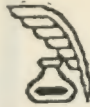


Our Time



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Hello moonbeam;
 where have you been?
Were you dancing with secrets
 in the magic thread you spin?

Where do you hide
 when the sun is awake?
Do you play in the clouds
 or in the silver you make?

Do you like to skip
 high among the trees
And float gently down
 on fallen autumn leaves?

What do you see
 as you travel to the sky
Leaving the worries behind
 and passing the stars on by?

I wish I could go
 and with you be free,
Breaking my shell
 and finally be me.

Wait, my moonbeam
 why must you go?
Please hurry back
 for I miss you so.

Carolyn A. Campbell

Grow Old With Me

Grow old with me-
Come along for the ride
Because deep down we know
We belong side by side

Come away with me now
Though I can't promise you much
Only friendship and love,
Laughter and such

Through eight years of friendship
We've stood the test of time
I'd be rich if I had
For every smile, a dime

Together we can go anywhere
And do everything-
Watch sunrises and sunsets
And have the world on a string

We'll dare to have dreams
And then make them come true
As we do things that others
Only wish they could do

Though perfect it won't be
We won't fool ourselves that way
We'll be happy together
And grow closer each day

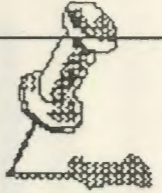
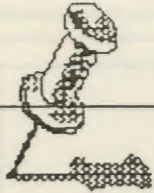
We can travel the world-
We'll go near and far
And spend our nights walking
Under clear skies and stars

We'll lose track of time
As the years just fly by
But in the end there'll be two
And that's you and I

Our vision may worsen and
Our hair may grow grey
But we'll still be together
Like we are today

So grow old with me, won't you
And stay by my side
I promise you it will be
Well worth the ride.

Julie A. Byrne



Why am I special?
What makes me so damn special?
Is it because I'm left handed?
Is it because I'm a
Geography major?
Switching from the great field of
geology to the great study of
Geography.

Why am I so damn special?
Is it because I'm a man?
Unlike women who don't have the
same respect, forced into a
second class because of their
gender.

Is it because I'm white?
Unlike the poor orphaned black
child, living on the drug
infested streets of Harlem.
What makes me so damn special?
Is it because I'm an American?
Unlike the Pole standing in line
for hours on end to try to buy a
loaf of bread that they might
not be able to afford.

Unlike the Indian being forced
onto a reservation after their
land and life were taken away.
Unlike the Chinese student,
who fights with his life at stake
for a chance at freedom.

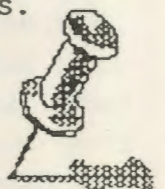
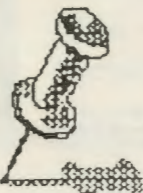
What makes me so damn special?

Michael Anthony Kazmierczak

Lumberyards and Mills

I scuffled down a dusty road with
mud-caked boots and sawdust powdered
blue slacks waiting to fade from view
to tie my hair in a gypsy band, dark
secret from my dad cussing hippie under
and over his breath,
the tin roofed houses with plank porches
lined the road; their grey blue tar
shingles and flannel blue jean laden
clothing lines greeted me in the early
morning hours
scruffy mutt dogs barked loud warnings
answered by routine curses, and passing
a cigarette with tattooed men we
shuffled toward our machines.
old weathered faces spit chew while
chinking cardboard into dust covered clocks
women passes, amid hoots, their wide white
bras neath green dye stained shirts revealed
seductive cold nipples that laughed
at an adolescent arousal then tossed
lip ringed butts onto the road and departed.
cigarette and quick-coffee hellos.

J. L. Morgan



Melt

Sculpt me from ice and
hold me as close to
your heart as you can.

I melt pools of clear
warmth, water for the
thirsty, lifeblood for

the sick and dying.
Paint me the colors of
the world I describe,

flat hues of brown and
grey. Stretch tighter
the canvas that is my

life, the stage on which
the actors perform my
past for the members of

my future. The sound
I make is the music I
hear, the sound of my

melting self held close
to your beating heart,
your human warmth. When

at last I am gone, I
ask only that you bathe
in what once was me.

John Sweet

Rainbow

Speaking
not with words,
but with color.

Showing love
with red,
the color of a rose
just in bloom.

Sadness shared
with blue,
the color of the tear
that falls from my eye.

Laughing together
with orange,
the color of the joke
that noone else understands.

Quiet times
are green,
the color of summer days
and open fields.

Expressing anger
with purple,
vibrant and bold,
a fleeting storm.

Happiness is found
in yellow,
the color of friends
who can share
a rainbow.

Christine Quader

The Death of the Unicorn by Carolyn A. Campbell

She stared straight out in front of her, but she was not focusing; her vacant eyes, once twinkling with happiness, were now turned inward, lost in a world trapped inside. She was crouched in a little ball, rocking back and forth, crooning to herself, all the deadened of all feeling. The pain began to swell deep in my throat, began to rip at my heart, tugging at it with overwhelming force, and I turned away. Why God, I thought as I looked out over the lake as if to find the answer amongst the tiny wind-blown ripples that glided along the glassy surface, why her?

It seemed only moments ago that the old dusty bus pulled into camp. I was so excited to start off the summer, leaving the pressure of school and family behind as I took off for the mountains. I remember so vividly how I flew into the tent, throwing down my heavy luggage with a hollow thud that rattled the canvas sides, and

flopped onto a cot. I felt so exhilarated by being in the woods that I did not even notice the girl sitting in the corner, watching me. At first, I seriously thought that she was an angel as she stood up and walked over to me. A small ray of sunlight poured through a weathered tear in the side of the tent and spilled out over her face, reflecting off her snowy hair, creating a halo around her head. For the longest time, we said not a word but continued to stare at each other, not knowing what to do yet not wanting to do anything. And then, suddenly, she smiled at me.

Ever since I was little, I never became close to anyone. I was always considered a "dreamy child" and so, to escape from the hurt and disapproval, I retreated even deeper into my dreamy bubble where unicorns roamed freely amidst the daisies and gnomes worked diligently to protect the forest treasures; I refused to give up my only happiness to live

in the dead, structured world built by adults, for if I did, I'd give up living.

