

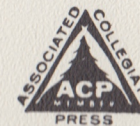
Sower 1969



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PREFACE

Here it is, **Sower 1969**. Thirty two pages of Dana's creative talent, this years finest. To the contributors, the staff wishes to say, "Thank you." To the reader, we say, "Enjoy, not just once, but several times."

A unique feature in this years **Sower** is two second language poems. Congratulations to Boyd Horst for his French poem, "La Vie Grosse" and to Keketso Phasoana whose home is Rhodesia and whose native language is Sotho for his poem in English, "The Black Monster."

Finally, a special thanks to the **Sower 1969** staff and to Mr. Bansen for their help in this years publication.

Lynn Edgell
Editor

AWARDS

Joseph Langland Award for Prose

REMEMBER AUTUMN by Pam Holden

Joseph Langland Award for Poetry

GOMER'S CHILDREN by Lynn Edgell

Hal Evans Cole Award for Excellence in the Arts

GASLAMPS by Paige Yowell

Kaj Munk Award for Translation

MAN Translated by Becky Nielsen

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LA VIE GROSSE

la vie sèche pour moi
n'est plus
de plus en plus sèche même devenue
elle n'existe plus

la feuille d'automne tombée d'arbre
même à la boue
même pour cela qu'est-ce qu'il y a
de plus

tout séchée
avec la boue mêlée
je deviens engrais
la vie grossière
la vie commence à grossir

tout nu après tout je sais
d'où je viens
d'où vient l'esprit le corps ce corps
le mien
même de la boue qui est de la terre
le sein

de ma boue devenu l'engrais
où se trouve cette vie mêlée
ne cherche plus que le vert
les pousses la sève fraîche

Boyd Horst

CONCENTRATION
Bob Rasmussen
Woodcut

THE HOUSE ON 101ST STREET

The wind blew the footprints of silver birds
Over our dead; we lay unaware on spring grass.
The sun defracted to millions of rainbows on your hair,
We were new to each other then, and we talked.
You drug my life out, sliced it, examined it, replaced it
A little out of line, but that was alright.
You told me I was the lonely house we saw just before;
Tall, strange and gray-cold, alone against all the world,
But still somehow warm, dignified, inviting exploration.
And you cared not to have my roof only bare beams,
And you wanted windows into my soul.
Stand, gutted and used, holding out still against all!
We walked then, you east, me north;
You to the one before who held your life,
Me, to find a hill and become weathered.

Michael Beech

ALONE

I wanted to count
the raindrops on the window
but there was no rain.

L. J. White

always a sweet plethora becomes our angry prison

S. H.

She smiles at me in a living dream;
I reach to engulf her.
Her face is in my eyes;
We breathe as one.
But her life ceases.
I am alone in the light.
Only darkness with its warmth
Will bring her again.
Screw your modern morality,
Or the search for Ultimate Truth!
So what if God is dead
Or Black is Beautiful?
That doesn't put her arms around me once more.
That doesn't make my dreams real.
Without her I just feign creation.
My impotence cries for revenge!
My crucifixion begins when I rise.
Let me wake to find this life a dream.

Joel Hermann

HAIKU

Ten slender fingers
Harmoniously moving . . .
Silence — the deaf speak.

Mary Louise Henneman

the fraudulent sofa floats over their super psychosis

CHORDS IN THE NIGHT

It starts with a single note
then the haunting organ chord
repeated
again and again.
A quarter rest
the chord crescendos
forte, fortissimo
closer, closer.
Chords fill the night
percussion:
tiny drums and cymbals.
The crescendo is building
it reaches a climax
then
the decrescendo begins.
Drums and cymbals are muffled
chords become piano, pianissimo
till at last the smoking, black organ is silent
lost in the night.

Sharon Christiansen

EMBARASSING EROTIC OBSCENE MEANINGFUL POEM

cockelfuss
dirt

A Student

God's halcyon bottle aims from the party and into an element

HAIKU

The sea smooths away
footprints in the sand, saying,
"Before man, I am."

