



SOWER 1972



GRAIN AND BUTTERFLY

"How far can you fly from here?" asked the grain.
And the monarch said he didn't know,
He wasn't yet finished flying.
And when the monarch asked how far the grain could see,
The grain told him just up mostly
And just far enough around to see all the monarchs fly by.

by Drew Sorenson

YOUR LAUGH IS HOLLOW

Having been told all my life that hell
is a place of fire and brimstone
and this being an established but untenable
doctrine of churches
I did not think to question it
but lived my days in comfort at the equator
and dreaded always the cold of foreign winters
which is natural with a child of the sun
and this dread was not only for the deathly pain of cold
but also the unbelievable bother
of having to wear layer upon layer of clothing
and loss of freedom
which all men hold dear
and so in my childlike innocence
I thanked God for His blessings
and at times
remembered to be good
in order to avoid the fury of hell

But as my years of carefree childhood ended
I returned to the land which my ancestors chose
in preference to their own
though I really feel they would have chosen another
had they known of it
for the cold which I had dreaded in my childhood
is now a figment of the mind
but a reality
and in its reality much worse
and with the departure of warmth went also
my careless joy
and I knew something
but found no words for the utterance of it

And so in my travelings among books of ancient wisdom
I found one Dante
a man of greater insight than most
and it was he who said (and I agree)
that the farther one is from God the colder one becomes
as God is god of life and warmth
and it follows then that hell must be of ice (not fire)
for what is farther from God than hell?
and what could be worse than the absence of heat?

by Tricia Groat



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THE BARN RAISING

Team spirit is not unique to the sports world. In fact, the Amish adopted it long ago and it is still an important aspect of their community today. One of my first encounters with this concern for their fellow man occurred when I was not even four years old, yet I can remember to this day as it happened.

The weather was just starting to warm up enough to get out and get some work done. The baby blades of grass were standing like green hairs out of the few remaining patches of snow. Buds had not yet formed on the trees, but they were destined to appear with the moisture of the ground from below and the more direct rays of the sun from above.

It was this time of year that my father decided to build a new tobacco shed. Last year had seen the old shed filled and the last few laths hung in the hay loft. As it cured, the smell of the hay impregnated the leaves of tobacco which in turn made them less valuable. Our tobacco was used for cigar wrappers and no one wants a cigar that smells like alfalfa. This and the fact that we were planning to put out more plants this year provoked my father into this rather expensive investment.

I like to think I was a great help to my father that spring, but I'm afraid all I could offer was my companionship for I was not adept at wielding a pick-axe or dirt shovel. My mother taught school in the mornings and my sisters got to spend the day there. So, it was just the two of us and I felt obligated to help as best I could.

We would always start early in the morning and work till noon. The ground was moist after the thaw and we chose a good site as it had few stones to work around.

The highlight of the day was after lunch, which my father expertly put together, made of fried potatoes with eggs scrambled over them and covered with lots of gravy. Then we would lie down on the living room floor for our afternoon nap. That was often cut shorter than either of us wanted by my mother coming home from her half day kindergarten class. This went on for about two weeks till the trench had been dug and stones placed in the bottom for our foundation.

The next few days held some different excitement for me. Redi-Mix trucks brought in the cement for the foundation and flatbed trucks transported wood from the planing mill. Wood was stacked according to thickness and length which was no easy job. I was always eager to act in my supervisory capacity.

Up until this time, the operation had been engineered by my father and me. Now it was obvious that we would need some help. I don't know how the word got out. I think it had something to do with my grandfather and the Bishop of the Amish community. My grandfather lived in the other half of our house and he had very close connections with community leaders, since he was a leader of sorts himself.

It was a Saturday. I know, since my sisters were home to help with the work to be done around the house. That day more than ever, their help would be of great importance.

As soon as the milking was done and a hearty breakfast eaten, we went outdoors to greet the first of the arrivals. One at a time, the horse drawn buggies came up the lane till there must have been at least a hundred people there. Children, dressed in their appropriate costumes filled the yard with dark greens, purples, blues and basic black. The girls wore their prayer coverings and the boys their straw hats. The Amish women helped my mother prepare the meal, which at that point seemed like a greater task than building a barn. The men unhitched their buggies and left their horses to graze in the orchard. They went right to work on the bleak rectangle of concrete forty feet long and twenty feet wide. Hammers flew as nail bags were opened and lumber was brought from the pile.

By lunch time, all four walls were up and men were hanging and buzzing around the framework like flies invading a pot of honey.

The lunch was a typical noon meal, only in quantities such as I will probably never see again. There were the usual delicacies such as tripe, or pickled cow stomach; chow-chow, which is a bean salad; roast beef; boiled potatoes and plenty of gravy to cover the whole affair. This was accented with home baked bread and then for desert hand cranked ice cream and shoo fly pie. That is a very interesting piece of pastry made of a great deal of sweet crumbs separated from the pie crust with a layer of thick molasses. The nicest part of the whole meal was not the food but the feeling of being a person with friends who give of their own time to help a neighbor.

After the meal, the men went back to work without any hesitation, though a few did enjoy their after dinner cigar a little longer than the others.

All afternoon the barn was alive with the swarm of humanity which covered it. By nightfall, the barn was finished except for a few pieces of finish on the ventilation doors. In one day, a group of well trained carpenters with the proper leadership performed a task, offered a service for their neighbor and still maintained a feeling of fellowship and brotherhood in that group.

This type of barn raising is common in an Amish community throughout the year. Usually fire in a neighbor's barn is the reason for the service but, as in our case, is not the only reason.

The barn was built, but my father never did get to use it. He died that spring in an accident. But that is another story entirely and has no place here. This is the story of life and growth, of my first impressions of the Amish and my last impressions of my father.

by J. Dennis Weidler



by Joy Cole

FAIRY-TALE BELIEVERS

Weren't we sweet dreamers though—
We fairy-tale believers?
When only magic ruled the rain—
We put our faith in rainbows!

And, oh, how I believed it then!
So much love I had to spare!
You, the Knight in shining armor—
and, I, your Lady Fair!

When days were spun of sorcery—
our only need was one another!
And we forgot about the changing wind—
That wears no warning color!

My Knight in rusted armor—
I've lost you to the rain!
Your lady fair is wiser now—
I won't believe again!

