

# RED CEDAR REVIEW









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# CONTENTS

<b>Jean Battlo</b>	
The Birth of a Poet . . . . .	2
<b>Carol Cavallaro</b>	
To the Woman At the Window . . . . .	3
Poem for Emily Dickinson . . . . .	4
Starving with others . . . . .	6
<b>Mary S. Emery</b>	
Romance Languages . . . . .	7
<b>Gwen Ashbaugh</b>	
Packing Grandmother's Trunk . . . . .	8
I Wake to Nakedness . . . . .	11
<b>Lyn Lifshin</b>	
The Woman Who Wraps Up in Poems and Leaves and Fingers . . . . .	13 15
Madonna Who Doesn't Want to See . . . . .	16
Madonna of the New Age Man . . . . .	17
Madonna's Phone Calls . . . . .	
<b>Gayle Harvey</b>	
Angel . . . . .	18
<b>Amy Beth Hill</b>	
Weatherveins . . . . .	19
<b>John Lee Hall</b>	
to the druid's mother . . . . .	31
<b>David Ewick</b>	
Dream of the Storm . . . . .	33
The Things We Can't Name . . . . .	34
<b>David Swan</b>	
Only in Death Will Man Find Peace . . . . .	35
Keweenaw Fire Tower . . . . .	36
<b>Hannah Stein</b>	
Living of the other Side of the Line . . . . .	38
<b>Paul Shuttleworth</b>	
The Quiver of One Moment . . . . .	39
<b>Carol Morris</b>	
Carriage Hill Blues . . . . .	59
Magic Pickles . . . . .	61
<b>V. Glen Washburn</b>	
Life's Like That . . . . .	63
<b>Shirley Campbell</b>	
<i>Alienation</i> . . . . .	65
<b>V. Glen Washburn</b>	
A Holiday Tour . . . . .	66
<b>Louis Philips</b>	
Dinosaur . . . . .	67
<b>Contributer's Notes</b> . . . . .	95
<b>Editor's Page</b> . . . . .	97









## THE BIRTH OF A POET

*Jean Battlo*

That single instant when I saw infinity  
then turned away and out and in  
to living;

that imagined moment when my mother's blood  
burned into me  
and my father bruised me into being,  
forging with fire my self to this moment  
where now

I sit with a fine white wine  
wondering, what drink was theirs  
what thirst  
what seed of celebration or of rancor

formed this I-am,

that now, old and dead abandon me

here and now and poet  
in late late sleeping hours of night  
peering at a painting of that sad Gachet  
weeping, out of context  
at that twisted bed at Arles,

two nights before I take that father  
to a grave.

## TO THE WOMAN AT THE WINDOW

*Carol Cavallaro*

Are you dead, a ghost in the machine  
who turns my blood to the noise of every day?  
Do you sit on the bed with the shadow neat under your legs

like a skirt, while you remember Europe as a geranium stuck  
in a jar, the smell, the crippled streets,  
the head-bent people?

How horribly you let in glaring light  
to burn my hand, til it stares out  
from a chiaroscuro painting, the thick sun white as a line

in two dimensions, and unbearable.  
Mother, electricity  
leaks from the calculator as it sits in the drawer ;

water drips from the clock ;  
onions red as hearts  
eat a circle.

They're building a highway near our house; they're pounding.  
Like the bones of a saint, like a bone beneath the altar,  
I float on the river below the road, an arrow, a stick,

an effigy of birds and spirits twisting at last  
like the sculpture of a cathedral.  
You press against the glass to watch.

And I see them, your window wizens.  
They uncurl my hands working them in sleep;  
their yellow powders streak the sheets. One after another

you send them through the door  
to play at childhood, force me to recall  
likes, dislikes, the patterns numbers take.

Then sometimes you turn your face away, in spite  
of history, and go  
further back than birth.



## POEM FOR EMILY DICKINSON

*Carol Cavallaro*

Idiot. Victimization  
is damn well one of the three temptations, the way  
of the cross, the feminine Jesus. Look.

*A flame reflected in her lantern  
makes a hundred piercing  
suns, casts the shell  
of everything that pounds*

I understand; you love me; you can't  
give anything; I shouldn't take it personally--  
I don't, gentle one, and if it's any comfort, know

*in the tide.  
Her silence formed the sounds that comb  
our brains for meaning.  
she gives us only the circle*

that I don't understand why you can't; it's perfectly  
opaque to me, except that you must keep your male house  
close around you, but I hope

*of the forest's  
blooms, the gold  
dilation of the water light,  
the spark of stars in the night-thin*

that I've made it clear that I can't give and give alone,  
shockingly enough; it's too dangerous for me, for whatever  
reason, and I hope that I've given you what I owe you,

*sky, the paper  
of smoke where our shadows  
shine  
to comfort us as we dream; and the crown*

and taught you all that I can; perhaps  
you've forgiven me for growing up and wanting to take  
you to where you think you already are--but so

*of green leaves on the summer grass  
covers her when she sleeps;  
she whispers in the tree's breathing—  
convince me like the constant*

blocked, and understanding nothing!—and I can't bear it  
anymore, or you staring at me, expecting everything  
but giving less and less; I hope

*wind. She is the one who watches  
the bittern drink  
serenely. The awful torch  
stabs from her fingers.*

that I've given you what I promised, because even now my  
spirit cries that it isn't enough, but the pain was enough,  
and isn't it supposed to be pain?

*She is jewel-like, open, the sweet,  
cruel, broken  
stitch,  
the moorage.*



## STARVING WITH OTHERS

*Carol Cavallaro*

She wants her blood to stop. She's in a light.  
You see  
what she carries, how fragilely  
her children  
are buried at Schoenbrunn inside a circle  
of the flames, among the double rows  
of golden houses, the pure,  
slanting sun, where she stood  
in the window. At night there,  
the moon is so hot and white that it is a luminous  
black burning in the eyes, moving  
very fast; but now the sun threads through  
openings in the clouds, apertures  
in the bone-cold mind of God, the patterned,  
layered, blue  
sky, the land itself  
streaming, creeks, roads, horses  
that lift their God-given shoulders to the edge  
of the stream  
of the sun, the hills, the yellow and grey  
covered fields, the pebbled  
places, the water there, brown, upturned,  
plowed dirt, as upward and open  
as her husband's big hands,  
and trees  
on both sides of the dark  
shy deer  
in a light too small to see.

Today a sea gull turning to an ibis  
landed in the exact middle of a narrow  
bridge, among black  
fishermen, in the intense  
morning light, near  
vegetation peaking in the green-shadowed water  
fingers of the canal, fir  
trees thin  
and incredibly pointed, the red,  
strangely, singly petaled thickness  
of an anthurium plant,  
bleeding too.

## ROMANCE LANGUAGES

*Mary S. Emery*

We spent half the night  
finding synonyms for fuck  
because there was nothing on TV.  
By the time we reached the d's  
you were telling me I was looking  
more like Ann Corio every minute.  
Maybe I should have pretended  
she was that little Calabrese  
from your old neighborhood  
who ate hot Italian sausage  
and made the boys' eyes water.  
You said we could turn down  
the sound and play \$10,000 Pyramid.  
I said we could turn down  
the covers and you could read my lips.  
And until your elbows collapsed  
beneath all those Italian words  
I couldn't have imagined the dreams  
of any dying burlesque queen.



## PACKING GRANDMOTHER'S TRUNK

*Gwen Ashbaugh*

It was daddy  
taught me the alphabet. He put  
Apples, I put  
Bears, he put  
Cotton Candy, I put  
Dolls. We packed  
Everything we could  
Fit into my  
Grandmother's trunk. We passed the  
Hours that way, me learning my  
Ps and Qs, he sending me valentines by homing  
Pigeon, or teaching me secret ways to get gold  
                                out of the lode with  
Quicksilver.

