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The Vehicle, Fall 1992

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Walt Howard

Ann Moutray

Ben Hausmann

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Recommended Citation

Essig, Peter F.; Howard, Walt; Moutray, Ann; Hausmann, Ben; Wolaver, JoAnna; Pilon, Jill S.; Krueger, Stacey; Gray, Jean K.; Moro, Jennifer; Hoke, Michelle R.; Shields, Jarrod T.; Liss, Randy; James, Nancy; Beauchamp, Sandra; Schnarre, Thomas D.; McGrath, Tom; Reuther, Robert M.; Irvin, Larry; Carmody, Stephen P.; and Hall, Jacqueline, "The Vehicle, Fall 1992" (1992). *The Vehicle*. 59.

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Archives

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1992

Fall

Fall 1992

the FALL



The Vehicle

PRODUCED BY SIGMA TAU DELTA
International English Honor Society

Eastern Illinois University
Fall 1992

The Vehicle **Fall 1992**

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Photography: Dan Koonce

Thanks to:

University Print Center

The Daily Eastern News

Student Publications

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Extra Thanks to:

Johnny Bough • Karin Burrus

Ann Gill • Tinley Hanks

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Brian Poulter • All Submitters

Deconstructivism

They broke it apart,
and tore out its heart.
They crushed creativity
before it could start.

They vivisected my verse,
and what could be worse-

They excised it of meaning,
by ideological cleaning.

They twisted my imagery,
reworded my rhyme.
Noted: "Using a thesaurus is not a crime!"

They mixed up my metaphors,
and slashed out my simile.

They trashed my "trite" title,
and let my poor manuscript
sit rotting and idle.

They said my "obscure allusion"
caused them confusion.
and if I thought I was good
it was all self delusion.

— **Peter F. Essig**

Homecoming Pep Rally

The tyranny of ten thousand voices
Locked into a scream.
I hear each of these ten thousand voices
Around me as in a dream.

Fiendish faces in the firelight.
Pyre flares, burning desire. Right.
Frenzied fools, eyes all glazed.
Mass mood, zombies. I'm amazed.

Subsuming self into the crowd
This mesmerized mob shrieks so loud.
An effigy appears, draped in a shroud.
Into Inferno it dances; they're all so proud.

An orgy of Symbolism, sure.
Cleansing Fire, heat so pure.
Catharsis constructed as a cure.

No Phoenix rises after the flames.
They were all just playing games.
A spectacle, performed with fire.
Engineered to engender desire.

— **Peter F. Essig**

McAfee Gymnasium

The old gymnasium on the north end of campus is alive. Old gymnasiums tend to have a lot of vitality, and this one is especially animated. When I say it's alive, I mean ALIVE. It is a living being. When you look in the octagonal windows and pass through the building's studded doors, you can instantly sense it.

The first thing you'll notice is the distinct locker room scent that has permanently seeped into the tiled floors and weathered brick walls. This smell is characteristic of all old gymnasiums and old school buildings for that matter. It is a combination of must, leather, and aged sweat. It is beautiful and historic. You can smell the sweat of the 1954 game-winning shot, and the fresh sweat of Friday's volleyball game. It's all there. Immortalized. Before you enter the gymnasium itself, you'll notice a ticket booth with black, wrought iron bars. Class. When a Friday night basketball game was an event. The only place in town to be.

Enter the gym and you'll be instantly overcome with the arena's magnitude and grandeur. Your feet will creak on the ancient wood floor with its finish worn off, and the noise will seem deafening if you are in solitude. It is speaking to you. It's telling you you're walking on sacred ground. Shadows fall and meander like gods on the worn wood floor in late afternoon, and you realize they come from above. Look high beyond the steel rafters under the ceiling, and you can gaze into the soft sunlight falling from two immense skylights.

Look around you, and notice that the sturdy bleachers are not collapsible like most, but are built up on high concrete balconies surrounding the floor. Built during a time when things were less portable, and made to last. The only thing beyond the boundary lines is a ten-foot wall, making the basketball court reminiscent of an ancient Roman gladiator's arena. Set into those walls on either side are the obligatory porcelian water fountains. Many are white; yet these are a pale lime green, a must for any pre-1960, Chuck Taylor, drive-in movie, Richie Cunningham, white crew-cut, hoosieresque gym. The water from the fountain is warm.

Athletics prevailing over the fine arts, there is a stage at the south end of the gymnasium. I know in my heart, however that this makeshift facility hasn't hampered performers' spirits.* It is like a church. It really doesn't matter if you worship in a beautiful cathedral or an old barn. If you believe, then God will hear you. A gym can just as easily be transformed into Carnegie Hall, if you are in tune with the performers, and they are in tune with you. When the house lights dim in a gymnasium, and the stage lights shine, anything is possible. The setting will metamorphose into an enchanted imaginary world, if your heart and soul will allow it.

Up high on the northwest wall of the gym is the traditional American flag. Like many other gyms across the land, the flag was hung proudly when the building was finished. It serves as symbolic inspiration, even today. There are small, blue, electric scoreboards on the north and south walls of the gym. These are next to common school-like clocks that are protected from stray basketballs by a metal fencing.

Everything about the building is very nostalgic, and tells so much about our history and ideals. This is why the old gymnasium on the north end of campus is alive, and is so important. It isn't like a heartless factory, where the only thing on people's minds is when the whistle will sound, so they can go home. A factory is dead. Emotionless. An old gymnasium, however, is vital. It is a place where dreams are both made and destroyed. It is a passionate building, and people want to feel that passion. They want to be in it, and around it. They want to make it happen. An old gymnasium is aged and dignified, like a museum or a library. It breathes culture, and the building on the north end of campus is no exception. It is a magnificent, divine place. A mecca that all should bow down and pay homage to. Hopefully, the old gym and all its aura will live forever.

*In the late 1960's The Chicago Symphony Orchestra actually played a concert on McAfee's stage, to a packed house.

— **Walt Howard**

Vehicle 8

Morton Park

In Morton Park at lunch
I hear a small girl's laughter
piercing the air, like a siren
intruding on the afternoon's slumber.

I hear children's voices
ringing out in almost perfect harmony
with the whistling breeze
beneath the oaks.

