



SOWER 1971

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Volume XXVI

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FOREWORD

Since the beginning of time, the Sower has sown the seeds of many different ideas. He does so again this year. The seeds are no different. Indeed, they are as old as man and as young. Sadly, most often the less desirable ones take root while others, more pure but also more frail, do not. Perhaps in you these seeds of love and of the peace and harmony which understanding brings may find fertile soil in which they can break out of their shells of anguish and despair and grow healthy and tall into the skies of the future.

Jim Pierce
Editor



THE DAYS OF SHOUTING

These are the days of shouting,
raging to be heard.
I don't think there really is a majority
at least not a silent one.
Everyone demands satisfaction.
The long haired radicals
with shoeboxes underneath their arms.
The hardhats with their brass knuckles.
The liberated women with their sagging breasts.
The Negroes with their upraised fists.
All of them like children
competing for Mother's attention.

But mother is not around.
She's off searching for a fantasy world
and deaf mutes to sing to
or the blind for whom she can dance.
Making orphans of her children
while looking for her stillborn.
Reopening the weed grown graves
that she dug for them herself.

These are the days of shouting,
raging to be heard.
And the silent earth suffers without a sigh.

by **Tim Kuiken**

JOHNNY AND FRED

Johnny
 (the one with a mind like a snarled fishing-reel)
and Fred
 (the one with no mind at all)
come to stay the day
Johnny says we are all dead
 our lives lived out long ago
 and wanders off to play in the fog
and Fred's got me
 up against a wall
 with his dread silence

by **Eric Evans**



SEASONS

she stood there,
nestled in a vale of soft lights
and sultry looks . . .
a haven of spring
in the barren winter of
loneliness.

she stretched her limbs
toward me,
green leaves of love
soaring skyward
as if to push away
the gloomy mists
of melancholy.

snows of sorrow were
melted as her welcome warmth
spread its rays of
love and light.

but spring sweetness
changes to summer savagery,
and in the heat
those life-giving leaves
were left dried and cracking.

now in the rustle of autumn's crispness
i once again feel
the unbridged gap of sadness,
and watch and wait.

by **Steve Hahn**

WE DO NOT THINK ALIKE

I play with the stars in the water,
and I listen, at a bend, to the river singing.
I await the frigid wind
as a passing bird.

You see hands of a thief
in hands stained with blood.
Can they not have come from tending roses?

You do not know there are flowers
which smile on their stems.
You feel always that night is sad
and the heavens are false.

My cup is often bitter;
I cast away the honey of hopes
and I drink it slowly.
You smash it in rage
or drink it in one swallow.

from the Spanish of
Aristides Sosa
by **Rebecca Nielsen**

THE SONG OF MY NEW OPTIMISM

Lights of festive brilliance flamed in my spirit.
A strong cosmic breath gave impulse to my being;
And I saw my soul, newly young, ascending
in the spiral of a dream, to a new dawn.

I heard a murmur of the songs of stars.
—Memories, perhaps, of longings unfulfilled—
And I perceived that the hoarse greyhounds of desire
like soft lambs threw themselves at my feet.

Unutterable happiness suddenly filled me,
and I felt a rare joy, purest trembling;
the mysterious Sphinx offered me her smile
and my new optimism rejoiced in song.

from the Spanish of
Aristides Sosa
by **Rebecca Nielsen**

REFLECTION

You are sight and sound and touch
to me.

The sight—

of a schoolgirl skipping home
lighting the sidewalk
just by being there,
of dark hair that reflects the nighttime
and catches the wind
as it whirls about your head,
of dark eyes and white skin
that shine when you smile.

The sound—

of tiny footsteps that walk beside mine
disturbing the sleeping sand
and rustling the grass,
of a rippling brook as you watch it wash the rocks,
tumble downward,
and finally disappear,
of quiet words whispered in my ear
above the roar of the wind.

The touch—

of the night chill against my face,
fresh and clean
and not really so cold,
of a soft, fuzzy-white scarf
and tiny hands
snug in woolen mittens,
of warmth
nestled in my arms.

It was evening, but now it is morning.
And today I must be about my business,
hurrying,
scurrying,
worrying

And I do not see you as I run from place to place,
busy with the day's activity.

You are out of sight,
out of sound,
out of touch

. . . but not out of mind.

by **Don Nelson**

POOR ST. TOM

poor St. Tom from Missouri
with the sunken eyes of a realist
came down to tell me
of one he knew well:
carrying his cryptic cross like a carnival
he stumbled into the town like a miner
blinking in the light set off
by a thousand gleaming eyes
where have you been since then I say
awaiting with dread
an uncertain answer
lost
lost
so lost and so free
in reeling reality
his thoughts like fists
drive one into silence
like a stake into the ground
it's cold said he
it's winter said I
something abundant like ice rides by
stilling the stir of the river
and touching ground lays flat
upon the calloused palm of land
sending roots to the heart of the matter
freezing the stirrings of the soul
said I:
we are the Radiation Generation
passing winter around in cups
said he:
you are blunt humanity
traveling in herds
stampeded by a storm at night
he rose to go
and what of you I ask
his eyes stand out darkly
like buttons on faded leather
I AM A WOODPECKER
POUNDING MY CRAZED HEAD
UPON A WROUGHT-IRON FENCE