Lynn Edgell



PORTRAIT
Acrylic
Walt Duda

THE PLASTIC ROSE

The plastic rose inhales no breath,
Will never know of life and death,
Will never tempt my wandering nose,
Nor seed another plastic rose.
The factory flower refuses the rain,
Rejects the sun, with nothing to gain.
The plastic rose stays unaware,
God gives no artificial care.

Connie Derry

HAIKU

Bare branches reaching
into the gray winter air
wanting spring to come.

Sharon Juhler

what if a golosh grabs a light ghostly sand

IDIOTIMATIC

Once upon a time, long long ago, three wise men lived together in a crooked little house in the middle of nowhere. Their mother, may God rest her soul, had named her sons Tom, Dick, and Harry. Those who knew them well often commented that these three stooges led lives of Riley. Each brother held the dubious distinction of being a natural-born musician. Tom, who had a round little belly and was jolly as an elf, could fiddle away for hours on his Stradivarius violin. Dick, the second of his mother's three sons, was tall as a tree and skinny as a bean pole. He loved his slide trombone and wished he had seventy-six of them. Harry, the youngest, blew up a storm with a mean alto sax, although you wouldn't think it to look at him. In order to peer into his thoughtful eyes you had to look through huge horn-rimmed glasses. Harry had high hopes of becoming the world's greatest musician. He would practice for hours in the shade of the sturdy oak tree planted behind the house. Not only was he a stupendous sax player, but he also had the voice of an angel.

One day Harry was outside diligently practicing as usual when he had a brainstorm. "Brothers," he called at the top of his voice, "I have a magnificent obsession!" His manner of speaking caused Tom and Dick to stream out of the house.

"Brothers, you recall I have always said that a penny saved is a penny earned. Unfortunately, we have saved none. Now, in my opinion, it is necessary for us to look ahead. We are each of us dyed-in-the-wool musicians, and, although time will tell, it seems to me that we should put our talents to work. I think our best bet is to cut a record."

"Fiddle faddle!" exclaimed brother Tom as he tucked his violin under his arm.

"Oh, I can see you got up on the wrong side of bed, as usual. As a matter of fact I doubt if it will even ring a bell with you when I say we're over our heads in bills already." One could see by looking at Harry that he was fit to be tied.

"Personally, I think Harry has hit the nail on the head. It's a sure bet that the public would be crazy about a record by us," put in Dick.

"But we don't know the first thing about--"

"Aw, that's kid stuff," said Harry. "I say majority rules."

And so it came to pass that these three musketeers went into the record business. A violin, a trombone, and an alto sax were such an unusual combination that people began to sit up and take notice almost immediately. Their first recording was "How Dry I Am," which was followed by a rousing rendition of the "Nutcracker Suite." As their fame spread they made guest appearances on television programs and even took a promotional tour around the world in eighty days.

Harry took to strutting about, slapping Tom on the back and exclaiming, "Ah, the good life!" He even traded his glasses in for contacts. To be sure,

(more)

he didn't intend to be pompous, but he was having a whale of a good time and couldn't keep himself from rubbing it into Tom a little. One blustery day in March, however, he was taken off guard as Tom announced, "I've stuck to it for a coon's age, but this is a dog's life if I've ever seen one. The first of the month I'm going back home to live in peace."

Harry was shocked. "Leave us, Tom? But you know we always do things the united way! That's enough of that idea! Why, we've only started. We have mountains left to climb. As they say, you ain't heard nothing yet!"

"I'm sorry, Harry, but I'm just plain fed up."

