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## Exile Vol. XII No. 1

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### **Authors**

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Foster

no. 1

# EXILE

The  
EXILE

SPRING 1967

Vol. 12

No. 1

*Denison University*  
*Granville, Ohio*

Take thought:  
I have weathered the storm  
I have beaten out my exile.  
—Ezra Pound



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*cover design by Jamie Foster*



## THAT HORRIBLE WAR —DREAM—

My friend and I—my friend's name is Jan—were on a train heading West with the rest of the 107th Ohio Volunteers. We were supposed to reinforce Grant, who was at that time fighting toward Chattanooga to rescue Thomas' army. The Fall of '63 it was—a beautiful one in Tennessee. The trees were in full color then, and had not lost many leaves. Janny was busy writing home . . . he did that about once a week when he could. I was just dreaming along with the passing countryside.

The railroad tracks were laid into a ridge overlooking one of the prettiest valleys you'd ever want to see, and it was as yet untouched by the war. I don't know why they built the damn railroad up on that ridge—maybe the farmers in the valley wouldn't sell out—but anyway, that's where the tracks were. The beautifully colored trees were above us on the ridge and the valley was green below. I still think it was pretty. Jan had finished his letter, and we were talking. Should we return to school after the war, should we marry our girls, should we maybe go West—great things out there, we'd heard. Jan was talking about Toby's—his brother's—recent death at Gettysburg. Sniper got him . . . filthy people, those snipers; they just lie there for hours waiting for you to stick your head up and then . . . that's all. Anyway, that's how Tobe got it.

As I was saying, we were talking about Toby and Gettysburg and the war in general when wham! the shooting started. Must have been guerrillas—Mosby or Morgan—or maybe it was some of Forrest's men . . . anyway, I guess they got the engineer on the first volley, because the train slowed immediately and finally stopped. Because we were going up a grade at the time, it was obvious to most of us that pretty damn soon we'd start back down—fast, too. No time for the doors; we grabbed our Springfields, smashed out the windows—they were, some of them, already broken from the shooting—and jumped out. I left my pack and—of all things—my boots behind . . . I take them off whenever I get the chance. I noticed Janny holding tight on to his letter. He isn't too good a writer, so when he does get something written, he takes good care of it. So anyway, we jumped out of the train. We weren't too careful about where we landed—we must have rolled halfway down to the valley—finally stopping, I against a rock and Jan up on some logs.

Most of the 107th had reacted with equal speed—those that hadn't been shot, and not many had—and so there was pretty many of us on the hill. I suppose if the Rebs had stopped to regroup and make ready according to the book, we might have stood a chance, but by '63 precious few people were fighting according to the book any more, and so down the hill they came on us. Owing to the surprise and our poor position, it didn't promise to be much of a fight, and it wasn't, either, lasting all of ten minutes or so. I got a couple; Jan shot one and stuck another, but their horses against our single-shot rifles—they hadn't issued us the Spencers yet—well, there wasn't anybody going to stop Johnnie that day.

The big officer on the brown and black horse nearly split Jan in two with his saber—I mean he took a swing that went from Janny's head almost to his navel. Seemed like it anyway. Was really quite a sight—I must paint it someday. I must have got too engrossed in watching Jan get killed, because when I looked away, I was looking down the bore of a Navy .44—one of *ours*, of all things. Well, this boy with the gun—couldn't have been more than sixteen—didn't stop to chat; he was damn scared and looked it, so he just yanked on that trigger like it was a lanyard of a 24-pounder. Didn't hear the noise. The ball struck me in the chest . . . must have been close to the heart, because I died within seconds.

Well, getting killed was about the biggest thing that had ever happened to me, so naturally I wanted to celebrate and let everyone know. Jan agreed with me, so we ran down the main street of Millersburg together, shouting our fate to the old men who always sit on those benches they have there, the ones under the elm trees. By the way, the elms are all gone now—some disease—but Millersburg was really pretty before they had to take them down. I guess I should mention here that Jan wasn't nearly as cut up as I thought; I wasn't much scarred either.

Anyway, we ran all the way to the Groveton Pike, shouting all the way, but nobody heard us—the bells of the Baptist Church were booming out the noon hour. Well, we stopped for a spell to get our wind back, and that's when I noticed this girl walking along across the way. Something about blonde hair makes my head kind of swim, and this girl had the longest, richest blonde hair you'd ever want to see. I left Jan standing there and followed her. She led me to her house, one of the biggest in town. Used to belong to Thad Campbell, but that was before the war. We went in. By then it was night. Jenna Lee, that was her name, led me to the parlor where a very mad party was in progress . . . two of the parlor windows had already been smashed out. Almost everyone was there; Billy, Cal, Suzanne, Brady, the officer on

the big brown and black horse. The little fellow—I found out his name was Raoul—wasn't there; he'd been killed at Chancellorsville that Spring. Jan wasn't there, either—probably writing a letter.

We all were drinking, and I guess I had a little too much, because my head was going 'round in a real short time, but I could still sing and dance along with the rest of them. More people kept coming in and I guess some left, although I didn't pay too much attention . . . you know how blondes distract me. Finally, about three in the morning Jenna Lee—she looked a lot like Nancy Fleishman—led me upstairs to bed. We undressed and got into bed, and I began to make love to her immediately. Unfortunately, there was suddenly a great commotion downstairs—before either of us was satisfied—and I fell asleep.

When I awoke, Nancy Lee was gone. I ran downstairs to find her, and found everyone out on the front veranda, watching the sunrise. I was very unhappy by this time. As I say, I love blondes beyond any sort of reason, although I've never painted one . . . I must do that very soon . . . and I was very concerned about finding Nancy. I soon saw her across the road at a table in a yellow house that was a bakery then. This bakery, you may remember, had a very large screened veranda, before they glassed it in. By the time I got there, it was closed, so I went next door to the restaurant—maybe Nancy would be there—and went in. I had left my money in my boots on the train, which increased my unhappiness, because I was very hungry—I hadn't eaten since we boarded the train in Columbus.

I sat down and ordered a cup of coffee and smoked a cigar, and struck up a conversation with the waitress. She reminded me a great deal of Jenny, except that she had brown hair. Her name was Brady. As I talked to Brady, I became increasingly uncomfortable with a pain in my chest. It was a dull pain at first, like someone had struck me with a closed fist, but then it got sharper, and finally it burned me horribly, drawing my breath from my lungs in a loud whistle. I became increasingly sad, and I realized I would never see Jenna Lee again, so I ordered another piece of cherry cake from Brady, and sat back and thought about Jan and Jenna Lee and that horrible war.

—James Jacobi

## ELSINORE

Order and digression  
 Chaos becomes unity:  
 Abstract raced through a mindless night  
 The wind is blowing

## Hamlet

He was dead; he was alive and small animals move in  
 the night that is bitter and indifferent  
 He traces an image in a mirror to the sound of a flute  
 unifying the quiet air:  
 Specifics held fixed in a nightless mind  
 His voice must act

A woman sings softly with his voice through many variations  
 As a mirror show him musky distortions as the  
 Music unifies the incorporal air as the small animals move  
 Outside as the wind whistles through the new green trees  
 As he stands - still.

All roll into steadfast dawn; caught at that time  
 And this place in a dumb show, no words, now songs, swing out  
 Of order, all are moving to conclusion . . .

The house lights are on; the audience has abruptly left.  
 A fat man chewing a cigar shines the marble hall with  
 An electric buffer.

—Alan Pavlik

## GERANIUMS IN WINTER

We went back to the graveyard today.  
 On the edge of that great museum  
 known as the small town,  
 it lay unfenced  
 to let in three cattle or two lovers.  
 But there were too many weeds for that—  
 grey hair strangling in December frost.

Blazing a trail through the weeds,  
 stepping over broken stones  
 toward his parents,  
 I wonder: Is the antique community  
 having a prayer-meeting tonight  
 They sit on brittle chairs;  
 he pedals the organ;  
 she sings lusty hymns in a pinched voice.

We offer our name  
 like a campaign button  
 to the carved stone.  
 The long metal prongs of the wreath  
 are awkward to push into the frozen earth.