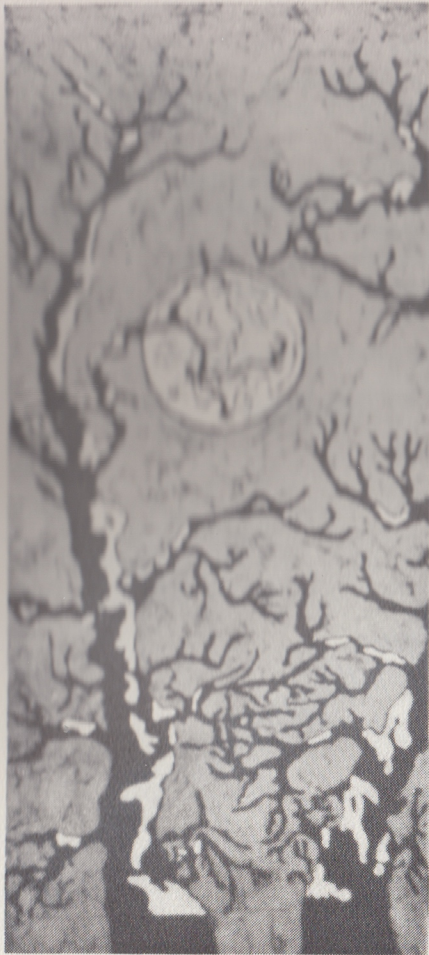
and he is gone
leaving a puddle of wilted snow
upon the floor
spring will come again I think
soon flowers and dams will be bursting
as the wave that dies bumps up again
slowly I drink my clotted wine
and await
the great
celestial surprise

by Eric Evans



THE PENITENT

by Judy Brooke



by Mary Saucke

THE LAW OF THE MOUNTAIN WOLVES

And this is the law of the mountains:
In all things, you must obey.
The mountains are ever the stronger;
you're passing and fade in a day.

Trust neither the full pack's howling,
nor your own kill in the park;
The pack will soon turn against you,
and wolf-strength fades in the dark.

Go lonely, my free-toed brother,
run lonely in front of the wind;
the aspens are all turning golden;
winter is soon to begin.

by Walter Wolff

LETTER

Byron, Deer——i hope do really true
because forever is so immense when
miles prevail upon the summer thoughts
of innocent victims of Truth;
wisdom never sufficed for Freud when
understanding stood patiently waiting
for love. question mark thoughts
abound luxuriously within the softly
silent cavities of our minds?

stop look & listen

dreary phone call of used-up words
ex-communicating hellofatear
ears are not what really counts but
what goes into them
language of the deafanddumb makes
silly sense ya oui yes si

then broken chasms

the ultimate Reality settled among
the dandelion field in my head
and with rejoicing radiance of shimmering
rainbows transformed weeds into
brilliant glowing smiling daisies
come witness the rebirth of my soul

by Carol Anderson

ON THE ROAD TO OZ

I met a tin man
who once said,
"man lives his
life until he's
dead, and when
he's dead he
turns to dust."
I killed him . . .
. . . do you think
he'll rust?

by Jamyl

LE PLUS GRAND PARTI

Beaucoup de peuple vivent dans
l'obscurité vide, mais—
Ils ne le savent pas parce que
l'ignorance est félicité.
Bien qu'ils ont le pouvoir à
penser et douter,
Ils ont peur de la peine que
le savoir peut donner.
Je ne suis pas un Dieu donc
je ne peux pas les condamner.
Ils sont heureux avec leur très
simple vivacité.
Mais enfin mon coeur pleut avec
les pleurs d'impatience
Parce qu'ils manquent le savoir—
Le plus grand parti d'existence.

by **Katie Hines**

AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT

Some years ago, during my student days, I had the pleasure to be attending college in a large city. One might well imagine that the pleasure I speak of would include such things as the opera, art museums, symphony orchestras, the theatre, and the like—cultural opportunities which are readily available to the urban dweller. But I cared for none of these. The only advantage which the city gave, as far as I was concerned, was the opportunity it gave me to frequent the Metropolitan Chess Club.

Chess, indeed, has been about the only passion I have allowed myself during my somewhat ascetic life. I learned the game at about the age of ten or eleven and have followed it fanatically since then.

When I was in college, I attempted as much as possible to schedule my classes during the mornings so as to leave my afternoons free for the daily sessions at the club. I was also quite sure to be present on Saturday afternoons and evenings.

The Metropolitan Chess Club itself was located on the third floor of the Downtown YMCA Building in a well-lighted, spacious corner room which commanded a view of one of the city's busiest intersections. Leaving the hubbub of the city behind him, the weary chessplayer could enter the clubroom and forget his cares and worries in the solace of the sixty-four squares.

The primary furnishings of the room were ten or twelve tables with two chairs at each one. At these tables were conducted many Herculean battles. A few old pictures portraying chess masters of the past adorned the walls,

and in the corner stood an old battered chest of drawers which served as a storage place for the chess sets. Such was the outward appearance of the Metropolitan Chess Club, and we need dwell on it no further.

It was what happened in the room which was of primary interest to me. Besides the many hours I spent there playing chess, I also welcomed the opportunity to observe the various people with whom I came in contact there. Several of my professors were frequent visitors at the club, as were doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and some of my fellow students.

One of the most enigmatic of the club's frequenters was an elderly gentleman whom I should have judged to have been in his sixties. What his line of work may have been is more than I can say. He certainly seemed old enough to be retired; perhaps he was. Nobody knew much about him. He never offered any information, and no one felt inclined to ask.

