

EXILE  
Fall 1986



EXILE  
Denison University's  
Literary Magazine

You of the finer sense,  
Broken against false knowledge,  
You who cannot know at firsthand,  
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought:  
I have weathered the storm,  
I have beaten out my exile.

*Ezra Pound*

Fall 1986

## Editorial Board

Editors share equally all editorial decisions.

Debra Benko	Jim Linsao
Jennie Dawes	Liz McCarthy
Deepak Khiani	Jane Smith
Lauren Kronish	Elizabeth Wright
David Zivan	

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### Contributor Notes

Cover: *Treetops*, Jane Smith



## The Unfathomable

Who, swimming naked and alone  
In some forgotten pond  
Wants to open her eyes beneath the surface  
To see the strange light her body casts?  
To view her own familiar figure's  
Angles askew, contorted in a yielding suspension,  
Glowing in the green?  
Frightened some stray bass  
Might cross the dim boundary illumined  
By skin-shine, who would guess  
What swims beyond tender eye's range?  
So let the struggling plant-life  
Entangle my limbs, but  
Keep me from asking who sends them.  
Why touch where the roots are bound  
To the muddy earth?

## Busting the Fence

Billy's Chevy pickup in the silver light of dusk,  
Breaking free at 60 and shuddering through the  
Dusty half-roads of Midwestern Acreage.  
Raging against furrowed land. Busting the fence.

Billy's Chevy pickup with me, elbow out the  
Window. Tobacco spit out on the landscape,  
Miller bottles stashed low, then flung secretly,  
Smashing on moving earth. Scarring the fields.

Billy's Chevy pickup on black city pavement,  
Straining hard against the Good Book, and looking for  
The daughters of Sodom and Playboy,  
Waiting on forbidden corners. Staining the Word.

Billy's Chevy pickup, our only ticket to the  
Wide eyed Promised Land; neon in the Ohio Night.



## H2O

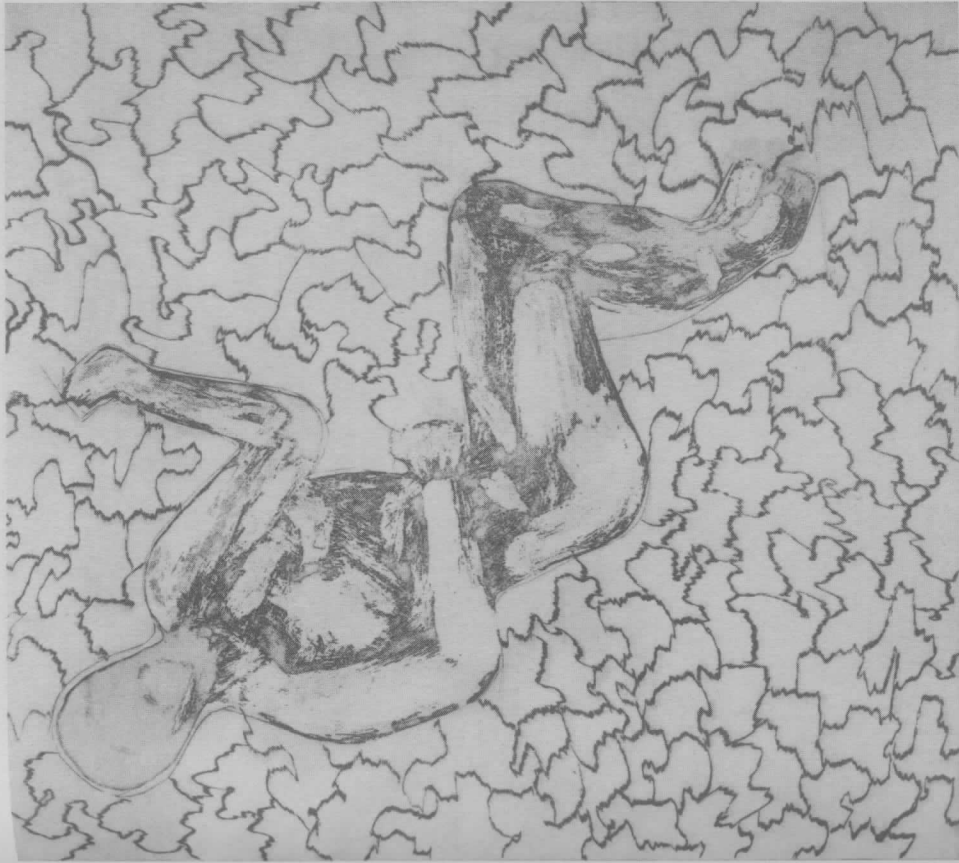
This single tear I let fall from my eye  
Has travelled far across the vacant plains  
In clouds that gathered, darkening the sky.  
This single tear fell once in summer rains  
Upon a woman, nude below the sur-  
Face of the water where she swam. She wrung  
It from her hair while singing, soft and pure.  
It fell as perspiration from a young  
Man's brow, a home-sick sailor thinking of  
The work he must complete before his shift  
Is through, and how the ocean conquers love.  
This tear, once crystallized within a drift  
Of snow, has quenched a glowing cinder with  
Its breath. It falls away, ignoring death.

