

Spring 1979

# The Carroll Quarterly, Spring 1979

John Carroll University

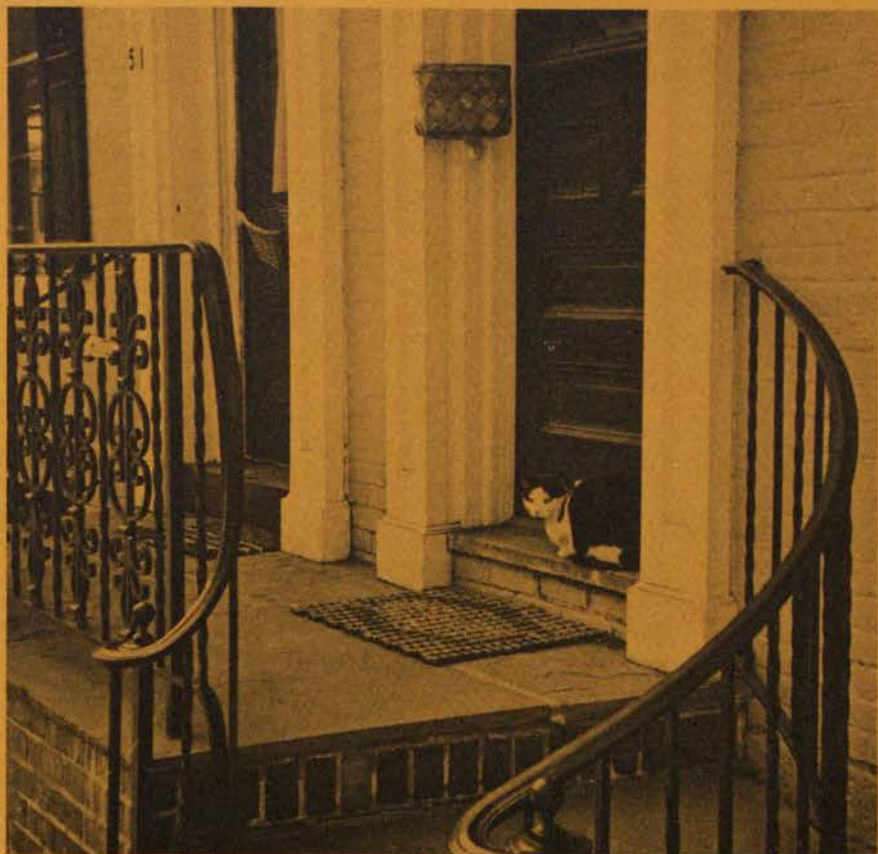
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carroll quarterly

spring 1979



## OPENING

*On Keller Street  
at the slowing of bike spokes in afternoon drone,  
when the sun-specked cobblestone  
paradised toes,  
and the soft-giggle breeze  
flipped maple leaves to silver;  
when the cat flicked ear to whispering warmth  
and slowly lifted eye to gentle tufts of fur;  
while woodwinded sparrows lullabyed our veins,  
we lay against brick walls  
and purred ourselves to sleep.*

THE CARROLL QUARTERLY

SPRING 1979

The *Carroll Quarterly* is a literary magazine produced by an undergraduate staff, and written by the students, alumni and friends of John Carroll University. Manuscripts should be sent to the English Department.

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Ann Zukowski

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Laurie Ewert

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Pat Healey



GARDEN CHIMES

(for Catherine)

Soft sound, through the air light music traces;  
Dangling precariously from the tangled branches of trees,  
Round, jostled in circles by the breeze,  
Silver and glass gems,  
Alone, but not desolate above the elevated terraces;  
Chiming among the leaves floating on their stems.

A quiet tune that tumbles down to fond listeners below,  
Secluded behind garden walls out of hedges spun,  
Enclosed by meadows and woods dressed for the season  
To give the wind color,  
Quenched by excited currents which naturally flow  
While the morning dawns or stars in the night sky stir.

Bittersweet fruits pressed together into a liquid fine,  
Pour over smiling lips. Fragrant and cool  
Beside them, reflected in a rich blue pool,  
Flowers appear as if each  
Were an eternal white, like clouds on a vine;  
Here where a lover's touch is never out of reach.