But we have that chair in the living room;  
 John refinished it last fall.  
 And the organ is in the attic—  
 dust coats its neglected bones.

I begin to feel the cold

John cheerfully dabs blood where  
 he cut his hand putting in the wreath.  
 "It does me good to come back twice a year."

I huff warm air into cupped hands.  
 "We could plant some geraniums instead."

—Tom Getz





## CLYTEMNESTRA

Amid the smoke-wash of green night,  
She,  
In muted coral peignoir  
Sits brushing her gold-flecked  
Sensuous hair  
Before the glass,  
Before the silver-amber prisms of  
Perfume flasks  
Arranged before the glass.  
A pungent musk  
Shrouds the room now stale with  
Dribbled brandy and  
Rotting citrus.

Out of the brittle black above the  
Green darkness  
Drips  
A bead of molten copper moon  
Sizzling through the green  
To faded aqua on the sheets  
Revealing him,  
Naked,  
Shadowed, splotted with burgundy,  
Glistening with sweat.  
He groans, belching,  
Then turns to thrust a bearded  
Leer into the shrieking  
Silken pillow.

She,  
In flowing coral folds,  
Whispering  
Across the room,  
Takes a taper through the  
Vaulted hall into the  
Bath,  
Into the green-white  
Marble bath  
Beneath the tiny, sticky

Leaves.  
 Silence:  
 Clear, rain-soft, rippled  
 Water in the mottled  
 Marble bath.  
 In the misty screen of green night,  
 She,  
 In hushed coral stands,  
 Gazing at the water,  
 At bubbles in the cauldron.

—Sharon Hornberger

## PANES

"Ya know" I said t' my friend  
 As we were driving along beside those snow fields,  
 "Ya know" and then I couldn't think of anything else to say,  
 So we both looked at the snow and the street lamps all going by  
 Outside the windows, which were only windows because we had  
 Seen them as windows at some time before that night.

It was all going by us out there, all that we knew,  
 The mailboxes and the telephone wires with snow piled high,  
 And especially the windows of the occasional houses, yellow and  
 One by one going by, and us knowing the people inside nearly  
 Every house. And then I said, "Ya know, if two wrongs  
 Make a right, why can't two windows make clear space?"

—Bonnie Bishop

## IN A FAMILY WAY

Jasmine Clancy rings the bell because she knows her visiting sister will be back from the day's shopping, and she doesn't want to put down her portfolio to search awkwardly for the key in her large, "conference day" purse. She thanks Mr. Fairchild with a blush as he reloads her arms with French bread and the chocolate-marshmallow-walnut ice cream from Bergdorf's that she had dropped in the elevator.

Approaching steps and the door is opened.

"It wasn't locked," laughs Minerva, trying in vain to embrace her sister. "I'm sorry. I forgot. I knew you'd be home soon." Her beaming smile attends the fast-retreating Mr. Fairchild as far as the elevator and then resettles inquisitively on a pensive Jasmine.

"Well . . . . Hungry?"

Jasmine is a well-groomed, medium-large, thirty-two year old fashion designer who lives on the sixth floor of a marvelously modern apartment with a walk-out balcony off the living room and front bedroom, overlooking hill-descending, tarred roofs and eventually the Sound. She pays at least three hundred dollars a month for it.

"Why don't you get a roommate?" asks the slightly older Minerva, who is quite happily married to a music professor at Whitman College. She leaves him with the youngsters, of eight and five, at least three times a year to make mid-week, Seattle shopping excursions during clearance sales. It is now mid-July, time to stock up on bermudas and cotton shirts.

"Because it is difficult to find an unmarried, middle-aged women as well-adjusted as myself," replies Jasmine. "And besides, if I had a roommate, I'd get fat."

Minerva, who is two inches taller, twenty pounds lighter, and still flatter in the tummy, despite having given birth twice, says nothing to her sister because she has just discovered an air-conditioner in the back bedroom. This is an unheard-of extravagance in screenless Seattle, where the climate is nightly mild.

"Why would you need that, when you've got such a delightfully breezy balcony out here? And while I'm venting my curiosity, why don't you sleep in the front room?"

"I'd be up all night watching ships. Hope you haven't had spaghetti recently." Jasmine tosses a handful of celery stalks into the sink and unhooks an apron from the refrigerator door.

"Not with Chianti," chuckles Minerva as her sister dusts off a bottle she has retrieved from the "wine cellar." Jasmine's wine cellar-pantry-solarium happens to be a cement back landing, the most ideal feature of an end-of-the-hall apartment, she claims. The maintenance man's extra trash cans share this nook with three cookie tins, a shelf of African violets, and a cardboard box of assorted liquors being saved for holidays and "occasions."

While Minerva is wedging garlic butter into the bread slots, she gazes into her sister's neat, pale blue-grey living room. It contains a dark blue-grey upholstered, Danish modern couch, red cushioned chairs and drapes, and a deep plum, tufted rug. "You do have a unique color scheme," she offers.

Why Minerva! It's PRACTICAL! Light walls make a room sunny, and my rug doesn't show the dirt or its nap."

While Jasmine concocts the sauce, she is thinking about the traumatic night that lies ahead. She loves her sister; she loves to hear about Ralph, Ralph Jr., and her niece Jasmine who is called Mina. She would enjoy Minerva's visits except for one small, personal quirk that she long-ago stopped trying to communicate to her sister.

Tucked away in Jasmine's imagination is an innate recurring, uncontrollable FEAR. Her first memories of the sensation are when she used to awake, sweating, trembling, and fighting the panicky need to call her mother. She has learned to compromise with the fear, blocking out house-creakings with the hum of her air-conditioner, carefully locking all doors and windows before retiring with a secure feeling. Her greatest self-indulgence, and one she is ashamed to admit to anyone, is the possession of a duly-licensed firearm which lies in the top drawer of her night stand.

Jasmine analyzes her obsession as a REVERSE "It-Could-Never-Happen-To-Me" syndrome, brought on by watching too much T.V. violence as a child, and also by being too closely attuned with their somewhat nervous mother. She feels she has learned to cope well with the fear, except when her fortress is made vulnerable by well-meaning Minerva. During this visit, as always before, she knows she will lie abed all night, watch-dog alert awaiting the subtle scrapings of a prowler-murderer on the balcony, and she will inevitably possess the cool strength necessary to save her sleeping sister when he arrives.

At the dinner table, conversation swerves toward a familiar topic. Minerva finds her sister's creativity a refreshing release and loves to hear about her career; still, she can't quite understand why someone so basically domestic doesn't marry. A person who thinks to send magical, Jack Sprat's Anniversary gifts deserves to have children of her own.

"Any interesting men in your life these days?"

"Oh, yes! I have a fatal crush on that gallant gentleman who lives on the eleventh floor . . . and he actually volunteered to carry my ice cream. Listen, if I leave my door at exactly 7:22, skip to the end of the corridor, touch my toes three times, and press the button, HE is invariably in the elevator. Isn't that kind of precision exciting?"

"Haven't you seen Pete since April?"

"Oh, once or twice, but we had a big fight about what it means to have a "negative attitude," and I'm not interested. Really, I'm serious about the elevator! I allow myself the privilege of punctuality any day, but only once a week, and I even talk to him . . . a little.

"His name is Fairchild, and I think he's some kind of architect on the city planning board. He's shy, too, but he knows my name somehow. Next week, I'm going to propose."

"You would!"

"I would . . . if I didn't like living alone so much."

"Once, I just happened to be in the same elevator with him in the afternoon, and my heart did flip-flops all the way to the sixth floor! And once I saw him in the lobby with a tall, attractive blonde, and I thought I'd die. Isn't that love?"

At about ten o'clock, Minerva, who is shopping-weary and used to early hours anyway, decides she'd better go to bed. She insists on leaving the glass balcony doors slid open, so there is no use bothering to turn on the air conditioner. She will be sure to pull up the blankets if she gets cold.

Jasmine settles down, sighing, to read herself drowsy in Camus, whom she has recently discovered to be an optimistic sort of Existentialist.

