

Spring 1986

## Dakotah Poesy (1986)

Jill Sacks

*Dakota State University*

Pamnela Lewis

*Dakota State University*

Wanda Streff

*Dakota State University*

John Dambek

*Dakota State University*

James Swanson

*Dakota State University*

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### Recommended Citation

Sacks, Jill; Lewis, Pamnela; Streff, Wanda; Dambek, John; and Swanson, James, "Dakotah Poesy (1986)" (1986). *New Tricks*. 1.  
<https://scholar.dsu.edu/newtricks/1>

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# DAKOTA

## *Poesy*

1985/1986

COVER DESIGN: Rosalie Johnson

ADVISOR: Prof. James Swanson

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Jill Sacks  
Pamela Lewis  
Wanda Streff  
John Dambek

ART EDITOR:

Rosalie Johnson

A special thanks to Bob McCaughey and the Karl Mundt  
Foundation for funding this literary magazine.



An Exhibition

Daringly, I sat myself upon a mountain  
For the whole world to see!  
Part of my soul wanted to cover up,  
Protected from the hurt,  
While still a larger part of my soul  
Stood naked, exposed to these  
Elements that came and went  
And left me no more than weathered.  
Yet, there is within me  
A craving to bare my weathered soul,  
Which is satisfied on the mountain.

--Rosalie Johnson

To Life

Oh sing our joy in every living thing:  
The seal that blows sea water through its nose;  
The rose that spreads aroma where it grows;  
The ivy as it greens in early spring,  
The leafing tree to which the squirrels cling;  
The glowworm as it shows which way it goes;  
The farmer as he sows his corn in rows;  
The butterflies, and honeybees that bring  
Their pollen home. All life deserves our song.  
In sea or stream or pond, winging in air,  
Or standing, crawling, leaping on the earth,  
We celebrate the power that gave them birth.  
With creature-kinds that breathe and feed and care  
We share a need to be, and to belong.

--Keith Thompson

Alone

empty  
cold  
alone  
don't understand.  
flowers  
cold  
snow  
but how?  
snow  
organ  
cold  
but what?  
cold  
snow  
covers  
the  
roses.

--Rosalie Johnson



Rosalie Johnson  
© 1988

Why Jimmy Won't Come Home

I looked to the top of the hill. My brother, Jimmy, was just standing there.

"Hey, it's about time you went home, little brother," I said. Even though he was 6 foot 2, I always called Jimmy, little brother. Younger brother didn't have the same ring.

He flashed one of his Chesire cat grins at me. His hair was a curlicue mess, like always.

"I mean it," I said, as I made my way up the hill. "You've been gone almost two years. Your wife's been in tears, and ma and dad are worried sick." I noticed a man standing behind him. He looked familiar.

Jimmy's grin broadened. "I'm just fine, big brother. How are you?"

The hill was steep, and there was a white fog flowing at my feet. I slipped.

"Walk much?" he said.

There was something that I'd forgotten, but it didn't seem important. "Don't be a smart ass, little brother. You left your job. You left your family, and we miss you. Your sisters have given you up for..."

"Beginning to remember, big brother? Don't worry. Everything will be fine."

"Jimmy, but you're...you're...Damn it. Why haven't you come back to us before this?"

"You don't quite get it, yet, do you big brother? You're the one who came to see me. Look at the bottom of the hill."

I saw my living room. My sister, Kathleen, was straddling over some man, definitely not her husband. She was doing all the work. I turned back to Jimmy.

"Ohhh, you have a dirty mind," he laughed. "Look again."

Kathleen was pounding on the man's chest in a rhythmic fashion, and breathing into his mouth. After all, she is a nurse, I thought. I looked closer at the man--it was me.

"Remember, now?"

I remember rewiring one of the sockets in the house.

"Fixing up the house was never one of your major accomplishments. Turn off the electricity first."

I fell forward, and almost went over the top of the hill. Jimmy caught me in his strong, muscular arms. A warmth went through me--a feeling of love, a feeling of strength.

"But then I'm...I'm dead, too."

"It's not so bad."

"But the kids...my wife...ma and dad."

Jimmy looked at me with his deep blue eyes. He had that look that he got when he was about to tell a joke. He pushed me towards the bottom of the hill. I grabbed for his arm, but missed. I began slipping back down the hill.

"Come with me. Come back with me...just for a visit."

Jimmy just stood there.

"Don't you love us, anymore?"

Jimmy looked hurt. I was sorry I hurt him, but at the same time I wasn't. I wanted him to feel the loss that we felt. He

just didn't seem to care anymore. What good is heaven, if you lose the love for those you've left behind? He didn't feel the fire that burned at the pit of our stomachs... the fire that burned, but didn't consume.

The man I saw earlier stepped from behind Jimmy, and I recognized him. I recognized him but I didn't understand. Other people began to surround them, but they shouldn't have been there either. Jimmy put his arm around the man, and smiled again.

"Big brother, time is different here. I don't have to visit you. You're already here. Your death is in your future, not mine."

I rolled into my body, and began breathing on my own.

-Michael A. Duffin

Passing

Fleeting moments---

Then eons of time

Filter through the transparency of the soul.

The silken bondage begins to break;

And as swans swoop upon a pond,

Darkness settles---

Deafening silence sounds---

Small strips of light form

A rainbow upon the perceived horizon.

Suddenly, brightness is everywhere,

Glittering gold dew upon the trees.

Skies turn a blue hue again

While white wisps accompany them.