Even though the tall girl that stood before me did not speak, I knew she wanted to be my friend. I felt very strange inside; part of me wanted to open the door and let her come inside so that I could share my thoughts and ideas but a part of me held back, scampering to the back of my bubble world to hide from the risk. Suddenly, the girl grabbed my hand and dragged me out of the tent before I had a chance to pull away. Together we ran through the woods, turning over moss covered rocks in search of forest sprites, passing by a brook and listening to its song, and then climbing to the top of a grassy hill where we both lay down, trying to catch our breath as we painted pictures in the sky with white tufts of cotton. And we laughed. I laughed so hard that salty streams ran down my cheeks. It felt good to laugh -- I mean really laugh. It felt as

though each chuckle that bellowed out from deep inside erased all the loneliness and aching that had been bottled up for years. For the first time, I was truly happy. Summer days turned to magic as I shared my bubble. People thought that we were crazy as they saw us skipping through the daisies, hoping to catch a glimpse of the unicorns, but we simply threw our heads back and laughed; those people were dead, what did they know.

When the children arrived to camp, time ran short. I did not see my new friend as much and when we did, we did not laugh. I had noticed a change in her; she no longer smiled and her eyes looked sad. She grew frustrated as she had a hard time communicating to the children with her thick foreign accent and she cried a lot. I knew she was hurting, so why couldn't I have helped her? It seemed like every time she wanted to talk to me, I was busy with the kids. What could have been so important that I could not find time to talk to a friend?

One night, my friends came stumbling into the tent, hysterical. I looked at her in shock, noticing her tear stained face smudged with dirt and her trembling, pale body. She was gasping for breath as she sputtered out words between sobs. She leaned against me, clinging to me tightly as she cried out her anguish. It was then that I left my friendship role and assumed my counselor position. You are sick, I told her, and I must take you to the infirmary. All at once, she stopped crying and her face hardened as she nodded in agreement, staring down at the black earth beneath our feet. I shivered for it felt as though a door slammed hard against my face but I brushed the feeling aside as I performed my job and left her with the nurse. There she stayed for two days. No one knew what was wrong with her but no one seemed to really care. Then one day, the someone came to me and told me that my friend was going home the next day. She put her arm around me and said words like "very sick", "needs

help", and "crazy" but I could no longer hear her for my thoughts were swimming. My friend needed my help!

I broke free and ran madly through the woods, not stopping to say hello to the babbling brook or to catch a glimpse of a unicorn. I kept running, my feet pounding hard against the hollow ground, streaks of color passing me in a blur. My hair flew with the wind, flapping against my back, as I raced by the trees, wildly swatting branches and anything else that blocked my way. I knew not where I was going; I only knew that I had to keep going, to keep running. Before I realized it, I was standing on the beach. There I saw my friend sitting on the shore, hugging her knees, her head buried in her arms. I cried out to her as I ran toward the shore. I missed you, I said as I threw my arms around her, hugging her so hard . . . but I was too late; she was no longer there. Instead, I was hugging someone else. Someone who no longer danced on

cont.

grassy hill tops where the daisies grow and the unicorns roam freely. I looked deep into my friend's eyes and shouted, Where are you? but she did not answer, her eyes blankly staring back at me. I tried to tell you, they seemed to say, but you would not listen; I wanted to show you, but you were blind.

Slowly, I let go the embrace and crouched down, moaning as if I had suddenly been struck by a long sword. My friend had been falling, falling down a dark tunnel, but I had not been there to catch her for I had walked away. I wanted so much then to reach inside and pull her back out so that I could say the things I did not say, do the things I did not do, but it was too dark; I was groping around, feeling nothing for she was no longer within my reach. I'm sorry, I whispered. Her head turned to me and her eyes glared coldly through me, her icy

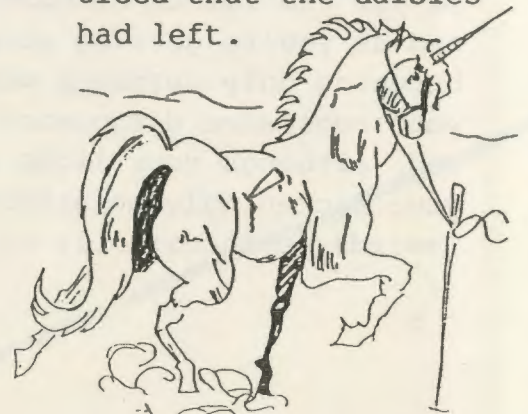
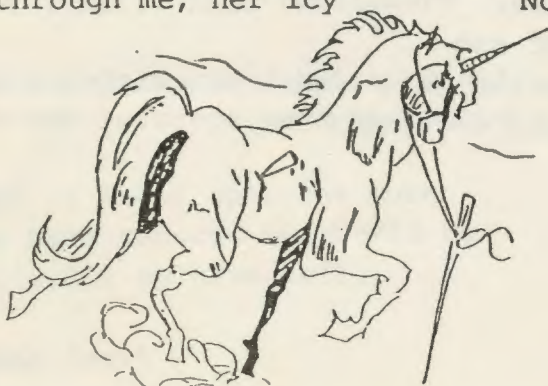
stare penetrating my heart. I hate you, she said, for you are one of the dead now, living in a grey, structured world. Don't share your bubble with me, for it is empty. My face pulled tight, cringing with pain and shame. Leave me and the unicorns alone, she screamed as she thrashed her weary body against me, kicking with all her strength. Blow after blow she pounded out her rage against me, eyes flaming with hatred, but I did not stop her even after I felt the warm trickle of blood stream down my face for I could feel nothing; my bubble broke.

