

The Mockingbird

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1998

# The Mockingbird

ETSU Department of Art and Design

ETSU Department of English

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## Recommended Citation

ETSU Department of Art and Design and ETSU Department of English. 1998. The Mockingbird. Volume . Johnson City, TN: East Tennessee State University. <https://dc.etsu.edu/mockingbird/18>

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An artistic illustration of several Mockingbirds perched on bare, gnarled tree branches. The birds are rendered in shades of brown, grey, and white, with detailed feather patterns. One large bird is in the foreground on the left, facing right. Another is in the center, facing left. A third is on the right, facing left. Two smaller birds are perched on thin branches in the upper left and upper right. The background is a plain, light color.

THE MOCKINGBIRDS  
1998

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# MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY TREE

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## Judges

From 1967 to 1994, **Dr. Jack Higgs** was a member of the Department of English at East Tennessee State University, teaching courses in Appalachian, Southern, and American Literature. He is the author or co-editor of six books and numerous articles on Appalachian and Southern literature and American sporting culture. With Ambrose Manning and Jim Wayne Miller, he co-edited the two volume work, *Appalachia Inside Out: A Sequel to Voices from the Hills*, in 1994. His latest book, *God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1995. He was this year's non-fiction judge.

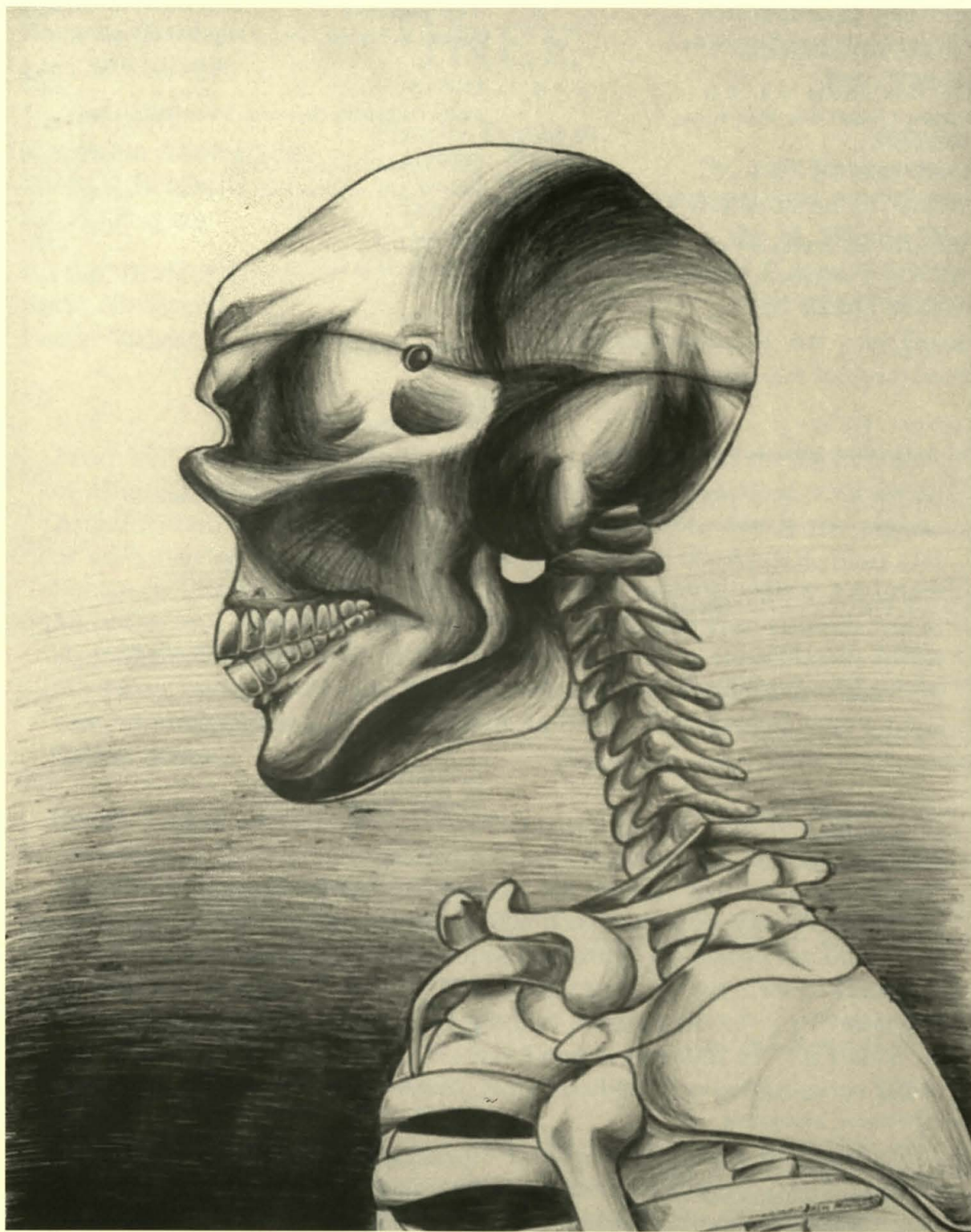
**Scott Bates** served as this year's poetry judge. He is a poet and professor at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. Mr. Bates has published four volumes of his poetry, and his poems have appeared in *The Partisan Review*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Sewanee Review*, and other publications. He edited an anthology of anti-war poems, *Poems of War Resistance, From 2300 B.C. to the Present*, for Viking Press, and studied French poetry in France on two Fulbright Fellowships. He has been a member of the Board of Directors for Highlander Center, New Market, Tennessee, since 1958.

**Dr. Jay Clayton**, Director of Graduate Studies at Vanderbilt University, judged this year's fiction competition. Dr. Clayton's publications include *Romantic Vision and the Novel*, *Influence and Intertextuality*, and *The Pleasures of Babel: Contemporary American Literature and Theory*. In addition to his books, Dr. Clayton's writings have also appeared in publications such as *Denver Quarterly*, *Southwest Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, and *Southern Review*. He is currently working on a book entitled *Charles Dickens in Cyberspace*.

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DRAWING



UNTITLED

JOSHUA HATHAWAY

# Another Resurrection

First Place Poetry by William Abbott

"This little light of mine  
I'm gonna let it shine..."

When I was 12,  
I was asked by my minister father  
To witness to the church Again  
About my salvation.  
And others went before me,  
Crying and whispering of love  
That I couldn't claim.  
When it was my turn,  
I told the church that I'd had no choice  
But to be a Christian.  
When I got home that day,  
My parents couldn't wait  
To start the crucifixion  
That hasn't stopped since.

The plan was simple:  
Crucify the messiah again  
After every resurrection.  
Don't give him time to recover  
Before the nails go back in.

So it's another crucifixion  
On the day of another resurrection.  
And Easter blurs into Good Friday blurs into Palm Sunday  
And the temple curtain has torn so often  
That it has fallen apart,  
And the messiah is tired  
Of dying for the world's sins  
And has turned bitter.  
He no longer asks his Father's forgiveness.  
He no longer tries to move the stone away from his grave.  
His masters roll the stone and steal the corpse  
Again and again,  
Then display the body  
On a wooden cross  
For all the world to see.

I didn't ask to be a messiah,  
But they taught me to be nothing less.  
I didn't want to conform  
To the point where I lost my soul,  
And they've made me a symbol  
For my defiance, no matter how covertly I'd managed.  
I became a reluctant messiah,  
Hanging constantly from their demands  
And I haven't found a way to escape.

"Don't let Satan poof it out,  
I'm gonna let it shine."

Jesus didn't die for the preacher's kids.  
They had to do that for themselves.

# The Daydream Soldier

First Place Fiction by William Arwood

Bell looked from under his poncho at the pre-dawn glow emanating from behind the desert ridge. The heat followed the sun as one day led to the next in a hell that would know no end. "If I could just stay asleep, if a minute could be an hour," he thought, "God, if only the morning would never come." He could just sleep and dream—dream of the cool, misty northwest, the park, the surprise in her eyes, the mist on the scarf that covered her hair, and the life he had once loved.

"Sir, we've got movement." Bell heard the voice behind the hand shaking his shoulder. His dream was interrupted by Rannelucci, the bantam-weight radio man and rapist in other times who said, "There's a Hod out there."

"Just one Goddam Hod," said Bell.

"I thought you wanted to know," Rannelucci said, sounding hurt.

"Oh, dammit, I do want to know. You did right, Ranny. Let's take a look." Bell stood up and put his hand on Rannelucci's shoulder, giving two short squeezes to his trapezius muscle. Bell saw the light in Ranny's eyes. All was forgiven.

The faint odor of marijuana mixed with the early morning desert air to open another day of imperfection, of flaws. He walked up the hill and past three men sleeping at his command post. At the top was the *paloverde* tree—a deformed skeleton of twisted branches, leafless and moribund. Tall Jim was lying beside it, staring through an ancient night scope. He was camouflaged by some sagebrush to avoid being highlighted in the skyline.

"He's about 800 yards out, Sir. He's movin' strange; movin' squirrely," Jim slid back from the scope to let Bell have a look. Bell could barely make out the slow moving figure of a man through the red glow of the night scope. The small figure appeared to be carrying something in his hand, but it was too far-out to tell what it was.

"Get Yew'ens up here. That Hillbilly could knock a dime out of a pig's ass at five hundred yards," said Bell.

"Yea, he's a killer alright," Jim said as he left to find the Tennessean.

Bell continued to look though the scope at the man appearing to move aimlessly in the desert night, within the lethal range of armed men who didn't invite him. Random acts, spurious correlations, acts of God had long since left Bell's index of reasonable probabilities. He only wanted to know why the man was there.

"What's up, Suh?" Yew'ens asked.

"Countryboy, we got a Hod out there roaming near the line about eight or nine hundred yards out. It'll be harder than hell to get a shot off as dark as it is, so if he just roams near the line or re-crosses, just let him go. If he tries to go north or if he even looks like he's planting something in the ground,

kill him." Bell turned to Jim, "You've got a hell of an eye there, Jimboy, spotting that little bastard at night in all that *mesquite* and sagebrush."

Yew'ens turned to Bell, "What if I have an accidental discharge?"

"Then you have an accidental discharge. But don't start thinking small on me, Countryboy. I don't want just one; I want them all."

"We're laying' here fuckin' with one Goddam Hod. One life don't make a shit one way or another," said Yew'ens keeping his telescopic sniper-rifle off of the sand as he slithered toward the night scope.

"One life don't make a shit...?" Bell repeated back. "What are you some kind of philosopher, Countryboy?"

Bell couldn't see the sniper's wind-burned, weather-beaten face or his watery blue, lifeless eyes. Yew'ens was a baby faced nineteen when he first got here: wide eyed and scared, tall and blond. Some would move close to hear him talk or watch him walk out of the corners of their eyes just to see him move. That was a long time back; twelve years in a penal brigade had taken its toll.

The rest of the night passed without a shot. Word from battalion was that the resupply ship would be in shortly with food, water, mail, orders, and a space for Johnson, the former accountant was goin' home.

Bell spoke on the hand-me-down radio, "Send him out of here with the clothes on his back and a tooth brush—no drugs, no weapons, no souvenirs. Over."

"Six, Johnson says his Gerber is his personal property. Over."

Bell wondered about his second platoon leader, "He knows better than that. The American people thank him for his sacrifice and his contribution to the war on drugs. Take the Gerber. Over and out."

"That damn accountant could sell shit to a septic tanker," Bell mumbled as he handed the radio back to Rannelucci.

Bell heard the engines and felt the prop-wash as a sleek, new helicopter landed looking more like an Army gun-ship than an all-purpose transport. It had the usual complement of machine guns and cannons and had an unusual barrel protruding from the bottom of the front fuselage. The rockets had explosive heads larger than any Bell had ever seen. Through the camouflage next to the door, Bell saw the FBP lettering next to the crossed handles of the mattock and shovel. the emblem of the Environmental Brigades.

"Linda Ramirez" was painted boldly below the pilot's left window. She was one of only three female pilots in the southern sector and the only one to have the left seat. Under the left window his second look revealed the irreverent and ribald *Chingona* centered just below her name. The last he had heard she was



## SECOND PLACE GRAPHICS



### ATTACHMENTS-2

KAREN E. PHELPS

flying in support of the *Mojadocheros Brigada* in their plush assignment in the mountains of Southern California.

Bell's eyes lit up as time languished to a standstill. The brown-skinned pilot was all that existed. Johnson started a brisk walk to freedom. Rannelucci looked at the name and saw a dimly lit parking lot. How hard would she resist? Ramirez tried to keep her eyes down on the sectional chart strapped to her thigh. "That, what's his name, Bell's puppy-dog eyes could undress you down to the string on your tampon. If he weren't an inmate maybe, only maybe. But I would screw the rules for that tall blond with the quaint mountain talk and the killer's eyes, the sniper," she mused. A quarter of a mile to the south-west and 300 feet closer to sea level, an Israeli mercenary looked through his Swiss binoculars and cursed himself for not taping his gold Rolex. Sixteen-hundred and seventy miles to the north-east, an aging Rhode Island Senator was preparing another impassioned plea to disband the Environmental Brigades, a speech to be given to the deaf ears of a twenty-first century Senate, who had long since turned over to twentieth-century prejudice and idealism. "I think it's fair to say that these so called Environmental Brigades are little more than bands of roving gun thugs." The Senate was tired of hearing the same speech.

Johnson quickened his pace. The helicopter was less than 200 yards away—parole, freedom. He became less apprehensive. This could be real, he could be leaving. "Bye, bye, Storm Troopers, Blitzkriegers, drug fighters." He chided the troops.

"*Pinchilli mellates, Señor Aaron. Totos tontos,*" Ruben, a Mexican drug gunman, told the mercenary advisor as he pointed to the troops unloading supplies from the overly armed helicopter. This area along the border was normally patrolled by the *Black Knights*, the all-black 2nd Environmental Brigade of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Neither gunman knew that two battalions of the *Black Knights* had been pulled back from the line and temporarily transferred to Montana to fight forest fires. This sector of the border was now being covered by units of the *Waffen*.

"If they're so *pinchi* and dumb, then why didn't they take the bait?" the Israeli wondered as he put his hand over his Rolex and cursed himself again for not taping it.

Yew'ens slid back from the sagebrush and moved with a cat-like grace to a mat six terraces below the strange tree, the *paloverde*. 'So there you are!' thought Ramirez as her eye flicked toward the movement. She didn't smile or appear to move one facial muscle. There was only a gaze between two pairs of sun glasses, a side window, and seventy yards—a gaze that told all. "Don't fuck with my mind lady; I've got eight more years to do. Screw with the day dream soldier; he ain't got no sense at all when it comes to women." Yew'ens just held up five fingers and closed his fist; he repeated with five more fingers then four fingers, and pointed to the south-west. She acknowledged with a thumbs up, thinking, "You stuck up little bastard. You're

Continued on Page 6

probably queer." Then she turned her head and nearly smiled at Bell. The jag-off Johnson came into view.

"I hate to leave you dedicated men, pillars of civilized values, after just five short, lovely years," Johnson paused for effect on the last hill to freedom, "but the accommodations just aren't up to my standards."

