

Des Moines Area Community College Open SPACE @ DMACC

Expressions

Student Work

1979

Expressions 1979

Bev Clark

Donna Kemp

Betty Paglia

Kathleen Signaigo

Tom Sniffin

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openspace.dmacc.edu/expressions>

Recommended Citation

Clark, Bev; Kemp, Donna; Paglia, Betty; Signaigo, Kathleen; Sniffin, Tom; Barron, Kirk; Berndt, Julie; Brandt, Sandy; Busler, Lorna; Chadwick, Diana; Cunningham, Robin; Hawbaker, Clarke; Hill, Darci; Newstrom, Terry; Rauer, Max; White, Glenda; Wiggins, Kevan; and Udelhoff, Sue, "Expressions 1979" (1979). *Expressions*. 5.
<https://openspace.dmacc.edu/expressions/5>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Open SPACE @ DMACC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Expressions by an authorized administrator of Open SPACE @ DMACC. For more information, please contact rsfunke@dmacc.edu.

Authors

Bev Clark, Donna Kemp, Betty Paglia, Kathleen Signaigo, Tom Sniffin, Kirk Barron, Julie Berndt, Sandy Brandt, Lorna Busler, Diana Chadwick, Robin Cunningham, Clarke Hawbaker, Darci Hill, Terry Newstrom, Max Rauer, Glenda White, Kevan Wiggins, and Sue Udelhoff



EXPRESSIONS

Authors

Clark, Bev	22
Kemp, Donna	4, 13, 14, 19, 24
Paglia, Betty	3, 20
Signaigo, Kathleen	11, 18
Sniffin, Tom	5, 6, 9, 16

Table of contents



Photo by R. E. Stilwell

Expressions contains selected work from the 1979 Creative Writing Contest winners and honorable mentions along with Commercial Art students at Des Moines Area Community College. Design, typography and layout was done by Journalism students.

Staff members include: Dianne Petersen, editor; Bev Meister,

Carolyn Milbeek, Sherry Ross and Tammy Skeie.

Advisors to the publication were Rick Chapman, English Department; Jack Mastrofski, Commercial Art; and Tom Nelson, Journalism Department.

Expressions was produced at Carter Press with student newspaper funds provided by the Student Government Association.

Illustrators

Barron, Kirk	12, 13, 21
Berndt, Julie	5
Brandt, Sandy	6
Busler, Lorna	4, 24
Chadwick, Diana	17
Cunningham, Robin	23
Hawbaker, Clarke	11
Hill, Darci	8
Newstrom, Terry	19
Rauer, Max, Jr.	10
White, Glenda	15
Wiggins, Kevan	3

Cover illustration by Sue Udelhoff



ARMANDO

As my husband of two weeks and I walked up to the door of his parents' house, I worried silently about being able to talk to my father-in-law. He was from Naples, Italy, and even after living in the United States almost forty years, he spoke with a heavy accent. Try as I might, I could not understand him, which usually caused him to throw up his hands in exasperation, and holler loudly at his wife to tell me what he had said. To add to my dilemma, my husband always found this amusing and his lack of support infuriated me.

"Hello, Jimmy. Hello my daughter-in-law," he greeted us, from his usual chair at the kitchen table, as we entered the house. I answered and breathed a sign of relief at being able to get that far in the conversation.

His accent was not my only problem. He had a language filled with words that were all his own. It took me months to figure out that a "bastage" was a bastard, "papoots" were shoes, "Cayoots" were neighbors he feuded with, and that when something was lost it had "just dis-is-appeared."

As he watched people do everything from sewing on a button to building a house, his favorite phrase was, "How many times am I got tole you - do it **my** way." When someone didn't understand him (usually me) he'd shake his head and mutter in disbelief, "No kapeshe Americano, no kapeshe Italiano!"

Of course, he was sure it was I who could not understand or speak good English. My main problem was not being Italian. After all, just how intelligent can a non-Italian be?

Although he stood barely five feet tall and weighed only 140, his word was law for his wife and eleven children. No one ever won an argument with him because, right or wrong, he was always right. In his youth he had been quite the Dapper Dan with his coal black hair and eyes, stylish suits and diamond stick pin. Now, his hair was thin and grey and years of hard physical labor had crippled him, forcing him to walk with a homemade aluminum walking stick, a foot taller than he was.

He took great pride in the block square garden that fed his family. He grew row after row of hot banana peppers to be dried, canned or packed in oil. According to him, to eat "hot" was healthy and the man who could eat the hottest was an Italian to be admired.

He was hospitalized after breaking his hip a few years ago. When I visited him one afternoon, we talked about many subjects for over an hour. I thought back to the time fifteen years before when we couldn't talk because I could not understand "Americano or Italiano."

As I stood up to leave he took my hand and said, "Daughter-in-law, you sure have changed."

Betty Paglia



Kevan Wiggins



Circles

Reds, yellows, faded blue
Cotton fabric, thin and old;
Paisley, dots, and florals, too
Lie softly heaped up to renew
My pile of rags.

Buttons to be saved,
Zippers to be kept,
Sundress, shirts, striped sleeves --
With no mercy silver shears.
Rip and zip and part the years.

Too late -- they swiftly snip and cut
Strains of sweet-remembered sweat,
Cherries picked in Spring,
And pears in Fall,
Grape jelly and apricot jam,
Silently the dresses fall.

Someday's vision comes to me
Of some granddaughter --
A stranger to me now --
Who rips some rags
And with her shears
Releases long-forgotten years
When we shared -- just we two --
The sweetness of life.

Donna Kemp

Lorna Busler

I'll Never Speak to my Grandfather

Our family recently helped Grandfather celebrate his eighty-sixth birthday. He celebrated with the customary cigar and glass of wine.

We think Grandfather is unique. He is almost completely independent, living in his own trailer home in Oelwein, Iowa. Hobbies of his include photography and traveling, and he likes to read or watch television. Vices include an occasional cigar, a glass of wine or beer, and an eye for the ladies. He has been a widower twice over, and now spends his weekends driving to Cedar Rapids to see his eighty-three year old girlfriend.

Grandfather is a small man, about five feet five, weighing 120 pounds. He wears wire-rimmed glasses and combs his black and silver hair straight backward over his head. His wardrobe usually consists of baggy pants, floppy flannel shirt, and bedroom slippers. His idea of dressing up is to add a string necktie to the previously described ensemble.