Once inside, both are content to spend whole days  
With the growing companion open to evening's dark song,  
Rains' throb, and fresh blossoming in day's light strong.  
Few enter this fertile field  
Where all time and weather stays,  
But to green, sorrow and loneliness yield.

Still, the sweet music from wind-powered percussion  
Falls to two surrounded by the gentle air,  
Listening openly or answering with their  
Love spoken freely; in meter; with rhyme;  
Most often in faithful understanding through silent  
discussion  
Of life that lasts an entire lovetime.

*Chris Johnston*



UNTITLED

Spring comes on furtive wings  
whispering madness.  
The light listens and raises  
rain-strung breezes  
to voice hushed sacramental song.  
May Day asks no pungent incense, no satin cope.  
For the light listens to muted sounds  
of ancient celebration;  
the frenzied offering,  
the vernal sacrifice  
to win an altered earth.

*Victoria Robinson*

MARY STEVENSON CASSATT (1844-1926)  
(for Catherine Brady)

"There's only one thing in life  
for a woman; it is to be a mother."

Such a scandal for a spinster  
to claim so many children.  
To name not two or three  
but to boast in numbers  
where decent women would blush.  
Begotten in pride and  
consummated in the flesh of paint,  
each child's life was  
breathed in line by line.  
A little girl sits primly  
in the center of the frame;  
Or, draped askance across a sofa  
bored, perhaps, by the blueness of the room;  
Or, arms sweeping to the nape of neck  
to arrange her hair listlessly:  
these are your daughters.  
For your own mother, you chose  
a proper pose. She is caught  
in stiff white tones,  
eyes scanning Le Figaro.  
Always alone you labored,  
consecrating your nights  
to an unlawful passion,  
disciplining your children  
in strict lines of will.  
Still they sit, obediently,  
just as you ordered them.

*Marylin Mell*



*Daniel Rondini*

GIRL WITH THE PHILOSOPHER'S TOWEL

I have just come out of powder,  
As informed as a law of chemistry,  
To tell, in towel, the moisted mirror  
That I have never worn a man  
Appropriate. To suit, I should stress  
For the occasion. I foresee no event.  
I have received no invitation.  
Mailboxes stand in the way of the snowplow.

I have just come down from up,  
As predicted as a law of gravity,  
To hear an instructive voice tell me  
That I have never left a room  
Considerate. To assist, I should clear  
A place for the next. I foresee no successor.  
I have given no plans.  
Disorder stands apart from God.

I have just ascended per a command,  
As directed as a canon law,  
To absorb the condensation that mists  
And squeaks lint on my mindless  
Reflection. With time, I could clean  
The fog out. I foresee no face.  
I have folded unmatched towels.  
The profound is advanced by the maid.

R. Porritt



Pat Healey

EXCERPT FROM THE TRAIN  
by Jim Reho

Shortly after the Train plunged into the tunnel, a sharp veer in the tunnel's direction cut off the view of the outside; the Train was immersed in darkness. After an indeterminate interval Greg grew aware of a glowing spot on the tunnel's wall, as though a firefly had settled there. Additional spots appeared, more and more pinpoints of light, some scattered, some grouped in queerly familiar clusters. As the Train became surrounded by the tiny, intense lights, the sense of enclosure vanished; the Train had left the tunnel behind. They were outside, then; the lights, placed in the new context, revealed themselves as stars. But somehow Greg knew that something was amiss, out of place. He realized what. The stars shone steadily, constantly, with no blinking or fluctuation at all. How can that be, thought Greg, when the Earth's atmosphere itself makes the stars seem to flicker? He received his answer when he happened to look through the window towards the ground. There was no ground, only stars reaching downward and outward as far as Greg's vision could penetrate. The Train swam across a sea of stars; and space is the only such sea.

