

THE SOWER

66



SOWER

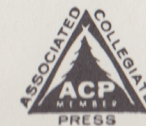
1966



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Communion

Your word was that
 in this time and place
We would make eternity
 from all past and future.
In one act, in one moment,
 you would become me;
I would become you and
 we would become one.
You offered yourself to me--
 your flesh and your blood.
You said: "Come and have me.
 Take me. Hold me. Caress me.
Make yourself drunk with pleasure.
 Here I am. Take me."
Anticipation shook my body;
 every organ vibrated.
My head grew light and dizzy
 and my hand trembled.
I wanted to accept your offering and you.
 But I was afraid.
These two forces, fear and desire,
 struggled for control of my will.
The odds against desire were great.
 I had much to lose.
Could I admit my need for another?
 Could I sacrifice pride for love?
Could I admit I had not been complete?
 Could I let you complete my being?
Man and God continue
 the act of Creation.

Corinne Adams

In May

I walked

And as I walked the grass
Withered and leaves fell,
Writhing in death,
To tear the dry earth.

I watched

And as I watched a cloud
Covered the moon and stars
Disappeared in the wind
Of torn leaves.

I smiled

And as I smiled the child
Cringed in fear and ran
From my offered hand
In the starless night.

I walked blind

In the night
Of no moon.
Dry wind tore my withered hand.

Mary Larsen

Haiku

Rain beating on screen.
Thunder wrestling with lightning--
A pearl on a leaf.

Corinne Adams

Suzie's Tale

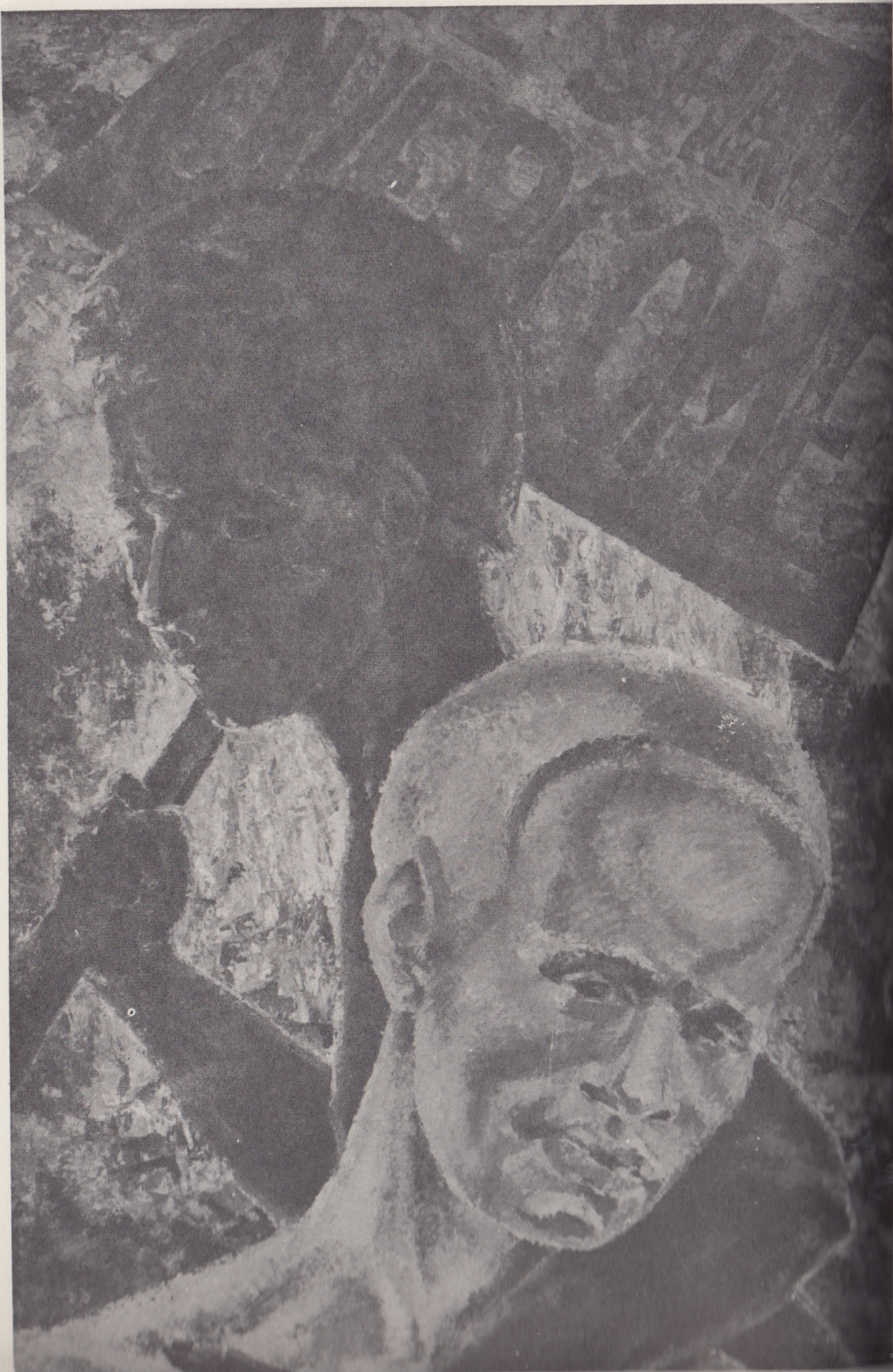
Carl Wangsvick

The day was a poem, beginning with the gold. Suzie rose early, savored the sun, ate the cherry clouds in her breakfast Cheerios. She downed the red-flavored apple cider. Next came blueberries in thick, white, fluffy cream, followed by pop-up pancakes covered with the orange taste of the honey. And, all too soon, she was full. She went out to play with her friends.

Now Suzie is a real girl, but being tiny and small, she looks like a toy; in fact, she even talks the sweet, tinkling language of the toys. And of course, her best friends are toys. Every day, for as long as she could remember, Suzie had played with her friends on the elf-green grass in the garden, the garden that is both outside and inside. Outside in the yellow sun, but inside the tall gray wall. Suzie doesn't mind the wall though, it is just *there*, catching mudpies that don't turn out right and holding up the vines.

So today, as before, Suzie sprawls lightly of the ground, telling fairy tales to the gathering of eager soldiers, princesses, dwarfs, dolls, and Peter Pan, who's only ten years old - always only ten years old. Today, as before, Suzie tells of the beautiful things in her vegetable patch next to the wall. There are stories about blue and orange lettuce in little rows, about tasty sugar-carrots, marshmallow tomatoes, and watermelons with red rinds and cool, green insides. Then, too, there's the fable of the corn that's already buttered on the cob, and the red licorice-rhubarb story, and the candied spinach story. Later, when it's time to go in, she ends by repeating the story that Mamma used to tell before supper, about the harvest and the first Thanksgiving. And Suzie and her friends are thankful, thankful for the vegetable patch and the wonderful things in it.