He visited the club nearly every afternoon and was nearly always one of the first to arrive and one of the last to leave. He would arrive in his customary nondescript garb: dark overcoat, black or gray business suit, white shirt, dark tie, and a battered old homburg hat which seemed about as old as he was. He would remove his coat and drape it over the back of his chair, place his hat on the table beside him, and proceed to play with anyone who would challenge him. His games always attracted a group of spectators, for he favored an exciting attacking style of play which was easy to watch and easy to understand.

Furthermore, he gave an entertaining running commentary on his games. He might say, "Oh, so he wants to go there, does he?" in reply to a certain move by his adversary, whereupon he would force a win in a few moves. Or he might comment, "So now, if I don't do this I might be in trouble," and then he would convincingly demonstrate the win of a piece.

For whatever else this puzzling gentleman may or may not have been, he was definitely a good chess player. I very seldom played him myself; it was bad for my ego. I did, however, have the satisfaction of beating him once in one of the club's annual championship tournaments. That caused quite a sensation and was a distinct feather in my cap, for he rarely suffered defeat.

The incident for which I particularly remember this gentleman, however, took place on a Saturday evening during one of the club's ten-seconds-per-move tournaments. That same evening the YMCA was also sponsoring a dance for black youth and young adults—a dance which was held on the same floor as our club room. The sounds of "soul" music mingled with the intermittent buzz of the timing device which signaled that the players must move.

Toward the end of the evening, when nearly all the games had been completed, he left to step out to the restroom. A moment later he came reeling back into the room, one of the bows of his glasses dangling precariously, holding a hand to his bleeding forehead, blood dripping onto his shirt front, exclaiming, almost in tears, "They cut me! Two or three of

them. In the restroom. They got my wallet. I think one of them had a knife."

This threw the room into a shock. Fortunately somebody had enough presence of mind to call the police. Others swarmed around him, "Could you recognize them again? How much money did they get? Should we call an ambulance?"

For my own part, I was scared and upset. I got away as quickly as possible. I don't know how, or indeed if, the matter was settled.

We didn't see him at the club for several months after that. Some thought he was too scared to ever return; others suggested that it would merely take time before the unpleasant memory would erase itself.

One afternoon I took a bus downtown, got off at the YMCA, and headed upstairs to the club. And there he was, standing in the hall.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Whiteley," he greeted me. "The clubroom is locked, I see."

"Yes, I see it is. How long do you suppose it will be before someone comes to open it?"

"I am sure I couldn't say. Perhaps someone at the front desk would know. This is the first time I've been back since the incident, you know."

"Oh, is that right?"

I then noticed a black janitor sweeping at the other end of the hall. I thought perhaps he might have a key and suggested to my companion that we ask him.

"No, I won't ask him," was the rather sharp reply. "I hate him. I hate them all. You know what they did. You understand."

"Yes, I suppose I do, Mr. Rosenberg," I replied somewhat bitterly as I turned away in disgust.

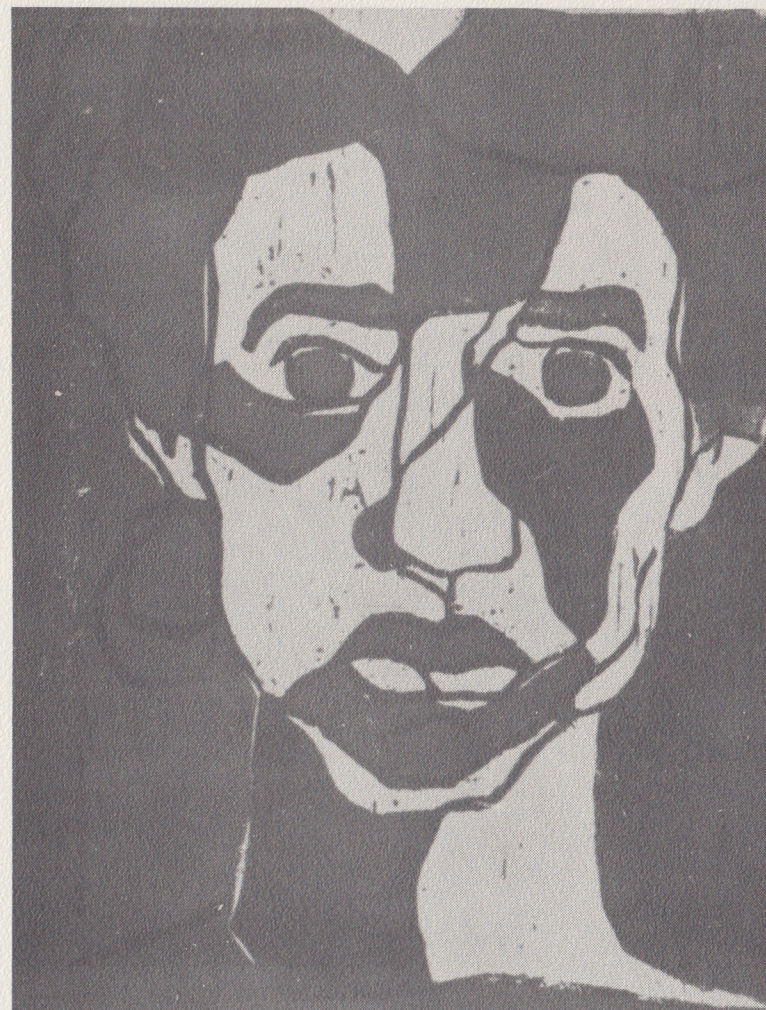
by John Leitel

Crisp February
Morning, with only shadows
To slice up the snow.