Small footprints,
like trails on warm sand
mark circles of fun
by a merry-go-round.

Young couples converse
entwined like fragile ropes
their lives unmarred
by the drudgery of the years.

Perched on a faded bench
an old woman clutches socks,
newspapers, and crackers
in a Hefty bag.

I finish lunch
and return to my car.
When I look back,
her face melts among the voices.

— **Ann Moutray**

Why The Willows Weep

Solemn willows weep
into the placid pond
as day's last light begins to
fade.

Soon it will be gone.

Water pure,
reflects the light,
mirrors the sky-
approaching night.
The painted sky
begins to die.

A curtain of black
consumes the pond.

The moon's soft glow
comes out to show:

six cigarette butts
an empty beer can
a wad of gum

floating defiantly
among the algae.

And so, eternally
solemn willows weep.

— **Peter F. Essig**

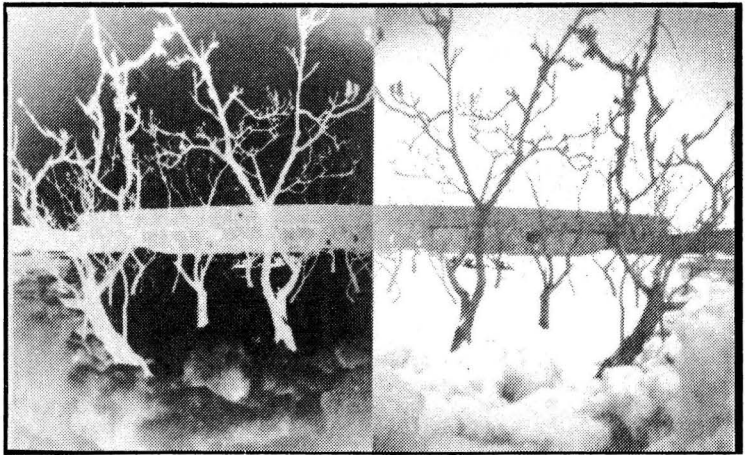


Photo by Stephen P. Carmody

A Stranger's Morning

the straight-back bench
as hard as stone
the once-white browning cup,
the homemade slogans
smalltown jokes
where help yourself still lives,
the daybreak men share all they know
while still-warm pies go round,
the cars stroll by with
nextdoor smiles
waving wrinkled hands,
the polished table wiped friendly clean
with gentle, timeless care,
the springloaded door slams
politely slow
as restless air sneaks in,
and we excuse ourselves and walk away,
while looking forward back,
at innocence and ignorance
walking hand in hand.

—Ben Hausmann

deMONSTERative pronouns

Words, words
this, that, those, these-
Monsters all
destroy the mind of me.

This eats that,
these devour those
I am forgetting words—
what will happen to my prose?

That ate determiners
what disaster!
Now nouns don't have
anything to come after!

This consumed interrogatives
what fun!
No more questions
to dwell upon.

These devoured adjectives
what to do
I cannot write
I haven't a clue.

Those ate verbs—
I he she it house
SNOW.

—**JoAnna Wolaver**

2.5%

We are not the innovators
but the TV watchers
liquor drinkers
party goers
wasteful eaters.

Comfortable in our inlaw's rented home,
we let our "people food" fed dogs
rule our weed filled lawns.
We are those who expect power
and success
to fall onto our hands
as easily as new fallen snow from the sky.

Behold! The men who want everything for nothing.
Do we work hard
or steal ideas from others
claiming them as our own?

Like children,
we lie to protect ourselves from becoming
laggards
of the 16th percentile.
As the elderly do,
we are eventually drawn into the category
of the inactive.

— Jill S. Pilon

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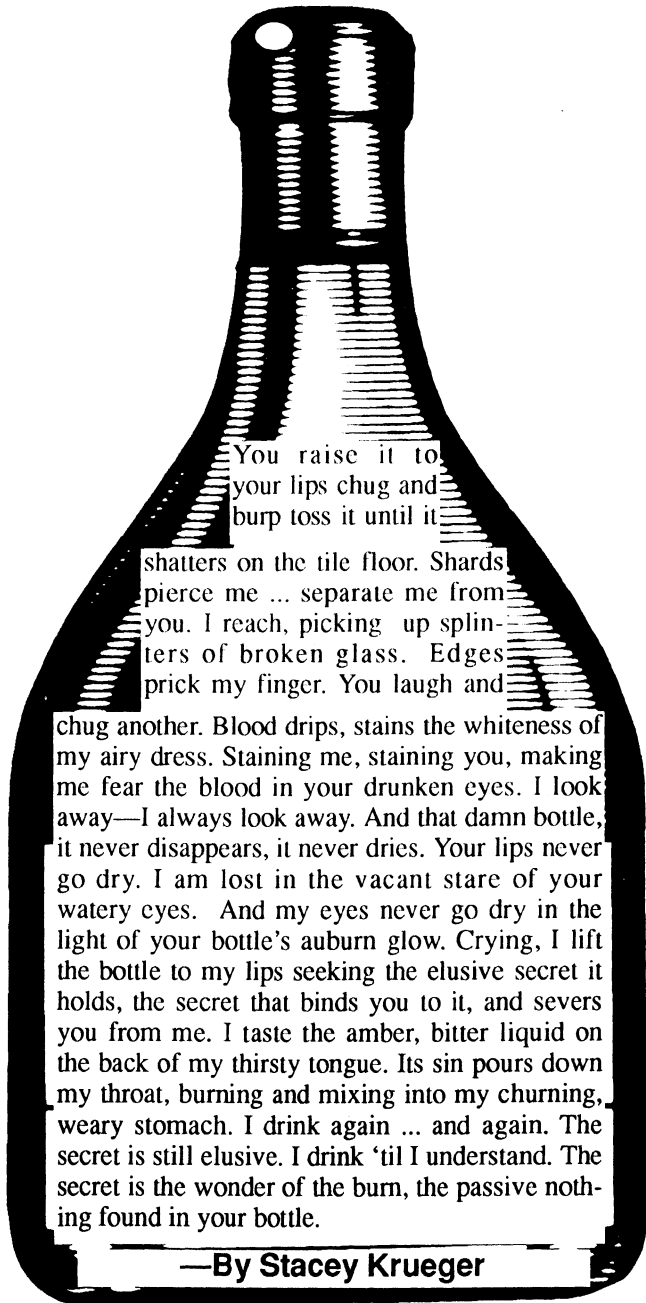
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— **Jill S. Pilon**

The Bottle



“Suppression”

Take a seed.

