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GRIMOIRE

1975
M. DREYER

GRIMOIRE

STUDENT ARTS PUBLICATION
 LASALLE COLLEGE
 PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
 SPRING 1975

In this, its fifth year of publication, Grimoire is fortunate to have had such a great variety of creative material from which to choose. In an attempt at innovation, faculty material has been included in this issue. Many students expressed a desire to become acquainted with such material, and hoped that a wider interest in the publication would result from the inclusion of faculty work.

It is my hope that this year's Grimoire will be worthy of its definition as a Book of Magic.

—Beth Stahlecker

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Front Cover by Mary Dreyer



Lamb
26-2-75

LAMB

Breath

When breath distracts, the hours grow slow and long,
and restless sounds threaten the quiet night,
the air, unbalanced, drums against my ears
and all the stillness vanishes like light.

I listen to the soft creak of your bones,
and hear the gentle rustle of your hands
and hunger that some simple tenderness
inform the night, so you might understand.

But you, unconscious of my anxious world,
sprawl strangely in another distant place,
this you composed with signs breathed on the air,
and love, such draftings often leave no trace.

Nina Fenwick

WATER RINGS

The crystal rings of water,
rippling in a summer-still pool,
consistently move outward.
Moving with grace and ease they
inter-twine with neighboring
ripples congenially.

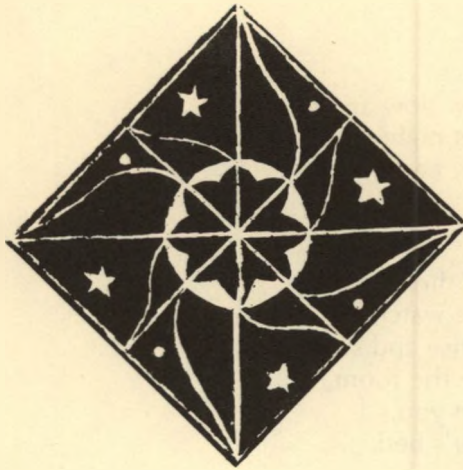
Ah! If man knew only of the
grace and ease of the water-rings!

Maryellen Kueny

Lord I have sinned.

Lord I have sinned,
and found great meaning in the seas around me.
I have travelled like an outlaw across the wake
and fallen, fish flashing on the edges of my body,
glowing with beauty that I wanted like a saint's life.
How I rocked and flowed and jangled for them,
stranded though I was in the presence of God
who had once splattered me with ragged ecstasy
but too quickly I sank from those lights
that danced so confidently beyond my reach.

Nina Fenwick



poem about black women i know,
and who know i know
Re: stoops & st. corners, steel & stone oceans

the sun wanes red
darkens and dies
painting the tenement brick faces
a mournful magenta —
to welcomes and smile upon these nightbirds
she comes
her ruby-rouged beige body
walks invitingly
wiggles rhythmically and
winks wetly at dry-eyed
diabetic men
who sit
or
stand erect
on stoops & st. corners,
fascinated and wanting this
flowing warm, syrupy smooth visual
of honey brown breast that bounce and nod and
make you acknowledge those
nectar nipples
that almost point you out
the sullen green moon is her navigator and friend,
darkly charting steel & stone oceans
for her once sable soft cocoa-sweet soul to travel
she is the midnight mistress to groping fingers—
chapped and twisted from the cold,
they reach to touch and taste her chocolates,
her bitter-sweet chocolates.

Hoskins R. Broaddus

Longbeach Rd.

Here in the cool sadness of their trance,
Deep in the dead of night's watch,
The curtains, dancing, will rise and sway.
Winded and soft they grace the room,
As did the flowers last given you,
Fading and dusty in summer's bed.

We're living out summer near the sea,
Near the sanderlings whose frail wings
Must soon beat against the wintry gale.
We'll be trudging inland from the sea,
As proud and lonely as the water's horn,
Leaving August like wreckage in sand.

I let this happen. I will not forget
The soundless mornings, so wide and whole,
Or the evenings crazed by fog and song.

Beth Stahlecker

Falling to Sleep on Bull Island

the sun dies slow in a red wine sky,
the stainless moon steals in behind the pines.
daybirds bed down in ebon winding eaves.
here and there a leaf leaps past, alive with air,
soon swallowed and shaded, as we
follow and fade, and take our leave,
like the pining fire and the grave
birds. By now the sun
is dust the moon outlives
into the dawning
night that draws down,
deep and silent.

Lawrence Bowman



A. CARNEVALE

QUICKSILVER

By Frank Urbanski

He was permitted to remain at home. To wait. His former record and position allowed that at least. No false moves, of course. Stay put. Of course.

Michael Garent sat within the frayed halo, its edges stretching to wed the darkness. It was two in the morning and the only lamp on in the entire house choked electricity into light as best it could. The television screen transformed into a spotty gray eyeball that spoke: irrrrrrr . . .

Sweat on his back from the plastic slipcover that clutched at his shirt whenever he moved. Felt as if he had been sitting in butter. A prickly chill shot up the nerves of his spine, caressed his neck. Shook like a wet dog to loose the needle-fingers. He crushed the red life out of his fifty-sixth cigarette of that day in an over-burdened ashtray. He had been smoking three packs a day since last week. Only a pack or so daily before that. Thumb and forefinger were suddenly an ugly yellow-brown. Nerves forever tightened like holding back urine.

Irrrrrrrr: more silent-like than the faucet that trip-tipped in the kitchen, trip-tipping trip-tips that Michael could not hear. Fuzzy blank gray and irrrrrrr more silent than silence. He wanted his head to be a bell with no clapper, a warm tractable void, cavernous, yielding to greater depths of motherly blackness.

That possibility eluded him. Was not trained for that: Mr. Michael Joseph Garent, former teacher of English, Welkin High. Having thought of that possibility—hear, see, speak no evil/you know what killed the cat/birds of a feather accused, accuser?—it was no longer a possibility.

He moved to get up. Sound like plopping in a half-inflated rubber raft. Damn slipcover. Quiet! Quiet! Hump-bellied Linda asleep upstairs. Sweet camel-belly. Asleep or pretending? Must sleep. Pretend didn't happen. It. I. Does she think . . .

Michael Garent stood and stretched, inhaled deeply, the air flushing his mentholated lungs in a cold shower, and exhaled a low, cough-interrupted, moaning sigh. His head was much clearer now. More clear than it had been in the last seven days.

Days. The case would be heard. Backlog, y'know. These things take time. And his lawyer was irritable: Michael was not a very cooperative client. No. Blind faith in celestial justice and martyr-complex combined, or something. Masochism. Felbach, the lawyer, said.

There was a great need to explain, like a lump that was suspended powder-dry in his throat but would not come out. Would not come out. Could not. Could? Now, after he had gotten himself into it, it was—really, c'mon now, admit it—ridiculous. All that fine-line drawing. Hairsplitting: thinking about doing it is having done it, they say. Well, yes, in a sense.

And the words in Michael's head, still there. Wished he could remember them all. The words:

Your winedark eyes glassspeaking beasts;
Sugarstick serpent with jewel-tongued desire
Crackling under priestwarm flow . . .
Memories are the air we breathe,
Lived kings mounting molecules invisible . . .

Memories, memories, hmm. "Yes, Donna," he said, "memories are the air we breathe, aren't they?" He was startled, jumped a bit in a jerking nervous motion, by the sound of his own voice. Like Big Ben ring-ringing in a sleep-dead ear. Funny, he was so used to hearing himself speak that he had

never oothered to listen until now. Oh, but someone had. Donna had had Donna. Ave Donna, Ave Donna. Say ten times and it'll go away. Hail Donna full of, of fecal matter. Her style. That first thing she gave me, yes: "Intercourse, Social." Bit of a presumption, ha. *Winedark glassspeaking sugarstick memories.* "For M" that was. Allunseeing M. All boils down to a young girl's crotch itch. Wants to be scratched, like a dog under the chin pulls way back 'cause he likes it, feels so good. Not under chin like dog. Under under. Unfair that.

It was all getting away from him. Michael realized that but could do nothing about it. That was his way; that was how he saw it: everything rolling about, mixing, connecting here, intertwining there. That was why Linda had married him. The mark of distinction. Creative, artistic, disorganization. That was why the kids, his students, former students, had loved him. Such an ability to improvise. What it really was, and Michael knew it but could never explain it, partly because no one had ever hinted at the prospect, partly because his mouth was conditioned from experience into yes yes yes I see unuh, was that the world was a kaleidoscope: turn turn turn. It was a savory, fun to smell taste and even touch stew. Within it: a person who would take twenty minutes to find a word in the dictionary because he would end up reading five or six pages.

What could get you into more trouble than that? Nothing. Walk in the fog and you'll end up on the dark side of town. You'll get hurt. *Winedark eyes vinegar weeped.*

But, still. Wanted to explain that, his theory, take note, his, to them, all thirty-four in Room 117 third period. And now he would have to explain. To Linda anyway. The trial would take care of itself. No real proof. Just itch wants scratching. That would come out. But Linda, babe, deserves to be told.

Michael tiptoed up the stairs. Not quite three packs today. A good sign. Cree-eak! Quiet! Hump-belly.

He undressed in the womb-safe darkness of the bedroom and ev-er-so-gen-tly got in next to his wife. Linda, good-natured to take it all. Good ton-belly. Never asked. Deserves an explanation. Try best.

He settled on his left side, his head in the crook of his arm. To explicate *glassspeaking beasts*. To hurt more than be hurt, really. "For M." Ah, to tell how Explain had started it all:

They were discussing his popularity in the broomcloset teachers' lunchroom, where 7:15 coffee perked bravely while singing songs of Columbian plantations. Heavy invisible odor of the earthy bean. Clang-bang-clink of tarnished silver-colored trays. Talking faces over steaming squeaky foam cups, dark faces with the sun on the back of their heads.

"Well, here he is. The prize of the main floor."

"Oh love, youth's fruit."

"It's the beard. Makes him relevant."

"Sir clowns, princes of the fool's kingdom, a toast." Michael Garent raised his cup and drank. The others followed cheerily.

When he saw the black grounds in his cup: "Parting is such sweet sorrow."

"Aaghh. 'Scuse me. Yeah, it's about that time."

"Oh well. Off to the war."

See ya later later have fun yeah giv'em hell see ya . . .

Michael moved smartly away from the herd, out the door and stit-stit stit-stit up the flight of concrete steps to the first floor. Youth overflowed on all sides of him. And though he was only twenty-six, youth seemed a wave that would never approach him, a wave that had receded so far that no moon, no sun and moon together, could ever return it to him.

"Hey, Mr. Garent."

"Hi Bobby. 'Morning, Joyce."

"Mr. G. What's hapnin'."

"Whadayasay Cal."

What was third period for everyone else was always first period for Michael. New teachers drew the later schedule. Could never stop calling it first period, no matter how many

times he was reminded. Sign of a distracted mind; one easily distracted. Michael was fascinated by everything to the breaking point of credibility. A profligate among the credulous. The world did not move in time, step, or rhythm for him, but swirled and rainbowed like innumerable shades of paint being mixed with an egg-beater.

No matter. Today the doorway to Room 117 was a mouth as harsh as cracked porcelain, with teeth slanted back, prepared to shake and never let go. The after-effects of a boring lesson to be quickly (and boringly/but nobody's perfect/what can you do) finished up today. Air-tight (?) wrap it as best you can and move on. He wrote on the blackboard:

Did John say, "Where are my boots?"

Did John say, "I like my new boots?"

The students shuttled in amidst their own chatter, seceding the front of the room, leaving Michael friendless, lonely in a way that only a self-conscious thirteen-year-old girl who must wear braces could appreciate, and decidedly older. Michael had the curious feeling that he was watching fish in a bowl: flip flap how are ya fine hi hi flap got ya there: a container of lives which he could observe but never enter. To do so would be to exchange his medium for that of an alien planet. One Giant Step . . . Michael was not up to Giant Steps today. As he took the roll he could see himself: black academic robe, slightly faded; cap askew and equally discolored; gray beard that sunk roots in his chest. He straightened his tie for reassurance.

Michael stalked as close to the students as he could get—the tip of the first desk in the center aisle, Donna Barello's desk. Heckuva way for a girl to spend forty-five minutes. Have a zipper stare you out. Did she notice . . . convey . . . But he dared not move. Though young, he was already steeped in his own tradition.