by Kathy Christensen

Lazily watching
It dip between the mountains
And close its red eye.

by Roddie Miller



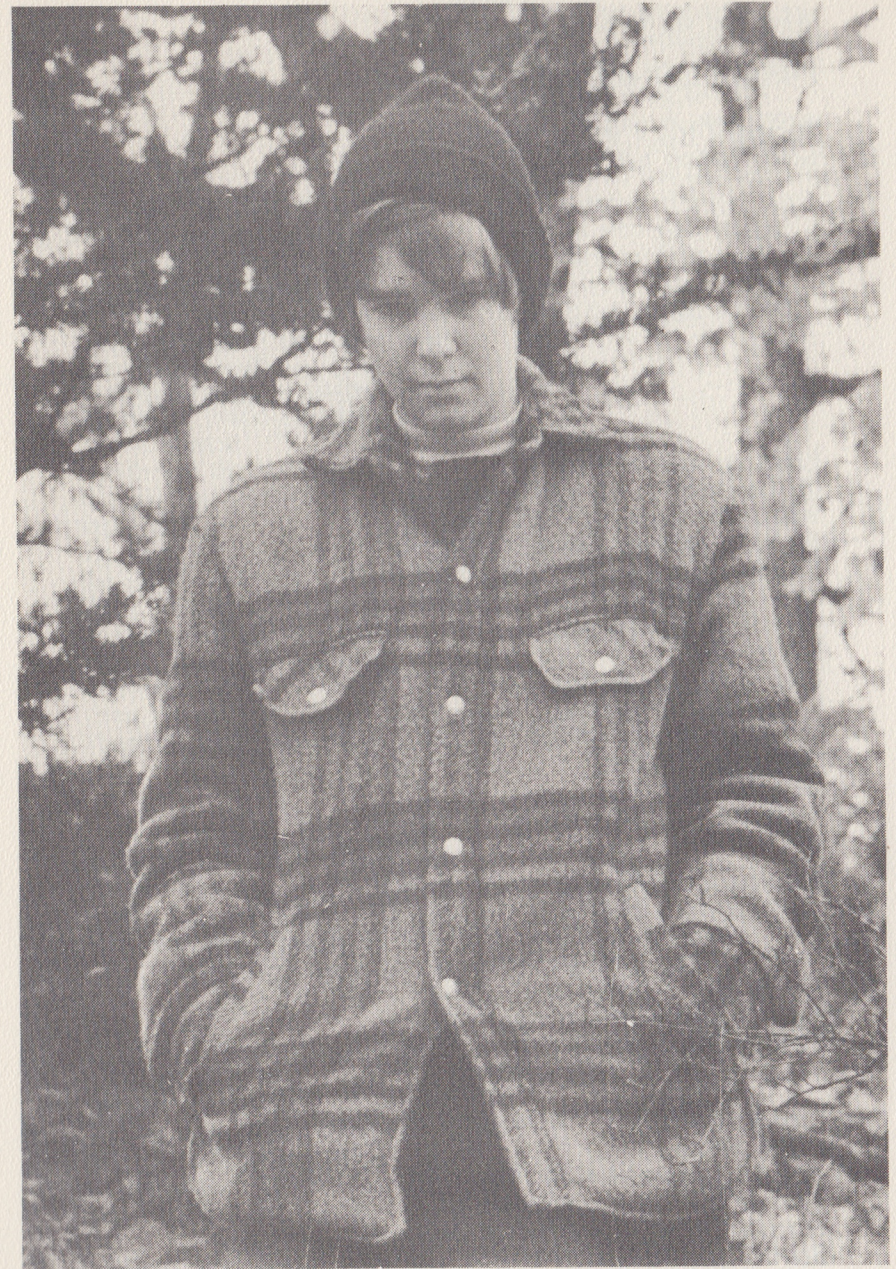
Diane Peterson

DOES IT HURT YOU TO SMILE

- 1) Does it hurt you to smile
 dear lady?
 Will I see you in a while
 dear lady?
 How do you know I'm here?
 You laugh at my jokes
 but do you see **me**?
 I doubt it.
- 2) It's not your fault
 dear lady.
 You can't unlock my vault
 dear lady.
 Don't feel bad.
 I keep my inner self
 A secret from all.
 Often from myself.
- 3) Do you find this odd
 dear lady?
 Little of this earth I've trod
 dear lady.
 Must you travel to learn?
 I've seen and felt so much
 In just where I've been.
 It amazes me.
- 4) Does it hurt you to smile
 dear lady?
 I won't see you in a while
 dear lady.
 I must keep to myself.
 I must look for someone else,
 one with a pleasant smile.
 Are They still made?

I doubt it.

by **John Brooks**



DARK DESTINY

What does the future offer me?

Nothing.

What has life given to me?

Nothing.

I desire death but am afraid to meet it.

Why?

Because I fear I will miss that
which destiny has prepared for me.

“Wretched Destiny! In vain you
paint your furrowed face like an
old harlot, in vain you jingle
your fool’s bells; you weary me;
it is always the same, an ‘idem
per idem.’ No variety, always a
rehash! Come, Sleep and Death,
you promise nothing, you keep
everything.”

Liken me to Kierkegaard
for I am melancholy and pessimistic.
When I compare my life to eternity,
my years become minute and insignificant.
Destiny has no reason to be partial to me.
There is nothing to hope for,
yet I hope just the same—
just in case.
I am foolish, as all men are.
I desire what I don’t have
and fail to use that which I do have.
Yet I find comfort;
not in melancholy,
but in the fact that my life is a mystery.