Fascinated, mesmerized, riveted, Greg watched until the distinctions between consciousness and dreaming wavered and dissolved. He felt the Train slip and spiral back through time, through space, to the fringe of creation where the original infant stars coalesced, when our own galaxy was the merest wisp of potential in the muddle of times unborn. There Greg witnessed, or dreamed he witnessed, the pulsing first heart of love, gravid, bursting, casting bits and pieces of its flesh in every direction, seeds scattered, drifting, awaiting the opportunity for fruition. And Greg Tryson, awed beyond thought, suspended outside time, witnessed the passage of eons, the maturity and disintegration of galaxies, until somewhere in the backwaters of the universe, in a two-bit little solar system whose planets were still hot to the touch, an intersection occurred beneath lifeless waters, between one of those seeds, fragments of the first great heart, and an insignificant jot of jelly, one in a million billion such jots. But this one was different. This one quivered, bulged, split in two, then those split in two again. And so did the seed, germinating, multiplying, a viable smidgeon infused into each new cell. And so on and



on and on until multi-celled creatures appeared, each with its germination of heart, but primitive germinations, no more advanced than the insensate creatures they dwelt within.

And on and on. Trilobites dominated, vanished; gape-jawed fish reigned and were deposed, within each the seed, barely germinated, patiently waiting. And then some pitifully clumsy half-fish heaved itself on shore with flippers, inhaled one searing breath, and died; but some of those who followed lived, and the seed dwelt within them, waiting.

The amphibians evolved, grew, the dinosaurs rose and fell, the seed growing little more than in their one-celled ancestors. And so it would remain in most animals: the host a too limited environment, the seed unable to reach fruition, unable to develop in creatures without mind, creatures untouched by the slowly gathering light of intelligence. But life took many trails, and the chitterers who fled the dinosaurs bore their young live and protected them, mothers fighting to the death to save their progeny, sacrificing themselves for their young. In these the seed grew more fully, extending thin tendrils which anchored themselves in the beginnings of crude minds. But this soil was too dry, too lacking in nutrients, to support further growth; and most of these species reached evolution's end too.

But not all: one of life's paths led to the treetops, and some of the primates came back down. At first they shambled on all fours; then one of them raised his knuckles off the ground and walked. He fell, tried and failed again and again, but his grandchildren two thousand generations removed had a bit more luck. And at some point, perhaps when a shaggy-haired hunter saw the stars and dimly wondered why, the seed's first stalk broke the surface, pale and thin. Other seeds it developed, had germinated in the same soil; perhaps the day the hunter grabbed a tree branch and clubbed his companion's brain in, a shoot of another sort appeared.

Finally the heart-seed's stalks, growing rapidly in competition with the other plants, rose through the unconscious and began to twine themselves around the conscious mind. The object? Symbiosis. For only intelligence could bring the heart-plant to bloom; and only the bloom of the heart could bring intelligence and the emotions evoked by the heart's presence to fulfillment. Parasites, bloodsucking vines, established themselves also, often causing the heart to wither and die, to be stunted and overcome.

And at last Greg Tryson witnessed the world he lived in, and whether his vision be real or but a dream, was profoundly moved. For he saw human hearts always struggling to touch and commingle, to strengthen each other, to protect each other from the vines. He saw human beings striving to find that long-ago lost wholeness, to end the aloneness of their births. But for all the couplings, the combinations



and recombinations, the aloneness persisted. Some contact did take place, and Greg saw hope for the future in this; but mankind had not yet reached readiness for bloom, if indeed it ever would. Steps remained to be climbed and vines to be cleared. Still, the bloom was not so distant that the thought could not enter men's dreams. And that, in a sense, was the tragedy. Many people, unable to conceive of what a bloom would mean, and hence able to believe they had attained it, could be content. Others, knowing they were missing something but not knowing what, attempted to endure and wondered what was wrong with themselves.

Still others could at least begin to imagine their heart's bloom, to understand what it might feel like, but because the plant was not sufficiently mature, because the competing plants were too strong, because social conditions were unsuitable, they could not bring the bloom about. They could see, they could wish, they could hope, but they could not succeed. They could pound on the barriers, but they could not pass through them. This Greg witnessed, and witnessed his own heart and his own past, and he knew he was one of these.

OUR TRIBAL ELDERS

Days have run by;  
A wandering Armenian we are,  
Oasis before us  
Perhaps.

Light fails,  
Dusk darkens,  
Tomorrow looms with thirst.

Our tribal elders have slipped  
Into darkness,  
Their skeletons entrusted to the earth's womb  
Their souls hover.

The winds might tell us  
Their destination  
Perhaps.