Weren't we sweet dreamers though—
We fairy-tale believers?
When only magic ruled the rain—
We put our faith in rainbows!

by Barby Dayton

A STATEMENT ON GETTING OLDER . . . WRITTEN AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN

I

Rake ice tongued winds
tear unhaltingly
Whip the flame each man harbors
A flame that twists and turns
the unsolved question of
our brief stint
unavoidably
providing the fuel

And the ice helps to quench
the flame
and the flame
the ice
Lonely creations that we are
the ice in our veins
and fire in our chests
are determined
before we chance
on this dilemma
We simply collect
in unreasoning pain
the results

II

Sweeping across the barren plain
once rich in the awakening of spring
Now a dry crumbled brown
the living green
eroded beyond recognition
icy winds stir the leaves
of memory
Leaves once fallen do not live again
and the wind blows them everywhere
But nowhere

III

The timid
shudder at the sterile bleakness
of the wasteland
Numbingly
the virgin
truth
yielded up her chastity
Every voyager takes this course
slipping into the icy fingers
of the wasteland
Innocence
here is a forgotten word
a youthful myth
without insistent overtones
unquestionably accepted
long ago
The myth like any
slips away
The sure is unsure
now ringing in the ear of the
protestor
the fuzzy myriad tone of the
wasteland a mere skeleton
ghastly and vague
of moments enflashed in reality

IV

Love
 once only exuberant
 pouring forth from the inner realms
 of Being
 spontaneously
 as melting snows of spring
 Soaring high into the blue sky
 with the song of the thrush
 Emerging gently as tulips softly
 nudging
 above spring's ground
 and blooming
 gloriously

V

Remember how the words
 I love you
 tumbled out
 without
 consideration or restraint
 free as the wispy breeze
 of spring night
 which held you laughingly captive
 all the way home

HAIKU

by Cheryl A. Harris

Playful mountain stream
 pulls at my ankles, daring
 me to follow him.

While I was laughing,
 cotton from a tree floated
 into my mouth! Ph!

VI

Totally enclosed in the moment
 you are completely satisfied
 Your soul caught in a crystalline
 world
 without past or future
 as in those rare experiences
 when the sun's rays
 through the church steeple
 slanting
 or
 in the spherical world of the dew drop
 suspended
 hold to your wondering eyes
 life
 for a moment
 still

by Sterling West

ZIMBABWE¹

Black Panther—
 that is what they call me with my fiery claws.
 Did you know that a living man could
 burn with fiery sparks of apartheid?

I have seen its poisonous gas
 seething across you, Zimbabwe,¹
 leaving lingering particles
 of hatred and murder.

Grandfather groaned, I groan, we are all
 groaning under this yoke.

But

with each birth there is blood.
 Zimbabwe, let black blood reign and not the
 savage rape of the whites.

Leave the unholy trinity² to us;
 like a giant hammer crushing lice,
 we shall trample them
 and we shall breathe again.

If these savages want to drink our blood, let
 them also feed like greedy vultures on our carcasses.

there goes another life.

One fallen, two, three . . .

dona nobis pacem³, but we shall
 sound our drums from Gonakudzingwa⁴
 Robin Island⁵ and Detroit⁶.
 God, you made us all black.
 We lift our eyes to the mountain⁷
 knowing that the tropical sun
 shall not rise before all the
 land belongs to the people.

by Koketso J. Phaswana

- 1 A country which whites call Rhodesia.
- 2 John Voester, Prime Minister of South Africa
 Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia and
 Cateano, Prime Minister of Mozambique
- 3 give us peace
- 4 Detention Camp in Rhodesia
- 5 Concentration Camp in South Africa
- 6 City in Michigan, U.S.A.
- 7 A home for the god of rain and protection.

WILL I LIVE

will I live to see the fall
 swoop of the gull the ocean's call
 a Neptune scream to end it all
 dying on the wing

will I live to see the fall
 with its pursed lips
 and dangerous reasonings
 ape-foot
 and awkward
 upon the land

will I live to contemplate death
 to squat like a frog in the night
 and boom against the gray

or will I fall like a leaf
 and hide what I feel
 with a certain subtle curl
 winking in the wind
 at unheeding feet

by Eric Evans

Music by
 Barry Anderson

Handwritten musical score for the first system of 'Will I Live'. It features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a piano (pp) dynamic. The first measure is marked 'I. Piano' and 'pp'. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Handwritten musical score for the second system of 'Will I Live'. It continues the grand staff notation. The music features a variety of dynamics, including 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'f' (forte). The notation includes slurs, ties, and accents. The key signature remains one flat.

Handwritten musical score for the third system of 'Will I Live'. The notation continues with complex rhythmic figures and dynamic markings such as 'ppp' (pianissimo) and 'f'. The system concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

will I live to see the fall Swoop of the gull the oceans call

neptunesscreams to end it all dying on the wing

FRANK

His eyes were haunting. The chest still heaved at intervals but the eyes were dead. Icey clear blue, they stared at the empty walls without comprehension. The cancered bones protruded against the parchment skin. He looked so old that you feared he would crumble if touched. He was 64. His name was Frank but he had no identity. For him there was no day, no night. His eyes seemed never to close. You doubted that there was reality for him any longer. Doubted that he knew anything but pain. That was the only thing he responded to.

It was morning for the rest of the world. White clad ladies ascended to the second floor in a green elevator. The night shift picked up their purses and plodded out or, if the hospital was full, quickly tried to finish the 6:00 TPR's and then get home to a warm bed. The day shift gathered at the nurse's station to get report. A sickly yellow light flickered on down the gray hall. Reluctantly someone answered it. Emptying a bed pan is not the nicest way to start the day.

At 6:00 an aide had come into Frank's dim room, popped a thermometer into his mouth and his roommate's, then proceeded to wash his hands and face with a warm washcloth. A soft young hand searched for a pulse along his boney wrist. Surprisingly it pounded back against her fingers. The eyes comprehending nothing. She left.

At 7:30 another white angel flew in with his breakfast tray. He was a "feeder" which meant she had to spend at least fifteen minutes forcing a spoon into his mouth before she could get started on her baths. She had six baths to do this morning and only two partials. As she stooped over to roll up the bed she noticed the man had slid down in the bed and his feet were shoved up against the hard metal foot board. She tried pulling his large frame up but with no luck. Noticing the time, she left him where he was and started feeding. Hot cereal, coffee and toast was about the extent of his breakfast. She glanced at the name card over the bed. "Frank," she commanded loudly, "open your mouth." The eyes blinked. Hot cereal dribbled down his stubby chin. She wiped it off the loose fold of skin on his neck, then tucked the paper napkin into the top of the dingy hospital gown. "Would you like some coffee?" She stuck the straw in the cup and held it to his lips. "Frank, drink some coffee." She enunciated clearly. The dry lips parted slightly and the tongue groped for the straw. With a rasping noise he tried to suck. The hot brown liquid ran out the corner of his mouth. His large, but now powerless hand made a spastic movement. The aide impatiently wiped away the coffee, then offered more cereal. He maybe swallowed a little. She noticed the bed was wet when she rolled it down. Someone would be in soon to give him a bath and change the bed so she left to start on her own patients. "349-poor" she scribbled on the white dietary sheet then hurried down the hall.

A few minutes later Frank's aide for the day popped in the door. "Good morning" she gushed, "isn't this a lovely day?" Mindlessly the middle-aged women chattered on as she set out the bath packs. "Hello Frank, how are you today?" He only lay there, a human skeleton draped with skin, motionless and silent except for his gasping breathing. The aide smiled pityingly and stroked his tangled pepper gray hair. "Do you have a lot of pain, Frank?" The hollow eyes did not move. "Well, we'll get you cleaned up, then you'll feel better. Yes we will." she crooned in her sing-song voice.