At about midnight, she checks the doors, turns out the lights, and looks in upon her sister. Beyond the bed, the lights of Bainbridge are retwinkling in the Bay, and the last ferry from Mercer Island is rapping against the dock.

Soon Jasmine is lying on her back, very still, breathing calmly and regularly, waiting and listening. She drowns lightly, dreams some, but doesn't really sleep. What if Mr. Fairchild and she were stuck in the elevator together? Wouldn't they soon discover how indubitably they were made for each other?

LIFE magazine has called Jasmine "foremost in femininity in a generation of fashion experts." In a businesslike manner, she contracts Mr. Fairchild to build her a beautiful, sea-side salon at Greys Harbor. He, disdainful of her wealth and fame, declares that she lacks a true aesthetic sense. In passionate wrath, she challenges him to go mountain climbing with her in the Olympics. When they are trapped by an avalanche,



their mutual concern betrays their stubborn hearts—

Suddenly, Jasmine is sharply, coldly awake. The early-morning tug hootings have not yet begun. She hears a, fine muffled, irregular scratching. She listens.

Lava flows through her veins, scorching and numbing; she can hear only the throbbing in her own head and the rustling of her own tremors. Pushing back the adrenalin, she reproaches her imagination that Minerva is getting herself a drink of water, but she knows with a horrid, certain joy that this is a lie. The step is too slow and stealthy to be here sister's.

Another thrill pulses through her calmed system—a shiver of wonderful power—as she carefully, cautiously slips out of bed, slides open the drawer, grasps the gun, and glides to the door. She wavers on the threshold, detailing the empty living room. There is a grey margin around three sides of the front door. A shock of rage shatters Jasmine's composure as she realizes that the intruder has entered where she has LOCKED him out. She wants to retreat to her warm bed.

But a murmur of sheets in Minerva's room renews her purpose, and she softly comes to stand at her sister's doorway. A man is there, stooped hovering over the still bed. Jasmine shoots him three times, and he silently crumples.

Minerva awakens howling, choking, and gasping. Afraid to flip on the light, she watches her ashy sister, limp against the doorjamb, revive as from a stupor and throw the gun with revulsion toward the balcony, shattering glass onto the black-purple rug. A dismal foghorn begins to moan.

"Switchboard? Connect me with 11-D . . . . Mr. Fairchild Please, this is Jasmine Clancy . . . . Please, would you come right down to 6-G? Something has happened, and I CAN'T—"

Jasmine has never fainted before in her whole life. She wakes up two days later, beside a bouquet of yellow roses in Mercy-Benedict Hospital.

The following months are not nearly as horrible as sympathetic friends and relatives imagine. Minerva's bad dreams gradually subside as Ralph comforts her. The police have proved that the man whom Jasmine shot was responsible for the death of that stewardess on Queen Anne's Hill in June. Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild are very happy, and as Minerva has noticed, Jasmine is getting fat.

—Kathy Swiger



### VANTAGE POINT

You and I stood  
 Out on the surface of the desert,  
 Our minds reaching  
 Out of our bodies  
 To observe two stalks  
 Tall with shadow  
 Alone out  
 On the flat desert—  
 Our shadow standing  
 More an interruption  
 And piece of the blue blue sky  
 Than of the flat desert.

—Hugh Wilder

## THE RETURN

The wind blows quickly through the concrete garden.  
 And the windows around me shudder once.  
 It is quiet again.  
 The pale noon sun festers in the powdered sky.  
 Clouds are moving around the moon sinking in the west.  
 A young bare tree, hardly five feet high, celebrates  
 What might have been.  
 The wind starts up again,  
 Blowing small bits of paper in minute whirlwinds.  
 If I were to return to this courtyard after  
 Twenty years perhaps this blind and numb day might  
 Be forgotten. And the shuddering empty windows that blankly  
 Face me now may be mirrors. In this cold stillness  
 I move to that tree with a shrug. I can hear  
 The echo of my footsteps. Will I always?

Near the black-top road we built through the complex  
 Jungle, under a feathery tree and hidden under a thousand  
 Small leaves, orange turbulent blossoms, and guarded by  
 Insects there was a wild vanilla smell from somewhere in the  
 Warm earth as we crouched shock still listening to small  
 Sounds and so often the afternoon moved on without an  
 Event. In that stillness I would watch the face of  
 The man with me for a sign and I would listen for the  
 First hint of wind. And,  
 As often as not, nothing would happen.  
 Guns were silent.  
 I once found a human finger under a leaf.  
 And sometimes at night,  
 Just after we heard the roar of the planes distant,  
 It would rain.

Now I'm home to this courtyard. There is not much I,  
 Or anyone can say. There are jungles. There is  
 This, my home.

—Alan Pavlik

## GEORGE

I was setting on my front porch. Just setting. It was too hot to sit inside and watch Mag sweating and cleaning. Outside there was some wind blowing up from the river, so it weren't near so bad.

Construction work was sort of slow in the late summer so Bill had laid me off for a while. But I didn't mind. I was tired of that damn job anyway. Taking hell from Bill. And sweating in the sun. I should of been foreman, standing in the shade and telling the niggers what to do. Sure. Bill didn't know the first thing about building. I bet he couldn't even build a doghouse half as good as the one I built for my old hound Moonshine.

I wondered where Moonshine was. Maybe he'd gotten into another fight. The last one was something. Blood squirting all over. Why he tore that other dog almost to pieces. It weren't a good dog though. Strange in the neighborhood. Never seed him befo'. Never see him again either.

Looking around I seed this bird strutting across my front yard. Trying to pull worms out of the ground. Never much liked worms, except when I was a kid and used to drop them down the backs of girls' dresses. Sometimes I'd sort of step on them when they was trying to wiggle across the sidewalk. But that weren't really no fun.

I sort of hoped old Moonshine would come running around the side of the house and chase after that bird and knock some of the cocky strutting out from under his damn feathers. But he didn't. There was a loud bang of a door slamming shut and the bird flew away. I guess he was afraid it was a gun popping off. I turned around and saw Prudence Schadler come walking down her front steps with her gardening tools. I never much liked Prudence. She and my wife talked together early in the mornings befo' I got up. They even went to church together sometimes. I didn't go with 'em though.

Prudence was just a stuck-up old biddy that was always telling kids not to go around sinning and that sort of damn stuff. She used to get on me about drinking, but now she's sort of given up on me.

Then I got an idea. Quick-like, I run inside and got a beer then went out again and walked over to the bushes. She was trimming away at them. Pretending she was too busy ta' notice me, she didn't say nothing when I started talking. I asked her real nice to go to the Wayside Bar with me some night. I used that same tone she uses every Sunday

when she asks if Mag will go to church with her. You know: that way of talking which makes you sound like you're doing the other fellow a big favor. Still she pretended she didn't see me. But I could tell by the way she was going at her hedge-clipping that she was getting mad as hell.

I felt I wasn't really getting through to her. Normally she would have been calling me a sinner by this time. Then I breathed real hard in her direction. She couldn't resist but reacting to that. That really worked fine. She looked at me in the eyes and said, "Oh, you sinful, evil man! How in Heaven's name do you expect Mag to put up with you? Oh! you evil, evil man!"

I reckoned that was the best she could do at cussing. And I was glad she got it out of herself even though it was a pitiful try at the real thing. Anyhow, she turned her back and started walking off toward her home. Her behind, which was so big that it looked like it belong to a horse, waggled as she strutted up the steps. I wondered if she wore a bustle or just what the trouble was. The whole thing was pretty damn funny, though.

I decided to go on down to town. As I closed the gate on the fence, I saw old Moonshine coming panting down the road. He was all wet, so I guessed he'd been swimming in the river. I was glad to see him and I whistled to make him run faster. When he got near enough he jumped up and put his paws on my belly which was sticking out from underneath ma' T-shirt. He licked my face, but his paws on ma' belly were cold, so I told him to get down. 'Course he didn't, so I took a step forward. That threw him off balance and made him get down. He started jumping around trying to nip at ma' hand, the way dogs do when they really like you. I patted him on the head and started walking faster.