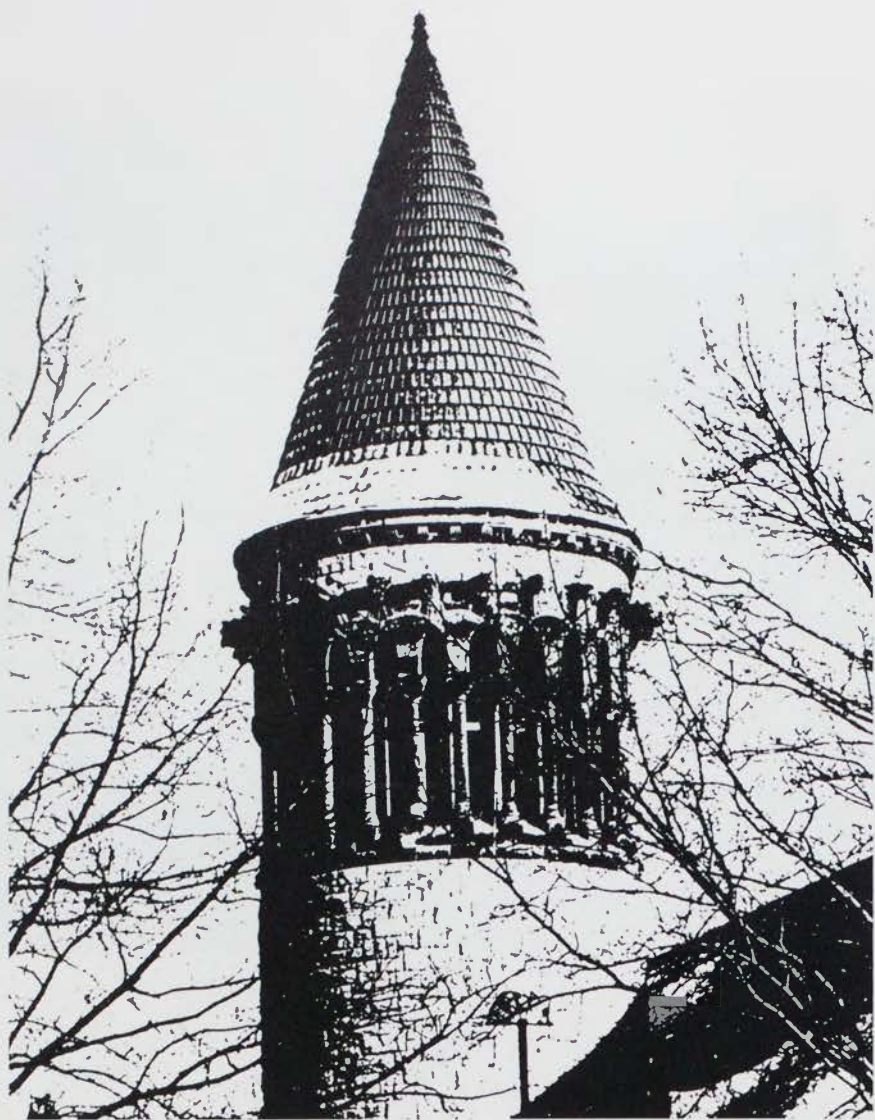
Their bones dive deeper,  
Their souls roam.  
How far are they?  
How near are they?  
Are they thirsting for nectar?  
Are they pining for holocaust?

The ubiquitous winds  
That prowl the fields  
Know all  
Perhaps.

*Br. Charles de Graft-Biney, OSB*



*Cindie Carroll Pankhurst*



*George Kosicki*

### ADMONITION

This sanded brick does not  
allow for one the wilds of wind,  
holds curled and cornered  
in lock the wool wrapped figure  
who, perhaps in spite  
of know and should,  
would heed the unceremonious lure  
of northern breath  
beckoning with the blistered knuckles  
of the silver birch  
that upholds the tumbling night  
with less brittle arms.

*Paula Bruening*

CALVARY

The cup of hours expires on evening's lip;  
Gethsemane's lees we raise toward the morn  
In memory of the place of the Skull.  
Without the cross we'd bleed into the night.

*Alan M. Kumpf*

## ON THE RIVER BANKS

You have not lost me today  
though to touch me sears affection,  
and your words sit on stone walls before my eyes.