It was daddy  
taught me to crouch low in the cinders, to feel  
for the pre-trembling of the train in my legs.  
He used to move out slowly, ankles  
sinking into the ties as into the stops of a silver horn, loping  
the low notes of a sad bolero.  
He waid he'd wait till he'd hear train wheels  
screaming in their ruts before he'd  
break for the shoulder, snare his big hands in the rungs,  
catch, couple, cling  
to the O-moan of darkness.

He rode home to Colorado from the  
                                Chicago World's fair, crouched  
On chunks of coal and baled steel in the orange boxcar.  
He said he loved the cows and cornfields flying by, the train  
                                clatter of castanettes, the  
fencepost, fandango.  
It was a free moving picture show.  
It was his way back west.

I packed my grandmother's trunk and in it I put his  
Ashes, his grandpa's  
Bible, his grandma's  
Choir of Cornish miners. I packed my Central City  
Dancing shoes, a churchyard elegy, the  
Ear his grandpa sewed back on  
the bear-mauled man. I packed  
Fool's gold, daddy's fine most gallant handkerchiefs,  
my gypsy skirts, even the  
Glory  
Hole. I packed a cake with lemon  
Icing, beef  
Jerky, his bone-handled  
Knife, the  
Low notes loping, my mantilla, my mother's  
Marriage vows. I packed the  
Nights of  
Orion, the train  
Palmada, the cornfield's  
Quaking, broken rungs of mother's  
Rocking chair, my black  
Spanish shawl. One ticket to  
Trinidad and Tobago in the pocket of his  
Uniform, a purple  
Vellum tambourine, pressed  
Wallflowers, a wishbone, sheepbur  
Xanthium, clotbur clinging to his trouser cuff.  
White flakes of  
Yarrow, the train  
Zapateado.

It was daddy  
taught me to cling to the broken rungs of his big hands.  
He wrapped me in wet strands of pumpkin pulp and rocked  
me to sleep. He packed me in my grandmother's trunk and  
buried me deep. I called him Ashes to  
Ashes, train bolero,  
Bound for Colorado in his soot-covered boots.  
Daddy light the tallow  
Candle on your miner's hat and I'll  
Dance your churchyard



Elegy, our train fandango.

I'll wear lupin and wild rose so  
Fancy folks in passing groves will think a new tooth  
Grows in the  
Hollow mouth of the dream coach.

I'll hitch our  
Jack-o-lantern surry with the broken singletree  
I'll take my

Knotweed-tasseled whip for  
Lame gray Dobbin. I'll remember your  
Mad money, I promise, and my flannel  
Nightgown. I'll go to the Judge's  
Old road to the courthouse steps. I'll  
Pack the horseshoe nail you bent into a wedding  
band, all the

Quaint dowry you gave me, and I'll ride the  
Rails, hoping that somehow again, in  
Some field of lost

Time, I can be  
Unwise of myself as  
Vagabond child

Wedded like  
Xanthium to  
Yesterday, always dancing your train  
Zapateado.

# I WAKE TO NAKEDNESS

*Gwen Ashbaugh*

1

Just before dark, the swans take off their wings and webbed slippers. Orphans, as are all children of the imagination, they peel the feathers off their long necks and pile the white husks on the banks of a lake.

Just before light, as in a game of musical feather, one of them finds herself naked, standing on two human feet in front of a stranger. In his arms he hides a bundle the size of a skinned widgeon. She follows him home, and for seven years, when the owl grazes her window, she leaves her work to look through moldering closets for the raiments of her metamorphosis.

11

Wobbly apprentice to enchantment, my foot sucking the floor behind me in arabesque a terre, while the needle pecked out the scratchy strains of Tchaikovsky and the ballet mistress flailed and preened in front of the mirror, I tried to hold perfectly still, part of a frozen foreground of swan in a nineteenth century landscape.

Somehow I knew  
that if I ever got wings I'd have to fly through  
the waiting room where the mothers sat gray as mollusks,  
puffed out in a sea of netting, glueing sequins and rhinestone  
tiaras, plying needles and pleating tuttus for the ballet recital.

Inside, I tried to bleed white aragonite out of my pores.  
Womb hollow, quill mute and full of air as the scattered  
stars of Cygnus, I tried to be an orphan, no man's Odette,  
the owl's Odile.

Ribbons and thread, the tools of a mother's artifice  
are not enough to lift a child swan out of the resin. I was  
caught with one foot in the water, one wing straining its  
seams.

Slowly, I learned that the dance is the grain in a leaking  
oyster, wrapped like a poem in the white nacre of elision,



spun into the pearls that are sometimes found in the beak of a downed bird. Not as swan, but in a poor mantle of flesh, I knew that I too would go down off a cliff with a man who had plighted his troth to the dark vision he remembered having dreamed once dressed in motherwhite.

111

But I have always believed in the mysteries of dusk. I have sometimes seen the owl fly down by motherlight with a pearl in his beak, always believed I would unravel it and find in it the singly grain of my knowing.

Feather white

spun out of prism light, mother  
of pearl, I know where to find them. I mount the stairs  
to a steamer trunk covered with the labels of cities  
sunk in practiced opulence. I crack it like a shell, find them  
put to rest with burst shoes in the prison light of attic  
window, packed tight and drugged with the popped beads  
from a lover's broken string of camphor. But I do not put  
them on.

1V

Instead, I wake to nakedness, the man beside me naked,  
unfamiliar, as though seen by an eye still floating in the  
delicate cranium of a swan. I grope for my dress of feathers  
on the floor by the bed, over his muted form, and painfully  
I feel the webbing recede from my hands, a shrinking tide  
blue yes or a little green with dawn but fingers unmistakable.

Then the man, I know him, know his nakedness, and the  
knowing rises up whirring and flapping out of my eye and the  
rings clear and I love.

# THE WOMAN WHO WRAPS UP IN POEMS AND LEAVES AND FINGERS

*Lyn Lifshin*

the woman born in  
July crab  
shells around  
you know she

sounds like she  
gets right down  
to you'd think  
from her poems

she gets intimate  
fast telling  
you the first 7  
years with a

husband who  
couldn't She's  
not the kind of  
woman who'd

use the word  
intercourse  
seems loose and  
open People

come on to her  
just reading the  
poems. Listen,  
it's a shell

she's had to  
grow something's  
missing in her  
skin that keeps

her from bruising  
when she touches  
people fast some  
thing's cold and



it's sealed over  
with glass that  
she's painted  
words like cunt

suck and fingers  
and baby on But the  
words are just  
words It will

take longer than  
you suppose to  
make a world  
of these words

## MADONNA WHO DOESN'T WANT TO SEE

*Lyn Lifshin*

won't wear a  
watch doesn't  
look at what's  
happening lets  
shutters blur  
the stained  
air tilts on  
the edge like  
someone who  
stands on  
the rim of a  
scale set  
back ten  
pounds with  
glasses they  
can just  
see as far  
as their  
waist



## MADONNA OF THE NEW AGE MAN

*Lyn Lifshin*

is always feeling  
herself up to  
getting that  
silent pulse  
of pure rhythm,  
gulps flower  
essences before  
its light ashes  
on her skin for  
the fire trance  
ceremony knows  
if she feels  
low or odd its  
probably just  
her chakras not  
really flowing

## MADONNA'S PHONE CALLS

*Lyn Lifshin*

scream like a  
broken smoke  
detector or an  
ambulance breaking  
a door down.  
She watches the  
black rose twitch,  
lies there waits  
like someone  
waiting for a  
liver transplant  
who only has  
a few days



ANGEL  
from *The Art of Children*, boy, 10

*Gayle Elen Harvey*

a very large angel is flying like an astronaut over this country  
of orange-rooved houses.

with only one wing, he fills up most of the sky.

think of it, this kool-aide blue air parting in front of him,  
his gown painfully white.

we know his manners are better than ours.

toucan-colored clouds soak the top of this paper.

half a sun shines.

it's Sunday. the right day for angels.

one-dimensional flowers bloom in the sky over his head.