After a while he got tired of nipping at ma' hand and started sniffing around for other dogs on the sides of trees and in the bushes. Every once in a while, where he felt it was right, he left a message for some other dog to sniff up later.

When I got to the corner of Pearl Street and Maple, I saw old Cletus Harper sitting on the old wooden bench under the elm that was planted the same day the town was founded.

"Hey, Cletus," I said.

"Oh. Hello George," he said back.

"Damn horrible weather we're having. Ain't hardly ever seed it worse in ma' whole life."

"It's cool under the tree," he said.

"Hey, last night I got drunk and sort of tore up the Wayside. You should of seed it. I broke one of those damn captain's chairs and three beer bottles in a little squabble with Joe. What's his last name? You

know him, Cletus. The one that bought Bill Priestly's place. Oh, well. Anyway, it was Judy's night off and that new girl, you know the one with the read hair and the ugly nose? Is it Maxine? Well, Maxine just sat down in the corner and started crying when we wouldn't stop."

"George. Ah. I gotta get over to the hardware store befo' they close for the day. I'll see you, George."

"Yeah. After she started crying . . . Hey, where are you goin'?"

"I'll see you George."

Damn Cletus. Just because he's got a full-time job he is always running off some place. Never takes time to sit down and have a helluva good time. He'll get ulcers befo' he's fifty or a heart attack or something. Always rushing to do something.

I called old Moonshine who was sniffing around across the street and we started walking up Maple past the filling station. There were a goddam big Lincoln sitting there getting gassed up. A fancy high born gal was walking one of those damn imported poodles around on the longest, daintiest leash you'd ever expect to see. It sparked with jewels, maybe real fake diamonds and rubies. I don't rightly know. Old Moonshine saw the dog about the same time as me an he run over and starting sniffing at the poodle's nose and then at it's other end. The lady tried to swish Moonshine away. But he was determined. From what he did next I guessed that the poodle was a she dog. The lady screamed and tried to pull her dog away. She screamed again and the boy that ran the filling station shouted to me to get ma' dog and he run over and started pulling and kicking at Moonshine. I couldn't let him do that so I went over and got Moonshine. When I saw the lady was crying, I sort of felt bad and said I was sort of sorry. The boy picked up the poodle and put it into the lady's car. Then went over and put a dime in the pop machine and gave the lady a bottle of Coke.

"I'm real sorry this happened, ma'am. That man ain't no good. Always causing trouble." He said.

I felt sort of badder than I did before.

"Say, let me pay for that pop," I said.

The boy just looked at me and said, "Just get out of here. You done enough."

"Say, ah, ma'am. Ah, I'm sort of sorry about, ah, what, ah happened. Ma'am?" I said. But she didn't say nothing. She just stood there with her head inside the car window, crying and petting her damn dog.

Well, I wasn't going to hang around there listening to that all day, so I started walking on back home. It was almost supper time, anyways. There weren't nothing goin' on in this damn town. Never was. Anyhow, what right did that woman have walking her dog around making messes



on the streets. There ought ta' be a law against that junk.

When I got home, I tied Moonshine onto his doghouse. I always did that about evening time, 'cause when it gets dark you never know who starts walking the streets. Damn niggers just close their eyes and you can't see 'em.

Then I went in and ate supper. It was horrible, like usual and I told Mag that. I said if she give me hogwash like this again, I'd take it outside and use it to fertilize the vegetable garden. I speculated that the damn cabbages would die, but better them than me. I ate it anyway, though. I was hungry.

Then I went on outside and sat around on the porch. Mag scrubbed the dishes and set the table for breakfast. Then she sat down and started knitting a sweater she was making for Gordon Meyer's son that got into a car wreck. Knitting a sweater in weather like this was pretty damn foolish. But I didn't tell Mag. I gave her enough sense to know that she was a damn fool.

The evening was sort of nice. The waves was making noises when they hit against the reeds on the bank of the river. But I kept ma' eyes out for niggers just the same. None of those coons was goin' ta' sneak up and get me.

Long about eight thirty or nine o'clock I saw Prudence Schadler again. She come to the living room window of her house to turn out the light. I couldn't help but thinking about her damn fanny. How could any woman so small have such a big behind? Moonshine started licking himself. I could hear his tongue slurpin'.

The lights acrost the river started popping out. I was getting pretty tired, too. So I went inside. Mag was asleep in her rocker with the knitting plopped in her lap.

Hey, Mag," I said softly. I can't never figure why I always talk softly when I try to wake Mag up. Seems I ought to be shouting like hell. "Mag," I said softly again. I just couldn't make myself talk loud. But she started waking up anyway.

She looked at me surprised and said, "Oh. I must have dozed off for just a minute. It must be the weather. Makes you sleepy."

She'd been sleepin' for most of the night though. I knew because the sweater weren't much more far along than when I went outside. But I didn't say nothing. I like her to be in a sort of good mood when we go off to bed.

As we were undressing there weren't much talking between us. She was too sleepily to talk I guessed. But I was feeling uncomfortable about the silence, so I said.

"Hey, Mag. You're a woman. What's the matter with Prudence

Schadler's fanny? Why's it so big?"

"Oh. George. Twice a month for the past three years you've asked me that same question. What's the matter with you? Every time I tell you I don't know. I don't go around asking people why they don't look like other folks. It ain't my business. If she wants to tell me she will."

"I was just wondering if she wore a bustle?"

"I know, George."

—Buck Niehoff

## CHIAROSCURO

he lies in darkness toward the window,  
 she in dimness watching shade.  
 street lamps the other side of glass (there is no moon)  
 have made his pupils tight,  
 his night hard-edged and firm.  
 her finger traces swaying woodless branches  
 curving over sheets: she's mindless  
 of the light. he waits for yellow noon,  
 she for pale and liquid dawn.

—Bonnie Bishop

You are old and young, virtuous and old  
 Blind hope and blasted virtue: I research  
 Your eyes, each time, your voice and hands  
 And I can only feel a strange and tender  
 Wholeness in your light. My friend.  
 You frighten me at times, your quiet world,  
 The knowledge in your eyes of emptiness  
 And disappointed love.  
 I know that you will never run into the sun,  
 That you would rather play in mummer shows  
 And murmur with the faces in the crowd,  
 But—all those times in yesterday you juxtaposed  
 Your solitude with mine; and now . . .  
 Then, when I had bartered gold for trash  
 And crashing silence blew upon my dammed up tears;  
 Those months, those years of nothing  
 You were hardly noticed, hardly noticing,  
 Yet there. And then, after a horror and  
 A nightmare time, you're here, a whole, important  
 Man; you save me from a cell of memory:  
 The drug of reminiscence. You can brush  
 Your hand across your honey hair and  
 Slowly slur a comment on the day  
 And, empty bottle, sleeping bee, and passions giddy laugh  
 Become a warm and softened fantasy of light.

—Gretchen Schenck

## WAITING TO DIE

He told me that he had found  
 Behind the juniper, under a spruce,  
 A seagull, broken winged, waiting to die.  
 It sat, calmly, in green seclusion  
 Waiting for some sort of heaven.  
 Oh, they were death eyes  
 Opened wide and glassy  
 But reconciled and serene and waiting  
 Except, somewhere behind those eyes  
 The thought must have screamed  
 "Oh God! I don't want to die!  
 I don't want to die!"

So we went up that night—  
 And it was dead  
 Face down, wings spread  
 In the cold light rain  
 It had toppled silently:  
 Its soft last refrain.  
 And I thought,  
 What dignity!  
 Such sadness  
 In the cold  
 And the rain.