Scoop a hole.

Place inside and cover firmly w/soil.

Water liberally.

Growing instructions.

Soon:

A cornucopia of sustenance for winter.

Doing just what my mother taught.

Take a daily dose:

Anger/Fear

Hurt

Frustration

Disappointment

Irritation

Dig a hole; push it over the edge.

Cover firmly w/a smooth smiling mask
and words of sacrifice.

“Oh, no. That’s just fine.”

“Of course I dont mind.”

“I didn’t really want that anyway.”

Destructive Instructions.

Soon:

A cornucopia of rage and hate
leaking through.

Exploding into an everlasting winter.

No Survivors.

— Jean K. Gray

Progress

Behind the wall
of dusty construction,
brown mud
and the new blades of yellow-green sod,
lies my castle,
my fortress
my green, lush oasis,
built of rotted, forgotten planks
and orange rusty nails
enveloped, hidden from view
by the waist-length weeds and grasses,
left untouched by the builders.

Away from the noise
of dusty construction,
grinding bulldozers
and the scraping of plows against the stony earth,
we built our own little world,
our playground
out of the lost,
discarded remains
of the newly built homes.
We painted it
with violet wildflowers,
yellow bumblebees
and decorated it
with the joy of youth.

Our house,
built with our innocent hands
our oasis
—until the day
the bulldozers came.

— Stacey Krueger

Daily Lessons

Imperative to watch the hands—
to ignore the agitated clench,
unclench means certain surprise
at the palm cast across your cheek.

So study the physiology
of a swing— just how
the muscles tense and rip,
how the shoulder stretches in the joint,
and where starts the left,
where starts the right—
the actual strike
is unimportant — no memorization
required— the purple
is X marks the spot, so you know
where upon to aim your hits,
scraping the wearing canvas until
it burns or bleeds your knuckles—
then switch to old methods.
Yank the yarn stitched to the head,
pound the ears 'til you imagine
the buttons begin to tear, or
squeeze the limbs so the stuffing clumps
and the ragged arms hang limp.
Expressions are inherited.

No need to practice the thread
white lips, the rolling eyes,
the contorting juts
of a determined chin.

Then banish dolly back under the bed
where the cat peeks out, but does not
paw the tattered trespasser
seeking asylum. The lesson over—

Darkness stilled on the bedroom floor
beneath the broken screen, where comes
the quiet breeze that cools
the running streams across your brow
and back, and hides the essence
of onioned-stew for a second—
then return the heavy smells
of sweat and supper while panting
slows into a triumphant smirk
that begrudgingly acknowledges
Mother, the only successful
teacher.

— Jennifer Moro

Vehicle 17

Sunset Theater

Silently waiting
atop a hill,
under a roof of elms
I adjust my chair.
The sound of trees whispering
surrounds my seat.
The show begins. . .
A ribbon of clouds frames the stage.
The lights dim,
a hush falls over the audience
of one.
One by one the actors appear . . .
Crimson dances across the stage
flirtatiously,
echoed by Goldenrod and
Peach.
The three embrace,
giving off a glorious warmth.
Goldenrod tosses confetti to the
audience,
showering my hair with golden flecks.
The dance slows to a steady
move for center stage.
Almost suddenly, they are surrounded.
Sapphire, Violet, Emerald and Plum
clutching each other's hands
waltz across the sky,
changing partners all the while.
Minutes later the scene changes
drastically.
Midnight begins to overpower
the trio of warmth.
All three clinging to each other,
fighting to remain.
Slowly Midnight crushes
their willingness to fight,
They retire
frightened
exhausted.
Midnight rules everything
and it is cold.
The starry curtain closes.
The end.
I smile.

— Michelle R. Hoke

Eagle GT's

warm in my bed, I stare at the window
open, wind flirting with the drapes
I recall the night's lurid activities
vivid as blood on white satin
tearing down the highway
on brand-new coal-black tires
Goodyear Eagle GT's, only the best
speeding through dark country road
a raccoon frozen in headlights
I downshift, accelerate, snarling
my right-front Eagle crosses his back
flattening his middle, he explodes
and I speed on with an evil grin
arriving at my black brick keep
I put the rubber-footed beast to bed
the hissing Lotus resenting me
and then retire myself as well
here I lie, drifting towards slumber
I hear a scratching, a dragging
like claws on hard packed earth
I dismiss it, sleep tugging my eyelids
but then come to realize I'm not alone
I'm surrounded, entrapped, ensnared
reanimated roadkill on every side
the recent raccoon is there
a squirrel from last week
a half-skeletonized german shepherd
a dozen others, grinning mad
they close in with white, lifeless eyes
the stench, the teeth, the claws
that bite and scratch me into unconsciousness
and drag away their prize, my body
my corpse is found the next day
a hundred lacerations, like tatoos
stretched out on that highway
and tiremarks back and forth
all across my broken form
tread from a brand new set
fresh Eagle GT signature
on my grated back
and the gleaming, grinning Lotus
with claw marks on its door and seats
all across the wheel and shift knob
cares not the least
from the shade of the garage

— Jarrod T. Shields

Vehicle 21

New House

Driving past a red, brick church
I go down the street
 to my new, so-called “home.”
I spot the house by its olive-green tint—
Green? Our old house wasn’t green!-
 on the outside.
I walk through the back and notice
 there is no upper level.
What? No stairs? How can anyone
 have any privacy?
Rooms and halls look strange to me;
I am not familiar with my surroundings.
I walk into my bedroom, which
 overlooks the street.
The street? What? My old room overlooked
 the yard!
I walk into the living room, which is
 smaller than its predecessor.
Why is the T.V. on THAT side of the room?
It should be on the OTHER side!
I walk into the dining room—wait,
 there is no dining room.
What? No dining room? Where will we
 eat on holidays?
I walk outside and hear peace and quiet.
What? No horns blaring?
No people screaming? No gunshots ringing
 through the air?
What a relief. I will get used to this.

