

The Mockingbird

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1976

# The Mockingbird

ETSU Department of Art

ETSU Department of English

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**MOCKINGBIRD**



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MOODY MOUNTAIN  
by Darla Davis

by Grey Jewell

Moody Mountain, on sunny days  
Your face is deceptively close,  
each feature perfectly formed  
And touchable.  
This is how I met you.

Then one morning I awoke  
To find you enshrouded in a mist  
Far, far away. I even wondered  
If this distant form were you.  
I had planned to wander across the valleys  
Under your lips. I wanted to explore  
The ridge that is your nose,  
And rest in your cool eyes.  
Now I felt it was all a vague dream.

Later the mist blew away and  
I hoped to again feel the closeness  
Of the gentle breeze blowing from your nostrils.

Ah! I was fooled again.  
It was not until the snow fell  
And froze your features into immovable disinterest  
That I knew you were much too far away  
For me to ever roam the trails  
That give your face its character.  
And I felt a loss,  
Not to know you, Moody Mountain.

Even now on bright sunny days  
You can deceive me.  
And I still fall for your hoax—  
But only for a moment.  
Then I walk out on the nearby foothills  
And I am almost satisfied.

tumbling in the tresses of  
passion  
i find myself entwined  
in a tangle of folly.  
tearing at the follicle  
'til I lie limp  
in loose lush

softness  
trembling. . . . .  
testing this tryst of torment.

wound against the head of  
misfortune  
these fugitives of freshness  
fumble for flight  
frenzied firelights who foresee  
that which is  
forbidden.

**ALL THE LAUGHING HANDS**  
by Tom Lawhon

All the laughing hands  
Reach our —

they burn our bridges  
Down

We'll step into our separate  
Worlds  
Never to be  
Found



## A TYPICAL NIGHT AT A. P. CARTER'S STORE

by Frank Greally

1st Place Article

It is Saturday night in Hiltons, Virginia and a cold nip of Winter is in the air. About three miles outside "downtown Hiltons" on highway 614, a steady flow of cars and pick-up trucks are beginning to turn off the road and try to find a parking place close to the A. P. Carter Store.

Across the clearing from the store the lonesome strains of an old mountain fiddle tune can be heard coming through the night air. The tune has the haunting melody that one associates with the story of a lost love or the search for times past.

Inside the store which has now been remodeled into a small auditorium, the McLain Family Band are entertaining a growing crowd who are beginning to settle into their hard wooden seats and benches. On entering the auditorium, it is immediately obvious that the musicians are getting some encouraging feedback from their audience.

The band is made up of a father and son and two daughters and their closeness as a family unit, so obvious on the stage, has probably been best described in some of the old songs of the famed Carter Family.

The old-time fiddle tune comes to an end and on a signal from Raymond McLain, Sr., the band breaks into a lively song called "Darlin' You Can't Love One." Raymond, Jr. leads on vocals and the whole family shares the instrumental leads. Going into the third verse of the song, the younger of the McLain sisters goes into a solo on her base and the crowd really comes alive and joins her in some high spirited hand clapping. She slaps the bass with a beautiful lilting rhythm and as all the family joins in, one can see why the family from Berea, Kentucky have delighted audiences as far away as England and Japan.

The small auditorium is now thronged with people and a look around shows that the audience is made up of a cross section of people ranging from knee high kids to well seasoned old timers. They have one common bond and that is that they like old-time music, and they are having a good time.

The McLains start into some jig-time music and some people can be seen leaving their seats and filtering up on stage. It is now clogging time at the store and the people who have taken to the stage know exactly what this old-time mountain dance is all about. The cloggers, who are made up of a colorful cross-section of the audience really have the crowd on their toes. One old man on stage appears to be in his early seventies, yet he and a middle aged lady appear to have more energy than some of the younger dancers.

Janette Carter stands with arms folded watching the dancers, a happy, thoughtful smile showing on her face. It is quite possible that the music and the dancing may be taking her back down memory lane to the early days when A. P. Carter, her father, was alive.

The store's fame really started way back in 1927, when RCA first recorded the Carter Family at a recording session in Bristol. They recorded in the same studios as the legendary Jimmy Rodgers, and it was from this recording and humble beginnings that "The Great Nashville Scene" later grew. Nashville went commercial for love of money but the Carter Store stayed humble for love of music.

The original Carter Family was made up of A. P. Carter and his wife Sara and Sister Maybelle. Maybelle and Sara did most of the instrumental and singing work on their recordings and A. P. was instrumental in collecting songs from the hills. Between 1927 and 1941, the family recorded over 300 songs that were collected by A. P. and a black singer called Lesley Riddle. Janette Carter is making sure that the tradition of the family will live on.

Every Saturday night she has her sessions at the store starting at 7:30 and ending at 10:00. Her main interest is to entertain the people who love and appreciate old time music and her store is also an outlet for the growing number of young traditionalists and singers that seem to be springing up in the south. All she asks is there be no drinking at the store and that people come to have a good old fashioned time. Tonight as she stands in the wings, looking with admiration at her orderly crowd, it is pleasing to see that her format is working.

The McLain Family are now thanking the crowd for being such a good audience and once again it is almost time for the show to end. Janette gets up on stage with her auto-harp and she is joined by a few local musicians as they end the session with "Will the Circle be Unbroken". It is a fitting end to the night.

The crowd starts to leave, and out in the parking lot little groups of people are getting to hit the road. Over 250 people have had an enjoyable night and roads from Hiltons are liable to pretty safe tonight. A group of young people from ETSU are preparing to get started for Johnson City and are shouting to some friends. "We'll be back!" The friends holler back, "Yes, and bring some more with you and we'll all have a great time!" One gets the strange feeling that A. P. Carter is somewhere in the shadows listening.