—Kit Andrews



## PERFECTION

Harry Tumbrill's marriage was a happy one. He had often in the course of its ten year span, congratulated himself on his successful match and fine little family. "Harry," he would often say to himself as he pecked his wife on the cheek for goodbye in the mornings, "Harry, you're a lucky man." There weren't many of Harry's friends, after all, who could boast of such fondness for their children—Harry's strapping six-year-old son was his special pride—or of such complete harmony with their wives. Harry had, at one time or another, speculated upon the reason for his particular happiness. The key, he had decided, was simplicity. He was a simple man with simple tastes; he needed no extravagances to be content. Both he and his wife were plain, ordinary people with no outstanding extremes in physical attractiveness, intelligence, or distinction. They had, for this reason, Harry remarked to himself, accepted one another exactly as they were, making no demands as far as these qualities were concerned. They weren't wealthy—Harry's job at the museum didn't pay much; but neither were they poor—his wife ran their small home efficiently, they wouldn't have gone out much anyway—there had even been a second-hand bike for his son last Christmas. So while more materially fortunate couples were separated, divorced, or at the least unfulfilled in their marriages, the simple Tumbrills were happy—and, Harry would hasten to add, still very much in love.

The day the sculpture arrived at the museum began no differently than any ordinary day, really. Waving goodbye to his wife and son as he started down the street, Harry then walked the five short blocks which separated his home from the metropolitan art museum. The steps to the building were wide and numerous, ending in two impressive granite pillars on either side of the entrance; he always felt a certain pride as he marched between these pillars wearing his guard's uniform. There were many things Harry liked about this job; the uniform headed the list. It was of stiff bright blue cloth with large gold buttons down the front, and a lapel pin which had his name: Harry Tumbrill, on it. Harry also liked the easy-going quality his work allowed—in fact, he attributed part of his happiness at home to the absence of "businessman's pressure." He enjoyed walking slowly from room to room, watching the various people come in, and often subconsciously gave in to believing that these rooms were his own and that he was the magnanimous host, making sure his

guests were having a pleasant time. Admittedly, too, Harry did rather enjoy the authority his uniform allowed him; a request for a monacled gentleman or a furclad woman to please stay behind the ropes gave him a little boost, although he was always careful to be very nice about it. And when a small child would slip underneath the ropes and stand in wide-eyed wonder at the base of a statue, a pudgy hand perhaps resting on the bronze hoof of a famous general's horse, Harry often would just happen to be looking the other way. All in all, it was a peaceful way to pass the afternoons, and he was satisfied and even happy with the job. Harry, however, was a very unlikely man for the job. It wasn't a case of his developing a kind of immunity to the treasures after more than ten years among them; it was simply that Harry had been indifferent to them at the start, and remained so. The priceless paintings were to him but color smeared on canvas—the modern ones he had noticed only as far as to remark to himself that his son's finger-paintings were equal to any of them. The sculptures he considered no more than inanimate masses of stone and bronze. He felt no contempt for the appreciation of those who visited the museum, only a wonder at their apparent intensity.

It was shortly after his lunch break when Harry heard the commotion in the hallway outside the delivery entrance. It was a Thursday; Thursdays were always slow in the afternoons, and at that time there were no people in the four rooms assigned to Harry's care, so he left his post to see about the delivery. The service entrance doors were open wide, and large men in overalls wheeled in a sizeable crate marked "fragile." More sculpture, thought Harry. Mr. Bacon, a musty little man with a yellowish-gray moustache who was the museum curator, was scurrying here and there excitedly, barking orders at the men in overalls, and generally being ineffective.

"Tumbrill," he said, running up to Harry, "How much room do you have?" And then, not waiting for an answer, "Well, we'll have to put "The Lisa" in your section, that's all there is to it. It won't go with the other works, but I can't help it, we haven't any other place. It simply can't be helped. In there, boys, around the corner . . . now watch that vase! That's it, that's it."

Harry followed behind, dimly hoping that weren't going to give him a nude. Nudes made his uncomfortable, as if he were responsible for their not having clothes on, and as if the visitors knew he was responsible. He watched as the work was unpacked and placed in the room.

Harry's first impression of "Lisa with her Child" was of its perfect whiteness. The marble appeared to have been polished until it took on almost a translucence. The sculpture was of a seated woman, clothed in a loose-flowing robe, holding in her arms a young child. The child was

a boy. He was asleep, and as he slept, the woman gazed down at him in tenderness. The way Eleanor looked at Bobby when he was very young Harry thought, although the memory of his wife and child in this position was very dim. The usual fuss was made over the new work that first afternoon—curious students, collectors, and art critics wandered in and out, sometimes writing things on small pads they carried inside their coat pockets, sometimes tapping a pencil against the side of their cheek in meditation—but the novelty soon wore off. Apparently "Lisa with her Child" was not a work of great merit. "Poor copy of the Pieta idea," Harry heard one man say ". . . the artist may have potential though . . ." Still, something about Lisa—who could say what: the tender smile, the delicate features—something rather touched Harry somewhere. He didn't know what made it good or what made it bad, but he liked it. "Eleanor," he would say to his wife when he got home, "I was assigned a new statue today, and it reminds me of you and Bobby . . ."

But that evening Harry never mentioned Lisa. He had the opportunity several times during dinner but for some unexplainable reason he kept silent. He imagined how Eleanor would say pleasantly, "Oh, really, dear? How nice!" after he had told her the statue reminded him of her . . . and, well . . . *then* what would he say? It wasn't at all important, and, besides, the resemblance didn't seem as strong. The Tumbrills ate their dinner, watched television, and then went contentedly to bed.

In the days that followed Harry gradually developed a habit of guarding the room in which Lisa stood a little longer than the others. After all, there were more small articles in that room, things that could more readily be broken or stolen. He found that Mr. Bacon never noticed the change, and so after several more days he began staying near Lisa almost all the time. It was her expression. The lips slightly parted, the eyelids half closed as Lisa looked down at the sleeping baby. Somehow it seemed to be more than tenderness and affection—it was sensitivity which was alien and yet wonderful to Harry.

The Tumbrills' life continued at home as before only perhaps it was that Harry was quieter now. On several occasions he startled his wife slightly when she turned from the sink or the stove to find him staring strangely at her. He had often watched her as she moved busily about the kitchen, but these looks had an unusual intensity to them. Harry would always just smile then, and turn back to his newspaper.

It was not quite two weeks since Lisa's arrival when Eleanor suggested that he take Bobby to the museum. She had shopping to do, she said; it would get him out of her hair—and, besides, the boy had been after Harry to take him for such a long time. The excursion had been planned, but curiously it seemed slightly distasteful that morning.



Harry finished his second poached egg before replying.

"Six is much too young for him to go to the museum . . . he wouldn't get anything out of it."

Eleanor looked at him quizzically. "Get anything out of it? No, of course not, honey, but he'll have fun . . . go on, take him."

And so Harry left for work that morning with his small son tripping along beside him. He took Bobby around from room to room, pointing out some of the more colorful and bizarre objects he thought might fascinate a child, and concluded that he had been right; six was too young. He avoided the room where Lisa was. At noon Harry started to head from the main hall towards the entrance, when Bobby suddenly pulled away and ran toward that room with a fascinated, "Hey, look Daddy!" Harry was suddenly angry. "Come back here!" he said sharply, his tone of voice a surprise even to himself. Bobby was already in the room, and Harry ran after him. He watched as the boy ran toward Lisa and then past her without so much as a glance, over to a large colorful surrealist sculpture of a horse and rider on the far side of the room. "Neat, Daddy!" The small fingers want out to touch. "Don't touch, honey," Harry whispered a little hoarsely. He felt shaky. They went home for lunch, Bobby talking about cowboys and "grub," and Harry marching along in silence.

For almost an entire week after that, it rained every day. Although rain hadn't really ever bothered him before, he told himself that this, after all, was cold-catching weather, and he hadn't better take any chances. He began staying at the museum instead of going home for lunch. He took the brown bag Eleanor packed with sandwiches and cookies into the room where Lisa was, and ate his lunch while sitting near her. Harry had never been a man of much imagination, but he sat during the lunch hour, when everyone else was gone and he was alone with the statue, and made up fanciful things. In his mind he pictured Lisa standing, walking—speaking, singing. Eleanor never complained about his not eating lunch at home. On several occasions she opened her mouth as if to say something to him, but then closed it again with a scarcely noticeable sigh, and went about her business. Harry became almost overly-attentive to her, this she never mentioned either. One night Harry rummaged through the attic of their small house until he found a shoe-box with dog-eared corners and bulging sides, and brought it downstairs. It was filled with photographs—old yellowed pictures of Harry in his high school band uniform, Eleanor in her first prom dress, the two of them together as they cut their wedding cake. Harry and his wife spread the pictures out on the living room coffee table, and had a pleasant time laughing and remembering. There was one picture though, at which Harry didn't laugh—one Eleanor thought was really funny. It was of Eleanor holding their

son when he was an infant. The baby's eyes were clamped tightly shut and his mouth was open wide in a scream of intense dissatisfaction. Eleanor, at that time an inexperienced mother, had set her mouth in a thin little line, and wore an expression of slightly frantic helplessness. Eleanor laughed, holding up the snapshot.