He motioned toward the blackboard and explained it like this:

"As I stated yesterday, this is our final grammar review before we move into actually writing a composition." Clean good-hearted sultry dirty eager listless faces enacted the ritual "ooh." "Now, there seemed to be some confusion yesterday right before we left as to when the question mark is outside of the quotation marks and when it is inside." He was winded, not so much from speaking as knowing that he was repeating. Necessary evil. Occupational hazard. Faces suddenly blank, blank, blank . . . "I asked you to check your notes last night and bring in any questions you might have." Michael saw eyes traveling quick and unwary down a road the end of which was lost in a bleached fog. "Hmm. Questions." No response. "Questions. You know, things that require answers." No response. "Is anyone awake?" No response. "Is anyone alive?" Throat-choked chuckles. "I assume, then, that everyone knows the material." Statement or question? I assume no such . . .

Michael shifted his weight from foot to foot. Zipper dance. Zones of soft chatter began to pimple the classroom. This is it. Get them. He bowed his head preparing to act, and in a split-second noticed the Barello girl's head (blond . . . north of Italy father maybe . . . looks more Germanic; sharp oblong of a nose, Norse eyes . . . Viking woman . . . hair stylishly parted on the right-hand side, but very unstylishly uncropped in the front, pulled across then back and tucked behind the left ear like the boys who can't manage their hair . . . Viki . . . snow complexion with ice-lake eyes . . . cold eye-rocks holding in warmth . . .) banished the image spread his arms like a descending eagle, and came up growling: "Arrrgraaa!" His voice echoed within the confines of an uncertain silence.

"You know what that was?" he said. "That was my interpretation of a dream that was strangled in its youth. The owner of said dream has reached old age while the dream itself was an abortion case." Got them! What the hell is he talking

about? "Now, everyone has some dream, ambition. Something for the future. You may already have some idea of what that is. Or, it may be packed away somewhere in the deepest, darkest crevice of your mind in a box marked "fragile." A delicate star. Ergo, as such is a matter of universal possession—the perfect composition topic."

A hand climbed for the ceiling, a shooting-star in reverse.

"Yeah Don."

"Mr. Garent, couldya repeat that in English?"

"Yes, enough of these amateur theatrics. Take note." The conditioned response: a flutter of notebooks and pens, grimly attentive faces. Worth . . . "Composition. Dreams, ambitions, or other thoughts about your future. Strict attention to grammatical rules. Due one week from today."

"Any special length?"

Fish swished swished behind Michael's eyes. He shook his head. "What I'm interested in here is your ability to express yourself in writing, not in how many ways you can B.S. me."

"Uh, Mr. Garent. What if ya don't have any ambitions?"

"Define as best you can the reasons for that lack."

"Be a lot easier ta have some, huh?"

"I think you do. You just haven't admitted it to yourself yet." Un-huh. The old "yeah sure" look.

A thin braceleted arm went tingle-jink up in front of him.

"Donna."

"Don't you think dreams and ambitions are different?"

More asking approval of statement than question . . . Heil! "Explain."

The girl pushed back in her seat as if giving birth to words weighty and timeless. "Well," she said, "A girl could dream of the perfect guy but never have any real ambition to find him 'cause she knows she never will."

"She sounds like a defeatist to me. Maybe she should start the fight before she throws in the towel."

Michael started toward the blackboard. Fourth period, Romeo and Juliet. Wherefore. Always gets 'em.

Donna's voice: "Mr. Garent, are you really interested in our futures?"

"Sure Donna. I wouldn't be a teacher if I wasn't." Safe, evasive. Outside. Fish flash flish. Cling!!! Bell like hot poker to the brain. "See everybody tomorros. Git!" Pound pound. Horses in herds. Cattle in droves. Buffaloes are becoming extinct . . . Queen Mab onward and upward, stuck frigid on the prick of noon . . . Will . . .

Michael knew that Donna Barello would come to him. The way that she moved slow in her seat while the others jumped pavlovically at the bell's first ting; the way that she patted and straightened her books as students raced I forgot about that history test wait'l Friday I've got too much homework to dream by her. Some question about the assignment—coals to Newcastle—no doubt. The brighter students disliked being cut off in the middle of a discussion.

And as far as the school was concerned, Donna Barello was a brighter student in every way: ranked ninth academically, member of the debating team, member of the field-hockey team, cheerleader. Also, Michael had noticed her for the first time. He disengaged her image from that of the crowd. Though her "a girl could dream" speech was tactfully impersonal, Michael could not help but feel that she had exposed herself to him. All of his students were categorized in three ways: physical description (plagued by his personal like and dislikes); general personality make-up; ability to perform in his class. The Barello girl, however, had provided a new insight, rather, a glimpse of insight: the always (professionally, they say) forbidding door of Personal Life. The door was barely ajar. And Michael thought that he could see some light in there. New discoveries always fascinated him. Hadn't the door to Room 117

been shark-tooth-rimmed? Hadn't he stepped inside to see what he could see while shaking the shark's hot living entrails? Well, hardly . . . really quite unprepared . . . hello, there—we're serving the standard mish-mash of irrelevance today . . . bulk rates for dreams . . . one lump or two? If Donna Barello could blast open to door, unhinge it top middle bottom, and lead him by the hand into the promised land of personhood within his students' lives—or, at least, just give him a peek at that light way back there—Michael Garent promised that he would tread very softly.

As he turned the blackboard Donna struck out on an intercepting course, books in arm, jeans faded more gray than blue from numerous washings, their evident thinness stretched to capacity by Donna's sleek animal thigh muscles, her navel a bobbing bud where a belt buckle should have been, and up-downing a slide rule like a walking-stick too short with more vigor and rhythm than her figure suggested she might.

In the seconds that it took for her to cross to him, Michael studied her as inobviously as he could: the tight flat pelvis that feigned rotation with each step; stern white belly-flesh; books carried against her chest like feeble armor; the Germanic face; the eyes—Michael had seen those eyes before. The eyes of young girls at the rock concerts, gun-barrel zeros of eyes, the vulvae of their brains' squirming with each rasped note, eyes and minds that would have died had the singer said "Hell, my wife's sick an' I'm worried. I just can't do it tonight."

"Mr Garent,"—Michael noted the almost submissive tone; odd, new—"Could you read this? If it's not too much trouble for you."

"Well, what is it, Donna?"

"It's a poem I wrote. If it's no bother."

"Convenience is really only a matter of perception, you know." A confused smile. The girl appeared tense, a dormant volcano . . . explode any . . .

Donna squinted, said thanks and disappeared into the incoming tide of fourth period students. The poem was sealed in an envelope and he should have been getting ready for the next class and he wanted to shout: Hey, wait . . . we'll . . . together . . .

An hour and a half later, Michael read the poem while drinking coffee in the faculty lunchroom. It was titled, "Intercourse, Social," it was written by Donna Barello (signed in ink, not typed), and it was a completely obscure howl of monosyllables. Maybe that's what dialogue has become . . . ah! hot . . . should I have to say maybe . . . um, stings . . . asked for it, though . . . door, ha . . .

And now, in bed, tossing, nervously flexing arms and legs, Michael still could not remember the words. He only knew that he had returned the poem to Donna, that he had told her, more or less, that her imagery was vague, and that the girl's eyes had, without the familiar pained adolescent remorsefulness, said, "Well you really didn't understand anyway, did you?"

Before he even realized that his arm was moving, Michael had snatched his cigarettes from the night table and lighted one. He moved slowly, quietly, from the bedroom to the bathroom, flicked on the light, and sat on the edge of the tub. The cold porcelain that he could feel through his shorts told him that he was alive. He was thankful for the reminder. The silence was broken only by the occasional *thitz* of a hot ash drowning in the toilet bowl. He remembered: one week after the first poem:

"Donna, I didn't see you pass in a composition with the rest of the class."

"I didn't, Mr. Garent."

"Well, I—"

"I, uh, did something different, sorta." The girl handed

Michael a sealed envelope much like the first one. Michael felt a tremor run through her and come to a tingling climax at his fingertips while they were briefly connected by the envelope.

If it's another poem I'll scream . . . she should have done . . . I can't . . . hey . . . "Wait a minute, Donna. Wait!" Michael's fourth period students eyed him as if he were a beached whale, watched Donna's back as she shouldered her way through them.

"Bad case of unrequited love, Mr. G.?"

"Bad case of . . . sit down, will you."

Michael read the poem in the lunchroom. *Your winedark eyes . . . jeweltongued desire . . . livefired kings mounting . . .* and all "For M" . . . some high school romeo with big plans maybe . . . what am I supposed to do with this . . .

Michael saw the Barello girl passing 117 as he was closing his briefcase for the day. He called her in. Asked her if she had a minute. Yes. Her eyes were red-rimmed, pink and moist. Mourning her lost, great love, uh . . .

"I read your poem."

"Did you like it?"

"Well, what I really need from you is a composition, something to—"

For M . . . unrequited love . . . tread softly to see the light . . . take my hand . . . *sugarstick serpent . . .*

Donna dropped her books. Her arms came up rigid. "But that was for you."

Michael could see her: a Viking princess, spear raised to defend her . . .

"Okay, calm—"

"You—I thought you . . . I . . ." She started to cry.

He pulled her to him like a daughter. "There. C'mon now." He could see students passing the doorway, slowly, watching, moving on. Donna grew quiet and he thought (he was not sure; his mind was a strobe light: flash flash flash) that she was nuzzling closer, tightening her arms, warm, purring now.

He eased the girl out to arm's length. "Now, what is the—"

"What! What! You still don't . . . You make me feel dirty." She began crying again.

Michael could only gasp. Felt like a kick in the groin. The girl left her books on the floor and ran. Out the doorway, into the hall. Ran with heels thumping. Crying. Howling. Boys, girls, stopping. Staring.

Like a man exhausted, Michael slouched to the window, threw it full open and sucked in the fresh air. "No more pencils, no more books," he sing-songed. How was I supposed to know? Such a quiet girl . . . *ice-lake eyes glassspeaking beasts . . .* if this is . . . I don't want it. Just give me my grammar text . . . close the door . . .

Michael closed the window, turned, and started to gather up Donna's books.

A noise, a breath clipped in progress. Alan Burgess, Welkin's principal, was framed in the doorway. Michael watched his eyes settle on the heap of books. Then the wind-tossed hair. The security officer—oh, what's his name—red-faced, broad shouldered, stood firm behind Burgess, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Mr. Garent." The principal's voice was sharp, cold, like ice cubes clink-clinking in an empty glass.

"Mike, what are you doing in there?" Linda's swollen belly emerged from the bedroom. His cigarette burned his fingers and he chucked it into the toilet. Now—to explain . . . how to explain nothing . . . The tub was too cold on his rump. He stood. His legs were not his, shook like they only did in the dentist's chair.

"It's four a.m., Mike. What're you doing?"

"Nothing. I'm not doing anything." He wanted to hide his hand: the one with the ugly yellow-brown fingers.

BOGS

The languid flux of seasons
Pressing sedge and heath;
Marshy steps and patient gazes
On the mosses wreathing his quiet lake.

Gentle change in the blended measure;
Sandy beach now boggy moss.
Silver hair now wreathes his pleasure,
Among the sediments, a lonely man.

Gerard C. Devine



AP AUTUMN GRASSES

PSE

I PRAISE WHATEVER MADE YOU

Finian Joseph, O.S.M.
to
Anne Naughton

I praise whatever made you flesh and bone,
whatever gave you shape against the wind,
but know that I must one day stand alone.

Your breath, unlike the wind—hard as stone
along the Gorge—is soft as moving sand.
I praise whatever made you flesh and bone.

The ghost of cold spray the Falls disown,
fleeting as the features of a lost friend,
demand that I must one day stand alone.

I walk the roar of Devil's Pool, grown
soft since we have stood there, and pray my end,
in praising whatever made you flesh and bone,

will live to shape the light, like bells at None
ringing down the price for sins un-sinned,
and hope that it may one day stand alone.

Dear Anne, from heights along the River flown
with spirits real as your breath upon my hand,
I praise whatever made you flesh and bone;
know that I must one day stand alone.

Joseph Meredith
English Department



Roger Gillespie

Song for a Penny

In sheer waves breaking,
Bending surely to the sand,
I watched you waking
Emerald water with your hand.

The waves became you—
Passing mirrors: Evening sun
Dancing tongues in blue
Like copper tossed in fountains . . .

Shaken under spray,
As if you lost your bones, un-
Tied them all. That day's
Reflection is weighed by one

Who, seeing you wave that time,
Waved too—you see
I'd been waiting for a sign.