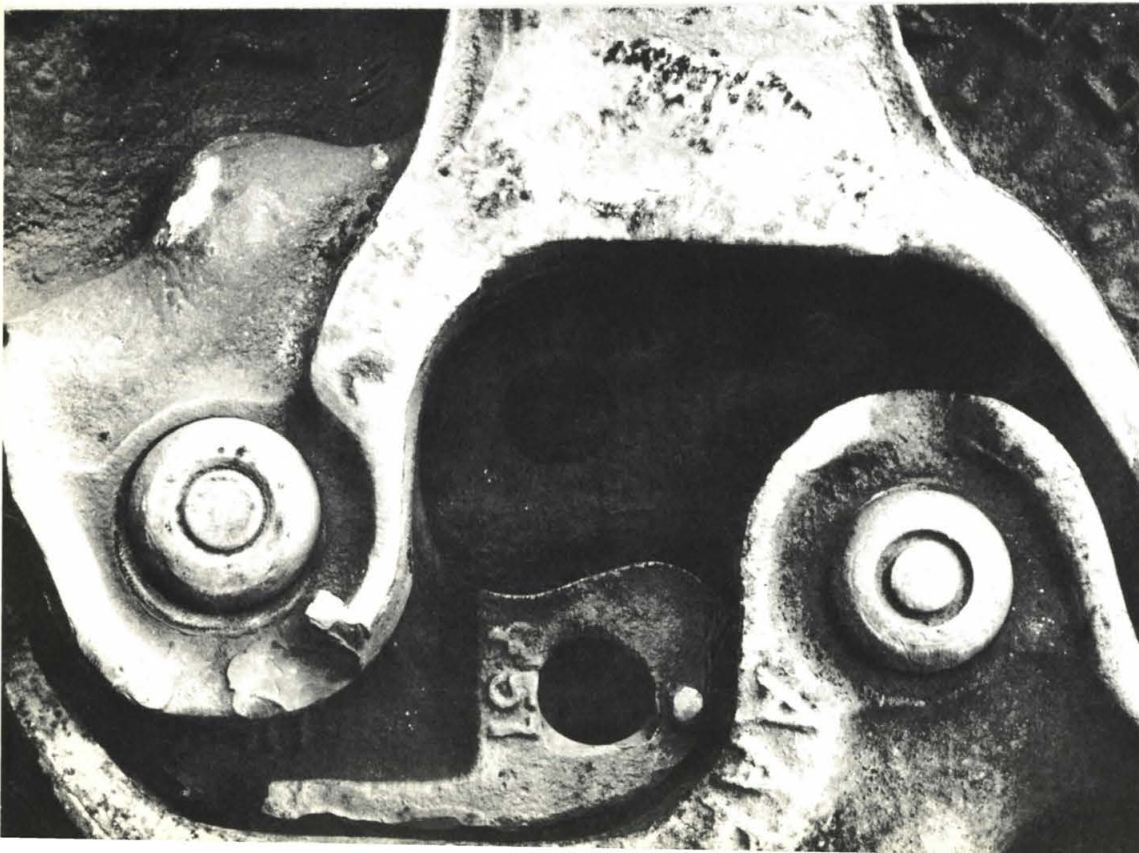


**DETROIT**  
by Randy Mitchell  
Second-Place Poem

I never saw any old people  
they must have been hiding  
in those little white houses  
with well kept lawns.  
I wonder who mowed their lawns  
and swept away the gray snow  
that lay on from November to February  
probably some grandson  
who hated the chore,  
but what are grandsons for?  
I never saw old people in the stores  
even at the magazine racks  
where they should have been.  
Pam said one lived next door  
but I never saw him.

**JANUARY 16**  
**DOWN THE STREET**

cocktail glasses  
clinging  
against stale breath  
do not alter  
the love  
that borrowed  
Mrs. Tilly's bedroom  
for bubbly champagne  
of the filthy rich  
is the gold  
encased epitome  
of what radiated  
from between  
Mrs. Tilly's  
borrowed sheets



Carl Bergman Second Place Photograph

**TIMESTEPS**  
by Phyllis Dickenson

Across the sky moves each cloud  
making shadows play on land,  
why have they hidden the sun  
only to drive out sheets of rain.  
Pushed onward by wind  
moving fast, hurrying to reach the sea.

Earth being harrassed by the sun,  
beaten and reshaped by wind,  
rain, rain, is a cry from the land,  
storms move in from the sea  
carrying a heavy load or rain  
overflowing a darkened thunder cloud.

Precious rain  
healing the wounds inflicted by sun.  
Pushing, shoving the cloud,  
as the dying wind  
is called to death at sea  
leaving a child to the bleeding land.

Blow softly, clean and refreshing wind  
carrying high, a soft, white cloud.  
Caress the bleeding land  
deserted for the sea,  
to bear in labor the rain,  
but nourished by rays of sun.

Restless, splashing emerald sea  
relent the shackles holding back rain,  
freedom to be embraced by the wind  
blowing under a sheltering sun.  
Run, run, to safe and solid land  
shadowed by a darkened cloud.

Shut out the precious rays of sun  
cooled by raging wind  
fighting a battle for the sea.  
Beat, strike the weary land  
with flashes of anger from a cloud.  
Surrender to the rush of violent rain,

Strike, strike again restless rain,  
fighting endless battles for the imperious sea  
against the tired, bleeding land.

**BLUE LADY**  
by Frank Greally

The crowd was leaving the club on the corner  
and the couples were all going home  
When I saw her come strolling along on the sidewalk  
She looked pretty and sad and alone.

I stood in the shadows and watched the young lady  
as she stood by the disco-club door  
I thought she was looking to find her a lover  
I'd met many of her type before.

The crowd passed her by as if they'd not seen her  
Her gaze followed all the young men  
She seemed destined to spend another night lonely  
I smiled and thought I'd move in.

I stepped from the shadows and walked up beside her  
and invited her come drink with me  
Then we walked hand in hand to an all night cafe  
and her words there fell easy and free.

She told me her story across the bar-table  
A story of love and of pain  
She dealt out the cards from the deck of her lifetime  
She'd been whipped by the wind and the rain.

She told me a story about a sad hooker  
who was once forced to take to that trade  
She was young then and loved a pimp from the ghetto  
and to lose that love she was afraid.

"He called the tune, I danced to his wishes"  
She said with a tear in her eye  
"Then he cast me aside like an old dirty oil rag  
when he'd taken my love and my pride."

She said "stranger I know why you asked me to come here  
and drink this good wine with you  
I'm sure that you thought I was just a stray hooker  
and I hope now you know that's not true."

She thanked me for listening to her sad story  
and said she must be on her way  
She said "everytime that I find someone to listen  
there seems to be no more to say."

She left the cafe and I gazed in my wine glass  
and her words echoed deep in my brain  
I knew it was useless to ask her to linger  
once I'd helped her unravel her pain.

Still sometimes I wonder about that young lady  
though I know I'll not meet her again  
But I see her face mirrored in many a woman  
who's been whipped by the wind and the rain.

## FOR MY DEAREST ONE LOST

by Gail Watkins

I sat beside the Edisto last May,  
The turning waterwheel was in my head,  
Inert and flowing patterns of my darling  
Turning time forever with the dead.  
A camping trip with spirits on Mt. Fuji;  
You: killed and buried in an avalanche.