Grandfather is an eternal optimist. Mom tells of the depression years when Grandpa kept the family together by doing odd jobs. She says there were a lot of

meatless days, but everybody stayed healthy, and nobody starved. Grandpa's cheerful attitude made things easier. In 1968 the awesome tornado that struck Oelwein demolished Grandfather's trailer. I'll never forget seeing his bathtub hanging from a nearby tree. Luckily Grandfather was at my uncle's house and escaped injury. We all thought his loss was a tragedy, but Grandpa reminded us that things could have been worse. After all, he told Mom, "I might have been in the trailer, and it

could've been me hanging from the tree instead of the bathtub."

Of course, I consider Grandpa unique because he is my grandfather, but there is one thing that makes him kind of special to everyone. When he was one-and-a-half years old he had whooping cough, and as a result lost his hearing and his ability to speak. It has been more than eighty-four years since my grandfather last heard or uttered a word.

Tom Sniffin



Julie Berndt



Dog Days

It was one of those hot, sticky August days. The time of the year we called dog days. I was in the living room rolling newspapers for my afternoon route. Word was the trout were biting out at Brush Creek and Grandpa had promised me we'd go fishing if I'd get done with all my route by four o' clock. That was the reason I was using one rubber band instead of two.

I was just about done rolling when I heard this God awful commotion coming from the road that ran in front of the house. I raced out to the front porch just in time to see Les Lockard's yellow forty nine Ford pickup turn the corner towards downtown. I knew it was a forty nine because at that time in my life I knew the year and model of just about every car and

truck on the road. Tied to the back bumper of the pickup was a yellow dog, and it looked like Buster. There's quite a pair I thought -- the town punk and the town dog. It was Dad who called Les the town punk. Dad said he was a shiftless no-good who spent most of his time looking for trouble. It was us kids who called Buster the town dog. Buster had been

around for years and nobody seemed to own him. Grandpa had told me that some years ago Buster had been one of the best coon dogs in the country, but had gotten his leg torn up in a beaver trap thus ending his coon hunting days. A farmer over near Elgin had owned him and apparently just turned him loose when Buster couldn't run anymore. Buster showed up in our town and folks kind of adopted him. All of us kids played with Buster. He was a big old yellow hound and would even let the little kids ride him. Our moms would set scraps out for Buster to eat and he would make his rounds from house to house every evening. No dog ever ate better, but then Buster deserved the special treatment.

wore the same uniform year around. Gray pants and long sleeved shirt. He didn't even roll up his sleeves. The only difference was that in the summer he left his shirttail hanging out.

The pickup was coming back up the street -- going slower than before. It didn't matter though because Buster couldn't walk anymore. His body just drug along kicking up little puffs of dust and he wasn't screaming anymore, just whining. Grandpa turned and walked back into the station. Through the front window I could see him tuck something into his waistband under his shirt. The window was so dirty I couldn't tell what it was. Grandpa ambled out into the middle of the street and stood facing the pickup

dumb dog?" asked Les. Without waiting for an answer he told Grandpa how Buster was always dragging trash into his yard. "Any trash in your yard would be an improvement," Grandpa said. Then Grandpa kneeled down on one knee and rubbed Buster's head. Buster just looked up at him with those big, sad brown eyes.

"You've suffered enough," said Grandpa and he suddenly put the pistol behind Buster's ear and pulled the trigger. We all jumped at the blast especially Les who reared back and fell on his seat. Buster's eyes were closed and he looked real peaceful. I glared at Les Lockard. I think that's the only time in my life I really wanted to kill somebody.

Grandpa stood up and turned to

'You've suffered enough,' said Grandpa and he suddenly put the pistol behind Buster's ear and pulled the trigger.

Anyway, it was Buster tied to that truck which was moving faster than Buster could keep up. He was being drug down Main street which was nothing more than a dirt and gravel road. It was Buster making all that noise. He was screaming. Now I'd never heard a dog scream before and it gave me a chill -- even on that hot day. Those screams made me think of the screaming of a mortal sinner on judgement day.

Hopping on my bike, I sped after them. Four blocks later I slammed on my brakes in front of Grandpa's gas station -- the back tire leaving a black streak on the sidewalk. The pickup was already at the end of the street making a U-turn. Grandpa and three of his cribbage playing cronies had already stepped out to the side of the street to see what all the fuss was about. People from the general store and the two taverns had also come outside to watch. I asked Grandpa if he had seen what Les was doing to Buster, but he didn't answer me. He just stood there with a frown on his face. Grandpa was a big man with considerable girth, but the heat never seemed to bother him. He

forcing Les to stop. Les stepped out onto the running board. "What the hell you want ole man?" he sneered.

"I want you to get down out of there," answered Grandpa.

"Get outta the way old man fore I run ya over."

Grandpa reached under his shirt and pulled out a pistol and pointed it straight at Les' head.

"All right you son of a bitch, now get down out of there."

I was doubly shocked because I'd never heard Grandpa swear and I'd never known him to have anything to do with guns. Les looked at Grandpa and then over at the crowd. His eyes darted back and forth and he had a nervous grin on his face. Somewhat bewildered Les looked at Grandpa's gun. "You crazy ole man," he said. Grandpa told Les to get on around to the back of the pickup and untie Buster. Les walked over to Buster, bent down and untied the rope from around Buster's neck. Buster just laid there. His poor body was pretty torn up, his legs all broken, and he was bleeding bad. He was just barely moaning.

"What do you care about this

me. "Tommy," he said, "go in the back of the station and get me a spade and pick ax."

I took them out to Grandpa and he handed them over to Les.

"Now what do ya want?" asked Les.

"We're going to have a little burial service, dog killer, and you're going to dig a grave."

"Bullshit!" was all Les said.