"gum-drops," he murmurs, unable to tell us about  
his own childhood.

muddy and mortal, we ask for his blessing.

"christmas," he weeps, rising like a perfect skater  
over the real ice of a pond.

# WEATHERVEINS

*Amy Hill*

My wife, Monika, left me, O, about an hour ago.

I can't really blame her. Afterall, it's not every day that one comes home to a ten foot marlin with chrome scales bowed across the fireplace. Well, actually she took the marlin, O.K. You see, Arcady and I had redecorated in her absence. I'm afraid it was the frosted glass portholes and the stained life preserves, Arcady's idea, that really gave Monika the willies.

"The Lusitania!" she had screamed.

"So," I said calmly. "Maybe someone could've spray painted that on or washed it with a hose a couple of times. You got to admit. It looks authentic."

"Ruther, what are these planks, and for god's sakes, what are these crates?"

"Monika. Please. They're just lobster traps, I thought you liked seafood."

She had never looked better storming out of here. Tempestuous almost. I think it was the sound of her moire cape snapping at her ankles that made me shiver, then laugh.

It was a good thing she didn't go into the bedroom. O, I suppose I could've explained some things, maybe have said we were having the furniture cleaned. All of it.

But I couldn't have explained the rest.

She wouldn't have understood. Not ever. I wouldn't have known that a week ago. Monika's misunderstanding.

It was a week ago, on a fuzzy blue Monday, that I drove Monika to the airport. She was flying to the Carribean and I was not stopping her. Monika went there every year. She insisted that a good tan during the off season was a marketable asset. Marketable asset. That was how Monika thought of herself. She had told me that she was a hand model and I never asked for proof.



You've seen those commercials with women stroking all kinds of things. Dishes. Furs. Men. Well, some of those hands are Monika's. Or so she says.

When I met her in Arizona she was a weather girl. They'd tell her that it was raining in Kansas and she'd gently press a magnetic drop of rain somewhere in the middle of the map. Don't get me wrong. She was extremely bright. Monika had a chatelain wisdom and was certainly the most radiant girl I'd ever met. No, her hot-waxed exterior never got dull. I could swear that when it rains, water just beads on her skin.

She did admit to me though that she knew more about cuticles than isobars.

The station gave me her job. And I guess I felt guilty about it. I felt that I owed her something. If nothing else, I figured I could coach her at night about sunspots. I don't know. Things got out of hand. Somewhere between hurricanes and monsoons, I married her.

We'd been together about a year when they sent me to a sister station, here, in Green Bay. I let Monika fly ahead and find us a house.

She did. She found us a dandy. A house with a family name. Monika had told me over the phone that the name of it was Ashton Hearth.

She also told me that she had put a down payment on it and that the house was on a peninsula of all places and that it needed just tons of work.

The new job was too good for me to pass up. I had to move fast. So I bought the Ashton home without ever seeing it. When I finally did, I wasn't really sure whether it was right or not. But I felt terribly moved by Monika's presence as the car had crackled down the crusty gravelled driveway.

The house was low, sunken into sandy earth. The corners of the house were darkly fused with monstrous recalcitrant lilac branches. At one time, I felt sure that the house had been a towering manifestation of whitewashed rocks and giant crosses of green laquered timbers. Now, gravity had since sucked the house down into a bowl of white and grey stalks. The roof was no higher than the top of my head.

Monika had worried me a bit about the tons of work part. But the outside seemed too defined, too linear for an inward erosion that consumes some old houses. And I was fairly



certain Monika didn't know a thing about plumbing or electricity. Whether it was top notch or what.

"What work?" I asked, as I poked my way about the damp but immaculate rooms.

Monika moaned. "I can't believe it. She must have been crazy that Ashton woman. All the rooms are peach or teal. Are those what I think they are? Giant orchids and peacocks on everything. O, Ruther. I know what you're thinking."

I honestly thought she did, so I didn't say anything.

"You're thinking: Monika. What difference can colors make? June. *Psychology Today*. 'Passive Prisoners in the Pink'. No, listen, I'm serious. Hospitals. What color are they?" She lifted an English hunting print off the wall.

"What?" I asked. "The waiting room or where you die?"

Monika made fish lips. "They're that milky green. It's supposed to soothe you and give you hope. Look at these walls. Will you," she said.

Monika. Monika. This is what I thought. I don't recall what I said to her.

In the end, we agreed that it would somehow be an infringement on Monika's selfhood to be subconsciously manipulated by the late Mrs. Ashton. Especially since Monika considered herself to be reptilian and would never find temperate harmony as the house stood. Point being, I was mammalian and would always be cold without someone to warm me.

We gave the renovation of her bedroom top priority. The house was so large that we allowed ourselves the luxury of separate bedrooms. At least this is what we told each other.

The truth was that I hadn't slept with Monika since she'd left Arizona. It became a habit that neither of us attempted to break. Monika suggested the separate bedrooms and I had agreed. The more she pulled away, the more intangibly beautiful she became. I told myself that she was playing a sophisticated courting game. A game that would one day end in a most delirious capture. But I'd been in pursuit for several months now.

My loins ached for the final killing, but my heart was beginning to fade. It just wasn't worth it anymore.



I wanted the goods without the hunt.

Two days after we had moved in, Herrace Zanker, an old friend of Monika's crept in from Philly. They had what she called a creative *tete a tete*. With him came a circus of designer assistants who ate all my natural peanut butter. But Zanker and his harlequin workers had slipped back in Philly by the Friday before I took Monika to the airport.

He did only Monika's bedroom.

"Herrace didn't want to do the rest of the house," she explained slowly. "My bedroom exhausted him. I thought he'd thrive on the frustration of it all. Especially, god, o, the sunporch."

"The sunporch? I like the sunporch," I murmured and she shook her mussell black hair.

"Rutherford. I think this would be a good time. Transition periods are difficult. Do you know it takes a bear a whole week to come out of hibernation? Look, I've got a possible wedding band layout in Chicago. I think I should go to get ready for it. Alone. Ruther. Please. Please don't smile like that."

After she packed she gave me a little card. I thought it would be where I could reach her. But it was a business card in the shape of a house. The address was in Warwick, the closest town.

"I hear she's good," Monika cooed at the airport Snackhut. "She'll do a good job of things before I get back. Call her this afternoon and make an appointment with her to see the house."

I never called the woman though.

On the way home from the airport, I stopped off at the Ginger Foxe bakery to claim the coffeecakes Monika had ordered. In fact the last thing Monika had said to me was, "The blueberry caramel cake, Ruther. Don't forget to pick it up." Then she had blown on her plane ticket like there was a bug to be got ridden of.

As the brass bells over the bakery door jerked on their fat velvet straps, I remembered how I had caught Monika's kiss in my hand and put it to my lips. But she had already turned to the man next to her and was laughing. This made me want to give the girl behind the counter a hard time.



She was a striking young woman with a pin-up girl look to her. Not an aluminum blond of a Marilyn Monroe ceramic, but softer, like a twenty-five watt light bulb. Her jeans were the color of a fresh bruise. A blue and orange college sweatshirt was bunched around her torso.

On the glass case to her right was a shoebox with receipts in it. Someone had crossed out the size with thick, greasy black strokes.

I shook the snow off of my tiger-eye tweed driving cap and stomped my feet loudly on the carpet runner.

"You must be Ginger Foxe," I said leaning toward her over the doughnuts.

"I just wiped that counter off. No. I'm Arcady. I live upstairs. Mrs. Foxe, that's Ginger, has a cold. Don't I know you from somewhere?"

"Arcady?" I interrupted and pulled out the card Monika had given me.

"I do know you," she insisted. "You're the new weatherman on channel eleven. O, I love the color radar. So does Mrs. Foxe. Was that your idea?"

"No. Listen, do you know a Herrace Zanker?" It was only a hunch.