Lawrence Bowman

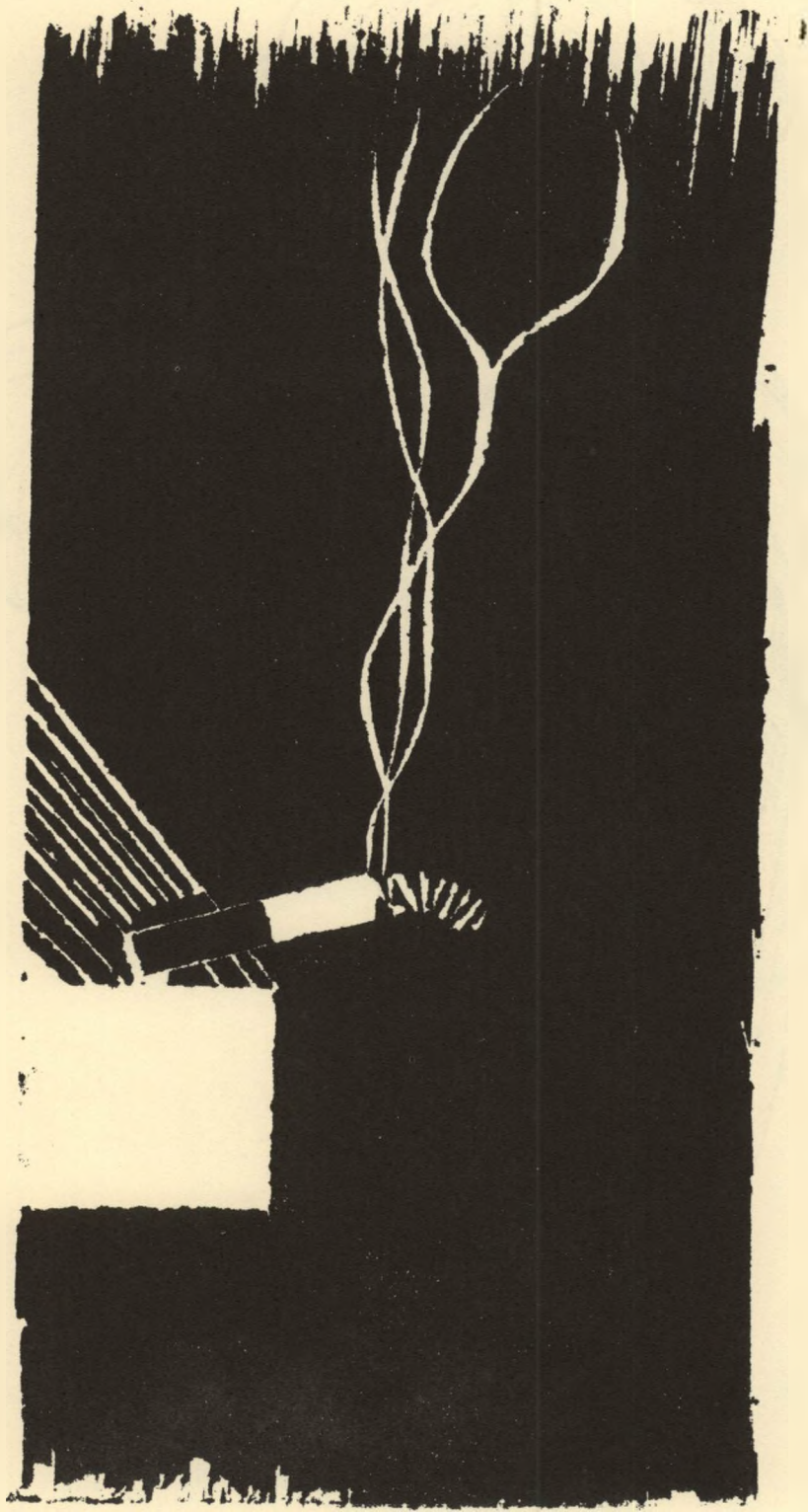
Trains on trains on tracks on
ties of time, trains going from
someone loved,
from a granite tomb,
covered with soot, soot covering
trains and tracks
taking me back to time,
someone loved

Steven Peters

Written While Listening To Copland's Third Symphony

Mindful membranes pulsing with each
Violin-struck note.
The beauty of precision, as brass proceeds,
Cautiously, into the sequence, climactically
Climbing, with haunting tympani.
Leading the awakened listener into
Fields of plain symphonic gesturing.
Lasting only for a moment, when once
Again the climax recapitulates with brass and drum.
We drift again beyond the conscious,
To plains of enlightened chorus.
Conducting our minds, as well as your instruments,
To the gentle relaxation of chimes and flute.
It is a Tender Land where you play.

John J. Haney



"THE LONG WAIT"

Mike Gearer



Iris

HIBERNACULUM

Listening on the high hills
While the rivers trickled and curled,
Through the washed rocks
That sparkled in the light
And chimed like the beginning
Of the beginning
Of the world;
I followed with my heart
That was my ear,
The endless running of
The thrumming of the waters
And the voices of the pebbles
As they tried to sing,
And realized that the sod
Who first conjured Lethe,
Was a happy old drunk
Who must have loved the spring.

Alban Berg to his wife—1915

The clouds, I think, above me; soldier brown
Mud wings draped along the brow
A bugle summons but not for me
My eyes are unaccustomed to the rest.
By day we pitch our bodies flat
In the sand and practice marching
With guns and packs. Our food
Is cooked with mutton fat.
I breathe like an old man.

Papa Mahler can not sing anymore.
The heaven in his body went home.
I remember when he told me,
“Only composing, That’s the only right way.”
And now I must wait here with
The wagon mules, interminable rains
(Until the war is won or until the war
Is lost) at the officers’ school.
Does anyone sing anymore?

There is a courage in the drug
Of a kiss. My coffee stirs in the mug
Stirs a vacant head; reflection;
Gone; I think of you.

The mice carve their numbers in my bed.
I have such ideas, they are breaking
My head. For poor folks like us
There is no rest but chains.
I must walk the watch tonight . . . again.

It looks like rain. The moon shudders,
Fingers pale. I wish I were
As light as leaves, dancing
On kite tails, but there is no wind
To take me to your heart,
And I am where the leaves
Turn to falling
Snow.
The minutes pass into dreams. Nothing
Is as it seems. The dark is like
An old man begging for time.

MARTIN FITZPATRICK

A PART OF THE FEAST

By William Lamsback

Thanksgiving day had a special feeling of its own for Cindy Grossman. She sometimes suspected that a turkey was baking in every room of the house, for that is just the way it smelled. It seemed that her father was forever watching the Detroit Lions on television, while her mother spent the day in the kitchen, and it was the pleasantest thing to think that the nuns spent their day in the convent, beside themselves with fury over the fact that there would be no school tomorrow. Peter, Cindy's brother, would be cracking walnuts in his room and getting the shells all over his bed. And soon, the company would come. In her room, Cindy combed her long black hair and she wondered what good things Uncle Charles would bring to dinner this year. Oh, and she had to remember to be nice when Mrs. Toast patted her head and Miss Lockworth tried to kiss her.

The doorbell rang downstairs. Cindy put her comb on the bureau and ran for the stairs, but Peter, being taller and faster than Cindy, had beaten her to it. Down the stairs he flew, still munching walnuts. Cindy attempted to thunder down behind him and frighten him off, but she was such a petite child that Peter's munching easily drowned out the sound of his sister's footsteps.

"Hey!" Mr. Grossman shouted in a puff of cigar smoke as the children ran past his chair. "Peter, let your sister answer the door. And don't stand in front of the television."

Peter glared at his sister. Cindy stuck out her tongue at him in triumph.

"Cindy, how's my girl?" Uncle Charles looked like Old King Cole. He was almost as chubby and as jolly. The late afternoon sunshine danced brilliantly on his large bald spot, trimmed by a circle of thin brown hair that looked like a crown. He carried a bulging brown bag in his arms. "And a merry old soul was he."

"Hey whadya got?" asked Peter before Uncle Charles could even step into the house. Mrs. Grossman often had to scold Peter for his lack of manners.

Uncle Charles laid his bag in the nearest chair. Mr. Grossman got up, grinning and puffing. Uncle Charles pulled a pumpkin pie out of the bag with the kind of motion a magician makes when he pulls a rabbit out of his hat, and he waited till the "Mmmm!" subsided before taking out the cocoanut custard pie and then a lot of donuts in a smaller bag, and finally a bottle of wine. All the while his face beamed with the biggest smile. Cindy knew her mother had been wrong that morning when she said that Uncle Charles really didn't have anything. He had brought the best part of the meal.

Mrs. Grossman came into the living room, wiping her hands on the apron that she only wore on Thanksgiving. "Charles how are you?" she said, almost singing. Cindy's mother always made a great fuss over Uncle Charles. It was as much a part of the feast as the turkey.

"Something sure smells good in here" Uncle Charles said.

"That's my cigar" Mr. Grossman joked.

"He means the turkey," Cindy corrected.

"Oh."

"Well it sure beats Thanksgiving at the diner," Uncle Charles laughed.

"Well, how's the club going Charles? I'll bet it's exciting."

"Why-exciting-yes, we played billiards last week. And how's everyone here. Cindy, how's the fourth grade?"

"I have that sister Bertram who beats all the boys on the knuckles with her ruler."

Uncle Charles belly shook as he laughed. Cindy and Peter were then given the task of carrying Uncle Charles' presents out to the kitchen.

"When I grow up, I'm not getting married either," Peter said. He stole some frosting from a donut. "Then I could play those billiards all day and have bowls full of candy and walnuts and eat them all myself."

"That sounds fun."

"Mmm. It smells good."

"Thanksgiving's one of my best days besides Christmas." Cindy arranged the donuts neatly on a plate.

"We can give Terry a big bone" said Peter, looking out the kitchen window at the frisky terrier who chased sparrows around the yard, and barked good naturedly, if it is possible for a dog to bark in that manner.

"Peter, I wish you'd straighten those curtains after you open them."

"Ha! I've got it this time!" Peter laughed as the bell rang again.

He can have it too, Cindy decided. Peter would be the first to get kissed by those—"biddies," Mr. Grossman called them. Before going in, Cindy stuck a kleenex in the belt of her dress in case they kissed her too wet.

In the living room, Mr. Grossman had his "the biddies are here" smile on. Both Mrs. Toast and Miss Lockworth seemed to fix their gazes upon Cindy when she entered the room.

"Cynthia, that dress is so cute." Mrs. Toast patted her on the head. "How's my good friend, Sister Bertram?"

That horrible witch. Cindy glanced at her mother, who raised her eyebrows. "Fine, I guess."

Mrs. Toast made her rounds, as if she were everyone's mother, when actually, she had no children or relatives at all. Everyone stood around the living room, and Mr. Grossman peeked at the television whenever he could.

Peter seemed to get the greatest enjoyment out of watching Cindy get kissed by Miss Lockworth. It was as loud as it was wet. Cindy screwed up her nose at Peter, and she wiped off the kiss when she was sure no one was looking.

At last, everyone was seated, except Mrs. Grossman, who had gone back to her kitchen.

"And how is the library, Eileen?" Uncle Charles asked. He sat in the chair next to Mr. Grossman.

"Young people today read the strangest things." Miss Lockworth wagged her gray head as she spoke. Cindy and Peter sat on the floor and watched to see if she would bang heads with Mrs. Toast, who sat beside her on the couch. "Not at all proper, some of it."

"Ah, but Eileen, you are always surrounded by the greatest minds of the ages. Why, the wisdom and the great sagas of . . ."

Mrs. Toast and Miss Lockworth nodded yes yes together as Uncle Charles rambled on. Mr. Grossman had once told Cindy that Uncle Charles was a philosopher, and that that meant he sat at home and thought about the things that other people really did. But Cindy knew that her uncle could understand things that other people could not. Now Cindy would know that when she passed the library at night, when it should have been closed, and saw Miss Lockworth alone and staring at the shelves, it would mean that she was thinking about wisdom and great sagas.



"Enough about me," Miss Lockworth said, and pushed away with her hands as if to signify the same.

"She wags her head like Terry," Peter whispered to Cindy. Cindy gave Peter a harsh look, because Mrs. Grossman wouldn't like Peter saying that. But Terry did wag his head like that.

"Did you know," Miss Lockworth continued, "that Emily Toast has a boyfriend?"

"Oh, Eileen!" Mrs. Toast blushed.

Uncle Charles sat back in his chair and smiled thoughtfully, and Mr. Grossman looked a little surprised, but Mrs. Toast's face went to such a shade of red that it almost matched her wig.