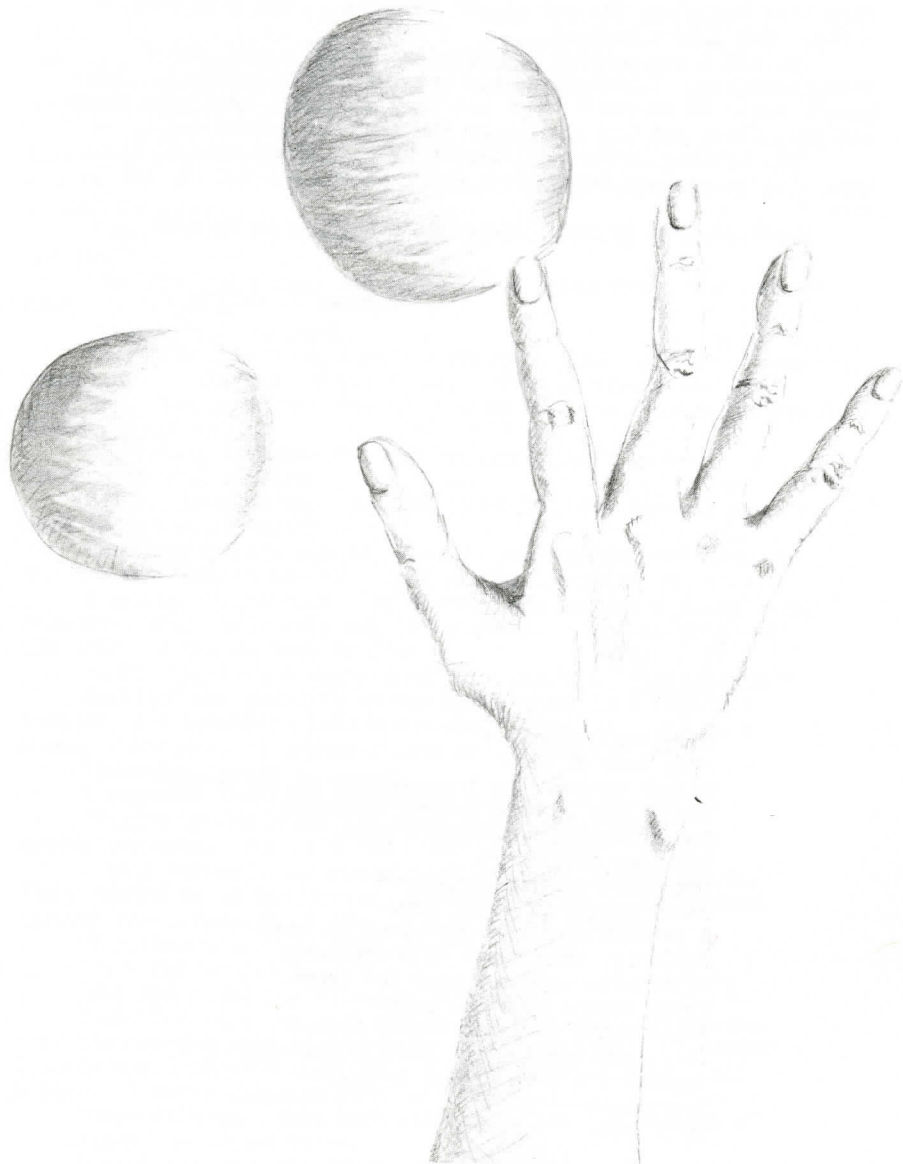
Peace and tranquility heavily prevail,

Because the love of God is Here---

Everywhere---

As always.

-- Pamela Lewis



There's a step that we all have to take alone  
an appointment we have with the great unknown  
Like a vapor this life is just waiting to pass  
like the flowers that fade like the withering grass  
But life seems so long and death so complete  
and the grave an impossible portion to cheat  
But there's One who has been there and still lives to tell  
there is One who has been through both heaven and hell  
And the grave will come up empty handed the day  
Jesus will come and steal us away

Where is the sting-tell me where is the bite  
when the grave robber comes like a thief in the night?  
Where is the victory? Where is the prize  
when the grave robber comes and death finally dies?

Many still mourn and many still weep  
for those that they love who have fallen asleep  
But we have this hope though our hearts may still ache  
just one shout from above and they all will awake  
And in the reunion of joy we will see  
death will be swallowed in sweet victory

When the last enemy is gone from the dust will come a song  
those asleep will be awakened--not a one will be forsakened  
He shall wipe away our tears--He will steal away our fears  
There will be no sad tomorrow--there will be no pain or sorrow

-- Bob Hartman

The End

Tonight, in spite of all my pride, I cried--  
Too old to hold the love I know must go.  
The boat we rowed together moves so slow  
And rides too high upon the rising tide  
Of idling life without you by my side.  
Only one oar, bone-sore--the shore bows low  
Before the roar of waves that soar and grow  
To giant size. Wide-eyed, my tears are dried.  
All, all is gone: the longing song, the call  
Of arms, of artful charms that start the heart  
To bound and pound. But now a howling sound  
About the prow confounds the power I found  
In dartling stars. In darkness I depart  
To awful jaws. In scalding gall, I fall.

--Keith Thompson

## Heroes

The battle fields are silent;  
The children have ended their play.  
All that remain are bitter memories  
Cast away in some old soldier's mind.

We read the names of those who so courageously  
Gave their lives so that we might be free on some  
Old wall,  
And we weep.

If you cannot cry for them, who can you cry for?  
But, remember, cry not for what they might have  
accomplished, but rather for what they were.  
Heroes, each and every one.

Heroes each and every one with an unselfish love and pride  
For a country where all men could be free. Fighting  
To keep that tradition alive.  
In a tomorrow for me.

-- Wanda Streff

## Pheasant Find

Walking out to the barnyard  
where we've let the weeds grow up,  
I can hear them calling clear  
back and forth.

Lying on the ground away  
from the paths of dogs and sheep,  
I can see the pheasant runs  
before me.

Looking through the maze of tracks  
of birds, dried hard in the mud,  
and up, a little blue sky  
filtered light.

The earth lets go of one bird,  
then another follows him  
invisible before flight,  
radiant now.

The earth will not let me go  
like that; nor would I want to  
take so dangerous a flight,  
colors shown.

Shoot those colors as they fly,  
down them faster than your eyes  
can tell you of the beauty  
you have seen.

-- Pat Amert



Wanda Streff --

Brenda Budweiser

I met you in my younger days, when I was young and free.  
And grew to love you oh, so much, that we went on a spree.  
When I turned 18, I married you, I wanted to shout and sing  
But I was young and foolish, and didn't know the grief you'd bring.  
I loved the way you showed me how to have good times with friends,  
But in your cunning ways, you baffled me, bringing friendships  
to their ends.

When I'd wake up in the morning for work, trying to remember  
where I'd been,

It didn't take me long to know, I was loving you again.  
But I stayed with you darling, through all the joys and tears,  
Yet the only growing that I did, was only that in years.  
As turmoil brewed inside me, I couldn't tell what I saw,  
But you were gaining control over me, making trouble for me  
with the law.

Why can't I leave you alone I ask, as signs are beginning to tell  
I'm asking for answers to free myself, while I'm wasting in  
this eight-man cell.

