly looked up, and said that he was fine. He then stared forlornly at his partly charred book; about one third of each page had been burnt, and that meant that everything would have to be re-written. He looked up and gave Burton a long, venomous stare, mustering as much hatred as he possibly could. Burton was very noticeably bothered. Bruce told him he'd gone too far this time, and that even if the Dean did nothing, Bruce would. Burton shrugged, and then tried to laugh it off.

"Aw, what are you gonna do, shoot me?"

Bruce stared at him again, and nodded.

*April 16th*

*I'm going home and I'm coming back with a gun. Dad's gun. Big gun. I don't care what happens anymore I've had enough enough enough. I'll get no results any other way. I'll shoot him dead I'll kill him dead stone dead. He won't do this to me anymore not to me I don't care what happens not to me.*

*My book. What'll I do (kill him) I'll have to rewrite everything just because of what he did. He burned my book I'll burn him. Fire and then ashes. Shoot and then ashes. No more Burton no more torment only peace. Peace for me. Peace for him.*

"Come in, Bruce, come in." Dean Wilson smiled half-heartedly at the dour figure standing before him. "Please have a seat."

Bruce sat down and stared at his shoes.

"Bruce, you do know why I want to talk to you, don't you?"

Bruce answered the question with a sullen stare. The Dean continued.

"I spoke with Paul Burton this morning, concerning the affair in your room a few nights ago. He expressed regret about what happened, but also said that he felt I should know that you had tried to attack while he was still asleep, a few days previously. Is this true?"

Bruce shrugged and looked away.

"The problem is, Bruce, Paul claims that after he'd accidentally set your book on fire, you threatened to kill him." The Dean was obviously bothered when the student before him remained silent.

"Now look here, I'm trying to help you. The R.A. for your suite, John Whitlock, tells me he thinks that Burton may have been bullying you, although Burton himself naturally denies this. We had problems of this nature with him last year, and if what Whitlock says is true, all you have to do is speak up, and Burton will be withdrawn from school."

Bruce paused for a while before he spoke. He asked the Dean what made Burton think he was going to kill him. To Bruce, it sounded like a serious and extravagant charge.

"Well. Bruce, Burton claims that after the incident with the book, you threatened to kill him. Then yesterday he claims you left a note on your door saying that you were going home. You were back the same day with a small chest with a padlock on it. Burton says he has reason to believe that you have a gun in this chest."

The Dean became visibly nervous at this point. Bruce, on the other hand, laughed. Since he'd not spoken to Burton since the morning he'd puked on him, Burton's facts had to be based on what he'd read in his diary. How surprising that Burton hadn't mentioned that to the Dean.

"This is no laughing matter, Schmidt. If this is some kind of joke I want to know about it."

The Dean was losing his composure by this time. He found Bruce's indifference hard to accept.

"I'm going to ask you two questions, and so help me you'd better give me straight answers." He could imagine the reaction of the press if it got out that Bruce L. Schmidt really did intend to shoot his suite-mate.

"Has Burton in any way been intimidating, bullying, or threatening you since you've been here?"

Bruce thought about the question, and after a short while he nodded his head. Yes, he has.

The Dean was relieved to feel that he had at least solved part of the problem.

"Thank you, Bruce. I'll take care of Burton later. Now tell me, do you have a gun locked up in a chest in your room? Tell me the truth."

Bruce thought about this question as well. This time he shook his head.

"In that case, you won't mind if we go and take a look in your room, will you?"

The Dean was determined to be sure. Bruce once again gave some thought to the matter. This time he just shrugged, and said that if it would make the Dean happy, he didn't mind.

Ten minutes later, the two stood in Bruce's room. Bruce pulled a key from out of his pocket and unlocked the chest. He slowly lifted open the lid of the box to show its contents. There, in the middle of an otherwise empty box, was a hair-dryer.

#### *April 20th*

*Bye bye, Burton. I knew you'd find my journal, and I knew you'd read it. You had to know the extent of your power over me, and that was your downfall. Things turned out even better than I could have hoped for in my wildest dreams. For that, Burton, I am grateful to you.*

*I admit, the last journal entry was both contrived and corny, but I've never met a psychopath, so I had to use my imagination. What counts is that poor, witless Burton has never met a psychopath either, and it was enough to convince him. It may have been one of my worst pieces of creative writing, but in the long run it may turn out to be one of my most effective. At least it means that my problems are over . . . at least for now.*

*In years to come, I guess I'll be always asking myself if I would have shot him. The gun's well hidden, so chances are they would never have found it. Who knows, I might even have got away with it. Vincenza had better behave himself from now on . . .*

*Stephen C. Woodward*



## The Dance

They say its supposed to be fun.