"They should have sent you to the *Gay Breed*, pencil pusher," the chorus responded. "You don't have enough class to be in the *Waffen*." "Don't swindle any more old ladies, you slime ball." "You cheap bastard, pay your taxes this time."

Johnson dashed toward the waiting helicopter, but he couldn't resist one last farewell. He turned and put his fingers to his lips and blew one last kiss, "*Vaya Con Dios*, YOU SICK MOTHERFUCKERS," gyrating both hands up and down with the middle fingers extended. Suddenly, terrified he would be pulled back, terrified he had thrown away his ticket to freedom, Johnson sprinted for the chopper and dove through the door. The hill howled with laughter.

The Israeli heard the faint sound of laughter and saw the un-professional gestures of the "soldier" before he ran to the helicopter. That had to be either an elite unit or a mob, but they weren't Negroes. What other surprises? Yet his confidence held that his thirty-seven well-armed, well-trained professionals would be more than a match for a couple of hundred convicts armed with ball bats and antique rifles. Plus, the prisoners had surgically implanted monitoring devices programed to kill them if they crossed the border or got out of line in any other way. Thirty miles to the west a coyote gnawed on the humerus of an investigative reporter whose editor was still waiting for his last scoop. The long hand on Aaron's Rolex was clicking off the remaining seconds of his life.

"Golf six. Condor three."

"Golf six. Condor three. Come in, over," Ramirez repeated.

Rannelucci nudged Bell's arm. Bell advised Ramirez: "Condor there. Golf six. The movement was about 800 yards west. Now, we're getting reflections off metal or glass about 1400 yards to the south-west just across the line near that big Joshua tree. It looks like a set up. Use all due caution, over."

"Golf six. I'll do the flying, over."

"Golf six. Over and out," Bell caught the tone, but let it slide. He spoiled his women.

"Condor three."

Aaron didn't like the armament on the helicopter, but he was grateful for dumb-ass Americans and international borders. He watched the sand fly as the copter lifted off and flew away toward the north-east. He breathed a sigh of relief. Aaron was eager to have a crack at the penal

brigades who had sealed off the Southern U. S. border. A grateful nation let them make their own rules and take few prisoners, leaving only well-armed drug smugglers to dare to cross the Brigades' lethal strip of desert. Aaron knew that the helicopter crews were correctional officers of the penal system, but didn't know the *Chingona*.

Some of the company watched as Ramirez continued to fly to the north-east for about a half mile. Then her craft rapidly lost altitude. At about five feet off the ground, Johnson was thrown out the door. The copter turned and raced back toward the line, flying so fast and low that it was raising more dust than two troops of calvary.

"Damn, they just threw Johnson out." "What do you mean threw him out?" "Threw his ass out the door, man. What do you think I mean?" "God, she's heading for the line." "Man, she's got a pair." "Boy can she fly," the chorus was limbering up.

Skimming thirty feet off the ground at ninety knots, a comely Hispanic finger, tipped with twenty-two millimeters of heavily lacquered garnet nail, flipped on the switch that activated the weapons system. The *Chingona* streaked past the company's ridge and banked hard to the starboard. The weapons lens on her helmet showed a virtual reality image of about 40 men, two machine guns, and a mortar. Without provocation or warning, she commenced firing.

Aaron lived through a moment of disbelief, nature's final kindness, a suspension of reality, and a feeling that his perceptions were playing a joke on him. The Americans would never do this, but that helicopter, those flashes, those rockets, these explosions, the flames....

Ramirez saw the image of a machine gun team in the midst of flames making a heroic effort to move their tripod to elevate the barrel for a shot. When she had them entered in her crosshairs, she manually squeezed off a rocket, and the team disappeared except for a boot that went flying through the air. Flying through the shock waves from a secondary explosion, her air-craft buffeted as a pile of mortar rounds was cooking out.

Something in the inferno had hit Aaron's arm, spinning him around. The world went black. When he came to, he couldn't hear; nothing made noise. His lungs were empty or full of something. He wasn't breathing. The familiar smell of burning flesh filled the air. It was his hand. White phosphorous was burning through his arm just above his watch. Why couldn't he feel it? It wasn't attached! AAAAAHHHHHHH...

Ramirez made a slow pass over the smoldering lifeless target area. Her door gunners were still firing sporadic bursts. Let the boys have some fun. They felt another explosion followed by a cloud of black smoke as a truck exploded. Linda preferred to leave a few alive to "spread the word," but she

wasn't a fanatic about it. Most people already knew that trying to penetrate the Southern border of the United States was an "iffy proposition."

As she flew back over the company area, she saw them mouthing *Chingona*, saw the salutes from the troops, and saw him—Yew'ens. The telescopic rifle was in his left hand and his sun-glasses were off. She saw those blue eyes as he flicked her a little two fingered salute. "I guess you saw that you stuck up little bastard. I'm going to find a way to get you a bath, and I'm going to have you," Linda smiled.

Bell had his company and his orders. "Ranny, get my platoon leaders up here. Have their NCO's start a police of the area. This is an Environmental Brigade, Gentleman. We leave nothing but dead Hods, Flora, and Fauna."

Bell divided the company into three platoons sweeping along different routes to a canyon about fifteen miles to the west. Yew'ens' sniper team and a reinforced squad were sent directly to a vantage point on the canyon rim above a small spring or artesian well that was wet part of the year. Cutting through the rugged mountains and ridges, the canyon was considered to be a prime invasion route for the merchants of white death: armed smugglers—"Hods."

The action of the morning had rejuvenated Bell. The realization that he was a soldier and that his was a war like any other war was keeping him in the present, mostly. He was thinking that if the Hods kept coming, some of them must be getting through. Maybe the profit was just too high, or maybe not all of the brigades were fighting as hard as the *Waffen*. If he just had the data on the infiltration that the Bureau had, he could use a formula no more complicated than Linear Programming to show them where to best place their forces. They weren't interested.

Just after dark, Yew'ens radioed that there was movement, maybe 15 or 20 people, in the canyon. Bell decided to have Larsen's First Platoon assault from the north, use Marshall's Third Platoon as an ambush-blocking force south of the spring and have Porter's Second reinforce Yew'ens and infiltrate down from the canyon rim. Bell's command group linked up with Larsen about midnight.

"Now, Larsen, the canyon gets real narrow before it widens at the well where we believe the Hods are. Here is the only grenade in the brigade." Bell handed Larsen the grenade as the men listened. "This attack is going to be more of an infiltration than a classic infantry assault. You'll only be able to put four or five troopers on line in that narrow section of the canyon. Attack right about dawn, throw the grenade and attack with your best firepower up front—your AK's, M-16's, FN's—your best. Forget about fire discipline. Go in blasting with screams, hollers, Rebel yells. Just stampede the sons-of-bitches into my killing zone.

"Most of us can remember when our country was covered in drugs, the border was sieve, Ameri-

can sovereignty was a fuckin' joke. Now, I know some of you boys are even in here for selling a few drugs yourselves, but no son-of-a-bitch is going to take drugs over our turf to poison our kids while we're stuck here in prison. Kill the bastards like roaches, like snakes in your home."

Bell went around and touched and spoke to every man in the assault-force. "Good Luck." "Good hunting." "Shoot low." "A Hod with a round in the head can't shoot you in the back."

It took another three-mile march to link up to Marshall's platoon on the way to the ambush site. Bell's heart was pounding from the fast walking and the thrill of the hunt. What's with this damn depression and his mind drifting forwards, backwards, or just standing still. He was an officer for God's sake; he was one of only two inmate Captains in the brigades. He has perks: good quarters in the rear, booze, a woman once in a while. He could organize "skivvy runs" and trade dope to the Mexicans for beer and women. But Bell was having too many days when he questioned whether or not it was even worth it.

Bell helped Rannelucci carry the radio and both were dead tired. Tired but exhilarated, every nerve was actualized in the present. Bell loved to second guess the enemy, and to choreograph desert check-mates.

The rest of the company moved through the desert night silently and professionally. Years of experience had led them to believe that they were the best desert fighters in the world. When they reached the canyon, they expertly positioned themselves for the ambush. The smugglers wouldn't have a chance. Air tight, perfect, fool proof—all described this place of sudden death. Bell positioned himself above and in back of the troops, where he could best control them, to wait for the daybreak attack.

"Damn, he's attacking too early," Bell mumbled in the pre-dawn darkness as he heard the grenade explode followed by the rapid fire of automatic and semi-automatic rifles just before dawn. The massed rapid firing was over quickly followed by short bursts. Screams could be heard. Then, he saw the shadows coming, running to their deaths. One, two, three, get ready, hold it, hold it, hold it, hold it. "FIRE." Bell launched an illumination flare. The Hods were dropping, gyrating, screaming, as the fire from dozens of rifles tore through their bodies in the eerie artificial light.

"Cease fire. Don't waste ammo," Bell yelled when none were left standing. Some of the Hods were women and he couldn't see any weapons. "These Hods are sending women out here. No balls at all."

"Do you finish off a woman?"

"No, roll her a joint, Numnuts."

Bell heard the shot. He didn't like this. This isn't supposed to be the way it happens. He didn't like it here. "Jerry...Jerry..." he heard her long dead voice from the grave reverberating around in his brain.

"Sir," Rannelucci shook Bell's arm and handed him the radio as the rising sun began to illuminate the bodies. "Larsen."

"Golf one. Good work on the assault. How many kilos, you figure? Over."

"Six. We can't find anything, over."

"One. Come on Larsen. They've got to have packs, over."

"Six. They're just carrying stuff like clothes, spoons, a coloring book, a fuckin' Bible. Just crap. I think they're just 'wet backs,' over."

"Come on, Larsen. There hasn't been a 'wet back' with balls enough to cross live in five years, over."

"Six. There hasn't been where we are, but no telling what the other brigades have been doing, over."

"One. The *Knights* don't baby the bastards. Keep looking. These hods are slippery. I think they set these people up and us too. Keep looking, over and out."

The word was spreading through the company that no drugs had been found. "They probably wrapped it in rubbers and swallowed it," a man uttered as he commenced to cut and saw through a dead Hod's abdominal muscles with a Gerber Mk-II dagger. He then cut into the stomach and the duodenum. Some of the men were getting short on drugs themselves.

Bell was trying to hold back the dreams as he grappled with reality. "Marshall, send a reinforced squad to recon down to the line. I don't want to get hit in the ass while I'm screwing with civilians. Send your Gastro-intestinal Specialist with them." Bell wanted the son-of-a-bitch out of his sight.

Depression was setting in to the point where Bell's guts ached, but he was still trying to function. "Check with Larsen, Ranny; see if he's... What the fu...? Is this real? This can't be real. What is that?" Bell saw a small child, a little girl about three years old, come walking out from behind some rocks on the north side of the killing zone. Tears were running down her eyes and a streak of blood had dripped down her forehead. Bell couldn't tell if it was from her own wound or a splatter from someone else's.

"Oh, God, no. What did I do?" Bell turned and walked toward some shade under some rocks out of sight of the company. If he could just sleep, just lie down and not wake up. A shot rang out, a high-powered rifle. "I don't want to know. I don't fuckin' want to know," Bell mumbled. God, if he could just sleep, if he could just get back to the park, if he could just have one more chance...

Rannelucci held his radio. His brain was processing the perception of a skull exploding before he heard the shot. A reddish, whitish pulp was flying, and part of a cranium was spinning through the air like a broken cue ball. The rest of the girl dropped like a wet dish rag.

Rannelucci's revered Hauptsturm Fuhrer let his M-14 rifle fall muzzle first into the sand, let his cartridge-belt drop, and tore the SS off of his collar

and let it float to earth. The ambush organizer just fell to the sand and rolled up in a little ball. "If I could sleep..."

Could the men see? No. A deep shudder went through Rannelucci. This is not going to happen, he vowed as he turned and watched Golf Company—the pride of the proud *Waffen* Brigade—disintegrate.

"You son-of-a-bitch. You like to kill little girls." "You sick bastard. How would you like somebody to take your God-damned head off!" This was getting ugly. With his leopard-like grace, Yew'ens jumped from rock to rock in a frantic effort to get to the command group. A rock whizzed by his head.

Rannelucci desperately tried to raise someone, "Golf six. Golf six. Come in 1-6,2-6,3-6. Come in platoon leaders." Silence.

Yew'ens leaped to the sand at the bottom of the canyon and saw he was cut off. Men were coming at him from all sides with hate in their eyes and an excuse to settle old scores. His 38 was out and twirling around his finger. He was up against the mattock handle carriers—the newer convicts. The senior men who had fire arms were pushing in from the outside: a ring around the dog fight.

"Ok, you sons-of-bitches, who wants to be the first to die?" Yew'ens yelled. Nobody moved. "What are you, a bunch of pussies? This is the *Waffen*; we kill them all. How many times have you heard that shit? If you're looking for a murderer, your murderer is your fuckin' Storm Trooper up there. He even killed his wife, for Christ's sake." A rock hit his arm loosening his grip.

They rushed him. "Just let go of the rifle Yew'ens, we don't want to hurt the scope."

"Kill him."

"The bastard thinks he's such hot shit."

"Eye for an eye."

Yew'ens felt himself being hit and kicked and torn off of the ground. They were tearing at his clothes and his glasses and his face. A hat, a boot, the sky, a hand, a watch, clawing finger nails—all were drifting by his vision. He felt suspended, the cold water of a stream. "Johnnie are you playing in that creek again? I'll tan your bottom." His slam to the earth gave him the sensation of something hard at the back of his head. There was a patch of sky, the most beautiful blue, and two hands holding a huge boulder coming...

"Put that Goddamn rock down."

"Sir?"

"If you want to blame somebody, blame me," Bell stood on a huge boulder, weaponless, his collar turned in, and his head haloed in the morning sun. He paused for a response. None came. "This is a military organization, Gentlemen, not a mob. Return to your positions, Men."

The men helped Yew'ens up, shuffling their feet and hanging their heads; they drifted back to their units. Officers and NCO's, who had stood by doing nothing, re-asserted themselves.

"What are you, some kind of actor, Countryboy? You ought to have an Academy Award

for that performance. Take a team and go up to that high peak, up there by that boulder, way in the background. Shoot anything that moves. There are no friendlies out here."

"Yes, Sir."

Bell organized a 360 degree defense, with a 25% watch, and two morning patrols—hash and marijuana were ok for those not on watch or patrol, but no stimulants. Another day to drift into another...

"It's strange how one man willing to do something can change the course of events," thought Rannelucci as he ran a cleaning rod through the bore of Bell's M-14. After brushing off the last grains of sand and re-inserting the magazine, he handed the rifle back to Bell.

"Thanks, Ranny. Thanks for everything. Oh shit, man. I don't like this killing. I swear to God I don't. I don't even like to look at those sons-of-bitches over there," Bell mused as he pointed to the dead Hods. "Hell, they'll be drawing flies here in

another minute...that poor little girl, Ranny. I hate this shit."

"Go ahead and get some sleep, sir. I'll organize the radio watch."