I am there  
on the opposite bank of the river  
hauling my day's catch shoreward,  
pulling my last nets homeward  
as you, my mirrored reflection, pull yours.

Shoulders taut, hands raw,  
the nets come in  
heavy, but empty,  
as the dusk drains the evening light from air.

The dip and lift of our arms, the harmonics of our bodies  
ripples the water, sends it cresting  
to a peak and curl in the central flow;  
our hemp lines mingle on the river's bed.

I look up to you, looking up to me  
and I wave,  
reaching to you over turbulent water,  
touching you through swirlings of air.

You have not lost me, though my sunlight fades,  
for I am there  
dragging my empty nets nightward,  
and knowing in the strain of the ropes on my shoulders  
the pain of the burden on yours.

*Laurie Ewert*





*Peg Nash*

FOR MY YOUNGEST SISTER  
BECAUSE SHE KNOWS THAT  
THE HORSES AND FARM ARE TO BE SOLD

The horses groan their sleep bulk  
In shafts of dark dulled old.  
Their redolent brome sighs  
Are lofted from their lungs--  
Twinings of vaped oats  
That hang their tarps on beams.  
The hope for such continued issuance  
Peaks, rafter lays, then clouds  
To time-lock foals who lip at grass.

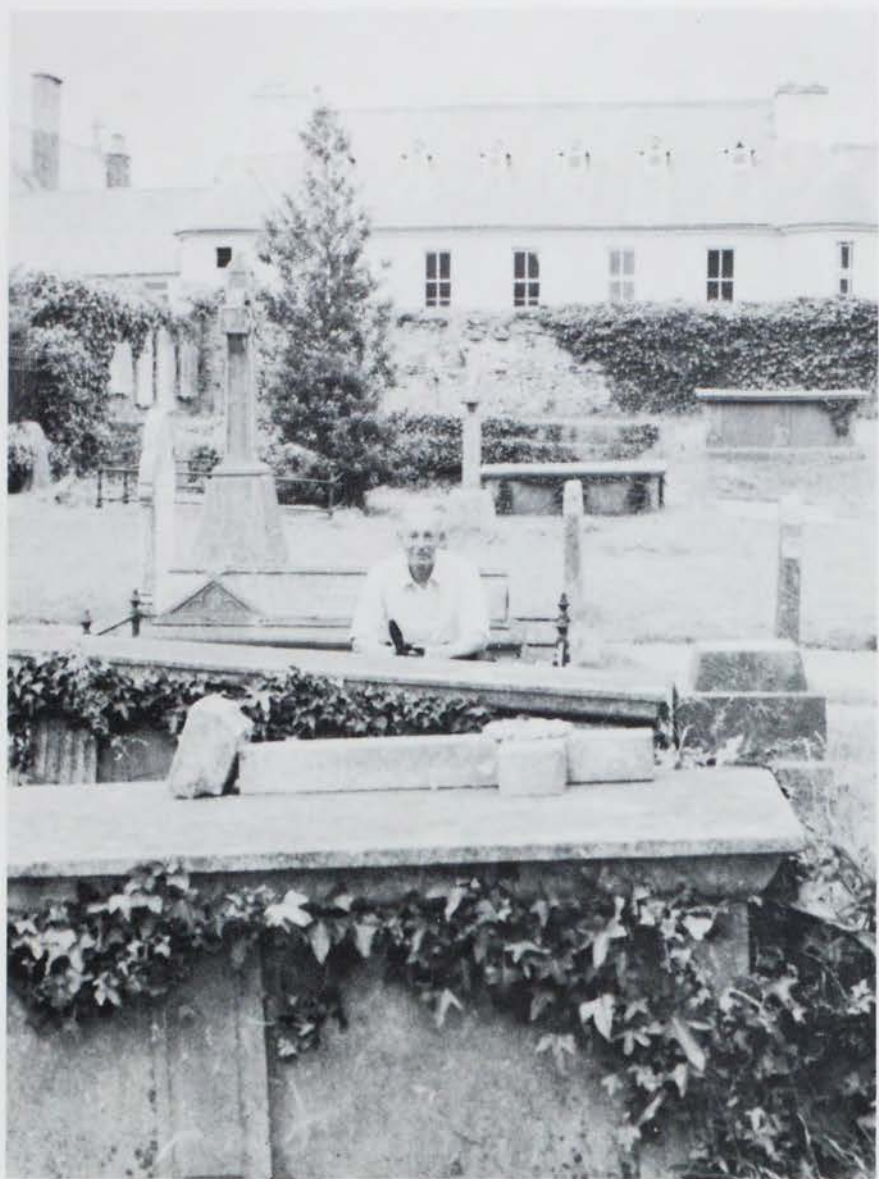
There is more than the indication of the weather vane:  
The pattern of the rural man is best seen from a plane.