Tomorrow and for each tomorrow to come, Suzie will rise early and go to her garden. Like today, she will sit with her friends and tell her stories. A midget in both mind and body, Suzie is like Peter Pan, only ten years old - always only ten years old. She can never be sad or unthankful - her life is laughter and roses and hello. She has not seen - will never see - our tears, our ashes, or our good-byes.



Shades

Shy shadows steal above a sleeping land
As cool hands caress a wrinkled brow,
And breezes gently lower their demand
Till fine fern foliage scarcely shivers now.
So I, alone, into my room retire,
Embrace the night and take it to my bed.
It touches me and wakes a roving fire
Of transient dreams that wander through my head.
Like ripples stir the surface of a pond
And oceans grasp the rock and pull away,
Fragmentary time and space respond
To make the darker night elusive day.
So search, my mind, for glimmers of the past,
And let some unbound moment be my last.

John Overgaard

Haiku

On clear days, in sun
through rain drops on pine needles
there is sometimes God.

Mary Larsen

"Selma"

Maureen Eagleton

The Intrusion

Wesley Iversen

Stillness...Stillness broken only by the occasional rude screech of the hoot owl or the slight patter of the grey cottontail's feet. An ever so slight swirl, now and then, added a few delinquent flakes to the freshly fallen white.

The dark night noises had now all but died away, as an ever increasing but still faint glow developed in the eastern sky. Now as the darkness gave way to faint light, only few faults were visible in the new layer of white...here and there, the trail of a lone rabbit, the stalking footprints of the delicate red fox, the harried criss-crossings of a congregation of field mice.

The glow in the East gained a foothold now on the obscure atmosphere covering the area. A few sparrows, the early risers, were already becoming busily engaged in their noisy and often quarrelsome daily routine.

But only as the sun rose above the horizon, shedding a brilliant glare on the new fallen snow, did the world around begin to realize its full activity. The red squirrels playing and chattering gleefully in the peaks of the tall and massive poplars, the coyote, the raccoon, the fox, and the bobcat, returning from their night of hunting and foraging, the white-tailed deer, feeding cautiously in the now covered pasture, all were members of nature's fine and delicately balanced progression.

And also awake to this world of activity, but as yet huddling under a ground-hugging sapping, was the young rooster pheasant.

As the great flaming ball began to rise, the young bird ventured forth slightly shocked by the slicing sub-zero coldness of the morning, outside of his warm nest. But, soon recovering, he began his trek to the nearby and only recently harvested cornfield.

He was now wide awake and alert to the strange, new world around him. What had been only yesterday a mixture of soft, subdued, and darkened hues now shone with a brilliance of dazzling white. And why was he having trouble maneuvering? His strong legs seemed to bog down in this white stuff.

Finally arriving at his destination, he found what had previously been easy picking to also be complicated by the snow. He now had to scratch and dig to locate a fallen kernel, or if he was lucky, an ear of the gleaming yellow corn. He fed till almost mid-morning. Then, fairly well satisfied, he turned to start for the warmth and cover offered by a nearby creek.

Suddenly, all activity around him grew silent as the sound of two successive muffled booms mushroomed in the distance. He froze. For a moment, he was an inert, darkish statue set against a world of white, his senses all alert for more sound or any danger around him.

Then the great reddish wings took flight, carrying him up and over the short distance to the brush and thick entanglement of the creek. There he settled, content that he was safe from all elements of danger.

The flaming sun now climbed higher and higher in the early winter sky. Its infiltrating warmth penetrated the brush and the pheasant sat, drowsily drinking it in. He perked up slightly as a belligerent porcupine waddled by, then relaxed again. Life was sweet.

He was startled by a strange sound. A different type of sound than that made by the subtle deer or the rambling porcupine. This was more of a clomping, a tramping sound. He could hear it, far up the creek, but gradually moving closer.

Now he heard the audacious cackle of another rooster pheasant, and then, a sound that struck a ripple of terror throughout his body, one solid boom, so loud and so close, much too close.

He ran, down the creek, zig-zagging through the brush, away from the noise. Now he stopped, listening again.

The tramping was still coming. He ran farther. The creek was getting smaller and the brush thinner. Now it died out completely. He was at the edge of the brush. A considerable distance stretched between him and a clump of trees slightly off to the right, the nearest cover.

He held his position, crouching low into the snow and listening. The tramping still approached. It came closer, closer, closer. Still he held, afraid to move.

Now the sound stopped. Had he been seen? There was nowhere to run! He would have to fly!

But wait, the tramping began again, stumbling off to the left. The pheasant held. He was safe yet.

But now the noise had turned back. It was coming directly toward him.

He flushed, his wings taking powerful beating strokes, lifting him up and out of the brush.

He was up now, and as he veered sharply to the right, heading for the trees, a resounding blast filled the air. He flew harder, his wingbeats frantic. He gained altitude. Now another blast. He felt his body being pelleted by sharp severe pain.

His muscles were giving out. He fought spasmodically, trying to regain lost altitude, but realized he was falling more rapidly each second. He crashed to the snow with a hollow thud, thrashing violently.

Seconds later he was pinned down, held securely. He looked up wildly to see the huge, bulking form standing over him. The man's foot was coming down.

"Still Life"

James Wardrip



Rite of Spring

The warmth of air and body meet,
Caress each other in an understanding which
The briefness of that touch alone
Can lift to such a moment as
Will not be dulled by seasons' change,
But only by a chill which rises from within.

One trembling leaf of early green,
The fire of sun confined in moistened petals,
Intensify an image offering itself but once.
When the warmth has died,
Will memories exist or be enough?

Wayne Morton

The Girl

The girl can see, but yet is blind.
What does she understand?
How can she know the color red,
And that she plays in sand?
The girl can't hear, so very young
A victim of her fate.
She sees our mouths move, forming words,
And tries to imitate.
The girl can touch, what does she feel?
The soft? The smooth? The hot?
When will she ever know the words?
Is stupidity her lot?
The God of Men can only know
Just why her mind's a void,
Why she will never understand. . .
For she's a Mongoloid.

Lois Hanson

Characteristics

The man will laugh and die and drag out chains
For wheels of cars and buy more oil or wood.
He'll shake his body frame to keep his life warm.
And then he stands as though his flesh covers not
His precious human soul and points at me, the creator
Of white and cold, a part of that which he must adore.

He curses me. He's cold and angry.

He thinks to command the skies and silence and spring.
The birds will sing when I decide, though trees may scream
In freezing gusts to call them home and sing their lives
Back to the sun which clouds will hide from earth's cold crust
As long as I decide.

The silence stays and plays with house tops and frosty panes
And caresses his brain with nothingness and gloom.
He cannot command the noise of spring to come from depths and
heights
Of airless splendor.