So when somebody says  
Its fun isn't it  
I say yeah, great

And the somebody drifts away.  
And I drift off in a different direction.

I look at everyone and they're having fun

There are people dancing  
But I am not a good dancer  
because I never learned how  
and rather than go look like  
the last time I danced  
it was to Alley Cat  
(which it was)  
I don't dance.

And there are people laughing  
But they are laughing  
In that oh-so-funny manner  
with that oh-so-knowing smirk  
and I know that their jokes would be  
over my head  
or below my belt  
so I wouldn't laugh anyway.

And people are talking  
In large, easy groups  
But they look like a closed society  
And I don't really want to talk to everyone  
just someone who would really listen.

I look at the dance floor.  
I see the guy I am interested in  
dancing  
having a good time  
having fun  
talking with one of my best friends

I look someplace else.

I wonder why I'm not in

Is it my dress

The dress which looked gorgeous

last week in the store

which was reduced

so I could buy it

if I scrimped and went without lunch for a week

which I did

and no

its not the dress.

Is it my makeup

which is as perfect as shaking hands

and inexperience

can get it. No

the mirror in my compact assures me that

my eyes are large and sparkling

my cheeks red

my lips pencilled into a bee stung cupids bow

(with just the hint of a smile)

and my hair waves back in a style

that hasn't yet flopped

But I'm the only one looking at myself

And I know that

the red covers and ash-pale face

and an acned complexion

and the hair is covered with hairspray

and my eyes are luminous because its hard

not to cry

And I snap my compact shut

because an acquaintance comes up to me and says

isn't it fun

and I say yeah

great

and

I watch her drift off

into the crowd

and I wish I could follow

but I don't.

*Anonymous*

# Unclaimed

Voices echo  
down a twisted spire,  
curling back  
to the meaninglessness and mire  
of their birth.  
The circle completes itself  
and the search for origins-  
... futility ...  
-where none can be first;  
-behavior trapped  
as a function of its own pattern.

The voice of a misfit haunt  
cries to me in strains-  
"Fantasy Roles, Everyone!" ...  
... Where walks he now,  
this Doctor Strange?

His world is one  
universes apart  
from this unreal reality  
whose very heart  
lies but a stone's throw away;  
where steams of music  
fill my ear ...  
"...100 million castaways ..."  
grappling for a beer.

Andromeda peers  
downward at my folly  
glaring with permanence  
born of emptiness devoid of reason.  
A kinship I feel  
in this, our brightest season.

in this our brightest season,  
though I'll search for comfort in another ...  
... But Living Things evince their decay  
with only promises of vague rebirth,  
leaving me to ponder  
can one be demonstrated within the other?  
And still, politely, she glances down ...

I look her in the eye, but do not see  
Amazement and Wonder ...  
must be mysteries to me.  
The facts are hid  
and locked up safe,  
but will you not invest the chase  
of fortune  
in an uncompromising  
glance?

*Steve Miller*

## Where e'er There Be a Reason

Where e'er there be a reason or a care,  
or an excuse to justify,  
exist a million questions, but a stare  
as blank as death can never answer why.  
'Because' will not suffice.

Though mighty rivers may be turned to ice  
by some swift overseeing sword  
which wits explain while we just nod. Suffice  
to say our nods, anon provoke "Wherefore?"  
"I don't know" is not enough.

Simple minds accept and say, "Life's tough."  
while others kneel in reverence to the sky,  
and cry a million tears, I say enough!  
Won't someone simply answer for me, "Why?"



## Pour le coin

Mes amies, nous ne sommes pas laides  
Aucune n'est bossue ou tarée  
Nos caractères sont bons pas laids  
Chaleureuses et pas inhibées

Pourquoi, pourquoi nous sommes touts seules?  
Chaque week-end les autres s'en sont allés  
Toujours, nous sommes ici, toujours seules  
C'est ce que les Parcae nous ont envoyé

Les temps s'en va nous le savons trop bien  
Mais pour nous délivrer, il n'y a rien

*Anonymous*

## Thinking of You

Early morning ice  
    warmed by the thought of you.  
Sleepy, heavy eyes  
    winking, blinking the dawn away.  
The sparkles of the red sun  
    ease across the floor . . .  
slip into bed with me,  
    hold me, soothe me . . . .  
Pines outside the window sigh.  
    You are here . . . or are you?

*Laura Lee*

## You Were The One

You were the one who always made me smile;  
    who always cheered my heart.  
— How lucky I was to find you!  
You were the one who always came through;  
    who never backed away from a challenge.  
— How lucky I was to have you!  
A most treasured and precious gift were you,  
    and you shall not be forgotten . . .  
Your memory shall live forever in my heart.  
— How lucky I am to remember you!

*Joanne Kohler*