I've moved from jail to another place where I can honestly see,  
That thank God there is life after you, and I can once again be free.  
You taught me how to curse and hate, and too many times resent.  
You shaped my personality with an attitude that was bent.  
I did my crime and done the time, all of it because of you.  
I think it's time you realized, dearest, that you and I are through.  
My folks want me to divorce you, and so the hell do I.  
I did love you once, but never again, so long my love, goodbye!

-- Author anonymous

#### ODE TO A COKE BOTTLE

Coke Bottle, Coke Bottle, Vision of perfection,  
Thy crystal walls offer amber liquid sterilized protection.

The Symmetry of thy beauty lies engraved upon my mind;  
Thou art no hinderer, thou art a helper to mankind.

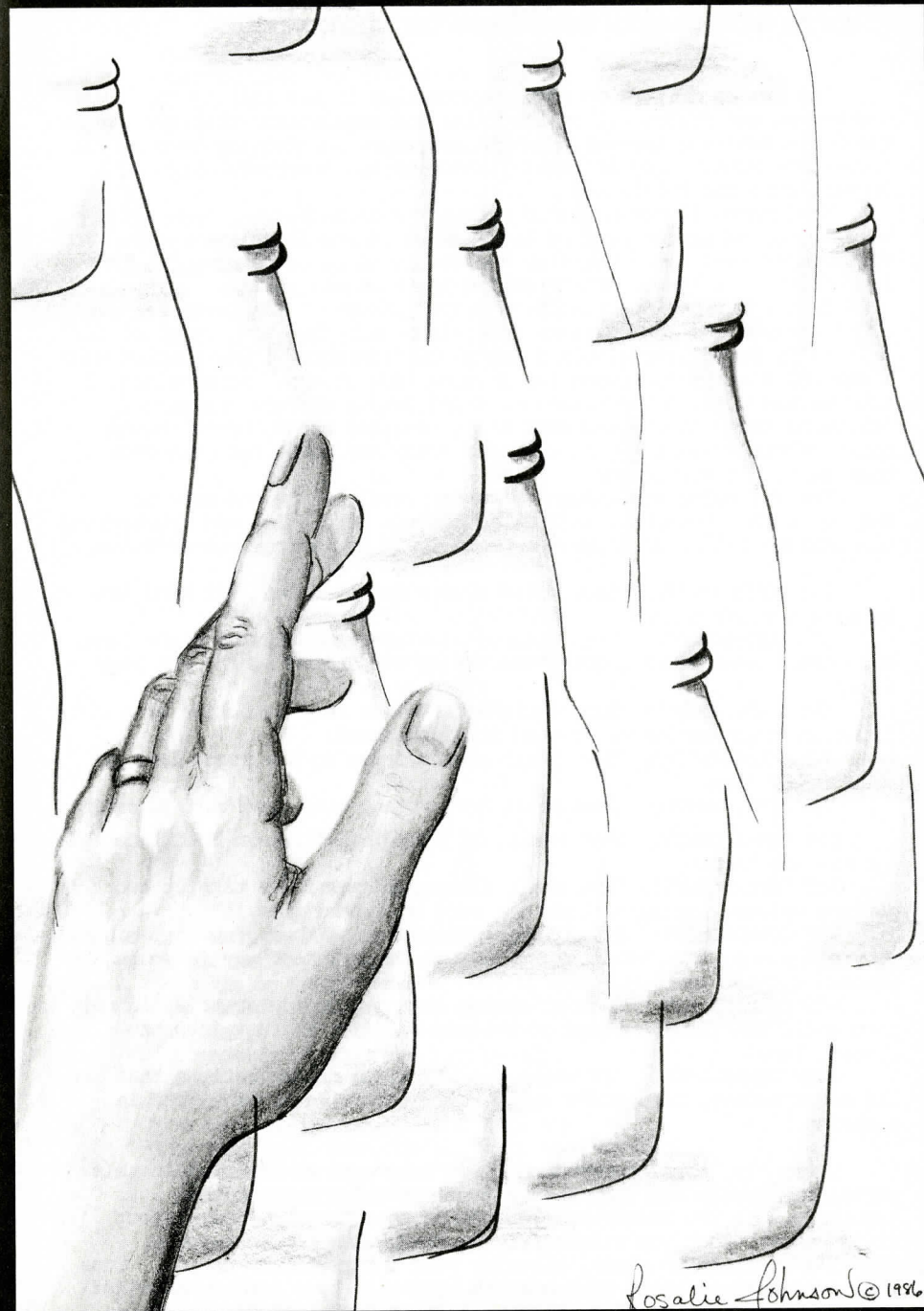
Thou art a symbol of America in countries far away;  
Thou art uncanny in this canny world today.

Since thou bearest not the stamp - no deposit - no return,  
A two penny profit we can make if thee we do not spurn.

Coke bottle, coke bottle, I do worship thee.  
I love thee for thy versatility.

But most of all I love thee for the lift you give my soul,  
When thy amber liquid flows into me from out thy crystal  
hole.

-- Kathie Courtney





## HOW TO DRIVE IN SOUTH DAKOTA USING THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

The art of driving in South Dakota lies in the ability to understand and follow all of the rules and regulations that are set by the South Dakotans themselves which are unprecedented anywhere in the five-state area. They are what I refer to as, "South Dakota's 10 Commandments for Driving."

Now, these 10 commandments are very real indeed! I have seen them practiced diligently and they have been specifically observed and followed to test their validity and are found to be adhered to faithfully by a large percent of the South Dakota public.

To the non-resident, such as myself, these commandments may seem a bit strange and perhaps even ridiculous, but they are essential for driving in South Dakota. As a native of Minnesota, I was shocked when I saw the blatant disregard for driving regulations. Nonetheless, I soon became used to the masses of South Dakota drivers religiously following their 10 Commandments and I realized one thing--although South Dakota drivers may be wild and crazy and sometimes dangerous, they certainly are unique!

The following commandments are relatively short and easy to follow, a fact that assures 100% success in perplexing and frustrating the unaware following driver--especially if he is from out-of-state!

1ST COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt always drive in the left hand lane to make a right turn.

2ND COMMANDMENT: When stopped at a red light in the right lane, thou shalt never turn right, thus making the driver behind you very angry.

3RD COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt sit in the left turn lane at a red light and then decide to proceed straight ahead.

4TH COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt always drive in the right lane to make a left turn.