— Randy Liss

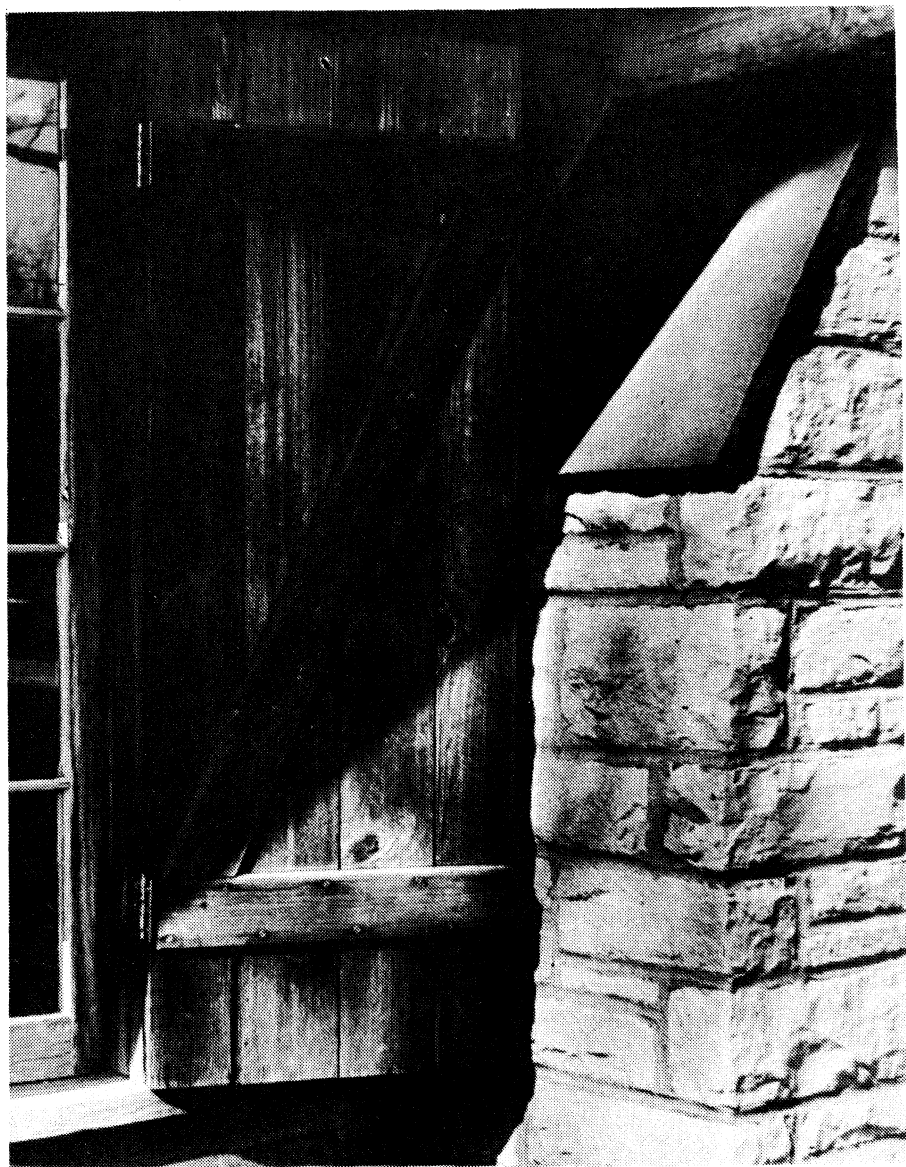
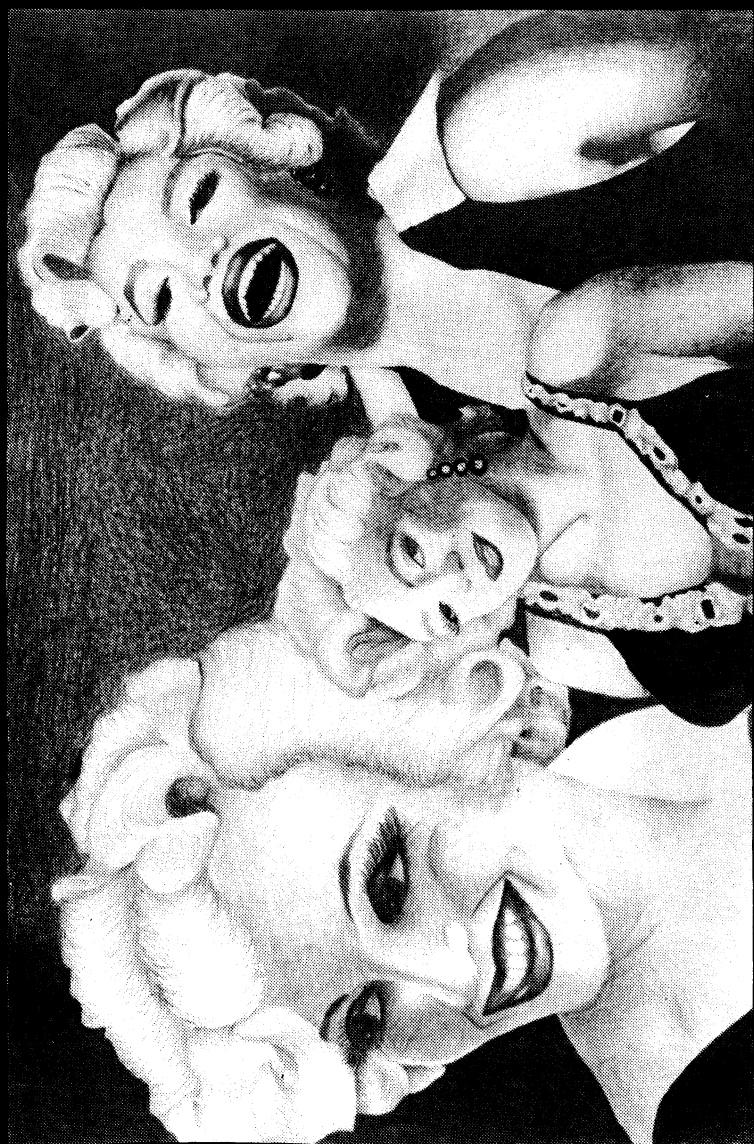