"Thanks, Ranny. I think I will. I'm sick and tired of this damn ugliness. I like pretty things. You see that tree over there? It's just past those dead Hods. That bony, lifeless, blue-green piece of shit with no leaves on it. It looks like a skeleton, it looks like something that ought to be dead. Man, in the spring, it is pretty, the little leaves come out, and it blossoms with those yellow flowers. Where in the Hell is spring, Ranny? Spring would be nice. Man, I'm drawing a blank. What's that damn thing called?"

"It's the *paloverde*. You did right today, Sir. No one could have done it better. You didn't shoot the little girl."

"Yea, but I didn't do anything to stop it either."

"Well, nobody really does. Sweet dreams, Sir."

## PHOTOGRAPHY



GHOSTLY SENTINELS  
OF MT. LECONTE

TONYA ELSWICK

PRINTMAKING



UNTITLED

DENNIS GREENWELL

# Dancing Fruits

## Second Place Fiction by Nicole Elizabeth Hunt

I am wearing red. I am at a diner and the waiter looks like Elvis. I'm sitting in an orange chair with lemons on it. Elvis brings me a bottle of Tylenol, a dove, and a bowl of ice cream with a cherry on top. The diner is closed but I am not the only customer there. A man with a gas pump is sitting three tables down from me. The man is talking to someone named Sue Ellen through the telephone on the gas pump.

3 a.m.—the phone starts talking at my apartment. My senses are awake now. I struggle to open my eyes, and I lean across the mountain of fluffy marshmallows on my bed. The phone jumps off the receiver and into my hand.

"Hello."

"Mary," a voice like nails on a chalkboard says on the end of the other line.

"No," I say, "you must have the wrong..."

"Is this Mary?"

"No," I repeat.

"Mary?"

"No," I say, "this is Sue Ellen."

I hear a click on the line, and the phone goes dead.

Wrong number I guess.

The digital clock says 3:01 a.m.

I lay my head down. The marshmallows are eating my head. The man in the picture next to my bed is smiling. He is nice.

The phone rings. It's 3:02.

"Hello."

"Is this Mary?"

"No."

"Mary," the voice says. "What are you doing?"

"I'm not Mary. You have the wrong number."

I hang up the phone.

The digital clock on my nightstand tells me it's 3:02 a.m. I shut my eyes and go back to sleep.

I'm at my car at night in the parking lot of a gas station called Sue Ellen's, and I can't find my keys. The lights are really bright around the gas pumps. Tubes of neon, green and yellow and white, burn around me. I see a man behind one of the gas pumps. He is staring. I look in my coat pockets, in my pants pocket, in my shoes, in my purse, in my hair. I can't find my keys. I look on top of the car, in the car, around the car. I can't find them. I run to the pool, and I can't find them. I go to the tennis courts, and I can't find them. I put my hands in my coat and there they are. My keys are in my coat pocket.

I put the key in the lock and turn. The door unlocks. I lift the door handle, but it won't open. I pull and I tug and I yank and the door won't open. The man at the gas pump stares. The car alarm goes off. Rer Rer Rer.

4 a.m.—I jump out of bed. My heart is pounding against my chest. The car alarm...no, it's the phone. My heart is beating. I pick up the phone quickly.

"Hello."

"Mary," the chalkboard-scratching voice says.

"You must have the wrong number."

"Mary."

I hang up.

Continued on Page 12



UNTITLED

MIWAKO KATO

4:02 a.m.—The phone rings again. I don't answer it.

I flip on the light next to my bed. Sitting up, I lean my head against the bed's backboard. There is a metal tree in the corner of my room with an Elvis bathrobe hanging on it. On a table in front of the window is a bowl of lemons and oranges and a letter from Sue Ellen. There are leaves flying at my window. A shadow of a man is cast along my bedroom floor from the coat tree. A little man walks on top of my eyelids and throws sand in them. I have to close my eyes.

The digital clock reads 4:05 a.m.

The car door won't open. I am crying. There is a lemon dancing in the back seat. The man at the gas pump is staring. I throw my shoe through the car window and the lemon throws it back. The glass disappears. I hurry into the car. My purse, my purse...I can't find my purse. It's next to the gas pump. The man picks up my purse. He walks toward the car. I try to put the glass back in the window. I can't...I can't find all the glass. He comes closer. I try to get out of the car but I am glued to the seat. The lemon runs away with the orange when the orange knocks on the window. I try to scream. My voice won't come out.

5 a.m.—My eyes pop open. I scream. It's the phone. I let it ring twice, three times, four times, five times. The ringing stops. I get out of bed and lock the door to my bedroom. The gears in the lock moan and groan and a little voice tells me the door is locked. I sit down in the chair at the foot of my bed and close my eyes. Sue Ellen is coming to town soon.

The digital clock reads 5:03 a.m.

He is at the car and he is yelling.

"Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary."

He won't shut up. I'm crying. I can't leave without my purse. He yanks the door off the car. He grabs my arm.

"No," I say.

I try to break free. Then he pushes me into the passenger seat and gives me the gas tank. I try to call the police from the phone on the gas pump but the phone won't work.

"Give me the keys." It's the voice.



He grabs the keys from my hands and turns them in the ignition. The car won't start. The gas tank is empty. He pushes me through the passenger door. I get up and run. The neon lights are still on and there is a man behind one of the gas tanks. A woman is standing at her car looking for her keys. She is crying. I am running. The lemon and the orange are in front of me.

"Run," says lemon.

"You can do it," says orange.

He is in front of me. He has one foot on the lemon and one foot on the orange. There is orange juice everywhere. He grabs my neck and squeezes.

"Are you thirsty?"

6 a.m.—the phone rings. I am awake before the end of the first ring. Ring ring ring ring. I stand up and pace the room. There are little people everywhere—little people that look like Elvis. I want to have some orange juice but the little voice in the door won't let me.

"Don't unlock the door."

I can't open the door if it won't let me. The rug jumps up and grabs my ankle. I fall down. There are oranges and lemons on the floor.

6:30 a.m.—the phone rings. The rug pushes me off the floor.

The phone says, "Answer me."

I answer it.

"Hello."

"Finally! Mary, why didn't you answer the phone," the voice says.

"My name's not Mary! I am Sue Ellen. I am Sue Ellen."

The voice on the other end is agitated. I am scared.

"Mary. Oh, Mary. Why are you doing this?"

I hang up. I am scared. The room is talking and I am crying and the oranges and lemons are laughing.

I walk to the window and there is morning sunlight through the trees. Birds are at my front door. The paperboy is in the middle of the road. I want to go outside.

7 a.m.—I unlock my bedroom door and lean my head against the door. Silence. I open the door and I want the door to be locked again and me to be locked-in behind it. But I'm not locked in, so I walk down the short flight of stairs. I turn on the light in the kitchen. The refrigerator is talking again and the sink is waiting to be fed. I hear footsteps on the front landing of my apartment. I look out the peephole. There is a man at the doorstep. He is unlocking the door. I run. I want to hide. I go into the coat closet next to the stairway and the closet shuts me in.

The front door is open. A man is in my kitchen.

"Mary," the man says. "Mary, where are you?"

The closet is open a crack and I can see the man. He is the voice on the phone.

He takes off his coat and looks around the kitchen. Then he carries his coat on his arm out of the kitchen. The coat is long and tan.

He is coming closer. He is coming to me. I start to scream. The man hurries to the closet.

"Mary! There you are!"

He reaches out to pull me from the closet. I wish the closet would suck me in. I am out of the closet now and the man has his arms around me. I am screaming.

"Mary! Come on—not again."

I am scared. I am crying.

"I'm Sue Ellen. I'm Sue Ellen." I fall to the floor crying.

The man is on the phone.

"Yes, Doctor. I'll bring her right in."

He turns to me and he is crying, too. He is not crying loud but there is water coming out of his eyes. He is sad. I am sad. I am Sue Ellen.

"Come on Sue Ellen. Let's get you dressed."

Continued on Page 14

"Okay," I say. I think maybe I know this man. He is a nice man. Yes, he is the man in the picture smiling at me and smiling at the marshmallows and oranges and Elvis and the lemons.

The man carries me upstairs. I am tired, and the phone won't ring anymore. He helps me put on clothes and then we go downstairs. At the coat closet, he sticks my arms in a coat. He holds my hand, and we walk outside. I am still crying, and I do not know why. The sun is bright, and there are birds. There is a paper boy riding his bike.

The man helps me get in the car. The man—the man is Scott. I remember. Yes, he is the man in the picture who is nice and who is smiling.

"Where are we going?" I say.

"To the Doctor's."

"Oh. Are you sick?"

"No. I'm not sick."

The man is driving, and sometimes he looks over at me and smiles. There is a gas station with green and white neon lights and a man standing at the gas pump. I see a lady getting in her car. I want to say to her don't get in your car. I want to tell her don't sit on the lemons.

The car stops, a man comes out of the building and talks to Scott. A woman comes to me and helps me out of the car.

"Hi, Mary."

We four go inside. I am taken to a room, and the door shuts. I don't see Scott. I am crying. The lemons and oranges are laughing. It is 9:11 a.m. I am scared, and I am alone. Elvis is dancing again.

## FIRST PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY



ICE

KAREN E. PHELPS

# Dorothy, Go Home

Second Place Poetry by Pamela Sue Tabor

I used to dream of tornadoes every night.  
"A sign of unresolved conflict," my Father  
the holy wizard would advise.  
We have traveled the yellow brick road together,  
skipping along, singing songs of rainbows  
and witches dressed up like poor mountain folk,  
leaving our Kansas far behind.  
My Mother has walked miles in her precious ruby slippers,  
trying to show us the way home.  
My Sister, the scarecrow, has finally gotten wise enough  
to climb down off of her wooden cross  
and start her life over again.  
My Brother, the king of the forest, has finally  
found the courage to settle down, and his roar  
is a lot scarier now.  
As for me, well, I have begun to feel a  
soft fluttering of what seems to be a heart  
somewhere deep inside this empty,  
cavernous chest of mine.

As a child, I wanted to live in an Emerald City,  
wanted to drift off in a big ol' balloon,  
high above the mountains of this valley.  
I longed to sleep in fields of hypnotizing red flowers  
without the dark, twisting visions of snake-like funnels  
dancing over the munchkin landscape,  
tearing my childhood apart.

Now, I can only hope to spend the rest of my life  
safe in the arms of my Mother who welcomes me  
back home like somebody else's Auntie Em  
as I cling to her in this roaring vortex called life,  
chanting a crazy, cinematic mantra,  
"There's no place like home, there's no place like home..."

HONORABLE MENTION PRINTMAKING



DOMESTIC PATTERN #4,  
HAND-COLORED

DEBORAH BRYAN

# I Was Crawlين' through the underground

Honorable Mention Poetry  
by William Abbott

I was  
Crawlين' through the underground  
Into a low-class high dive  
Called Moody's  
And the door slammed behind me  
Like a time-release bank vault  
With a final click  
That reminded me of steeltoed slippers  
As I slipped into a booth and a stupor.  
"Coagulations," said the vampire waiter,  
"You have arrived just in time to  
Try your hand at the blood-drawing contest."  
And draw blood I did,  
In tear-shaped forms  
Until I ran out of red crayons.  
Shifting my gaze and focus  
To the bar, I glazed over  
Like a Krispy Kreme  
At the sight of a shadowy  
(form follows function follows substance)  
And substances were flowing over me  
And into the distance,  
Leaving me dazed and dozing  
Through the second act and the third reel  
After reel after reel,  
Left me reeling  
And the room spinning  
Like a manic wheel of fortune.  
"Yes, I'd like to buy a life."  
The form darkened my table  
In a dark sort of way,  
Dimming the light  
Like a light dimmer,  
And a voice spoke in a voice-like manner,  
For anyone.  
From the shape that eclipsed my world  
And said, "Have we met?"  
And I reacted the way  
The Facts of Life girls would have  
If they'd ever met Erik Estrada,  
Drooling and melting down  
Like a big nuclear puddle.  
And met we had not,  
But that was not to stop me from trying  
to prove the dysfunctionality  
In my personality.  
In the end, of course, it was over before it  
began.  
Almost tragic, how fate steps in:  
You see, she was a one-man woman,  
And I was schizophrenic.

# VI.

## Honorable Mention Poetry by Emily Carmichael

A voice like that one  
draws a mind like mine to rumination.  
Something about the way he holds his head sloped over rounded  
shoulders  
and a flash of some jaded melancholy in his eyes  
as he talks of home...  
How he's never had one,  
and the closest he's ever come  
was once not being entirely lost.

Here among these rolling wooded hills  
where trees can sing with autumn's vivid palette for a voice  
it is easy to be lost.  
The mountains that surround us here are haunted by cloudy ghosts of  
pale moist haze,  
imposter smoke that gives these peaks a name.

It's a part of my name, too, now,  
and of his as well—  
though never would the boy admit to that.  
He's a wanderer like me, and has seen more of the world while still  
than most men in a lifetime.  
My name is growing every day, and deepening,  
as his must be as well if he, too, realizes  
that a name is another kind of home.  
Thus would it seem that we are wandering to some end after all.

I have journeyed now from rolling waves to rolling hills—  
from soaring Rocky crests that framed my childhood world  
to my valley cradled in the arms of San Gabriel  
and here, at last, unto the unsoiled charm of a modern Appalachia.  
So have I learned that, though given seven years at best to root in  
any one place

I have yet to find more than fondness—belonging may come  
hereafter—

for any land,  
it is possible to grow a home through other means:  
love for the comfort of a mountain-marked horizon,  
contentment pitched, tentlike (for warmth, protection) over each  
new environment,  
music etched into my mind and faces recalled through the stream of  
loss and rediscovery.  
Him I have ingrained into my life because his name is wonderful.

And through it all I find that, in the end, the home nearest my  
heart

is the one I carry with me—  
of which both past and future memory are part,  
and which is growing, brightening, warming all the time.