The horses flick an ear in dream,  
Or tense to buckle a gaskin;  
In their propped heads clatter  
The shod racing plates that shed  
When the distance is done.  
They groan deep and steam again.  
Out of barns, the rowed white pines  
Gesture aptly to invoke  
The oboe horns from centennial siding.

Mother lifts the fruit off the shelf;  
Father turns the land over in harrowed self.

The bracken curls and darkens.  
In their season, the children scatter  
Beyond fences, eared to sound.  
But when bell called, the children cannot wipe  
The leave slick off.  
Rather, they pass back through the isles,  
Armed with grass and grain,  
To tangle in stalled manes  
And a dun hide stain.

*R. Porritt*



Anne Crowley

AN INFORMAL REVIEW: THE GRIEF OF THE SMILING IRISH  
by Owen Hernan Jr. LaCrosse, Wisconsin: Juniper Press, 1978

From the first line, you know that this review will not be objective or antiseptic: for it is about a person whose life and art are in my blood like rum from the night before. It is both for a man and for his father who are born growing old as their forest darkens towards its center; for an artist and his father who are now becoming one as the evening gathers. The tribute to the son is a tribute to the father, for love and grief and beauty resonate to their source.

Owen Hernan Jr.'s work in The Grief of the Smiling Irish and the entire body of his work is like listening to a flawed and wounded Zen master speak of life in symbols of East 9th Street and the abandoned banks of the Cuyahoga. His poems do not unravel, they stare with the eyes of words: words of an outcast and a beggar who knows grief from its bone and transforms it into a beauty that must be drunk directly, not chewed as narrative or even as extended poetic circumstance. The testimony to his talent that is sometimes great -- and never has generated a bad poem (which can be said of very few of us) -- is that his art is a direct transmission, through image, from intuitive artist to intuitive reader. He induces readers to come from the fragments of their days and stare simply at their lives as if his poem hung as a painting of their grief made beautiful. His lines do not unfold; they stare. And the life of the poem is in the staring of the image and in the relation of one image to another and one line to another, much as in a poem by Basho or another artist of Zen. If the relation between the lines is not apprehended, then the poem fails for the reader. Hernan demands of the reader that he make the leap of discovery as in the symbology of dreams. Dreams have significance and are an "existential message" for those who have the intuitive power to ascertain their emotional value. They are there only briefly and only briefly unfold -- stare at us from ourselves as children of our emotion that implore. So it is with this sensitive outcast of symbology. He comes with a few words from the bag of his imagination and asks only for the coin of our attention. He is a child who could not scale the schoolyard fence -- afraid of heights; a child intimidated by his conceived inadequacy, fostered by an

overwhelming world and demands made too soon on a sheltered innocence. We all live out the absences and presences of or childhood and reach maturity or oblivion, laboring from our beginnings. So it is with this radiant outcast and child.

But now I feel, because I know him, he will assimilate all presences and come strongly into his own. He will wrestle better with the angel of his memory. I spoke of him as Zen in style, though he knows little of Zen; but he is, in heritage, Christian and Irish and speaks to his Lord as a father who has gone away and returns in his loneliness, to the ritual of quiet Irish rhapsody in the laughter and silence of the magic house: the bar. For there, at least, is a temporary home: a home which, at least, in anticipation and imagination, can requit the longings and the hopes of a deeply fearful heart.

But now the day is come and the night has gone, old friend. And compassion and acceptance of our deeply flawed beauty will be enough for us. I give you now a poem I wrote for you long ago and I give to your public -- always small for poets, but enough for us -- a few worded creatures from your magic bag.