"There's no need to be embarrassed," Uncle Charles assured. "The need for companionship is the most natural thing in the world. Do we know the gentleman?"

"Mr. Craig!" Miss Lockworth announced.

Mr. Grossman coughed. "Rotten cigar smoke."

"Old Craig must really be gone," Peter whispered. Mr. Craig was their mailman, and he suffered from an acute case of poor vision, which certainly made the carrying of the mail a true community endeavor. Each afternoon, the neighbors would go from door to door correcting Mr. Craig's errors.

The doorbell rang again, saving Mrs. Toast the further embarrassment of describing a relationship with someone who probably couldn't even see her. Cindy couldn't imagine who would be at the door.

Cindy's eyes bulged. Standing at the door was Peter's sixth grade school teacher, Miss Barry. What had Peter done now?

"Hello!" Miss Barry smiled, and seemed very pleasant, not at all like she acted in school. "May I come in?"

"Yes."

Peter looked as if he had just swallowed raw liver. He had once had a crush on Miss Barry until he learned that she was thirty-five. Miss Barry had just come to the school this year. She used to live with her family in Ohio.

Mrs. Grossman came into the living room. "Miss Barry! I'm so glad you could come."

It was the nearest Cindy had ever seen her uncle come to being speechless. He stuttered a how are you when he was introduced to Miss Barry. It had to be admitted that Miss Barry was pretty, but Uncle Charles eyes stayed wide for some length of time, and his mouth hung a little open, so that Miss Lockworth had the look she had when someone took a not at all proper book out of the library, and she had to ask Uncle Charles if he were catching flies.

"Oh, no, no. I'm hungry is all." And he looked as Mrs. Toast had looked a moment ago.

In another moment Mrs. Grossman announced that dinner was ready. Everyone seemed quite relieved at that. Uncle Charles and Peter continued to sneak strange looks at Miss Barry, who smiled upon the slightest provocation.

At dinner, Uncle Charles found himself seated next to Miss Barry, and after Mr. Grossman had said the grace, Uncle Charles continued to keep his head lowered.

"Are you all right?" Miss Barry asked.

"Oh!" Charles snapped back up. "Yes, yes, I'm fine."

"Charles is a member of the Henderson club," Mrs. Grossman said to Miss Barry. "He's always active at one thing or another."

"Oh really?" Miss Barry looked at Uncle Charles with lively interest. "How do you like the club?"

"Oh it's very nice." Uncle Charles smiled politely and returned to his turkey.

Then everything got back to normal with everyone passing salt and pepper shakers and butter and dishes of vegetables. Mr. Grossman found that Miss Barry knew football, and what were the great old college rivalries. Uncle Charles said little. He spent a good deal of time blushing, since he was the subject of most of the conversation between Miss Barry and Mrs. Grossman. Mother is matchmaking, Cindy at last decided. And seeing her uncle so quiet and shy, which was not like him at all, she decided to save the poor man. As soon as his plate was cleared, Cindy seized the opportunity.

"Uncle Charles, you want to come with me to give this bone to Terry?" She held up a large leg bone.

Mrs. Grossman frowned. "Cynthia, I don't think—"

"It's all right," Uncle Charles said. "I'll be happy to go with you, Cindy."

"Me too," said Peter.

"If you'll excuse me." Uncle Charles got up from the table. On the way to the door Peter said that Uncle Charles had a crush on Miss Barry, but Cindy argued that if that were true then he wouldn't leave Miss Barry to go out in the yard. But she had to admit that Uncle Charles was certainly acting funny.

"Tell me," said Uncle Charles, in the yard. "How does your mother know this Miss Barry?"

"She's Peter's school teacher," Cindy offered. "He's so bad that mother has to go up to school all the time. She's pretty isn't she?"

"Hm, yes, I suppose. Well are you going to give your dog the bone?"

"You do it."

"Okay."

Cindy handed her uncle the bone, draped with little strands of turkey. The spunky terrier spotted the bone, and having certainly had frog or rabbit somewhere in his

ancestry, he came prancing and hopping, prancing and hopping, over to Uncle Charles, who extended the bone, gingerly, about waist high. Terry sprang up and snatched it with such purpose that Uncle Charles had to jump back.

"Well let's go back in the house," he said.

"Whatsa matter?" Peter said, kneeling next to Terry as he dined. "You afraid of dogs, or is it you wanna get back to Miss Barry?"

Uncle Charles laughed. It was an unusual laugh; just his mouth laughed, and for the second time that night, Uncle Charles was at a loss for words. Peter smirked triumphantly at Cindy. Then, since he was by nature a boy who liked to stir things up, Peter swiped the bone away from poor Terry, who began to chase Peter about the yard. Peter zigzagged and dodged and then quite suddenly chucked the bone off to Uncle Charles, who had no choice but to catch it. Terry, understandably irate, came running at Uncle Charles, and though Uncle Charles had dropped the bone, Terry continued to chase him. Cindy had to laugh, despite herself, at that great bowl of pudding waddling around the yard. Then, Uncle Charles, as if accepting the buffoonish role he had fallen into, began to laugh and jump oddly, making contorted faces and shouting "oh! oh!" in mock fear. It wasn't particularly funny any more. Then all of a sudden, Uncle Charles stopped dead, as if he suddenly remembered who he was, and the reason for this realization soon became evident. Cindy turned around and there stood Miss Barry, who must have seen the entire exhibition. It seemed that this might mark the end of Uncle Charles' ability to speak. But what Miss Barry said was, "I love dogs," which seemed to Cindy an odd thing to say, considering what Miss Barry had just seen Uncle Charles doing. Cindy finally attributed it all to the fact that Miss Barry taught sixth grade, and didn't seem to notice Uncle Charles' antics because she must be surrounded all day by people doing some very strange things.

"Ah well, he is a remarkable dog." Uncle Charles straightened his clothes and assumed such a dignified air that anyone who chanced upon the scene would never believe what had just occurred. It certainly puzzled Peter, who watched Uncle Charles and puckered his lips thoughtfully. Miss Barry was playing with Terry.

"Watch this." Uncle Charles took the bone from Terry and held it out again. When Terry had taken the bone back, Miss Barry said, "That's very good."

"Thank you," Charles beamed. "It's a trick I've practised."

Cindy wondered what was going on here, but Peter seemed to have things figured out again. He pointed at Uncle Charles with one finger and at Miss Barry with another, and then crossed both fingers.

Uncle Charles announced, at last, that it was time to return to the house, as it was getting very chilly.

"Do you know billiards?" Uncle Charles asked Miss Barry, as they went into the house.

"Well I'm afraid I'm not very good," which Peter later told Cindy was a lie, since Miss Barry regularly beat

everyone in the recreation room in school.

"Well, I'll tell you; it's in the wrist . . ." and on went Uncle Charles about the fine points of the game of billiards, which seemed, unexplainably, to be of the greatest interest to Miss Barry. It was becoming clear to Cindy now that Uncle Charles did have a crush on Miss Barry and that he was, no doubt, a victim of her mother's matchmaking scheme. This became confirmed when, in the house, it was discovered that everyone had already had their tea and were in the living room again, and that Uncle Charles and Miss Barry were to have theirs, alone together, in the dining room.

"Ah," said Mrs. Toast, sipping some of the wine Uncle Charles had brought, "I can remember when Mr. Toast and I, God rest his soul, enjoyed Thanksgiving dinners together. Many's the time we'd sit in the parlor afterwards and look out at the falling leaves. But now . . ."

"Mr. Craig couldn't even see a tree unless he walked into it," Peter whispered to Cindy, sitting on the floor.

"Well, we're all like family here," Mrs. Grossman assured. "Isn't that right Peter?"

"Yes," Mr. Grossman went along. "I've always said that."

"As always, it was a wonderful dinner," Miss Lockworth added. "And even though I had a lot of letters to write tonight, I said to myself, 'I'm not going to miss dinner at the Grossman's.'"

Mr. Grossman smiled.

"Well, it wouldn't be Thanksgiving without you, Eileen," said Mrs. Grossman.

Cindy mused happily about a Miss Lockworthless Thanksgiving. Miss Lockworth made it sound as if the dinner would fail without her, when really, if it weren't for Mrs. Grossman, Cindy reflected, Miss Lockworth would have no choice but to stay at home and bother her friends by writing them letters.

"Well well, Charles and the young schoolteacher are hitting it off, eh?"

Cindy was undecided whether to tell Miss Lockworth to mind her own business or to tell her that she wagged her head like a dog. But it was Peter who spoke.

"Uncle Charles has a crush on her."

"Peter!" Cindy admonished. "But it's really your fault mother. You're matchmaking."

Mrs. Grossman's expression of amusement confirmed Cindy's belief.

"It doesn't matter," Mr. Grossman said. "You can't make a match for Charles. He just doesn't know how to go about something like that, even if he wanted to."

"Oh," Cindy said. "But he is out there talking to her."

"Nothing will come of it." Mr. Grossman sat back in his chair and puffed on his cigar.

"Who can tell?" Mrs. Grossman still looked amused when she said it. And, as if in answer to her question, Uncle Charles came back into the room with Miss Barry, engaged in lively conversation. Now, Cindy was confused as to whether she wanted Uncle Charles to escape her mother's trap or her father's gloomy prediction. The cards seemed stacked against her uncle.

"How was your outing?" Mrs. Toast asked.

Uncle Charles looked uncomfortable. Cindy wondered if everyone had seen his antics in the yard.

"It was nice." He was saved again by Miss Barry.

"Well, Miss Barry. Why don't you sit down with us and get acquainted," Miss Lockworth wagged.

"I'd really like to, but I'm afraid I have to go. I'm expecting a call from home tonight."

"Oh, that's too bad," said Mrs. Grossman.

In the steady diminishment of his loss of communicative powers, Uncle Charles had reached his low point. He had become mute at the announcement of Miss Barry's departure, and a rather distressed mute at that, for he tried to say something, but could only move his lips. He followed Miss Barry with his eyes through her walk to the closet to get her coat, to her saying goodbye to everyone, and then he watched her face, as it, turning to smile back, descended as she walked down the steps. And it (and Cindy had only the vaguest intimations of what "it" really was) was over just like that. Cindy wondered if Charles would ever be jolly again, because from the way in which he slouched over to the chair, and by his passive face, it appeared as if that jolly part of him had fled out the door behind Miss Barry. She studied her uncle as Miss Lockworth spoke.

"You and Miss Barry, I was saying, have hit it off."

Uncle Charles smiled weakly. "Oh, it's nothing, really."

"No need to be embarrassed," Miss Lockworth taunted.

Cindy had the urge to smack Miss Lockworth in her old maid's face.

"You know, I don't feel too well. I think I ate too much," Uncle Charles said, though no one had ever thought his eating too much to lie within the realm of possibility. "If you don't mind, I think I'll go home."

"I'll get your coat." Cindy saw herself again as her uncle's savior.

As he stood on the pavement, out in the wind and biting cold of late November, his tuft of hair flapped up and down with the gusts. Cindy and Mrs. Grossman stood in the doorway.

"Thanks very much for dinner."

"Your welcome Charles. I hope you're feeling better."

"Goodnight." Cindy smiled out from beside her mother.

"Goodnight, Cindy." His face had already taken on that raw look that bitter weather sculpts upon its victims.

He turned away and walked down the street, a solitary figure. Cindy, though she tried to resist, saw in her mind, Uncle Charles going into his dark house, a silent and empty house, and when he turns on the light, it is no longer dark, but still it is silent, and still empty.

"He really doesn't" Cindy said to her mother. "He really doesn't have anything, does he?"

"No." Uncle Charles disappeared around the corner. "At least we gave him a nice Thanksgiving."

"Yes, but how about the way Miss Barry had to leave?"

"Yes." Mrs. Grossman closed the door. "I tried. I tried."

"Because Uncle Charles liked her and then too Miss Barry doesn't have—" And it was exactly then that Cindy thought of something quite peculiar. All of their guests, all four, lived alone. It was something she had never really thought about before.

Miss Lockworth and Mrs. Toast sat side by side on the couch, chattering. Mrs. Grossman listened politely to the two old women.

"I'll have to be catching my bus soon." Miss Lockworth looked at her wrist watch.

"I'll drive you home," Mr. Grossman said.

"Now, no no. I'll be all right."

"But the buses are always dark on holiday nights," Cindy protested. "Nobody rides buses on holiday nights."

"Oh, I'll be all right now."

Cindy remembered seeing the bus last Sunday night. There was no one riding, and it rumbled down the street, all dark.

"I'll drive you home."

"Yes, my father will drive you."