Waiting thirty days since avalanche  
Had made you hers in heaping snows of May,  
Where you were seduced in spring on Fuji;  
I tried to lift my weary, paling head  
To find an answer in the sky, that dead  
Was not your claim, but silent sleep, my darling.

But heard that you were dead last week, my darling;  
Perfect though you seemed, an avalanche  
Made your lusty spirit out for dead.  
Oh, did you suffer, frozen, in that May  
So foreign to my South Carolina head?  
Ten thousand miles away from me on Fuji???

Your spirit must be living now on Fuji.  
They wouldn't let me look at you, my darling;  
They said it wasn't wise to view the head  
As if inside my brain some avalanche  
Could waken me to what your spirit may:  
No life upon the casket, vibes are dead.

Not knowing better, I should think I'm dead;  
Alive enough to choose the yellow Fuji  
Mums, the spring flowers may  
Not live long on your grave, my darling.  
Other times a forty dollar avalanche:  
But it's for you and seems to cool my head.

I took a rose from your precious head  
Where first I loved you, in your knowledge dead  
To others, thought I heard an avalanche  
When took one from the heart, Fuji  
Echoing her power, from the groin, my darling,  
As I took what leaving left behind in May.

The avalanche on Fuji was last May;  
You are in my head, but I never saw you  
Dead, my darling, never saw you dead.

<sup>ANON</sup>  
If I had two loaves of bread  
I would sell one  
and buy hyacinths  
for they would feed my soul.  
*gretchen whisnant*

**TANGLED WEBS**  
by Jerry Leonard  
First-Place Poem

among the tangled webs  
of tables lamps, coffee tables,  
soft, luring tones of Montovani,  
and over-stuffed, complacent chairs,  
the small limbs fluttered  
like tiny wings of an imprisoned  
lacewing in tragic ecstasy of  
her spider-like death, the small  
form sprawled in wonder beneath  
the brutal body  
of venom and his victory  
was his prison and beneath  
him lay total submission. he stretched  
his calloused limb to stroke the cooling  
form to find  
she was not there but  
in another tangled web of table lamps,  
varnished chairs and Montovani stretching her  
thin feelers to caress her prey.

**TENSION PULSES. . .**  
by Jamie Smyth

Tension pulses through my hands  
Veins tight as desire  
hard as your leaving.  
Scars, dry of pleasure  
hide my knuckles,  
Yellow glows within my fist  
striking at wisdom  
a childish paw  
fighting age  
like a blind man  
shutting his eyes  
after the miracle of light.



Michael Burnette Honorable Mention Photograph

by Gail Watkins  
Honorable Mention

The shock of your parting so soon  
The thick golden tresses of time,  
Dividing my portion of moon  
As if the quiescence of mime  
Left you whole and beyond earthly ways,  
Left your lionness lame in the lair;  
So wounded in animal daze  
That the aura in her blooming hair  
Has taken the glow of the dead.  
Like a lionskin rug by the fire,  
Love was found shaving its head.  
Sing softly the teeth numbing choir;  
My mane has been taken away;  
I am tame in the balding of day.

### THE RENDEZVOUS

by M. Louise Armstrong

The memories of clandestine meetings  
Held in dark monasteries  
Are betraying me.  
How the monks stared  
At the hooded lovers,  
Naked in the cloister,  
Naked in the garden  
Among the sweet peas red and white and pink!  
How cold your eyes were  
Through black robe and wire-rimmed glasses!  
I wrestled with pride  
As shadows grew on the sundial  
And monks came out for vespers.  
Then were the dreams of the nonesuch,  
Borrowed from nuns with monstrous rosaries,  
Borrowed from monks with sandals and shaven heads,  
Clasped to the breasts blue  
From ice blue eyes.  
When these memories return  
I know that it is only myself  
Whom I have betrayed.

**LAST DANCE**  
by John Stephen Howze

Poet, make the words dance;  
Music, make the feet;  
Spirit, make the heart  
Dance to your throbbing beat.

Hero came and the children  
Danced for him in the street,  
Who, when they are grown older,  
Will die in the white-hot heat

Of bombs that have fallen upon them,  
Deliberately or by chance,  
Ending the human will and  
Dealing death to the human dance.

Autumn, let the leaves dance  
Over deep graves and wide,  
Of brave earth men (O brave earth men):  
Who were dancing when they died.

Brave earth men, O brave earth men:  
They were dancing when they died.

Jim Devault Photograph





## THE MUSIC CONTINUES

by John Lyons  
Third-Place Poem

For the sake of  
Every Good Boy who  
Does Fine  
and those that get by  
an animal had to die  
like some dumb weight falling as  
his knees sink in the soft dirt  
and wonders about nothing but  
the slow throb of pain

For the sake of  
Every Good Boy who  
Does Fine  
and those who do poorly  
to the ruin of a toothache  
and all the rest who  
on tired benches sit  
beside a sacrifice  
who went to pieces and piano keys

Jim Cole Photograph



## THE DAY WE GOT RELIGION

by Ellen Markland

It was Sunday, and since my grandmother was the primary Sunday School teacher at her church, I was to accompany her with the understanding that although I was old enough to be in Mrs. Bailiff's secondary class, I would go to my grandmother's room instead.

"But, mammaw, " I had said, "I don't want to sit in there with all those KIDS!"

She gave me a long, hard look and I knew I had said the wrong thing.

"Susan, you know how much your salvation means to me. My time left in this world is short, but I'd gladly go to Hell right now in your place if I thought it would save you. But it's not your fault. You're just like your mother; she used to love me too until she grew up."

"Mammaw, mama loves you, and I do too."

"You did when you were little, but you don't anymore."

I could see that she was about to cry so I touched her hand and hoped she understood.

"I just don't want you in Mrs. Bailiff's class. She doesn't know her Bible like she should and I don't want her confusing you."

"Yes," I found myself saying, "I'll go to the kiddie class."

## II

We arrived late as always, a habit as mechanical as the murmur of the old Plymouth's insides when rust met ice and ice met rust, each battling the other for seniority, neither realizing that time had already won. My grandmother parked the car in front of the church, barely missing the little "First Freewill Brothers and Sisters in Christ Baptist Church" sign. I pretended not to notice.

"Have you got your Bible? You didn't forget your Bible?"

"No, mammaw. I've got it right here."

"Well, comb your hair. Mine's in a mess too—looks like what's left of a rat's nest."