And, indeed, Tom did live up to his word and return to the crooked little house in the middle of nowhere, but not before he had convinced his brothers to accompany him. After all, as Harry had said, they had always done things together and were not about to stop now. Back at home each brother, with mixed emotions, packed his instrument away in the closet, giving up music at last for a new way of life. They took up knitting and bought a color television set with plenty of knobs and dials. Only on rare days would they dig out one of their old records and listen to it. Even Harry adjusted to the new routine admirably. The long and the short of it is that Tom, Dick, and Harry all lived happily ever after. You were expecting something else, perhaps?

Kathy Christensen

I'VE WANTED ALL THE WORLD

I've long wanted to see the world.

I saw Paris and Van Gogh.

I've long wanted to hear the world.

I had a Wagnerian opera and Chopin's Polonaise.

I've long wanted to taste the world.

I tasted German chocolate tortes and Liebfraumilch.

I've long wanted to smell the world.

I smelled edelweiss and Arpege.

I've long wanted to touch the world.

I touched churning crowds and I've touched you.

L. J. White

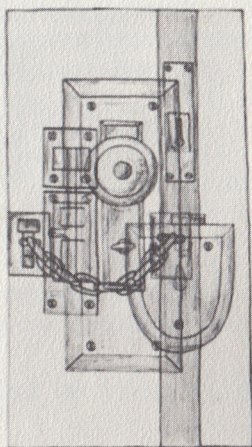


**MEPHISTOPHELES DISGUISED
AS PORKIAS**
Woodcut
Walt Duda

HAIKU

I asked of the road,
"Will you take me there?" It said,
"Friend, I run both ways."

John Leitel



LOCKED AND LATCHED
Pencil and Ink
Richard Tobin



THE CHESSBOARD
Tempera
Jerilyn Linscott

THE SAND CASTLE

The newly married couple lost in each other, a small child seeing it for the first time, and an old man who has seen it for many years are all watching the calm sea gently lapping the shore. They look beyond a sand castle which stands several feet from the water's edge, the early morning's work of four children. And although they all know the sand castle is there, no one notices the carefulness in each door and window, for they don't know how long and lovingly it was worked upon. They do not realize that for a small portion in four people's lives, it was life. For now each person is involved only in his own life.

So much has happened today on this beach. Before the castle was built this morning, the sky turned from the cool deep black of night to the sunny blue morning when the fiery ball came up seemingly out of the sea and climbed higher and higher into the sky. As always it was the most beautiful sunrise ever. The seagulls screamed as they dived for their breakfast, for the day had begun.

Soon the smooth white beaches, swept clean by the waves during the night, were full of impressions: footprints made from feet running to the cool water, seat marks where children had fallen, and shapes of people stretched out to absorb the rays of the higher climbing sun. The sand castle was built and the air was full of sounds: laughter, screeching, talking, and music from radios. And the ocean laughed at the absurdity of it all, with her waves growing larger as they charged for the sand to break on the shore.

The day progressed and the sun started descending. The people who had been so happy went back to their homes. Now in the cool of the evening as the shadows pass over the beach it is deserted again, except for the couple, the child, and the old man. Each is seeing something different as he looks out beyond the castle. The young man and woman are completely wrapped in dreams of tomorrow as they try to stare into the future. Their feelings glow more than the sun that is on the last part of its daily journey. The child is planning a new game to play and how he will build a new boat to sail. He is a little afraid of the water but hides behind a mask of bravado. The old man is different from the others, for he looks behind instead of ahead.

All four are so intent on their own thoughts that they haven't noticed the wind coming up and the waves breaking harder and higher, while at the same time eating away at the shoreline. In its rage, the angry white foam of the breakers is visible far out at sea and now with one sharp crack, the sand castle is gone. The woman bursts into tears as her husband comforts her. Her dream has been destroyed. The boy is infuriated and runs to the water screaming his wrath. And the old man sighs and turns away.