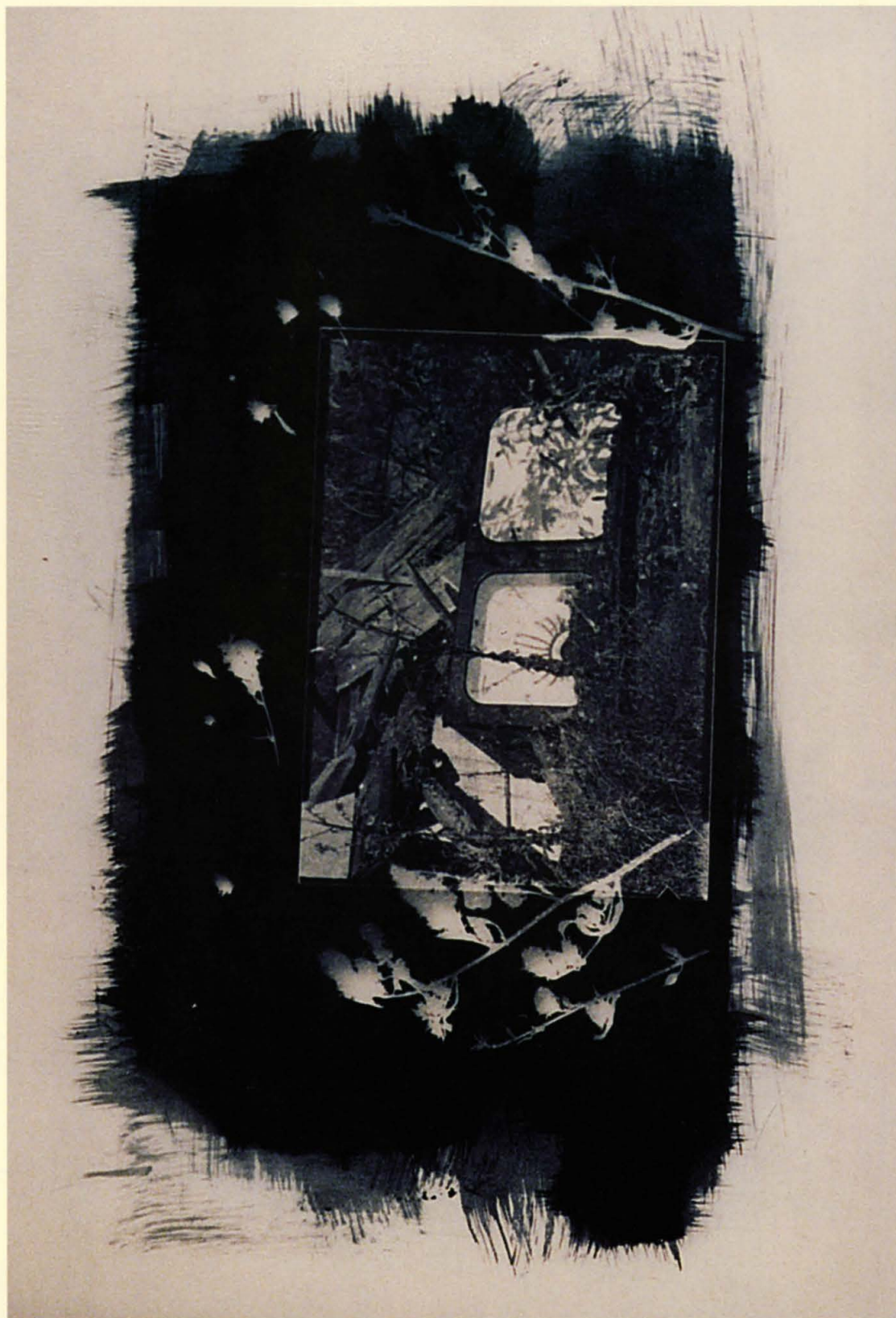
HONORABLE MENTION PRINTMAKING



EL PAQUETE

MARGARITA CASANOVA

PRINTMAKING



SURVIVAL OF THE SINK

LAURA WILLIAMS



# Hospital Survival for the Emotionally Challenged

First Place Non-Fiction by Deborah S. Deloach

At the age of sixteen, I worked as a candy-striper for one day. I immediately knew that I would never be able to work in a hospital. I went home crying because of the suffering I had witnessed and guilt-ridden because I knew I couldn't look into those faces again. I now believe the old adage is true, "Never say never." I currently work at a facility for the care of veterans. It is one of those places at which I swore I'd never work. Life sometimes throws you a curve and this was a doozy. I was divorced with a small child and working as a bank teller. I desperately needed a job that would boost my income above poverty level and that would provide good benefits. Persistent "encouragement" from my Mom led me to take the necessary exam and apply for a job at a federal hospital.

My training as a Ward Clerk, commonly and truthfully referred to as "the job from Hell," began as a three-week stint on the cancer ward. A Ward Clerk, these days referred to as a "Unit Coordinator," is someone who does everything from taking off doctor's orders and helping nurses to make up charts to admitting and discharging patients. They are secretaries and gophers, overworked and underpaid and they get yelled at a lot! For someone with a Hospital phobia, it was torture. I didn't think it could get any worse, but it did. After completing my training, I was assigned a second-shift job covering the Surgical and Medical Intensive Care Units and also the General Surgery Ward. Adjusting to the super egos of surgeons was an excellent lesson in self-assertiveness. The medical students were almost as bad, but they were much easier to "straighten out." I could make their already tough schedules and misery even worse, which for me was also a great stress reliever.

A kind of warped sense of humor develops in your mind after working on the wards for a while. I think it's a sink-or-swim survival technique. The surgery floor was constantly busy but I now believe what I've heard about full moons — people go berserk! Full-moon nights were the craziest and busiest times in the hospital. Patients would be lined up in the hall on gurneys waiting for rooms. Emergency surgeries were a nightly event and the ward kept an odor of blood and feces that seemed to permeate the walls. It's amazing how your senses will adjust. Walking up to the desk, someone would ask you, "What's that awful smell!" and without even looking up, busy with your work, you'd just say, "Supper" or something equally disgusting. There have been patients who drank their pre-op soap because the Nursing Assistant told them to "take it and get a shower." We also had Nurses who thought enemas were a cure-all,

especially if given at supper time. It was easy to pick out the really bad psych patients because they'd be wandering all around the hospital in a stupor doing what we called the "Thorazine Shuffle", then we would have to call the Psych Ward to let them know one was loose.

George is a psych patient at the hospital where I work. He is a small man, maybe five feet, two inches, with thinning hair that fringes the top of his head in slick, black ruffles. It's always mussed in the back from the frequent naps he takes just wherever he happens to be when the mood strikes him. His face is thin with a nose that is small and pointed like the beak of a small finch. His eyes are usually focused on the floor, watching his feet to see where they take him. When you see his face there is a look of sneakiness in his dark beady eyes, like a child who's been up to something mischievous and is wondering if you can read his thoughts and know what he has done. He has thin lips usually shaped into a crooked grin — Dennis the Menace at seventy. George has taken it upon himself to collect specimens from the hospital wards and take them to the lab. He has an extremely slow shuffling gate much like that of the character Tim Conway played on the old Carol Burnette Show. George talks very softly and quickly and always motions for you to come closer so you can hear what he is saying. My first encounter with him taught me that even though he always has his hands in his pockets and he's up in years, you don't get too close. George used to bring me presents that he dug out of his deep, greasy pants pockets. Gifts like black bananas, mashed cakes in slimy plastic wrappers and even pineapple upside-down cake wrapped in brown paper towels. He would always say in that low, fast voice, "Don't you throw that away, now." Of course as soon as what seemed like eternity passed and he was finally out of sight, I'd throw away whatever little "surprise" he'd brought to me and wash my hands until they were red and nearly raw. One day George asked me to buy him a pack of Camels, which is a good way to get fired, so I had to tell him no. He got mad at me so I don't get any "presents" anymore. Still, he tries to sneak up behind me now and then but that shuffle always gives him away, thank God.

Adjusting to the patients who are a little "off" isn't nearly as bad as getting attached to some of the "good" ones. Mr. B was a sweet old man, somewhere in his eighties. I don't remember what kind of surgery he had, but he was never the same afterwards. He had some family, but like so many,

Continued on Page 22

they never bothered to visit. When he got really bad, he had to be strapped to his bed for his own safety. I would go in to visit him sometimes and he thought I was his sister Mary, who just happened to be dead already. One of the Nurses, who'd become a very dear friend to me, told me just to go along with his banter.

"Hey, Mary," he'd say.

"Hey, B," I'd say.

"When's Mama gettin' home?"

"She'll be here soon, B. Don't worry. She's just runnin' a little late tonight."

"Mary?"

"Hmmm?"

"When's Mama gettin' home?"

"Soon, B, soon. Let me read a little to you.

Some pretty poetry. You'll like it. Maybe it will help you rest till Mama gets here."

"Okay," his voice would trail off into mumbles, his mind wandering about in some other time and place. Soon he would be asleep. It helped calm him down when he got agitated which seemed to happen at night, as it does with a lot of patients. (We called them "sundowners.") So I became "Mary" for him. What was the harm? He was dying anyway. Some nights the ward would miraculously get quiet around 10:00 p.m. I was taking Major British Authors with Professor Hollingsworth at ETSU, so I would take my book into Mr. B's room and read to him until he fell

asleep, soothing him and getting my homework done at the same time. One night, we were extremely busy. From the moment I got to work, I hardly had time to look up. The surgeons kept writing orders right up until 10:00 p.m. I was anxious to get away from the desk and go read to Mr. B.

Around 11:00 p.m. I was finally able to slip away with my book. The hallway that led to Mr. B's room was much too quiet. I knew before I walked in the room that he wouldn't be there. The bed was made with its neat "hospital corners," so tight you could bounce a quarter on it. The room was empty of all life and filled with a silence that smothered me. Backing out of the room, I could feel the guilt ease its way from the bottoms of my feet. It was slowly, warmly moving upward until my face felt hot with shame and my heart and head began to pound. I had known all along that this day would come, but I'd just spent seven hours not noticing that a man whose delirium made him think I was his sister, a man who depended on "her" visits to enjoy what was left of his life, was dead.

It didn't take long for me to realize that I needed a change. Working on the wards for two years and then in an outpatient clinic for two more years was making me emotionally and physically ill. So I applied for an office job processing medical claims and, thank God, I got it. I still have some patient contact. There are some patients I visit with

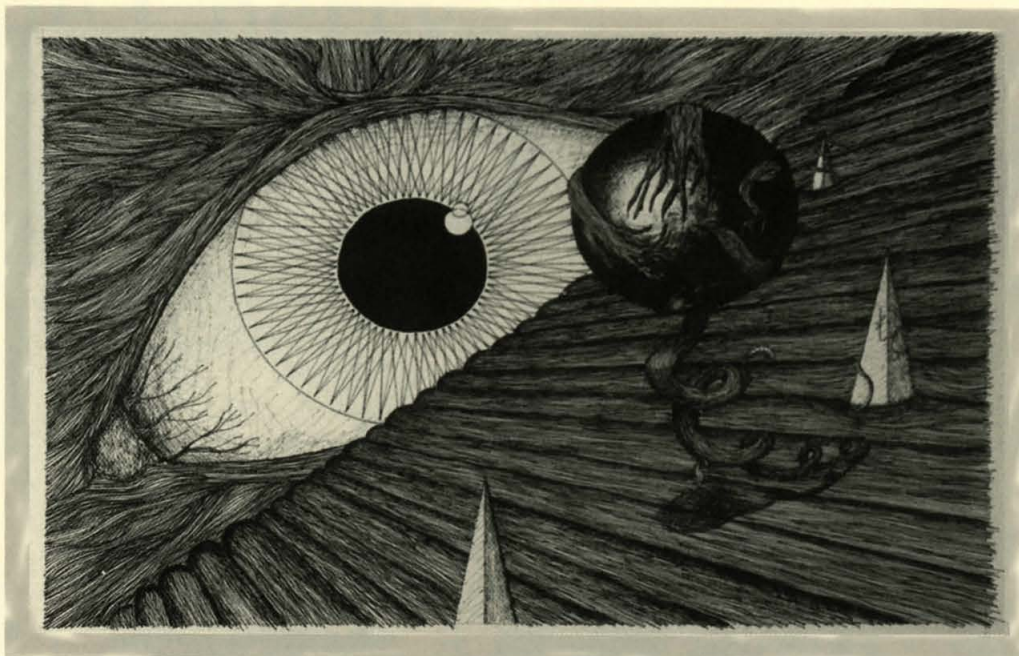
## HONORABLE MENTION DRAWING



UNTITLED

EMILY CARMICHAEL

## DRAWING



### STRESS #2

JOE TEMPLE

and some that come to visit me but it's usually just for a few moments to catch up. I spend my days in an office with another clerk with whom I get along really well. Our office is quiet and my work requires thought and reasoning and decision making. Sometimes it can be tedious but for the most part I enjoy it. I love researching and thinking through a problem and coming up with a solution. It gives me a great sense of accomplishment. But I never get completely away from the patients, the ones you just don't want to deal with sometimes, I mean.

One morning I was sitting outside at work, getting some fresh air, and thumbing through a medical record, researching a problem. I had developed a way of putting "blinders" on when I was in an area with patients. It wasn't that I didn't care about them anymore. It was just one of those days that had gone badly and for sanity's sake, I just had to tune them out. Still, a part of me stayed alert because as soon as you completely let your guard down, that one-in-a-zillion patient will catch you broadside with his cane before you can duck or will make a grab for some soft, fleshy body part that only your most intimate friend, husband, mate or physician, is ever supposed to get near. As I was skimming the chart, my head bent, and I noticed a wheelchair back its way into the narrow space between the bench I was on and a concrete planter filled with sand and spit and cigarette butts. From the corner of my eye, I watched knotty red hands slowly maneuver the chair into its spot. There were no legs to help guide it, so the act itself was quite impressive. I saw the cuffs of a dirty yellow jacket and the fringes of a worn, green afghan. I wanted to look up and take in the full view but my head refused to raise. I sat staring at the chart in my lap, not seeing it, suddenly anxious

yet curious. When the gruff voice began its chant I had to look up slowly. "Too much yellow, too much yellow. Too much fire, too much fire. Seven of them on the fifth floor, too high to jump. Well, we're all gonna die anyway. It's a Devil's Deal. Too much yellow, too much yellow." His cigarette lighter twirled up and down in the air like a yo-yo going the wrong way. At least three days worth of gray stubble covered his crusty face. His eyes squinted, surrounded by wrinkles, almost hidden by his hunters orange toboggan pulled way down over his ears. I wondered where he was. He never noticed me or my stare and I'm sure he never wondered where I was, where I'd been or where I was going, as I silently walked back to my office.

Of course, many patients get well and go on with their lives, and many are kind and intelligent. You search for these people like searching for salvation. You feel passionately for all the patients, even the ones who are mean and hateful. Maybe in the heat of a moment you forget their dementia or that they are just plain mean, but later, on break or driving home alone late at night you start to think about it. It creeps into your mind no matter how loud you turn up the radio. You thank God you aren't like "them" and you pray to God that you won't end up like "them." So you try to concentrate on the "good" ones and how you have helped them and something inside you stirs and you feel a little better. Call it survival, hiding your head in the sand and escaping reality. Call it whatever you will. All I know is that I take my life one day at a time and I deal with the ups and downs as best I can. I have learned so much about life and death working in a hospital, most of it hard to swallow, but I have a different viewpoint now. I think it's a better one, even if I do have a warped sense of humor.



TOASTERCHICK

ISAAC WADIHSTONE

# The Cherry

Second Place Nonfiction by Russell R. Forsyth

It was an absolutely gorgeous day on Rum Cay, one of the out-islands of the Bahamas. The palm trees were gently swaying in the trade winds that brought the warm balmy weather to the islands this time of the year. The gardenias, jasmine, hibiscus, and other tropical flowers in full bloom, filled the air with their sweet aromas. The Atlantic, a dark azure blue, moved in stark contrast to the white of the Bahamian sand as the sea gently and rhythmically lapped at the shore. Sea gulls cried up and down the shore in their never ending quest for nourishment. A fleet of sailboats leaned under full sail across the horizon, adding to the beauty of the moment.

I had been working for three years without a day off, starting a pool maintenance business in the Florida Keys. The business could finally be run without my constant attention now. I had promised myself this vacation as a reward on the day I started the business.