"Oh, me! Remember this one! Bobby cried most of the time until he was almost three!"

Harry took the picture from her and looked at it for a long time. When he finally put it down, he was unusually silent and seemed to have grown tired of looking at pictures. It was Eleanor who put them back in the box and took them up to the attic, after Harry had gone to bed. The next morning the picture incident was not brought up, and Harry ate his breakfast in silence, while he watched Eleanor. She was getting a little heavy, he thought—almost had traces of a double chin. When he kissed her goodbye, there was a tiny bit of a yellow egg still in the corners of her mouth.

One morning several days later Harry yelled at Eleanor for the first time since they had been married. When he leaned down to kiss her goodbye, he got poked in the eye with a clip sticking out from one of her rollers. It was such an awkward thing to happen, ordinarily it would have been amusing, but for a split-second Harry was furious, and screamed at her. Eleanor stepped back from him in confusion, looking at him as if were a complete stranger. He was sorry, then, and left quickly after mumbling an apology of sorts.

That evening after work Harry met with his Monday night poker club, and it was way past dinner time when he started for home. The museum was a full two blocks out of his way, but it was a warm, clear night, and almost involuntarily his steps led him there. When he stood down in front of the building, looking up at the majestic granite pillars, he knew he was going in to Lisa. Mr. Bacon had given him a pass key almost a year before; he let himself in the side door. It was very dark; Harry's steps echoed loudly on the tiled floor as he found his way to the room. He turned on one very small light.

In the shadows sat Lisa. She was even more beautiful now than she had ever seemed to him before. The soft light gave to her face an almost divine radiance. Her arm encircled the babe with such gentleness, the fingers of her hand curled in soft delicacy. She was perfect. Then Harry did something he had not done before. He touched Lisa. He put his hand out very slowly, a little fearfully, then placed it gently on her arm. She was cool and smooth and wonderful. Harry moved his fingers up and down her arm reverently, brushed across her fragile hand, then reached up and touched her lightly on the cheek. It was a half an hour

later when Harry left the room. He switched off the light, then turned around once more. The statue could not be seen in the darkness. "Lisa," he whispered very, very softly. Then he went out.

When Harry came home, Eleanor had already fed Bobby. She made no remark as he entered the kitchen, merely turned on the fire under his cold pork chop poured him a cup of coffee, and took his bowl of salad out of the refrigerator. Watching her move silently unquestioningly, about the small kitchen, Harry felt a surge of love. He took the butter dish out of her hand and put his arms around her. Eleanor was warm. "Harry," he said to himself as he pecked her on the cheek, "Harry, you're a lucky man." They ate a quiet dinner and without a word spoken about the matter, they re-established their closeness. Harry never again had a mood like the one he had gone through; he was once again the model of a tender husband and affectionate father. It wasn't until several days later that Eleanor read in the paper that vandals had broken into the museum Monday night and had broken off the fingers on the hand of one of the statues; in fact, the sculpture had been in Harry's section. She thought it strange that he never mentioned it.

—Susan Kurtz

Cleaning out drawers, discarding what's done for  
other noons and nights and day breaks  
gets nowhere at home.  
Things tossed into my bedroom wastebasket  
are slowly restored to the sill downstairs,  
Mom's reclamation shelf.  
Her soundless salvaging, her sifting already sifted flour  
is my undoing.  
She's teaching me to eat beyond the apple core.

—Trudi Spaeth

## DRAGON

There's a dragon in our midst,  
His spine tucked together  
With orange flecked scales;  
Appalosian wanderer drugged  
On his own volcanic breath.

He neither lurks nor stalks,  
Grazing with habitual hunger  
Through smooth-petaled flowers,  
Biting them with full-lipped  
Fascination from brittle stems.

Unhinged by gushing sunlight,  
Its boiling cascade oiling  
His grinding need, our dragon  
Wedges his knotted legs beneath  
The mound of his body and sleeps.

In the field, his slumber seems  
Like so many poppies locked  
In a rugged mound of drying moss;  
But when clouds hide from the sun  
The churning pockets of icy air

Beware: The dragon brays fire.

—Barbara Bergantz



## BLUE IN GREEN

Dunbar was holding a fat high D through this chorus. The saxophone was a little sharp in the upper range and Dunbar, hearing this, was attempting to lip it down, sweating. And the rhythm section was pounding on. His left arm was shaking with the tension. So he snapped out a chromatic scale, multicolored, up from low G, then kicked a high F# on the top—leaving the next couple choruses to Woody. Woody would half-valve around with smothered sounds, or choked runs, and every few bars or so, clear the air with a short round blast on his trumpet. It was Woody's style. Dunbar didn't like to listen to him. But he listened anyway.

These were the jam sessions in Dunbar's basement on Sunday afternoons that one summer. They were often unpleasant. But every so often, even though they were all just out of high school and couldn't play well—couldn't play professionally—and even though, as the weeks went by, the group might be six people, or ten, or five, or three; even though none of them could improvise well; and even though all they played were twelve-bar blues that all sounded alike after awhile—all this given, every few weeks there would be ten minutes when they would be feeling the thing. None of them, and not Dunbar, knew what the thing was. And anyway, this was the only room around with an air-conditioner.

But this Sunday they didn't have it. Dunbar sensed that. Maybe Woody didn't because he was reeling off fast twisted runs of notes with frantic abandon. Desperate. They were all, Dunbar supposed, trying to catch the thing that couldn't be caught. It was if a person couldn't try, but just had to wait for the loose feeling, the relaxed effort, the gliding feeling of floating over full surging rhythms; the thing. Dunbar listened.

Woody ended with a short blast. The piano player was pounding is now. Woody turned to Dunbar.

"Heard from Ruthie lately?" he asked.

Dunbar had broken up with Ruth last month. They had exchanged class rings over two years ago. Last month they had grown momentarily tired of each other at the same time. That had formally ended that. Woody had been dating her ever since Dunbar hadn't.

Dunbar grunted.



She had called him that morning while his parents were in church. He told this to Woody.

"That's funny. What she say?"

Dunbar told him, with a cautious laugh, that she said Woody had been calling her all the time and she had all she could do to avoid him. She said she really liked Dunbar, not Woody. She said she wanted to avoid Woody, because he was Dunbar's best friend. She did say this.

Dunbar and Woody smiled at each other differently. The piano player rumbled on and on.

"Ruthie told me that she liked me, not you, Dunbar; said she 'really' liked me."

Woody was smug but Dunbar didn't mind. Drum solo. Woody had to shout.

"She told me last night that you were calling her all the time because you wanted to get back together with her. She said she had her mother answering the 'phone and telling you that she wasn't home. She though I'd believe her."

Woody laughed quietly. The drums thundered. Dunbar was thinking about her lie. With a vague self-discipline he had decided not to call her after they broke up. And he hadn't called. He and Woody both knew she lied about this. But Dunbar was disappointed in himself. He hadn't known she lied to him that morning about who she liked "really." But he had hope for them, the two of them;—himself and Ruth.

Later, during the bass solo, he mentioned to Woody that Ruth was a bitch. Woody laughed.

Then they all blew through the melody. The song and the session and the afternoon ended with that. They began to pack up.

Dunbar was twisting the neck of his saxophone off. He was thinking. He asked Woody what he was doing that night.

"Nothin' . . . I told Ruthie that I might come over, but I think my parents are going to use the car. She loses."

Woody giggled.

Dunbar told Woody that they should both go over to see Ruth together that night and get the thing straightened out. They should both trap her with the truth together.