"Singular?" I took a step back at her laugh. It was a wet, open mouth bar laugh. Then she pointed to the card I was reading. "Hey, where you pick that up. That's mine, you know."

"I came to pick up a coffee cake that my wife ordered. I had no idea you'd be here," I explained.

She smiled and gave me a large, pliant masculine hand white with flour. "Ashton, of course," she said quietly giving it a dignity it no longer deserved.

I nodded proudly. "My wife, Monika, is away. She gave me your name. I suppose you've talked to her." There was no response so I went on to explain the rest. Yes, it was very large. What it needed was paper, paint, lamps, whatever she usually did to, uh, change the mood.

"The mood. Yes, your wife said something about that." I thought the girl might laugh instead she grinned and assured



me that the mood was what she did best.

She agreed to meet me early the next day. Tuesday, at eight or so. I gave her a key, though I don't know where I would have gone and in exchange she swung a white box at me. She held it by the strings like a marionette. I thanked her and she winked without smiling.

By the time I got home the snow was spinning in ferris wheel circles.

Just like I had predicted. Before I fell asleep I thought of the girl at the bakery and Mrs. Foxe pointed to the red spots on the radar moving like amoeba to devour Warwick.

In the morning I ordered Chinese food for our breakfast.

She showed up at eight in the same jeans. This time she was wearing a cocoa sweatshirt with smears of ochre paint around her shoulder. I gave her a mug of coffee. She shook the cinnamon sugar Monika had on the table for toast into it, not bothering to stir it. Then she fished around in the stiff canvas dufflebag that she had brought as I spooned the sweet and sour won ton into crystal bowls.

The snow had given her face an appealing, red chapped look of a pressed prom rose. As it melted, her curls grew darker under the fleshy jawbone. I leaned back in the wicker chair when she started to eat, rubbing the white denim kneecaps with my palms.

"I'm sure Monika will like what you do, Miss Sutherland."

The girl had a few strands of egg roll in her mouth. They swung as she bobbed her head. She seemed unusually awkward for a woman past her adolescence. Perhaps she was just unrestrained. I was certain that in long ago summers she had been a camp counselor. I imagined she would handle obscure games like sack relays, egg tosses and greased watermelons with an unequalled finesse. When she had finished chewing she insisted I call her "Cady".

"Like a katy-did, the insect," she added.

I was impressed by all the samples she had laid in front of me. A plethora of shag carpet pieces and paint chips. She seemed so suddenly serious and I began to sweat again.

"So tell me about your wife. That's really what's important here. Not what colors she likes, later, that maybe."



She put me off a bit with this one, though I suppose I had been mulling over just that subject in the past week. I frowned as thoughtfully as I could for Monika's sake. With an epiphanous grin I asked Arcady if she thought if there was any monosodium glutamate in the egg rolls. Some people notice that type of thing.

Then I spilled my guts. "Monika's, well, I don't know. It's so hard to describe someone you've been so close to. She's... not like you. O, god, Monika's not like anybody." My voice had begun to tremble.

"Neither are you," she shrugged nonchalantly but her hands had begun to pick at the carpet samples.

"Not genetically, no. But, spiritually or something people have a bond. Monika looks at things so differently. She scares me sometimes."

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Mr. Wildlimb." She looked redder and I wondered if perhaps I was scaring her a bit, if she was thinking that I was not safe to be with. Like this. Alone.

"O, Christ. This house, for example. Monika hates it. She has been stripping it, clawing at the walls for weeks now. It's all she does. She wakes up and it's chip, chip, chip. She get's in bed and well, the whole place reeks of turpentine and linseed."

"I can't smell anything, Mr. Wildlimb."

We were silent for a while. She sorted paint chips and I rubbed my eyes with the back of my hand.

Finally I said, "You smell nice. Like allspice, cloves."

"Like a bakery," she said, smiling a bit. When she blinked, I saw that her irises had the dull sheen of undeveloped film. Blank and moist, waiting to be engraved with an idelible image. She looked back at me, boldly for a moment then pulled her hair over her eyes trying to stretch her bangs.

"I know," she said suddenly." A jungle motif in the dining room."

"Rainforest. Yes," I added eagerly, knowing what she was getting at.

Glass fruit swung over our heads as she bumped the Tiffany



lamp, reaching for samples. We wrote down a long list of ideas Monika was sure to love on the bag the Chinese food came in. I thought of all the colors and patterns of snakes and lizards that I could and wrote those down on the receipt that was stapled to the bag.

After writing notes feverishly, Cady paused, almost panting." Do you think I could see her bedroom?"

It was the one question I had been dreading. I felt like a father who is trying to tell his only daughter that the backseats of cars aren't only for groceries and the Great Dane. So instead I told Cady that I would do the painting myself. I wanted to be done when Monika came back. That was the most important thing.

Before she could say anything else I thought of something I wanted to show her. I got up and grabbed a large prism from the window sill. A hollow grey earthwormish tube was suspended inside it.

"Do you know what this is?" I asked. "I found it when I was a boy. Monika put it in glass for me. She went through a phase putting all sorts of things in glass. Everything she found."

Cady held out her hand but I didn't want to give it to her.

"It's a fulgurite. When lightning hits the sand, it forms a tube of natural glass." Then I looked at her as if it were a telescope. The prism refracted her body in a zig-zag. Like a gruesome magic trick she waved her disjointed hand and smiled. I felt that if I could slide her head back on to her body and put her back together that it would help put me back together as well.

I put the tube down. "You're not what I expected." I suppose this could have been either one of us, but it was me.

I wanted to touch her or ask her something intimate. Instead I whispered rawly, "Maybe we should look at Monika's room now."

As we wound through the dim halls, I wished I could tell her to go home. But she was racing ahead of me as if to find an exit. I called ahead telling her which door was Monika's. Cady pushed it opened but stood there as if the carpet were quicksand.

Monika's bedroom was covered with dozens of girasol webs



that netted to form a ceiling. And each web glittered intensely, as if a spider had laid a dozen nacreous eggs.

“Dear god,” said Cady and she wet her lips.

There were almost a hundred apothecary jars filled with herbal oils on the shelves by the windows. Glass bubbles floated on the oil. By the brass bed was a case filled with glass engravings shaped like giant brilliant cut diamonds.

“Untouchable,” she said. “It’s so untouchable.”

Cady was crossing the room to the windows when she finally noticed the fish. Monika had strung ten circles of intravenous bags. The bags acted as suspended aquariums. Within each were dozens of darting neon blue, red, yellow tropical fish. Angel fish, tetras, and the like. Some no longer moved as I had not come in to change the water since Monika had left.

Cady twirled around under the bags wrinkling her nose. “My god, they can’t live very long.”

I frowned. “No, they don’t” She turned to Monika’s dresser and picked up a silver mirror, looking only at the back. Then she gently pulled open the top drawer, it slid into her long arms easily. I went and stood behind her.

Cady’s eyes watered as did mine from the sharp rose oils that had permeated the cedar lining. She dipped her hand into the waves of streaky silk and satin. I almost expected her hand to be wet when she withdrew it. The vitreous folds crested in foamy lace, percolated as she stirred the material more furiously. It began to trickle over the sides of the drawers onto the garnet carpet.

I took a deep breath as she lifted out a brassiere. It was reinforced with reticulated golden thread. Cady held it in her hands like the wing of cicada, then she held the gossamer membrane to her chest.

“I’ve never seen such lingerie. Your wife, well, she’s a very beautiful woman. She must look very stunning in them.”

I blinked. “I dunno,” I said.

Cady dropped it in the drawer. “I’m very sorry. I should never have said that.”

“No. She just won’t let me touch her. I try. She just won’t.



I've never. . .never seen any of these things. Perhaps they're for someone else." I paused, feeling very bitter and my eyes were hot. Cady picked up the bra again and looked to the window.