The R.N. who was passing meds entered. She injected a needle into the diseased flesh and chatted with the aide a moment about a activity going on at the high school that evening. The aide mentioned Frank's wet bed. The R.N. noted it, then bustled out.

The bath was a mild ordeal. Even a slight movement was extremely painful to the man. Deftly the woman sponged him off as she talked on about nothing. She tried not to move the patient too much but she had to roll him over on his side to do his back and change the drawsheet under him. She quickly stepped into the hall and asked one of the aides to help her. Gently the hands arranged his legs and arms and changed the man's position. The gasping increased to a moan. "Oh Frank, did we hurt you. We're sorry. We'll have to leave him on his side Elaine, because he's getting a pressure sore on his back. There we go now Frank, we'll just put a pillow behind your back and put up the side rail and you'll be fine. Are you comfortable?" The eyes stared at the bars of the railing. "Thats good, is there anything else I can do for you, Frank?" She patted the hand and it clutched her fingers in a strong grip. Moved, she paused a moment and held his suddenly strong hand. The grip soon relaxed and she laid it again on the white sheet. She realized the other aide's presence. "I feel so sorry for him, he's such a nice man. Yes you are, Frank. It's really a shame." She tidied the room. "Have you canned any pickles yet, Elaine?"

"Good-bye, Frank" she waved from the foot of the bed, "I'll see you later." Together the aides walked out the door discussing the merits of pickle recipes.

At 10:30 the doctor made his rounds. He talked with Frank for a few minutes and authoritatively examined the body. He grimaced slightly, asked the nurse about diet and ordered an I.V. to be started. They left.

The noon tray came in at 11:30. Someone fed him and took it out again.

In the afternoon voices of visitors wafted in from the hall. They pulled the curtain around Frank's bed so as not to disturb the visitors who came to see the other man in '49.

The aide came in again and noticed the bed was wet. They were very busy today and there were five units to be washed and made up, but they always said patient care came first. Justified, she went to get a

clean drawsheet and gown. She found an aide to help her and together they changed the bed and rolled Frank over on his other side. "I really wish I didn't have to work here," Frank's aide confided to the girl helping her. "I just hate to hurt people and it just breaks my heart to see other people suffer. But I must admit the pay check comes in handy even if I do only work two days a week. Then I can just use the money to get the things I want without having to bother Dale for it. It does help. And this is the only job I can get since I didn't get a high school diploma." The conversation droned on out into the hall.

The man lay alone among the white sheets and pillows. Waiting. Waiting.

Two hundred feet down the hall the waiting was ending for another person. A cart was wheeled into her room. Carefully, between contractions, she was lifted on it from the bed. The cart made a quick trip down the hall, through a swinging door, and into the delivery room. Quickly, but efficiently, she was moved from cart to padded table. The woman cried out in agony. A fitted muzzle was held over her mouth and nose. "Breathe deeply, Jean, just take deep breaths and it will take the sharpness off the pain. You're doing fine. It won't be long now." Again she screamed but it was muffled by the pain killer. The swinging door opened. The doctor scrubbed, put on his gown, then took his position at the end of the table. "That's right, Jean, push. Push. One more good one and I think we'll have a baby."

The tension rises to a climax. The head appears and with one last contraction the baby is born. "What did you order, Jean? You've got yourself another boy." He cries. The face that a moment before was ugly with pain, is now transformed with a glow of pride and relief. She looks at her son and the dark blue eyes sleepily blink back at her. The room smiles.

Frank's wait is also over. The transparent eyes are empty. The hands do not move. The chest does not heave. It is night and never again day for the man in 349.

The day shift enters the elevator as the evening shift comes out. They are thinking about food for supper.

by Dawn Marie Carper

The land lies
with dirty farms
and plowed furrows.

The fields shine white
under twilight's
frost blue heaven.

Black shines the plantation
over its plot
of naked earth.

The farm-house lights
like warm embers
on a cold evening.

The crust crumbles
under your foot.

The night frost settles
over the day's thaw.

WINTER EVENING

translated from the
Danish of Hans Molbjerg,
by **Thomas Solevad Nielsen**

GRASS

translated from the
Danish of Tom Kristensen
by **Rachael Neve**

The grass is strangely tall to me,
as I lie with my nose against the Earth.
If I stoop as low as I can,
my World bursts forth.

Under the green Gothic arches
I stand. Here will I stay.
Dare not go astray in the luminous gloom!
Among the blades of grass, dare not go astray!

Inside the grass blades' Dim Halls
there is a Voice which stirs and calls
a rising: come now,
you come, come, come now,
you now.

And like an Answer
there sounds a sure,
wonderful, clear boy's Voice within me:
Not yet, no! Not yet, no!
But when my Madness is at an end,
when my Dreams of Greatness end,
then I will come, I will come then,
for I will be small and happy enough.

THE KISS

by **Judy C. Brooke**



THE SPARROW

A slightly pathetic sparrow alighted in the wind,
searching for some scattered crumbs.
Wisps of snow whirled around his head,
and he hunched himself against the cold.
Here and there he managed a crumb,
a broken of stale and moldy bread.
The couple at the party, dancing and well-fed,
looked out upon the late winter snow,
and marked the sparrow hopping on the ground;
but only *en passe*, as though just another thing
which filled out the dull April scene.
The buxom blonde with the shadow between her breasts
laid her head upon his strong and manly chest:
"Will spring ever come? I miss the robins so."

by **W. L. Wolff**

HAIKU

Obituary.
Winter died prematurely.
Killed by anxious Spring.

Flowers, toiling to
develop, leave their pungent
odor of sweet sweat.

by **Glenda Holsing**

TO JOHN O., WHO PRECEDED ME HERE

He was my teacher, and he taught me
How to express my life and thoughts through words.
He was my teacher . . .
That's all I guess, though he wanted to be my friend.
I didn't have time to talk
Or walk two blocks to see him.
Abruptly today came
And at sunset I heard that the day
Had taken him along.
I heard the news—
Mixed in comments on the weather—
As I was finishing work.
Too late, I rode the two blocks to see him.
Only my memories were there to greet me.
And the weather.
Why must it always be too late
To help someone whom I never thought needed it?
And why do the poets,
Whether they write on paper
Or coax it out of other's minds,
Stay up all night to bring their poems to a hurried end.

by **Tim Kuiken**

THE SONG OF THE NAZI SOLDIER'S WIFE

And what received the soldier's wife
From the old Czech Capital Prague?
From Prague received she high-heeled shoes.
A greeting besides the high-heeled shoes
She received from the old city Prague.

And what received the soldier's wife
From Warsaw on Vistula's banks?
From Warsaw received she a fine linen blouse,
So bright and unusual, a fine Polish blouse!
She received from Vistula's banks.