The winds are mine to clip and cast around the curves
Of coats and hats and mitten rims at my pleasure,
To see him run from door to door with tears
Solidifying to ice on stoney cheek bones.

The man cannot prevent the death of iris bulbs and blue skies
And lazy rabbits in the fields.
He stands and points through window glass and swears
That I can't last through March and April fog.

But mercy comes and I must change as hearts grow warm
With love and hope, and forgiveness falls to growth of green and
white.

The man comes out of doors and thanks me to my blue sky face.

Vaudine Weber

Forever Are the Shades of Memory

Carl Wangsvick

This story is true. I remember it exactly and I am frightened.
The frozen pictures of a strange beauty and an unbelievable
terror will not leave my mind. They are my prisoners and I,
theirs. And again, I remember...

It happened one night when fall came in the middle of summer.
Darkness seized the earth - smothered her in a cold, windless
embrace. Our footsteps echoed down the hollow streets, then
fled faster and faster along an endless corridor and out into space.
The street lights gave off a black light. A *black* light? Yes...yes,
it *seemed* black...it *was* black! An evil, just released, walked
boldly into the open. It cackled, like a witch, yet made not a sound.
"I'll cover the sun," it said, "Tomorrow you'll live by moonlight."
We looked at the moon, the moon was *red*. "Oh no! No, it can't
be...not...*blood*? Faster, feet, faster!"

We reached home, but could not go in, for now the sky was
alive with the rumble of troops. "Something's going to happen,"
I said. We sat down on the front porch. "What's that?" A furry
little dog came over to us. *He* sensed something, too; he huddled
between us and whined a little. "Don't worry, dog," I laughed,
"It's all right." "*Is* it?" breathed the darkness, "Is it *really* all
right?" This the dog heard, and he burrowed in closer and whined
again.

Now! The son of thunder *pounded* his brother and his brother
roared! In the sky a grenade of lightning exploded and lit the
whole left heaven! "Again!" hissed Beelzebub, "Again, again!"
Giant gourds of hot coals burst like hideous white fireworks! The
Prince of Death and the Men of Sinister Darkness streaked
through the black sky on thin, scarlet clouds. They gathered on
our right for on our left, impenetrable, a huge, white glow persist-
ed. Suddenly, a comet of silver and mercury shot from this glow,
scorched the black night so it screamed out in pain, burned
through the first shades of red, and was gone! Once more the
ranks of red rode on. Once more the comet charged down and
was gone. Once more the grenades of lightning hurtled through
the blackness from white to red, from red to white. Then, the
whole sky exploded; it ruptured itself, ripped itself, and begged
for rest.

"Rest?" sneered Beelzebub, "Only I, Lord of Life and Death, can grant you rest again!" And as he said it, the heavens opened and Beelzebub was cut down by a golden spear of light - it was a *splendid* scene! Then, in a crazy, silent fear he called from hell to the Men of Sinister Darkness, and they vanished from space.

The sky stilled, the breeze moaned, the sons of thunder wept. The cool rain healed the sky, comforted the darkness, washed the blood and death from the earth. The cool rain and the tears of God. "You can go home, dog," I said, "It's all right now."

A Bit of Madness

A man gets lonely in these hills
walkin'
talkin'
hopin'
feelin'

alone...

Yeah once in awhile a man starts to
wonderin' what madness must drive him
to come here a sweatin' an toilin' to cut
an 'existence from them rotten rock mines an
breakin' his back down for him an his...woman

But

she'd never come to this barren rock pile
an help him to bear up the burden of toilin'
an sweatin' 'cause a woman'd
go crazy with nothin' to do through all the day long
but sit in her chair an look at the walls
of her cabin countin' tireless hours till
her man got back

home

A woman's mind'd break with the
walkin'
talkin'
hopin'
feelin'

alone...

Tim Wright

Imperfect Meeting

Friends?

Yes, we are friends,
But we are no more than friends.
I feel for you,
But not with you.
And, even if I could,
You would not let me.
For you it is difficult just to be friends.
You are too exacting.

Friendship is an art.
An art to be developed
With effort.
An art all can master
With patience.

Friendship fulfills, yet demands.
Strengthens, yet exhausts.
Is sufficient, yet inadequate.
Art can never be perfect
Because it depends on people.
Is this why you have never tried your hand at it?
You, who are intent on perfection.
You, who demand perfection in everything you do.
Perfect?

A perfect tree?
A perfect mountain?
A perfect star?

If beauty demanded perfection, there would be no beauty.
My tears?
Because we are friends.
Because we are no more than friends.

Loretta Heckathorn

Cradled
in blankets of
Superiority
haughty silence guards secret pain,
Shyness.

Mary Larsen

"Abstraction No. 5"

Russell Brabec



Games

Games.
Games are fun.
They are fun for kids.
They are fun for grown-ups, too.
What if one plays games all the time?
What if all of life become a series of games?
Then -- are games fun?

I can't remember the time I wasn't playing hide-and-seek.
Someone or something was always hiding from me.
I was always the seeker.
How much I wanted to be "the sought"!
No one asked me if I wanted to change sides.
So I looked and looked and looked for the hidden--
 in books
 behind rituals
 under institutions.

 I even looked up to the sky.
But I didn't know what was hiding from me.
There I was--
 panting from exhaustion,
 crying in frustration,
 hurting in loneliness,
 wanting to stop this silly game.
But The Law said that I had to keep playing.

So I played harder
 and harder.
I complicated things by starting another game--
Another game to sap my energy
 and time
 and thought
 and freedom.

Monopoly was the game.
And I was the monopolizer.
I allowed someone else to have the
 houses and railroads, the
 hotels and motels, the
 shops and stores, the
 money and merchandise.

These I didn't want.
So I let someone else have them.
These were petty.
I could afford to let another have them.
But no one could have what I wanted.
These I must monopolize:
 love
 truth
 beauty
 goodness.

These were worthy enough for me.
So when I had something of them, I
 hoarded them,
 refused to share,
 wanted more
 and more
 and more.

Hide-and-seek isn't a hard game.
Monopoly isn't a hard game either.
Kids can play these games.
 Kids can't play charades.
 It takes grown-ups to play charades.
I liked the challenge.
I tried it.
But I didn't give up my other games.
I played all three at once.
I played the roles of
 student and teacher, of
 daughter and sister, of
 confidant and friend, of
 lover and loved, of
 sinner and saved, of
 seeker and finder, of
 winner and loser.

This game was hard.
It took all I had to give.
I played hard.
I became a good role-player.
I was almost professional.
No one knew I was playing.
No one knew that there was more than my roles.

I had to win this game.
I didn't know how to live without playing a game.
Then Someone said to me:
 Your games are silly.
 (I already knew it.)
 Give up playing games.
 Playing games is not living.
 Life is not playing games.
 Life is not...
 Life is...
 Life is...
 Life IS.