"Can I try it on?" she asked and I watched numbly as she raised her arms above her head and asked me if I would help her pull her sweatshirt off.

After a short struggle we unbent our heads together and studied the mirror. I smoothed Cady's light hair with the back of my hand. Her breasts glowed a frostbite pink. Her nipples were swollen and sparkled of ice dust.

"What are those?" I asked, running my fingers down the deep, sunburst scars that sloped into her nipples. Cady lowered her chin, touching my knuckles.

"I just developed too fast. It happens sometimes." She started to cross her arms but I pulled her hands to my sides.

"When did you start?" It was a question I had always wanted to ask Monika.

Cady squirmed. The bra was much too small. "Ten."

"Is that very uncommon?"

"One day I was on the stairs in school. I was still a little girl and suddenly I felt as though someone had rolled a marble down my leg." I ran my tongue over the rim of the ear. "Monika doesn't have these, does she?"

"No," I said flatly, then I went and got the fulgurite so I could look at Cady from all the angles I could imagine and then some.

I had her put on all the lingerie we could find and each time Cady changed I looked at her through the grey tube. She was wearing a black teddy with sequins when I came up with the idea.

I pulled Cady down on the floor with me.

"I wish I could still do the house. But, I can't. I'm sorry, Ruth."

I squeezed her hand in agreement and told her what I wanted her to do. We found the hat pins in a drawer with scarves and sunglasses. I gave Cady the pin with the cabochon

ruby tip and took the opal one for myself.

We climbed on chairs. "Like this," I directed her with the opal in my fist. "Like this."

The stale water pooled into the carpet looking like blood. Cady wanted to go but I made her stay until the last fish, a blue one, had ceased its spasmodic flopping.

"Monika and I make a smart couple," I told her as she peeled off the black velvet. "You know, I think that we'll grow together in this house." It was, to be sure, a long range prediction that made us both smile.

"I know," she said. "I think you're right."

Naked, she bent and tenderly picked up a white angel fish by its forked tail. Then she placed it on Monika's bed.

"Do you know what causes it to rain fish or frogs in some places?"

"No. I've no idea. Perhaps Monika knows."

"Yes, I think she would."

Together, we put the rest of the fish there. Wetting the sheets. There were about three hundred getting pale in the air. Closing their eyes with metallic shutters.

About three hundred. That's what it looked like.





## TO THE DRUID'S MOTHER

*john lee hall*

i made  
the wind  
that swirls  
in the yard.  
it only shows  
in leaves  
and snow, but i  
made it strong  
enough  
to hurt you, almost  
enough  
to make me  
want  
to see you.

i  
split the oak  
back home,  
the one  
beside the thorn-wrapped  
ash, the one  
that leaned  
against my back  
while i read books  
that kept me  
away  
from you.  
i learned spells  
from reading books,  
mother. can't  
you read  
my warning  
in that  
tree?

you were the one,  
mother,  
who warned me  
to join  
the human race,  
stop living



in imagination.  
i  
turned farther  
into magic,  
cast the spell  
making you  
drink  
as much as i do,  
crazier  
then i am,  
more  
changeless  
than the celtic gods  
we serve.

the crab-shell  
castings  
say  
my pain will end  
when i accept  
your sameness  
over  
time. making  
good sacrifice  
and letting you  
be  
will end  
the rage  
you never meet  
and close  
the dreams that say  
i  
am the sacrifice, and  
you  
are the druid. i pray  
to the mother-  
goddess  
that it  
be so.

# DREAM OF THE STORM

*David Ewick*

The basement window  
caked with coal dust  
has an eye, a clear spot my father  
rubs clean with a rag.  
Through it, yellow light scatters,  
settles against the remains  
of an unfinished fallout shelter:  
boards, cinder blocks, storage  
for a week's rations, fiberglass,  
nails, other things inadequate  
for their purpose.

He stands on a cinder block  
dragged to the window  
for this purpose: to watch for the storm.  
This is Kansas, 1961. He is the age  
I am now.  
The glass rattles in its casing.  
My father drops the rag, turns his eye  
to the eye of the window, so only the glow  
from the bulb behind the coal furnace  
defines the difference between black and white,  
washes in dull light his  
white sleeveless shirt, black  
pants and shoes, catches the dust  
and coal particles in the slow dance  
our presence has stirred.

He turns to me,  
his face drawn, dark,  
as if peering through some great distance.  
He gestures to the eye, beyond the eye,  
to the hill in the northwest,  
the eye of the storm.  
He steps from the cinder block, backs away.  
*Here it comes,*  
and the eye of the window closes.



## THE THINGS WE CAN'T NAME

*David Ewick*

The stars burn  
like children learning to speak,  
vowel by vowel, through time,  
until their language  
has eclipsed its usefulness,

become something else,  
a glance, a wicked look,  
an accusation.

The light we see is not the star itself  
but something it has lost.

We touch one another and feel  
nothing. Our fingers are deaf and dumb.  
We see our children as reflections  
of comets moving away.  
Our grandchildren don't know us.

don't recognize the constellations in us,  
the names we were given  
by our ancestors.  
So we watch stars track across the sky  
until we lose them,

search for understanding  
of Polaris, the way it revolves  
around itself, no children of its own,  
reminds us that we are outdistanced  
by our own memories.

Antares is bright before dawn.  
Yesterday I watched it fade quickly  
while you slept.  
Our children were old before I could wake you.

## ONLY IN DEATH WILL MAN FIND PEACE

*David Swan*

1

Adam and Eve were legally married  
standing in nervous, rigid fright  
before a large congregation  
of unknown relatives.

Jesus Christ is buried  
in plot number one  
of the Methodist Midland County Cemetery.

11

Chopin's heart lies in an urn  
at the church of the Holy Cross--Warsaw.

Rasputin's penis was cut off  
by his lover and kept in a box.

Tchaikowsky left his skull  
to England's Royal Shakespeare Company  
for Hamlet's graveyard scene.

John asked for ten minutes of silent prayer  
2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 14.

111

*(For Chris Hammond)*

Upon hearing the news of my death  
find an old Gothic church,  
sit down at the piano and play Imagine,  
then ring the church bell  
once for every year I lived.

I don't know where I want to be buried;  
the south transept of  
Westminster Abby,  
beside Yuri's family estate  
within view of the Ural mountains  
and among the yellow daffodils  
and birch forest,  
in a small graveyard  
alongside Captiva's chapel,  
at sea, or  
in an unmarked grave  
overlooking Superior.  
I will dig my father's grave



and I would like you  
to help my son dig mine.  
Pass a bottle of Black Velvet,  
laugh until you both fall down,  
tell old drinking stories, and  
teach him to play Somewhere Over the Rainbow  
on your banjo.

I want to be buried naked  
in a rough cut pine box.  
On the top in black coral inlay  
I want the words

Only in Death  
Will Man Find Peace

Anyone who thinks of draining my blood,  
taking out my guts,  
filling me with embalming fluid,  
putting make-up on me,  
and dressing me in Sunday sport coat and tie,  
will be visited every night  
by a violin-playing poltergeist.

I want no gravestone,  
only an oak tree,  
to grow over my remains,  
to have it's roots enfold my skeleton,  
and to feed off of my body.

I am to be placed into the ground at  
sunrise.

## KEWEENAW FIRE TOWER

*David Swan*

first snow after October.  
flakes falling in perfect verticals;  
oxygen seeds cascading through pools.  
late autumn beige, reds and yellows  
soon wet with tiny white octopi.  
no longer can we see the lights  
of Lac La Belle, nor  
the outlined figure of the Hurons  
like a school of whales singing in the distance.

*you lean your back in the curve of my body*  
as we sit under the warmth  
of a blanket

my great grandfather brought over the ocean.  
I feel the moist breath of my whispers  
against your ears,  
your neck,  
your cheek  
as we talk of Diane, of Rexroth, of Lennon,  
Whistler and Monet,  
the perception of poets  
and hedonists.