And what received the soldier's wife
From Oslo beyond the straights?
From Oslo received she the stole made of fur.
It should have pleased her, the stole made of fur!
She received from Oslo's straits.

And what received the soldier's wife
From the rich port of Rotterdam?
From Rotterdam received she a bonnet.
And it fit her so well, that little Dutch bonnet,
She received from Rotterdam.

And what received the soldier's wife
From Brussels in Belgian land?
From Brussels received she luxurious lace.
Oh precious to own, such luxurious lace!
She received from Belgian land.

And what received the soldier's wife
From the city of lights, Paris?
From Paris received she the silken cloth.
Her neighbors envied the silken cloth
She received from the city of Paris.

And what received the soldier's wife
From Libya's port Tripoli?
From Tripoli received she the dainty necklace.
A small amulet, a copper necklace
She received from port Tripoli.

And what received the soldier's wife
From the vast wastes of Russia's land?
From Russia received she the widow's veil.
For Death's holiday, the widow's veil
She received from Russia's land.

translated from the
German of Bertolt Brecht,
by **Steve Hahn**

I WHIPPED JESUS

Tie Him to that pillar men,
He's next in line
tell Pilate He'll be done
'bout half hours time.

So your Jesus Christ
King of the Jews,
I've heard your teachings
I hate doin' this to you.

But my family must eat
I can't lose my job.
Don't look at me Jesus
I feel like a dog.

Jesus I'm sorry
but I'll make it fast,
Don't condemn me Jesus
cause I used the lash.

My family comes first
you know how it is
you'd lay down your life
for your relatives.

Why are you smiling
I cannot save thee.
How can I flog you
when your blessing me.

by John Brooks

MY KIND OF HEAVEN

I lie with my sleeping bag open. My eyes pointed to the cabin ceiling but I do not see it. A breeze rustles the tree-tops but I do not feel it. The crickets and frogs are singing yet I do not hear them.

I lie in the enjoyment of thoughts of the things I have seen and done today. I remember the dawn and how cool the air shivered me awake. The path through the fern and brush covered forest floor was still wet from the dew and soaked my canvas shoes. The gray mist was just lifting off the lake and I stood on the dock just gazing over the lake floor through the window-like water. My heart jumped for a moment as a pike powerfully gnashed at a swarm of sparkling minnows. Pink crayfish, at the touch of my shadow, shot into the cover of the moss. A shriek broke the silence and high overhead a heron, its long neck crooked back, was making its long, slow flight to the nest. I could see that its beak held a flashing, scaly breakfast. I decided not to go out in the boat; it would be a shame to disturb the absolute calm of that scene.

Rather than take the usual path, I trudged up the new one I had been carving out the past few days. Brush and branches were lying all over and as I stooped to gather some into a pile, I discovered a toadstool. It was an earthy red color, the peak of its short life. The underside and stalk were creamy white and the whole was surrounded by a carpet of young green moss in a feeble attempt to make this little world more beautiful. Nature was a better artist than I so I left it as I found it.

Later in the day I glided silently through the shallows of the lake in my canoe. One silent stroke and the boat eased ahead many yards. It was perfect for spying on the turtles and sunfish darting in and out beneath the lily pads which were in full bloom, some yellow and others a brilliant white. Close to the shore I saw a school of hundreds of baby catfish searching for their next meal. Their whiskered guardian swam lazily along a few yards into deeper water. Further up the shore, behind a screen created by a dead fallen pine tree, a buck, sporting his new antlers, waded out to his knees to take a sip of water. I accidentally thumped my paddle on the canoe which sent the deer crashing off through the woods without so much as taking a glimpse of me.

Towards evening, I took the canoe out again to try my luck at fishing. About fifty yards away from my favorite spot, I could see a "V" shaped wake coming slowly towards me. My first thought was that it was just one of the many muskrats in the area but it looked awfully big for a muskrat. Sure enough, the slap and splash showed it was a beaver. It was good to see the beavers back repairing the houses they had been scared out of a few years ago. Water levels changed so the speed boats could not get into their home area.

I didn't return until after dark because I watched the bats fluttering about catching mosquitos. I hadn't caught any fish but I didn't care. The fresh air was making me sleepy so I trudged up the hill to the cabin.

The moonlight glows outside the window, the cool breeze makes me close my sleeping bag, and the singing of the crickets and frogs slowly drowns me to sleep.

by Bob Coffey

SUNDAY CLOTHES ARE RED AND BLACK FOR FUNERALS WE WEAR WHITE IN WEDDINGS

by Kathy Christensen

Yawn, yawn, swallowed a fly
Beautiful Savior, Cleft for I
Brick, stone, evespouts, love
Someone's watching from above
Hymn, Him, church.

LET IT RAIN

with

our tongues patched to the roof
of our mouths
we stand waiting, and waiting,
for a drop of rain
the sea of the horizon
is empty—and down
on earth trees stretch their
naked arms to heaven
just for a drop of water
we pound our drums;
and sound our horns
to appease Mwari¹

but alas, our prayers fall
into deaf ears.

dismayed,

the men order the children
to chew the dry mango fibres;
the mothers would wring their babies necks
if they could,
just for a drop of blood
the fathers like a pack
of hungry hyenas
tear bladders of the water-buck
carcasses for a drop of water.

but the furnace

continues to bake the ground,
melting the rocks
and setting our houses on fire.
oh, **Mwari** is this the way brave
men perish?
let it rain all over the world . . .

by Koketso J. Phaswana

¹ God of rain and fertility who lived
in a cave at Matopo Hills near Bulawayo.

by Deb Howerton



I live in a whisper
waiting
to be unveiled

one
holding a color
yet to be discovered

fragile hue . . .

tasting like
the song of a
bird

or a mouth
burning with
the
sweetness of honey.

by Mari Saucke

WINGLESS

I rattle the rusty chains
 That claim my bondage
And take sight of the radiant
 Redness of the rising sun.
Another day, clear sky,
 Wrinkled only by a scattered cloud or two
I tug to break those chains,
 Pull with all my might,
And all I can claim for the effort
 It a tear.
Why did I do it, why
Did I condemn myself to this prison?
All I can do now is walk when
 Before I could touch the clouds
But I took the path of the earth-bound,
 Clipped my wings and
Began to clump through life like
 A man with two wooden legs.
I said I wanted to be normal
 Like all the rest.
Realistic, not a dreamer,
 Down to earth, a real person.
Now I groan under my load
 And lie down to rest.
A sparrow flies over, and mocks me.
 A snake crawls by and welcomes me.
The devil was a serpent
 Because he clipped his wings,
And I too have forgotten the bliss
 That is felt
As I played hopscotch in the clouds
 and hide-and-seek behind the stars.
I again pull on my chains and die to life,
 Life that is lived down to earth under the raped
 rainbow of realism.

by Mark Olson

BEDTIME STORY

Mommy! Mommy— There's a tiger in my bed!
When I pulled down my covers I saw him move his head.
I didn't stop to ask him how long since he'd been fed,
I just came running right to you before he killed me dead.