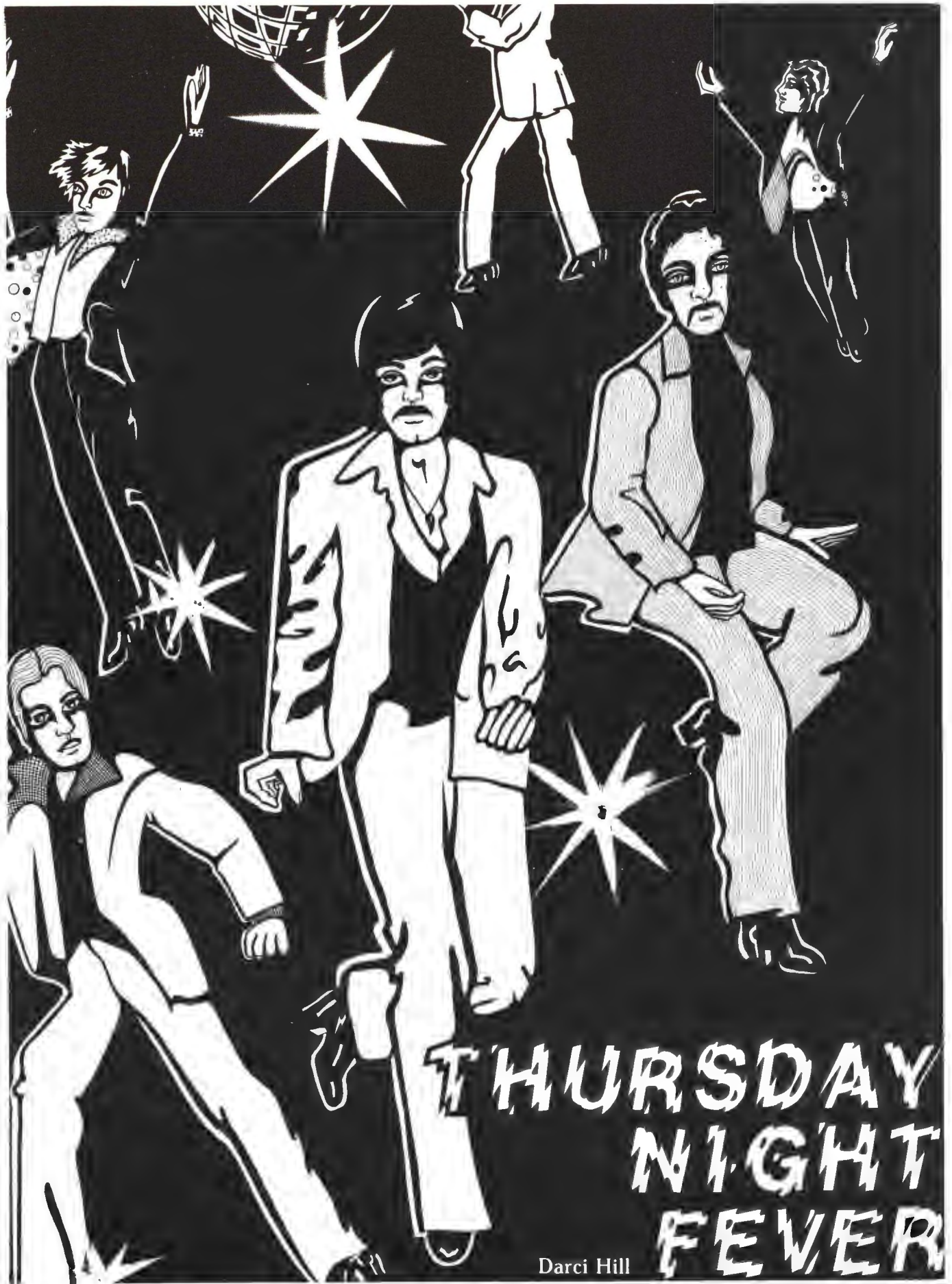
Grandpa cocked the pistol again.

"Ok, ok," answered Les and he picked up the pick ax and started flailing away at the hard packed street.

Grandpa made him dig a hole about six feet deep and it took Les about four hours to do it.

We didn't go fishing that day and it was dark before I finished my paper route. Main street has long since been paved and as far as I know old Buster's still buried there. Grandpa died in fifty-nine and Les was killed a few years later in a car wreck. People tell me there were a lot more people at Buster's burial than at Les'.

Tom Sniffin



**THURSDAY
NIGHT
FEVER**

Darci Hill

A couple of times a year Bill, Dave and I get together for a boys night out. You know a few drinks, a good steak, and of course the inevitable conversation mostly centered in sports, politics, or the latest issue of **Playboy**.

I don't remember who brought the subject up, but somebody mentioned the current disco craze. Dave was the only one who had actually been to one and he suggested we visit this new disco over on the west side of town so Bill and I could see what goes on in these places.

The first thing we noticed was all the cars. A block and a half away was the closest we could park. We next noticed the vibrating ground, which was a little scary. Knowing it wasn't tornado season I figured it must be a mild earthquake. Dave, a veteran in these matters, calmed our nerves, informing us the vibration was caused by the huge stereo system used in the disco.

Upon entering the place I was impressed by two things: Wall to wall people and ear-shattering sound. A 250 watt stereo totally eliminates communication by voice, and all those people caused me to consider this morbid thought. **WHAT IF THERE'S A FIRE IN HERE.** I could see the headlines in Friday mornings Register, 300 Disco Maniacs Do Flameout. With that sobering thought I felt a drink was in order. Also a stiff belt might take my mind off my bleeding eardrums. We locked hands and wormed our way closer to the bar where people were lined up five deep. Now the bartender can't hear your order so a combination of mouthing words and hand signals is necessary to place your order. My bourbon and water came back disguised as a banana daiquiri

Next we fought our way to the dance floor. My God, what

pulsating motion. The only thing wilder I could recollect seeing was the mating dance of the Carolina Mudhen, and dress--you wouldn't believe the leather finery and polyester plumage on display. If a Peacock were to enter the place he'd hide his head in shame.

About this time a sweet young thing sidled up to me and whispered in my ear, "You wanna dance."

Now I was a bit taken aback at this. I'm a settled down family man, and no member of the opposite sex has asked me to dance, besides my wife that is, since an eighth grade sock hop. However, the male ego took over and I led her to the dance floor. At this point you should understand that in my younger days I was considered something of a rug cutter. I mean back in the early sixties I was known as Mister Twister of Valley High.

Anyway, we secured ourselves about one and a half square feet of space and went into action. The left knee went first, then the right shoulder, and then my wind. Gasping for breath I reached for my partner to escort her from the floor, but she was gone. Seems I had been doing a solo ala' John Travolta. Dragging myself to the door I limped to the car and collapsed.

I arrived at the doctors office about ten a.m. Doc said I was somewhat overweight, but otherwise in pretty good health. He informed me I was in good enough shape to jog a couple of miles three or four times a week, play handball or basketball, and do some swinging. But, and he was very emphatic about this, stay away from those damn disco places. You're in no shape for that.

Tom Sniffin





Max Rauer, Jr.

Clarke Hawbaker



Mail A Meal

Congratulations!!! You are the lucky winner of "Mail a Meal."

Please accept this gift at absolutely no cost or obligation to you. This is our way of introducing you to our new and delicious line of culinary delights.