Photo by Stephen P. Carmody

Renting Classics on a Saturday Night

The tracking slips out of control
forming stretch marks of
white light
that hum across the screen,
disfiguring
James Dean's face with those
horizontal
jump ropes,
flickering at regular intervals
not unlike your breathing,
sounding hot
and rhythmically in my ear.
Cradled in my arms
you could be six years old,
only the month-old
beard on your chin
gives your age away,
so at peace
that drool dribbles from the corner
of your pink, loose-lipped
mouth and onto
my blouse.
If you awoke at this point,
I would have to pretend disgust,
turning you scarlet
at the unmanly act
of slobbering on a girl.
Instead, checking that your breath
continues low and regular,
I wrap my arms
tighter still,
a soft skinned boa constrictor
and watch the lines zig-zag
across the screen.

— Nancy James



Jacqueline Hall

Alone While He Sleeps

At last, he sleeps like a cat
basking in the comfort of
Spring's subtle sun.

He dreams, eyes darting
under delicate eyeskin,
unaware I am observing
in awe so overwhelming.

I watch his chest
as it rises and falls,
smooth, steady with
every purr let go.

I notice, tempted to touch,
careful not to disturb,
the finelined skin of his neck
pulsing ... pulsing ...

I long to enter
through the long lashed slits
of his closed green windows

And sit with him, softly,
beneath a sunset
melon-red and bright;
a slow motion firecracker night,

And maybe roam with him
above rooftops on wings
held aloft by nothing

Wondering, wondering,
what intangible touches
would be lost by the
inevitable waking.

— **Sandy Beauchamp**

Sand and Sea

I lie in the sun,
parched, dry.
My crystal grains,
fragmented,
separate as sand,
longing for you,
my wet essence.

Are you fact or fiction?
Hard to say.
White heat beats down
as I wait
for our union.

Your tide, slow and constant,
returns,
refreshing my bones of dust.
You come
gradually, taunting me
with your moistness.
Hours pass. My shores beg
your return
until you overtake me.

Thoughts entice me to rush
your steady currents,
Wishing the sun's flame
doused
in your soothing horizon.

We intermingle,
mesh.
Arid self refreshed.
Granules meld
into a moist whole,
giving you
a solid place to rest
as Luna dances, guiding
our liquid tango
through her blessed reign.
Slow, rhythmic waves
tantalize me with their promise
of permanence. Too soon
dissolved
by that mocking sun.
We lie still,
as lingering moonglow
lights
our bodies with the
translucent
glow of this sweet night.

— Thomas Schnarre

love

a single fluid diamond
rolled down his cheek.
no jewel shone as much
and nothing silent ever spoke so loud.

— Michelle R. Hoke

Backward Ass Junkie Funk

NeoNazi concrete surfers
painting pictures on sidewalks
with skeleton skateboards and kick-n-go's,
while slippery smiling moonlight
quivers on their barren heads . . .

Then salvation is sold by men
with drawling magic mandibles and dipty-do hair
promising a glory land for 19.95.

Catatonic crack consumers roam hungrily
searching for lost time, lost sanity, a fix,
while drunkards, hooty coots, sing folklore
through a recycled paper sack,

Imagine that.

— Sandy Beauchamp

These Things You Keep

From atop the bluff,
I am rich with pure froth
and the moist spray of saline.
To you, I am but clear azure. My
white caps ebb and flow like the
sinews of an athlete's body. Glistening
beneath a godly sky, with effervescent
life. White sails in sun smoothly
caress me. I gleam with vast and
hidden treasures to your naive,
so lustfully naive, but
flattering eye.

Search deeper,
only to find me a
carnivore, with
deadly and deceptive
currents, ominous undertow,
jagged rocks, hidden caves,
and ghostly skeletons.

Those who went before you
either fled in terror or were
sagaciously devoured by my ensnaring
and dangerously decisive jaws ...

The vastly black night fills my
great bergs with a lethal and polar illusion.

Like a vessel caught in a terrible storm, your
delicate eyes cannot see the foreboding
lighthouse. Aesthetic beauty and picturesque
landscape lead you to harbor blind naive
emotions rooted like seaweed on ancient
mariners' myths, or the ill-concieved

notion that I am the sustainer of
life. And from that bluff
where you stand, you in
your awesome solid
power, may turn
and hold your precious
vision, and leave me at the
hands and mercy of the wind and
the rains. But like some desparate
modern version of a humble Ishmael,
you, like a harpoon, might penetrate
my interior, and immerse yourself
so deep inside of me.

— Tom McGrath

Springhill Crest

1

A spade topped fence—
Paint flaked beneath my fingers.
The gate, aging, cried out,
Rusting behind us.

Churchyard, deathyard, shut us in
With names all around us.
Like frightened children, sneaking, we
Ached back into past, weathered stones.

Shrouded invaders of ivy covered
Tomb walls, among ancient columns,
We covorted. Caryatids danced to
Ghosts' sighing breath.

She harvested these awakened souls,
Phantoms flowered in golden lanes
Of tainted wheat, in which
She held her secret.

Unlike the reaper,
Knowing not his prowess,
His promise, not the
True grip of the scythe.

2

Night's descent, an owl asked
Blackened queries from chalkboard
Treetops. Her hair pulled back
In a bun, rimmed glasses dangling
From her nose. . .

A student of deception,
I was called to scrawl upon
Her dusty surface, carve my own
Plot, in this darkened
World of graves.

I had come to learn;
She was giving secrets
Passing letters.
All too soon, the grades
Were given.

3

Liquor increased our knowledge,
Demon carnal wonder
Quickly learned.

Vehicle 30

Her muted voice a feathered beast,
A sullen sparrow, vomiting poisoned
Words so easily imbibed.