Corinne Adams

Identity

There is within man a gnawing fear
Of that which is different. Even the young
Do not listen to words they hear
If they are spoken in a foreign tongue.
Like a cancer, the fear grows and spreads,
Feeding on ignorance it does not abate.
Unchecked, uncontrolled fear that is fed
Soon becomes fatal manifested as hate.
Man hates, then labels wrong
What he has neglected to understand.
He seeks to destroy - he arouses a throng.
Unthinking men obey his command.
Myths of god, ideas called treason,
National fervor - over these men have fought.
One different feature - sufficient reason
For men of passion, not of thought.
The motives vary - one thing is the same:
The usual, the common, the standard, the norm,
Are bases for rules in this thoughtless game
That demands one and all to agree, to conform.

Loretta Heckathorn

A Sonnet

In timeless shadows here I sit to write
My deepest thoughts in poetry I choose.
A golden watch--an inspiration not too trite.
This still old watch with timelessness I'll fuse.
I think the ancient sketches on the edge
Remind me vaguely of the Grecian art,
And sculptured hands would march to meet their pledge
Of passing faultlessly each numbered mark.
But fingers vainly twirl the slender stem
As eyes again behold the golden face.
The hands are moving. Seconds reach their end.
My timelessness is gone. Resume the race.
Once more the time will time itself destroy;
This endless hour I found my greatest joy.

Vaudine Weber

A Tear

Silently creeping
 slipping sliding
 leaving part of itself behind
it zig-zagged
till finally falling
 off into space
 it dropped to the ground

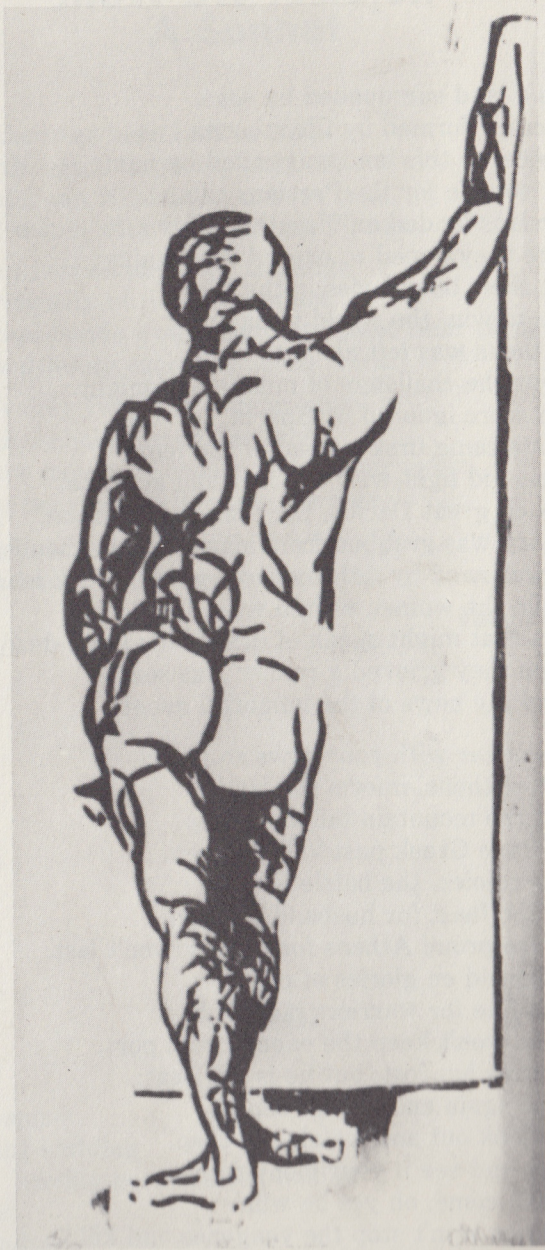
Tim Wright

Rejoice! We Won!

There is a land surrounded by seas,
A democracy formed by Cleisthenes.
But Greece, as this land was called by name,
Was not so safe for the Persians came.
The Persians landed on Marathon Plains
For there they hoped to extend their gains;
Increase their boundaries in the West,
Advance to win, the world their quest.
Great Athens was left alone to fight,
To answer the challenge of muscle and might.
Her cries were ignored by Sparta, for woe,
Their feats came first instead of the foe.
So Athens did fight with her freedom at stake,
She took on great Darius, the conquering drake.
The victory was grabbed from his greedy fat hands,
It was swallowed by Athens and near-by Greek lands.
Meanwhile the women waited with dread
For news that might speak of brave lads lying dead.
And while they grieved a runner was sent
To spread the news of the immortal event.

"Oh messenger with your news so grand,
Run on to Athens, inform the land.
Run past the mountain tall and steep,
Run on brave Greek past valleys deep.
Let cities rejoice, the battle is won,
Prepare the feast for husband and son.
But beware proud Athens for victory won't last,
Do not depend on glories of past.
A feast is fine for warriors if short,
But games won't keep the enemy from port.
Great Darius has lost, but he is not beat;
He'll come again and battles repeat.
Leonidas look out and watch and then,
Look over and see if your men are men.
Xerxes will come, oh yes he will,
For victories won't stop the vengeance and kill."

Kay Ringhand



"Nude"

James Wardrip

The Orphan

Mary Beth Rasey

"Poissons pour vendre," yelled the fishmongers along the cobblestone walks on the wharves of Marseille. The eastern skies were flooded with the pastel shades of early morning. Suddenly the bright yellow sun slowly rose from the depths of the horizon bringing the deeper shades of a morning sky. The heavy ocean mist was still lingering around the market stalls, but it was thinning out as the salty breeze from the ocean was blowing inland. The fishermen were scurrying back and forth bringing the last of their catch in for market.

Time passed so quickly as each person busied himself with his morning tasks. As the sun climbed higher and higher in the sky, the market filled up with people from all walks of life, buying what they wanted and then hastily leaving.

Among these throngs of people stood one small French boy not over six years of age. His face was expressionless; yet as he glanced from one side to another, he was bewildered, terrified all in the same glance. The world was strange for this young lad, for his ears could always bring the curious sounds in, but he could never make them himself.

This young traveler had wandered off from his home, an orphanage, not too many hours ago. The pictures and thoughts that were flashing through this youth's mind were all mixed up; yet he knew he must go on. The pangs of hunger were beginning to strike at him like darts. In his innocent mind, snatching some pieces of seafood was quite a soothing thought. The boy slowly shuffled his feet up to a market table, and with two dark eyes, he scanned the large selection all arranged so pleasantly for the customers, and as quickly as his little hand could clasp onto a piece of meat, he was gone. Just as he was stealing through the crowd, the fish vendor caught sight of the little thief and began to raise his voice and hands at him shouting, "Voleur! Voleur!"