Woody slapped Dunbar on the shoulder, hard. He was laughing.

"Great! Drive your Dad's company car, the Green Plum. She won't recognize it. I'll tell her I've got a friend and his car. We'll go for a ride. What a sadistic mind you have! Jesus!"

Woody called Mr. Dunbar's company car, "The Green Plum." It was a light green Plymouth. And he liked the idea of exposing Ruthie.

Dunbar said he would come over and pick Woody up at nine. He opened the doors for Woody. It was dark golden outside and raining. Hot and humid. Dunbar remembered the meal that his mother was preparing. He felt tired and not hungry; he wondered why he thought that Ruth had told the truth that morning.

He watched the rain for a second after Woody had walked into the falling darkness. Dunbar knew he didn't know the truth.

The rain made him sad with its whispering. He turned, picked up the empty soda bottles, and went to dinner humming the tune they had played.

A week later the session began after dinner. Sunday had been clear and wavering hot. Nobody wanted to play that afternoon. Dunbar spent the afternoon with his parents. They had visited relatives. That bored him. And Woody had gone swimming with Ruth.

The group was together by eight that evening. As the drummer was pulling his cymbals and drums into comfortable positions the piano player began playing his arrangement of *Saint Louis Blues*. The bass player fell in, walking along. Dunbar thought about what he and Woody had done last week. The drummer jumped on; the rhythm solid and began rolling. Woody's opening phrase burst out, riding high about them.

I hate to see . . . that evening sun go down . . .

Dunbar has picked up Woody at nine a week before. It had stopped raining by then; the streets were wet and hot. They laughed as they drove over to Ruth's home. The black asphalt streets were like dark rivers that reflected lights. Dunbar felt afraid, looking at Woody laugh, feeling a strangeness in his stomach. Dunbar turned corners, rolled over hills, and reeled off obscene and disgusting stories that would keep them, both of them, differently laughing long after they stopped in front of Ruth's house.

Saint Louis Woman . . . with your diamond ring . . .

Dunbar smiled ironically as he remembered the words of the song. Ruth had come out of her house with Woody only a minute after Woody went in. She recognized the car right away; but Dunbar saw her smother her surprise with her expression: a cute warm smile. She sat next to Dunbar, with Woody on her right. Her short red hair was glowing from some light on the street. She sank down into the seat with a pouty look. The soft light went out. Dunbar aimed the car toward a drive-in restaurant, ten minutes ahead in the pulsing darkness.

Woody was ad-libbing in long loping runs. In tune.

Nothing was said as they drove. The radio was on, crackling out rock and roll, but softly. Traffic moved in sickening cross-streams. Dun-

bar kept his eyes on the road. He suspected that Ruth was holding Woody's hand. He didn't look. She was leaning against him, Dunbar. And when they arrived at the restaurant they ordered hamburgers and soda to eat in the car—like a party. Before the food came Woody turned to Ruthie and with a smug, mocking tone began.

"You've been telling us some not-so-nice things, little Ruthie . . ."

Woody told Ruthie, word for word, what she had said to Dunbar about him. Then Dunbar told Ruth exactly what she had told Woody. She kept sinking lower as they spoke. Dunbar thought she was mocking them by faking embarrassment. He felt sorry for her. Woody thought she was truly embarrassed and ashamed. He was happy about it. The white electric lights at the restaurant made her hair look ever more red.

She asked Dunbar, suddenly, to give her a second to talk to Woody alone. Dunbar agreed and walked to the men's room. He combed his hair and stopped and looked at himself in the mirror.

Woody was finishing his last chorus, giving Dunbar his cue: a high screeching ninth, and A, held for two bars. Dunbar began rephrasing the melody in the lower range of his instrument. The rhythm section was strong and solid that night.

Dunbar left the men's room and walked slowly back to the car. Woody was just getting out. Dunbar got in.

Ruth then told Dunbar that she liked only him, she was sorry she lied, she wouldn't do it again, and asked if he would ever take her out again. Dunbar was counting the spokes on the wire wheel of the MG parked next to them. There should be sixty-two. He got to twenty-eight, remembered that he forgot where the first spoke was anyway, and quit. He told her he probably would ask her out again. He felt bored. She pouted some more, telling him that he had a sadistic mind. Dunbar watched the lights, brighter than any day, reflected in the shining street.

The food came. He paid for it. Then Woody came back smiling. They ate and, there being nothing more to say, drove back to Ruth's house. Dunbar noticed a wind had started up.

Dunbar was making his saxophone scream, top volume, through a double-time chorus. Trying to fly above it.

They got to Ruth's house. And Woody walked her to the door. After a time he came back to the car where Dunbar was waiting and told him that he didn't need a ride home, he would walk.

Dunbar drove off. He knew she had said the same thing to both of them. But she liked him. He had hope for them, the both of them;—Dunbar and Ruth, himself and Ruth . . .

After chopping one chorus of straight eight-notes against the smooth surging rhythm, Dunbar held the next with fat high D through the

changes. He flew over and through the chords. It was the thing.

Woody knew it too. They were best friends.

Woody blew into the melody as Dunbar suspended the one note, the long line above it. They all joined in the last chorus in unison in a lower key. The key change suddenly made the song thicken and become darker. They ended there.

Quiet. For a moment.

The group felt good. Dunbar suggested another tune. It was a Horace Silver number, "Filty McNasty." A fast blues. And they all played intensely at it. And the other tunes that followed too were attacked with an intense concentration. Two hours playing. But the thing was gone. They broke for some iced tea.

Someone knocked on the door that led outside. It was Ruth.

Dunbar saw her. He went to the kitchen to get himself some more iced-tea. He didn't want to see her. When he came back, five minutes later, she was gone. So was Woody.

The piano player said she was drunk. And that began it. Dunbar had taken her to the movies that night before. She had been cute. Lovable. Dunbar had told her how he felt. She felt it too, really. It had been good, calm. And as they lay that last night in the back seat of the car together, she had fallen asleep in his arms. He watched the tall calm stars.

Now Dunbar felt like smashing his saxophone through the wall. But he only stood quietly and looked out of the small basement window at the bare bottoms of the bushes in the yard. He felt like chopping them down and burning them. But he only turned to the piano player and offered to drive him home. He did this.

After he left the piano player at a dark corner, Dunbar hit the gas pedal of the Plymouth. It shuddered, almost stalling, then roared off.

Dunbar drove wild through widening roads, putting in time until it was time to go to Ruth's. He aimed the car through dark winding tunnels made by thick overhanging branches of trees. And he drove screeching out through the forested hills and back, aimlessly, at a hundred or more miles an hour. If he saw Ruth's car he knew he would try to stop her.

Later Dunbar parked the car a block away from Ruth's house and walked through the back yards to finally hide near her driveway. For one instant the thought crossed his mind that the whole idea was foolish. Then the instant was gone.

Dunbar waited.

In the night, things began to move around him. First it was the sound of a radio; a baseball game was being told to the dimness, far off, across the street. And there were thick trees hanging above him,

slightly swaying at the tops from a slight hot wind. Dunbar wanted to think about Ruth, to remember what they had done together for so long. He leaned against one of the swaying trees and listened to the sound of cars that were moving on the highway, across the valley on the next ridge of hills. Ruth. He tried to think. Dunbar wanted to wonder where each car might be going. But he found, after trying that he couldn't imagine, or daydream. With intense concentration he forced himself to listen to the next four innings of the faint baseball game. He watched the soft streetlight, suspended above the street, shining among the branches of a tree, moving in the faint hot wind.

An hour later the car pulled into Ruth's driveway. Ruth got out to open the garage door. At least she started to get out. Dunbar half dragged out of the car and slammed her back against the wall of the house. He hurt her head doing this. She didn't seem drunk.

She asked him, sarcastic even now, what he wanted.

At that Dunbar knew he was defeated. But he told here how much he felt he hated her. His arms were shaking with the tension; holding her against the wall. He thought her noble at this instant. Then, as if to hit her, he leaned back; and suddenly stalked off, back into the darkness, to his father's company car. He had called her every foul thing he could. He had meant to hit her.