The warm white sand felt wonderful to me as I strolled slowly to a solitary deck chair that I had spotted when I ordered my rum punch at the tiki bar. I slowly sank into the lounge chair under the warm tropical midday sun thinking, "Man, this is paradise." Slowly sipping on my punch and thinking that I had a full week of such leisure, I fell into a peaceful sleep.

Only a few moments later, my bliss was interrupted by that evil haunting "thump, thump, thump" that meant only one thing to me — a Bell Huey chopper was going as fast as it possibly could go. This immediately sent a cold shiver down my spine and goose bumps to my arms. At once I thought about the first time that I heard this sound and why it still haunted me twenty years later.

I was nineteen years old and was what the airborne troops in Viet Nam called a cherry or what legs called a FNG (f—ing new guy). I recalled the torrid soggy heat of the triple canopy jungle of northern I Corp.

The building that contained the briefing room looked like all the other structures at Camp Evans, a hastily built structure of 2x4s, plywood and corrugated steel roof with sand bags piled four feet high around it. I entered and found a seat. A first lieutenant entered and proceeded to uncover an easel with a drawing on it. Lieutenant Baker, a recent

ROTC graduate from New England, told me to sit with these four other guys and pay attention to what he was saying. I found out that my first mission was going to be at what the army called a secured landing zone. This meant that they didn't expect any hostile troop activity in the immediate area. I later learned that the Air Force had napalmed and bombed the area to saturation. Lieutenant Baker said that they were going to the landing zone to help the ARVNs (South Vietnamese Army) fortify the area for long term use. I was told that this meant we would be using dynamite and chain saws to remove trees and to expand the area for troops that would come in later. The lieutenant then told the men to return to their hooches and report to the flight zone at 0900 hours.

As I was walking back to get my gear with the other four guys that were going on the mission with me, the sergeant, called Pops, because he was old at 24, said.

"Listen up, Cherry, you're going on your first mission and we don't want you screwing up and getting us killed. Do what we tell you and don't ask questions. When we go to get on the chopper, we don't ride in the truck with cherries. We walk to the flight line to check you out, because once you get on the chopper you're on your own. Now let's go check out your gear."

The unit that I was assigned to had just recently moved up north and they didn't have much more combat experience than me, but I didn't know that. Most of the men in the unit had been in the Nam for 11 months and they were "short-timers," meaning they had a short time left in Viet Nam. They were all mad because they were supposed to have easy duty; they wanted to enjoy the night life of Saigon every weekend. Now they were up near the demilitarized zone fighting the North Vietnamese Army, an army better trained and equipped than they were.

The area we were to secure was a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) stronghold. The last time the U.S. went there they lost 97 helicopters the first day, but the army didn't tell anyone involved in this operation that small detail.

After Pops checked all my gear, the five of us walked the mile to the flight line. I learned that Pops was from Iowa and his family farmed

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corn and raised cattle. Pops said, "All I want to do is go home to my wife and kids and ride my tractor all day. Forget this B.S." The next in command was Hatfield, a good looking nineteen-year-old college kid from Helena, Montana. He talked about how he wanted to go back to school and chase women. Johnson, an extremely tall, skinny twenty-year-old black from New York City, didn't want to do anything except go home in one piece. Pierce, the nineteen-year-old medic, arrived the week before me and went on one mission where he never saw an enemy. He didn't say anything about home except that his girlfriend told him to kiss off just before he left. As we were walking, Pops suddenly shouted at me, "Your noise discipline sucks! Tighten it up." I wondered, "What the hell does that mean?" Hatfield saw my dilemma and told me that Pops meant that there was something in my gear that made noise. They all stopped and waited until I found that my canteen wasn't totally full and the water was sloshing around. Hatfield said, "Now you know why we walk to the flight line with cherries, that little bit of noise in the field could get us all killed."

I replied, "I thought the louie said the landing zone was secure." The others laughed and Pops said that you'd never believe what an officer would tell you about a mission.

The sound and the smell of the chopper was the first thing I noticed as we approached the flight line. There, standing on the flight line, was an olive drab green monster called a Huey delta model chopper. The aroma of burned kerosene and the whine of a jet engine filled the air as the chopper warmed up. The thought occurred to me, "Holy shit—this is real; I might never see my home and family again"

As we boarded the chopper, I noticed that the others removed their steel helmets and sat on them. I knew not to ask why. Of course, by now the scream of the jet engine made it impossible to be heard even if you shouted, so I removed my steel pot and sat on it.

As the chopper lifted off, I couldn't help but notice that everywhere I looked were bomb craters of all sizes. The landscape was filled with rice paddies broken up by tree lines. I could see the peasants working the fields, some by hand and others with water buffalo. It all looked so calm and serene from this view. As the chopper flew west, I could see the mountains rise up and I could feel that the air temperature was considerably cooler—almost bearable. I could tell how rugged the jungle was even from this angle. There were fewer bomb craters, but the ones there were bigger.

After about twenty minutes, the chopper started to descend and I noticed a small clearing in the jungle with smoke rising from it. As the chopper flew closer, I noticed about twenty men in the clearing digging foxholes and I thought, "This can't be the place." When I realized that it was, the hair stood up on the back of my neck and there was an emptiness in my belly.

When the men on the ground heard the chopper approach, I could see them all spread out on the perimeter and crawl into their foxholes. As soon as the chopper set on the ground, the air was filled with dust and ashes and the five of us jumped out and ran to the perimeter and hit the ground. With a roar, the chopper lifted off and was gone. The air filled with a stench that I had never smelled before. Pops observed my turned nose and said, "The smell of napalmed flesh. Welcome to the bush, cherry." As I looked at the charred vegetation around him, I could see the smoldering remains of humans in the ashes, charred beyond recognition.

A grunt lieutenant walked up to Pops and said, "Welcome to Firebase Airborne, at least that is what it will be when you engineers are done, I'm Lieutenant Riley. You and your men can stash your gear over there. In about ten minutes, two "shit-hooks" will be here with 1,000 pounds of explosives each."

After stowing their gear, Pops told me to take the radio and stay out of the way. A few minutes later, the sound of choppers broke the silence. There was a Chinook helicopter coming in with a big net full of wooden boxes hanging from the hook on its belly. I could see why they were called "shit-hooks" now. As soon as that one had dumped its load, another one was coming in. After they were gone, the silence of the jungle returned, making me wonder if anything living existed around me. As I looked at the ashen gray area, I saw that I was on a slight incline with two 1,000-pound piles of dynamite about 100 feet below me. In the distance, I heard the crackle of a radio and the louie called Pops over to him. I watched the two talk for a few minutes, then Pops came over to me and said, "There are twenty choppers on the way with the ARVN's. They will be landing two at a time, one behind you and the other one down there, pointing to the piles of explosives, so stay out of the way, cherry."

I heard a high-pitched whine overhead, Pops said that it was one 5-5 artillery rounds being fired at some troop movement to the west. Just then the ground shook and there was a tremendous noise about 500 feet outside

HONORABLE MENTION DRAWING



BONES

MISSY GATHRIGHT

THE MOCKINGBIRDS 1998

the perimeter. I looked and saw a giant ball of fire. "What the hell was that?" someone shouted, as everyone scrambled for cover. Someone else yelled that it must have been a "short round"—a shell that falls short of its target.

Lieutenant Riley shouted, "Everybody look alive, here come the ARVNs." I could hear choppers coming in from the east. Another cloud of ash and dust rose as a chopper sat down on both sides of me. I could make out six people in the back of the chopper. With all the noise and dust, the ARVNs didn't know what to do. Then one of the ARVNs on the chopper down the hill jumped out and ran up the hill. Everything at this point seemed to be in slow motion, I could see the main rotor blade of the chopper hit the running ARVN at his kidneys and cut him almost in two. The impact flipped the chopper upside down on the dynamite. The pilot and copilot, who were trained to deal with the situation, kicked out the windshield, crawled out of the wreckage and ran off. I could see the other five men still in the back of the overturned wreckage, now billowing out black smoke and flames.

Without thinking, I ran down the hill into the flames. I started grabbing the ARVNs, pushing them out the door. The first four ran for safety. I could see that the fifth one had a compound fracture of the lower leg. The jagged edge of the shinbone stuck out through his fatigues. I grabbed him and threw him over my shoulder. The smoke was thick by this time because the fire had spread to the explosives. The heat was so intense that I almost passed out, but getting strength from God knows where, I was able to run. Running with the ARVN over my shoulder, I slipped, reached out, and grabbed a smoldering stump. I screamed in pain as my palm was seared by the

burning wood. The only thought in my mind was that I had to get to safety before the dynamite exploded. Up the hill I could see the other ARVNs running for the jungle. I headed in that direction, my lungs screaming. The dynamite exploded. A hot blast of air knocked me down. I scrambled back to my feet, throwing the wounded ARVN back over my shoulder. A chopper landed in front of me. I laid my comrade on the chopper and ducked away, as it took off.

In a daze, I wandered over to my gear in a daze and sat beside it — my body shaking uncontrollably and my lungs still aching from all the smoke. It was then that I thought, "What the hell have I done?" I looked at the palm of my burnt hand and decided that I had better have it examined. As I looked around for a medic, I noticed the ARVN that ran into the rotor. Someone had slid a piece of plywood under him and four men had picked him up and were putting him on the chopper. I showed the medic the blackened palm of my hand. He helped me aboard. "Get help back at Camp Evans," he ordered. As the chopper lifted off, I looked at the wounded ARVN and realized that he was still alive. "What can I do for this man when we don't even speak the same language?" I wondered half aloud. I decided to slide over and cradle his head in my lap and give him some comfort in the last moments of his life. As his life slowly ended, all I could hear was the "thump, thump, thump" of the chopper as it headed as fast as it could back to the base.

"Excuse me, sir, would you like another rum punch?" I opened my eyes. Before me stood the beach waiter. "Yes, please."

I wondered if that sound would haunt me forever as I relaxed in the chair and stared into the blue of the Atlantic.

## **rusted bottlecaps and banana peels**

Poetry by Lisa Rogers

I lie scattered  
in the parking lot  
grasping bargain booze  
in front of  
the laundromat,  
Kuntry Kitchen,  
and  
Handy-Way.

Digging  
rusted bottlecaps  
out of asphalt  
requires  
concentration.

I think I'm  
slipping--  
I should take  
another  
drink.





SO SHALL YOU BECOME

JOHN W. HILTON

THE MOCKINGBIRDS 1998

SECOND PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY



UNTITLED

ELIZABETH HICKMAN

# Here's Looking at Ewe

Third Place Non-Fiction by Katherine Kopp

It was an ordinary morning for all of us at the vet school. Nothing was in the air, no exams coming up, no tests in recent enough memory for us to still feel depressed about the grade we'd received, nothing was happening except a morning lab in a class that bore the innocuous title of "Physical Diagnosis." It was late in the semester and we'd already had several such labs where we had learned the fine art of giving physicals, administering injections and generally getting comfortable with all those tasks that comprise the day-to-day life of a practicing veterinarian. This morning's lab was listed as "Small ruminants." So what? We'd go look at a few sheep and goats. It was probably just a demo lab in any case—many of them were.

We donned our pristine white lab coats, slung our stethoscopes around our necks with a surge of self importance, and strutted across the parking lot to the animal science building, casually chatting about everything except the lab ahead. The instructor (we'll call him Dr. Baaa) met us at the door and led us into the pens where the sheep were being kept. The sharp odor of sheep dung and lanolin alerted us to the sheeps' presence several seconds in advance of our first sight of them. The sheep were in a long pen against one wall that was about 40 feet by 10 feet, with a gate at the far narrow end. A dozen or so sheep were standing or lying quietly at one end, looking placid and pastoral, despite the surrounding gray concrete and orange metal. Dr. Baaa began a long discourse about proper sheep care, and common problems seen in sheep. We listened with half an ear, rather bored at the whole thing. The soft whispers passing among the huddled group of students expressed the eager hope that this might end up being one of those rare and precious labs where we got to leave early. Many of us had focused our attention on the covert plans that were being debated on how to best utilize those cherished few free hours. Perhaps that was how we all managed to completely overlook the sparkle of mischief that lurked in the eyes of our dear Dr. Baaa.

Dr. Baaa finished his talk and casually entered the pen to demonstrate some of the techniques that he had been discussing. He walked over to a sheep, nonchalantly threw it over onto its rump and set it up between his legs. The sheep serenely sat there as he demon-

strated how to give a sheep a physical. Letting the sheep up (the placid critter ambled to its feet and calmly walked over to its dozing companions), our professor next told us to "Get your hands dirty and get a feel for how sheep throwing is done." Since he had already demonstrated the sedate and serene nature of the animals (these were after all, only sheep) none of us were terribly concerned as we entered the pen. I can only assume that the sheep Dr. Baaa used as a demonstration had been hypnotized by the calming drone of Dr. Baaa's lecture because the instant we entered the pen to stand there in a tight clump with our heads down and our eyes flashing, the few rams took positions at the head of the pack. My classmates and I looked at each other, shrugged, and moving in a line, headed down to the end of the paddock. In retrospect, I think it was due to the poor lighting that we never noticed the sheep's eyes had begun to glow red as we approached. We also never noticed that Dr. Baaa had made a discreet exit of the pen and was now waiting on the other side of the 5'-tall metal railing. We had assumed that since there were only about a dozen sheep and over 30 students, we could overpower them by pure numbers.

Our first attempt was a dismal failure. The sheep bolted as we got close, barreling between people and between legs to escape us. They regrouped at the far end of the pen and we turned to follow. We had learned our lesson, though. We were even closer together and the tall people in the group had turned slightly sideways so that the inviting exit between their legs would be eliminated. Full of confidence (Dr. Baaa had shown us how easy it was), we once again advanced on the flock.

Has anyone ever wondered why one of the favorite methods of going to sleep is counting sheep? Everyone has seen this phenomenon on Saturday morning cartoons—cute fluffy sheep jumping one by one over a fence. As this image is so deeply ingrained, I'll never know why all of my classmates and I managed to forget that sheep can jump. We were only about three feet away and those of us in the lead were already bending down to grab our targets when, with an explosion of wool, the whole flock bolted. There were yells and curses as the air was suddenly full of flying sheep.

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These sheep weren't just a few inches off the ground. these sheep were chest high for many of us, and head high or better for those of us like myself who are vertically challenged. Most of us acted predictably when faced with an oncoming hundred pounds of wool with glowing red eyes and long fangs that appeared out of nowhere to hang ominously below the jaw—we dropped to the ground to get out of the way. Have I mentioned the 3/4" of manure that was solidly coating the floor...?

By the time we picked ourselves up, several things about the situation had changed. The sheep were back in the opposite end of the paddock, looking once more like normal sheep. Their eyes weren't glowing and several were chewing their cud or laughing at us, I couldn't tell which. Dr. Baaa was definitely laughing at us from his clean perspective on the other side of the gate although his laughter turned into a firm "Go catch a sheep" attitude when several of us decided that we'd had enough fun and tried to leave. This caused the final change in our attitude. It was no longer "nice little vet student against cute little sheep." It had become a grudge match. Grimly straightening our filthy lab coats and retrieving our stethoscopes from the floor, we huddled at our end of the paddock to plan.