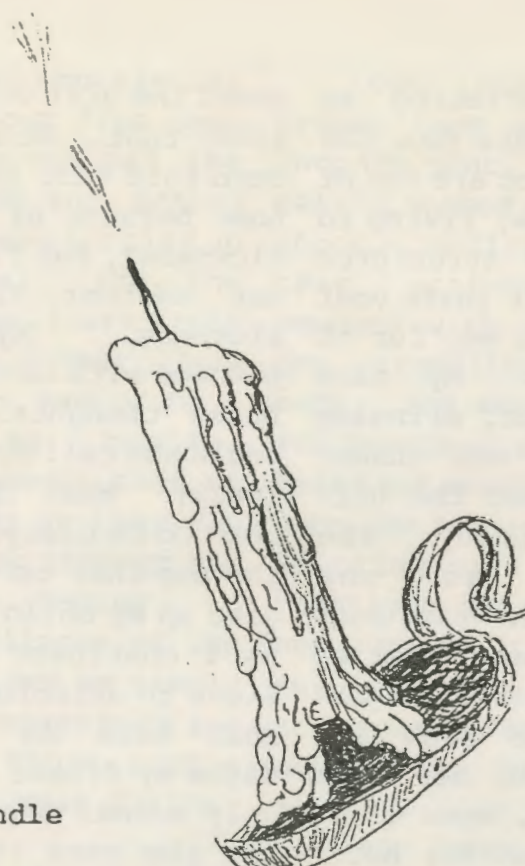
Suddenly, a car pulled up and two people came running toward us. They grabbed a hold of my friend and firmly dragged her to the car. I sat, frozen to the sand, listening to her cries, and then watched the car drive off, disappearing in a cloud of dust.

No one talked

about the girl very much after that. We all had been told that she went home because of "homesickness", but I knew it was another kind of sickness. My head pounded with dark, confused thoughts. How could she call my friend crazy? What does it mean to be crazy? I was the one that refused to give up my childishness as I continued to believe in unicorns, does that make me crazy? Maybe my friend was the only normal one and we are the ones that are crazy as we don't understand her laughter that rings out in a crying world. Does playing in the woods, searching for magic, make one crazy?

One day, someone nudged me jokingly and asked why I was not searching for unicorns anymore. I looked away and replied, "There are no such things as unicorns." My sad, grey eyes looked up at the grassy hills and noticed that the daisies had left.





The Candle

your flickering is,
 at first, bright and steady
 next, waving back and forth,
 as if incapable of surviving
 my eyes follow you and as they take you in,
 I am consumed by the quiet excellence
 with which you reflect my living
 the person who walks by you
 realizes not, the force his simple bodily motion exerts on your existence
 you flicker again
 will you succumb?
 no--you must suffer through this time of weakness
 these external forces only taunt you
 --only give you a glimpse of your ultimate, relieving end
 but now
 no breeze blows
 so you are forced to burn steadfastly
 and as you're getting shorter and smaller
 becoming only formless wax and a bit of ash
 your substance disappears gradually during this hopeless existence
 and, although your light and your beauty enrapture me,
 your sickeningly pointless fate
 reminds me incessantly of my own.

C.A.

Death By Candlelight

A soft flicker,
 Pastel shades,
 It wasn't dramatic,
 The light slowly fades.

Some do it with guns,
 Some claim a cause,
 What of the silence?
 What of the loss?

It wasn't the flame,
 It wasn't the cry,
 It was the realization
 As our civilization died.

And the last survivor
 At the end of our fight,
 Looked for a sunrise,
 And found death by candlelight.

Jennifer R. Brotzman

I sit staring
Unable to think
The rain comes in through
the open window
The wind blows it on to my face
But still I sit
Looking on into emptiness
Lightening flashes
Thunder roars
I feel sad
for those who have died
The rain makes it peaceful
The thunder and lightening
make it war
A bitter struggle for the
right to go on to live, to die
For peace
But who has the right
to say who is right?

Second Psalm

we form organizations
now that it's too late
dig our shelters
now that the bombs have fallen

I will attend the meetings
I will drive my car to them

I will alert young people to the evils of drugs
I will smoke and drink to excess

everyone's to blame
except myself
like a good martyr
I bleed in sanctimonious silence

world peace is still necessary for survival
but I still hate foreigners

make this world a better place
do not infringe upon my rights

let us feast upon the dust
we have reduced our world to
it's all we have left

John Sweet

Michael Anthony Kazmierczak

The Dance

I choreographed a dance
Performed twelve hours hence,
In the coolness of last night;
In a soft, solitary spotlight.

Across the stage we hovered
Emotions scantily covered
Deft muscles guided my gossamer thread
Gentle steps so carefully tread.

Limber limbs.
Easy grins.
Arms so gracefully outstretched -
Coursing motions of centuries etched.

Toward the edge of the stage I rapidly turned,
So close to the light, I feared I might burn.

With a leap we concluded.
Vast joy exuded.
The music drifted off into the silence.
The curtain fell, hiding us from the audience.

My partner and I stretched a deep bow
Then floated away in the wake of a cloud.

Kimberly Eagen



I Wish You Were Here

I wish you were here
To hold my hand
Or look at the stars
And walk on the sand

I wish you were here
To laugh with me again
To share jokes and share smiles
Like you did then

If you were here now
I'd be holding you tight
And I would never again
Let you out of my sight

If I had the power
To bring you back here
You'd be here already
And I'd be holding you near

I wish you were here
For good times and bad
To celebrate the good
And cheer me up when I'm sad

I wish you were here
I can't stop missing you
If you were here
I'd say this to you

I wish you were here...

Julie A. Byrne

Underfoot

I took my heart out of its safe keeping place
and handed it into your care;
I believe now I'll never learn.

Once again I allowed you to hold all that I am
in the palms of your hands.
And once again
you let it slip through your fingers
falling heavily towards earth.

Turning your head so as not to notice
my heart shattered at your feet.

Its broken pieces found their way
into filling the cracks
of the sidewalk beneath you,
as you smiled

and walked away.



Kym Graham



Upward
My eyes turn toward
darkness...
warning
here it comes.
A loud, deafening crash
hitting me
killing me?
not yet
pelting wetness
enormous black spikes
cutting through to my soul
carrying me to the ground
-hopes
---aspirations
---loves and all
suddenly we land
soon, though
light; heat, bright and warm
on my pallid face
trying to penetrate
but there's nothing inside to enlighten
only blackness remains
with its door shut to reawakening
isn'tthere a tiny bit left?
I'm afraid...
now I know...
its all gone
carried off by the storm.

C.A.