The crowds paid little heed to the shouts of the vendor, and business came and went as usual. As the noise and shouts were pouring into this young thief's ears, he finally made it out of the market square down a very narrow street with old brick shops and warehouses. He saw an alley even narrower than the street which he slipped into. The sensations of fatigue, hunger, and

terror struck him so fiercely that he suddenly collapsed, dropping his fish on the dirty pavement. Where he was or where he was going did not matter to him. Wearily he sat up and ate at his piece of fish like an alley cat eating its first meal in weeks.

Many hours passed and the sun was glaring straight down from the clear blue sky. After eating his meager breakfast, he had fallen fast asleep. As he was becoming aware of the passing daylight hours, two large apple cores landed on top of his shaggy head of hair. Startled, the boy sprang up, and saw four older boys laughing and aiming more apple cores at him. Regaining all his senses, he ran for the street again.

As he was making this second exodus, he bumped into a large sailor lumbering down the narrow walks.

"What is this, what is this?" bellowed this coarse, smelly giant. Stricken with fear, the little boy wanted to cry, "Leave me alone you-you ugly man!"

The sailor clutched the small-sized tramp in one hand. "What are you running from you rascal?" yelled the sailor. Since the poor orphan could not speak, the only action he could take was to kick the sailor as hard as he could. Taking him by surprise, the youth squeezed out of his iron grip and dashed across the street. Running faster and faster, he finally found himself alone again in another busy market place.

By this time, the sun began to wander farther west in the sky. The boy slowly began to recognize various buildings and see the old rusty antique signs hanging from the shops that he had observed so many times before. He knew now that he hadn't escaped at all from his home, but had run in circles all day trying to get away.

All of a sudden, shrill whistles echoed through his ears, and before he knew what was happening, two rather young *agents de police* grabbed his small frame and headed for a large brick building so familiar to this youth's eyes.

Now the escapade was over. As this unfortunate group entered into the bleak yard, the sun was slowly sliding beneath the horizon. Two open arms took hold of him and the door closed behind them. Darkness now completely covered this side of the world.

Escape

Evenings I strolled around my pond--
large, yet too small to call a lake--
and watched the rippled surface pull at sand
then wash it back much smoother than before.
Clear evenings Venus rode between the waves
winking at her heaven-bound sister in the West
until some playful fish dashed his silver sides
and threatened to upset her fragile shell.
The sun often lingered below the hill,
its peacock rays reflected in the pool,
a guide for those who followed
into the brightness of the other day.
The rail birds ran in front of me
but made no real attempt to fly
while they stabbed for bugs
and other wiggly things.
Or on some low, half-floating log a bull frog croaked his sober tones
and from some slow moving tone sermonized on the futility of love.
A lunker bass jumped
then settled back
with a mouthful
of frog or bug.
Some evenings I walked until
I had trod the whole circumference of the pond
while the sky still held some hint of blue
with white clouds puffing slowly in reflection.
When the shadowed log that was my starting place
loomed before me, I often sat a moment more
before turning from my private world
to that imperfect image I call home.

John Overgaard

Haiku

Small light in large dark,
It threatens to grow brighter.
Poof! I blow it out.

Mary Larsen

"Solitude"

Dennis Danitschek

slow and expressive

The Plow in the Oak

The plowman reined in his team
and turned to check the furrow,
the scar of black on green,
laid open to the sun.

Fat earthworms slid themselves into upturned homes,
while earth black beetles
skittered under clods.

Within the shed the bags of grain
lay waiting to be cast
to moist furrows
warming in the sun of Iowa.

He turned hand-shaded eyes
to follow the flight of geese,
a jagged line formed northward into spring.

In the draw a distant sound
of spring-cold waters tumbled past,
and in the meadow milk cows
licked up the grass of April rains.

And then the thud and roll of distant thunder,
guns of Lincoln's war,
shattered peace.

He turned the team to pasture with the cows
and tugged the plow beneath a tree;
the oak received it with protecting arms
to hold the share from rusting in the soil.

The children waved;
his wife brushed back her tears
and watched him go to fight a war--a war that was not theirs.

Cairo, Henry, Shiloh, Vicksburg--
Hooker, Grant, Pemberton, Lee--
Two rusty years--
Reports from Vicksburg.

A widow wept in silence by the plow;
the summer sun sucked dry the fallow land,
and seed bags fell to dust.

The oak tree grew, embraced the plow,
and folded over it.
It seemed to know: within its trunk it held
a monument of war.

John Overgaard

Fun and Games

Let's play "complexity," it's very easy.
You pretend you're somebody
I'll pretend I believe you
The one who convinces himself first wins
The prize is small, but then the game is easy.

Let's play "simplicity," it's not as easy.
You be somebody and
I'll believe you
Both can win at this game
The prize is honesty, but, as I said,
the game is difficult.

Wayne Morton

The Offering

They looked up at his body before them
and wondered
if it were dead
And the soldier
the soldier
lifting up his iron probe
plunged it into his boney side
And blood

water
flowed
down
into the soldier's eyes

The other looked up at him
thinking
feeling:

Truly this man
was the son of
God

He's dead now
pass him by
he told the others

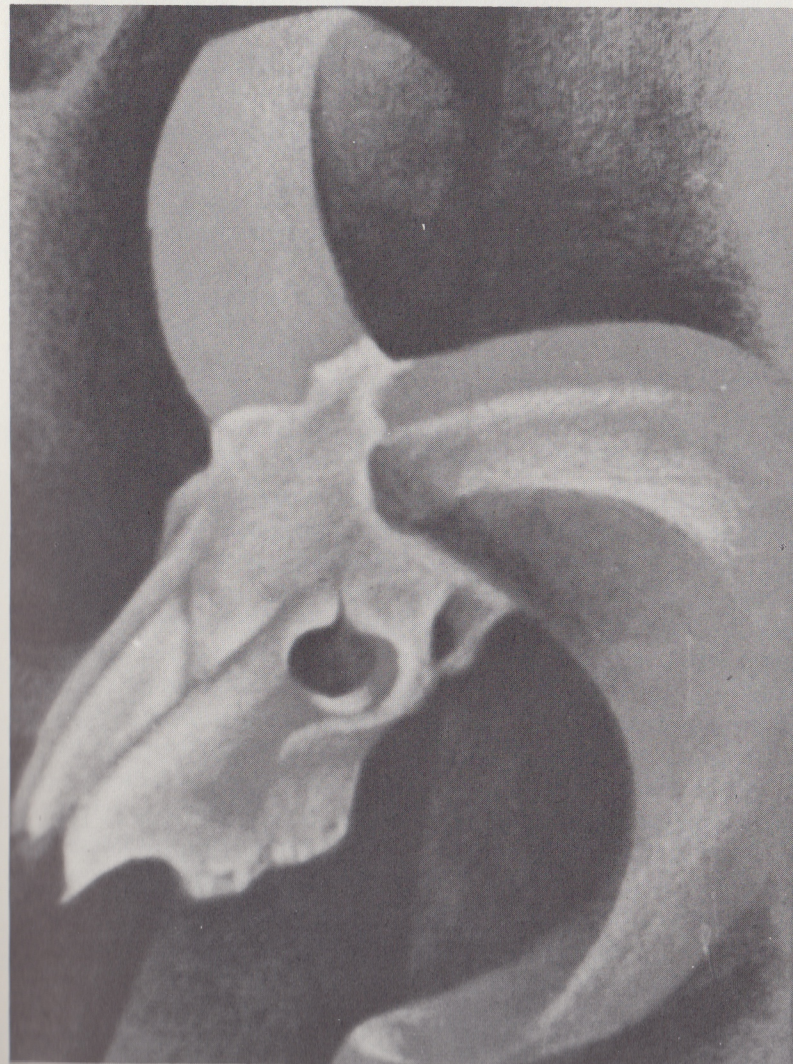
But

they already had
And his bruised body

hung

an offering
above them

Tim Wright



"Ram's Skull"

Jean Steele Johnson

Before Becoming a Corpse

By *Manuel Acuña*
Translated from Spanish
by *Judy Olsen*

Now you have reached your final plateau:
Where the vast horizon of knowledge flows
to its fullest bounds,
Where firm experience dictates the superior
laws which command existence,
Where the splendor of knowledge o'erflows
that star in whose brilliance all slaves
and lords be one,
Where the fable falls dumb and the voice of
facts advances and superstition vanishes,
Where knowledge views the solution of that
problem whose statement we fear.

From your lips proclaim the majestic voice
of truth; sweet to him in search of reason.
Behind you now is the pitiless struggle;
the prison of pain which had bound you.
The light in your eyes no longer dwells,
Your vital being is stilled,
Your purpose remains unfulfilled.
Those who see you now think the reign of life
finished when death begins;
All is misery, misery.

And supposing your mission fulfilled,
from their sight they dismiss you unto eternity.
But no! Your mission is not over, for nothingness
is neither the beginning nor the end of life.
Existence is a cycle and we err in measuring
life's limits by the cradle and the grave.

With fleeting form you follow life, given from
your mother, the molder of form.
This form is not the first your being wears,
nor shall it be the last.
Now lacking breath, shortly you return to the
womb of the earth; the center of universal
life.

And there, in strange existence, the power of the
rain decays your clay.

When you rise through the roots to the grain,
you shall witness the flower and fruit.
By chance you may now return as wheat in bread
to a grieving wife who dreams of you.
As time passes, the sighs from your grave shall
rise from the open pit as larva transformed
to butterfly,
Which testing uncertain flight, shall go to the
lonely bed of your love to carry kisses
from death.

In the midst of these changes your brow will be
full of a new life;
Flowers will grow where thought once lived.
A brilliant tear shall nourish this chalice,
shed from the eye of your love.

Death remains the tomb of life's journey,
where the dead flame of your spirit lies hidden.
This mansion whose door cancels your breath will
issue new breath that again to life will awaken
you.

There all power will fall,
There the enjoyment and suffering will end,
There faith and passion will fail.
The grave will level the wise and the idiot
to the realm of equality.

But there where souls depart and beings perish,
there a body dies and another being is born.
The powerful, fecund abyss of the ancient organism
seizes this form and makes him a new creation.

Without care, indifferently we give your name to
history; a name which becomes eternal or dies.
Taking the clay only, changing the form and purpose,
new life is wakened eternally.

The tomb guards only a skeleton, but the life in
its vault continues to feed in secret.
In this present material life forms change,
But death is immortal like glory.

The Loser

Mary Larsen

It was long ago. Nine days. For her there was no longer time. On her right Tom's mother hunched over her hymnal, a lacy white handkerchief to her nose. Her own mother sat on her left. She wouldn't look at her mother. If she did, she'd see the deep empty eyes that said, "Let me help." But there was no help. No one could know; no one could feel this blackness that was hollow. She sat stiffly in the pew and stared at the droning minister. Just nine days.

That morning had been the kind travel posters blazed about. They'd been up at five; Tom couldn't sleep. He was excited. Tom was always excited. But now they were in Monaco. He had to see the sun from the look-out point. After all, he'd said, they had only two days here and they had to see all, simply all of Italy this trip. After he began studying in Edinburgh there wouldn't be time for long vacations. He'd hopped around, stumbling over shoes and open suitcases.

Cathy remembered her pride in him as she watched him tip-toe to the little corner bed to wake Cindy. Tom was definitely not what one would expect a minister to be. No sombre black, no twitching, wet lips, no New Testament in his back pocket. Cathy had always been sure that if the church were to be saved, if it was worth saving, men like Tom were the only ones who could do it. Tom was more interested in people than in God. She often wished he had never decided to be a minister. Certainly he could help people more in a less limited field. But Tom felt that people needed understanding and this was possible only in a God.

O.K. he'd vowed to serve God, his God of understanding. Cathy had tried to believe in that God. But sometimes she wondered if her faith was in Him or in Tom. Two years had passed quickly at his first assignment. Quickly, because Tom himself never dragged. If he wasn't painting the choir room bright yellow, he was practicing to be Scrooge in the youth group's Christmas play. She loved him; he was a minister who insisted on shoveling his own sidewalk.

Then came the chance to study in Scotland. They'd left three months early in order to see Europe first. It was too bad Cindy was no older than four. She wouldn't remember much of this fun.

"Hurry," he'd said as he bounced on the edge of the bed where he'd been tying his shoe. And she had. But it was a happy kind of hurry because she knew Tom would completely forget the time. He was outside already, taking deep breaths, probably hopping the parking lot posts.

Cindy had been ready to go and Cathy just finishing her make-up when he'd run into the cabin room.

"Oh, you'd never imagine the sunrise, girls. I've just been at the look-out and, wouldn't you know, forgot the camera. This we must have a picture of. The sun turns the water all orange. Hurry."

He'd grabbed the camera and disappeared. Cathy finished. She took Cindy's hand as they walked out into the sun. It was indeed a lovely day. On days like this, in the sun, there was surely God.

Across the asphalt lot, she saw Tom. He was at the look-out, camera in hand. To get a better view he'd climbed to the top of the low Roman built wall on the edge of the cliff. She wished he'd be careful; he'd laugh if she warned him.

Yes, the sun had turned the water orange and now was changing it to gold. Cindy and Cathy peered over the wall. The gold hurt their eyes. Cindy said she was hungry and Tom handed her a candy bar. He would, before breakfast.

"Look girls, see that tree bending over the water? Its leaves change from gold to green in the wind. Mmm. Just smell that fresh air. I'm going to hop down onto that little ledge beyond this wall to get a really good picture."