You are probably asking yourself, "How is it that the people at "Mail a Meal" can afford to send out these meals as gifts?" Well, friend, the answer is simple, we know that once you have tasted our complimentary selection, of "Watership Down," your taste buds will not let you

rest, until you have tried our entire line. This selection features Roasted Rabbit on a bed of wild nuts and berries.

And now, let me take just a moment to describe a few of the many palate pleasers created for your enjoyment.

Macho Meal

A plump and juicy sausage, surrounded by scores of extra thick and extra long french fries. Now doesn't that just make your mouth water!

Phallic Pheast

Artistically sculptured cucumbers, attractively arranged with a mixture of

carrots and celery stalks. A real crowd pleaser.

Schizo Snack

Crispy fried brains, scrambled eggs, and crackers. Guaranteed to drive you wild!

Sound enticing . . . why not place your order right now? It's easy, just check the meals desired, and send your order to us in the convenient "Mail a Meal" envelope.

Before you know it, you'll be savoring every luscious morsel.

Kathleen Signaigo





Fortress

While sentinels of sorrow
passed through corridors of night and day
optimism crept within
the walls of suffering
to slay
Aloneness and
Fear and
anchor my pain
with Understanding.

Donna Kemp



Kirk Barron

Fog crept under the window as Dianne filled the coffee maker and wiped up the toast crumbs that speckled the counter. She sighed, gave the counter another swipe and sighed again. She went to the desk and took out the grocery ads.

Back to the counter to fill her coffee cup, over to the desk. She sat, then stood, then walked back to the window. A light rain was beginning to fall. The drops dribbled down the window.

She surveyed her kitchen prison

then sat again at the desk. This time she took out the stationery and her best fountain pen. Slowly, then gaining momentum she scratched the words out to the rhythm of the rain.



Tears of Spring

Donna Kemp

Dear Mama,

Grandpa used to tell me he never could write letters. I remember how every one started, "I sit me down with pen in hand to write to you a letter to let you know that I am fine and hope you are the same."

It's raining today. I was watching it just like Grandpa and I used to from the porch swing. Now it's coming down like the sky just couldn't hold it any more. I guess I just can't keep things inside any more either. So after all these years I'm writing it down. It's hard for me to put these words on paper. They're words that should be said in a kiss or a smile.

I'm sorry, Mama. I've missed you.

We have a house now and a rose garden. I just bought a new white rose bush and I can't wait to plant it. You'd love the flowers, Mama. There are red geraniums in the window box, yellow tulips blooming along the garage.

We've started a small vegetable garden in the back yard this year. Just tomatoes, radishes, onions and carrots. Would you believe I'm going to learn to can! I know I didn't spend much time in the kitchen at home, but I bake a pretty decent apple pie with fruit from our own tree. Of course the crust is from scratch. Every so often I make vegetable soup and the smell fills the whole house like yours.

Whenever I make soup I remember the Sunday pot roasts and how you used to put the carrots and cabbage in just before we went to church. I can taste that gravy now. I never make pot roast on Sunday. It isn't quite the same.

Do you remember the blue sateen dress you made me? The one that had those little pins, shaped like ships, that we got at the dime store? Mary is just about the same age as I was then. I wonder what ever happened to that dress?

I still have the walking doll. I'm glad I didn't let you talk me into giving it to the Salvation Army. I'm glad I didn't let you talk me out of marrying Bill.

Oh, Mama . . .

Suddenly she crumpled the letter and tossed it in the wastebasket. The clock ticked louder . . . louder. Slowly she took out another sheet and wrote again.

Dear Aunt Opal,

I'm sending you a check because we won't be able to make it home for Memorial Day. Please buy Mama red and white carnations like always.

*All my love,
Dianne*

She looked out the window at geraniums nodding their red heads at the tears of spring.



Glenda White

First Day of Hunting Season

Friday 4:07 A.M. John Bailor groggily reached across his wife Mary and shut off the alarm clock. He lay back for a few moments allowing his senses time to regroup. Slowly, carefully, so as not to wake his wife, he got out of bed, put on his slippers and padded to the bathroom. It was the first day of hunting season and Bailor, an experienced hunter, knew an early start was absolutely essential towards increasing the chances of his getting a prize buck. With that thought in mind, along with a cup of fresh brewed coffee, he began to warm to the day ahead.

Bailor was a big man—nearly six four and well over two hundred pounds. Easing his large frame into his hunting clothes he thought about the hunt to come. He had told Mary that he planned to hunt in Warner County where he knew some friendly farmers who allowed hunting on their land. But in his heart he knew he would be going back to Kellogg County. It was opening day a year ago, and he had been trailing a beautiful eight-point buck. Plowing his way through some dense brush he had abruptly stumbled into a clearing and stood face to face with another man. At first he thought the man was another hunter as he **was** carrying a high-powered rifle. The man was short with a thick build and was wearing a padded denim jacket with the familiar Osh Kosh label on it. Underneath he wore bib overalls and a flannel shirt. A baseball cap with some seed company's logo on it was perched atop his head. John remembered the man's face well. It was neither handsome nor ugly, just plain and moon-shaped. A pleasant enough face—except for the eyes. There was something hard and ominous about those eyes.

He recalled their conversation almost verbatim.

"Any luck?" asked the farmer in a high pitched voice.

John had replied that he had been trailing a big buck for over a mile.

"Well you ain't trailin' him any more," the farmer said, his voice lowering an octave.

"Why not?" asked John.

The farmer's face was suddenly masked with rage. "Because, goddamit, this is my land and nobody hunts on my land 'cept me," he had yelled.

John quickly realized that he'd better not argue with the guy. He apologized to the farmer and told him he'd get off his land immediately. That done, he turned and headed back into the thicket from whence he had emerged a few minutes earlier. But before continuing he turned and glanced once more towards the clearing and looked straight down the barrel of the farmer's rifle. The fear that enveloped him was a fear he hadn't felt since he was an infantryman in Korea.

Still thinking about the incident over a second cup of coffee, John Bailor knew he was going back to Kellogg County. He knew that magnificent buck was still there and the challenge was just too much for him to reject.

With the hunting gear, extra clothes, lunch, and thermos packed into the dark green Blazer, Bailor was ready to begin his pursuit of that elusive four-legged quarry.

4:51 A.M. He backed the Blazer into the street, pointing it North. It was a two hour drive to Kellogg County and he wanted to be there by daybreak.