Ruin

When I,
amongst the stark silent shadows,
beneath the night naked sky,
within sight of a flickering glimpse of absolution,
struggle, vainly blind,
to retain my stale illusion of sober inquisition,
seeking faith redeemable only through self-abdication,
Then you,
who offer only minute shelter,
under your blood fresh altar,
will be witness to yet another sacrifice,
boasting all the time of your avid grace,
while accusing me of corrupting your sweet chastity.
For I,
who never could fathom
the depth of your hypocritical beliefs,
am left to bask, fearlessly alienated,
in the fountain of my own misgivings,
as you,
who never could feel my private hell anyway,
unflinchingly allow me to perish
in the wake of your impassive nonchalance,
remorselessly evoking my very ruin.

Anonymous

With a benevolent smile
he placed his hand on my head
patted my shoulder
and sent me away to my doom.
A white dove
released
against a night sky
I flew toward the pain,
wings beating hard against the wind.

Kym Graham

A Second Chance

In a quiet, open place
I lay
gazing into the sun
and I feel the invitation of its light...
--steady and full
--encircling my being
I grope for my way inside:
Soon I am taken in by its warmth
And I turn green at the sight of its perfection
its vibrant yellow glow
spreads its orange brilliance around me.
I feel the peace found only in a clear blue sky;
But then,
I see the misleading crimson rose
--the blood its hidden thorn has drawn
And I feel the presence of corruption.
The purple of Easter and its forgotten significance
present themselves unmasked.
Then,
I am thrust outward
into the black void
where only death exists.
The light's absence has brought it about.
For a moment, I wonder
If I will ever return to my quiet, open place
where the light is...
where I can see my world and all its parts
in their perfect balance of white.

C.A.

It's A Small World . . . Afterall

by Jennifer R. Broteman

From the dense jungle comes a hoarse cry.

(Zoom in on a couple.)

The male is large and muscular, clothed in the barest of loin cloths. His head is flat, his hair...a greasy black. His nose seems to cover most of his face as his nostrils flare in anger.

(Pan to the woman.)

Her nails are sharp with dirt caked underneath. She uses them as a feline would, scratching at the male's face. He screams in outrage. Her mouth works the words of their guttural primeval language in quick succession.

(Widen angle to capture the two together.)

The male's hand tightens on a weapon. He raises the club menacingly. She chooses to ignore him. He swings with all his brutal savagery. The weapon finds its mark. There is no time for sound. She slumps to the ground at her mate's feet.

(Cut to the pres-

ent.)

Two planes dive through the clouds. Each of them armed. They spin and separate, curving back on an enemy jet. The jet seems to shudder, it dives, following the earlier flight of the two American planes. A missile whistles in the still air--the jet doesn't pull out. There is a silent and terrifying mushroom below them. Two Americans smile grimly at each other. One Russian down. Their Commander is elated, he calls the troopers home.

(Swish pan to a Lebanese base.)

There is a uniform clicking of heels as a troop of armed men walk an empty gray hallway. They pass a sealed metal door. Inside, two men confer. One reminds you of Hitler in appearance. The other wears a blue turban.

(Zoom in on a red button.)

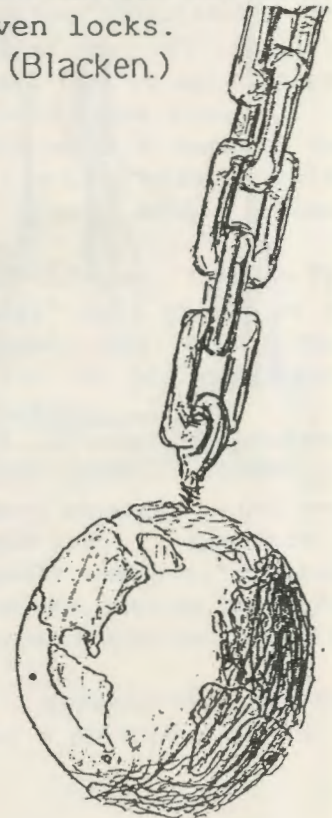
A finger rests gently on the unobtrusive button. The men watch a screen with a

view of two countries. One is called the Soviet Union, the other...the United States. There is hysterical laughter. The finger presses downward. There is no time for sound.

(Cut to the future.)

A barren earth stretches toward the horizon. The sky is no longer blue. The sun rarely shines. A broken doll lies on the scorched grass. A sudden streak of light shines upon the toy. It looks as if blood runs down between the doll's raven locks.

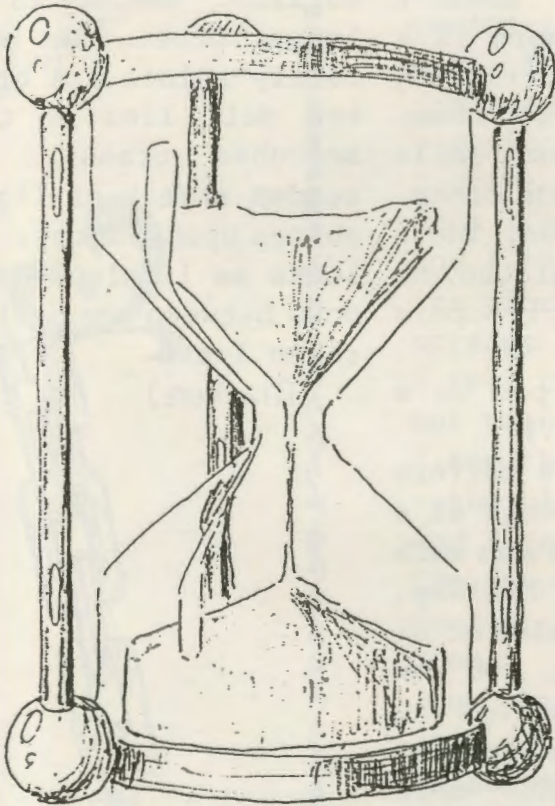
(Blacken.)



Life is short
And so am I.

Time is up
And you are wrong.

Michael Anthony Kazmierczak



Ocean of Dust

Slow down time
so that minutes are hours.
The hands on the clock
haven't moved since the day
you left and today
has dragged on for as long
as I can remember. There's no
light at the bottom
of this ocean, no sound
in this vacuum. There's no air
to breathe in this sea
of dust, but I've heard
that the sun
still exists.