## The Women Below Me

The women below me are leaving.  
I was so glad when they moved  
into the apartment,  
so glad it wasn't a man  
or a family with noisy children.  
I hoped we would share recipes  
and coffee and the complaints  
of bad days at work.  
But they were private women.  
Oh, I enjoyed seeing them  
whenever I could.  
They laughed so much together,  
and their thoughts often overlapped  
so that one could finish what the other  
had begun to say.  
They were good friends, good women.

But now the women below me are leaving.  
One has just moved out.  
Her sister picked her up.  
I watched them pack the car  
and I watched her hold her sister tightly  
in the street below.  
I thought I saw the sister  
wipe a tear off the woman's face.  
I don't know when the other woman  
will leave, but I should think  
she will miss her friend.  
I know I shall miss the  
soft sounds of their laughter  
and their overlapping thoughts,  
and I shall miss imagining what they are doing  
in the quiet rooms beneath me.





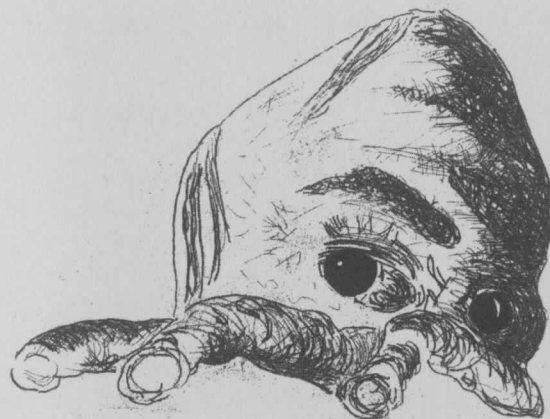
## Together, Bathing

I look at you now, a child  
but five years old, silently  
watching me bathe you.  
I think of the girl  
who birthed you five years ago.  
She wanted to keep you,  
wanted to bathe you as I am now,  
wanted to protect you,  
wanted to love you enough  
to make you love her.

You watch me, wide-eyed,  
wash first my arm, then your arm,  
my breast, then your breast.  
We are quiet, together, and naked  
in the hot water.  
I bathe with you every night  
after I pick you up  
from the daycare center.  
You draw the bath,  
undress in the corner,  
and then wait for me  
to come and cleanse you,  
and do what she could not.

## Big Scissors

With my big scissors  
I trimmed away  
the lining of the sky.  
Infinity poured in!  
White noise flooding my nose,  
throat gurgling, I groped  
for my big needle  
and blue thread.



## The Day Before

To see crows perched at tops of sycamores,  
hear their throaty screeches,  
circling, swooping

and then to go out at the hour  
of morning when the world belongs to crows  
and meet one on the grass, silent,

not scaring the crow half my size  
but myself

was to know the day before

was to come home, ten miles away from Davis Besse,  
after headlines about Kiev  
and letters about my brother

to remember the ten-year-old who  
clapped tight fists to his ears  
when sirens sounded Fridays at twelve noon,  
and shut his eyes to find a Ray Bradbury story  
where people are shadows on a wall.

Now I see the fifteen-year-old taller  
than I am and still growing,  
lean and knob-shouldered.

Today I fear a different Siren he hears  
more than the other,  
the name of a girl who calls his number and shadows  
of female forms under rapid eye movement

until I remember that in the rhyme the crow,  
no, a blackbird, snipped off  
the maid's nose.

## On Choctawhatchee Bay

I feel the storm before I see it,  
bay breeze stronger than before.  
The flashes of reflected sun on water  
whip up into whitecaps,  
the wind urges water to quicken.  
I have not seen this before.  
The blue bay reflects yellow as  
the clouds approach.  
A lone sailor, on a small craft,  
races across the wind for shore and safety  
to beat the rain, his red sail straining.  
I turn to windward,  
see your face  
in the storming clouds.



## Contributor Notes

Amy Becker does other things

Debra Benko is waiting for March 15!

Eliza Brown is a junior from Nashville. She is on her first semester of photography at Denison.

Karen J. Hall is waiting.

C. E. McGinnis is the Editor-in-chief of *The Denisonian* and is therefore, rarely poetic.

Jane Smith is a senior studio art major. Her favorite medium is engraving/printmaking.

Holly Trotter is a senior studio art and psychology major from Buffalo, N.Y. She looks forward to her own art show next semester in Cleveland Hall.

Terri J. Wolf is a junior studio art major. Her solo print show recently opened in Cleveland Hall.

William (Woody) Woodroof is a junior studio art major. His first solo photography show opened in Cleveland Hall this fall.

David Zivan is a junior English major. He is already looking forward to Spring Break.