5TH COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not, at any time, use turn signals.

6TH COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt, if possible, drive in both lanes of a four-lane highway.

7TH COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt always, if possible, take up two parking spaces leaving no room for cars on either side.

8TH COMMANDMENT: If an intersection is unmarked, (no stop signs, or yield signs) thou shalt always assume the right-of-way is yours and proceed without caution.

9TH COMMANDMENT: When at a stop sign perpendicular to a highway, thou shalt put the front end of the car at least halfway into the closest lane.

10TH COMMANDMENT: If there are any rules or regulations that are not satisfactory, thou shalt ignore them and drive any way that is pleasing.

Obviously, these commandments don't have to be followed in this particular order, but they should be memorized and practiced regularly. If you learn these commandments at an early age (about 12-15 years), then you will surely be ready when you take your driver's instruction class, pleasing your instructor to no end. Once you have mastered these commandments, you will have finally attained the art of driving in South Dakota--a great feat indeed!

-- Jill Sacks

Here I am alone  
Surrounded by the darkness  
Enjoying the time to myself  
And at the same moment  
I'm trying to understand others  
And their reasoning  
I wish they could accept people  
And their life choices  
Instead they can never let you be  
They are always finding you at fault  
It makes life hard with people like this  
Why can't they take you for who you are  
And let you live your life your way  
Instead of what they expect and want  
-Eller Sun

It's so nice  
to be able to see and hear  
the waves of the mighty ocean,  
when there are some  
that have not even seen nor heard  
a simple drop of water.

-Robin Embrock

### Threnody

The moon is full tonight--my being aches  
With fantasy undone and futile love.  
I wish on falling stars too far above  
The world's reality that always takes  
The dream away and leaves a voice that makes  
A mockery of song and turtledove.  
I try to mold what I am dreaming of  
Into a truth. It glows--It sings--It breaks.  
It's time to turn away--for I am old.  
The moon will wane, so all will soon be dark.  
And when it waxes next I will not see,  
for its pure light was meant for youth, not me.  
At dawn again I'll hear the lonely lark,  
And seek the sun to burn away the cold.

-- Keith Thompson



### Killer at Your Table

Beware!  
There's a killer at your table.  
Beware!        Beware!        Beware!  
of robbers  
stealing your pride.

                                 Beware  
of parasites  
draining your strength.  
                                 Beware

of rapists  
trespassing on your heart.  
                                 Beware

of destroyers  
gnawing away at your foundation.  
                                 Beware

of arsonists  
burning your creative source.  
                                 Beware!

There's a killer at your table.  
Beware!        Beware!        Beware!

-- Rosalie Johnson

### Memories

As shadows lurk in the darkness of the night,  
So do painful memories linger in our minds;  
Clinging, pressing, constantly gnawing--  
Never listening to our pleas.  
Sometimes they seem to diminish a bit,  
Only to return, more agonizingly worse than before.  
Will they ever leave the nested caverns of the mind?  
Or will they simply dig a channel into which  
they can burrow even deeper?

Bad memories--  
they're here to stay,  
Like shadows on a dark bedroom wall.  
We must accept and not fear these tiny channels  
of the human mind.

-- Pamela Lewis

## THE OUTFITTER

Every year, our neighborhood feels the change of the seasons from summer to fall long before the leaves turn their color back into the security of their branches.

As average people chorus out a sigh of relief at the chance to settle down from their busy, churning summer lives,

The cool air fills him with exhilaration.

As others find comfort in the nesting instinct that comes along with the later seasons, he revives.

The mornings come earlier and easier.

Nights are extended with enthusiasm when the opportunity to ponder over the preparational motions draws nearer.

The two massive 16 by 18 1/2 foot white canvas tents pulsate in the breezes, seemingly eating up what's left of the yard.

They sit, waiting out the final days as if their tie-ropes could simply pull up the stakes and walk to pack themselves into the trailer.

All winter, spring, and summer, rolled up tightly and snugged onto the shelf, the wrinkles now seem eager to press themselves out.

He brushes, and washes, and curries, and combs.

Sweeps and ties, and tucks.

The outfitter.

Each antique-looking, black wood burner never weighing so little at any other time of year, is cuddled into its place within the bellows of the white canvas masses.

Gently he scours each nook and cranny, looking for the remains of last year's roast turkey drippings, or spatters of prime rib, or perhaps the lingering sugar syrup from the apple pie mom sent, homemade and frozen.

How tender the strokes in removing any rust that old man winter might have tried to paint upon the sheet steel sheepherder's stove.

Retouched with stove black finish, it awaits the final moments before its revitalization back into the world of the living.

To exhale a tantalizing breath of aromatic flavors amid the crisp mountain air.

The outfitter's annual ritual in preparation of the hunt.

The anticipation of the camaraderie and the unique celebration of years of traditional movements.

Challenge of the wits, he says, makes it sport.

Matching wits with the animals and their advantage over the territory

For two weeks, he is gone, nourishing his spirit and warming his soul

Placing his senses back into the feeling, experiencing, unity with life.

And mom, she waits, her celebration bound-up within the confines of another love.

Waiting motionless, waiting without confirmation.

This outfitter's wife having to settle for a glance at what might be left from his overflowing exhilaration.

Knowingly she waits out for his return.

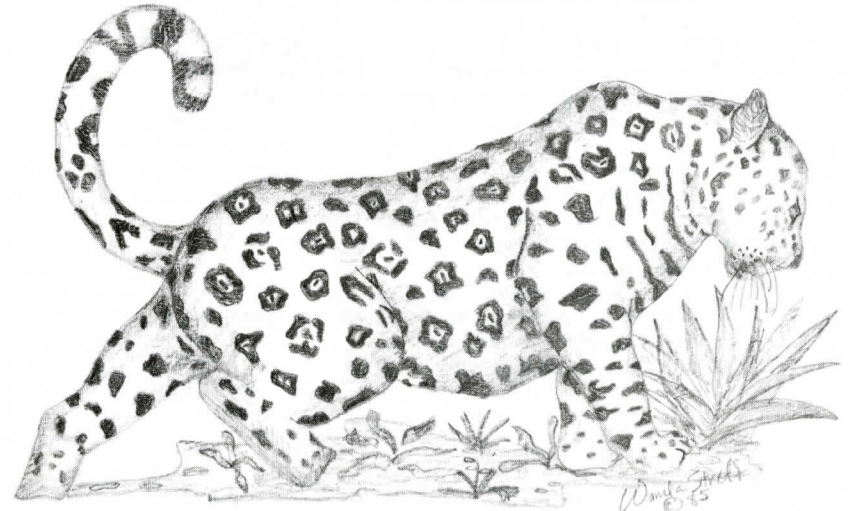
Two weeks of bliss, six months of never-ending stories and tales of how each moment passed, always unique in and of itself.