John Sweet

Swords and Wedding Veils

by Stacey Ames Heeney

Truly, the red-haired princess was the jewel in the crown of her kingdom. King Lyrr watched his daughter walk through the tall green grass, holding up the hem of her skirt to keep it from being stained. Her vibrant skin, glimmering green eyes and soft petal lips...ah, her Garahdith would go well, the king thought to himself.

The Garahdith was one of the most ancient ceremonies that Tamaal had--it was the wedding feast, an event spanning three days in which royal and noble men from all over the Sangdonese Continent would come and try to woo his daughter and take her home as his bride. They would give her gifts, sing to her, and flock around her like young partridges would about their mother. Lyrr grinned, loving every thought. Even if she was ugly, it would happen all the way he imagined it, for Tamaal was one of the most powerful kingdoms on the Continent, and to be wedded to such power was any ambitious prince's dream.

"Come here, Sereena," he said, smiling proudly. The girl was frowning . . . she couldn't do that and break hearts, he decided. Not now...not when the Garahdith was a day away. "What's the matter, my dear? You look troubled. Tell me what it is."

Sereena said nothing, although she obediently came to her father's side.

Her hands were all twisted up in her skirt, and she pursed her lips without even being aware of it.

Lyrr nudged her. "Something's wrong."

"Father," she began, "the Garahdith...it's coming so soon. I'm not ready."

Lyrr sighed in relief. That was normal. "Oh, Sereena, you're ready, my dear. Twenty's the common age to participate in the ceremony. Not too early or too late. All of the Continent's best will come for you tomorrow. You have a day to revel in your choice--and you know I will stand beside any man you should choose as a husband."

Sereena rolled her eyes. What a lie! Her father had been hinting at Pythlor from the neighboring kingdom of Kleiste for some time. He could be the gentleman she chose, but perhaps not. She had never met him--or any of the candidates, for that matter.

How do you choose a lifemate in twenty-four hours? she wondered.

She could not have appeared more exquisite if she had tried. It took her hours to arrange the dress of gold silk she wore, positioning each yard of fabric so that her soft bosom and curved hips would be displayed to their best advantage. Their servants had combed out the long tongues of living flame that was her hair and set a

simple tiara of gold on her head. She didn't like wearing so much, but her father obviously wanted her to advertise as much of his wealth and power as possible. She felt sick inside; she was no longer his daughter, but a thing to be sold to the highest bidder. Biting her tongue to stop the tears from welling up in her eyes, Sereena walked out onto the Main Court, where her father and all of the gentlemen were assembled.

To one after the other she was introduced, and it was basically as she had expected--so many faces and too many names to remember. Some were handsome while others were so dull that she discounted them immediately, regardless of who they were. Still, the attractive, charismatic men she was wary of: it could be all just an act to catch my vote, she thought. I don't need a husband who will be kind to me in public and cruel behind closed doors.

"Sereena, this is Pythlor," Lyrr purred as he brought his hand-picked suitor to his daughter's attention.

Pythlor, a handsome blond prince with eyes almost as green as her own, bowed low. "A pleasure to finally meet you," he said. "You are just as beautiful as your father described to me."

Sereena shot her father a poisonous glance.

"Father! You were supposed to be impartial!"

Lyrr shrugged. "Pythlor is worth it."

As Sereena discovered, Pythlor truly was kind and interesting. Perhaps she would choose him...after all, she would be able to travel home from Kleiste in a day's ride to visit her father any time she pleased....

A servant appeared to announce the arrival of another suitor. "Prince Tormir of Arithgard, Your Majesties," he said, and the suitor appeared before him, dark and foreboding as a storm cloud.

At the mention of Tormir's kingdom, the other suitors began to flash stares of disapproval, and they muttered amongst themselves. Sereena knew why. There had been a war several years ago where Tamaal and Arithgard fought over trade rights. Arithgard had won, and Lyrr was bitter about it even now.

He strode up to the prince after dismissing the servant and whispered fiercely, "Is this your father's obscene idea of a joke?"

"King Rith is not in the habit of such things," replied Tormir in his deep base voice.

"I did not invite you to my daughter's Garahdith!" Lyrr continued, his face crimson.

Tormir remained unphased. "All princes of the Continent are eligible for any princess's Garahdith," said he.

"You will not marry my daughter, you snow serpent! I promise you that!"

Tormir calmly searched the crowd until his gray eyes came to rest on Sereena's slim form. His full lips parted in the smile of a wolf. "You promise nothing. It to decide who she weds." He came to her, ignoring the stares of the others, and bowed deeply to the princess.

Sereena was stunned by the Arithgardian prince. His skin was like polished ivory, with the raven black of his hair standing against it in sharp contrast. The prominent features of his face--the full lips, the carved cheeks, and square jaw--made something in her stir, for he was different. Most of the men she had ever seen in her life came from her part of the Continent, the South. They all had tanned skin and light hair with bright eyes. Tormir was a dark, brooding storm cloud that commanded her attention.

"I am..." she began.

"Princess Sereena? I know. Many stories of you and your beauty have filtered into my land, though far in the North it may be. I have not come to butter you up like morning toast, fair one. I will be brief, for that is the way in the North. Marry me, and I will share what I have with you. You will have what you reap from me: kindness begets kindness, you see. I will not spoil you--but you shall not want."

The other princes looked at her, outraged--but they did not understand how impressed she was. This man, though he was politi-

cally an enemy, was the most truthfull of all.

Pythlor stepped forward, hand on his sword. "You insult her, foul Snow Prince! 'Get what you reap'--who do you think you're talking to? A servant?"

Tormir shrugged, untroubled. "I am merely being straightfoward. No campaign promises."

Pythlor spat in rage, but Sereena stood between them, causing Lyrr to run to her side. Sereena shook with rage and turned to deliver a tirade--but King Lyrr was surprised at which direction she turned to.

"Pythlor, you fool! Desist!" she growled. "YOU insult me, by making such a display of your brashness! Behave yourself!"

Pythlor visibly crumbled. Tormir hid a grin.

"Get out of here, all of you!" she screamed. Then she changed her mind. "Never mind! There's too damned many of you! I'LL get out!"

So she did, with Lyrr following her. Tormir coolly remained behind to stare down thirty pairs of eyes.