Mammaw groped through her purse looking for a comb, and a small, bony woman appeared on the porch steps. She seemed to be watching us. Beside the little white side-board church, her tiny figure looked almost infinitesimal—as if she had no body at all, but merely clothed her spirit as a storekeeper would a mannequin.

"Oh, there's Mrs. Bailiff. Come on, Susan, we'll just have to wait and comb our hair when we get inside. The bathroom's the first door on the left as you enter."

By now Mr. Bailiff had walked to the car and was talking to my grandmother. In getting out of the car, I dropped my quarter for the offering under the seat and I

couldn't find it. Under the car seat, their voices seemed miles away. I thought what it would be like staying under there with the quarter—so dark and cool and quiet. . . not seeing or hearing or having to know—then I heard my name and gave up searching.

"Susan, this is Mr. Bailiff, our secondary Sunday School teacher, and Louise, this is Susan, my oldest granddaughter, who is visiting me for the weekend."

"How do you do, Mrs. Bailiff, "I said, "I am so very happy to meet you."

My tongue stopped and I stared in disbelief at the sound of my words—so stale and pretentious. I wondered if she could tell that mammaw and I had rehearsed them the night before.

"Hello, Susan. I've heard so much about you. How do you like North Carolina, is it better or worse than Tennessee?"

"They're both very beautiful, "I said, "I guess it just depends on which one you call home."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bailiff, and then paused and looked at me for a moment with a blank expression. She does know that I've memorized, I thought, and I began to feel uneasy.

"Well," said my grandmother, "you know the old saying—If you don't like Tennessee, you'll like North Carolina, and if you don't like North Carolina, you'll like Tennessee, and if you don't like either one, there's always Virginia."

We all laughed. Mrs. Bailiff pulled her shawl closer around her midget arms and said, "Here we all stand gossiping in the snow. I think it's about time for Sunday School to begin. Let's go inside."

The two women held each other by the waist, each stepping where the other stepped, being careful not to fall on the icy pavement. I walked a little behind, watching the blackbirds flit from tree to tree and make scratches in the snow. Every once in a while one would land on the church chimney and sit there for an instant, or until the smoke burnt his eyes and he became lost. Intoxicated, he'd weave and sway upon the brick, engraving in the soot a drunkard's song, then down upon the shingles he'd fall, the song becoming his eulogy.

Mrs. Bailiff turned around and looked at me. "How old are you, Susan?" she asked.

I told her I was sixteen.

"Well, good. That means you'll be in my class."

My grandmother turned around and looked at me too. "Uh, I wanted Susan to see the bulletin boards in my room, and to hear my children sing. Why, did you know they've already memorized over fifty Bible verses? I wanted Susan to hear them."

Mrs. Bailiff took her arm from around mammaw's waist.

"Oh, well, of course she'll want to hear them," she said. "I guess I'd better be going on. I think it's time."

We watched as she went on up the walk ascended the steps and disappeared through the door. I helped my grandmother the rest of the way along the sidewalk and, climbing the steps, I remarked that I didn't think Mrs. Bailiff was to happy about the room situation.

"She'll get over it," mammaw said.

We were met at the door by the preacher; everyone else had already gone to a class. He was a short, stocky man with black hair, green eyes, and he had on clothes that didn't match. Looking at his forehead and at the creases between his eyes, one would think that he was angry or extremely worried about something; but a glance at his mouth revealed a perfect set of teeth which were always smiling.

In the background I heard echoes of an introduction and more memorized lines. Preacher Harlan was saying something about "these Carolina winters," and I faintly heard myself answering his inquiries. But the real queries were being asked elsewhere, his eyes had never left mine—feeling their way, tearing at the edges, stripping my pupils of their calm facades—his eyes asked me, "Do you believe?" "Yes," mine answered. Again he asked, "Do you believe, have you got religion, are you one of us, have you been saved? My eyes, still as intent as his, answered, Yes. Yes, I believe. Yes, yes, yes."

Suddenly the lines in his forehead and the creases between his eyes vanished. His whole face smiled. He knew. Damn him, he knew. They always knew.

My eyes dropped to the floor and I thought again of the quarter.

### III

When we came back out from Sunday School, I saw that the congregation altogether numbered about twenty five or thirty, most of whom were children. A big husky woman in a red, white, and blue dress sat at the piano, and at the nod of Preacher Harlan, she began playing a hymn. I recognized the tune; I had heard it many times before, but I didn't know the title. When everyone was settled, somebody named Brother Jacobs led us in prayer and then we all rose to sing. Just then the door swung open and an old man staggered in out of the cold. He didn't have on a coat, and he was in his shirtsleeves. Everybody watched in silence as he stumbled over a chair, sat down and then got up again when he realized he'd forgotten to shut the door. He was obviously very drunk.

Some of the children standing in front of us started sinkering and mammaw leaned over to me and whispered behind her hand, "Oh my God." Preacher Harlan nodded again to the woman at the piano, who played "I'm On the Battlefield For My Lord" while everyone attempted to sing in harmony with the choir

leader, though very few succeeded. For the first time, I realized we were sitting in fold-up chairs rather than pews, and Preacher Harlan said that was what the offering money was to be used for. Somebody else led us in prayer and then the offering plates were passed around, or as I soon discovered, a small wicker basket with a velvet bottom was used instead.

The preacher started toward the drunk man in the rear and I knew his time had come. But he didn't seem worried; he just kept rocking back and forth and running his fingers through his hair which was thin and looked as if it had not been combed in a very long time. The drunk man kept mumbling something about how sorry he was and I could hear Preacher Harlan telling him that he'd have to leave. The offering basket was handed to the drunk and he reached inside his shirt and pulled out a wad of bills, unrolled a twenty and put it in the basket.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I'm sorry for everything—for beating my wife, for cheating that man last night, and for getting drunk. I'm sorry for all my sins. I'm sorry, Jesus," he sobbed.

The preacher stopped short in the middle of another protestation and stared at the twenty-dollar bill. Then he sat down beside the drunk and began talking to him in whispers. I could no longer hear what they were saying, but in a little while, Harlan had his hand on the old man's shoulder and was referring to him as "friend," and occasionally as Brother James. A few minutes more and Preacher Harlan stood up.

"Myrtle," he said. The woman at the piano stopped playing "I'm On the Battlefield for my Lord" and looked from side to side like a dog that thought it heard its master call but wasn't quite sure—it could have been the wind.

"Play our saving song. Brother James here is ready to get religion."