"Well, all right."

When Mr. Grossman left with Miss Lockworth, also dropping Mrs. Toast off along the way, Cindy and Mrs. Grossman set about performing the single distasteful task of Thanksgiving, that of doing the dishes.

"If it wasn't for us they wouldn't have a Thanksgiving would they?" Cindy asked her mother as they stood together before the sink.

"Not a very nice one, I guess."

"But how about when they all go home. It'll still be the same."

"Well, there's not too much we can do about that. But at least they had a nice Thanksgiving."

"I hope so."

TO PATMANABHA*

My shelves are filled with someone else's books:
A man I never met,
Who died last year,
Who left before I came,
Whose books,
Delivered by his father to his former colleagues,
Were tumbled into a back room
To await the picking over by the hungry vultures,
Who never came.

Another book.

Perhaps it takes a profess-
ional reader of books
To say those words just right,
In weariness and boredom,
Frustration and despair.

We pile the unread books upon our shelves,
And pray for some
(God of Transmission of Wisdom)
To grant us, without pain,

The textures and connections,
The ethereal webs of thought and love,
By which that now-dead young man
Brought together

Such crazy books, such wild ideas,
Such hopeless, angry, baffled minds
And wandering spirits of alchemy
And poetry, war and logic, Sufi
Dancers, Indian astrologers, and
English critics of the breath.

Stephen Pripstein,
A kabbalistic Jew
In a Catholic School with a basketball team,
Reading for God knows what
Mysterious symmetries.
He Has Not Died.
He calls me, half-alive,
To join him, in thought of mysteries,
And I find I do respond.
I do respond.

John McLaughlin
English Dept.
Feb., 1975

* He who has a navel of jewelled lotus. One of the names of
Buddha, referring to his contemplative wisdom.

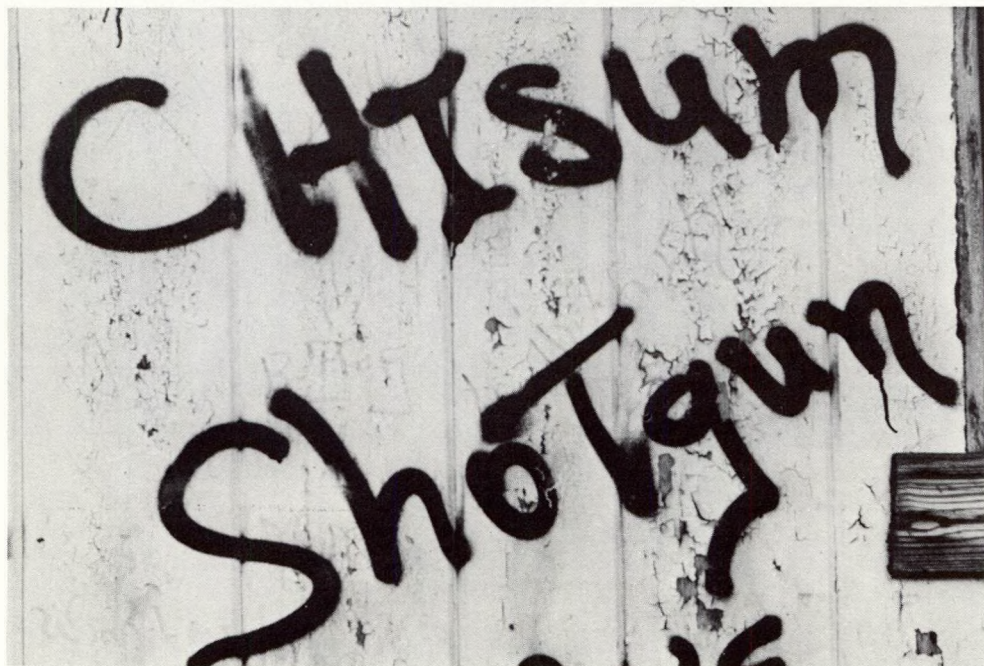
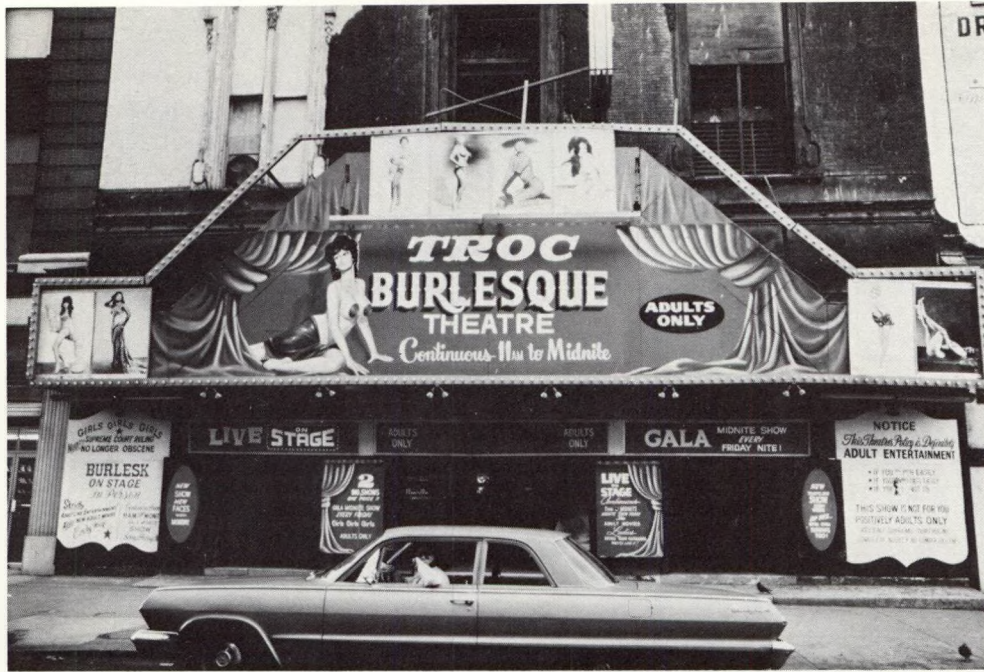












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RALPH'S

In between sips,
this old crow, one of the female variety,
struggles on upon the brown and green blocks of the linoleum floor
of Ralph's Corner Tap Room.
A Tap Room?, My friends mutter,
Yes, according to my Grandad,
A Tap Room,
complete with Lawrence Welk crammed juke-box,
and fifteen cent beers.
But the old crow appears to be an
off-duty, old nurse,
with snagged, illuminating white nylons,
and ivory seams, no less,
and an exhausted, mid-calf white uniform
with yellowish underarms.
She climbs upon the stool, and plops herself
between me and a long-since retired railroad worker,
whom she is apparently
nicely acquainted with, probably pools her
Social Security check with,
for he weasles an arm here,
a beady wink there,
while I line up the stranded straws that formerly
accompanied my sours,
in direct lineage.
He relinquishes a mug of beer for the netted-headed nurse,
and she swallows with rather young accord,
while simultaneously burning a
neat, round, brown hole on the sleeve of her pale, cardigan button-down.
It resembled the quarter-sized crater in my dear Arnie's chest,
which had once been bored by the head of a neglected cigarette
in the midst of an important night.
It healed, without a doctor's care,
in time,
with time,
The barmaid poured herself a frosty glass of milk
in smiling satisfaction,
making my frothy sours lusty,
and herself wholesome,
and the old pair absurd, too old for spooning,
spooning, my Grandad says.
He says all things of then, and nothing of now,
and nothing to me.
They cuddle in a wrinkled caress,
she wipes the milk from her upper lip,
I take a recount of the straws, three more than last night,
and contemplate if Ralph ever set foot in the place,
or took a peek at the dirty, little goings-on
in his corner tap-room.tavern.

Diane Bones



Initiate

Dimples in such a small face
Seem larger. When he smiles
No one notices the crooked teeth.
We can't afford braces
Or the truth he will meet
The first time they call him
Nigger.

Two poems by Suzanne Pope

Adoption After-piece

You cry guilty tears
Over the cracked cup
I once caressed
Like a chalice before you,
Though it was only a relic
Of some shadowy memory
Best forgotten. Now
I should recall the pledge
Made when I took you, broken,
Into my arms
From that cold, dark place.
Instead, I sweep away
The shattered pieces
Not knowing why I feel shame
At your grief.

Post Sponde¹

A thousand beauties appear to my eyes
to these eyes so unlike my plan of stone
whose subject of the Ideal or Love relies
on the hope to be content with Thought alone.

While displays and parades seem to be clear
they are holding me back; I am cold in the bone
and my thirst grows increasingly deaf here
inside, a demand for a warmer zone.

Taunting faces you softly tame
those flying heads who readily stain
the bright memory of Love's precision.

The thousands appear, they are vain
phantoms, and like chiseled ice so remain,
melting before my faithful vision.

¹Jean de Sponde, French poet, (1557-1595).

Glenn Morocco
Dept. of Foreign Languages
and Literatures

THE CARNIVAL

Morning after finds the carnival vans
Faded blue and rusted red and bleached out yellow
Moored in oily rainbows while an old fellow
Ferries the food debris and filth to garbage cans

And all is still and sleeping, dead to day.
The Fair, a foul-faced hoyden, waits for night
When midway stalls athrob with sound, ablaze with light
Put penny toss and shooting ducks in play

And rides swing skyward to the children's laughter,
Mania of motion, babble of buoyance, colors stream
In ribbons while the siren vamp with saucy gleam
Struts down the hours into the morning after.

Eleanor Shiel Zito

Passage to U.S.A.

Whispers from the Ganga become ravings
As the monsoon becomes the Tandav
He reaches for the setting sun;
He wouldn't burn in the evenings
Hydrogen couldn't turn to Helium
When it rains in rhapsodies
And life showers from tropical trees.

I fly like a fall leaf
Over icecaps
And islands lost in the Atlantic
I land without the chlorophyl.

Falls colors leap orange red and pink
Remember the New England springs
We left in the sand dunes for the sea gulls?
Recall my words evergreen forests
Elephants felling trees
Lips limbs like sky-smile
Faces black and wheat-brown
Back home
With smells of love in heat
Touch-me-nots like shy girls
My tip-toe couldn't stop from folding?
In the beginning,
Words would fall like fall leaves
Set adrift by advance winter winds
And clutch at the earth;
Then one evening,
Before we fed the sea gulls
We gathered our words and put them back on the trees;
You blossomed like a jasmine
Without even
A shade of original sin.

It snows nightmares all night long
Drifting to the beat of the black mass;
Melting labyrinths of the mind
Pieces of you pop up in stagnant pools
Two swollen breasts a tangled heart
Mermaid thighs brain tissues sprawled like Indian food.
I scream Miranda Miranda
And chant the Gayathri Mantra
Hoping to chase the ghosts away.

California fell by a foot
As Vietnam veterans landed at Frisco Bay
And Hollywood decayed;
It was a bad trip for goldiggers
Some ran to nuclear shelters
The rest sought their neon heavens.

the next inexorable drop
Brought coitus interruptus
And the Pacific to Los Angeles;
The west lost its poise and promise
They all waited for the final collapse of California
Reagans Rafertys and Radicals.

We live here
As if we are on earth's edge
Hendrix, Kennedys, King and Joplin
And all those who die of violence or sheer pace.
When the earth rumbles
We go looking for the moon;
Erect
We do not bend
We burn vegetation from helicopters
And smoke the vapors.

We live here amidst Acme meats and Penn Fruits
In high rises taller than church spires
In suburban stubbornness and militant slums
All of us in automobiles
We take our respective trips
Speeding up or down
With no faith in the sunrise;
We live here reeling reeling reeling
King Lear and Ophelia, may God bless us!

When monsoon passion pales in these cold regions
Imagination like a cobra's tongue
Lashes behind the freshly fallen night queens
And the air fills with hisses.

Waiting is all there is
Long ago once Sharade at tether's end
Broke away from the cow-shed
And never returned;
Did some brahmin from a temple town
Or some ploughman from the hills
Seize her for a stray cow?
Two full days I waited in the sun
I wept on the third and wiped off the tears
To hide my sentiment from my ironic friends;
In my sleep Sharu's neck tiger's teeth
Mud-brown gentle triangle face
Where are you now?

Endless sunflowers soft breasts
Lookback comfort lap lullaby
Rocking thighs falling falling
Greasy underside tenderness
Shiva's third eye opens
Flameflowers white hot
Himalayan cliffs crackle and melt
The deluge the ark
Sea-saw visions of new life
Ishmael waits on the raft
So lonely so silent
For sunflowers and poems that open.