He is the only justification, the only real feeling and living being, here.

The wild, robust cripple of the woods, uniting himself within himself and only integrity he knows as real.

Stalk that beast.  
Stalk that beast.  
Stalk that beast.

-Julie Larson



For Sol,

Who never got to finish  
being the prodigal son;  
who died alone in his apartment  
on Saturday night  
and wasn't missed  
until he didn't come to work Monday morning.

He came every other Monday morning,  
all grey and green and bloodshot,  
anyone who had ever had too much to drink  
even one time could see how wretched  
he must have felt,  
standing braced against himself,  
yet he could be a carpenter  
he could make it fit,  
he could run the saws and drills and hammers  
and somehow still have all his fingers.

All through the week he would work,  
until by Friday you could look at him  
without wincing,  
and he would smile and speak your name softly;  
a few hours later,  
he would be a Lost Boy again, in Never-Never-Land,  
staggering and stammering,  
a caricature come to life.

But on those many Tuesdays Wednesdays Thursdays  
of his life,  
he never lost his skills with wood and metal,  
carpentry remembered and carpentry improved  
from his colony youth;  
did his people let him go or push him out?  
On which day of the week did he leave them?  
He only wanted to tell you on a Saturday,  
when he couldn't.

They came for him today;  
a Tuesday; he would have been all right by now,  
they brought with them a box they'd made,  
with their own carpentering hands  
at the colony,  
his brothers came to get their brother  
who died on Sunday, thinking he was resting,  
and never got to finish out,  
being the prodigal son.

-- Pat Amert



Smoke, Smoke, Smoke Those Cigarettes!

People all over the country are trying to quit smoking, whether for health related problems, expense, or just a desire to quit. They're all crazy! They will subject themselves to physical and psychological torture, not to mention gaining up to fifty pounds or more of squeezable flab. Why, I could list an extraordinary number of reasons not to quit smoking, but because of limited space, I will list only a few of the most important reasons.

The main reason people should not quit smoking is that we all need oral gratification. Since America invented baby bottles and formulas, most of us have been deprived of our mother's breast; therefore, we need oral gratification from cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and chewing tobacco.

Another major reason people should keep smoking is to help reduce America's rapidly growing population. Because of the many life-prolonging devices now available, America needs to keep people smoking so we don't get too many old people overcrowding our already overflowing nursing homes. How does smoking do this? Well, it's really quite simple. The average smoker smokes one pack of cigarettes per day. This adds up to 7300 cigarettes smoked per person in one year. Tar and nicotine collect in the lungs and obstruct the valves of the heart with each cigarette smoked, making breathing relatively difficult. Myself, I've been smoking a pack a day for ten years making a grand total of 73,000 cigarettes. I'll surely never have to waste my money on nursing home care. I will never become a burden to my children in later years. By the time I'm 36 years old, I will have smoked 146,000 cigarettes, investing nearly \$10,000 in my early retirement plan. I'd certainly rather pay the price of cigarettes than have to pay that money to Uncle Sam where it would be used for wasteful government spending.

Also, think of all the people who are permanently employed because of cigarettes: tobacco factory workers, ashtray companies, tooth polish companies, and now with the newest popular smoking items: smokeless ashtray companies, ceiling fan companies, and the makers of take-home refillable oxygen tanks. If it wasn't for smokers, a large percentage of Americans would be out of work, adding to the unending list of welfare recipients.

What would happen if smokers couldn't smoke? Well, I'm afraid this country would be in big trouble. The number of violent crimes and suicides would increase, not to mention the fact that mental hospitals would be overflowing. People need cigarettes! Take cigarettes away from a 20-year smoker and you'll witness destruction in its most violent form. This is why America is so lucky to have a legal drug such as nicotine--it keeps the crime rate down.

Yes, I'm sure glad I smoke! All of my non-smoking friends are chronic complainers when they catch a cold.

I've never found colds to be annoying because I've had a slight cold for years. My friends never have to put up with whining from me. Plus, I've found that cigarettes work great for finding some privacy. The next time you can't find a place to sit down in a restaurant, stand nearby and smoke a couple of cigarettes--you'll soon have a seat!

Smoking--don't ever consider giving up this wonderful habit. Think about how much you're benefiting before you make a decision. Why, I figure I'll only have to work for ten more years and then I can retire for health reasons. Not all people can enjoy retirement before they're 40. Besides, you wouldn't want all your friends and relatives to miss out on all the benefits of second-hand smoke just because you made such a rash decision. Keep puffing, America!

-- Pamela Lewis

My Friend?

Are you the one I can call my friend?  
Are you somewhere in the darkness that never seems to end?  
My heart grows sad, beating less and less.  
Where is the one that I can call my friend?

It becomes harder to face the morning each day.  
No encouragement,  
No smile,  
No friend.  
My tears flow silently as if to say,  
Please, someone, won't you be my friend?

-Jill Sacks

Music

permit me to tell you about music  
for I have heard the notes calling,  
hoping someone will answer their call  
yet the music answered first  
is the one that begins within  
with the spirit running free  
and the imagination running on.

-- Julie Heisler

ON THE RUN

There have been too many days  
When all I do is let my mind wonder  
To places far away from here  
And wishing I could go there  
I'm beginning to feel like a gypsy  
Who is always on the run  
Running from something inside  
People seem to always ask you  
If running is the answer  
Sometimes we have to keep running  
Before we find all the right answers  
-Eller Sun

LIMIT OF FREEDOM

I wish I could be  
As free as the wind  
That blows through the canyon  
Moving so gracefully through  
Space and time  
Not worrying about going  
Beyond the limit of freedom  
-Eller Sun

WHERE DO I BELONG?