Betty Ann Ramsey

PAGAN POETRY I

tonight I pour my wine upon the ground
libation after libation
the temple prostitute causes me to
experience resurrection after resurrection
I pour my wine upon the ground
this is the true poetry of the flesh
the pit is dug
the earth is thrown aside
I see the bull above me
 charged with potent blood
long and hard he strains
potency become libation
the sacred holy tabernacle of the tauroboleum
tonight I pour my wine upon the ground
the bullocks bleat for me
dehumanization before emasculation
this is the true poetry of the spirit

PAGAN POETRY II

the coils around her arms and legs
 constrict at the sight of me
I am as wholesome and vibrant as
 vegetative growth
 so green and fresh
I am the long straight tree
no mad-dog teeth have ever torn my flesh
I am a profusion of shoots and runners
the immediacy of my need taxes
 the earth where I stand
my potency is primordial
 I raise up phoenixes out of ashes
 and beetles out of dung

PAGAN POETRY III

no longer the full-bodied tree
oak or ash
not Yggdrasil
Life
Knowledge
the beautiful gleaming tree is broken
come and feed the stump
catch the juice
like an old insect in the crucible
 of the desert and arid places
 in the very womb of being
of which fluid and plastic forces
tear off one of the legs
I walk and limp.
your hands drenched in sap
 won't help me.

PAGAN POETRY IV

the dung-beetle returns to walk upon the earth
his shining fuselage passes a thousand
 even harder older colder
 golden scarabs in the sand.
the sun dries the wings of
 its new point of energy
it moves its legs and horns and jaws
it stinks from its creation
and is ready.

A Student

INCANTATIONS OF THE NIGHT

Incantations of nighttime pound against my ears,
Only sometimes finding an unguarded corridor of my mind.
It is the nighttrain that always and without fail
Breaks into the inner byways of a forgotten room
 on the other side of my ego.
Its whistle sounding and resounding till
 silence gives me empty peace once more.
The the cry of the nightbird —
 not really belonging to the night, but
 existing there as if by the spell of
 some Night-Monger —
 whimpers to me
 from a lilac bush

Perhaps these things only bother me because I do not
 myself belong to the night.
I only stumble through the darkness
Watching wind push against wind, while I search for my
 favorite time:
When darkness pushes against light and
The cry of the night bird becomes laughter,
The train is just another piece of machinery,
Grinding its way across a path from one wholesale house
 to the next,
No longer tormenting my soul,
No longer making claim to me, fearing my protector
 the day
And the day being wiser than the night makes no claim
 on me
 because she knows
 I belong to you.

James Black II



STILL LIFE
Woodcut
Paige Yowell

HUMANOID
Bronze
George Wallace



THE BLACK MONSTER

Why can't you spare the sucklings,
The newly wed, faced with life ahead?
The middle-aged hate your ugly claws,
Which when stretched, they prey greedily.
When, when Repugnant Monster will you rest?
Had you not haunted on that Thursday Eve,
I should not be wearing this black cloth.
For my devoted wife would have been spared.
But you seized her from my arms rudely,
In your chasm now she lies where light is cut.
Take me along then if that is your wish.
I have, I have to be with her tonight.
Tear my limbs with your saw teeth
And carry my Spirit to where she is.
Does that satisfy your greed, your mission?

Koketso J. Phasoana

a gypsy finagles but escapes the warm bride who soars tentatively

REMEMBER AUTUMN

From the rustling, knee-high grass I watched the sun bid a fluorescent good-night to the river valley. Alone on the hill I felt I was the only person on earth, an Eve looking on the garden for the first time. And I wasn't lonely for I had the wind, a wanderer like myself, for a companion.

The rain-scented wind was whipping the storm from the south and the black clouds rolled in with the kettle drum thunder. The prickly dry grass murmured in protest as the valley hid in shadows from the coming rain.

Below me in the ravine an old cottonwood, towering above the other trees, bent restlessly against the younger, more vibrant wind. The rolling hills, marred only by the plow, met the horizon subtly beyond the wide Missouri. A pair of gleaming headlights crawled along the ribbon road toward the twinkling lights of town.