4

Her Plathian wonder not easily quelled
A wolf in a night-dress, she stops
At a Shelley. The tombstone,
Inspiration like a mold of sin.
We grasp the fiery cauldron,

Pouring the bronze-like passion
Upon this mound of unpoetic earth.
We indulge ourselves, lycanthropes
Feasting upon the naked
Bowels of seduction.

5

Resting her back
Against the wind-worn headstone,
Browned pilfered lilacs
Adorning her lap,

She pulls a drag from her
Long-filter, and smiling,
Winks at an empty partner.
The smoke still burns in my eyes. . .

6

Her number, scrawled on parchment
Yellows on a dusty shelf.

Winter falls, I find myself dialing,
The forgotten digits whine in my ear.
And stopping to slowly replace the coiled
Receiver, the numbers fade into exhaled
breath.

7

Can flames rekindle chalky ashes;
Can we commune with the dead?

— Robert M. Reuther

The Pass Over

I found a part of me that
before did not exist,
yet no longer can this
just live

Oh! how I wish your
chest would heave with
life's breath, still now,
unhumanly hard on my cheek,
and fingers

that once grappled together
and clutched and drank
from the same bottle,
bonding ourselves within
its fog

of life; and death:
not fading but driven
away by that new, mad
driver, incapacitated,
damned forever in just
my eyes

I see a youth as we once
were, facing the future
a and now forever scarred
by his thoughtless path, the
shattering choices made without
a question:

how to live, love, and how to
grieve—these feel so close
now, indistinguishable, domnating,
inseparable, as eternally in
an embrace

mourners tried to gently pry
my sobbing form off
the casketed corpse, flowers
for the living pulled, and my
tears remain

on your face, appearing quickened
by them (please be in spite of)
but only until smudged away with
careful pats from a procession
member, helping me pass by,
still walking.

— Larry Irvin

The Stolen Child

*"Come away, O human child!
To the water and the wild
with a faery, hand in hand,
for the world is more full of weeping,
than you can understand."*

-William Butler Yeats.

It was the time of year when a weathered windbreaker would suffice with perhaps a layering aid of a hooded sweatshirt. When rakes and red-tip matches became more than simple garage decorations. The great and arid sun gave paint to new and seasonal shades of gold and orange leaves, which were soon to fall from their trees' beleaguered branches.

The faithful southsiders like Danny and his family would sit before the television and cheer on their religious heroes: The Notre Dame football team. On this Saturday, like all the autumn Saturdays, an entire Religion would sit in front of their twelve-inch screens and cheer their religious heroes on to another victory and ultimately, a National Championship.

After the game, Danny and his father shared the common bond of brown leather with whitened laces and idle chatter of Rockne, Parseghian, and other haunting shadows of historical Saturdays passed. To the boy, these were not real people, but instead they were legends of mighty courageous men who were solid in their beliefs and charmed a nation by being as tender as kittens before the tell-tale lens of the television camera. To the father, they were all of these things which were only the embodiment of something greater; the Church. In all actuality, they were Apologists, the modern-day Aquinases dressed in helmets of gold. In a time when the very chalice filled with the sacred blood of Jesus Himself seemed under attack, somehow these fighting Irish-Catholic gentlemen seemed to perform the acts of undaunted crusaders.

Following in their footsteps, the boy would run the angles and patterns he had seen his heroes run earlier in the day and they would lead him to Hail Mary receptions and, perhaps someday, the Touchdown Jesus. Somehow, these Kodak-autumn Saturdays always lead the boy and his father on a long walk to St. Barnabas for four-o'clock confessions. Just as the game had ended but the pride remained in little depictions of a leprechaun with the backs of his fists raised in the position of an ungainly boxer, so was the darkness of the painstaking week over, yet the sins remained on unseen souls marred with black splotches. These souls however, had the opportunity of a lifetime every Saturday afternoon to gleam with white in preparation for Sunday mass and its offering of God's greatest gift: the Holy Eucharist.

The streets were desolate with the onslaught of night, and the sharing of touchdown bombs began to subside, yielding time for the father and son to speak as only a father and son can speak to each other. The topics the father would lecture on certainly varied but were always very serious ones. The boy would listen very intently as he took every word into his idealistic heart in the hopes that someday he could mold himself into a role that was righteous, pure, and heroic by all of his father's standards.

The boy respected his father. After all, though not by any worldly acclaim, his father was greatness. He was greatness in that he was hard-working, honest, and religious. The boy most admired the insurmountable odds which his father had overcome to merely survive, let alone to become a somewhat successful man. The man had lost both his parents by the age of nine, and lived in orphanages until his late teens, at which time he was adopted by his barren aunt and uncle. The man was sent to a Jesuit university where he went so far as to receive his Master of Arts in English Literature. The man had also been quite a baseball player but not quite good enough to accomplish his dream of playing professionally.

What the boy really admired about his father was his humility. Despite the fact that he had a good job and family, he would not credit these things to himself, rather he would say that they were gifts from his Heavenly Father. The boy knew his father's faith was solid, genuine, devoted, and deep.

The father had told the boy that his faith alone had kept him alive in the most desperate of times as he grew up. Yet the father never seemed to be asking for pity, nor did he pity himself, he only wished to instill in his son an appreciation for the greatest gift he had been given in his life. These were things the father wasn't able to share with his daughters or even his wife. He was only able to share them with the boy who he hoped someday would walk in his footsteps in some ways; but he also hoped his son would not face the same amount of suffering that he had.

Beneath the respect, Danny feared his father. He was a man with tremendous power over his son. A man whose love of God was much surpassed by his fear of hell. A man who could deliver a sermon with greater power than Jonathan Edwards, and he could damn the finest of people to hell in Danny's mind by simply making Danny aware of their sin or fatal character flaw.

Danny wondered what today's lecture would be about. Would it turn political? Or would his father leave it up to Danny to change the course of the decaying twentieth century. So often Danny left these lecture sessions with a sense of impending doom that made Danny not only fear for his own soul, but often for the whole of humanity. His father's words would often unknowingly condemn the actions of the boy's friends. When the father would speak of such eternally deadly sins as gluttony or lust, Danny often wondered whether his friends would ever be in the

same place in the afterlife that Danny hoped to be. There was James O'Malley, a perpetrator of the sin of gluttony, who almost weekly would steal his father's Irish moonshine and, like the ancient Romans, would drink voraciously. Like the Romans' worship of the temple of the Vomitorium, he would also become an idolater as James would spend the evening worshipping his own porcelain god.