“One ought to be a mystery, not
only to others, but also to one’s
self . . . the Lord only knows
what He meant by me, or what He
would make out of me.”

Nobody knows me.

Perhaps people love me;

or fear me;

or despise me.

I am a mystery and I make them curious
as I am curious.

God only knows what He will make of me—

if He is inclined to make something of me.

Perhaps this is where my hope lies.

But one gets tired of looking at oneself;
at solving mysteries.

One must look at all of life.

Perhaps it contains clues, or an answer!

But I see n o t h i n g

“Life is so empty and meaningless.—

We bury a man; we follow him to
the grave, we throw three spadefuls
of earth over him; we ride out to
the cemetery in a carriage, we ride
home in a carriage; we take comfort
in thinking that a long life lies
before us. How long is seven times
ten years? Why do we not finish it
at once, why do we not stay and step
down into the grave with him, and
draw lots to see who shall happen to
be the last unhappy living being to
throw the last three spadefuls of
earth over the last of the dead?”

If only life were so simple.

If only we could live that short span

in one minute

and forego the suffering,

the longing,

the boredom,

the anxiety,

the disappointment.

Then we would not delude ourselves.

The meaning of life would not be to secure a livelihood,

its goal would not be a high position,

love’s rich dream would not be marriage with an heiress.

Then we would not laugh at ourselves and at life.

Then this short stay could be meaningful.

And what does the future bring?

“I do not know, I have no presenti-
ment. When a spider hurls itself
down from some fixed point,
consistently with its nature,
it always sees before it only an
empty space wherein it can find no
foothold however much it sprawls.”

And so it is with Kierkegaard

and so it is with myself.

The future brings nothing.

I have said to the future

I will have this of you

but have been denied it.

I have asked the future

will you give me this?

and have been ignored.

I plan for nothing and hope for nothing.

Then why don't I end everything?

"Sometimes I have considered taking
a decisive step, compared with which
all my preceding ones would be only
childish tricks—of setting out on
the great voyage of discovery. As a
ship at its launching is hailed with
a roar of cannon, so would I hail
myself. And yet. Is it courage I
lack? If a stone fell down and
killed me, that would be a way out."

Fear or hope keeps me alive.
Or maybe love—
love of that bitter drink
which I am just now getting used to.
Now I shall live;
but I won't forever.
Someday I will die.
And maybe,
for a moment,
the veil will be parted,
and I will see through all of my melancholy and my pessimism.
I will look back and I will laugh.
And the laugh will be on my side.

by Steve Schou

DESTRUCTION

The air was cold but I was burnt with fright
As darkness fell like death upon the night.
A fear which God alone could comprehend
Attacked my frozen form with hellish heat
And fixed Achilles' wings upon my feet.
My body forced by soul and not by will
Flew wildly up a strange, deserted hill
And there I watched the world come to its end.

by Katie Hines

WALT WHITMAN

In the nation of iron lives the venerable one,
fair as the patriarch, serene and saintly.
On his forehead there is an Olympian furrow
that dominates and overcomes with noble enchantment.

His infinite spirit is like a mirror;
dignity cloaks the bowed and tired shoulders;
but with David's harp carved of a vintage oak,
the new prophet proclaims his song.

As a priest breathing divine encouragement,
announces the future will be better.
He speaks to the eagle, "Fly!"; "Row!" to the sailor,

and "Work!" to the robust laborer.
Thus walks this poet along his passage,
with the sovereign countenance of an emperor!

from the Spanish of
Ruben Dario
by Lavon Bohling

IN THE FOG

Strange, in the fog to wander!
Lonely, each bush and stone;
no tree sees another,
each one is alone.

The world was filled with friends
when I was tender in years;
now that the fog descends:
no longer—so it appears.

Truly, no one lives wisely,
who does not find the Darkness enfurled,
gently and irrepressibly
cleaving him from the world.

Strange, in the fog to wander!
Life is always alone.
No man knows another,
each one is alone.

from the German of
Herman Hesse
by Greg Schou and Walter Wolff

THE EDGE OF DAY

At the edge of day
I saw the children squatting naked
In the gutter,
Walked down the narrow street
And saw vertical whores,
Flapping their dresses, showing their wares.
I was pinched on the ass
By a young man in bulging pants,
Saw an old man spit on a peeing dog.
I returned to the place
Where the night before
On a stale mattress I made love
To a musty, sagging maid
Who engulfed me and left me,
Empty as she had been before.
And I was empty too,
And sick
Because I had surrendered and merged
With those whose lives I despised.