The first few drops of rain spattered on my jacket as I leaned against a rough fence post that stood black against the sky. I felt the tense, exciting atmosphere always present before autumn storms and I remembered how, as a youngster, I would sit on our huge open front porch and watch the rain. The fresh clean smell, the thunder running shivers up my spine, a cold nose, the spatter of raindrops on cement, and the cool wind were the same as they had always been. I wondered why I was never afraid of storms as many children are.

I like to wake up on Saturday mornings to the tapping of rain on the windows and feel snug and warm and pleasantly sleepy. I like to be alone in the rain to think or just to dream. People are people in the rain. Because of wet feet and frizzy hair, part of their mask is gone and so they hurry through puddles into the impersonal world of taxis and subways.

Autumn is my favorite season of the year. It is rainy Friday nights around fireplaces with popcorn and candied apples. It is Halloween and the joy of little children. It is the shuffling of leaves under foot and blue, blue skies that accent the colored leaves after the first frost. It is football games on Saturdays and hayrides with cold feet. It is the last of the thunder storms before the silent peace of winter.

I was getting colder and wetter by the minute standing there in the wind. It was time to go, at least for awhile. I knew that I would stand in many more autumn storms to dream. Suddenly I felt like running and letting out a whoop so I did, and then laughed because it felt so good.

If someday I can no longer remember how rich the autumn is, I will have grown too old to live. I hope I never lose the taste of life; I hope I never grow old.

Pam Holden

MAN

Beneath me, fire of the earth, above me, a universe of shattering cold. Surrounding me, the green fields, the blue sea, the horizon's beauteous, wandering ring.

On a sphere in space I balance between the pressing forces of madness and the cold processes of paralyzing thought.

Between the chasms I build life, tones and flavors, towns and ships, miracles of color, and a poem that mirrors the whole world.

Otto Gelsted
Translated from Danish
by **Becky Nielsen**

YOUNG MARTYR

a strange nebula
clouding the sky
approaches the earth —
let the star speak for itself —
let it keep its light
and its remote freedom —
who
can know the aspiration of a star?
who
dares stop a comet streaking through space?
and who
dares speak before the silence of victory?
but you, who want
to die a glorious death —
wear the name of the star
across your guiltless breast, and
your death will be as pure
as a night of stars —

Gustaf Munch-Petersen
Translated from Danish
by **Juel Neve**

RAIN

We dislike the rain here;
We recognize the need for it
For growing crops and gardens.
Yet we worry about our hair,
And clothes, and new shoes.
It may cancel our picnic
Or ruin our tennis match.
We don't think about it much
Except that we don't like it.
You welcome the rain.
It comes hard and fast — there,
Beating the rocks and
Bending the trees to new positions,
It races down roads and hillsides
Carrying familiar debris
To an unknown destiny,
Cooling the thick jungle, and
Giving a moment's relief
From the clinging hotness.
The mosquitos disappear,
The sweating bodies are
Washed clean and breathe,
And the stench of death
Is for a moment covered up.

Marilyn Hansen

HAIKU

Run, swift impala!
The cheetah is lurking. O!
Your blood dyes the sand.

Chuck Knight

HAIKU

Bullfrog on the bank,
you belch out your evening call . . .
did you eat too fast?

Larry Hubbard

GASLAMPS
Oil
Paige Yowell



HE FAILED

He failed
that is all, he failed
 (the coffin was lowered
down into the moist home of roots, worms, and elves)
 His ambition was to storm
the gates of Heaven
 He set out
 his whole life for this task
 (it, the coffin, had reached bottom
and rested in an inch of water, for it was drizzling)
 As he moved eyes fixed firmly upward,
he tripped over the stones that cause one to
stumble here below.
 (the grave-diggers now became grave-fillers)
For he never knew
 or realized
that the gates of Heaven are here on earth
 and, thus, require a level gaze
And that God walks naked among men
 very mean
 very low
 very crucified
Also very short
 so that if the gaze is too high
 one misses Him entirely
 (the grave now filled was a bare, bleak
mound of mud that smelled heavily of
musk and decay)
(And the blind, the lame, the poor, and the meek
bowed their scarred heads and sang a mournful dirge
with their toothless lips, as a small, beaten mongrel Dog
sniffed among them licking their sore-covered calves)
 (then all were silent and left
save for the mongrel Dog who
with mourning eyes ascended the grave-mound,
lay down and whimpered)
(And the headstone, wet with Heaven's tears,
 read . . .