Hush, little Tommy,

Hush, little Tommy,
You know you should be brave.
Just march yourself back up the stairs
And please try to behave.

But Mommy! Mommy! There's a bear behind the door!
I heard him breathe and snort and saw his shadow on the floor.
I wanted to be brave and fight but he scared me more and more!
You see, I just have two hands and the bear, well, he has four.

Tommy, don't be silly.
There are no bears upstairs.
If you don't go to bed right now
I'll call your dad, I swear.

But if you think I won't be killed you haven't seen the snake!
Going up to bed with him is more than I could take.
He squirms and curls beside my rug—I know he's not a fake!
And I think that just to look at him would even make you shake!

Tommy, go to bed.
I'll take no more of that.
You have three minutes to get to sleep.
Go on Tommy, scat!

Tommy slowly climbed the stairs, his face reflected pain.
He reached the hall, he neared his room, he knew he would be slain.
Why did his mother want him dead? What did she have to gain?
And it is true—after that night they searched for him in vain.

by Kathy Christensen

HAIKU

by Kay Horton

She walks in the rain,
Red balloon for company,
Waiting for people.

DESOLATION

Heart pounding upwards,
beating out a steady, deadening rhythm; get away,
Get away!
Can't find a place to escape.

Wind shoving down the throat suffocating with
a searing pain.
Snaring traps entwined to grab
stumbling feet.
My God!

Heart still pounding, lying beneath a tree.
Ugly, bumpy arms stretch and sway
waiting for a chance to crush.
Black, barren monster in towering contrast to
icy, blue background.

Run!

Dry, despairing fields rolling up to swallow and
cover with nothingness.
Sharp stalks, brutally severed now await with
their knifed edges.
Why have you . . . ?

Wind and grass are whispering evil, tormenting secrets.
Together with the trees now they scream
their derision.
Tiny particles sweeping along, tear and scratch,
blurring the vision.
My God, why have you . . . ?

He's not here.
Not to be found in this blind, futile search.
My God, He can't even forsake.

Running, pounding, breathless, not able to escape
my soul tumbles back to the
deep, dark emptiness of
Desolation.

by Glenda Holsing

HISTORY READINGS

Everyone now owns a sewing machine, a radio, a refrigerator, and a telephone. What is there to make now? asked the Industrialist.
Bombs, said the Inventor.
War, said the General.
If that's the way it goes, said the Industrialist.

The man in the white coat made notations on the paper. In doing this, he made many small, delicate letters.
Then he removed the white coat and tended the flowers on the window-sill for the space of an hour. When he saw that one bloom had fallen off, he became very sad and cried.
And on the paper stood the figures. Through this formula, using only one half-gram, one could kill a thousand men in two hours.
The Sun shone on the flowers.
And on the paper.

Two men spoke with each other.

Cost estimate?

With tiles?

With green tiles, naturally.

Forty-thousand.

Forty-thousand? Good. Yes, old fellow, had I not switched my production from chocolates over to gun-powder just at the right time, I couldn't give you this forty-thousand.

And I couldn't give you a shower.

With green tiles.

With green tiles.

The two men parted.

They were an Industrialist and a Contractor.

It was war.

A bowling-alley. Two men spoke with each other.

Why the somber coat, Principle, a funeral?

Not at all, not at all. A party. All the high-school boys went to the Front. I delivered a little speech. Recalled Sparta. Quoted Clausewitz.

Gave them two noble concepts to take along: Honor, Fatherland. Let Holderlin be read. Very touching. The boys sang: **The God, Who made the Iron grow.** Every eye shone. Gripping. Very gripping.

My God, Principle, stop that. That's hideous.

The Principle stared horrified at the other. He had during his story made nothing but small crosses on the paper. Nothing but little crosses.

He stood and laughed. He took a new ball and let it roll down the alley. It thundered lightly. Then it struck the pins. They looked like little men.

Two men spoke with each other.
Well, how is it?
Pretty sharp.
How many do you still have?
If it goes well: four-thousand.
How many can you give me?
At the most, eight-hundred.
That's not enough.
Than a thousand.
Thanks.
Both men separated.
They spoke of men.
They were Generals.
It was war.

Two men spoke with each other.
Volunteer?
Of course.
How old?
Eighteen. And you?
Me too.
Both men went on separately.
One fell down. He was dead.
It was war.

When the war was over, a soldier returned home. But he had no bread.
There he saw a man who had bread. He beat him to death. You are not
permitted to kill anyone, said the Judge.
Why not? asked the soldier.

When the peace conference had been settled, the Delegates toured
the city. There they came upon a shooting-gallery. Would the Gentlemen
care to shoot? called the girl with the red lips. Then each Minister
took a rifle and shot at little paper men.

In the middle of their shooting, there came an old wife who took their
guns away. When one of the Delegates wanted it returned, she slapped
him across the ear.
It was a Mother.

Once upon a time, there were two men. When they were two years old,
they hit each other with their hands.
At twelve, they beat each other with sticks and threw rocks.
At twenty-two, they shot at each other with rifles.
At forty-two, they dropped bombs.
At sixty-two, they used bacteriological weapons.
At eighty-two, they died. They were buried next to each other.
After a hundred years, an earthworm ate through both graves, not noticing
that two different men were buried there.
It was the same earth. All the same earth.

If in the year 5000, a mole were to peek out of the earth, he would
observe an orderly scene:
The trees are still trees.
The crows still caw.
And the dogs still chase after rabbits.
The smelt and the stars,
the moss and the sea,
and the gnats:
They have all remained the same.
And sometimes—
sometimes one meets a man.

translated from the
German of Wolfgang Borchert (died 1947),
by W. L. Wolff



by Norma Stone

ODE TO HOT PANTS

Oh, thou, girl, who dost adorn herself,
In clothes so fine yet scant.
Who in her walking . . . wiggles!
To make each male heart pant!

Oh girl, when mercury plunges,
To the reaches of 10^o below,
Thou art still clothed in Hot Pants
Braving the cold and the snow.

Thy legs so long and tapered,
Sculptured fine like De Milo's grace.
Tis hardly a man can truly say,
He has ever seen your face!

Nay! your face mattereth not,
There are better things further down!
Thou art packed within the fundament.
So firm! yet soft and round.

Oh girl, thou takest the greatest of pains,
To be careful when you set!
Lest thou slip and revealeth,
The greatest of your ASSets!

Oh girl, or woman, I know not which,
Thou tryest to ensnare a male.
And slappest their face when they think to buy
What is advertised so well as for sale!