6:16 A.M. Ray Olson eased his bulky frame into the chair, slid it up to the kitchen table and took a sip of hot tea from the chipped cup. God he wished he could drink coffee, but the doctor had put an end to his

coffee drinking days. Ray's wife Thelma was bustling around fixing a typical farm breakfast—eggs, sausage, hash browns, toast. Olson wouldn't eat the eggs though—again doctor's orders. A big breakfast was imperative for Ray Olson was a farmer. Not a rich farmer, but a small farmer, and there would be a lot of hard work before noon dinner.

Thelma Olson set the table and sat down to join her husband. Quietly she said grace, but with a little more emphasis than usual. It was the first day of hunting season, and the one day her husband most hated. Casually she asked her man what he had planned for the morning. He was lost in thought and didn't reply at first.

"Uh, what did you say?"

Again she asked his plans for the morning ahead.

"Well, after chores I'm gonna clean the barn, and then I'll lube and change oil on the Massey," he replied. "And then I might do some hunting," he added.

Thelma looked at him imploringly for she had detected the bitterness in his voice. "But Ray," she protested, "you don't like to hunt. You haven't killed an animal in years."

Gazing at her steadily he replied. "Look Thelma, everybody else hunts on my land, why shouldn't I?"

She had no answer, but she couldn't shake the feeling of apprehension within her. Breakfast ended quietly. The farmer and his wife began the morning's work.

6:33 A.M. The hunter turned off state highway 118 on to the unmarked gravel road. Hilly, with a number of curves, the road wasn't much normally and was particularly treacherous now that it was ice and snow packed from five inches of new snow that had fallen two days earlier. But he was not bothered by it. He had grown up in this

part of the state. An area known as Little Switzerland. He loved the wooded hills and many hours of his youth had been spent hunting and fishing in them. Now ensconced in the city as an insurance executive these outdoor excursions had become rarer and rarer. In previous years he had brought friends along, but that didn't work—much preferring the solitude—the one on one confrontation of man versus nature. The four-wheel drive vehicle turned onto a tractor trail and proceeded about a hundred yards to the edge of a stripped corn field and stopped about an eighth of a mile from the base of a heavily wooded hill. This was where he had first picked up the trail of the buck a year ago.

7:02 A.M. The farmer picked up the five gallon can of oil and trudged towards the machine shed where the tractor was parked. Halfway there he paused for a moment, then sat the can down, walked over to his pickup, got in, and drove away toward the hills.

Seeing the Blazer off to his right he drove the pickup another half mile and parked at the side of the road. Stepping out onto the road the farmer then reached behind the seat and pulled out a gun case. From it he extracted a scoped, lever-action, 30.06. The gun was worn, but well oiled. Most of the bluing had worn off the barrel. The farmer turned and walked into the forest.

7:19 A.M. Finishing the sandwich and coffee, the hunter screwed the cap back onto the thermos. He walked to the passenger side of the Blazer opened the door and put on his hunting vest and jacket. The vest was brown, the jacket bright orange. Picking up the twelve gauge the hunter stepped back to the side of the vehicle and surveyed the hillside before him.

From the edge of the woods the rifle barrel slowly traversed to the left then up a fraction—back to the right. With the cross hairs of the scope centered on the hunter's chest—motion of the weapon ceased. A barely audible click could be heard as a cartridge was slowly levered into the chamber. Again there was slight movement in the gun barrel—adjustments made for windage and elevation.

John Bailor didn't know it but the hunter had become the hunted. His eyes caught a glint of sunlight reflecting off of something in a thicket located in a slight rise just above the bottom of the hill. It was the last thing he would ever see.

The thunderous report of the rifle shattered the silence echoing again and again off the hills that sheltered the valley. The slug ripped through the big man's upper body jerking him backward and off his feet—slamming him against the side of the Blazer. Locked legs momentarily held him there. Then he slid down the side of the vehicle leaving a dripping red stripe against the green metal.

Watching through the scope the farmer observed the body as it slid down then slumped face forward into the snow. He watched the twitching body in the crimson snow until movement ceased. Picking up the spent cartridge the farmer carefully placed it in his pocket, and walked back to the road.

The farmer strode into the kitchen. His wife was at the sink her back to him.

"Where did you go?" she asked.

"Been out hunting," he tersely replied.

Somewhat hesitatingly she asked if he had gotten anything.

"Yup," was all he said.

Tom Sniffin

A Wedding Celebration

Among the many conventional weddings I have attended, there is one that stands out. Patsy succeeded in throwing a wedding that was a real bash. One that will always remain clear in my memory.

The actual ceremony itself was not unusual. The first indication that this was not going to be an ordinary wedding came in the receiving line.

As I congratulated the wedding party, I was taken aback by the groom's family. His mother, father, and two brothers were all missing several teeth. At this time, the reason for the jack-o-lantern smiles was beyond my comprehension.

Later, when one of the brothers took a swing at his father, I realized what happened to the missing incisors. Fists continued to fly, until other family members were able to separate them.

The brother was led to a chair behind the buffet table. For a moment there was total silence.

The confrontation had started and ended so abruptly, I had a hard time believing it actually happened.

During the lull, I learned that the groom's parents were divorced. The earlier trouble started when the father insulted the mother. In retaliation, his son let him have it.

Round two began when the brother, seated behind the table suddenly began tossing beer bottles. Next, he heaved a huge coffee pot over the table. Before I could absorb the impact of the beverages being served, it was time for the finale.

In what seemed slow motion, I watched Rocky crouch down and grasp the edge of the table. Keeping his hands at shoulder level, he stood up. Ham, mostaccioli, salads, breads, everything hit the floor at the same time.

Total chaos broke out. The entire room was a disaster. These people weren't kidding around. They were really slugging it out. Now the en-

tire family was involved. Even the mother, in her long gown, was in there kicking and punching.

I wanted to run out of the room, but the way they kept rampaging around, I was afraid to try. All I could do was cower in a corner.