I tell you about the death of Mingus;  
how he died in Mexico at 56  
was cremated the next day  
and that same day 56 sperm whales  
beached themselves along the  
coast of Mexico  
and were removed by fire.

I explain to you how I will die  
sailing toward the eye of a hurricane, or  
hang gliding in a lightning storm.

I tell you that my reality  
is found in the lights and reflections  
upon water . . .  
any water.

as the morning  
seeps into focus  
we watch  
blue green lights

undulate  
upon the bay,  
like my lips  
upon the wave  
of your  
naked  
shoulder



## LIVING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE

*Hannah Stein*

I discovered a note  
not meant for me. Slowly  
I untied I and You  
Pulled sinuous body straight  
spun them all into a ball of thread  
on my fingers. But  
it sprang open, unraveled,  
  
drew a line down the middle of my life.

I stumble on. Owl-eyed  
I teach, cook, eat.  
But I am afraid. Of  
leafless branches  
that imprint a cold sky, a cursive  
of ropes on grass, a centipede  
running along a laundry basket.  
I fear a snake next might unwind  
from a pocket, retrace  
your writing. That your eyes,  
as guileless as before,  
will strike me blind.

# THE QUIVER OF ONE MOMENT

*Paul Shuttleworth*

A man is sorting ice cubes on a wooden counter. He never completes the audit.

I can think she waits for him. Driving like a knife. Her honest admiration is ballad-quick. These long yellow eyelids. Will I forget you again? Hands of consolation. The personification of fire and smoke. It is precisely how she slept, the full hips brown on the white quilt.

Her sobs were an event. Is she ineffectual snow blowing off winter wheat, darkened by the loose soil? She runs screaming like lighting. On the sofa, three minutes of gushing and no attempt to conceal it.

Burlesque dancer laid aside like a striped jacket, very pretty like a new bar of lime soap. The dull metal look of eyes. To this day she thought, to this consequence of boogie woogie music. The tongue of heaven in the labia: the color a natural defense. Standing alone, her gaze against him like the others. Lovers feeding each other lemon pudding.

Hygienic kiss, down cushions, no altar, glass beads on a curtain. When she finished, her clear shadow stretched, the hands smooth on the bruised thigh, a boredom speechless, halfway between the notion of love and being paid.

The interview made him limp and pale. His chin sweaty. Her eyes added to the shaking of the room. Porcelain walls. No idea what time it was. The need to urinate soon. He thought of a king weeping for a favorite horse, a type of joy between old noun and old noun.

The popular city street leading to city hall and the fountains and statues and drunkards in waiting-rooms dejectedly, hands saying 'Forgive me.' A man walks along the sidewalk with a dog on a leash. He may be ill. His head tilts to the right side. From the cradle to this: bundles of see you later and the end of the week ending like a dropped plate of buttered rice. The hostile glances of waiting strangers prowling in the library. It was already late afternoon and the fog was rolling in over the new highway erected over the older section of town.



The wide entry comes alive for the beardless face. Lit candles. This misty wind stills the music vaulting out the window. She rests one arm, using the other arm's elbow to arch herself upward. He intends to remain ethical. Forget the comedy of children painting on old bureau forms. It is not yet fatal. Melancholic conduct: he retrieves her pink camisole from the bare wooden floor and kisses the lace border as he hands it to her. She rinses off a washcloth and hangs it on a peg on the door.

He ignored the summons as long as he could. Each tap on the door, each reference to the authorities: please answer correctly. The neck muscles cramped. He calculated the distance downtown.

Do you get up early in the morning? Does the sight of red paper annoy you? Was her mouth cruel? Did she remain kneeling? Did you notice any abnormality? Was it as coarse as sand? The answers, please. With some detachment, he was able to finish the form, not feeling rebuked. Her hands folded over her pubic hair?

Riding in a car, he selected people he might like to meet. The audience as performance. Photography as erotic habit, the motion of frozen gestures. This earth, this sickly texture of developing off color, preserved in his own hands.

An hour passes. The house is suggestive of the nearby beach. By a desk lamp, he files the photographs in a cardboard box. The zoom lens was used. A warm breeze from the ocean. Books on the occult, a ghost in the small hamlet, children led by a demon-child. She waves to him from a window. Her upper parts pudgy, red velour wallpaper behind her. He files it away. She does not say, 'Go away.' Later, they share a bottle of white wine and sit by a wicker table.

'Let me help you.'

'I admire a man who know what he wants.'

They do not take sides. It is simple and quick, her blithe smile does not remind him of anyone he has known.

'You flatter me.'

'Shouldn't I?'

Unashamed, she says, 'Come, come, you can't take it all in



with your eyes.”

I could write a short letter if you know what I mean. Something that draws her conclusion for her. The bitten ear. The world takes another step without me. I tried to telephone a couple of times, just to say the mouth lodged in pink hell. Closing your eyes, the sofa damp in the corner, you tried to sleep. The streets empty and there was no one else but you to watch. I could have counted the worn out garments that other men shred or disliked because it wasn't the first time. Fingers on her breast, lulling my hand to a dream of rosy return. I stumbled up the stairs, the hurry up of lifting her off her knees afterwards. The blonde. Pale sleeping face. Rushing the words of becoming a man.

He felt no desire to stay with her. The greasy dinner later: hamburger and white bread out of a plastic package. A coast of strangers, all walking within the winks of time. Time as what echoed in the corridor leading to the stairs. She sat in that same room, possibly beside the wicker table, her shoulders pale and heaving, the dim street outside lonely like the jingling of a dog's collar tags.

I'm on the front end of a fire truck, holding on to something as soft as a mattress. We pass alongside a high brick factory wall, nearly scraping. We barely avoid a head-on crash with three bicyclists, all in suits, perhaps missionaries. We arrive at a farm where a field is smoldering. As the firemen bring their hoses to the field, I enter a machine shop or kennel where numerous dogs are in crates. The crates are too small and the dogs cause the crates to breathe.

I wanted to ask if she liked coins. Did she like men to bow and open doors? Several times on the beach I have been struck by the silence. It reminds me of a hat in a closet. It is like a late evening parlor game. She yawns, but I am enchanted and pat her shoulder. A dog barks outside. Her white teeth on my ear.

A little thrill with marbled flesh. Promised strawberries. Giving in to the sucking. Plump breasts. Slowly. . . think of it as reading a menu, narrowing the choices. She could use oil for a massage. Ask her to speak in low and soft tones. Her impudent smile, then down on her knees, her blonde hair in the ball of a fist, an angry shake of the hand, pulling her forward again, disgusted by her spitting on the floor. Kissing the lips. Whimpers. Imagining a mountain inn, young girls with rucksacks in a meadow, their noses sunburnt and peeling. Then she brushes out her blonde hair. A casual



glance out the window.

Before starting out for downtown, he thinks, They scratch too much. Something could be done. A decision must be made before the walk is over. Inside the brain tiny mice clawing at the stuffed furniture.

"These are not empty threats," the letter says. "You were heard." Enclosed photographs of rope coiled on stone. He licked his fingers, wiped them on his tweed jacket. A wave of nausea as when he came down the stairs from her performance, feeling he had paid too much. "Snuggle up against it," he told her, "it's healthy." So clearly her breasts throbbed. The pleasure of only a second.

When I got home, I thought it was criminal to have expected it to last forever. It's more like a box of bonbons one can buy at some movie theaters. It can be spaced out. A cigarette and begin again, gently rocking her hips to the music. From my seat, I could hear the sour breathed whinnys of the others, their cheap jokes about moon landings and incomprehensible breasts glued to pasties and little steamboats in canals. A row of high school youths up front. She lets one stroke her flank. "We're so glad you came this evening," she added.