Anonymous



by Judy Brooke

WOODEN BRIDGE ON THE ROAD

Load Limit 5 tons
Heavy Trucks use by-pass
200 ft.
20 m.p.h.
Alas! bearing the world
in smokeless decay
the bridge passes
traffic between the banks . . .
Handrails of weathered two-by-fours
(gray paint peeling) with
dull red reflectors . . .
unpainted beams 20 x 14
creak and groan under the 5-ton load
asphalted over . . . gray and patched . . .
the sleek-cars, the big-cars
pass over concrete and steel bridges
monuments to engineering . . . , today
no one crossed this wooden bridge
but me . . .
and I am richer
for having crossed . . .

by Walter Wolff

RESIGNATION

i guess i could pack and go.
i've been thinking about it, you know.
even now while i'm lying
in your bed (which i must admit
is warmer with you in it)

i guess we've had our fun,
and it was a good thing
while it lasted.

but it looks like dividends
are down (what was your name anyway)
i guess we both know it.

i
 don't
 feel
 like
 going . . .
not yet, anyway.

by Steve Hahn



SEIN UND ZEIT

A simple sunbeam
on a maple leaf captures
a moment's being.

by Walter Wolff

ROLLER SKATES

Birthdays are special.
Really something.
Once-a-year merry-go-round occasions.
Waking up to parents singing "Happy Birthday;"
Repeat performances until bedtime.
A birthday cake to cut
To the tinny tones of a musical plate.
Candles and wishes and smiles and laughter.
Ice cream—and chocolate cake by special request.
After supper: the best moment.
Presents wrapped and taped
And waiting calmly on the table;
An audience for the opening.
Shrieks and thank-you's and roller skates.

Birthdays are sad.
Really nothing.
Once-a-year wish-to-forget occasions.
Waking up to pull the covers slightly higher;
It's going to be a cold one today.
A bowl of soup for lunch
To the electric eighth notes of a cafe radio.
Icicles and wishes and frowns from worries.
A package of cookies from home—how nice.
And a check besides—how thoughtful.
So this was my birthday—
Just another long day rolling by
With millions around yet none watching
As I quietly skate down the right track in life.

by Kathy Christensen

ODE ON A GREASY TRASH CAN

Little trash can, white and clean,
Your open mouth needs listerine.
You stand so noble your task you do,
To catch remains of a human zoo.
The meals you eat should cause your death,
Instead, you simply have bad breath.
By and by the artist dies
But you just sit there, drawing flies.

by John Gebuhr

NOISES OF THE PAST

Out of my still mind
resound noises of the past
pounding at my door.

Unwillingly
I answer and surrender myself
to these echoes
that will not die.

The rabbit is there
and the bird we skinned.

That hurting letter
of the seventh grade
and the talk
through the bathroom door
pour themselves
into my ears.

Another john
and those doctor games
drop in and fall away
as other life-acts
fill their place.

And others do
to remind me
that I am
worse
than all men
that I am
like
all men
that I am
man
that I
need
you.

by Jim Pierce

ONCE I WAS A HUNTER

Building castles in the sand
Dreaming dreams of distant lands,
And soon there will be another
And white knights will fall in disgrace
At the thought of it all being a lie.
 "when johnny comes marching home"
 all under the blue, red, and white.

Mother of empty avenues of memory,
Bring out the past from your crumbling skull—
 There he sits on the platform
 amid the pomp and circumstance of it all
 on his way up you said, — if you only knew—
 pictures of a farewell,
 after winning a trip,
 all paid for by his friends and neighbors
 I pledge allegiance to the father
 and to the Flag for which he stands
 hallowed be Its name,
 one nation under god,
 Its will be done
 with liberty and justice,
 forever and forever—

Sandman, sandman you've paid your dues,
I see your once blue eyes have changed their hue,
 coagulating wine in pools at your side
 pure white pillows in the sky
And "handsome johnny" marches on
Remoulding ploughblades from whence they came
All for the freedom of the land.

by Roger Smeland

Snow melted today,
Revealing dregs of autumn's
Glorious splendor.

by John Leitel

LANGUAGE APPLICATION

is the word ACTIVE too passive
allow it to

A V E
C I A
T T

is the word LONG too short
extend it

so it becomes really
L O N G

and is the word QUIET too noisy
muffle it
so it becomes really

similarly one writes poetry
the word DISAPPEAR
will actually

DISA
and the word AWAY
actually goes

the word WORD
becomes in fact a
WORD
when one writes poetry

from the Danish of
Vagn Steen
by Larry Knudsen

Jumping little fish
Leaps from his watery home.
Oh oh, dried fish meat.

by James Lippold

LACK OF REFRIGERATOR SPACE

A fat watermelon,
looking like a big green bug
on my windowsill.

by Miriam Hiller

by Mark Pedersen

MOVEMENT

Let us share what we have learned
of the joy in life.

There is value to be found
in relationships to make.
Not in forcing what we see
but in guiding others
to what they may see—
And in letting them guide us.

Life will be an ever-changing search
for more meaning.
But there is joy in this—
in realizing each new insight.

If ever we thought
that now we understood all
What value then would there be?
What impetus to continue?

Joy in growing
Joy in living
Joy in learning
Joy in becoming
As part of God
As God in and around us
All that we are capable of being
Each of us
Continuously approaching
A fullness.

by Warren Nielsen



"SWEET JESUS I . . ."

Sweet JESUS i
ask this boon of THEE
give me life, joy, and honor . . . ,
but, above all liberty! ? .

i ask once on monday
tuesdaywednesdaythursday thrice
friday and saturday never
on sunday i try to be nice.

on second thought sweet JESUS
just give the other three,
for what in the hell would i
ever do with liberty?

by Walter Wolff

ALONE

I go forth from myself through storm and night,
away from each eye which my way would follow,
alone, free, from a fest taken flight,
where fortune drowned in waves of despair and sorrow.

My mind is sick of playing with words and dreams,
laughing at flattery with anguished soul,
I long for all the sources, the flowing streams
of youthful ways that melancholy stole.

And I go forth in the thick darkness of night,
forward to where the tumult about me reigns
and sweeps cold as rain across my soul's plight
and eases all its pains.