I come back to see  
All the familiar faces that I grew up with  
But those faces are starting to fade  
I feel like an outsider  
Trying to look in  
But there is nothing there for me  
Could it be that I'm looking  
Through the wrong window  
A voice inside  
Keeps asking me  
"Where do you belong"  
When hear that I realize  
I have to keep searching for my place  
I may not find it today or tomorrow  
But I know it's out there  
Just waiting to be found  
-Eller Sun



He's Our Son

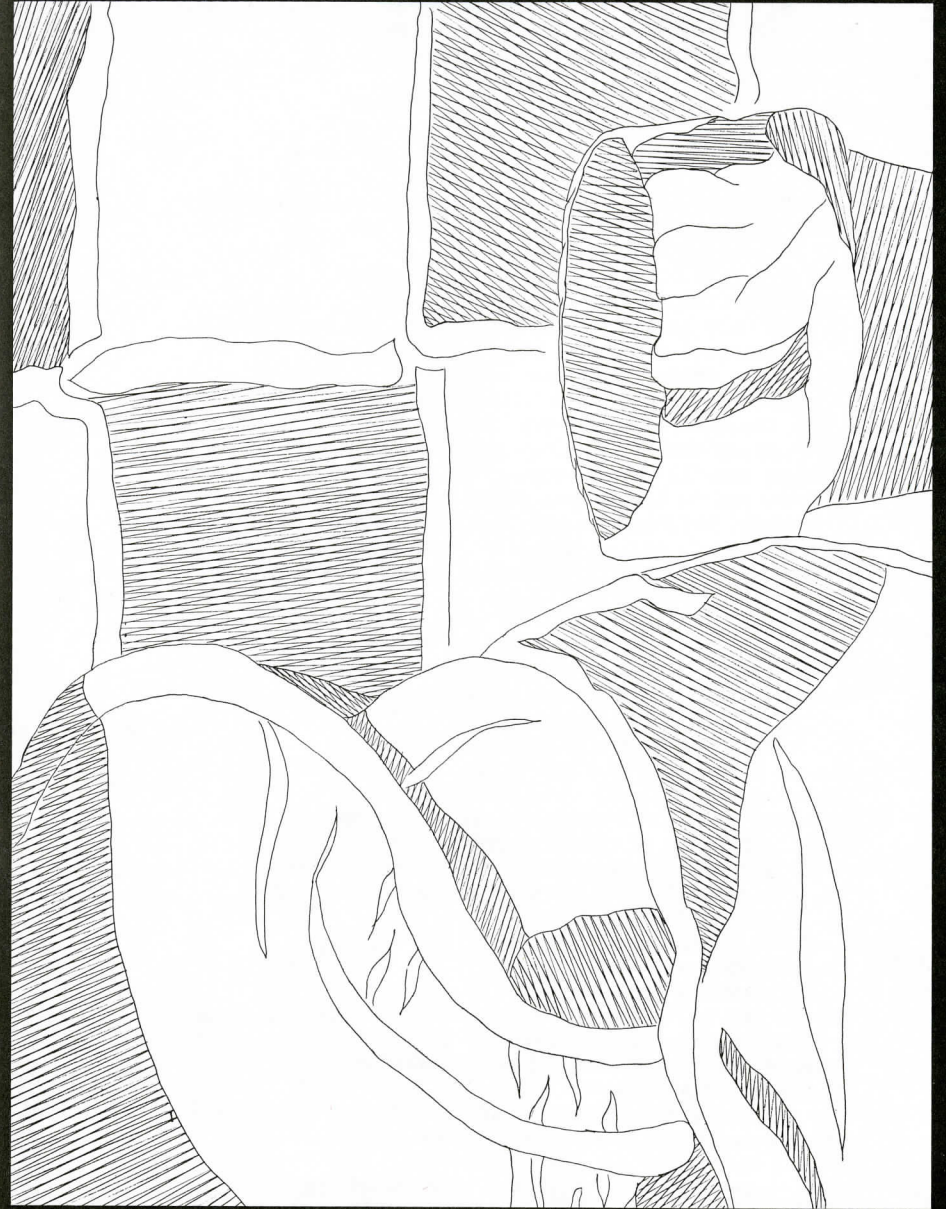
We went before the judge that day.  
That day she took our son away.  
She left him there so he would die,  
She didn't want to hear him cry.  
She put him in that lonely place,  
With death his peaceful end to face.  
But he was found before his end,  
By my dear husband, my dear friend.  
They placed him in our welcome arms,  
Where we protected him from future harms.  
Two short years he was given us.  
The judge said law, the law said just.  
He was born to her and not to me,  
For this reason I cannot see  
Why he must go back to be with her,  
She doesn't love him, of that I'm sure.  
He was our son, we'd loved him so.  
We'd hoped he could stay, they said he must go.  
He cried and cried, they broke my heart.  
My husband's words didn't comfort me,  
"We'll have our own someday, you'll see."  
I close my eyes, I see his face,  
No child of mine could take his place.

-Jeanne Even

Senior Sonnet

We did not know we'd go through sixty-five,  
And never thought to live to be this old,  
But we still breathe and care - must we be told  
There is no reason now to be alive?  
What we have learned: to love, to think, to strive  
For better days, and ways to warm the cold  
Of lonely virtue seeking help to hold  
The lamp of truth which surely must survive.  
There is so much that needs experience -  
So many sunlit paths which youth can take  
That lead to quicksand, thorns or rock-slide wall  
Where age at least can show how not to fall,  
And when it seems a fruitless trail, to make  
No moan, but smile and bear with patience.

-- Keith Thompson



## Sweet Strings of Steel

Sing me a song, sweet strings of steel;  
You, only know my hurt, just how I feel.  
Yesterday, when I was but a child,  
The world was not my concern, yet I  
Longed for the day when I would be older,  
stronger, wiser.