Melting together, hearing our guttural tameness cry out for now and then, we speak preference and place, trying not to be rude. I warn her not to bite. I extend a thumb inward and she straightens up for it is a second opening, a joining of nearby forces, and pressing my chin on her nipple, wondering if she tells the story later to finish off the boredom of being with another woman. The course lay open to me. Her art coupled so desolately with amiable coolness, speaking not of morning, only now and tongue and lips contracting.

Who is caressing her now? In the purest night, the salt air reminds him of all he has given away. To live simply with one's desires and defects, unaware of others. She makes him feel he is understood. She listens. "Trust me," he instructs, "this finger is not very long and surely. . ." She kisses his cheek.

He begged for a little time to think. The questions were difficult. He had a hard time thinking with the others in the room. Was her silhouette lovable? Do you drink much? Did you ask her to pose in a frock? She proposed a glass of white wine. Yes, it was there below the bed, already cool-



ed. Do you frequent those places, and how often? The only way to get a handle on this is to consider the pleasure she gave. A beating does not have to be inflicted.

The scent of jasmine and privacy. I have referred to her instructions. Her movements right and left. The circle of her hips in the bright amber light. Her clothing opened. She had been on stage scarcely two minutes. A short whine as she moved her hand against her coarse hair. "I am so sensitive," she said. The meaning as perfect as the invention of the gate latch, as thought out as a dog climbing another dog. The movements of memory. She is not herself, she says, and was once a model. The small pocket camera. She must stand closer.

If he loves her performance, he sends a note backstage. He attends her act over and over until she responds with her address, and that surely cost a gold ring or bracelet. He is more than onlooker, yet less than superior when she pulls back the piece of bright cloth and drops into the humid bed by the curtain.

We were to discover inclines of breast, the colorful slumber of seduction, and we did not cry. Yet. . . the summons. The poses were lifelike. Now the bath water is warm enough.

He is given a fourteen year old bride by the natives. She is brought to his hut in a white pantsuit and white fez cap. She is brown skinned with black wavy hair. She makes love ardently. So quick is his passion: he rushes inward after lowering her trousers to her knees and slightly raising up the blouse beneath the open jacket. He pulls her onto his belly. She gyrates on him. She is much smaller than him. Later he is disturbed to see that the flesh of her young breasts is mottled as if by fire scars.

The doctor said, "First, I'll write you a prescription." Towering over me. "Our wee friend has caught. . ." Yes, our little man, tallywhacker, puddly, tiny engine, peter, the horn of knowledge. Fever too. Twin pals hurting between such unconditioned legs. The wart. . . "No, it is not a callous." Double whammy. "Of course I'll have to report this at the end of the month."

When they hire inspectors, they have to give them something to do. Now in my own eyes, it is not truly an infraction of the law. We will be sensitive. But you must cooperate. It causes us all some anguish. Now again, after the curtain fell, what happened? It's certainly better than standing



around at the packing house looking at dead meat. We are not empty of emotion.

She lit another cigarette. The odor of cosmetics. A bitter taste in my mouth. I was surprised to be there, as if with all the goodies in a schoolyard, the other children held to their lessons.

He gives him medical names that had never entered his mind, items without the fragrance of delicious berries stuck inside a vagina. Pay attention. It does no good to recall her throat, the half-spoken promise of hands curling to what is imagined beneath lace.

“Are you sick?”

“Why do you think I’m here?”

“Many like to pretend until it is too late, and they give the wrong symptoms.”

“My disorder is of a private nature.”

“Do you have any children?”

Her hand was on my forehead. It was in the room they searched later. Her outstretched arms. . . I needed to get away as soon as possible. The body produces a sense of anxiety before the illness actually makes itself known.

Please copy the questions on the sheet provided. You must not say that you have no opinion. You must represent your life honestly. Feel free to be ruthless with yourself. Think of it as a script. What led up to the feeling of justification? Do not forget that their statements have been turned in. We are on familiar terms with the events. You noticed that she was pale. Her teeth were on your cheek? Your ear? The full lips suggesting you would be pardoned for any dilation of moral posture.

Do you clip photographs from magazines? It should be your intention to come clean. Your permit has not been renewed. You had better come downstairs. You can leave your coat in the hall. Would you care for a mint? There’s a bowl of them on the desk of the secretary in the second office down the hall in the basement.

The curtains parted. She was there, strikingly blonde, something to be sipped like a liqueur. There was an eagerness



to appear available. It was as if her mouth was a phone number. She began to dance to the beat of a drum. I was just an onlooker, there only because I felt a sense of sympathy for her plight. I nodded at her as she danced past me and dropped a black stocking. It was only natural to wish we could have met by accident on the beach. The performance was divided into three zones, providing a sense of intimacy for the whole audience, particularly those of us near the front.

The lateness of the hour. The scolding for wanting to leave. The offer of a poster used another town, a wanton pose. Then I had no doubts. Flatteringly, she rubbed her teeth on my ear. The finer stuff, she must have thought, as she brought out a bottle of white wine.

The doctor looked at him and must have said, "So this is joy." Manly pride. Stop squaking. We can burn it off. That is what he will say at the next appointment. The authorities have not indicated if they will allow the cure to take effect. What then would prevent him from saying that it did not happen the way it is described? Direct methods are called for. He did not insist that she was beautiful; he was simply feeling virile.

He is slowly blinded from acid secreted by his tear ducts.

Perhaps meaningless. Yesterday the train ride ended. The voice said, "If you look into a telescope, a most powerful one, you will see yourself at the other end." Now again at some country inn. The proprietor has no memory, he says. For breakfast they served two slices of bacon, toast, and almond flavored tea with honey in it. The door opened and it was there. An enamel tray.

I can still see my father standing over my bed when I was three years old. Terrible fever. In the middle of the night. His paunch. These things come back, soft like the pillows he placed on the floor beside my bed. "Will it help if I hold your hand?" Like the stones he kept for luck in his pockets. Was it sense of duty? The look on his face: an evening spoiled. The white blossoming snow outside. Then waking up to see him asleep on the floor, waking him up to ask for the wool blanket he had taken from the end of my bed and had placed over his body. Cough medicine, the taste of chewing tobacco. My teeth clenched. The night snapping against the loose door downstairs. Something wanting to come in with slim hands and full lips. Spitting into a paper napkin. Inch by inch his hand moved across my forehead. Ice on my favorite tree



outside. My dinner on the table downstairs, uneaten and cold. He slept with two pillows, one below his head and one over his head. The blankets drawn up to my chin.

No more sea and wind with salt in it. Now the ride past fields of winter wheat. Large hogs in pens. Silo. Barn. Rough roads. The inn's proprietor driving. A gold tooth. He names the towns: Impulse, Knowledge, Remote Pacing. . . Driving slowly. Saying, "It's best not to see yourself as an isolated figure." Saying, "In our profession, we feel we have a healing influence."

Later, installed in the white house in the middle of the block, I am told, "Fill the void. The answers will come to you. You will feel like a fugitive. You will come closer to the confession here."

He spent the first day writing a report on the condition of the house. Tattered wallpaper, chipped paint, stained toilet bowl, soiled rug, blankets used for curtains, broken thermostat on the stove makes baking difficult, no mailbox, furniture tawdry (sofa ripped to the stuffing). . .

Again the questions. Did her breasts take you away? From What? Will you need three sets of thermal underwear? Had she been waiting for you? When you climbed the stairs, did you imagine her bleeding into a vaginal pad? Describe her posture. Was it like plucking a flower? Use your own words. The whole affair. Did you imagine her pregnant?

Well oiled and restless. She dozed off. An intimate bond. She bent backward. It jumped. The beach required a coat. Using the bus in the morning meant having to wait on the foggy corner with people setting off for work. The bus was always crowded. The men read newspapers, often unfolding them onto your half of the double seat space. They did not like to think you were reading what was before your eyes. But taking the bus in the evening was different. In the tunnel you could see your face reflected, could see the faces of the other passengers without seeming to stare. Gaunt faces of people going to a movie or dinner or shopping. Then arriving and climbing the stairs. Saying, "Undress slowly." Remembering a television show where a woman scrawled her love on a mirror with lipstick.