And the thing had lasted less than a minute.

Carefully, he opened the door of the Plymouth and got in. Cautiously, he drove home.

Dunbar knew what would happen. There would be explaining. And he would have to apologize to Ruth's parents. But he only felt tired.

Some of his friends, and Woody, would congratulate him for what he had just done. Others would hate him. And Ruth would still want him. In her room at home she would be almost loving him then. But Dunbar didn't feel one way or the other. It was over and done for that night.

Dunbar opened the windows of the car at a stop light. The fresh wind was good. He moved on into the darkness, listening to the hiss of the tires slightly under him. Nothing had been proved. But as he turned down the street where he lived he heard some children talking in the shadows; he felt good and alone.

—Alan Pavlik

## AFTER ALICE

Long before me doors  
Stand like dominoes  
But large  
With the large shouting  
Gawk of not-me  
And in my staring mouth  
The crystal taste of  
A toadstool torn  
Piece-meal from  
The lower edge  
Within bare reach

Big brass handles  
Hang high above me  
Tarnished suns  
Screwed  
To the flat-up horizon  
Splintered, chipped  
Weatherless

I duck my smallness  
Kept so  
To peer beneath  
Knotty sky  
Seeing unraveled  
Empty gray  
Grounded but  
Going beneath  
The next door



That one of red  
 Solid, shiny  
 Suspended  
 With guillotine  
 Finality  
 Above necromantic  
 Numbness  
 The gray carpet  
 I cannot crawl  
 The cracked passage  
 Too small for my fleshy bones

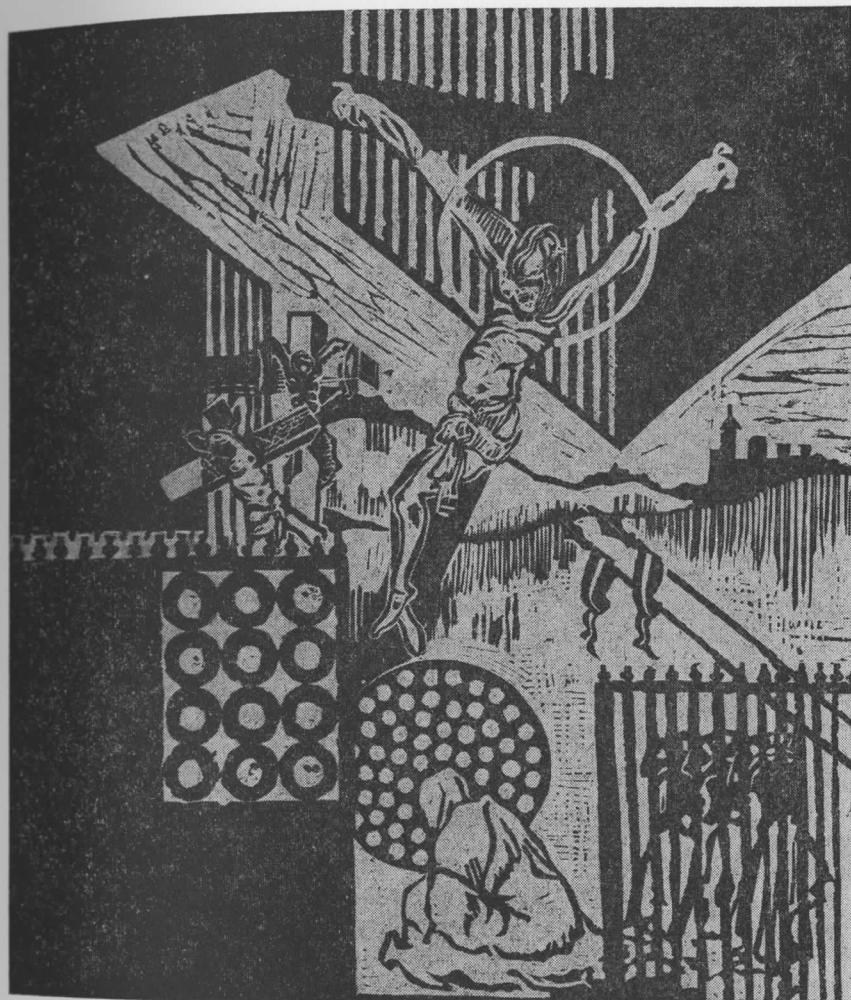
—Barbara Bergantz

### REEDS

Morning comes but brittle on the reeds,  
 Who are silent realizing that all must break,  
 Even as I realize, even as I know,  
 Sensing the crispness of the stalks,  
 Feeling them point to sky and stretch,  
 And then not stretching but growing,  
 And then not growing but drying  
 And now dry and dying  
 Because all must break.

Water we have and do not need,  
 Fire we have and cannot use,  
 The reeds and I are stiff and cannot move,  
 But in not moving we cannot be wrong;  
 Before us there were more who did the same,  
 Who heard and answered this, the ultimate command—  
 Break.

—Lauren Shakeley





## INFERNO

Beginning from Como,  
Thinking of rowing through storms,  
I wandered among heroic moments  
In motherless cities  
And child-barren landscapes,  
Looking for my poetical place:

Echoing noiselessly through jade rooms  
Of the Oriental Wing of the Louvre;  
The blue-black piano  
Cleanly transparent  
In the silent stone court  
Of after-closing-hour Pitti Palace;  
Studying, out of season,  
From across the deserted square,  
Utrillo's rose cathedral;  
Watching the sybaritic bougainvillea  
Lushly erode the broken bottle wall in Antibes;  
Trying the night-bright corner table,  
Alone with warm tea in Paris;  
Ashamed on the quay,  
Of old men and their river;  
Escaping unspoken from Borghese's temple  
For swans and fat suited men  
Rowing sinking red boats—

Probably sinking on Lake Como too,  
There being no progression in silence,  
But only arbitrary passing;  
Only moving on  
To memorize more table tops.

—Hugh Wilder

## THE STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

I saw her when a misdirected light from the stage struck her face and impressed her profile upon my mind. Until then I had been watching "The Streetcar Named Desire." From then on my attention was captivated by her.

She was sitting in my row, across the aisle from me. She wore a black dress. It was quite short. And she was sort of careless about it. As she made herself comfortable in her chair, I became uneasy in mine.

Spots and darkness played shadows on her golden hair, and on her young breasts (especially when she leaned back). I ignored "The Streetcar" and watched for two hours, her and Desire. Before the curtain was down I had my coat on, ready to follow her wherever she might go.

The Istiklal Avenue was cold and crowded, and she walked fast. I jostled my way through the dense human clusters, excused myself, bumped into people, got jostled back and cursed at.

With a lash of my imagination, I snatched her off the street, and took her to my apartment. We listened to music, and uttered our passionate, eternal love for each other, and ceaselessly made love until the dawn broke.

She made a sudden turn and entered the covered Flower Market. We walked through rows and rows of beer barrels with marble tops, around which sat red-faced men. We walked on cobble-stone, among glistening flowers in their racks, and drunks gently rocking on their chairs. Bloody sheeps' heads gaped at us, lurching by. Before we stepped out into the cold and leery night we stopped side by side at the exit of the Market, and let our eyes meet.

Hers were blue, but not a gay, carefree blue. They wanted to tell me something I couldn't understand. I had somehow imagined them differently.

We stepped into one of the narrow, winding streets behind Istiklal Avenue.

I already had her in my boat, headed towards a secret, small bay in the Princess Islands. There we lay on the rocks, spread out against the sun and the sky which was immediately vacated by the discreet sea-gulls to insure our privacy. We made love on the tiny, soft beach, swam in the warm water, then swam back to our beach to make love again.

The street became narrower and darker and meandered between tiny but tall apartment buildings and small shops with dusty windows. I walked faster and the distance between the two of us decreased. Suddenly she stopped under a lamp-post which illuminated her by its faint light. Her golden hair reflected the light and the million stars which flickered on us. She stood there more like a vision than a tangible being, long enough for me to catch the la Gioconda smile on her face. She then turned to her right, and entered the street of the brothels.

—Cem Kozlu

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