Oh girl! hear me now! of my wisdom partake.
Listen to me, as I beseech.
Baring thy . . . soul . . . for all man to see,
Will get thee not a man, but a leach!

by Firebird

CIRCE

At four o'clock Circe opened her door, walked through a living room filled with rickety furniture, old newspapers and magazines, wadded pages of typing paper, dust, and dirty coffee cups and entered a kitchen with pillars of unwashed dishes. As she walked over to the sink, her mass of copper-colored hair, uncombed and unruly, floated in the breeze that she created; and her pale face seemed more unusual than beautiful in the limited light from the greasy kitchen window. People always noticed that face—the lips which were often set, the prominent nose, large green eyes that would widen and stare at one without looking away, and dark, well-spread brows. One could feel the power of a strong will in that face and see a complete disregard for a meticulous appearance. In fact, Circe had never allowed anything—her home or even her relationships with others—to interfere with the one goal in life that really mattered to her. This afternoon, however, she had decided to fix something decent for dinner. David had called at two o'clock with something on his mind, and because she had happened to notice an unusual hesitation as he spoke to her, she had talked him into coming to dinner.

Circe put two pork chops in the oven and cleared a space in the sink where she could pick apart a head of lettuce. She set the table and heated some leftover green beans, all without thinking, for her mind had left the kitchen. There were plans to make for the next two weeks, and if she didn't get started immediately she would fall behind. "If I decide to go," she said to herself; but the doorbell rang and Circe, knowing that it would be David, shouted for him to come in. She heard the door open and close; but when he didn't enter the kitchen, she went out after him. David stood by the door wrinkling his forehead and biting his lower lip. When he saw Circe he started, and began speaking without saying hello. "Circe, I can't stay. I'm sorry if you've made plans, but I tried to tell you over the phone. I'm leaving. I don't want to hurt you, but I just can't accept this way of life. You may be happy living in this mess," he said, pointing to some empty bottles in a pile on the sofa. "You may be happy doing what you want to do with little or no regard for what others think and feel. Your immersion in your work has paid off, I know, and I admire you for your talent and success; but I've decided that I want a wife and children. I want someone who will make a home for me—a home of which I can be proud. Why, I could never bring anyone to a place that always looks like this to meet a woman who won't marry me and who probably won't even be here. Since you won't compromise your life, I . . . have to say good-by."

Circe, startled by David's attempt to pull out of her life, exploded. "You're not talking about compromise. You're talking about capitulation—giving up my own life to take care of you and some little brats. You're not the first man who has wanted to leave me for a beautiful bride with an apron around her waist and a broom in her hands. But think! What could that kind of woman offer you? Six kids and a loving little wife who's always standing at the door with a pair of slippers and a newspaper? You'll feel trapped eventually, David. You're used to my kind of freedom."

"But there are no meaningful bonds between us, Circe, and I have come to want some meaningful bonds. You don't care when I show up as long as I show up sometime, and then I feel that you only want me around to run your errands. I can't live like that. I want a wife and children to provide for. I want something solid."

"Something solid!" Circe stormed to David and pointed at the door. "I swear to God, David, that if you walk out that door for good, you'll be sorry."

"But you said something about freedom."

"Yes, freedom. I can be free. You can be free. But we can still have each other."

"I want to be more than just a port in the storm, Circe. Good-bye."

As David turned to leave, Circe's eyes widened in desperation, which seemed opposed to her sudden outward calm. "All right, David. Leave. But please, before you go let's have one last drink together and I'll propose a toast to your future domestic bliss."

"Really, Circe, I . . ."

But she had left the room. David thought, "Why not give in to her this one last time." Having already failed to avoid an argument, he wanted to end their relationship as tranquilly as possible. Circe came back with the glasses and filled them from a small antique decanter of purple liqueur. She smiled as she handed him the glass, but again her eyes widened.

"I always save this for special occasions. Cheers, David."

David brought the glass to his lips and emptied it in three swallows. As he turned, he realized that the drink was stronger than he had thought. His body began to feel as though it were dissolving like an aspirin dropped in a glass of water. It was drifting down, and Circe was watching his descent over the edge of the glass. A jarring crash at the bottom cleared his head and a feeling of physical presence returned, but Circe was still staring down at him. It took but a few more moments for David to reach with his man's mind the startling conclusion. A long snout had appeared before his eyes, and his hoofs were making sharp clicks on the floor. Circe had transformed him into a pig.

At first David, in his frenzied effort to somehow escape his pig body, charged in disbelief around the room, knocking into tables and chairs; but by the end of the evening, he lay grunting in the corner, so exhausted that he hardly saw Circe come to him and scatter a few acorns before his snout with the pleased glance of a purveyor of justice. As she shut off the lights in the living room, Circe turned to say good night; but David did not pay any attention to her. He was standing in the corner of the room, rooting amidst the old newspapers and magazines.

by Cheryl A. Harris

MIDNIGHT CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND MEMORIES

He slowly draws the bow

with a gentleness no younger man
could ever achieve
even in the soft caress
of a silken female breast,
gently coaxing out a pure
and single note which
gives itself to the hushed
and somber night.

Another note slips forth, new yet old,

timeless in pure serenity. The
strings regain long past suppleness
as note with note passes
from memory into being.

Hushed and purely golden the

pacific depths of music
reflect the old man's soul.
His eyes half-closed, his body
transfigured by the living breath
of music born on each quickened string.

Then gently, slowly the music fades,

yet still the mood remains,
this transcendent purer Form
of music which dwells beyond mere sound.
Gravely the old man lowers his violin
and bow to the plump old cat,
who blinks in silent wonder.

by W. L. Wolff

GIORDANO BRUNO

Why did you burn Giordano Bruno?

because the mind's openness is dangerous.
Because the Word's mental power is a weapon.
Because life's freedom is a strength.

Because life's freedom is the strength
against which violence is fruitless.
Because the Word's mental power is our weapon
against the Inquisition's control.
Because the mind's openness is dangerous
for anyone who live's on its bondage.

Because the Aristotles can steer,
and the Copernici can expand the world.
Because mankind's long trek
toward new multiplicity and abundance,
led by the humble open idea,
burst apart all slave's bonds.

For all that you burned Giordano Bruno.

Therefore.—Because the man is greater
than the rooms, which he is subdued in,
than weapon, which one turns against him,
than the forces, like that powerless
accumulation against Giordano Bruno's idea.

Therefore not you, but he, lives.

translated from the
Danish of Piet Hein,
by Dianne Nicolaisen



MEMORY

by Judy C. Brooke

Have you ever stopped
to watch the rain?
It falls so gently
from the sky,
it hits my screen
in quiet splashes
then drips to the sill,
and drops to the earth.
What made those drops
spatter slowly
against my screen?
While I gaze
it seems part of a whole.
Or am I dreaming?
No—each is different
but does the same.
The lightning flashed
and brightened the room.
I squinted, but,
I could see.
Was that quick flash
spitting death somewhere?
Or am I dreaming?
I hope so.
The thunder rolled
it shook the air.
It sounded far away,
but then, came near.
Was it saying something
to someone
who would understand,
or am I dreaming?
A crisp, new breeze
just said hello.
It tickled my cheek
shivered my body.
It caressed, slowly,
each aching bone.
It cares for me.
Or am I dreaming?