"Tom, are you sure it's . . .," she'd started. She'd rather not remember, the tearing sound, the three hundred feet, Tom's scream or had it been hers? It took forever to fall three hundred feet on a beautiful day - a day when there was surely God.

Nine days ago. Nine days of white, swirling yesterdays of nothing, and a white, silent tomorrow of nothing. The minister was saying that God had called dear Pastor Tom to an eternal work in heaven.

"Fool! Your god's not supposed to need anyone in heaven. Heaven doesn't need men like Tom; we do. Is he afraid to leave them here?"

Identity

by *Goethe*
Translated from German
by *Kay Ringhand*

A calm quivers
Over the mountains;
In the treetops
You barely
Trace a whisper;
The birds are silent in the forests.
Pause,
Soon you will be at peace.

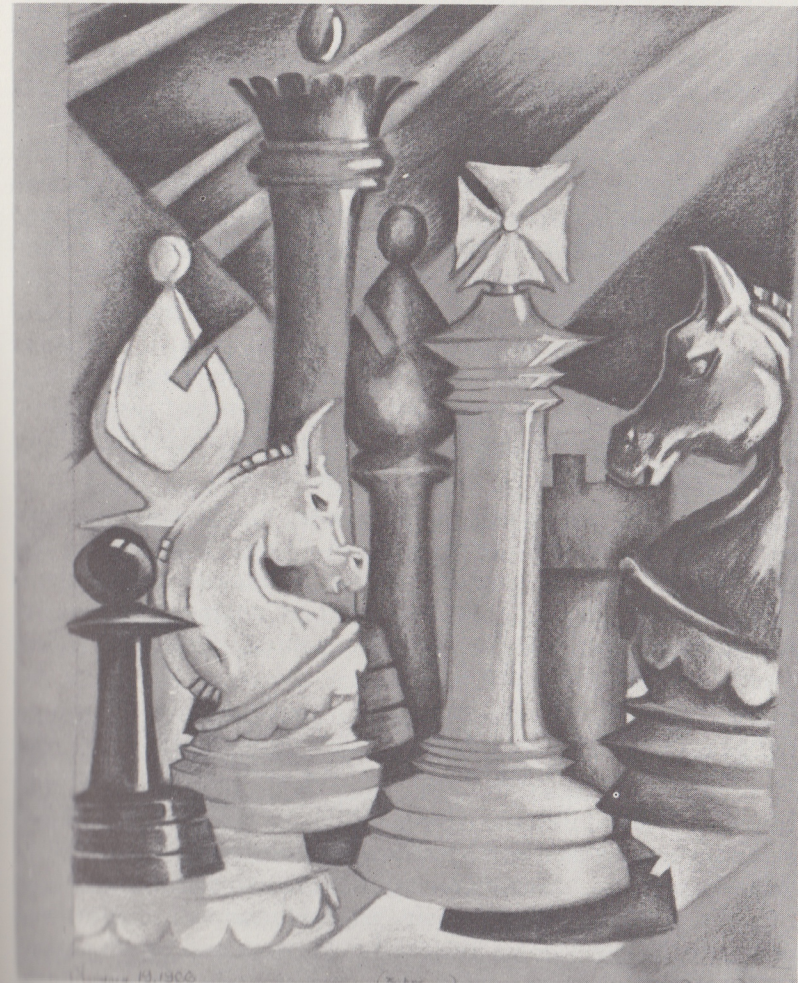
One tear

a tear burns within,
striving toward its release
in the last
cold, moist,
insignificant evidence
of a pain
unseen.

I long for the tear
which can be quickly wiped away,
leaving no trace of that dulling pain
which gave it birth.

One tear
before the inner fire devours it
yet unborn

Wayne Morton



"Chessmen"

Dave Rassman

Business as Usual

John Overgaard

Paul Doyle sorted through the papers on his desk, stacking them into neat piles as was his custom at 9 a.m. Miss Wright, his secretary, peered through her black horn rimmed glasses as she typed the pile of correspondence that he had left on her desk when he left the office at 4 p.m. the preceding afternoon. The staccato rhythm of the typewriter, punctuated only by the toss of the carriage, hardly made a dent in his consciousness. This was the sound of business. Doyle finished sorting the papers and mentally marked the piles, as he always did, "urgent" and "not quite so urgent." He glanced at his watch and noted by his calendar that his first appointment was scheduled for 9:30. He hoped that the young man would not be late. Doyle admired punctuality, and as the personnel manager for such a large and complicated firm as Krispy-Krackle Breakfast Foods he would certainly have to consider this in any hiring that he might do.

After the applicant had made his exit, Doyle made his first entry of the morning on his memo pad, "knot of tie sags to the left." He tore off the sheet and stapled it squarely to the application form. One cannot be too careful about neatness, he thought as he penciled in a few more notations on the form and slid it into the proper folder on his desk.

Doyle pushed back his chair and walked to the large gilt framed mirror which hung on the wall. He straightened his tie and brushed a microscopic speck from the lapel of his dark blue coat. As he looked into the mirror his glance fell on his secretary across the room. "Not bad," he thought and then he caught himself and muttered, "I must suggest that she start having her hair done in a more dignified manner. We can't have all of the office males chasing her." Doyle returned to his desk and began penciling notations on papers from the "urgent" pile: drying room, packaging department, accounting office. His mind began to wander on the fifth or sixth application, and he had to shake his head to bring himself back to the business at hand. Once he distinctly thought he could see a row of palm trees outside of the window, but when he looked back, the blank face of the office building across the street greeted him as usual.

The coffee break bell broke the usual office noise, and instant-

ly the sounds of typewriters and adding machines in the accounting department next door stopped. Doyle checked his watch--10:28. "I'll have to check that bell," he noted, "we can't waste more than ten minutes on a coffee break."

In the coffee shop, the mechanical noises of the office were replaced by the hum of conversation. Doyle picked up his coffee, placed a level teaspoon of sugar into it and retired to a corner. A minute later Mike Roster pulled up a chair and attempted to start a conversation. Mike was the time keeper and paymaster, and usually the conversation would have turned to problems of mutual concern in the offices of the two men. This day, however, Doyle lost his concern for office problems. He even forgot the matter of the bell.

"Do you think the new wage and hour law will affect us much?" Mike offered.

There was no answer from Doyle who was watching the women from the offices lined up at the coffee counter. While they were waiting for their turns at the coffee urn they engaged in animated conversation. Before Doyle realized what was happening, there appeared in front of him a line of hula skirts. Waving hands told their stories, and numerous rears swayed beneath their grass coverings. The line moved slowly until, suddenly, the bubble of illusion burst, and Doyle, his shallow dream evaporated, saw Mazie Hill planted in front of him--all two hundred and thirty pounds of her. A vague surmise as to the amount of grass it would take to cover her rotund figure flickered across Doyle's mind as he turned back to Mike who was still talking, evidently oblivious to his partner's preoccupation.