Sereena, locked away in a tiny side court, parried with an invisible partner as she swung a shining sword about her head. She was so furious that she decided this was the best way to expend the anger within her. The door was locked by a key only she and her father possessed; no one could disturb her.

She was sadly mistaken.

cont.

Pythlor opened the door and came upon her deadly thrust to her unseen sparring partner. Pythlor laughed loudly and took the sword away from her. "Sereena, my dear, put that down!" he said.

"You obviously have no idea how to use it! You're going to hurt yourself!"

Sereena was seething. In Pythlor's other hand was her father's copy of the key. He DID favor the prince above all the others!

"Give me that sword, Pythlor! It's mine!"

Pythlor became hysterical. "A princess with a sword? Unheard of! Why, you don't even hold it properly! You're going to kill yourself, I tell you!"

If I had it, I'd kill YOU, she thought to herself, and she found herself smiling at the thought.

"An old guard left it to me when he died," she explained, snatching it from his grasp. "HE believed in me! Now leave me alone, or I swear, I'll marry a servant before I marry you!"

Pythlor shrugged and left. At the door he said, "Sereena, I'm sorry to have bothered you, but I've discovered something very important...I'd better behave myself or you'll show me a thing or two on the wedding night! You'd better not keep the sword under the bed, my sweet!" He disappeared.

Sereena grimaced. "Oh, you think so!" she grumbled, and hacked at the grass venomously.

From the wall, several

feet away came a voice as deep as a grave. "Quite a charmer, isn't he? You're certainly lucky you have a choice, or your father would have you experience Pythlor's charm on a daily basis." Gray eyes danced with mirth.

Sereena raced over to the wall. "How did you manage to scale that?" she inquired. "It's quite sheer!"

Tormir shrugged and leapt down. "Not completely. I've climbed sheerer walls of ice in Arithgard."

"ALL is ice and snow there?"

"All year round. The icy breeze, the snowflakes and great fields of white..." Tormir sighed. "It's so hot here."

"I'm sorry, Tormir."

"Don't be. Tomorrow I leave--for if I do not, the reception for me in Tamaal will grow hotter than the weather." He looked at her sword. "An old guard's, eh?" He took it from her to examine it.

"You heard?" she asked.

"Oh, I was sitting on that wall for some time." He stood behind her and positioned the sword properly in her hands.

"Like this. Two hands--this is a two-handed sword, not a short sword. Stab. Do not swing."

Sereena took several steps away from him and stabbed deftly at the air. Her eyes were full of intent, and her hands stayed in their proper positions. She kept up her guard and did not dance about the way

many novices did. Tormir was enthralled.

"Put it down," he commanded, and she did. "Now pick it up." When she did, he applauded, for instead of picking it up and holding it the wrong way, she immediately held it the proper way.

"Excellent," he said. "You're a natural. You have the capacity to be an excellent fighter."

Sereena melted, for secretly she had always wished to be able to become a fighter, but her father would not allow her to be...she told Tormir this, and he came close to her. "You are double-blessed to be both a lovely woman and a good fighter," he observed. "I could train you, if you wanted. With the proper training, you could put Pythlor to shame."

Sereena's emerald eyes gleamed. "Show me how to use the sword again," she asked. "Just in case I forget."

Tormir came behind her again, putting his hands on hers. This time, Sereena twisted her neck to kiss him, and his lips were full and warm. He carefully helped her to lower the sword before he took her in his arms--and when he did, his lips were more eager, more demanding.

Oh, my father's going to have a fit! Sereena thought gleefully. There's going to be such chaos! We will be forced to make a swift departure, if I know my father....

I can hardly wait!

You can hide the fury of ten thousand suns within yourself.

You can keep the despair of ten million martyrs inside yourself

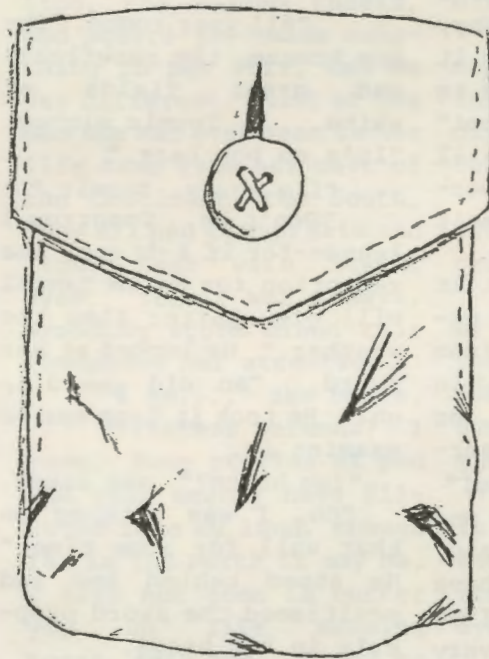
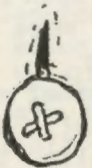
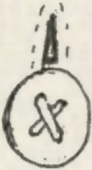
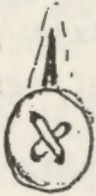
You can even conceal all of the hate in the universe in a space the size of your eyes.

Just

Don't

EXPLODE

Jeff Zampino



If I were a horse
I would say nay, of course
But I'm a guy
So I must say hi
But maybe one day
I'll get my way
And I'll be able to say
Just a little nay
But probably only
If I eat some hay

Michael Anthony Kazmierczak



Oops
My pistachio ice
cream cone
got a
hole
and
d
r
i
p
p
e
d
on my new
white
sneaker.

Kimberly Eagen

In Lasting Memory

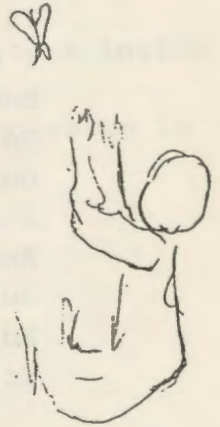
Old man in a rocking chair, his bones cry
Passive acceptance, too tired to ask why
Wrinkled face, white-schocked hair, a weary eye

A tremble, his eyes squint shut,
He clutches his chair, shouts a silent cry

A child laughs a high voiced
Happy laugh as he pets his
Dog, and his father takes
His small, lively frame into his
Strong arms, tousles his
Fine hair and looks into
Those wide, innocent eyes gleaming
With youth and curiosity,
Clapping his tiny hands

As tears come slowly from his eyes,
He shudders, and breathes a sigh.