D. Kirche

W. L. Wolff

THE APOCALYPSE

In this grey world,
 tainted by man's self-righteousness,
 where gadgetry is of higher worth than a soul,
a computerized, self-resurrecting, plastic society,
 assumes the moral conscience of the universe,
 enforced with nuclear toys,
 that give ultimate responses.
It is not good enough to simply have life,
 it must be worth living.

The tall mushrooms of smoke tear holes in the sky,
ascend up into the subdued,
magnificence of the winter sky.
The hot breath of its burning face,
under the firetongues, unspeakable,
hush the smoldering earth into its eternal night.
How many centuries of forgiveness,
 scorched out in the fireball of uncontrolled technology?
The coldness and quietude of death,
lay bare a lifeless land covered with raw air.
And the night sky quick with stars,
shining over the dusted ruins of man's mistake,
 the ashes and bones of God's mistake.
Valleys lay stretched and blackened, whitened.
Mountains are leveled, formed.
All that remains of man are the craters,
 of hate and ignorance.
After a hundred years,
 maybe a thousand,
 even a million . . .
 Time doesn't matter anymore.
When dust has covered the sterile surface,
what remains is untouched,
 unseen beauty.
 Even a dead planet has a sunset.
And out of the dust and death, the swirling gasses,
 and time smoothed rocks,
comes a spark of life.
 The grace of God is seared but not dead.

Walt Duda

IMPRESSIONS IN AN AIRPORT

I sat in the orange plastic chair and tapped my foot impatiently on the shiny tile floor. It reminded me of the television commercial where the typical American housewife dressed in typical stylish suit and three inch heels scrubs and waxes her typical **Good Housekeeping** kitchen floor in one easy step with Top Job. I nearly laughed out loud, but a strict looking elderly lady gave me a withering look from the other side of the lounge. I wanted to stick out my tongue at her, but I knew that wouldn't be at all sophisticated.

I glanced at the clock for the fifth time in five minutes. Six o'clock. Dinner time. I decided I was too broke to be hungry. Besides, I would be home in six hours and Mom would certainly have something around. Then I remembered how my teenage brother eats, so I changed my mind and bought a candy bar. That really made me hungry.

I looked at the clock again. Six fifteen. Only two hours and thirty five minutes to wait. "O.K.," commenting to myself, "I can't just sit in this chair for two and a half hours doing nothing." I took my own advice and walked into the gift shop, heading toward the books and magazines deliberately because the shop had stuffed animals, my weakness. My mother would never understand a stuffed animal instead of supper.

I ended up buying a paperback novel I had wanted to read and filling only forty-five minutes. I retreated to my orange chair and tried to read, but I kept interrupting myself. Visions of plane crashes from old movies kept popping into my head. I told myself I was being ridiculous, and I finally forgot about it. Then I started worrying about tripping up the stairs or poking some important businessman with my umbrella. I knew I must have looked like a freshman flying home for the first time. I certainly felt it.

I forced my attention back to the book and only read a few words when a skinny young man came up to me and blurted something about his name being David Collins. I looked up and found myself peering at a pair of knobby knees. My goodness he was a tall one! He wasn't at all exciting, either, because he was selling magazine subscriptions, of all things. I told him I would rather have a stuffed animal. He stood there and looked at me for a second and then tottered away nervously. I guess nothing in his sales pitch could answer that.