We spoke only in hushed whispers so that the sheep couldn't overhear our plans. We divided ourselves into groups of four or five. Every group picked a target sheep, conferring to insure that there wouldn't be crossed targets. We had noted the sheep that had leapt the highest on the previous attempt and avoided them. The individuals in each group were assigned a specific task: herder, catcher, or backup. With smooth coordination, we advanced to the end of the dimly lit pen. The sheep watched us warily as we approached, jostling for position even as we did. The distance narrowed, 30 feet, 20 feet...,tension was high, 15 feet...anxiety and adrenaline levels mounted, 10 feet....with a roar of challenge (consisting primarily of "Get'em!") we attacked!These were not ordinary sheep. Most living critters have to use real space in order to travel from one place to another. Not these beasts. They simultaneously teleported en masse from one end of the paddock to the other, thereby bypassing our feeble efforts at capture. The momentum of our charge threw many of us up against the far end of the barn since there were no sheep there to stop us. With a minimum of jostling and reorganizing (including some heavy breathing and no small amount of choice invectives), we turned and

hurled ourselves into the fray again, this time with dark determination that, with this grand effort, we would finally vanquish the foe (and not incidentally quiet Dr. Baaa who, by this time, had been joined by several other instructors, all of whom were leaning helplessly against the fence, racked with hysterical giggles.) We were a little luckier this time. Many of us felt that we could hear the command from the biggest ram, "12 to beam over, Scotty." They vanished before our very eyes to rematerialize on the far end of the pen.

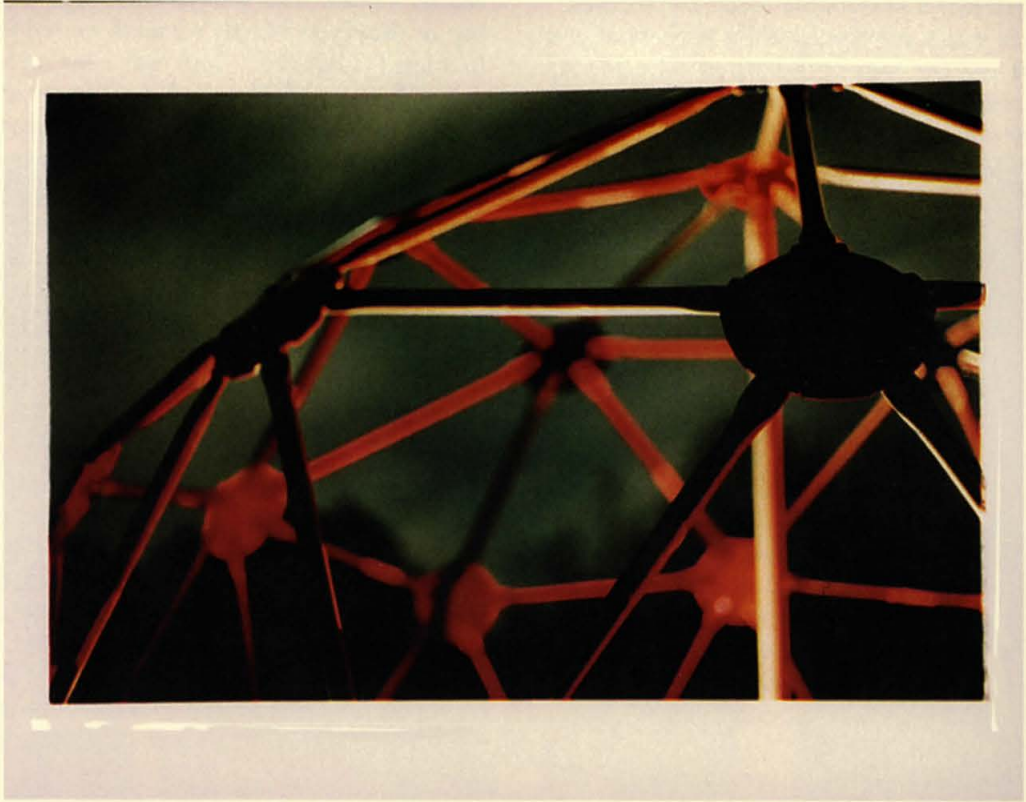
This was the final straw for all of us. We were filthy, tired, and Dr. Baaa had made it adamantly clear through his paroxysms of glee that none of us were leaving until we had successfully captured a sheep and given it a physical exam. Thinking red tinged thoughts of grilled mutton sandwiches for lunch, we spun around with a wordless roar and charged the sheep. Finally, looking at least a little worried at being faced with a mob of incensed humans, they scattered.

For an eternity (objective sources like Dr. Baaa say it lasted about 15 seconds) it was every sheep and student for himself. Many fell to the churned up and muck covered ground only to valiantly rise and again hurl themselves into the fray. It was a time of great heroics as we valiantly threw caution and concern for personal safety to the wind. It was a time of great sacrifices (mostly paid out in clothing) as tangled knots of sheep and students rolled across the floor, each trying to gain the upper hand. Lastly, it was a time of VICTORY! For when the dust settled, we had one cornered. Forgetting the other eleven, who by now huddled fearfully as far away from us as they could get, we turned our attention to the remaining sheep.

He was magnificent. A ram in his prime, horns curling gracefully along a thick neck, eyes glowing in challenge, head majestically thrown back, he faced us all with dignity. He stared at us disdainfully. The obvious superiority of this fine ram when faced with 30 muck-covered and sweat drenched students was clear. He wasn't even breathing hard. We stared back, panting from exertion and nursing bruises from the previous seconds of combat. It was like he was the sheeply personification of Dirty Harry saying, "Do you feel lucky, punk?" I don't remember which of my classmates it was who finally broke the tense silence.

"Well, we have him cornered. .so now what do we do with him?" It was a good question and generated much sudden debate.

"We keep him blocked off and take turns



UNTITLED

JEANETTE HENRY

going in and grabbing him. He can't tamp over all of us," came the suggestions from another classmate.

"Ok, that sounds good. Who's first?" I asked. A long tense silence ensued. You could hear the straw dust settling to the offal covered ground as each of us tried to convey with looks that, although we were more than just willing to go first, we didn't really want to take such a tremendous honor from our other classmates. That just wouldn't be fair. Finally one of my classmates (we'll call him Sucker) volunteered. A slender young man, he probably didn't weigh as much as the sheep. He stepped forward among much prodding and chanted encouragement from the rest of us. The sheep lowered his head and flared at Sucker then backed up so that his rump was tight in the corner. There was about 10 feet separating the pair. Sucker cleared his throat and straightened out his clothes, ceremoniously handing his stethoscope to another student to hold. He rolled up his sleeves as he watched the sheep calculatingly.

"Go get em! He can't hurt you. It's only a sheep. " and various other comments concerning proper procedure began to circulate among the rest of us crescendoing into a rhythmic "Go, go, go, go, go. !" Sucker popped his knuckles and took that first step

toward the ram. The ram dropped his head even lower and started pawing the ground. Sucker stopped, lowering his head and staring back at the ram, eyes steely. The dominion of man over beast was about to be proven for all time. (Meanwhile, Dr. Baaa and associates had climbed on the fence to get a good clear view of the proceedings.) The tableau of locked gazes held for 5 seconds, for 10..., then it suddenly broke. Sucker straightened up, blinked myopically at the sheep and emphatically stated, "No way, man. I ain't going after him," before wriggling his way back into the protective circles of students. With a collective sigh of disappointment, we once again turned our attention to how to get the sheep. It was discussed that we let the ram go and attempt to corner one of the other more meek sheep, but all of us were reluctant to relinquish the only victory we had managed to get out of the morning. Finally it was another classmate who had the solution. He was a big fellow (we'll call him Manly), well over six feet and built like a linebacker.

"I'll fall back and you guys allow him to come in my direction. I'll nab him as he comes by. If he jumps," Manly shrugged massive shoulders, "I'll catch him." We looked at Manly,

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we looked at the ram, the ram looked at Manly. It seemed like a reasonable idea. We formed ourselves into a narrow corridor with Manly at one end and the ram at the other. The entire line moved along closer and closer to the ram until the moment came and the ram decided to make a break for freedom. He bolted down the human chute, straight towards Manly, working up speed. Manly spread his arms, the sheep gathered his feet beneath him and leaped!

It was beautiful. It was graceful. Manly pivoted like a dancer and caught the ram right at the apex of its leap.

"I got him!" he yelled. The moment seemed frozen in time, Manly cradled the sheep like some biblical shepherd, and the sheep had a poleaxed expression of shock on its face. All of us were breathless with surprise. The universe held its breath, and the laws of physics and momentum stopped. But only for a brief moment. Then, before our horrified eyes, Manly ever so slowly fell over backwards. He had failed to take into account that the impact of a rapidly moving, 100-pound object can tend to overbalance a person.

The floor shook with the force of the fall, even though the landing was somewhat padded by sheep dung. The sheep (who must have been part cat) twisted in Manly's arms just before the impact and managed to land on its

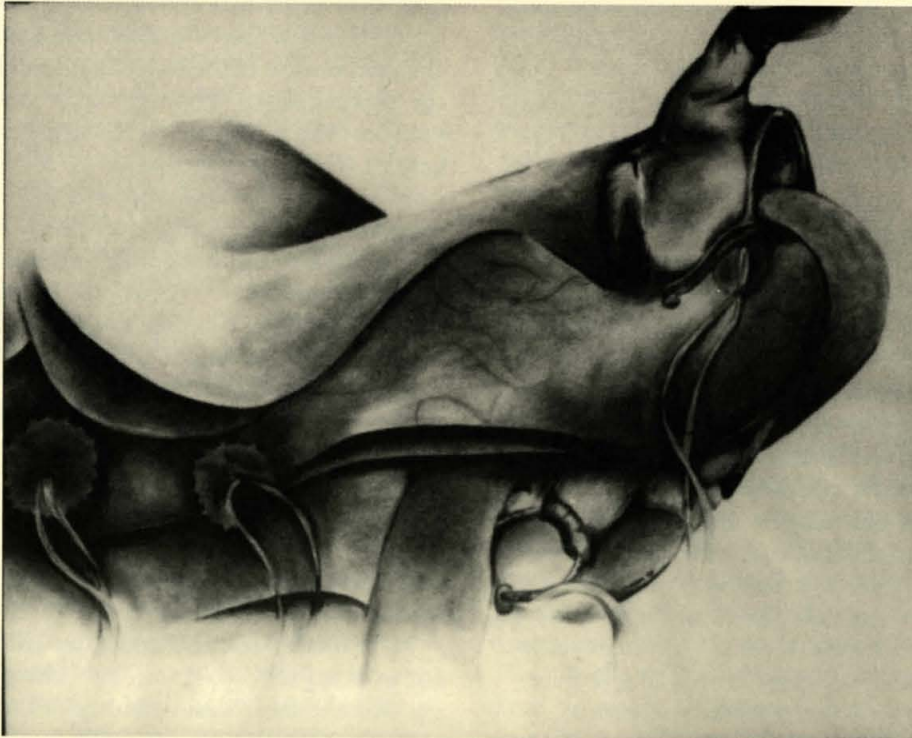
feet, one delicate front foot on both sides of Manly's head. The sheep's hind legs were on top of Manly as Manly's breath exited his body in a loud "OOOF!" The ram bent its head down close to Manly until their noses were almost touching, and Manly's eyes crossed with the effort of keeping the sheep in focus.

"BAAAAAAA!" The ram let out an ear piercing vocalization then calmly walked off Manly's chest to rejoin its friends at the far end of the paddock. The lab generated from there.

We did eventually manage to catch some of the sheep, although the ram effortlessly eluded us the rest of the morning. It was not a short lab. We returned to the vet school just in time to shuck our encrusted lab coats, grab our books and join the rest of our classmates who were already waiting for our next class to begin. It was kind of strange to us that they all got up and moved to the other side of the room when we entered, but the reason didn't strike home until the professor entered. He set his notes on the lectern and turned to face the class, sniffing the air and making a wide array of strange faces. He looked at us for a long moment.

"Physical diagnosis lab this morning?" We nodded dully. "I thought something smelled really baaaaaaaad." None of us ever understood what the rest of the class found so darn funny.

## SECOND PLACE DRAWING



PALE RIDER'S MOUNT

CAMERON BYRD

FIRST PLACE DRAWING



INTERIOR #2

DEBORAH BRYAN

# My Black Heritage

Honorable Mention Poetry  
by Pamela Sue Tabor

I think of my heritage,  
my black heritage,  
so deeply ingrained in the skin of  
my father, his brother and their father  
that it will never wash away.  
I was born into blackness,  
into a world built by human hands  
deep beneath the earth  
where my father labored to  
rip out of the ground a black rock.  
He would load an unforgiving steel car  
with great big chunks of dark gold.

While we slept,  
safe and secure in our beds every night,  
he would descend, hundreds of feet  
down into the inky dampness of the earth,  
to work, stooped over and half-blind,  
side by side, neighbor to neighbor—  
like a sooty phantom,  
laughing and joking,  
a flash of white eyes and white teeth  
beneath a carbon lamp.  
While he breathed a black death,  
I went to school,  
went to church and prayed,  
thankful that the mines were so productive.  
My childhood bought and paid for  
by a fossilized currency,  
my adulthood guaranteed with every  
lunch my mother packed in a steel bucket.

I remember my heritage,  
and even though those mines  
are silent now,  
I can still hear that old coal calling out,  
beckoning me back home.  
The dark colored memory of a  
coal miner's daughter that will never forget  
the price her father paid  
for his family and our home...





EL NOPAL

MARGARITA CASANOVA

# A Cat's Hide

Third Place Fiction by Brandon Bragg

"We have one hour. You ready?" I looked out over the harbor and wondered how that night would end. "Yeah, I'm as ready as I'll ever be," I answered quickly, trying not to seem nervous. Joe glanced up from checking his gear, "By-God, you better be. Remember, you fuck up, you're dead." I raised an eyebrow and shook my head with as much confidence as I could fake. Joe knew I was scared but he was the one who told me to use fear as a tool to be ultimately careful.

"OK, let's go over it for the last time." Joe's words echoed in my head, especially the part about it being the last time. No matter how it happened, after tonight I would never be the same. "One," Joe commanded.

"One, I follow behind, keeping an eye out until you get the rope secure, then I go up first." My answer was the same words I had memorized for weeks, but they seemed very real this time.

"Two. Mr. Paws starts up the rope and then.." Joe looked through his binoculars as he waited for me to finish the command.

"When you start up the rope, I prepare the tools and keep a watch out. Hammer, anvil, and stirrup." I patted the nylon bag strapped to my left hip.

"Good, then three." Before I could answer Joe threw up his right hand while peering through the binos. "Dammit, what the fuck are they doing here?" he whispered but I could tell he was becoming excited.