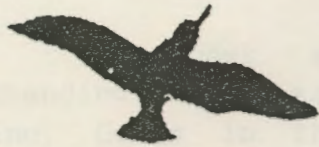
Alan Rissberger



Picture Perfect

I watch her
framed in gold
propped slightly up
on the dusty window sill
Like frozen memories
locked in time
she smiles endlessly
a big genuine toothy grin
one that fills the face
dimpling appled cheeks
and wrinkling a pug nose
Her hands cling to the box
ever so tightly
turning her knuckles white.
Sharing an intimate joke
she looks staight at me
knowingly
eyes glittering from the sunlight,
face beaming
flushed with excitement.
The moment is captured,
perserved in the smooth glass,
always to be
remembered.

Carolyn A. Campbell



Wildflowers

Springtime rain
marches in the meadow.
wildflowers waver in the wind.
scent so sweet
I wish it would last forever
but wildflowers wither
 when you take them home.

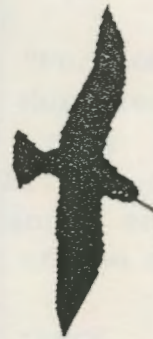
freckled face
smiles in the sunshine.
laughter frolicks in the field.
little girl
free as the windsong music --
dancing daisy
 why do you dance alone?

lonesome child
wild as the winter weather,
dreads the darkness as it falls.
unicorns
leave when the sunshine falters.
fearful friend
 why do you choose to dance alone?

Shelli L. Stiverson

Standing
overlooking the valley,
I debate my ability
to stretch out upon
one of the incoming gales of blue air
and ascend to a higher visage,
where I can see deeper hues
and more complex patterns
clearly.
Trying,
just as I feel I am above it all,
gravity heavily pulls me
back to the earth,
where I fear
I must
remain
forever.

Kym Graham



I remember a bird
whose broken wing
had healed
a day ago
still walking
around in circles
in the snow

Alan Rissberger

Elephant tusks, ivory white
Chickens dance, well not quite
Robins fly through the sky
Landing in nests way up high
Man builds smokestacks,
Pollutes the air
Kills all the animals,
But we don't care
Look what's left, what a fright.

Michael Anthony Kazmierczak



The Conversation

by Trevor Urban

The boys were standing around talking, Cokes in their hands, near the counter of the Prentiss Grocery when they saw the police car pull up outside. Jefferson Davis County Sheriff Robert Murphree got out, a cigarette in his mouth. After he shut the car door the sheriff took his stetson hat off and wiped the sweatband with a red bandana that he had pulled from his back pocket. He replaced his hat, took a last draw on his cigarette, dropped it on the street and came up the steps into the store. The bell above the door jingled as he opened it and stepped in, leaving his sunglasses on. He walked toward the counter with a slow easy stride. A .45 Smith and Wesson rode low on his right hip, like a gunfighter's rig.

"Hey Bobby."

The sheriff nodded to each in turn.

"Wes. Earl. Dave. Whatcha boys up to?"

"Nothin'," Wes Harvey answered, "hey, caught a brown in the creek yestiday. Big

'un," he grinned, holding out his hands.

"That so? Good eatin'?"

"Sweet as butter," Wes said, remembering.

"Billy Ames says he seen you down on Shabee Road talkin' to Joe Rawlins," Dave Barnett said, looking into the cool green lenses of the sheriff's sunglasses.

"That's right. Talkin' 'bout that new car 'a his," Murphree replied, meeting Barnet's look.

"Shi-it, who's he think he is? Buyin' a Cadillac, and the sixty-ones just come out only las' month." This from Earl Ames, as he cast a look out the window at his battered '49 Chevy pickup.

"Billy says he went all the way to Hattiesburg to get it," Barnet said.

"Well Hattiesburg's only thirty-five mahls away. Good lawd, way Billy talks he went all the wayta Detroit for it. And Billy neva even been outta Prentiss either," Murphree flared, then cooled quickly.

"Sides, Rawlins got himself a good business. People come from miles to buy his

clothes," he finished, turning toward the counter, leaving the men to stew in their thoughts.

"Where's Jesse?" he inquired.

"In back. Dropped a sack 'a flour. He's sweepin' it up."

Murphree went over to the cooler, opened it and reached down and grabbed a Coke. After removing the cap on the cooler's opener he came back to the counter, taking some change from his pocket.

"Jesse?" he yelled, "got myself a Co-cola. Money's on the counter."

"That's okay sheriff," Jesse yelled back, "it's on the house."

"Much obliged."

Murphree took a long swig from his bottle. He could feel the anger and resentment of the men behind him.

diff'rence what he drives," he said, staring at the calender on the back wall. It was from last year. "A nigger in a Cadillac is just that. A nigger. In

cont.

a Cadillac," he finished, looking out of the corner of his eye at Barnet. The men seemed to relax. They grinned mischievously.

"Be a shame somethin' happened to the car," Wes mused.

"With him in it," Barnet said quietly. He turned to find Murphree's face an inch from his.

"Now you boys listen to me," he said in

a low voice, "anything happens to that car, or Rawlins, say they end up in Bowie crick, I'll come for y'all. So much as a scratch on either of 'em and I'll find you."

"Aww Bobby," Wes whined, "whataya pickin' on us for? He's just a . . ."