Then again, there was Tommy who seemed to hunt young women as wolves hunt deer in the Northwoods. Though only a seventh grader, Tommy could regale his friends with tales of hardening nipples and wet panties that could make even the most unabashed of locker-room story tellers blush beet red. Danny often even questioned whether Heaven would be much fun without his friends, but if Heaven were all that his father and Thomas Aquinas had cracked it up to be, then he needn't worry a bit.

Yet suddenly, his father's lectures seemed to take on an even more serious tone than usual. Danny feared that soon his father would be speaking to him on a topic that is as hard for fathers to talk about as it is for sons to listen to. Yet he struggled with all his might to listen with a mature and piercing ear. His father's words were frightening.

"You know, Danny, you are coming to that age where girls are no longer something you will want to avoid." He paused as if for air. "I want you to know that it's natural for you to have those feelings." Danny listened intently to his father's words as if they were the gospel. His father continued, "but it is important to remember that the Church teaches that sexual activity is wrong outside of marriage. And it is important that you do not act on those feelings until you are married." His father seemed to ponder his next words. "I guess what I'm saying is that it is okay for a boy your age to like girls, and when you get older, it will even be okay for you to accompany girls on dates and perhaps even kiss them goodnight, but to go any further than that is to place yourself in the position of making a grave mistake as well as the possibility of committing a mortal sin. You may also want to remember a saying that the priests used to tell us when we were growing up. They used to tell us that 'a girl who will let you down her pants just isn't worth having around'."

The words sank into Danny's head like none of his father's lectures ever had before. He was no longer speaking from a pulpit to society as a whole, but instead, he was speaking to Danny and Danny alone. As Danny pondered these messages, he was silent as was his father for awhile. Danny wondered whether or not his father meant what he said about a girl who will let you down her pants. He wondered if that meant girls who did that were evil. He wondered what people did with their passions until they got married, for he knew that masturbation was a sin as well. Moreover, he wondered if he would ever be able to find such a moral girl. Soon his father spoke again with words that would make a

lasting impression on Danny. Even more so than the prior ones he had just listened to.

"You know, when your mother and I got married, I was a virgin." He stopped in front of the doorway of the church. "It was really beautiful and special. The problem with today is that everyone is so intent on their own personal gratification that they not only commit sins against God, but they also forget that the beauty of making love is that it can create new life." He began to walk again through the doorway of the church, passing the crucifix with a serious look on his face.

Danny was somewhat awe struck. It had never occurred to him that his father was a person. It had also never dawned upon him that his father actually had to practice what it was that he spent his Saturday afternoons preaching about. Suddenly, it came to Danny, a resolution. He resolved that he would walk in his father's footsteps. Not only because it was right, but because it was what his father wanted. No longer would he succumb to his new and occasional fantasies about being a wolf like Tommy, but instead he would be a saintly man like his father. He would not let himself fall victim to the sins of the flesh, it meant too much to his father, and now that he had resolved to be like his father, it meant too much to Danny.

The joy of the weekend disappeared for Danny as the South side began to go back to work and face the hard week with the hope that next weekend would bring another Notre Dame victory. Danny dressed in the dreadful uniform the parochial schools demanded. But school would not be so bad. It was a chance to see his friends and hear the stories of their weekends. Danny had thought about his father's sermon, and about his resolution. It was up to Danny to do what was right now. His father could speak the words, but only Danny could make the choices. Still he felt that with God's help, he could certainly make the right ones, no matter what it took.

Going to school on Monday meant that, after a long weekend without a gaze at the beautiful new French girl in his class, Danny could once again become lost in her champagne brown eyes. Despite the fact that Danny was rarely able to talk to Dominique without becoming nervous, he was almost certain she too felt this incredible feeling for him. He would often fantasize that he were one of the Holy Knights, and she was the fair maiden, and he would dedicate his heroic actions in both the classroom and on the playground for her honor. And though he never told Dominique of his small crusades for her, he was certain she knew of his battles for her pure and beautiful soul.

The first hour was P.E. The favorite of most of the class. The boys talked in the locker room. The most interesting stories would come from the mouth of Tommy Shannahanan.

"Hey, Tommy, I heard you went over to the place where that

Dominique girl was babysitting at over on Claremont.”

Tommy looked on with a confident smile. A man among boys. As Danny heard this, he could feel his stomach drop. It was worse than the feeling he had when he got his first detention.

“So come on Tommy, tell us what happened.”

“Maybe I don’t kiss and tell.” A roar of laughter came from the locker room at this ironic remark.

At the urging of other boys, Tommy began to speak. “Well, let’s just say that I was rounding third and heading for home when the third base coach told me to hold up.”

“Come on Tommy, we want details. How big were they? They don’t look all that big.”

“Actually, they’re not all that big, but they were perky.” Tommy reminisced and began to tell his every move to the boys. Danny got up and left just as Tommy was unbuttoning her jeans. For a moment, Danny wondered if it really happened, but he had known Tommy long enough to know that he was telling the truth.

Danny sat there dumfounded. The very foundations of the building seemed to shake. But no, it couldn’t be the building, it was solid in its structure. It was Danny who lacked solidity. He knew he should listen to his father’s advice from Saturday and realize that a girl like Dominique was not worth having around. Still for some reason he couldn’t seem to do that. Perhaps it was his own failure for letting his emotions get in the way of his conscience. He remembered the words of Father Breen about how sin could take the form of emotion when it was able to cloud the intellect.

As he walked out of the locker room he saw Dominique seated next to the hanging crucifix next to the bleachers. For a moment, he felt like giving her a hug and telling her he forgave her. Then, he heard his father’s wise words and changed his mind. What hypocrisy, he thought. She could no longer be his fair maiden. Her eyes could no longer sparkle like champagne. She seemed sad as she looked at him, she seemed to almost sense what happened in the locker room. Maybe it was the funny looks she got, or the giggling of the boys behind her. Danny felt empathy for her for a brief moment, but it was her own fault he thought. She was just like the rest of them. He once had plans for her. He thought perhaps she was moral and could meet the standards he and his father had set for him on the weekend. She was no longer a spotless lamb, but another black sheep among the herd of them. He felt at that moment that he could never fall victim to the things his father had talked about. He knew for the first time what it meant to feel truly alone. So very much alone.