"What is it?" I said, becoming excited myself. Joe just backed away from the wall leaving his scopes on the edge. Without a word he moved back and pointed. As I peered through the eyepiece, my heart suddenly sank. A couple of dumb ass cops on horses were trotting down the street. I backed up and looked to Joe as if to ask, "What now?" Only to be answered with a pissed-off look. He pushed me out of the way and returned his sweaty eyes to the binos. He suddenly barked with enthusiasm, "Damn, they're turning around."

I wanted to look for myself, but I trusted Joe, and I didn't even know his real name. Joe backed up again, and leaned against the three-foot wall, this time turning to face me. "How do you suppose they do that?"

I don't understand, "What d'ya mean?"

Joe shook his head and smirked, "How do they get those pigs up on those horses?" I got his humor, but I didn't smile. Joe crouched forward and began to crawl towards the road.

"Don't worry about them, they're probably just on some routine beat, but I'm gonna get a better look...be right back."

I leaned back against the wall and watched Joe shuffle to the corner. Joe was cool and unshakable, a true man of action. Though I didn't know when or where, I knew he had done many jobs before. He was no rookie, yet he had never been caught. He was tough, but he was sincere. When I first started working with him on this job he admitted he was often scared. But he used that to his advantage.

"You can be scared, that's OK, but if you get nervous you're screwed. Let your fear guide you to be quick and precise. Get the job done but don't be shaky. Being nervous will make you hesitate and that will get you in trouble. You have got to convince yourself you can get caught, but if you do the job right, exactly as planned, you won't get caught."

I liked Joe. He was like an older brother even though he promised if I screwed up he would kill me before the cops could touch me. I knew he never bluffed. My first few jobs I felt I was indestructible, yet after the bank in Texas I knew I wasn't. Joe wasn't there but he knew about it. That's probably why he agreed to work with me. There were four of us on that job. I knew one of the guys, Rocky, even though it's unheard of in this business. Maybe that was the curse on us that day. I was the only one to survive and I was lucky. My only avenue of escape was to lie bleeding with a bullet through my foot under a pile of garbage bags in the alley. I had to stay in that sticky, hot, stench for three days only to have my leg broken when the waste truck crushed its pickup. Somehow I remained free. When I returned to the market man with part of the goods, I was put on a list. The list had gotten me the job with Joe.

Joe crawled back and squeezed my shoulder. "Those pigs are gone. See I told ya."

I shook my head and checked my watch, "Forty-three minutes and counting." Joe checked his watch and agreed.

"OK, Jet, three."

"You reach the top and strap in, I pull up the rope and set the pulleys and the timer on the dust bag."

Joe nodded, "Good, on four Mr. Paws is ready to drop and Jet.." He stopped to watch a car turn down the street. When it whizzed on by, he turned back for my response. "Jet hooks the chain around the structure bolt on the west side while Paws keeps a watch, then

straps the winch cable around the second central-air unit making sure to avoid any pipes outside of the casing, then hooks the winch and tightens in place."

Again Joe nodded but this time leaned towards my face, "Five."

I backed up for space, "Five, I winch until the cable reaches the mark, exposing the open air-duct and Mr. Paws drops in. Once he's in, I lock the winch and follow."

Joe froze and stared for a second then leaned towards me quickly. "Dammit, Jet, if you forget this fucking plan you'll get us.."

"The radios," I interrupted, "Once the winch is set, we turn on the radios, mine on manual and yours will be on voice activated."

"You better not forget that shit."

"I won't forget," I assured.

"Six, and get it right."

"Six, once we are in, the clock starts.

We have no more than seven minutes. Mr. Paws cuts a hole in the top of the duct work and I crawl through, working my way to the drain pipes to hook my end of the zip-line. Paws clips on and waits. I cut the half-inch flex disarming the motion-sensor device, making sure to cut only the half inch. The three-eighths flex is for the floor lasers. If it gets cut, the silent alarm will sound. Once I do that, Paws removes the ceiling tile above the drop point then I lower him to the mark."

"Good, and seven."

"Seven, I drop the female end down to Paws and hook the wire to the alligator-clip. On Mr. Paws' mark, I lower the sack, Paws fills it, and we're gone." Joe nodded then sat back and closed his eyes.

We sat in silence waiting for time to pass. I glared into the sky that threatened to rain. My mind raced from one thought to another, all leading to that very moment. I thought a lot about Texas, and how lucky I had been. But that job was different. In Texas we were all pennies. A penny is a thief hired down a line of organized crime. The dollar is the top—the big man. The way he protects his name is to hire the quarter to set up the job, the quarter hires the dime to plan it, the dime hires the nickel to organize it and hire the men to do it, the pennies. No one knows who the man two steps back is, and therefore they can't rat him out. Once the job is done, the dollar gets half, and the rest split the other half, making this technique expensive but secure.

This time the dollar went straight to the men to do it. This job was worth too much to chance some unknown street mercenary. The dollar, Mr. O, was going to retire on this one, and he had already lost trust in any of the upper circle. Joe and I had become all the pocket change combined. We each would cut

twenty-five percent without the risk of moving the goods. Our risk would last only seven minutes. But our connection made this game all or none. Any exposure was fatal, because if the cops didn't kill us we would be sure to die before the trial.

Mr. O never left loose ends. His payroll ranged from police, to convicts in jail, to punks in juvie hall. He was everywhere. If it went wrong I'd be dead, but if it went right I'd live the rest of my life comfortably in the Caribbean. So much to gain, so little to lose. "This is my way out. Away from all the messes piled behind me."

I heard a faint rumble of thunder in the distance. The air felt heavy and salty, and the night seemed tense with anticipation. It was almost as if the darkness knew our plans. And although the darkness was on our side, time gave no mercy. Our wait seemed like an eternity. Finally, Joe broke the silence.

"Get your shit on, and let's go."

I tightened every strap on me and bounced into a squat. Joe shuffled down the wall until he reached the edge. He paused for a moment, then scurried behind the dumpster in the alley. He was in place. After he reached the dumpster, I ran to the edge of the wall and watched. As I looked at the hotel, it appeared much taller than ever before. It was like some sleeping giant—quiet and dark. Joe opened his belt pouch and grabbed the high-power sling-shot from it. He twisted around and set the lead ball. Connected to the ball was a three-prong fishing hook attached to a small steel pulley with a fishing line looped through. Joe quickly dove across the alley and backed against the parallel wall. He looked over at me and gave me a thumbs-up. I ran to the dumpster and watched Joe shoot the contraption to the roof. He easily tugged on the line until the hook was set. He then yanked the nylon rope from his ass-pack and tied the grappling-hook to the end of the fishing line. I peered up and down the alley while he raised the rope slowly. Once it reached the top, he slapped the rope against the wall and tugged easily. The second hook wasn't set but he was able to keep it from falling.

I could see the glimmer of sweat dripping from his mesh mask. I watched the silhouette of the black hook against the gray sky as it ascended over the top edge. I tensed and whispered to myself, "Come on, hook dammit, hook." Joe jerked on the rope and it didn't move, so he pulled himself up a couple of feet and kicked off the wall. It was secure. Joe slouched beside me and winked. I took a deep breath and crept to the rope.

Continued on Page 41

## HONORABLE MENTION DRAWING



UNTITLED

JENNIFER ANDERSON

### In Defense of the Curve Poetry by Amy Elizabeth Cook

There are some  
who have strident preference for perfection.  
They look down the untainted,  
titled tips of their  
purely angled noses at us  
who roll across the earth  
on grossly globlular excesses.  
I wish the cornered air that they breathe  
would get caught on their  
straight face lines and tangle them up  
till they look like the rest of us.

Me, I like the Curve,  
My composition is made up of fragments  
of straight lines so tiny  
they, when connected, form a different kind of shape  
What those pure edged others consider  
my downfall  
is a masterpiece in imperfection.  
How can one not love the  
smoothly rounded pieces of a face,  
traced lightly with finger tips  
and kisses?

The Dips and whorls of my body  
are warm and living  
and a thousand times more  
touchable than cold  
cutting corners.  
You can feel the life  
right under the surface of my  
marred and molded skin.  
I need the curves to keep me human.

So you lines and straights,  
with the hair-thin lips of plastic people,  
You keep yourselves on the knife-sharp  
point of your perfection.  
I am going outside to wrap my  
offensively round arms around the  
organic shape of a tree,  
who knows herself to be my sister  
in imperfection.  
My curves deserve better  
than to be confined to your  
sparse, linear demands.

Looking up as I stood against the wall, the rope seemed endless. I grabbed the end loop and began walking vertically. Left hand, right hand, left hand, I pulled the rope as if I were pulling the building down rather than myself up. Once I reached halfway, there was a loop in case one of us needed to rest. But Joe never stopped when climbing, so neither did I. My arms began to ache and my ascent became slower and slower. Gasping for breath and energy, I whispered to myself, "Just a few more meters, come on." Every muscle in my arms and chest felt like stretched rubber. I could pull no longer, so I stopped, wrapped the rope around my left arm, and held on. I looked down at Joe and gestured, but he was too far away to see my movement. I could see the harbor and all the lights of shrimp boats along the horizon. They sparkled in the distance like huge diamonds. The off-shore breeze cooled my sweat drenched ski mask and I continued to climb. Just as I thought I could continue no longer, I reached the edge and pulled my exhausted body over. I couldn't move, I could only lay gasping for air. Finally gaining enough strength I sat up and glanced down the wall. Joe was already to the halfway loop, and of course he didn't stop.

I swiftly dashed to the west edge of the building, then carefully lowered the chain and maneuvered it around the structure bolt protruding out of the wall. I had to hurry to be ready to pull up the rope by the time Joe finished his climb. "Come on, come on." I twisted, and in a single motion grabbed the end link of the chain, looped the winch hook through it, then hustled to the middle unit. Upon reaching the four-foot unit, I saw Joe in my peripheral vision rolling onto the roof.

"Shit, I've gotta hurry the hell up." I wrapped the cable around the metal box and dashed towards Joe, who was just then sitting up.

"What happened to you?" Joe asked.

"I had to tighten the strap on my bag, I thought it was gonna break." I pulled the rope up and avoided any other talk about it. Joe strapped in his Swiss-seat and hooked a D-ring at the buckle. I wrapped the rope around my arm and piled it in my ass-pack. Joe crept to the south edge, which was the front of the building, while I began cranking the wench. The cable tightened and the torque became harder and harder. The metal box popped, and collapsed in the middle. When the bolts at the base finally snapped it sounded like a shotgun blast. I reached the mark on the cable and pulled my headset from the Velcro pocket at my left shoulder and placed it on. "Batman, this is Robin."

"Robin, this is Batman, channel three."

I set my watch to stopwatch and started it. "Seven minutes." I turned my radio to channel three and climbed under the central-air unit. It was cool in the duct. I followed the silhouette of Joe's back until he was sure there would be no obstructions above the duct. He cut the hole and I climbed through. The city glow shining through the hole behind me gave the ceiling a dim and spooky blue glow. When I climbed onto the conduit I laid on my back, with my spine between two horizontal pipes I pulled my body along by the rafters until I could see no longer. I twisted on the little light strapped under my chin, and continued pulling. Finally I made it to the drain pipes and tied my end of the rope around them. I pushed the button on my radio, "Secure."

"Roger that," Joe whispered.

I saw his dim red light across the ceiling. Joe had to hook the D-ring at his buckle to the zip-line and slide close to the drop area. When he felt he was close he used a measuring tape and measured exactly four feet off the east wall and six feet off the south. He had a small pulley connected to the D-ring and he threw me the rope to lower him with. I unstrapped the bolt cutters from my right hip. I grasped the two strands of flex underneath me. "OK, this one is thicker," I placed the cutters around it and squeezed. The metal arched with a flash as I clipped it. Then I turned and yanked on Joe's rope. I could smell the dust from the bags and I knew they were working. The dust reflected where the laser beams were flowing without shading the receiving eye. Joe could see where they were, but he still had to avoid them.

"OK, I've landed."

I stopped until I felt Joe tug on the rope, then I tied it around the conduit to hold it in place. "Now where is the big pipe?" I began moving towards the north wall and found it. The four-inch pipe had a wire two-and-a-half inches thick running through it. Pulsing through the wire was 477 volts of electricity. I had to get to the wire without cutting into it. I began sawing the pipe at a shallow angle. I had synthetic voltage gloves but they are only 100-percent effective on 110 volts. Precision was my only security with the wire. Finally I cut deep enough to snag the metal with a type of can-opener device. The metal had to be twisted back like a sardine can. With a pair of bolt cutters to add leverage, I cut a section of the conduit out. I glanced at my watch, "Three minutes, fifty seconds."

Joe announced on the radio, "Today." I didn't reply. I pulled a rubber

Continued on Page 42

handled pocket knife from my inner-thigh pocket. My arms tensed as I began stripping the black insulation from around the wire. I could feel static run through my body as the chopper began to show. "Careful, very careful. There." It was stripped.

"Time, time." Joe said frantically.

"I'm there." I replied, then moved to the west end of the building until I was above the office. With my pocket knife I pried up the ceiling panel. I could see Joe well by the light coming from the window behind him. He had moved the huge oak desk to expose the safe. Above the safe door was another laser and below that was the electronic combination lock. Joe had taped a laser scope to the corner of the desk and aimed it into the receiving eye, therefore tricking it with another beam. He had taken the electronic face off of the safe's door and stripped the hot wire. I lowered the cable and Joe connected it to the electronic keypad. That type of electronic safe has a safety feature in which it shuts itself off if it gets hit by a surge of high voltage. In case of lightning or something. It does that so it doesn't burn up while it's locked. After it gets hit, it returns itself to locked, but its memory is destroyed and the combination resets to 00000. I pulled the cable to the open section of the conduit and eased the alligator-clip around the huge wire. I could feel all the hairs on my body stand when I quickly connected the clip.

"Lights out," Joe commanded.

Fear ran through me. I slowly grabbed the clip and began to ease it away from the wire. I jerked. Bang, the wire arched into a three-foot explosion. "Oh, God, Oh my God." I was burnt. I couldn't see or move. My arms were curled back and I began convulsing. Every inch of my body felt tense and hot, and I was struggling, trying not to swallow my tongue. "Oh God, I'm gonna die."

I felt blood flowing down my neck out of one ear and soaking into the earpiece and cloth around the other.

Joe hadn't realized what was going on. He had opened the safe. The safe had five shelves in it but each shelf had a pressure sensor that would sound the alarm if disturbed. Joe slowly pulled each shelf half way out and placed a spring behind it to retain the tension, keeping the sensors in place. Each shelf had a plate containing sixteen, very special, three-karat diamonds.

"Fly like an eagle." Joe was ready.

I could hear him but I couldn't touch my transmitter button to reply. I felt my body begin to slide. "I'm gonna die and I'm gonna fall through the ceiling and set off the alarm. Joe's gonna go down." I saw no way out of this one.

"Seven minutes, ten seconds. Reply."

"Seven minutes, thirty seconds. Reply!"

I saw Joe's light shine into the ceiling. I tried to speak but I couldn't. Joe aimed the light towards me. There I was hanging upside-down by one foot about to fall through the ceiling. My face was burnt and bleeding, my ears were bleeding, and both of my hands were blown up.