Sreenivasa Rao
English Dept.



TERMINATION

Paul Meissner

Looking to the East

December 24, 1974

9:00 P.M.

Faceless we sit, in cold ignorance of
That long-forgotten battle during which
Black dragon-like wings punched the sky in a
Fiery prideful course and angelic
Trumpets sounded the most grand division.

Faceless we sit, blankly unmindful of
Our most inner raging cacophonies,
An allegory of that fateful day
Which threatens to mark our cane of virtue
With a dark disgustingly triumphant.

Faceless we sit.

10:00 P.M.

Unfootnoted smiles obscenely parting
Our lips, we entertain holiday friends
With delicate infamiliarity
And glassware charm, with all the tact of Eve's
Child staring at a puddle of blood, with

Unfootnoted smiles obscenely parting
Our lips. And if we dare to ask "Where to
Next?" we pray there is no answer, for
It may differ from ours, and that would conceive
A child of the older war, before

Unfootnoted smiles.

11:00 P.M.

Tossing ebon cloaks about gaunt shoulders,
We sip our last and bid farewell to guests
Whose faces are plaster manikined by
Natural cold outside our whited door.
We also must brave the cold, and start by

Tossing ebon cloaks about gaunt shoulders
To protect us from Neighbor Nature's all-
Knowing eye on the way to midnight
Sacrifice and the promise of a quick
Rebirth. We trek with numbered others, all

Tossing ebon cloaks.

12:00 Mid.

Eyes so tired and blatantly full of the
Epic denouement of grand harmonies
Riming through Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter,
Searching chilled aisles for man-made glory
To relieve those insensitive columns

Of eyes so tired and blatantly full of
Disappointment and disillusionment,
Of a constant falling, being not brave
Enough to fall once with grandeur, of a
Disenchantment with heaven. Like eyes dead

To wonder, looking for a hurricane.

Frank Urbanski

A Stork Reality

I grew up on happy endings
everything else seemed to shrivel away.
Evil was melted down so even it
became gold; alchemy was reality.
I remember all those smiling faces
who were standing at the sun leavened cottage,
waving goodbye at us numskulls
who rattled at their triumphs
over us.

The witch may not have cooked
the ginger children
but we were surely charred.
We are returned to this rotisserie
over and over again
to experience these baked goods.
Drying out from our inundated world
we cling to this Arc this Rainbow,
hoping that it will flush us from the
wicked west.

We ask Dorothy for direction
for she seems to know these winding roads
by heart, memory and feeling.

We sit next to Alice wondering if
we'll ever have to step
through the Looking Glass Again.

This land of Id
where we eat of a house,
in a land of milk and cookies.
I promised myself so many tomorrows
that I have raced the colors in the rainbow
to one.

I have waited for Prince Charming
Cinderella and Snow White
to sweep off my seat and throw
me into a whirl of love.

How those glass slippers cut
in trying to make them fit.

I am awoken to reality
another Knight in armor.

Jim McGann

Carnival Side Show

You let them call you Penguin Man
And flip curious eyes and sighs
Inside your side show tent,
Where you waddle before each face
Wondering whether to spit,
And take arms against mankind
For questions as unkind as:
You anyone's-anything's-father?

Well can you really blame them?
And will I ever blame them?
When creepy finger things
Fumble before a clapping crowd,
Recalling the cries inside myself,
As if my hopes were drowned
By you who shrugged and swallowed
And let them call you Penguin Man.

Eileen McGowan



LAMB

The Collection

"Are you knitting again, for God's sake?"

The raspy, undulating voice was Clara's. Sadie did not look up to her friend for fear that she might drop a stitch.

"Come on in, dear."

Clara negotiated her wheelchair through the narrow doorway, nicking the wood by only a slight miscalculation. She rolled to a stop, then impatiently locked the wheels in place. "What is it this time?"

"Oh, just a sweater for little Annie—her Christmas gift." She lifted the yarn carefully from her lap and lowered it into the sewing basket at her feet. "I thought I'd better get an early start with the way I've been moving lately." She rubbed the knuckle of her right thumb with vigorous, circular strokes.

"Damned arthritis acting up?"

"Not more than usual. No, the weather's been kind. How do you like these crisp mornings?"

"Too cold if you ask me. That damned room of mine gets hit by the wind near every night and nobody does a thing about it. What do they do with our Social Security anyway?" Clara wore the sweater which she resurrected every September regardless of the temperature. She said it was her thin blood. Ran in the family.

"Well, today looks promising." Sadie pushed up off the armrests and leaned heavily first on the bedrail, then the bureau-top as she limped to the window. After a struggle, the sash finally gave way to a breeze that relieved the stuffy air. The Home's driveway below her was bordered with reminiscences of pinks and violets. "The asters are still blooming. Have you seen them yet or doesn't Mrs. Snyder take you out anymore?"

"God, how I wish she wouldn't! That woman blinds me with her talk. All that jibberish exhausts me." Clara sat slumped in the steel chair with lowered head on a left side that strained under the burden of her own weight. She had failed considerably since first entering the Home. Sadie was then impressed with the dignity of her new acquaintance, a handsome woman of such stately carriage. Her right side had been stilled by a stroke just last year. Sadie's glance retreated back out through the window.

"Yes, she certainly can talk." Sadie looked down affectionately to the color below her. "You know, Clara, those asters never cease to amaze me. Every fall they seem to grow more beautiful." She remembered that first autumn when they were so short-lived. The gardeners couldn't nurse them through early October. But the winters seemed to be getting more mild. "I'll say they last to November this year." She smiled back at her friend, delighted in the proposition.

Clara, who had been folding and refolding the pleats in her skirt, did not raise her head. "How about taking bets on whether I make it to November?"

"Oh, don't be so silly." Sadie heard her own uneasy laughter. Clara's lip quivered momentarily, then tightened to the line of her mouth. The silence was long. Sadie's hand played nervously along the splintered wood of the sill. Shifting her weight, she hobbled back to the chair and eased slowly into the upholstery. She reached for the yarn to resume her work, glad for the

relief it offered. "Jane told me she would send Joey's new school portrait for my collection." A solitary square remained open on the mirror covered with family photos. Clara's features hardened in the reflection; only her eyes darted quickly from picture to picture. "Who are you looking for?"

"Is there a Jim Bowman in any of the ones of you and Joe?"

Sadie's fingers slipped; a stitch was lost. "Why do you ask?"

"He moved in this morning—two doors down from me. He's from Tacony. Worked at the plant with Joe." Sadie did not answer but waited until Clara's reflection turned to face her. "Who is he anyway? Seemed a damn fool. All he could talk about was the nice landscaping job."

Sadie lifted herself from the chair once more and, clasping the bureau edge, pointed to a photo on the lower left side of the mirror. Jim, Joe and Sadie in the backyard on Longshore Street. Must have been thirty-five years before.

"Oh, so you were neighbors too."

"Yes, I guess it was ten years. Jim was wonderful with flowers. He'd always help me with the garden."

"Well, then, this should be some reunion." Clara looked up quickly at her friend, her head tilted slightly, her smile mocking.

Sadie stepped back toward the window. She felt as if she needed some air. "Yes, it will be nice to see Jim again." She came down heavily on the bad leg; the pain flared upward from her knee. She turned her face from Clara.

"Oh, but the two of you will have so much to talk about. Just think of all those memories. Maybe you could get together and plant some flowers. Add some beauty to the place."

Sadie, her back to the room, rubbed hard at the dry wood of the sill with wet palms. "I think I'm past the days when I could plant." A long pause was interrupted by Clara unlocking her wheels.

"Well, I know I'm past my time to ditch Snyder. I'm heading down to chapel. She won't ever look for me there. By the way, Jim said he'll stop up after he's settled."

Sadie did not turn around but waited until Clara had maneuvered the doorway. She straightened her back and smoothed her dress down over her hips. Jim Bowman—after all these years. How he had always loved the feel of the soil. The breeze grew stronger blowing a few stray hairs back from her forehead and, looking below her, she watched how mischievously it teased the asters.

Jim Bowman was a remarkably preserved man. His sandy hair had greyed but remained soft and with a subtle wave. His frame was thin but straight, his face expressive. Sadie recognized him immediately. "Why, Jim, you look wonderful!" She raised her hand graciously to him, but did not leave the chair. His grasp was warm and firm. The familiar callouses were rough to the touch.

"Thanks, Sadie. It's good to see you again. I met Clara this morning. I was surprised when she told me you were here."

"It's been five years now." Sadie withdrew both eyes and hand and motioned for him to sit down. "I'm not sure Clara could make anyone welcome. She gave a few warnings, I suppose."

"More than a few I would say."

She remembered his boyish laugh. It was wonderfully infectious. "May I ask what brings you to Oakcrest?"

"Well, in a way, it was my own decision. I had been living with Mary, my youngest. You've met Mary, haven't you?"

"Yes, quite some time ago. She's a lovely girl."

"She is. I lived with her family for six years. But then the children are growing and the house isn't. You know how it is. It seems to be for the best this way." His voice faded suddenly as if realizing that he didn't need to sound convincing.

"How do you like it so far?" She spoke quickly, unthinking, and then blushed with the impertinence of her question.

"It's hard to tell so soon. But it is a comfort to have met a dear and old friend."

Jim leaned forward in his chair. Sadie directed his eyes away. "Take a look at the view from my window. The weather's beautiful today." She watched him move across the floor with light and quiet steps, his actions slower but no less agile than she remembered. As his back was to her, she straightened her dress and pulled at the hem.

"Now, this is nice. Wouldn't you know that my room overlooks the highway?"

She saw his expression more amused than disappointed.

"Of course, the beauty isn't there, but then again it keeps me a man of the times." He smiled. "Are those borders of asters down there, Sade?"

"I'm surprised you didn't recognize them. They are lovely, don't you think?"

"Boy, and are they tough to raise!"

Sadie found comfort in the topic. "I should remember that. Leaf spots, rusts, beetles—they were all problems. But I'd try anything for Joe. How he loved them." Her eyes drifted out through the window and, returning to his, found a tenderness there.

"Joe sure was some gardener!"

Sadie could not help but share his grin. "Ever since the time he lost the violets, he gave up on planting." They sat for some time quietly. Sadie played with the yarn in the sewing basket at her feet. "You haven't noticed my collection." She waved her arm faintly toward the mirror.

"What a beautiful family! Ah, here's Joe. Any of the old crowd from the plant? Oh, here we are." He laughed heartily. "We sure were some crew."

Sadie was tracing the pattern in the rug but could not mistake the affection in his voice.

"Much younger then. Not bad looking either. What do you think, Sade?"

"Oh, yes . . ." She faced a second glaring hole in the mirror where Jim had removed the photograph. In it were the fearful eyes and tightened features of her own reflection. "I, yes, I . . ."

"I guess I put you on the spot with that question. Listen, Sade . . ." He stepped directly in front of her, blocking the mirror. "I have to get back to the room. I promised Clara I'd ward off a Mrs. Snyder." He put his hand gently on hers. "Maybe I'll see you tomorrow. We could walk out by the asters. Old times?"

Her eyes shifted back to the floor. She pulled at the yarn. "I do have this sweater to finish before long!"

Jim withdrew his hand. "I'll stop by just to be sure."

He backed out of the room waving. "Sure was nice talking with you, Sade."

He was gone. She pulled herself up to the bureau and hurriedly retaped the photograph. Her hands were shaking. She felt the tenseness in her back ease as she settled back into the chair. She picked up her yarn, then let it drop. The knitting could wait a bit, her mending had to be tended to.

Sadie watched the other guests file quietly into the dining hall like so many obedient children. She always started down for breakfast a few minutes earlier than the others just to get settled. She examined her place setting, then tilted her fork so that it was perfectly parallel to the plate. The napkin was unfolded and made ready. Mary McBride annoyedly pulled at the chair beside her, Mr. Wilson counted two down, and Agnes Neff slipped into her place. She nodded.

"In the name of God, I'm sure it won't kill you to move down a seat." Clara's face, angled at Mr. Hallman, was flushed. Jim hurried her wheelchair through the doorway. "Mr. Bowman here is a new guest and since he knows Sadie, I just thought he could take my usual place. Everybody just move down one, that's all. Right here." Jim eased the chair up to the table edge; Clara secured the locks.

"That is my seat!" Mr. Hallman's voice was stiffened with indignation. Jim, who stood aside stroking his forehead, smiled politely. Sadie rearranged her silverware, embarrassed by Clara's mention of her name.