Myrtle looked perplexed.

"Which one?" she replied, "'Just As I Am' or 'Lord I'm Coming Home'?"

Preacher Harlan thought for a moment, making the lines in his forehead look deeper. "'Lord, I'm Coming Home.'"

"They can't do this," I said to my grandmother. "Don't they know that he's durnk?"

"Yes, they know. The only time Leroy James ever comes to church is when he's drunk and feeling guilty for some godawful thing he did the night before."

I couldn't believe it. Preacher Harlan and the choir leader were helping the durnkard to the altar; the congregation had picked up on "Lord, I'm Coming Home," and Myrtle never tired, playing and singing the first verse over and over again. Mu grandmother was singing too.

"Mammaw, do you mean to tell me that this has happened before?"

"Oh no," she said. "This is the first time that

Brother James has ever got religion.”

“But what happened to the sermon?” I asked. “How can he be saved without a sermon?”

“Susan, when somebody gets religion, they have to be baptized. So there won’t be time for a sermon with a baptizing ceremony and all.”

I didn’t understand. This wasn’t how it was supposed to be done. Was this religion? What was religion. . . . I thought back a long time ago to a little girl crying out in the night after having a bad dream.

“Auntie Cora, please don’t leave me. I’m afraid of the dark.”

“There’s no reason to be afraid of the dark, Cora?”

“No, honey, I ain’t afraid. I’ve got religion.”

“What’s religion?” I asked.

“Religion’s how you treat people, Susan. Religion’s something you believe in like saying ‘thank you’ and ‘excuse me’ and ‘how are you’ and ‘I’m sorry.’ ”

“I don’t understand,” I said. “I’m still afraid of the dark.”

Cora pulled the big patch quilt up under my neck and then sat down on the bed beside me.

“Just think of good things and you won’t be scared,” she said. “What’s your favorite good thing in the whole wide world?”

“Ice cream comes,” I screamed. Cora laughed at me until her insides hurt and she had to put her hand to her ribs so she could breathe better. I hadn’t realized I was being funny, but when she laughed I laughed too, and Cora kept saying over and over, “Ice cream comes, ice cream comes.” I was too young to know my m’s from n’s and she was too religious to tell me the difference.

My great aunt leaned over and kissed me on the forehead. We said goodnight and as she was going out the door, I said, “Cora, can ice cream comes be religion?”

I saw her smile that smile of hers again and then say, “Yes, honey, if you want them to be . . . .”

“Susan, don’t you want to go up to the altar? My grandmother had hold of my hand. “Aren’t you ready to get religion?” Her pale eyes pleaded with my conscience and I thought what difference would it make if I did go just to make her happy. I looked at the altar and the drunk was on his hands and knees crying, still moaning, “I’m sorry, Jesus, I’m sorry.” Myrtle had stopped playing the piano and was at the altar along with Mrs. Bailiff, the choir leader, and some other people who were helping Brother James to his feet.

“Are you ready to go up, Susan?”

“No,” I said. “I’m not ready.”

Mammaw immediately released my hand and Preacher Harlan announced that it was time for the baptizing. I looked at the curtain behind the pulpit expecting somebody to pull a string and reveal a glass tank of waiting water. But to my surprise the entire congregation, including my grandmother, put on their wraps and proceeded to file out the door. The women virtually carried Brother James outside, Preacher Harlan

being the last one to exit other than myself.

“You’d better hurry and get your coat,” he said, “or you’ll miss the baptizing.”

And then I was alone, standing in the little country church, feeling guilty and wondering what it was I had done wrong. I walked to the pulpit and read the message at its base, a tiny plaque nailed to the pulpit’s wooden back. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” A picture of Jesus hung to the right side of the curtain which I pulled back, unveiling not a tank of water, but a huge hole in the wall that leaked plaster and insulation.

By the time I got my coat and was walking down the church steps, the verbal formalities were over. Preacher Harlan had the Bible in one hand and a stick in the other which he was using to poke through the ice of the little frozen creek that lay across the road from the church. Everyone turned around and stared at me and I looked away at the church chimney; there was a bird on it, perched there above us all, dancing in the soot.

Preacher Harlan held Brother James’s head in his hands barely above the icy water. With one quick motion he thrust the drunk’s skull underneath, but defiantly, James brought his head back up. The preacher shoved him down again, and again, but each time James’s head bounced back up like a jack-in-the-box. Perhaps the water was sobering him up. Harlan pushed the drunk’s head down one more time as hard as he could, and was preparing to again when Myrtle, the piano player, yelled “Stop! His nose is bleeding!”

Preacher Harlan pulled the old man up out of the creek and turned him over on his stomach. The back of his head was in a terrible mess with red gashes from the nape of his neck all the way to the crown of his head. I knew his skull must be fractured in several places for the bottom of the creek at that place was solid rock.

“Oh, my God!” screamed the choir leader. “You’ve killed him, you’ve killed him! Oh my God!”

Some other members of the congregation began screaming and a lot of the children started crying.

“He’s not dead,” said Preacher Harlan. “He’s not dead, he can’t be dead!”

I looked at the man and he wasn’t breathing.

“Has anyone here had first-aid?” I asked. “No,” they said. “Have you?”

“No,” I answered, “but we can’t stand here and do nothing!”

They all stood and stared at me except for the preacher who was already bent over James, beating the drunk’s chest with his fists and chanting, “He can’t be dead.”

The next thing I felt were my lips gliding over the old man’s. While I breathed in and out of Brother James, the preacher pushed and pulled at his chest, trying to force the water, or the alcohol, out of the corpse’s lungs. I can’t be a quarter, I thought, and I sucked at the old man’s lungs until I thought mine would burst . . . . I will not be a quarter.

And then he was breathing, Gasping, coughing, and gagging, the drunk started coming around, still muttering that he was sorry. Preacher Harlan was crying. My eyes looked at his and asked, "Do you believe, are you one of us, have you got religion?"

I looked across the road at the chimney. The bird was gone. Among the other cars in front of the church, the rusty old Plymouth glared out at the snow, threatening the ice to come its way. I thought once again of the quarter . . . hidden so safe and secure underneath the car seat.

"He wouldn't have gone to Hell. He was baptized," said Mrs. Bailiff. "He got religion. He was saved."

"He was in the process of getting baptized," said my grandmother, "and he didn't get religion because he was drunk. You can't get religion when you're drunk."