"Holy shit." Joe's radio was still on voice activated. "Move if you're alive."

I tried with all my might and finally moved my right arm enough to allow it to fall to the ceiling panel. Joe jumped off the desk and filled his pockets with diamonds. He managed to get all of them even though his pockets bulged to their maximum.

My breathing became harder and harder until everything went black. When I came to, Joe was pulling me along the duct to the open area.

"You alive? Hey." He pulled me to the roof. "Can you move?" I was gaining a little movement, enough to slowly shake my head "No." Joe backed up and pulled a Gerber lock-blade from his shoulder pocket. He opened the blade and slowly inched toward me.

"I don't want to do this, Jet," he knelt down to me and placed the tip of the blade on my spine at the base of my head.

"You understand don't you?"

I couldn't answer, but I did understand, "Oh please let me live..." I thought. But I knew from the beginning what the job was worth. I knew I had to die. Joe paused and whispered to me, "I'm sorry, man." I felt the pressure begin to pierce my skin, but stopped. Again everything went black, and in the distance I heard sirens. I heard Joe's feet scuffle to the east wall.

"He's gonna let me live."

Then I heard his feet return. Suddenly I regained my vision. Joe was dragging me to the edge. When we reached the edge, he slipped the rope through the repelling ring.

"OK Jet, I'm gonna lower you pretty fast."

He pushed me over the edge and I felt my body racing to the ground. When I smacked the ground I felt the air seep out of me. I began gasping and coughing. Joe was zipping down the rope when I finally gained enough strength to turn over. Joe's boots slapped the concrete and he spun around to me. "Coming around?" Joe pulled me into an upright position.

"I...I'm...doin' a...a little...b...better." I could at least speak.

Joe threw me over his shoulder and quickly ran to the front of the alley. Checking his watch, "Oh dammit, we're four minutes

late.”

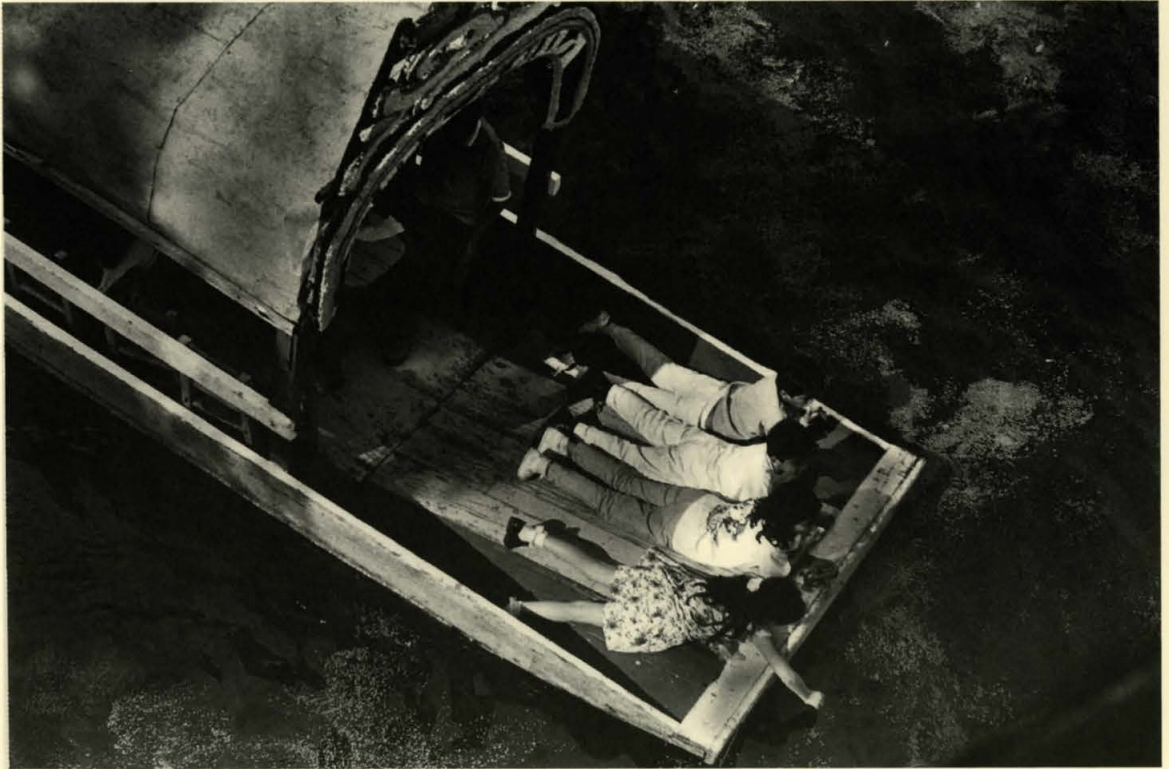
I heard the police cars closing in as Joe reached the front. He didn't stop. He just walked into the street and jumped in front of a taxi. The woman driver slammed on her brakes just before hitting us. Joe pulled his revolver and pointed it at the woman.

“Get out of the car!” Joe screamed violently, “Get out of the fucking car!” The woman rolled down her window, “I'm your pick-up shithead, you better be glad I came back for you. Get in!” The woman reached across the front seat and opened the passenger

door. Joe opened the back door and tossed me in, he jumped in the front and we sped away.

That was four years ago. I lost three fingers and I still walk with a limp. I don't know where Joe is for sure. Last I heard he was somewhere in the South-Pacific. I spend a lot of time remembering him. I never got the chance to thank him. But he knows I'm grateful. And for me, the sailing is great, the women are tan, and the bourbon is cheap. All in a night's work.

## PHOTOGRAPHY



UNTITLED

MIWAKO KATO

### To the Dog That Bit Me:

You bark all night, shouting your victory,  
You flash your razor-sharp teeth at me.  
I hope your dreams are filled with cats,  
and old men swinging baseball bats.  
May your days go by with children pulling your ears,  
And may the sight of a dogcatcher heighten your fears.  
And may the fire hydrant allude you night and day  
And I hope your owners never come out to play.  
Had you been friendly, I would have done the same,  
But you chose to bite my leg, as if it were a game.  
So keep barking all night, until you're out of your head.  
And may you have mites in your ears and fleas in your bed.

Poetry by Lori McCallister

PRINTMAKING



LITHADELICA

ISAAC WADIHSTONE



# The Village Fool

Third Place Poetry  
by Nicholas Jimenez

Foolishly seeking  
wandering beneath a relentless sun  
I am living savage years that threaten me  
I must awake  
and wash this heady torment from my eyes

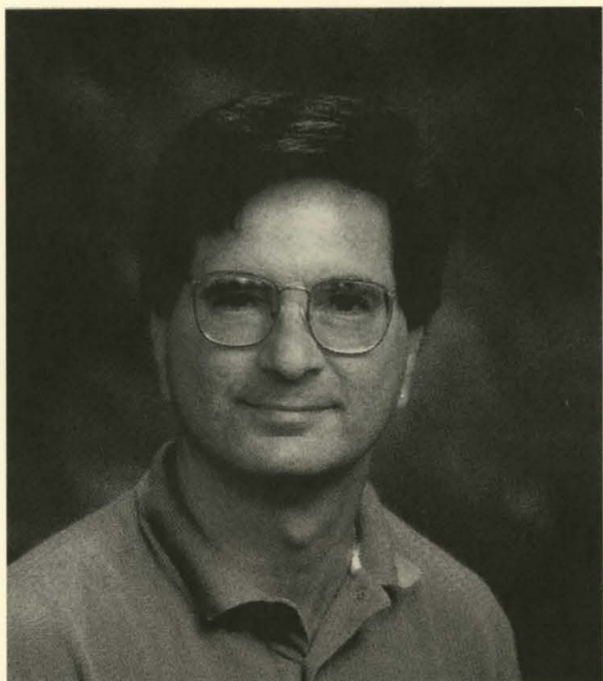
Turn away now  
and lie alone in the field  
contemplating what attracted you in the beginning  
Grow sick from the memories  
of all that you've done with and for me

Except for the jester  
the castle is empty  
I sit upon the forsaken throne  
wearing a crown that no longer matters

# Writer Draws on “the Inspiration of Praise”

Interview by Scott Braswell & Brad Owens

Dr. Gustavo Perez Firmat is a Professor of Spanish at Duke University in Durham, NC. A poet, fiction writer, and scholar, he is the author of nine books and over 70 essays and reviews. In an interview with the *Mockingbird*, he speaks of his writings and personal influences.



**MB** As you were growing up in Havana, Cuba, had you always planned on being a writer or was that something that came along after you arrived in the U.S.?

**PF** When I was growing up, I never expected to be a writer or even considered becoming a writer. I knew, or I thought I knew, that my future was the *almacen*, the family business, as it had been my father's and his father's before him. But exile does strange things to people, and in my case it gave me a reason to write, though even that took a long time. Although I began writing in my twenties, it was not until recently that I realized that writing is my way of being Cuban. No matter what the specific topic may be—critical or creative—I write to

define and defend and affirm my nationality. The paradox is that I do it mostly in English! (Go figure.)

**MB** Which writers have influenced you?

**PF** Since I make a living teaching Hispanic literature, most of the authors I read are Spanish or Spanish American. If I wrote in Spanish, I'd want to write with the serenity of Borges, the vividness of Rulfo, and the passion of Miguel de Unamuno. For a change I read nineteenth-century European fiction—Turgenev, Flaubert, Hardy, Conrad, James, Eliot—and some English and American poets—Housman, Larkin, Frost. I don't read much contemporary literature because I don't like to be reminded of the world around me: for that there's CNN. One of the most inspiring things I've ever read I found in George Eliot: "It's never too late to become what you might have been." My other motto comes from Albert Camus: "I've only written ten percent of what I know and they're already screaming."

**MB** What sources do you draw on for your inspiration?

**PF** My friends, my enemies, my children, my wife, my parents, my uncles, my students, Miami—and Cuba, Cuba, Cuba, Cuba.

**MB** Has your success as a writer changed you in any way?

**PF** It's given me the confidence to keep on writing. Cynthia Ozick talks somewhere about "the inspiration of praise." That's very important to a writer.

**MB** I've spoken with some of your students and have discovered your fascination with the television show "I Love Lucy." What is it about the show that is so attractive to you?

PF I love "I Love Lucy" for two reasons. The first is intellectual. unlikely as it sounds, Ricky Ricardo is the single most influential Hispanic in the history of this country (Bob Vila and Geraldo come in a distant second). Ricky is also the first "latino." The second is personal. For me a Cuban American is a Cuban married to an American, and that's what "I Love Lucy" is about, how a Cuban man and an American woman get on, get by, get down together. "I Love Lucy" is the great Cuban-American love story, and a very sexy show to boot.

MB In this age of political correctness, do you have a label for your writing? Do you prefer one classification over another?

PF No, not really. I think of myself as a Cuban-American writer—that is, a Cuban writer who writes in English. My work has little to do with so-called "political correctness." Some years ago a reviewer criticized one of my books for being "amazingly male." I took it as a great compliment.

MB James Abott of the University of Oklahoma has said of your book *Idle Fiction. The Hispanic Vanguard Novel, 1926-1934* that

you define vanguard fiction by "reading fiction as criticism and criticism as fiction." Do you consider this an accurate description of your process?

PF No—for me the writing of criticism and the writing of poetry or literary prose are distinct activities. It's almost as if they engaged different parts of my brain (such as it is), though obviously there is some overlap. Being a critic makes me a more self-conscious writer, though not necessarily a better one. Being a writer makes my criticism more readable, though not necessarily deeper.

MB What's next for you?

PF Well, I'm not sure. I'd like to go back to Cuba and do my life over again, but since that doesn't seem to be in the cards, I'll probably write another book which in one way or another will be about not being able to go back to Cuba and do my life over again.

MB As a successful writer, what advice do you have for aspiring authors?

PF I'm not good at giving advice, since I need so much of it myself, but it would be: write sentences that hurt.

## DRAWING



DAVE

ALISON REED

PRINTMAKING



WOLF

MEG DAY

## EDITOR'S NOTE

"There is an art of reading, as well as an art of thinking, and an art of writing." —Isaac D'Israeli.

*Mockingbird '98* invites you to celebrate the arts of reading and thinking as you experience the art of writing within this magazine. I am immensely proud of this year's product because I believe the writers have achieved a level of excellence that furthers the literary traditions of past *Mockingbirds*.

This year's submissions were outstanding and I would like to thank everyone who contributed. In addition to the judges' chosen works, the literary staff added poems which they felt deserved honorable mention. The judges, literary staff, and I had the unenviable task of choosing the winners, but I feel we have done our jobs well. My job would have been more difficult without the assistance and support of the following people: Ruth Tapp, Deanna Bryant, Landa Holmes, Janina Williams, Peyton Worley, and Lisa Rogers.

Special thanks to the ETSU Foundation and the Friends of the Reece Museum for providing the prize money for the literary and art competitions. I would also like to thank Dr. Steve Bader and the members of the student Activities Allocations Committee for providing the funds necessary to print *Mockingbird '98* and to Dr. Styron Harris of the English Department for his assistance.

Brad Owens, editor *Mockingbird '98*

## ART DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Appalachian culture and family life were the theme that inspired the literary and artistic contributions to *Mockingbird '98*. A family album is the idea behind our title this year, "*The Mockingbirds*." Think of your old family albums that include old letters, pictures, articles torn from newspapers, or even a family tree. This year's *Mockingbird* is a tribute to the family of ETSU and the culture that influences its community.

The students who contributed artwork this year exhibited wonderful talent that made choosing what not to include in the magazine a difficult task. Faculty advisors Ralph Slatton and M. Wayne Dyer organized the submission and judging of the artwork. A special thanks to them and the graphic design workshop for assisting the art team in the design of the magazine, and for making the project possible!

It was a great honor to be chosen art director and to be able to work with such a dedicated and hard working design team. Alice Lane photographed and laid out all artwork and illustrated the cover embossed mockingbird. Eric Vaughn illustrated the family tree on the front page and helped in page design. Coming up with a unique cover was a team collaboration and we are proud to break the binds of the traditional magazine. I also want to thank the ETSU University Press for working so patiently with us and agreeing to do it "the hard way."

I hope that everyone who contributed to this year's *Mockingbird* is proud to have their work displayed in *Mockingbird '98*, and feel that the "family album" will be enjoyed by many ETSU generations to come.

Ashley Honeycutt, art director *Mockingbird '98*

# THE MOCKINGBIRDS 1998

## Subscription Information

*Mockingbird*

c/o Department of English

Box 70683

East Tennessee State University

Johnson City, TN 37614-0683

To receive an additional copy of this year's *Mockingbird* by mail, send a check or money order for \$4.00 (\$2.00 to cover the cost of the magazine, plus \$2.00 for postage and handling) to the publishing office address listed above. Please be sure to include a mailing address.

Due to limited staffing during summer school sessions, allow ten to twelve weeks for delivery.

## Printer's Address

ETSU University Press

East Tennessee State University

Johnson City, TN 37614

*Mockingbird*

published in 1998 by ETSU University Press

an imprint of ETSU University Press, Johnson City, TN

TBR 260-129-96 5M