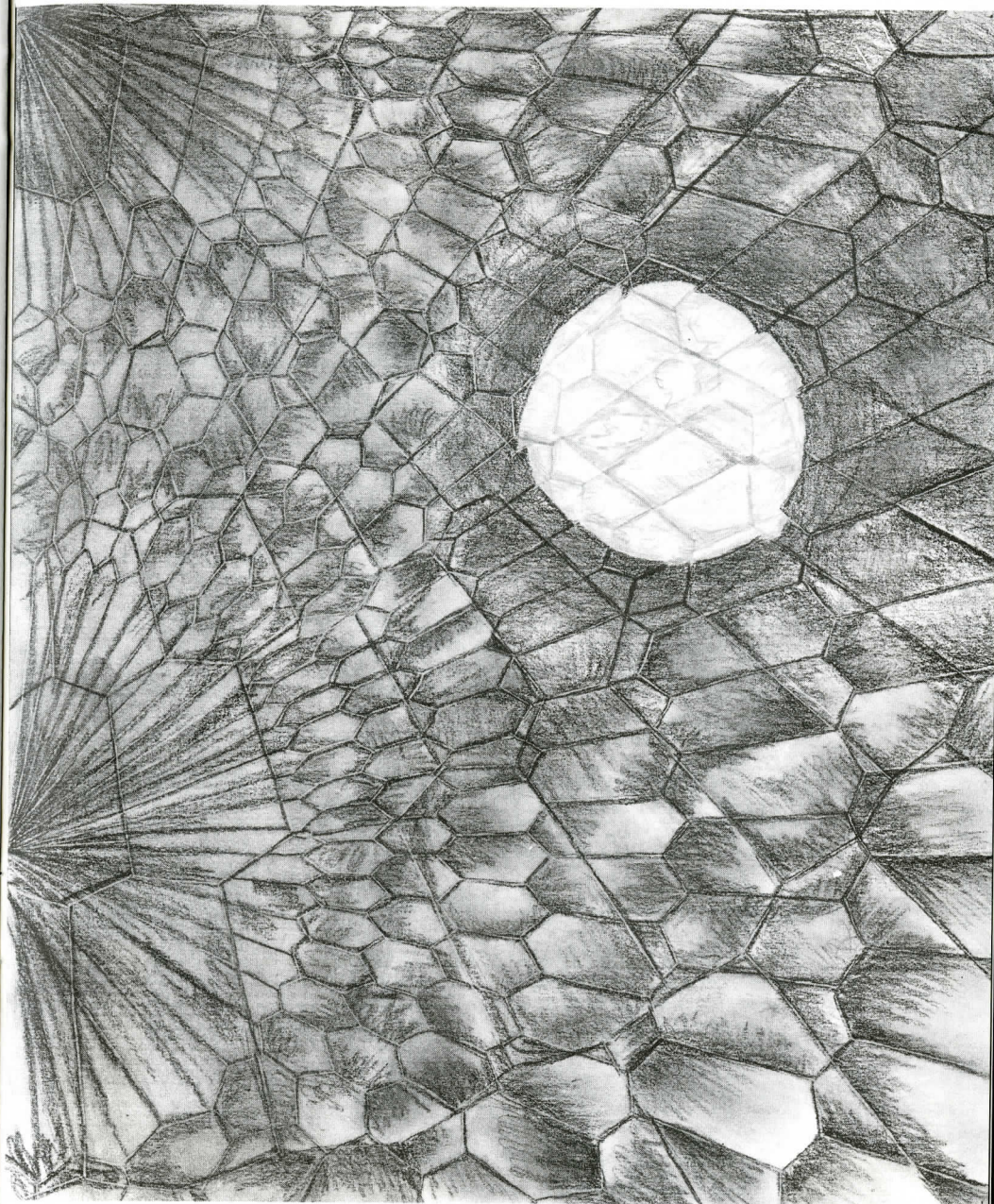
The cold, cruel breath of Papa time blew me on,  
A mere tumble weed upon the hot desert of life.  
And now, here I am! Life seems no sweeter than before.  
The grasp grows tighter each long day and  
momentous night.

When will all of this regurgitation cease?  
Mail from friends I never receive,  
No, the only letters I get are bills: the rent is due  
tomorrow, the phone bill last week.  
And Dakota State, they want more money,  
It would be cheaper to purchase the place.  
I rip the hair from my very head,  
Scraping up that much money is something I dread.  
Perhaps they'll pay me when my bald head  
Is featured in the record books as being that  
which belonged to the first bald woman in the world.  
It was so much easier when Dad paid my way.  
Ah, there's money in the farm boys, if only they'll  
pitch it out.

Mother Nature with your innocence, if she were  
so innocent, she wouldn't be a mother.  
I wish you could turn the clock back to yesterday.  
Back to the childhood days when I hadn't a care  
in this big blue world.  
Ah, I sigh, it wouldn't be proper to weep,  
I'm no longer a child and all my cares I must keep,  
Tucked deep within my very own soul.  
Feelings only, mere emotions, no one cares,  
They worry only of climbing their won stairs.  
Sweet yesterday, when I worried not of tomorrow.  
Now I cast the mirror forward and grimace at the  
sight I see.

Tomorrow is tomorrow, what will be, will be.  
The stranger and the wiser not,  
I wish it were as before.  
Lip sucked in, head held high, I lunged into tomorrow;  
I cannot tell of my feelings or thoughts.  
Bless those dear strings I pluck with my hand.  
You're my only hope!  
You can relieve me from the worst of pain.  
Take my hand, guide me through tomorrow.

-- Wanda Streff





MY POOL PAL

They say pool is a game of skill, but  
Pool with my Pool Pal was the learning of wisdom.  
How To shoot the ball is the beginning of wisdom.  
"You see" said my Pool Pal, "the ball is round  
but is divided into four parts."  
The ball goes straight as an arrow when  
hit in the center,  
Just as life is straight as an arrow when  
we walk the difficult path of moderation  
in all things.  
To solve some of life's problems, though  
there is the advantage of moving up or down or  
right or left.  
In pool it is the same, to make the shot you  
may have to not shoot straight.  
Often we are "hooked" behind some barrier  
So it is the time to hit the ball to the left or  
the right; high or low.  
Oh, my Pool Pal, on occasion you could  
Shoot a combination shot that would make  
Minnesota Fats proud.  
For life is often the same as  
a combination shot: We must attempt to work  
on several problems at different angles  
at once.  
Just like the last two weeks you were alive,  
you threw me a combination of clues that  
through wisdom I should have picked up.  
Yes, my Pool Pal, now I see you were  
telling me in many ways that you knew  
that the Great Pool Game for you was coming  
to an end.  
You were eyeing the eight ball for the last  
time and you were going to win the game.  
Thanks, my Pool Pal, for the wisdom of the  
game as well as the skill.

-- Roger Reed



Rosalie Johnson  
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From a Lark

While strolling through the woods one day,  
I came upon a lark.  
The sad, sad tune she recited to me  
Told the misfortune of her little baby.

It seems as though a mighty wind  
One night stopped there to howl.  
It did its best to swirl the lake  
And tore the tree tops down for spite.