Mammaw and Mrs. Bailiff were arguing about where Brother James would have gone should he have died—an extension of the Sunday School class dispute. I watched Mrs. Bailiff's skeletoned-soul argue the case for Heaven, and then looked at that old man lying in the snow with his face bleeding and the little air bubbles of life hanging on his chin.

I closed my eyes and sure enough, there they were . . . big, fluffy, ice cream comes.

Kris Hawkins Photograph



ORACLE  
by Elaine O'Quinn  
Honorable Mention Poem

There's honied magic in you.  
Touch me.  
My light tumbles out as the magic  
ripples and gleams.  
Dance becomes blood. I split from  
my seams.  
Masqued Fate!  
Blue glamour licks up the air.  
Silk costumes appear everywhere  
Time turns to rages of brilliance and pitch.  
Song born to wizardry flies from your  
lips.  
Touch me.  
Sparks set off glimmers on the  
loneliest star.  
Medusa caps her mane for the mad  
sorcerer.  
There's magic in you.

WAVES  
by Michael Roberts

I am as a pebble of sand on a beach  
as a twinkling star in the sky  
a disappearing wave ceasing to survive  
after it's seemingly endless journey  
but always reappearing on the shore  
to complete the cycle of life  
only to return once more to the  
foaming sea  
I speak to all who hear my roar  
The universal language of waves  
splashing against the oceans' shore

INNOCENCE WON OR LOST or Down at the Old Swimming Hole  
By Jerry Leonard

Henry shot a pelican and wore it around his neck  
after he read Coleridge  
back when being weird was in  
but every record's broken and it was Harold  
the little thin guy with big glasses and a lisp  
who all the teachers liked  
who did it. He wore his pet parrot to school  
and talked to it all day  
and everybody went crazy and laughed and talked  
and patted Harold on the back and fed part of their bologna  
sandwiches to the parrot except Cynthia  
She yawned and everybody said she was weird  
and I guess that's why I liked her 'til the  
next year when she caught acne and it turned out she  
wasn't good-looking anyway. At least Billy Paul said so,  
said he'd seen her naked and touched her thing  
which kinda made me feel washed out like when Superman  
lost his powers and had to walk and take the elevator  
and duck bullets and I didn't speak to her after that —  
or Billy Paul either, but then he wouldn't speak to me  
cause I hit him but I had to do it cause I just felt like  
somebody should help Superman after all he did for us.  
After that I didn't know what to do cause Billy Paul was my best  
friend so I asked Gramps and he said Don't worry boy  
everything'll work itself out and it did cause two months later  
Cynthia moved away and a month after that school was out and  
I didn't see Billy Paul cause he lived on the other side of town  
and couldn't cross the street unless his mother said he could.  
I was sure lonely but not as lonely as when I was in school  
and not talking to Billy Paul. Gramps said that's how hermits  
make it by themselves cause they can do without people  
only cause people ain't around. It's like cookies, boy, or donuts.  
Don't really crave 'em till you smell 'em cookin' in the oven  
and then you got to steal a couple when they're set to cool.  
So I stole a dozen cookies  
they was peanut butter and I love peanut butter  
and I took off to be a hermit and live in the woods in a tree stump  
but I had to stay near a creek cause my mouth was dry from them  
cookies. There wasn't any trees near the river so I had to live  
in a big bunch of bushes and that's where I met Jim and his sister  
when they came to swim. I liked Jim and Kathy was his sister  
and she was alot prettier than Cynthia. I gave 'em some cookies  
and they ate 'em and Jim said they were going swimin'  
and Kathy said come on and I said OK and we went down to the Hole.  
Jim started takin' his clothes off and so did his sister  
and Jim went splashing in and Kathy said come on and I saw her thing  
and I wanted to hit Jim except I didn't know him as well as Billy Paul  
and Kathy woulda got mad and so would Jim cause they wouldn't know  
why I did it cause they didn't ever know Cynthia.  
So I just took my clothes off and splashed in and the water was cold  
and Jim said it sure was good like The Garden of Eden.  
I wonder how he thought of that and Kathy said their father was  
the new preacher and I wondered how Adam tied a fig leaf on him  
till Jim splashed me then I splashed him and Kathy too.

YOU CAN NEVER BE A PART  
by Norma Myers

Your can never be a part of me  
Or I a part of you  
For I love you far too much  
To keep you for myself alone.  
Even the sea cannot contain the waves —  
Unrestrained they roll onto the shore.  
Like the sea I send you freely  
To your other lovers — unafraid  
For should I lose you to their loving  
I probably lost you long before.  
All I have to give you is my love and your freedom,  
And I give you freedom for I know what it is to be chained. . .  
No matter how alluring the bonds may be.  
Should you choose to go  
I will be all right alone  
Until I find another better suited to be free.

Zane Scarlett Photograph





**THE TOUCH**  
by John Lyons  
1st Place Fiction

I'd been watching him for about an hour. Moving from table to table, then he started at one end of the bar working his way down.

"Spare change, Mister?"

I knew the line, even used it a few times myself. I was what you might say between jobs and been in between for two months. I kept looking at him thinking that I'd be joining him in another week or so, two at the most if I stayed in Omaha.

Empty glass. I called for another round and he came like a bloodhound sniffing out change. As the bartender set the beer down, he stepped up to me and said,

"Hey good buddy. . .help a fellow out."

"Sorry. . .I can't spare it."

He stood there staring at the full glass of beer, an obvious sign of affluence.

"Oh come on now. . .you can spare me something can't you?"

"About all I can spare is the time to tell you 'No,' and that's just because

I've got a full glass and nowhere to go until I finish it," I said taking a drink.

"Do you believe?"

"In What?"

"The Lord!"

I smiled.

". . .it is easier for the eye of the camel to get through a needle than a rich man pass into glory."

"Great. Me and camels are safe."

"Not yet you ain't. . .the Lord shall judge ye by ye works."

"Look," I said, "I'll be panhandling with you in another day or so, and I know you think if you stand here long enough pestering me, I'll lay a little on you just for some peace and quiet. . . but like I told you, I can't spare it."

". . .you ain't never seen hard times like me, kid," he said! beginning to get defensive.

"I don't guess you'd know it, but there's people starving."

"Yeah, I know, but you ain't one of them. I've seen you put the touch on everyone in here. I've panhandled a little myself. . .long enough to know

that if you're any good at all you can pull down twenty bucks a day. How much have you made in here?"

He stepped back and fell silent.

"Come on. . .how much?"

"Well, I was once a working man."

He started. Trying another approach.

"You still are. . .but really you could come off with a better line if you tried."