*James Magner*

FOR YOU, OLD FRIEND, IN THE BLEAK MORNINGS  
OF OUR EXISTENCE

(for Owen Hernan)

Let us give ourselves in our deprivation  
to those who will receive our love,  
not sorrowing over attachment or loss,  
but to the world, our children  
and the old man on the stoop  
nauseous with his morning diaphany  
of muscatel.

Let us, old friend, not be undone by our aloneness  
and the ghost hours when the saturday night special  
wants entrance into our dreams.

We will not dissolve our hearts  
in the woods behind the house  
but give ourselves to all who need us  
and will absorb what we have garnered  
from the weeds, the moon, the Cuyahoga,  
the bleak mornings of our sickness  
and the eyes we have for paradise.

*James Magner*

POEMS by Owen Hernan

THREE A.M.

This is an hour of Chinese eyes  
when drinkers sway  
like monks at prayer  
and whisper their innocence.  
Absence approaches  
like sudden ice  
and time  
clicks to the heels  
of a slim girl's shoes.

TO AN IRISH BOY

He could never climb  
the schoolyard fence -  
a boost in the ass  
would turn his face red.  
So he imagined the heights  
and put stones in his shoes  
and walked  
like a lame boy.



MC GINTY'S

At McGinty's  
where the words  
were slow and impossible  
we found our faith  
and drank our melodies.

We had followed our fathers there  
and we wore their griefs  
like carnations  
and never knew  
we were grieving.

Those wishing a copy of The Grief of the Smiling Irish  
may write to The Juniper Press, 1310 Shore Drive,  
LaCrosse, Wisconsin 54610, or order it from the John  
Carroll Bookstore.



*Anne Crowley*

## WAITING ON WIND RIVER

I feel it is the day; all is right around me.  
My arm still sleeps while your head rests upon it;  
You have not yet pulled yourself out of the night.  
The kiss I plant on your forehead feels the warmth there,  
And grows. And the dampness from our dreams dries in  
The sheets cooled by the morning breeze, light but  
Un-fired by a sun yet low and far. Drawn into our room,  
Blustering curtains furl freely as they try and hold the wind;  
They cling to the white sill when it runs from them.  
I hear the rushing sound of the winds outside mimicking the  
    waves.  
A mile away down the river, a tall ship rocks steadily,  
With beams wrapped by dormant sails  
Waiting, waiting for the winds, waiting for favorable  
    currents.

In the ship's hold, men fasten supplies  
And work through their hopes of returning with treasures;  
A trove of foreign gifts--crystal, minerals, and perfumes--  
To replace the necessities. Men, within them, through them,  
Courses a briny solution, identical to my own, and  
They know their lives come from the oceans'.  
I reach out and feel the time to travel.  
You have spent time with me by this flowing river's side,  
Winding in roundabout ways but always prompt  
In meeting the sea, and we know all of the whitewashed  
Houses and picket fence divisions here. But the roads  
Were built to the harbor, where they release me to  
Movement and experience. The ship floats ready to scud  
Through waters that will whet her aged bow again.  
Should we return, I will tie the lines.

*Chris Johnston*

AGAIN I HAVE STOOD

"Days after, walking to the market or  
mornings in the gray office we will  
rethink our multiple replies."

Steven Graves  
"The Cancellation"

Again I have stood  
fixed to the pier, the  
Detached Spectator  
to vestiges of self  
left, irretrievable,  
on deck.  
The confetti languidly uncurls  
a weary attempt to incense  
in glittering homage to parting.

A flutter of salt wind smarts  
the eyes, and whips  
remnants of November  
to a dry, crackling wall  
of precarious surround.  
As you turn, the  
grey of your resolution  
shifts,  
unsettled on your shoulders.

*Victoria Robinson*

PRAYER

When at day's end  
Evening's gravity draws the sun  
In slow surrender to the dun  
And kites come tumbling down,  
You my son on the waters asail  
Guy-roped to the comet's tail,  
When darkness cowl's your tattered mast,  
A black sea wakes your crested bow,  
Maelstroms gape to your pitching prow  
And crosswinds snarl your desperate cast,  
Turn full hull to the lowering skies  
And dart your fiery riddle of eyes.

*Alan M. Kumpf*

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