SPRING SHOWER

by John Brooks

As each drop splatters
and spreads its magic
each bud, every shrub,
each blade of grass,
yawns and stretches,
reawakening, living,
breathing fresh life.
Or am I dreaming?
I must be dreaming.
Plants don't wake up
and breezes don't comfort,
thunder doesn't speak,
and lightning doesn't attack.
Raindrops are water!
There's **NO** special feeling!
But its nice—
to sit—
and dream.

PETALS

What is death? we asked the wise one
Ah, death said he
Death is petals
pulled one-by-one from the stem
sucked in the mouth
and spat on the ground
Ah, said we, death

And what are we? we asked the wise one
You? he said
You are the stem
whipped by the wind
rinsed by the rain
waiting for your petals to be pulled.

by Kathy Christensen



by
Joel Bohling

CRY OF THE DARK PONY

And he comes to her
windful and wild
rearing up before her
on leather legs

and he is at once
the dark pony
breathing the blaze of spring
leaves of fire
caper and crawl
upon his fast neck

and he feels he loves her
and says

when the hot Saturdays are over
when the bump and the grind is gone
make love to me softly
caress me with a word
jingle your eyes like bells
in the settling snow

but she is older than that
in truth she is older than the old
and replies

tigers alone will survive
only they and the Blakean night
left alone to gleam and scheme
as we sharp-eared planets of ice
shuttle about a vacant sun

and he the new-born is struck
he the pony reared up so proudly
is frantically poking hooves
into empty rungs of night
bewildered bats beat and battle the air
and within her mirror she holds
his silhouette carved upon the brooding moon

and she smiles
for she is spring
she is the instant forever frozen
in an orchard's smile
she is the wind upon the water
a tree open wide
as thunder shuffles in the distance

and he seeing all this
is fury
and one long last howl builds up
bursts forth
and thickens the fires of trees

somewhere
the wind is scuttling
rattling leaves like keys
with custodian hands
vague wisps of cinnamon haze
curl and crown the trees
as summer's sulking sleep descends
to slumber and snore like bees

but suddenly the wind is
fury
the cry of the dark pony
foams upon the waves of wind
only to break in useless anger
upon an unrelenting shore

it was night
and the birds woke up

by Eric Evans

REQUIEM

Peace
is dead
and tomorrow is an abortion
upon the jest
of continued human existence
as aardonic smile and a judo kiss around
pinch each other on the buttocks
and pass into Leviathan's maw

Pax
is
Tot
Eirene

by W. L. Wolff

TO A WART

What makes this wart grow out
Of my finger? Well, there's no doubt
It won't stop growing without
Some drastic action taken.

A virtual Matterhorn,
Its appearance the subject of scorn.
Not just a callous or corn,
But a little living eruption.

That Olympus of my knuckle
Which causes the skin to buckle
Doesn't make me chuckle.
In fact, it rather hurts.

I tried some medication
To soothe my situation.
But, Oh, the exasperation
When I found it didn't work.

This little mountain of skin
Must be the result of a sin
Or some little pleasure within
My brief but adventurous life.

by J. Dennis Weidler

HAIKU

Adrift in the sky,
Billowy popcorn clouds are
Buttered in the sunshine.

by Cynthia Homes

Sometimes Dana's breeze
Is a little overdone.
Today I turned bald.

by Kathy Christensen

SLEEPWALKER

The only girl I won't forget,
The only girl I ever met
Who never asked for anything—
Well, a free ride to the next town.
But she spent nights under picnic tables
because it was dry,
In interstate restrooms
Because they're the cleanest,
In the cab of a semi
because she was lucky,
And she could fall asleep to the smell of
cigar smoke
And to funny stories, hers and his.

Singing to herself,
Dancing to the music in her head,
She hiked along the highways.
Looked? . . . like everyone who ever raised a
brown thumb at the edge of the road.
A life of bluejeans, bandannas, backpacks.
Living on 23c and a smile.
Her mecca? . . . Mine, so we joined at Salina,
And that made 57c.

She never asked me for anything—
Enough to make me remember her.
But she gave me everything—
Enough to make me forget
My aching feet, empty pockets and all those
"no-ride" days.

Picking dreams out of the air,
She made long walks happy,
She made empty stomachs hurt from laughter,
And dusty bodies beautiful.

But at the end of the road,
Dreams vanished like exhaust.
I awoke.

Eyes opened on cement sorrows
And followed my sleepwalker down the street.

by Cheryl A. Harris

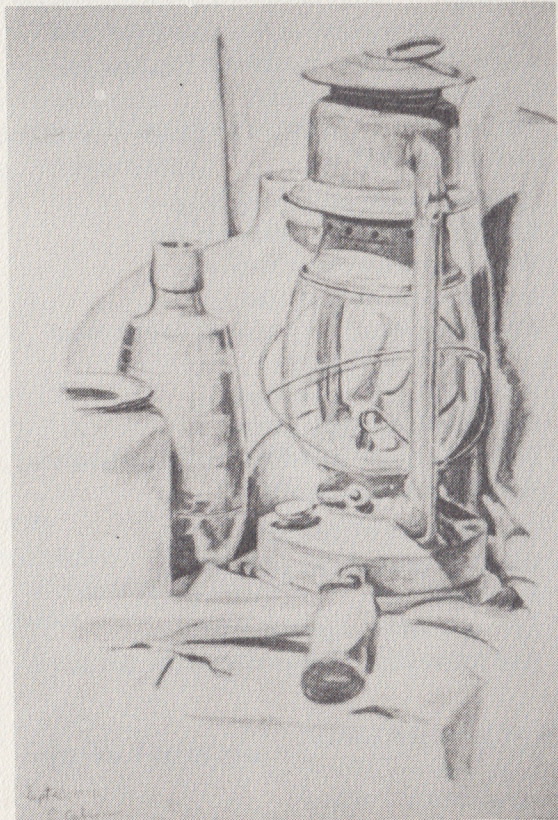
HAIKU

Watching the smoke walk
across the clean snow as the
wind gives it a push.

by **Patty A. Fredricks**

Crisp brown weeds wispig
Across the white sparkling snow
Are bent by the wind.

by **Bob Coffey**



by **Connee Gibson**



by **Carol Wenske**

FLASHES

These are time of uncertain direction;
as the tempest-tossed clouds;
as the blindman with no guide;
as the confused steps of the exile.

To live is to hope.
Dream your dreams with open eyes,
Only he that hopes dreams.

translated from the Spanish
of Aristides Sosa,
by **Linda Stuhr**

SPRING RAINS

by Steve Hahn

spring rains swish
gently on my window
dripping demurely
to the earth below them.
nature's self-transfusion
in a repeat performance.

and still the rains come.

pendant jewels
brocade the lush gown
of the
maple
carrying their secret
to the waiting ground.

and still the rains come.

carry your load,
laborers of nature.
pour into the
torrent.

swirl on,
loam-laden servants.
carry your
bones and skulls
from graves
forgotten.

and still the rains come.