Before the Recycling Kick

The newsprint might seem to fall rather low on the stationary scale. It is a very underrated paper, however. Not only is it a daily mass provider of current events to thousands, it even serves as a torch to light a fireplace on a cold winter night. Or as a blanket to a homeless person who can't enjoy the warmth of that fireplace. At least the newsprint can be comforted to know it will not suffer the torturous death of a piece of toilet tissue. The only glimmer of worth the toilet tissue can hope for is to be hurled high into a tree on a balmy summer night. The sheets of notebook paper and lightweight typing paper are usually blue collar. Average. Some, however, will go on to experience bigger and better things like love and hate. Life and death. Marriage and Divorce. Some will even go on to the universities. Pre-med, law school, the arts. When all is said and done though, the documents have it best. Government, F.B.I., C.I.A. If they can elude the shredder, they're looking at the eternal fountain of youth. Immortality.

— Walt Howard

Authors' Page

"Thank you Michael for sleeping so soundly; Guernsey for telling me I had ears, and all the southern evangelicals and skateboarders who made "Junky Funk" a reality." —**Sandy Beauchamp**

Stephen P. Carmody is currently an M.A. in ENG at E.I.U. He works as a G.A. in the W.C. For more info. send a SASE, c/o SPEC, ENG DEPT, E.I.U., ASAP, XYZ, PDQ.

Peter F. Essig, an English major, is glad for three things: caffeine, Jimmy John's Number Four's (on French bread, no tomato), and the English language. Without these three elements, none of this would have been possible.

Jean K. Gray thanks Nan for making me think, Audre Lorde for telling me I had to speak, and Ruth for letting me speak. "Would you trade your words/ for freedom? That's a barter/ for a blind man." Indigo Girls, "Three Hits," Rites of Passage.

Jacqueline "Tina" Hall is a Freshman Music major with a concentration in vocal performance, aspiring to be a singer. "Marilyn is my role model. I just do art, I love it."

Michelle R. Hoke is an English major lost in the shuffle, who is glad to be finally noticed. This opportunity gave her hope and the initiative to continue writing sappy poetry just to get attention.

Ben Hausmann is a senior Environmental Biology major with an English minor whose plan for the future is to leave the Midwest. Period.

Walt Howard is a Junior English major with a creative writing minor. He's interested in music and plays saxophone in Wind & Jazz Ensemble.

Larry Irvin is anxiously awaiting student teaching, graduate school, 20th Century lit. and creative writing courses, traveling, a career in academia, getting a Neapolitan Mastiff, and parenthood. I love the "what ifs" in life.

“Once and for all, I am finally admitting that I am, in fact, the one who drools. Many apologies to the accused party.” —**Nancy James**

Stacey Krueger is a senior English & Psychology major. She plans to go to graduate school in the field of school psychology with an emphasis in adolescent development. “Progress” and “The Bottle” are the first poems she has had published.

“My name is **Randy Liss**. I’m from Cicero, IL. (home of Al Capone.) I’m a sophomore Journalism major and I don’t write poetry for a living. Remember — ‘-ism’s aren’t good. A person shouldn’t believe in an -ism; he should believe in himself’— F. Bueller.”

“Somebody recently told me, ‘You go through life confronting one obstacle after another, trying to overcome them, without any attempt at enjoying the world.’ I wanted to explain to him that every time I write, I am attempting to enjoy life. But, I couldn’t seem to phrase my thoughts into words.”

—**Laurie Ann Malis**

“I am hoping to be accepted into graduate school here and then to study for my Ph.D. over in Ireland. If these plans don’t work out, I may either join the circus or go to California and learn the delicate art of being a beach bum.” —**Tom McGrath** • Tom dedicates “The Stolen Child” to his father and “These Things You Keep” to two special friends whose naive support has brought him comfort over these past several years.

“I’m another English major. I’m a Junior, so I’ve been living on the 3rd floor of Coleman for a while now. I have no real career perspectives. After The Vehicle, I think I’m gonna hold out for National Geographic. Writing’s O.K., but I like reading the stuff better.”

—**Jennifer Moro**

Ann Moutray is a graduate student who hopes to earn her degree by pedaling through the "scenic route," one course per semester. She is employed full-time at Eastern and resides in Arcola with her husband and their two children. "Morton Park," her first poem published in *The Vehicle*, was written during her lunch hour while eating a tuna sandwich.

"I love to write (as much as I love talking) and have found that I have done my best work since being at Eastern. I'm presently a senior going for a B.A. in Speech Communications and a minor in Creative Writing. With any luck, my future career will involve a lot of creative writing." —**Jill Pilon**

"Being an artist at heart, I try to paint my poems with words. I believe in creating an image that will enlighten the reader. Therefore, to infuse my poetry with feeling I must let the reader see while blinding him/her with images and emotion." —**Robert M. Reuther**
• Robert is a senior Graphic Design major.

"After thirty-four years I finally have an inkling of what I want to be when I grow up. I have always been drawn to the creative side of life and have decided to pursue it actively in the future. My writing usually gravitates toward subjects that are neurotic in nature. I count among my inspirations Fitzgerald, Plath, Lawrence and Carrie Fisher." —**Thomas Schnarre**

Jarrold T. Shields is rumored to be a sophomore at E.I.U. He is an alleged English major with a minor in Creative Writing. This is probably his first published work, or so he says.

Gail Walker has dedicated her life thus far to solving the ails of society, regrouping The Beatles, and finding the perfect cup of coffee. After graduating in May, she hopes to sleep for a year and then pursue a career as a bartender in Adelaide, Australia.

JoAnna Wolaver is a junior English major from Glen Ellyn, IL, who hopes to graduate in May of 1994. She wrote "deMONSTER-ative pronouns" while studying for a Structures of English test this semester.

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