"Money don't mean that much to me," he said proudly.

"O.K. then, how much can you spare me? I mean you've made at least a couple of bottles in here tonight. . .how much can you spare?"

He turned, deciding I wasn't worth a quarter's worth of hassle and started off. I hopped down from my stool and followed him.

"Come on. Buddy can't you spare a dime? I'm out of work, you know, and ain't had nothing to eat. . ."

I followed him to the door where he turned and screamed: "Beat It! . . . You work your own territory."

WITH EYES THAT CANNOT SEE  
by Phyllis Dickenson

Hands reaching out with a plea,  
Each shape is a rewarding find,  
With eyes that cannot see.

Another bruise on each knee,  
Sharp corner for the blind,  
Hands reaching out with a plea.

Autumn leaves from a tree,  
Nature is not kind,  
With eyes that cannot see.

Experience will mold a key  
Storing every shape in your mind,  
Hands reaching out with a plea.

Instincts of a singing bee,  
Honey for the blind,  
With eyes that cannot see.

There is only time to be,  
Storing each shape in your mind,  
Hands reaching out with a plea,  
With eyes that cannot see.

Bill Tingle Honorable Mention Print



by Gail Watkins

The tunnels of my eyes found fire in yours  
Before our voices found the words to say,  
And burned in me the shadow of your doors  
A tender arson, animated play.  
Its ardor was the breath of torrid bone  
That lost the flesh of documented day  
And sought the windows of a nearing noon  
In hollows where the stars are made of clay.  
The stars that gave me light had ceased to beam  
Until your welding arc gave fuse to mend;  
Now scintillant in daylight, I may dream  
Of darker worlds where friction yields to wind.  
A child of fire is waiting in the night:  
The glow that binds me low will leave me light.

THE TOUCH OF YOUR LIFE. .  
by Barbara Gail Yantz

The touch of your life upon mine  
has been well felt and well acknowledged;  
How the absence of it must  
be coped with and the frantic desire  
of memory must somehow be snuffed out. . .



Lee Stone Second Place Print

ALONE (A PROTEST AGAINST OBSTETRIC WARDS)  
by Lorna Garrison

A lonely lady lies abed,  
A pillow nestled 'neath her head  
That twists and turns and rants around  
While further down a covered mound  
Heaves and lurches wild in pain.  
Look out the window! See it rain!

Beads of sweat are on her brow  
And there is no one with her now  
To hold her hand and pat her face  
And tell her that joy will soon erase  
The terrible pain from off her face.  
Look on the glass the droplets race!

The lovely lady all alone  
In agony lets out a moan —  
A head does press for sweet escape —  
Will it the lady's young life take?  
She grips the cold grey bars in fear —  
"Oh why, oh why is no one here?"  
Outside all nature sheds a tear.

"Oh God in heaven look on me  
And thou my great physician be —  
We'll have this baby, you and me,  
While others ignore my agony."  
A tongue of flame flicks up her spine  
And then her groin it does entwine.  
The rain seeps in upon the blind.

Others sit and drink their cokes  
And laugh at one another's jokes  
And twist the dials upon the box  
That shows a picture of some flocks  
That graze upon a plain,  
While the lovely lady's racked in pain,  
Oblivious of the pouring rain.

Her helpless bones begin to part —  
The pain is shooting to her heart —  
Out in the hall they laugh and smile —  
"It still will be a little while."  
No one near to hold her hand —  
No one by to take a stand  
And love here through the terrible night.  
The storm blows with all its might!

Something warm is seeping out upon the snow white bed.  
Something warm is running down and oh! it is so red.  
The great mound lurches — then it heaves —  
Up come the lovely lady's knees —  
"Oh someone, won't you help me, please!"  
Outside the wind rips up the trees!

A head is pressing fiercely now —  
The skin begins to tear —  
Others sit upon the couch and talk, without a care.  
Snow white hands grip cold grey steel  
And thrashing hips begin to feel  
The sharp release of shoulders bare.  
The crashing storm still fury wears!

Out come the little buttocks round —  
The heaving mound at last goes down  
As scrawny legs lay by the knee  
Of lovely lady who will ne'er see  
The babe she bore in agony.  
The storm is blowing out to sea.

Enter honored doctor, nurse —  
See the startled lips that purse  
At sight of babe awash of blood  
And lovely lady in the flood  
That trickles down upon the floor.  
"It matters not — she was a whore."  
The storm is gone. The rain is o'er.

**THE EVERGLADES**  
by Katherine Honour

The brown pelican plunges beneath the water.  
Enjoy this event, bird watchers, for the fires  
Of destruction follow the hurricane  
And sear the sawgrass to its very source.  
Tourists take an airboat ride through the Everglades  
Frightening the marsh-dwelling birds in their path.

Follow the canny crocodile, king of this marshy path,  
The swamps grow arid beneath his search for water  
And drive him to dig deeper in these Everglades,  
Force him to seek aquatic beds away from fires  
That sweep this sea, impelling him toward a source  
Of food — hoping, hoping for the hurricane.

Listen to the lesson of the hurricane  
Which transports seeds and debris in its path,  
Brings aquatic plants from some far distant source  
And leaves them here beneath the brackish water  
To fight for reproduction 'gainst the fires  
That challenge the survival of the Everglades.

Airport builders assault the Everglades  
Whose real friend is the howling hurricane,  
Bearing ripened grain for sowing in its path,  
Extinguishing the fiercely glowing fires,  
Nourishing the drought-parched grass with water.  
This is their strength, their substance, their very source.

Lake Okeechobee is the inland source  
Of the river of grass, the Everglades.  
Canals have drained down to the ocean its water  
That would flow to Florida Bay. The hurricane  
Is welcome when it plots a perfect path  
That leads toward Royal Palm and quenches fires.

The Indians know the dreadful danger of the fires,  
The Seminoles for whom this marshy land is source  
And nourisher, this sea of grass their path  
Of life, houses built on stilts in the Everglades,  
And palm fronds tied for shelter from the hurricane,  
Their homes on hammocks higher than the water.

Birds seek refuge in the Everglades.  
The egret and the eagle can endure the hurricane  
But can't combat the brightly burning fires.

**ODE TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE**  
by Darla Davis

There is the house sitting back from the street  
Full of memories and tales incomplete —  
Tales of leap frog and run kick the can,  
Of a little girl's skip rope, and an old feather fan,  
Of Courtiers, and pranksters, and long times ago,  
Of flowers, and cake walks, and sometimes a beau.