"Everybody just move down—Agnes, Nellie, Mr. Owens—you won't mind." She pointed commandingly at the bewildered faces. "Hurry up, now. The food in this place is served cold as it is."



Agnes stood first and taking the next seat, sat as if testing for its secureness, then settled back. The others followed. Mr. Hallman dragged the new chair under him, scraping the linoleum. He tapped loudly on his plate and breathed heavily. Jim sat down carefully across from Sadie. His voice and glance reached down the table. "I'm sure sorry for all this trouble." Mr. Hallman coughed, drawing a scornful glance from Clara.

Agnes stared into her empty plate. "We'll get used to things, Mr. Bowman. I hope you're happy at our table." Her words were whispered.

"There's no reason for any damn apologies. Where is breakfast, anyway?" Clara struggled to see the kitchen help behind her. The young girls were giggling as they

pulled at the heavy, steaming trays. Thirty-four servings of oatmeal were distributed at random. Sadie stirred her cereal rhythmically, waiting for it to cool. She toyed with the square of butter on top, smothering then recovering it until lost.

"How is that sweater coming along, Sadie?" He wore a flannel shirt with bright patches of red and orange like the ones Joe would wear hunting. The touch of crimson in his cheek seemed a reflection. His sleeves were rolled familiarly to the elbow—just so they wouldn't get in the way he had always said.

"Oh, just fine. I should be finished in a few days as a matter of fact."

"Do you knit much?"

"God, she does too much—sewing, knitting, mending all the time." Clara leaned hard on the armrests, her head only slightly above the table. She turned to Jim. "Too hard on her arthritis. I don't know why she just doesn't buy her Christmas gifts this year." Sadie drew her hands back from the table edge to her lap where they fiddled with the napkin.

"I don't think one like that could be bought. Do you, Clara?"

"God knows, I don't. I just don't think her hands can take much more."

Sadie followed the smooth seam of the napkin from edge to edge until her fingers were stopped by roughness. It had a flaw.

"White, isn't it, Sade?"

"Yes, that's right. White with pink trim." She sipped her coffee, swallowing cautiously. She tried her cereal but it had grown stiff with coldness.

"I forgot to tell you how much I enjoyed those pictures yesterday. You have some collection."

"Three generations now. All of Joe's work pictures and then there's the grandchildren."

Clara pushed her emptied bowl to the middle of the table. "Oh, there's too many. The way you have them taped to the mirror—you can't even see yourself."

"But, yes, Clara, I can. I'm in most of those pictures myself. All the ones of Mom's place at the shore with the grandchildren and the ones of Joe and I when we were first going together."

"They were especially lovely of you, Sade." The sudden softness in Jim's voice startled her and, catching his eyes, she remembered the tiny creases that formed with his smile.

"Finished?" The girls had already begun to collect the dishes.

"Yes, dear, thank you. I wasn't very hungry this morning."

Mrs. Rawlings clapped for momentary silence, then began the prayer of thanksgiving. As the kitchen help scraped the bowls clean, bowed heads mumbled in unison and, after a slight pause, declared their 'amens'. Clara had already rolled away from the table when Jim leaned over to Sadie.

"How about that walk of ours—the day looks perfect. Can your knitting wait?"

Sadie pulled at the buttons on her sweater. "I think so, Jim. The air should be good for me."

He touched her shoulder slightly, then walked over to Clara, waiting by the door. Sadie pushed up, using both cane and chairback. Turning, she saw Agnes sitting alone at the table who, looking up, smiled.

The discarded leaves raked neatly into red and gold mounds were scattered under the unpredictable autumn breeze. Sadie remembered how the children

had loved such piles—hills to be plopped on. It was on Saturday afternoons such as this that Joe would take them over to the park where brightened sun and chilled air would spring them from slow and lazy August days. Jim sat close to her now on the low-backed bench and neither of them spoke for some time as if afraid to disturb the playfulness of the day. Back by the pines, the butterfly weed, encouraged by the wind, flew up then down behind the tall grasses.

"What's your secret, Sade?"

"Secret?" The glare of the sun blinded her so she slid a ways down the bench to where the old oak behind her blocked the shaft of light. "What secret?"

"Well, you seem so quiet, so content—and you've been here what, five years now? You still are one of the loveliest ladies around."

She waited for his mischievous grin but found his gaze still and watchful. She pulled the hem of her coat down to cover her knee, stiff but not yet painful, and grasping the bench, adjusted her leg. She loved the feel of the thick wooden planks—rough, hard, and solid. "You know, Jim, I used to look forward to these years when I was younger—in some ways. One can grow very tired." She glanced over at the piled leaves. "Well, now I have time to sit back, to remember. My grandchildren are lovely and I have such wonderful memories of my life with Joe. Then there's my collection." She smiled with these final words but could not catch his attention. He watched the field beyond where the slow wave of goldenrod and gayfeather was hypnotic.

"Yes, but what do you do with all your time? You seem to keep busy."

"Oh, I do knit quite a bit—and all sorts of handiwork. And then I try to keep my room in some sort of order."

He sat quietly for some time and very still, himself a wooden figure sculpted to the bench. His hands were large, gnarled, and calloused—the hands of a machinist. Just like Joe's. They sprung to life again as he spoke, molding, enacting, embodying the words. The expressive lines around his eyes also moved quickly, unpredictably.

"Sade, do you remember the picnics we would have on days like this? We'd take the kids down by Riverview. All those good eats. Oh, and the baseball games we'd have! Do you remember when Julie hit a homer and never left the plate. Said she didn't want to run that far." He laughed loudly, slapping at the back of the bench. A squirrel stopped short at his feet, huddled over a chestnut. "Do they run any outings here—just for afternoons like this, I mean. It would be so nice to get down by the river again."

"I'm afraid I don't remember any, not since I've come anyway."

"Maybe we could suggest it? What do you think?"

The urgency in his glance frightened her and, turning away, she felt the grinding pain flare in her knee. "Well, most of the folks either go out with their children or stay pretty much to themselves. And with the weather changing, so many are afraid of a chill."

He followed her eyes as they chased the squirrel back into the bushes. Broken shells remained on the walkway.

"Oh, I see." His voice now had the bite of the air in it and was carried off by the breeze.

She turned suddenly to the aster borders further up the drive. She had neglected them. A feathery bloom of the *White Heath* divided the bold magenta from the blue. They looked so frail against the burnt grasses and leaves, they did not seem real. "I can't ever remember

the asters being so delightful. I was telling Clara just yesterday how much they remind me of the Spring.”

“They are pretty.” He stood up quickly, then paused to gain his balance. “Think I’ll stretch my legs a bit. Be back.” He did not wait for her answer, but ambled slowly down the walk alone with hands in pockets and slightly bowed head like a contemplating youth. The pain was only a dull ache now, but she moved down the bench closer to the tree and shifted her position to ease the pressure. Irregular grooves scarred the trunk of the old oak, some more deep than others. Its large, knotted roots reached into the dirt, groping downward and out under the concrete.

“One for remembrance?” He held a tiny white blossom up close to her eye. A faded pink tainted gently the virgin surface of the rays held tight by a golden center. He laid it on her palm, then eased back on the bench. “Do you still sing, Sadie?”

“Heavens, no. I don’t have any voice left.”

“Oh, but you must. And you could play, too. Don’t you think we could get some of the guests together for a social hour or something? Maybe even practice some carols for Christmas. I’d like to meet more of them and it’s so quiet at meals.”

“You just want to hear Clara’s voice, that’s all.” Determination creased his forehead; her strategy had failed. She twirled the flower nervously between her fingertips, pressed hard at the stem. “Seriously, Jim. I don’t think anyone would be interested. There’s the choir that visits every Sunday. Besides, I could never play again—not with my arthritis.” She pulled off a small part of the stem, then let it fall to the ground. It was the first time she had said the word. “I’m sure you’ll grow to enjoy the quiet.”

Jim leaned into the shadow and took the flower carefully from her, then held it up to his face and in the light. “We used to call this white rosemary when I was a kid.” His voice was quietly removed. “A shame it doesn’t have any scent.” Sadie did not recognize him with lips taut and eyes unyielding. His complexion was the color of dusk.

Jim stood alone at the window which overlooked the highway, his back to the tinsel and garland with which the Lady’s Auxiliary had so abundantly garnished the parlor. He rubbed diligently at the frosted pane like a prisoner who hopes for any small vision beyond his cell. It had been weeks since they last talked aside from the polite acknowledgements at meals. He had changed not unlike the season.

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“How are you, Jim?”

He started abruptly as if chilled. “Why, Sade.” The fire in his cheeks had died and the fine lines at the corners of his eyes and mouth no longer sprung to life with his smile but were now stretched tight.

“How deep is it? I came in to see if the roads were cleared yet.” She peered over his shoulder at the newly white world. The cars crept along slowly in the dark tracks.

“Not yet. Doesn’t look too bad, though.”

“Will you see Mary tomorrow?”

He did not answer for some time, his gaze frozen upon a few sparrows which pecked at the crusted top of a telephone pole. “No, today. She and Bob are bringing the kids.”

“That should be lovely. I’m to spend the day tomorrow at Joan’s. She even asked me to help with the dinner.”

He fixed his stare on the road below and played with the silver bells which hung from the window sash. His sleeve was buttoned at the cuff. The silence made her uncomfortable.

“Holidays are always so special, so full of memories, don’t you think?”

“Yes, I guess so.” He sounded icily polite.

“I can remember how Joe and I would be up all night Christmas Eve putting up the tree, fixing the trains. Some years we didn’t even get to sleep. But then when the children . . .”

“For God’s sake!” His hand came down in a quick, jerking motion; the bells slipped from the hook and fell clanging to the floor. He bent over unsteadily, then with shaking hands rehooked the decoration. “I’m awfully sorry.” He stroked his forehead soothingly and leaned back against the wooden frame. “I’m not myself today. Do you think I could be alone for a while?” He turned back to the window with lowered head, then fixed his glance once more on the pursuit of the sparrows.

“Don’t apologize. We can talk some other time.”

She looked back once before leaving the room. He had the look of winter about him—black slacks, brown sweater, gray hair. He was still rubbing hard at the pane.

Sadie held tight to the guardrails in the hall. Agnes stepped toward her timidly across the floor, looking frail in her red skirt and off-white blouse trimmed in green.

“Merry Christmas, Sadie.” She spoke softly, faintly and with something of a cry in her voice.

Sadie’s Christmas was now complete. She had taped the snapshot along the mirror edge with care so that it wouldn’t overlap the others. How wonderful of Joan to send it just in time for the holiday. Little Joey certainly had the dark and deep-set eyes of his grandfather. She leaned back to admire her accomplishment—three generations of life in order before her. She was thankful to be able to cover the only open space left in the mirror—that one imperfection in the arrangement annoyed her. The white bloom that had crowned the finely-carved mirror top now hung over the edge with its rays curled like parchment and the center browned. Jim’s gift. She strained her back to pluck it from off the wood, then laid it gently out on the yellowed scarf which veiled the bureau. He hadn’t looked well that morning. Her gaze travelled across the mirror to Longshore Street. He had never denied his grin to anyone. She slid open the top bureau drawer and slipped the flower into a corner of the box which housed her old mementoes, then closed it quietly. She must remember to pray for him. She paused, then reached for her cane and limped over to the bed. Her knee was bad today with the dampness. The joint had deteriorated to the point where it couldn’t be counted on for any support. She’d have to learn to pamper it more. She pulled the blanket up to her chin, then reached up to put out the light. A muted amber glow from the streetlamp outside dulled the shapes in her room like the finish on an old photograph.