And there, alone, under infinite mask,
far from any friend, or home, or stove-warmed cell,
I raise, trembling, my long-lost task,
my first youthful suitor, chance to excel.

And the night rushes about me, deep and vast,
I know neither friend, nor home—my soul alone,
and on my lips burns the fortune cast,
and through my heart life's branches run.

from the Danish of
Viggo Stuckenberg
by Ulla Rasmussen

BY THE SEA

In the dawn
we ran
hand in hand
down the sands of our youth
to collapse breathless
by the sea.

We lay there
tightly clenched
afraid that the waves
pouring over
might pull us apart.

We laughed when we found a tidal pool
left by the receding sea
in the pit of my stomach
and you went to find a shell
to put in it
even as I
moving to follow you
felt it disappear.

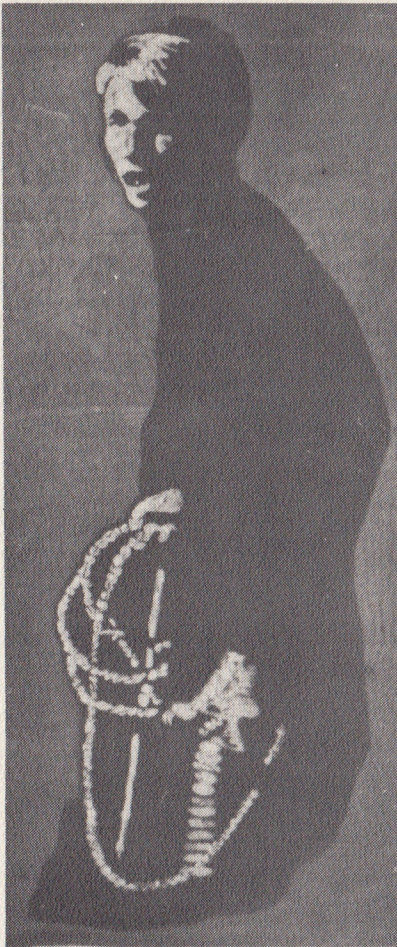
We laughed again
in love
and kissed
and there was the taste of salt in your mouth.

Now in our years
we no longer run
but stroll in wrinkled feet
along the gentle edge of land
and stand
your head on my shoulder
before the sunset.

by Jim Pierce

Wind whips through bare trees,
disturbing rain-laden clouds . . .
droplets on the branch.

by John Leitel



by Carol Wenske

SPASM OF REALITY

Streams of thought
Do not flow, and
The future lies
Like a coiled cobra.
Time is merely music
Without movement or
Reeds of wind.
Midget mentality flourishes
And yesterday Rome was
Eaten by her Lyons.
Morality is a noun
Weighted with dust.
Soothsayers predict and
Idiots run naked.
San Francisco has fallen
Into a gaping mouth
Of acid. An Albatross
Hovers overhead laughing.
Sailors ship out and
The sun is blood red.
Peace is found in textbooks—
The last battle has begun.
Silver stems flash in the sun
Ending in a bouquet of flame.
Doves are bought and
Served under stained glass
To one-eyed Hawks.
What must I do
To be saved?
What must I do?

by Roddie Miller

COME SEE AMERICA

Come see America—
The land of milk, honey, and ten-second service in our gas stations.
Red, white, and blue from sea to slimy sea.
In God we trust.

Come see America—
See our Budweiser, Plymouth Rock, and race riots.
Who says the nigger won't get his chance?
Everyone's equal here.

Come see America—
Look around—two cars in every garage.
Eat until you bust and then some more.
Wear a mink stole over your cashmere sweater.

Come see America—
Land of democracy, taxes, and Jesus,
Not to mention General Motors.
The war's been great for the economy.

Come see America—
First in the space race.
First in love, hate, peace, war,
And road construction.

Come see America—
See our rest homes, Hollywood, and fire hydrants.
We've got wall-to-wall carpeting in our churches,
And night clubs you wouldn't believe.

Come see
Come see
America the beautiful
The land of the dollar
God bless us
Hallowed be our name.

by Kathy Christensen

FOR KEEPS

homo sapiens sapiens
most intelligent of men
yet most savage of animals.

"This week in Vietnam
only 32 Americans were killed."

only thirty-two.
thirty-two souls,
sixty-four legs, arms, eyes
and thirty-two hearts,
which no longer function.
thirty-two human beings.

war, the eternal stigma
of humanity.
the mark of Cain
upon the brain of
"civilized" citizens.
The ultimate game,
cheered on by a corps of corpses
and remnants of regiments.

"This week only 47 Americans
were killed in action."

killed in action . . .
marionettes stringed to the
sweaty hands of madmen
on a stage of steaming
green countryside,
while the blazing sun
laughs at our ludicrous lot.

the hail of swift steel
rips apart the khakied rainmakers
while they that created the shower
work on thunderstorms.

funny, isn't it,
this game we play.
who's the winner?

by **Steve Hahn**



Ryle Smith

I AM YOU

I am you.

Not entirely
but growing more so
as my feeling of you deepens
and as I find my actions
more and more reflecting
your likes and desires.

It is amazing
that you enter me
in this way
because I am never
conscious
of your force acting
only of the results
when I find myself
doing things differently
and wonder why.

Will you succeed
in making me over?

by **Jim Pierce**

APPLICATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENSHIP

I sometimes remember the days that are gone,
Remember sleep leaving me hours before dawn,
Remember how time between sunsets seemed long,
Remember a childhood when nothing went wrong.