Mama birdy in her nest  
Clasped tight the crooked crag.  
The mighty tree upon which she resided  
Shuttled to and fro.

Then one titanic gust through the big old tree  
Sent the nest and baby flying.  
That same old gust that ruined the nest  
Sent the big old tree tumbling after.

Though Mama lark tried desperately  
To save her baby from dying,  
Her effort was in vain.  
For baby couldn't be seen.

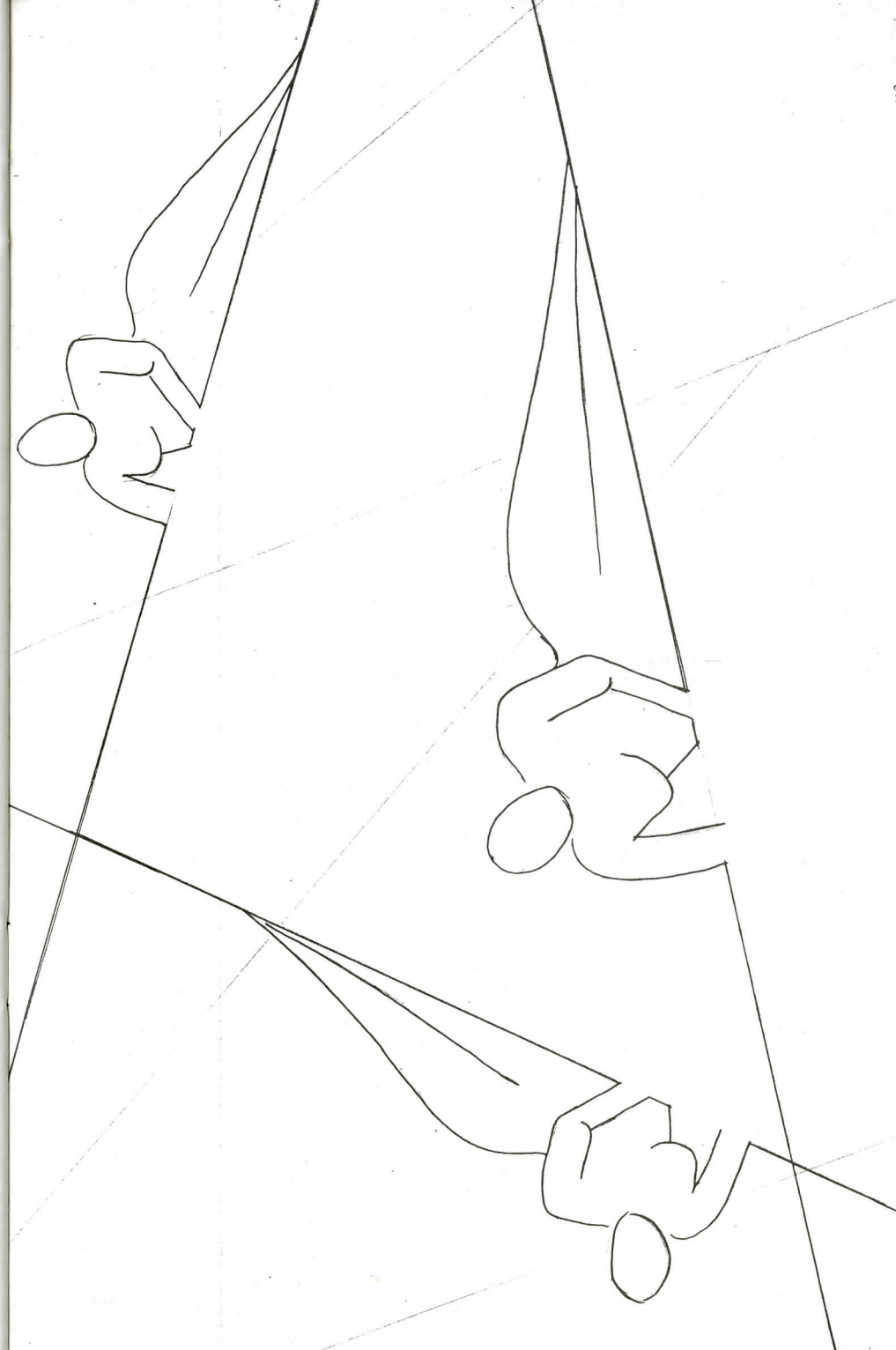
Tired and exhausted from the ill spread doom  
She collapsed in a pile of branches.  
And, when she woke the morrow morn,  
The wind had quit its howling.

She grabbed twigs and branches  
Carrying them away in her beak.  
Each tiny morsel brought her closer  
To exposing her little one.

When she had exposed the ground,  
there the tiny carcass found.  
Her little baby had been crushed,  
For it was no match for the tree.

Take from this story what you will,  
For each day God reminds us all  
How quick our fate  
May fall.

-- Wanda Streff



STORM WARNING

There's a spark,  
Tension in the air.  
A fight is coming--  
I can feel it.

Is there an atmospheric pressure  
That makes tempers flare?  
Or just presentiment,  
Foreshadowing the clash to come?

Whatever it may be  
There's no escape.  
Compliment or run away;  
It's no use.

Might as well  
Stamp on the brakes when  
Driving an icy road.  
Collision is inevitable.

The impact comes!  
We scream, gesture,  
Hurl little balls of anger, hurt  
Feelings, callousness at each other.

Then suddenly it's over;  
But like a hurricane  
Has left destruction and  
Wreckage in its wake.

We pick up the pieces,  
Tentatively at first.  
After a while it's as though  
The storm had never been--

Except for a vague  
Anticipatory dread  
Of the next presaging  
Heaviness in the air.

--Liz Delisi



Autumn

With the brisk, cool air  
Of glorious autumn days,  
A golden blanket covers the land,  
Protecting from the frost,  
And preparing for a long winter's rest.  
Squirrels scurry along gathering food,  
As cheerful birds say their final farewells  
To the countryside that will soon be dead.

Yet, despite the gloomy future ahead,  
Tranquility descends out of the heavens  
In the shimmering rays that touch each leaf.  
There's nothing to fear,  
For just as God taketh away  
So He giveth back,  
And soon, after winter has taken its toll  
On every living thing,  
I'll be sitting upon this park bench again,  
In awe of the beauty spring brings  
As the green buds reappear on lonely trees,  
And jubilant birds come home.

-- Pamela Lewis

Wanda Streff --



Rosalie Johnson --