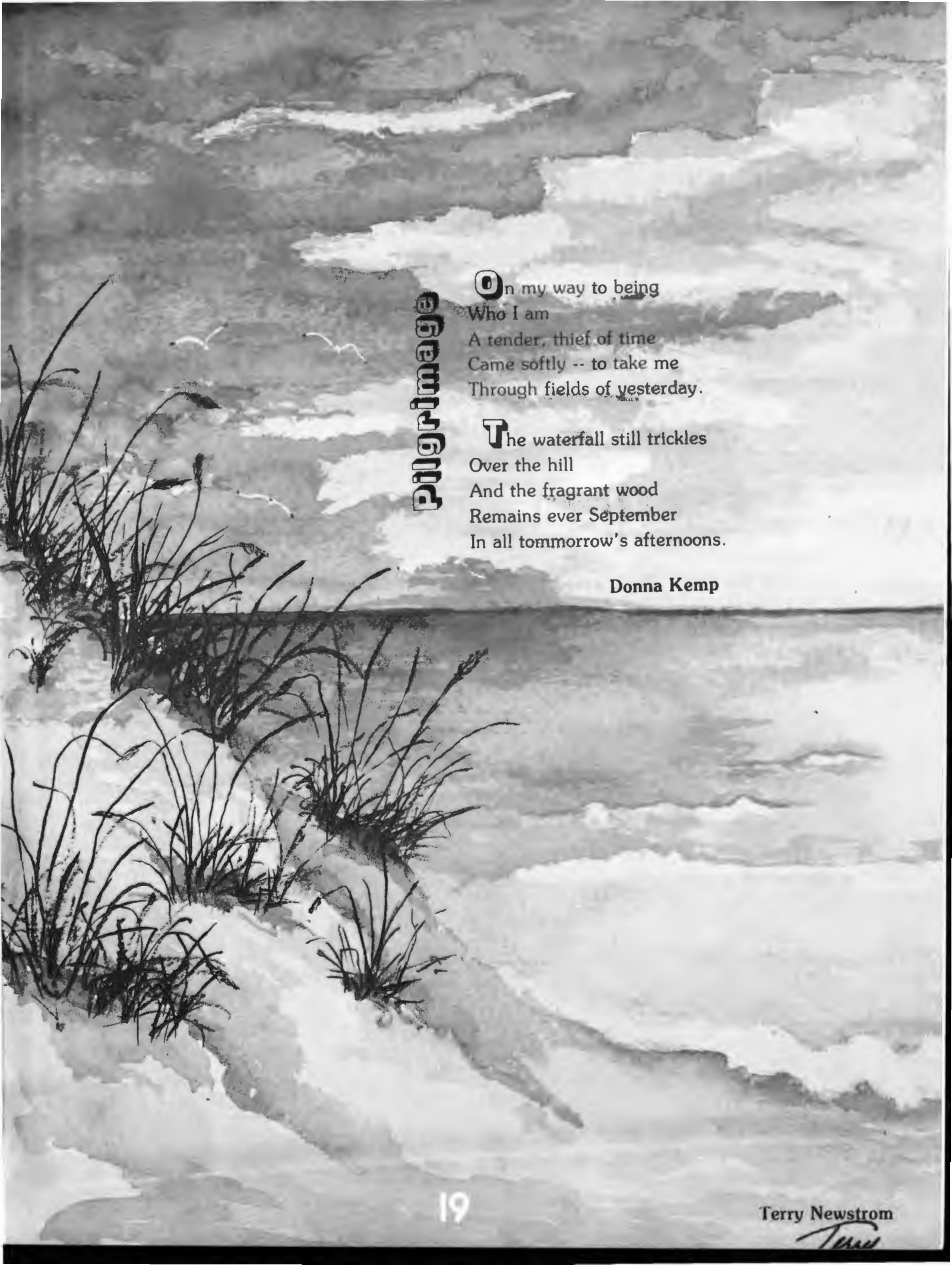
I just kept thinking, they'll stop in a minute, in a few seconds it will be over. But, they didn't stop, it just continued to get worse, until at last the police arrived.

Instantly, feelings of fear were replaced by overwhelming relief. I had total confidence in their ability to take control.

After putting up some resistance, the boxing participants were escorted from the room, hands cuffed behind their backs.

As I left the gala event, Patsy's mother, looking dazed, handed me a piece of wedding cake.

Kathleen Signaigo



Pilgrimage

On my way to being
Who I am
A tender, thief of time
Came softly -- to take me
Through fields of yesterday.

The waterfall still trickles
Over the hill
And the fragrant wood
Remains ever September
In all tomorrow's afternoons.

Donna Kemp

The Best Seat

After buying groceries, Mom, Dad and I stood in front of the PX at Camp Hood, Texas, waiting for the bus to come and take us back to town. I was hoping it would be the same bus that brought us out earlier in the evening, because it had marvelous, bouncy seats in the very back. The people sitting in them flew up and almost hit the ceiling when we went over the railroad tracks. This trip maybe I would be lucky enough to get one of those seats.

"The bus is on time," Dad said as it came around the corner and stopped in front of us. The door opened, and I climbed in. Good! The bus was empty. I ran straight to

the back while Mom and Dad sat down in front. As we went over a small bump, I bounced clear off the seat, much to my delight. This was even better than I thought. If I bounced that high going over a bump, I would really fly when we hit the railroad tracks.

The bus driver kept looking at my mother and glaring at her, trying to get her attention, but she was watching me and laughing. After four or five blocks he said, "Ma'm, you better get your little girl."

"Why?" Mom asked.

"The back is for niggers. She rides up here."

"What?" Mom exclaimed in astonishment. "No one is here but us."