A half-hour later the voice over the intercom announced my flight number, and I nearly ran all the way to gate ten. There were a lot of people waiting to check in, so I composed myself and began examining my fellow flyers.

Most of the people looked ordinary enough. Many of them were bored businessmen in blue suits reading newspapers. I watched my umbrella very carefully. One older lady looked terribly tired and I realized she was sending off her daughter and four grandchildren. No wonder she looked so tired.

(more)

Then I saw him. He was about nineteen or twenty and was wearing that sickening green uniform. His mother was trying to smile through many tears and his younger brother was finding it hard to be a man.

It was time to go. The girl he was holding so tightly turned to the wall and sobbed. He walked away quickly and never looked back.

As I took the seat in front of him I saw a single tear fall down his cheek. Suddenly I felt very old. He was crying.

Pam Holden

GOMER'S CHILDREN

Jezreel, my son, my life, though not my son,
Return to sleep, and dream of her return.
Thy youth, God sown, knows not what she has done;
Of Gomer's loves I pray you never learn.

Lo-ruamah, mine, though daughter of her lust,
She's gone to sin and now my tears you share.
Though pitied not, I pray you keep your trust
In Gomer, gone to men who do not care.

Lo-ammi, infant, weep that she may hear.
I cannot tell you if she loves us still.
Yet not my people if you lure her here;
Our Gomer must come home of her own will.

A lie! I love the whore as do these three;
For fifteen shekels she'll come home to me.

Lynn Edgell

The Hebrew names in this sonnet are translated into English from Hosea 1:1-8 as: Jezreel, God sown; Lo-ruamah, not pitied; and Lo-ammi, not my people.

that, i know

not that thought,
that i still walk the path —
that i still have the firm mountain wall
at my side —
that flowers grow —
and that the grass softens my harsh steps —
that the cliff radiates the sun's warmth —
but
that, which i do know,
that i can stumble —
that there is a chasm —
that i must walk firmly,
and that the mountain at my side
edges nearer the cliff the higher i climb —
that the path will be rougher,
and the rocks sharper —
that the grass will wither
as i approach the sun.

Gustaf Munch-Petersen
Translated from Danish
by **Becky Nielsen**

LYNN
Plaster
Mary Kuhr



THE DEATH OF THE LIVING GOD

When there was no man, there were not times like now.
Man made times
and tries to live in them.
When there was no man, there were not people like now.
Man made people
and tries to live with them.
When there was no man, there were not gods like now.
Man made gods
of people and times
and tries to live under them.
But . . .
When there was no God, there were not men like now.
God made men
of dust and ashes
and tries to live through them.
And . . .
There are times and people and gods like now.
God is Dead, Alive.

P. M. Nessen

HANDS
Bronze
George Wallace



GARY

The ever green cathedral
Its soaring, praying steeples reach upwards
Into the clean air,
And its cool reflections descend
To the depths of the virgin Michigan
In a crystalized, mythologized past.

It's canned.
It's frozen
In the glory of
Libby's once-fresh-and-green vegetables,
Scientifically wrapped in sterile cellophane packages,
And shipped off in air-tight plastic containers,
To arbitrary destinations.

But, oh what glory, what power, what progress.
The foundries, the factories, the forges,
Their spires spitting and coughing up praises;
Aspiring and expiring to the glory of
Our Father who art to be found somewhere
In the pages of the Annual Stock Holders' Report,
And those green, crisp bills.

And the directors drive their mint-new Continentals
Along the municipal incinerators,
And past the melancholy fringes of the lake,
Trimmed with its green stench and worthless distillates and
All of the other excommunicates of Industrialism.

Hail Michigan,
Full of it.
Raped Michigan.
Lying in the shadows
Of the never green cathedral,
With the spontaneous combustion of a mechanized faith
Burning at the bottom of the dump.

Paula Hansen

THE OLD STAIRCASE
Oil
Annette Sorensen