Hidden, these gay times will never be known.  
Chance passers see only the grass overgrown,  
The door off its hinges, the trellis blown down,  
The windows all broken, the porch with a frown.

But I see your beauty, your charm, and your grace,  
A treasure I cherish and can never replace.  
For years may have creased you,  
Your face is all wrinkled,  
Your windows are shadowed,  
With age you are sprinkled,  
But your value is more than chance passers can see,  
Your value is memories —  
And they're precious to me.

**TED**  
by Ben Addison  
2nd Place Article

One of the most popular members of the Addison family was not a person, but a parrot who went by the name of Theodore Roosevelt Campbell, but, of course, everyone called him Ted. He was the only member of the family to ever have a portrait painted.

Uncle Ben Campbell got Ted in Atlanta, Georgia in 1907, and he lived to be about 35 years old. I never knew him, but from the tales I've heard, I wish I had.

Ted was a Mexican Double Yellowhead, and apparently had a very large vocabulary, which he had picked up from people, of course. As a result of his mocking ability, several students would often attempt to teach him to curse, hopeful that he would embarrass someone while in the post office or store. The worst thing he ever said, however, was "Hell fire" one time when someone jerked a magazine out from under him.

This bird was never caged and wandered about the community quite freely, thus he became very popular with the local folks and the students.

This was almost his downfall, for he was once rescued just in time before becoming the target of some children's BB guns.

Ted often spent a lot of time in the trees, coming down only when he got hungry. At that time he would go home and announce, "Ted wants his breakfast!" He could hold a spoon in one claw and eat out of it. He also loved his whiskey, or "hot toddy" as it is called. He would always be real happy and "hoop and holler and carry on" after he had his hot toddy.

Ted was a one man parrot, meaning he always liked one person better than others at a given time, this usually being the youngest person around him. It would often be difficult for a parent who was about to correct a child, for Ted would say, "Better watch out," and would then proceed to defend the child.

When the neighborhood children would dress up like clowns and have circus parades with dogs and cats, Ted was always the center of attraction and he knew all the local kids by name.

Ted did a lot of traveling in his life. He would visit with family relatives in Bristol, then be brought back to go back and forth between Emory and Meadowview.

He was a very vocal character, and was gifted with the ability to cry just like a baby. His favorite song to sing was "Bye-Lo-Baby" which he would sing to my father. He would call my grandfather "Tom", but my grandmother was always "Mrs. Addison."

His all time favorite thing to do was to hang upside down from a limb in the pouring rain. He would spread his wings and sing and chatter away, loving every minute of it. As a result of this, plus the fact he was native to a warmer climate, he would often have bad colds and would need to have Vicks rubbed on his throat numerous times.

One of his escapades in the rain finally became his downfall, and he caught pneumonia late one Fall, and died. It seems he led a pretty full life for a parrot. He must have been quite some bird.

NIGHTSHADES  
by Scott Davis

Dark quietly forms from mist of day —  
Already there, yet needing only some soft mood. . .  
Plead night shed its cover, bring rest and. . .  
    Velvet sensuousnes. . .  
        or else  
    . . . Shades itself gently upon day's canvas, to touch  
Gently, lightly. . . ever so, and make the common  
Breathe, Immortal; under the band of the  
    Great artist-deceiver. . .  
        or else  
    . . . Drifts and flows from out the folds of day  
A wondering, wandering seeker, eager  
to know the world-universe  
    Its own. . .  
        or else  
    . . . Throbs its way from noise and sound of night  
A heartbeat, pulse of life —  
Glare, Glass, Glitter, and Brass; Motion and Surge  
    Humanity on the loose  
        or else  
    . . . Etches itself, a fiery epithet — Slowly  
Yet ever so sharp-clearly, until dawn burns away,  
Leaving only raw nerve, crackling static,  
    Hyper-perception  
        yet always  
    . . . Evaporates to day. Taunting, Breezing  
Never content or contenting. . . not quite existing  
    yet pleasing.

**THE WIND**  
by Mark Helton

What will become of the watcher?  
What will become of his soul?  
alone in a virgin's crypt,  
alone in blind ambition,  
where the wind never blows  
upon his master's empty hands,  
where the orchids grow.

Time has latched its lonely sails  
to the wind of faith,  
and is dragging its ship to harbor,  
slowly but surely before the storm;  
a dreamer has found the narrow gate  
and longs for admittance  
unto the straight light.

Across the horizon is a forlorn meadow  
where a single cloud has graced the sky,  
where myriad souls wait for the big sleep,  
where all is well in a glimpse of the sun  
and beads of dew cling to the grass,  
where dawn turned the page  
and let the wind blow them away.



**SILENTLY...**  
by Hunter Gilliam

Silently  
like a cat on a grass glide  
We stalk  
the birds of our dreams  
only to have them fly  
Into the sun  
when attainment is near  
without burning a wing  
They go on.





Dennis Powell First Place Print

THE MISSION BELL  
by Rick Davies  
Honorable Mention Poem

that it was several years ago  
when I walked along the edges of Monterey Bay.  
By the black water at night,  
around the pools, and the rocks and the gulleys.  
Sitting alone in the icicle plants,  
touching the wind and spray with my face.  
Listening to a warning buoy in the black  
whose voice they call the Mission Bell.  
A hollow voice sounding with the waves and the tides.  
Hiding its face in the grey fog it threw up with the kelp.  
And I sat and I listened.  
And it called and it asked.  
“That night in the canyon,  
where did you lie?”  
“How long did you rub your legs with dry rushes?”  
“That night in your bed,  
that quilt work of aspirins,  
how did they vanish,  
in rows before morning?”  
Down by the edges of the freezing black water  
I stood up without an answer.  
And turned to walk away  
as I saw a hollow laugh come apart in the wind  
and fall like rain under the streetlight.

BUNDLED UP INSIDE. . .  
by Norma Myers

Bundled up inside a quilt  
I sit and watch the fire  
And the flames form pictures  
Telling me stories in their burning.  
I see their glow upon your face  
And smell the woodsmoke in your clothes.  
Yet within your eyes I see the icy winter  
That lies beyond the windows of this room.  
I see the trees bent beneath the burden of the snow  
Leaning toward a sluggish stream. . .  
As if huddled together they might find warmth in their closeness.  
I feel the chilling air that slashes at my lungs like a knife,  
But I love the cold and wintertime. . .  
Even the snow and ice inside your eyes.  
For winter is a season just as is spring  
And the coldness in your eyes  
Is as much a part of you  
As the warmth of your smile.

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