ALMOST AN EXPERIMENT

After reading *Walden*, I am sure H. D. Thoreau found something for which we all look; real enjoyment of life. I say good for him. Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." So, Thoreau wished to live deliberately and when it was time for him to die, not find that he had not lived. Well, I must say that this was indeed a noble experiment on Mr. Thoreau's part—because I too attempted, at one time, to live deliberately. No doubt, had I succeeded, I would have drawn the same conclusion that Henry David did.

The experiment in *Walden* was similar to an event that **almost** happened to me while only a young boy. So, I feel Thoreau and I would have had much in common to discuss, had he not died so early. Although I was young, I was just getting old enough to see that life was about to change for me.

The pressure of conformation was forcing me to separate from my beloved family. Although I was content to sleep and eat most of the time while I was a baby, at the age of seven, I started to sense what Thoreau has written, that my days of childhood wisdom were about to end.

It has been told to me by my mother, that while I was in the cradle, I was contented with just sleeping and eating. This life style gave me all the satisfaction I needed and wanted from life. So, you can understand that when I was confronted by other tasks (evening chores), I saw them to be worthless for my own self. I decided I must leave home for my own protection of rights, and "from the opinion and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance" which Mr. Thoreau warns us of in Chapter II of *Walden*. One day I was so harshly treated that I saw no other way out but the way the road led. Specifically speaking, my oldest sister told me to start the evening chores. I revolted, knowing that I had no interest in the chores and feeling my sister had no business telling me what to do. Then I decided I would take advantage of the choice the road gave me and the fact that my parents were in town shopping.

I doubt that I had ever read any of Thoreau's writings at that time, but my feelings were mostly the same as his. I knew if I left home I would have to live cheaply, that the essentials were all that I could take with me. So I packed an old feed sack with the following items—

- 1 paring knife
- 1 piggy bank (contents \$1.27)
- 2 Sunday School books
- 1 Bible (reference for S.S. books)
- 1 ball-point pen (to work lesson)
- 1 baseball glove
- 1 favorite toy tractor
- 1 pair of work shoes
- 1 sling-shot

and hid it under our cornpicker, until I could sneak away, unnoticed.

My choice of articles was made with every intention of living easy and traveling light. I chose the paring knife because it was the only knife Mother had with a sharp blade that I could reach (all bread and meat knives were kept out of my reach.) The paring knife would be useful in killing and skinning game

The contents of my piggy bank were even more sparse than what Thoreau must have had in his. I realized that my talent in woodland survival was untried, but I had enough faith in it to gamble.

The Sunday School books, along with my Bible and pen, were packed because I was eager to show my parents that I would still be respectable. That they were really necessary for life in the naked wilds of southwest Iowa is doubtful, but I was afraid my parents would hear from my teacher that my lessons were incomplete.

The ball glove and toy tractor were not too practical but they were my own possessions and I reasoned that they could be used to entertain visitors.

The work shoes were very practical, however. They would be what I would wear during the week while hunting and scavenging. The shoes I was wearing would have to be saved for special events (entertaining visitors and going to town and Sunday School.)

Completing the list was my sling-shot. This was my most valuable possession. I could get all my food with this weapon. My greatest concern was whether I could protect myself with this and my paring knife from the wild beasts that might attack me.

I was ready to leave that very afternoon. The road would take me to my future home, which was approximately 180 feet from our mailbox. This great distance would separate me from my poor family. I had built a sturdy hut in a gully by our creek. It consisted of branches and horseweed stalks laid over the trunk of an old maple tree and the other side of the gully to make a roof. Although the sides were open, I would fix them after I had settled.

I started towards the cornpicker to get my few belongings while my sisters were eating lunch. I had eaten mine and left before they had finished. But before I got past the garage, I heard them yelling for me. I hid under the garage and watched them search for me. They were deeply concerned and earnestly pleaded that I should show myself before Mother and Dad returned. Then to my horror, they discovered my cache under the cornpicker. With my hopes for the future in a sack and my sisters holding the sack, I knew my plan was foiled. I crawled out and submitted myself to them, but said I only gave in because I sympathized with them and did not want them to get a licking when Mother and Dad came home.

Although I did not get a chance to try my experiment, I hope Mr. Thoreau will appreciate my attempt, and the fact that I received several lickings and lectures before I submitted to the opinions, prejudices, traditions, delusions, and appearances that were forced on me.

by Doug Bro

WHY?

A little boy
dressed all in rags,
a tassel of brown hair,
eyes of sadness,
but questioning,
all who passed by here.
A mighty general
happened by,
took pity at the sight,
stopped a minute
to talk with him,
was asked this question:
“Why?”
Because I am patriot,
I’ve fought in many wars,
loyal to America,
through thick and thin and more.
He walked away
quite proudly
gleaming at the sight,
of ribbons and many medals
flashing in the sunlight.
The little boy
just stood there,
warm tears filling his eyes,
until he spied a man of God
who just happened by.
He tugged at the man’s
black cassock
until the priest did spy,
the little boy
with tear-stained eyes
who only asked him:
“Why?”
Because I felt the urge
to serve,
the wretched and the poor,
I took this robe —
as a sign,
of serving God and more.
He walked away
very calm and slow
and studied with intent
the scripture for that Sunday’s mass
and what to do for Lent.

The child now alone again,
stood wistfully
by the curb,
until a passing hippie's
sympathy was incurred.
He squatted in front
of the little boy,
up came an inner sigh,
with all innocence
of a new born babe,
orphan asked him:
"Why?"

Because of this society,
I'm revolting from its norms,
I can't see where
they have the right
to tell us to conform.
The hippie stalked off angrily,
a scowl upon his face,
set against his countryman,
against the human race.
Alone again
in the city's streets,
the boy he wandered 'round
until a quiet poet
met him far downtown.
The boy's last hope
was finally there,
he questioned once again.
The poet's heart
was ripped in two
hearing that sad refrain.
What could the gentle poet do,
to stifle the urchin's cry,
he had no suitable answer
for the simple question,
"Why?"

I don't know why you're hungry,
nor why you're not well off,
nor explain the reason
you must wear,
that torn and ragged cloth.
I just don't know the answer,
but I'll try
the best I can,
to relieve a little suffering
and lend a helping hand.

Our little one couldn't
believe his ears,
at this man's sad confession,
but he had found
a human at last,
who listened to his question.
So now you know
what happened that day,
and hope you all will try,
to listen closely
if someone asks,
that simple question:
"Why?"

by John Brooks



by Larry Andrews

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AWARDS

Joseph Langland Award for Poetry

PETALS

by Kathy Christensen

Joseph Langland Award for Prose

ALMOST AN EXPERIMENT

by Doug Bro

Hal Evans Cole Award for Excellence in the Arts

MEMORY

by Judy C. Brooke

Kaj Munk Award for Translation

GRASS

by Tom Kristensen

translated by Rachael Neve

AFTERWORD

In the star black moon night
I cry for the tearless children
Who saw the virgins die.

the editors