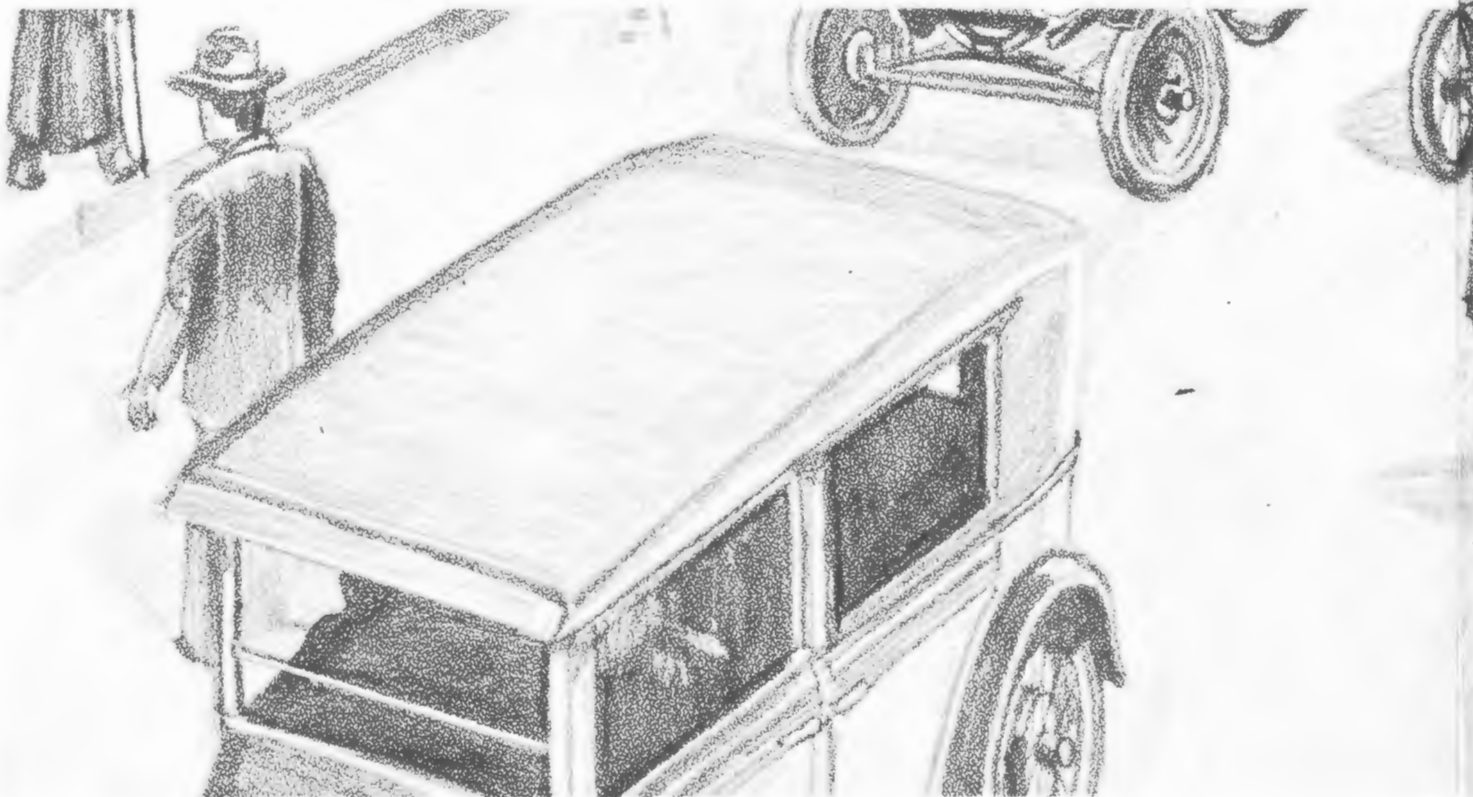
The driver glared at her through the rear view mirror. "Lady, get her! She rides up here!"

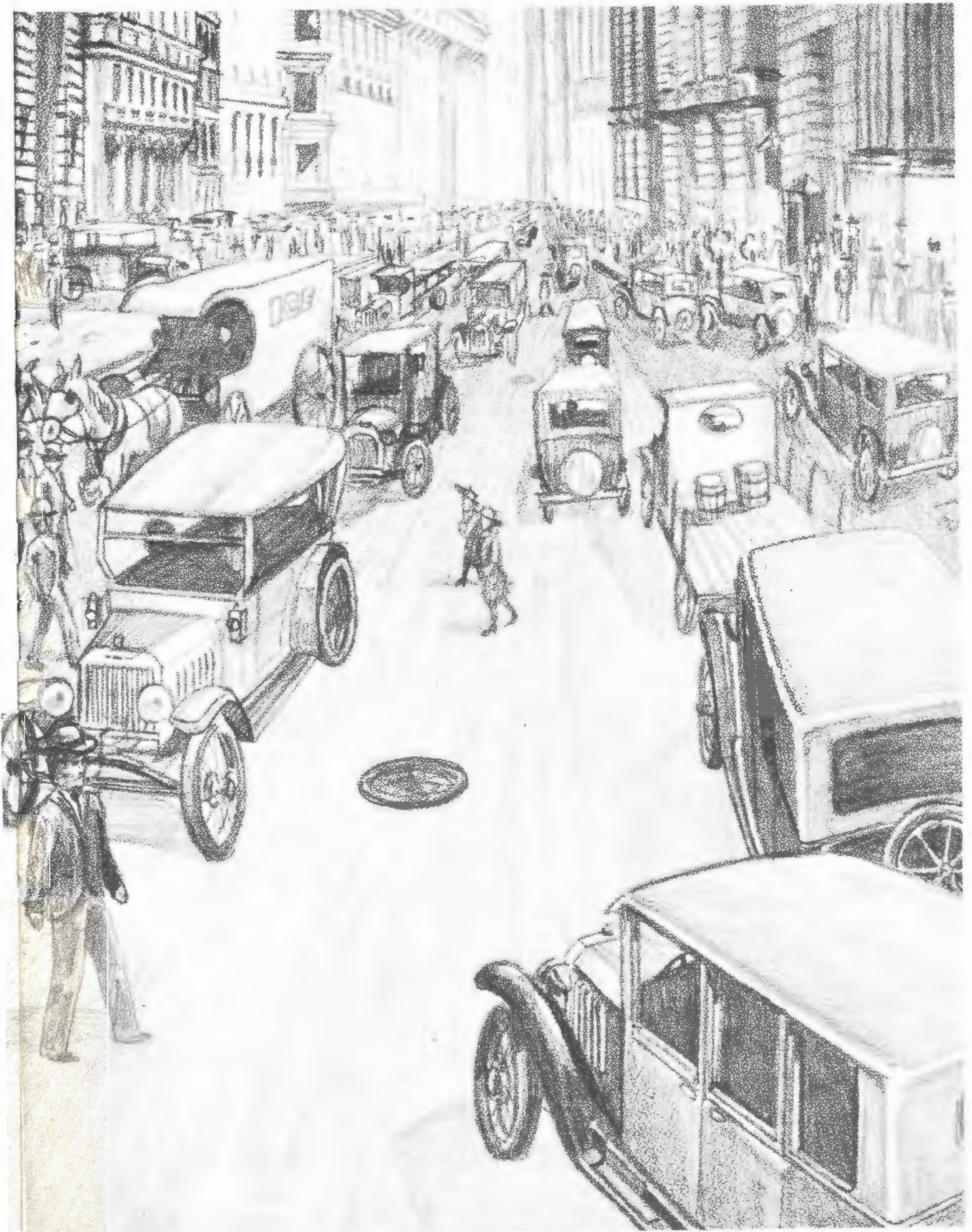
"But the bus is empty!" Mom argued.

"Come up here, Betty Lou," Dad called. He had been stationed in Texas for several months, but Mom and I had joined him only a few days before. He knew it was wise to end the argument.

I climbed down from my wonderful seat and walked slowly to the front of the bus. As I sat down, I leaned over to Mom and whispered, "How come the best seats are for just certain people?"