Murphree wheeled on Wes. "Because I am the law," he said, emphasizing every word,

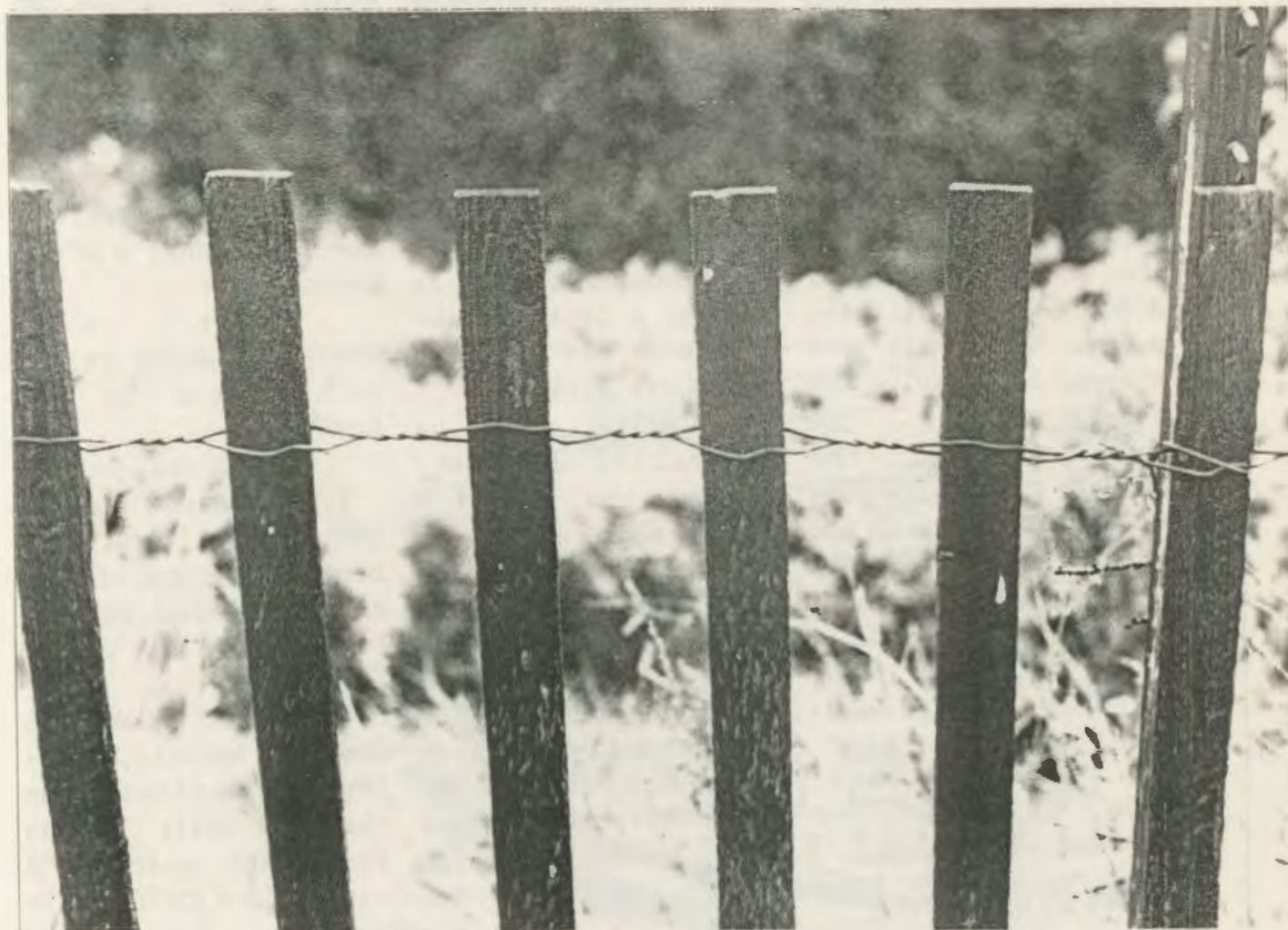
"and there ain't gonna be none a that in my county."

With that he put his bottle down on the counter and headed for the door. The bell jingled as he opened it. Barnet called:

"Hey sheriff."

Murphree stopped and the green lenses looked back.

"You forgot yer nickel."



Somewhere

Tie your boat to this tombstone
so it doesn't drift away
in the flood of unkept promises.

Wash
your hands in the blood
of slaughtered children,
dry them on the thin skin
of reality.

Snow piled on the dead branches
creates
a ghost tree, slightly above
the first. As they fall,
I record the flakes
but run out of numbers
somewhere
beyond infinity.

Stein considered herself to
be the greatest writer
who ever lived,
but now her bones
lie beneath the frozen
ground,
there for all to dance on.

Tie your boat to her tombstone
and sit with me on
this island
of unspoken words.

John Sweet

Golden Glory

I saw the fisherman
in the early quietness
he was all alone
then he cast out to sea
and became one
with the morning sun

Alan Rissberger



My Sweetheart

My sweetheart is a loving man
Who shows his warmth and tenderness
To every living soul he can
And does so much the more, not less
To fill my ev'ry low moment
With kind words, or helpful comment.

His soft blue eyes and angelic whisper
Do linger in sweet memories; and when
In woman's heart wells a pang, a shiver
To meet, to touch, to kiss, to taste him, then
He comes to me and takes we two beyond the heights;
We soar o'er lovely lakes and cliffs, God's gorgeous sights.

Our true love will not perish, I feel, but remain
In spirits where we'll cherish each identity.
The admiration and passion which I retain
from you, also you from me, will with certainty
Accompany each alone in tribulation
Until we come to part in earthly completion.

Heather G. Riley

When you put your drunken lips
four inches from my face,
And scream at me
from the top of your intoxicated lungs,
I can not forget it easily.

Treat me like the little whore
you feel I am,
--- the slut searching for something
she lost in her childhood ---
And go on reading
your Psychology Today,
While you carry on your third affair
you think I know nothing about.

Have another drink.
Try to forget your conscience.

Kym Graham

LAST WORD

As this is the last page it seems appropriate to thank everyone who has made this issue a success. We especially appreciate all of the submittals that we received this semester. It is unfortunate that OUR TIME cannot publish everyone's work. But rest assured that we need those submittals. If we are unable to print your work it does not mean that we dislike it. It means that we simply cannot print 250 pieces of literature, artwork, and photography. We encourage everyone to resubmit their work or to create new pieces.

Finally, the OUR TIME staff hopes that you have enjoyed this issue. It is always exciting to see a new magazine come together. We thank you for your continued support and once again encourage you to submit next semester, for without you, this magazine would be an impossibility.

Sincerely,
Christine Quader - Editor-in-Chief
and Our Time Staff



Thank You Shawn and Chris for helping with an Easter Layout!

We know
You're
Out There!



SUBMITSUBMITSUBMIT