I sit and observe a small child at her play,
Observe her go running and skipping away,
Observe her at pie-making, mud on her face,
Observe her—so thankful I'm not in her place.

I'm deeply relieved that I cannot go back,
Relieved that my life's not a rut, but a track,
Relieved that I've learned from all miseries past,
Relieved that old age is approaching at last.

by **Joy Cole**

THE CAT WITHOUT A TAIL

This morning, just when the day
sent its ten thousand spears toward the night's breast,
my love arose and went to her dovecot. She took
her favorite, the whitest of all the doves,
and she kissed it and smiled innocently
like a child, before she
let it fly on the sun's shining
glitter out of the old garden
where the golden roses bloomed.

Late in the day I found it in my wandering.
Its wings were torn
and sullied with blood, and
its head lay heavily on the place
where its poor heart beat.
On the stairway into the village's
reverend church lay the old tail-
less cat, slandered, with white feathers
around its mouth and a pious expression in
its single green eye.

I took the white dove, rinsed it
with oil and carried it home in the
dovecot, and when it was done I walked
to the house, where my love sat—and
she smiled at me as a child smiles,
happily and guiltlessly.
When the night hesitantly slipped over the
foot of Liljekonval mountain, she set fresh
milk out for the poor ownerless cat,
and with an anxious little laugh
she ran back and hid her face at my breast.

from the Danish of
Nis Petersen
by **Kathy Rohrer**



Jan Sailer

SONG OF THE SEER

I

The Seer

Now as I was young and easy,
In the swirling streams of muddy waters,
Ashes, spewn in timeless wastelands,
I arose in masses of living flesh;
Careless and Carefree.
A Spirit, A Reality,
Adrift amidst the swirling eddies
Of the time that was completely mine.

Today I am old as the human race.
Today I am at once as young as the
First cries of the newly delivered;
Breaking forth to link the future to the past.
My Reality is my Past.
My Spirit is my Future.
So must I journey on with plodding steps,
Out of time, into the future that is mine.

II

The Seer Sings of the Creation of Man

In the beginning was formlessness,
and out of this formlessness came form.
The primordial elements did not exist,
yet out of the void they existed,
And so water and soil,
Fire and air existed.
And the waters were separated,
And one was laden with salt,
heavy with the tears of sorrow;
And the other was fresh and sweet,
Necessary for the existence of life.
The salt waters and the fresh waters
were mingled,
and from the fusion of sorrow, and of life
Arose all beings.
And man existed hand in hand with woman,
And they walked upon the land,
And all beings existed with man, and there
was peace.
But out of the tears of sorrow, which were
fused with man, with the beginning of life,
Came envy and greed,
And man succumbed and was filled with the
Sorrows of envy and greed.
And the tears of sorrow poured forth,
And man existed in sorrow.

III

The Seer Sings of Man's Existence

Over the land
 there are no memorials,
 the soil, and air, and water exist as rough
 inscriptions of the judgment which is to come.
 I am frightened.
 Today I am as old as the human race.
 I seem to myself all man at this moment,
 and I understand and do not understand
 the actions of brother against brother.
 I am at once the innocent young ones
 destroyed by the deluge of the god, Enlil,
 enraged by the noise of mankind.
 I too think of Osiris, and of Isis,
 whose love transcended the beauty of the lotus flower,
 and their love brought peace to the land.
 But even the love and peace was destroyed
 by the brother Set.
 I am the Jews,
 wandering in captivity,
 homeless, spat upon, kicked at.
 I am also the sweating galley slaves,
 bleeding and dying only to be replaced by others,
 while the steady stroke of the oars pulsates
 to the speed of Imperial Rome.
 And time has journeyed on.
 And sorrow has journeyed on.
 And I am again the laborers,
 dying for the glory of Man and the Church.
 And within my hands are sculptured
 the lattice work of the great Cathedrals,
 and the rotting pigments of my body
 have colored the stained-glass windows.
 And I have seen man progress and yet
 with each step his mind rose higher,
 his sorrow grew deeper.
 And I think of the industrialist,
 grown fat at the head of the table,
 while those at the foot have done
 without nourishment.
 And I see with his knowledge of technology,
 and of psychology, that he has become
 technical in his cruelty.
 And I am again a Jew, standing at the edge
 of a pit, below me the twisted corpses of
 my brothers, and before me, my brother too,
 with a strange third eye of steel.
 Or I am a young boy with a red baseball cap,
 tending my goats in my village of My Lai,
 when the sound of guns drives me to hide
 in a ditch, only to look up to the cruel gleam
 of my brother's eye.
 And he answers my pleading eyes with fire,
 And I do not understand.
 And I do not understand.

IV

The Seer Tells of Destruction

over the land
 the wind rustles
 the dust is thick in the air
 the soil eroded
 the barren landscape stands threateningly before me
 it is my judge
 and I am alone
 earth water air fire
 no more shall love exist
 no more shall happiness exist
 no more shall hate exist
 no more shall greed exist
 no more shall envy exist
 no more shall love exist
 no more shall hate exist
 the nothingness is my judge
 today I am as old as the human race

by John Mark Nielsen

by Carol Wenske



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AWARDS

Joseph Langland Award for Poetry
JOHNNY AND FRED and POOR ST. TOM
 by Eric Evans

Hal Evans Cole Award for Excellence in the Arts
THE PENITENT
 by Judy Brooke

Kaj Munk Award for Translation
WE DO NOT THINK ALIKE
 by Aristides Sosa
 translated by Rebecca Nielsen