The break bell signalled the return to work, and the two men rose to leave. Doyle checked his watch and noted that the bell was, indeed, two minutes off.

Back in his office, Doyle attacked with new vigor the stacks of unfinished work. In a few minutes he had completed the one marked "urgent" and had started the less urgent pile. The return address of the first letter caught his eye: Palm Springs. The paper melted away, and the palms appeared once more, swaying gently in the mist.

"Mr. Doyle, excuse me, would you sign these please?" Miss Wright was standing at his left with a large sheaf of papers.

"Certainly, Miss Wright, I must have been concentrating. I

didn't hear you come over." Doyle carefully traced his signature on the appropriate line and then scanned the forms for typing errors. One could not be too careful. As Miss Wright returned to her desk, Doyle leaned back and appraised her retreating figure.

"Miss Wright, have you ever worn a grass skirt?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Doyle, have I what?"

"Never mind, I don't imagine you have."

The secretary returned to her work, the puzzled expression still visible on her face. Doyle turned his attention once more to his forms, then, glancing at his secretary, pushed the contents of his desk top to one side and strolled out of the office. Miss Wright, startled by his departure, stared at the door. Mr. Doyle never left the office before twelve o'clock.

Out on the street, Doyle waited for the light to change at the corner. He grinned suddenly at the plan that was taking shape in his mind. Halfway down the next block, he halted in front of the small cafe where he usually ate a quick lunch before hurrying back to the office. Today he didn't go in, but sauntered to the next corner and stopped in front of the travel agency. "Beautiful Bermuda," "Enticing Tahiti," "Aloha Hawaii." Signs cluttered the window with offers of exotic voyages promising adventure to the traveler. He entered the office and edged up to the young lady at the desk.

"May I help you, Sir?" her cheery voice greeted him.

"A friend of mine is interested in a trip to Tahiti. Could you suggest a travel plan for him?"

"Certainly, Sir, would you care to step into the office? Our travel manager will help you with some plans."

"Thank you, but...could I just have some travel folders please?"

Doyle unfolded the colorful folders on the desk in front of him. His secretary eyed him with a quizzical look and then returned to her typewriter. She was curious when he requested that she put in a call for him to the TWA ticket office.

At 4 p.m. as usual, Doyle left the office after placing a stack of forms on his secretary's desk. A minute later he re-entered the office, picked up his hat, then paused before Miss Wright and planted a quick peck on her forehead. Miss Wright, the amazed Miss Wright, watched Doyle march out of the office. She was now quite sure that her employer had come unglued. She was still

shaking her head when she locked the office door and pushed the button for the elevator.

After leaving the office, Paul Doyle packed a small suitcase at his apartment, dined at the Hawaiian Room, and returned to his office building. He climbed the stairway in preference to waiting for the elevator. He tipped his hat to the scrub woman in the hall and turned the key in the office door. Taking a small briefcase from the storage room, Doyle began to empty his desk, being careful not to take more than belonged to him. He snapped the case shut and hurried from the building.

At the street corner Doyle checked his memo book for the departure time of his plane. "Ten-fifteen. Just an hour from now." The light changed, and he half ran toward the bridge, the suitcase and the briefcase bouncing against his leg. He paused by the railing in the center of the span and raised the briefcase over the water--just one splash and Krispy-Krackle, Inc. could be gone forever. There would be no splash. Doyle smiled as he remembered the expression on Miss Wright's face when he had kissed her that afternoon.

"You know, I'll bet she would look pretty good in a grass skirt." He lowered the case to his side and assured himself as he hurried toward his office, "Tomorrow it's business as usual."

In February sun
early morning elves
bundled up in red and blue flannel,
turn cartwheels in branches,
play leap-frog in weeds.

Mary Larsen



"Skull"

Annette Sorensen

Innuendo

How soon
the moon
has come
to sum
our goal--
the whole
of all our strain.

How slow
to grow
the will
to fill
the hole
the soul
must satisfy.

How long
the song,
our strain
of pain,
will last--
soon past
our life is gone.

Tim Wright

You Were There

You were there when my days were joyful,
And we laughed.
You were there when my nights were troubled,
And you listened.
You were there when I walked the rains, alone and cold,
And you were warm.
You were there when my world had beauty,
And you were beautiful.
You were there - my spring was yours -
And you were worth it.

Carl Wangsvick

Vacancy

When I walk lost country lanes
And see the house leaned on the hill,
I wonder whether someone still
Peers through the vacant panes.

Push back the gate and step with care
Across the sagging slats that stay
Prone on the earth in grey decay
With walk boards scattered there.

Dry flung weeds surround it all;
The pump arm points toward the sky;
And swallows fly through a storm cracked eye
To nest upon the wall.

Step lightly past the one hinged door
And feel the warp of boards sag down.
In years no one has been around
To tread upon this floor.

The house is cold and dark with mold,
And I am not as young, you see,
As when you settled here with me
Then left when I grew old.

John Overgaard

"Floral Still Life"

Vicki Yowell



Haiku

Silent kitten sees
Sleeping me in sunshine. Soft,
Scratchy tongue on cheek.

Mary Larsen

Home for Christmas

The heavy tolling church bell
Struck the icy air.
It chipped and broke the stillness
Falling everywhere.

The knives of shattered silence
Pierced and cut my heart.
I couldn't stand and listen;
I had to go apart.

My thoughts were of Bob Johnson
Before he went away
Saying, "I'll be home for Christmas;
I couldn't stay away.

There won't be snow in Viet Nam,
Icy paths that crack,
But when the snow falls here at home,
I'll be coming back."

The snow is sparkling diamonds
Lying on the hill,
And Bob's come home for Christmas,
Lying cold and still.

Karen Rannells

The Cold Ground

Frost-stilled life,...frigid;
Deathless earth, hardened unto clay.
A stifling wind captures my breath.
I tread this harsh, stoned path.

Afar a tree lingers, majestically traced on
the backdrop of a storm-stilled sky.
She stands tall, with features firm, fierce.
But upon her I have come and...
Barren are her limbs!
Her trunk rotted, the task of summer pests.
Fall, thou mighty trunk, upon this bare, cold earth;
Betrayed by elements of your own nursing.

Where are those pests who on that stately tree did feed?
Who of the elements are left to take stand for their deeds?
Each is gone!

Bitter winds remain dashing crazed across yielding
shores, treeless forestlands, guilt-riddled meadows.
Guilt? You meadow shall suffer unjustly now.

You fed them.

You forest shall not grow again.

You supplied them.

Thou, impenetrable shore, protected them.

All of you hide and cower neath the darkened sky,

Alone to bear their viperous deeds.

Their dreams built nightmares from reality.

No longer will ends lie questioned.

No more will philosophers quarrel.

Senseless rule has answered them all,

Answered everyone,...everyone!

But a christened baby had to die.

Robert Aho