Betty Paglia





This time was the final act. They'll never work their evil ways around me or make me an unsuspecting cohort again. Even their names make me squeamish, so I refer to them as Frick and Frack.

It started out so innocently. My roommate saw an ad in the newspaper, offering a well broke, seven-year-old, double registered Arabian Pinto for sale. After reading the ad to me she said, "Wouldn't it be something if that were Frick's old horse? Sounds like a description of him and he'd be seven now."

"Call and see."

She called the number and for a few seconds I listened to the one-sided conversation. "How much? Oh...How long have you had him?...Where is he kept?... Uh, huh . . ." And finally, "Did you buy the horse from --- as a two-year old? You did?"

As the conversation went on I was remembering the horse. The sharpest impression left on my mind was the time we'd gone riding in the snow. We'd taken a

Frack, (with brains small enough to insert into a gnats ass) and he'd warned her that "Second time love affairs are never the same." He spews forth with these mutterings continually, hoping someone is jotting them down for posterity or at least memorizing them -- he intends to become a legend. I sound hostile -- because I am! He's taught Frick some of her most cold-blooded ways.

After calling and arranging to buy him, Frick called to ask if she could use the horse trailer and if we wanted to go with her. We weren't expecting anything sinister, so we went along.

We stopped to pay for him, were given his registration papers, then drove out to where he was being kept. On the way we heard about the 'Second time love affairs' theory and how she probably shouldn't be buying him back, it wasn't a smart thing to do.

The man who owned the place told us where to find Buddy so we crossed the fence and started out to the pasture after him. The man's five-year-old daughter was

he stood quietly for us to go up and halter him because we were with the little girl. Going back, she walked beside him, like an escort, with her hand on his side, patting him. I asked, "Do you like Buddy?"

"He's a good horse."

There's no way to describe all that was conveyed when she said 'good horse' or to repeat what her eyes told me, they were talking directly from her heart to mine.

It didn't take long to get back to the yard and the waiting trailer. Buddy walked up to the open door and stood, looking it over and smelling the inside. He didn't attempt to go in. He hadn't been loaded into a trailer for five years. After a few minutes Frick tugged on his lead rope. His reaction was to back away, so he had to be pulled harder. He started rearing. A rope was put around his butt to try to pull him in while the lead was being pulled, too. He fought even harder, rearing every chance he had, throwing his head high and whipping it from side to side, backing from the trailer with all

Buddy

saucer sled with us and took turns towing each other. I was on the sled, squinting into the wind and concentrating on staying on, while the snow and trees flew by. I looked over my shoulder and saw Buddy gaining on us. It was frightening for a second -- then funny. The vapor of his breath, shooting from his nostrils, made me think of a kindly, misplaced dragon.

"Well, I'll be damned, it is Buddy!"

It was natural to call Frick and tell her. She'd always regretted selling him and only a few weeks before mentioned that she needed another horse because hers was having leg trouble. At that time she'd thought of Buddy and mentioned it to her advisor,

sitting on another fence watching us. She was a sturdy, healthy, brown colored little girl. She looked like she'd spent her whole summer outdoors. She finally said, "Did you come to look at Buddy?"

I nodded toward Frick and said, "We've come to get him -- she just bought him."

She was a serious looking little girl as she jumped down from the fence and started walking solemnly with us. She told us that the girl who owned him had let her ride him a lot. Her tan made me think that she probably spent many hours on Buddy's back.

We found him in a pasture grazing with about twenty other horses and ponies. I think that

his strength. The ropes were loosened so he could calm down.

The little girl's family had an appointment and left while Buddy stood there. The whites of his eyes were showing, his sides heaving, sweat running down his body and legs. He'd hit his head on the top of the sides of the trailer and had once come down hitting the corner of the open door with his chest. Red patches were beginning to show where the skin had been scraped off. Even though he'd refused to load, he hadn't threatened any of the people standing there. There was no sign of bad temper, he never once stomped his feet or swished his tail. He stood there, 'a good horse,' confused and frightened.



After they'd left, Frick tried to load him again. This time she got the whip out. That'd make him jump right in. That effort produced a broken door and more cuts and bruises for Buddy.

I'd had it. He was on the verge of collapse. The fear in his eyes should've stopped her long before this. Frack, her alter ego, has a semi trailer for hauling horses. I told her to give the horse a break -- have him come out and load him -- he'd be back in town in two days.

A horse will load into a large, open rig so much easier, it's not nearly as frightening for them. We got ready to leave, walking Buddy to calm and cool him.

While we were walking, she was thinking. 'Second time love affairs,' and other such pearls of wisdom, along with remembrances of physically harsh lessons, were working on her mind. She knew she'd better get the damn horse loaded or she'd be in trouble with Frack.

She'd try one more thing. By backing the trailer up flush with

an open door and bringing him in through the stall, he'd have to load. He had no other option, it was the only opening. The roof of the stall was very low and within seconds she had him rearing, thrashing, throwing his legs, sprawling, hurting himself with his own strength and bulk. Finally, his left fore-leg went through a sheet of slate. Then she stopped. He stood there shivering, a piece of skin and muscle laid beside him, the knee exposed, the bones gleaming in the overhead light.

I lead him away from the barn and into the lot where he'd come from. He walked with me until I'd quieted him; becoming aware that he was free again -- if only for awhile. We doctored the knee and turned him loose. He stood, looked toward the pasture we'd taken him from, then started that way, slowly, then faster, using his leg the best he could.

The next morning someone met us with a low, wide stock trailer. Buddy refused to load and fell, coming down on the injured knee,

exposing the bone even more and causing blood to gush. The time on his knee seemed an eternity and I hurt with him. He stood and walked into the trailer, completely broken.

A quick trip to town and the vet arrived. He thought that the leg would heal. It needed to be wrapped for a month, and he shouldn't be ridden for three months. The main tendon had been severed, but it would mend itself -- especially in a big, good-looking horse like this.

Frack, the Charlie Manson of the horse set, came home, looked at Buddy and gave a lecture on 'Second time love affairs.' He said the horse would never be sound and he'd tried to tell her from the beginning.

She sold Buddy to the killers for thirty cents a pound.

I can still see the little girl walking beside him, her hand on his side, saying, "He's a good horse."

Bev Clark



Death

My love stands
barren
as your blackened bronze
covered by the soft virgin snow.

I have loved you
in the winter of my heart
with eyes squeezed shut
in revolt
against the whiteness of your absence.

Donna Kemp