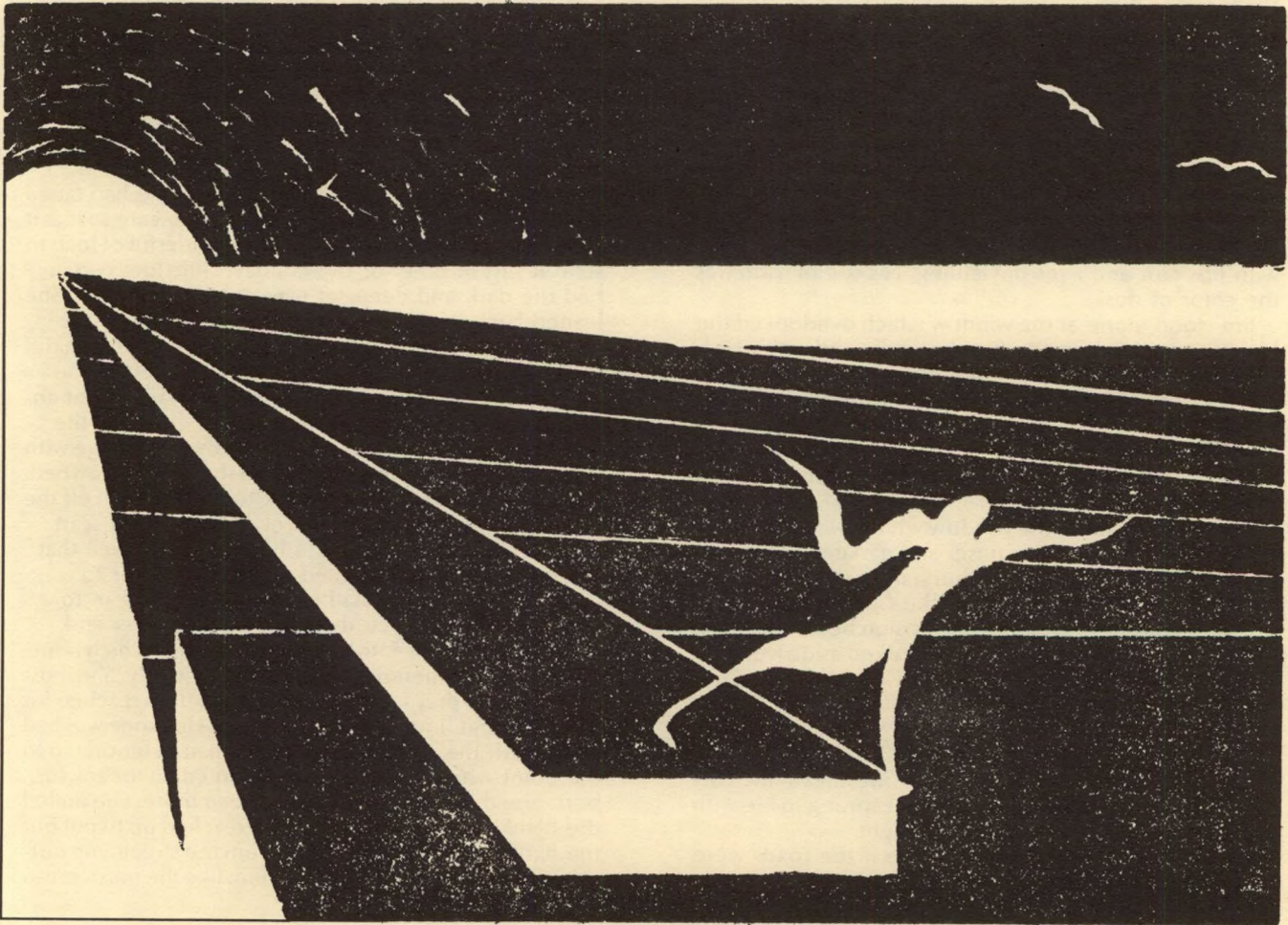
Eileen M. Bowers

Discord

You sit there you ebony
bitch cool and calculating,
calling me to messages
that are lost before
they end;
pulling me to your coldness,
a darken lair.
Oh! how your golden cries
lure me to destruction.

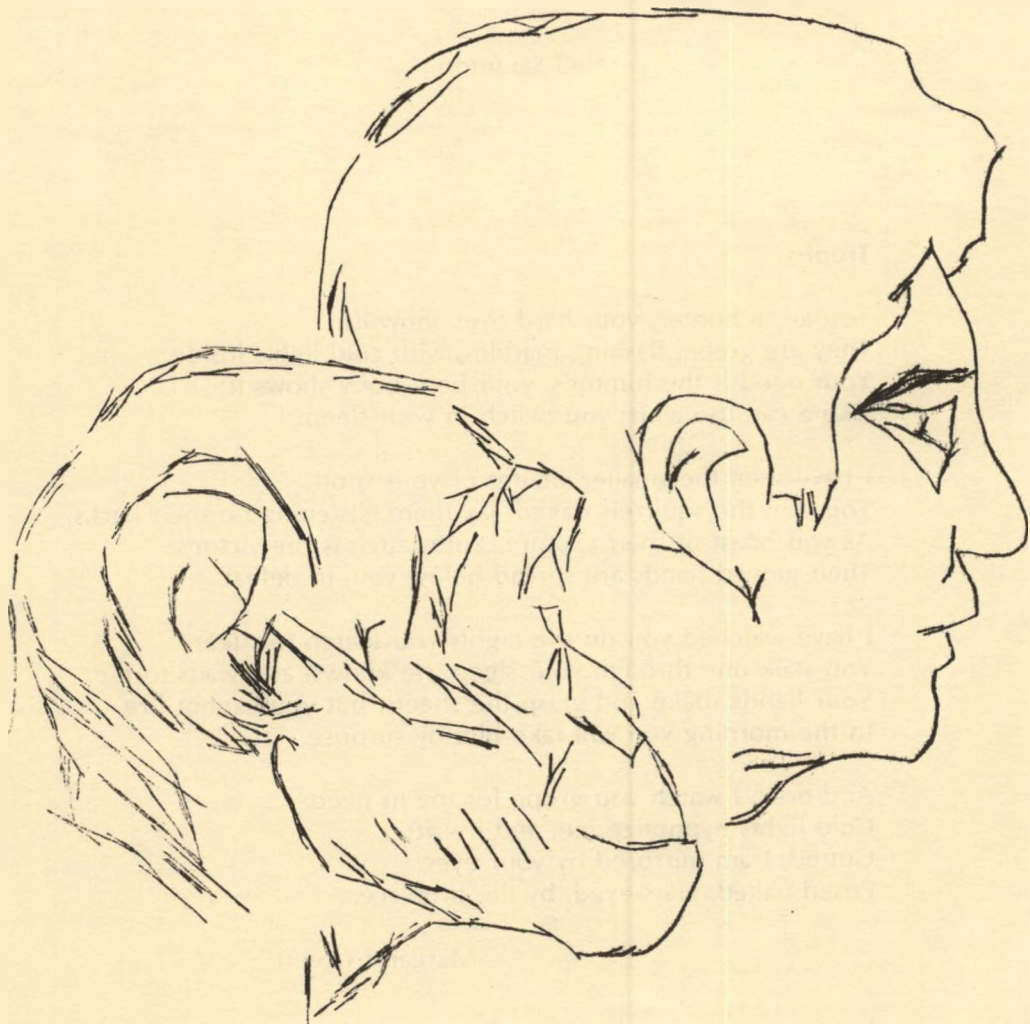
Pandora your
box even in its silence beckons
the pain of not knowing.
I have reached for the end of a line
wanting to pull back
words that slipped away too quickly
I face your darkness
unadjusted; trying to contact the eyes
that are lost in your insensitive flesh.
All that is left are voices
dangling on either end.

Jim McGann



My corner stone of
ancient history lies in basements
and attics—on front porches
hidden by evergreens and in
algae-covered ponds where all
the pollywogs once died
no computer cards for remembering

Steven Peters



OLIVASTRO

CARAVANSARY

In utter aridity
Our Visions of Life are impaired.
Wells constructed in isolation
Fill with comedic ice-water.
Sudden, a kiss;
Reason's voice holds scorn:
"How can two lips restore all
Time's Erosions?"

Neil Scranton

Trophy

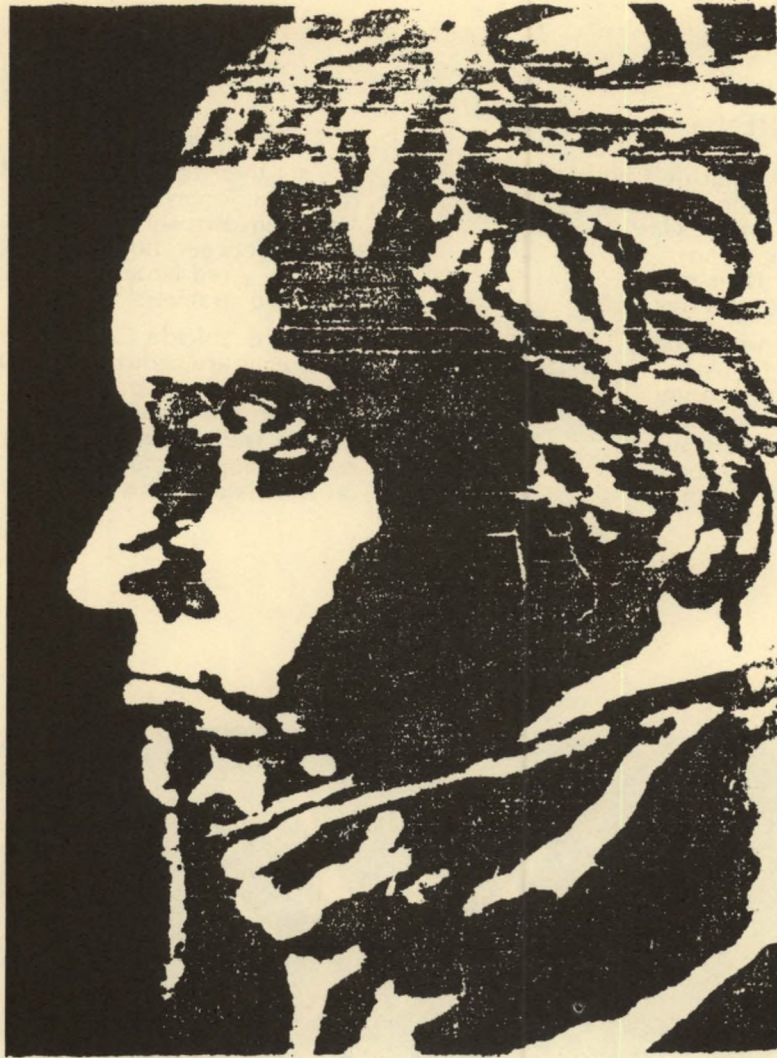
You are a hunter, your hard eyes show it;
They are green, flashing marbles, with cold lights inside.
Your need is the hunter's, your hard body shows it;
Like a cat, too alert, you twitch in your sleep.

I have seen the smaller victims of your sport.
You skin the squirrels naked, lay them glistening on their backs,
As you boast of their capture. Your laugh is the victor's;
Their gloved hands are spread below you, in defeat.

I have watched you on the nights you search for deer.
You stalk one through your sleep; he knows, and waits to die;
Your hands shake and grasp the sheets, but you cannot fire.
In the morning you will take him by surprise.

And now, I watch you grope for me in need.
Cold lights hypnotize me, and I wait;
Gutted, I am mirrored by your eyes,
Posed naked, glass-eyed, by the fireplace.

Margaret Green



BEETHOVEN

Mary Anne Cochrane

“My kingdom is the air. Just like the wind, tones whirl around and so often eddy in my soul
. . . . I shall, if possible, defy Fate, though there will be hours in my life when I shall be the most miserable of God’s creatures I will grapple with Fate. It shall not quite defeat me. Oh, it is lovely to live life a thousand times!”—Beethoven

SUICIDE CHILDREN

Through the window, Suicide Children
Watch the sky crack into day
And splatter its sun on the glass
In a bloody, burning manner,
Which tortures over their eyes
Like a magnifier does to bugs.

You pass their screen each day,
Smiling like a silent film star,
But they shatter your laughter
By blurring the glass with breath
Until your sharp teeth are seen
Like an out-of-focus photograph.

You set their tongues screaming
To fill the lonely silence,
And their own shrill voice
Echoes between hollow walls
The way a red lantern flickers
Over two strangers' whispers.

When the Suicide Children feel
Their eyes are reddened enough
Like a dye plenty prepared,
They run their ready hands
Against the glowing window pane
As if tracing a holocaust
on a stained glass window.

Eileen McGowan



Mike Gearer

Aloft

Her eyes that reach
Beyond the air
Suggest in fluid reverie
A timeless cusp
A shadow touched
In silent harmony.

In silent song
The sparrows' flight
Is nothing but what it seems
A moment's thought
Surpassed and caught;
Sister-lover of my dreams.

Poems by Robt. Baker

Orphan

The lady steals the darkest hour
Her jaded flesh retains the sweat
Of pyramid builders long ago.
Uncrested waves of solitude
Discourse her rhythm's rapturous plea
To burn the night and lose the ashy morn.
Unconscious of the winged adder's touch
She weaves her web of silver-gold
Never to escape the yet unborne
Unfathomed depths of one alone.

Spent passions tempt the cloudburst sheath
To curse the seed in afterglow she sits
And weeps
Soft seaweed tears to cleanse its mis-
Begotten soul.



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