Step by step you try to walk back. Sore buttocks. You try to remember a box of toys you owned. Tractors, wooden blocks, metal coachmen, rubber balls. Now jagged flakes of snow.



She seems enormously happy that I came on time. A slovenly housekeeper. The smell of blonde hair. A wicker chair and table. Her hands on my knees. It always happens as if two patients slipped away to meet in the darkened waiting room, afraid of footsteps in the hallway. Hastening, as if reputation was still to be had in the old way. I could have broken my neck on the steep stairs. Like two patients in the bushes. The deserted garden. Not seeing the doctor with his camera and tripod on the roof. Going down on her. Once more imagining that it happens on a grassy slope above the ocean. She rests her head on my arm, saying, "I can't figure you out." She whimpers. A celebration of half-refusal.

Now the back door nailed shut. The proprietor out front in his car.

"We could take you by the scruff of the neck. . ."

"Why taunt me?"

"You refuse to cooperate?"

When my father came home from work, our two dogs would meet him at the front door. The older dog was calm, but the young retriever leaped and mouthed his gloved hands. My father would smack the retriever, actually box with it, unloading fast combinations of rights and lefts. The dog would stand on its hind legs and snap at his hands. Finally, my father would say, "To your corner. Go lie down."

He watches his finger dab at his eye (as if looking at a mirror) to remove a piece of dust.

Higher primates can describe their feelings. Everything failed. But on her skin, I waited. I noticed the pale brow, the reddened cheeks. It was like staring into a bowl with the soup all gone. Motionless, she slept. She offered marvels and merriment, then withdrew behind the curtain. She was not a star, not someone seen in the right cafe chatting to the right photographer. She looked at me from the stage, as if saying, "Suppose it were to be." I sank into her rounded belly, an abdication of blush and the need to get some money to pay the dentist. My native parts deep into the advantages the others only imagined. Her blonde hair in my fist. Yes, this way, toward me, tilt your head slightly and then the other



way. All the secret dreams narrowing into the power of being, only days after she glided across the stage. Then the yearning done with, her sleeping form before me like the sea flickering at the harbor.

At the waiting room, noticing the wooden chairs scraping the marbel floor each time someone stood up or shifted a chair. Waiting to be interviewed. Old magazines on battered coffee tables. The words and photographs like slavers groping in the hold of a ship with pubescent contours. A baton twirler sells a pick-up truck. Get a fix. An identity crisis for a woman naked by a swimming pool, the door to the house open behind her, her auburn hair long and pulled around her tan neck and down her shoulder, the right nipple exposed. The chairs scraping. Rooted in the full neon light, unable to leave. An exultation of It-would-be-a-shame: this delay not the end, certainly a note could be written to her, something to say it can be consummated again if I keep the secret.

Now the house in the middle of the block. The car outside. The endless torture of no choice. The suggestion of blonde oneness in the questions. Were you under a spell? Poised over her. We are now prepared to deal seriously with you. Was it mystic? It's for your own sake. She was very striking. The aborigines brought her to the hut. It is easy to understand why she was not weeping. Perhaps no suitable man had previously been found. Now the house in the middle of the block: smudged wallpaper, soiled carpets, kitchen chairs obviously bought at a restaurant auction. Just sit for long periods in the overstuffed easy chair and think about the questions.

If you need a rest, read the local newspaper. Perhaps she was fifteen years old and ran away from home. Seeing an advertisement for dancers, she. . . Stop it, read the local newspaper. King and Queen Candidates Announced. A dance will follow. If you haven't made plans for your valentine. . . Some people may have inadvertently been missed in the survey work. For sale--Brome and alfalfa bales. Filled with delicious chocolates and creamy butter bons, she dripped sweetly on the stage, then inserted a finger, withdrew the finger and sucked on it. A boy wearing a high school football team jacket caught the black stocking she tossed. The boy waved it over his head, then kissed it.



Do you think that women like to kneel? Did your father bet on horses? He kept on trying, but he could only remember the foam the surf left on the sand.

“Would you like to go out today?”

“Do I have to?”

“The fresh air might help you to answer the questions.”

“Where would you take me?”

“You could see the packing house. It’s really quite interesting and it’s only just on the other side of the railroad tracks.”

When I was a boy, my father collected rail spikes. He walked along the tracks on weekends. Our basement was filled with rail spikes. When he began this hobby, he believed he could paint them gold and sell them to people he met. Later he used them as birthday and Christmas presents. The railroad company went bankrupt and I often wondered if it wasn’t somewhat his doing. Afterall, he could have brought the loose rail spikes to the train station once a month to be used again. I went with him often along the tracks. It was the only time he was really dishonest. If a train passed us, he would wave to the engineer, wave as if he was not stealing railroad property. Yet I still have one of his favorite ones.

Do you understand cause and effect? Breast like someone in the business of breeding. Hearty. Unembarrassed, she bent over and arranged the bed, letting me rub her buttocks. This small investigation is officially recognized as having boundaries, but we warn you. . .

Outside I could hear the jingle of a dog’s license tags. I walked west toward the beach not caring what time it was. My eyeballs seemed raw. I tried to count how many blocks I could walk without turning my head from side to side at corners. It was late. There were no women out. Usually, I enjoyed counting women who were attractive enough to be desired. I would try to keep in mind the number of the one that was most buxom, the one that was blondest, the one with the most dark eyes. . .



A man is sorting ice cubes on a wooden counter in a country store. A customer is in front of him, telling a story. It is difficult to keep the count straight.

When we arrived at the packing house, it was late afternoon. A tour without death, but with the odor of death and defecation in the air. We are issued white plastic helmets and white luggers to snap on over our clothes. The lecture begins in the storage room.

Everything is cooled to 35 degrees. I notice the great sides of beef hanging on hooks, blood dripping onto the cement floor.

"We use everything. The noses, lungs, gullets, and excess livers are sold for dog food. By the way, have you tried eating brains. Very good fried."

I watch the proprietor closely. He has been with me for days, seldom leaving the car parked in front of the white house. As we entered the packing house, he asked me, "Do you get the feeling you have been brought here to be killed?"

In the room named The Killing Floor, the walls are made of enamel white brick.

"After stunning the cattle with a captive bolt compressor, a stunner driven into the sinus cavity (a shock wave to the brain renders them unconscious), we puncture the aorta."

The floor is slippery with steamy water and animal fat. The proprietor, obviously holding the rank of inspector, is watching my reactions.

"Aging begins at death."

She brushed her blonde hair. Her parted lips suggested loss of hope, yet an hour of passion. In a golden light, her flesh seemed more gold than pale. Behind her the velvet gold curtain. From each wrist, a bracelet and chain dangled a massive gold globe. This incident recurred at the start of every performance.

"I was waiting for you."



The stairs had exhausted me. She asked if I wanted a cup of coffee. She said she had to complete her exercises first. Her breasts evenly bounce, smaller and less pudgy than they appeared on stage.

The shouts from the audience mingled with the music. One boy shouted up a proposal for marriage.

Did she blush? You said that you did not fall on the stairs. We must be sure beyond a doubt. Did the glitter attract you?

She wiped the perspiration from between her breasts. My lips passed over her. Applause she still heard. I cried out all at once. Like a nude painted for a popular magazine. Now these inquiries. Just a portrait. Recalling sand castles at the beach. The gloomy fog, neighborhood bars, the sandy streets. Delicacy and firmness saying, Come to bed, come to something better defined than a dance. I remained awake to observe her. Her upturned breasts for every clerk to see, forgetting their sagging shoulders and lost luggage. The boys shouting, "Let's make out." A journey out of plot into silk and outstretched arms, audacious hips and black stockings bought by the carton to toss aside.

Passing judgment. The train moving days from the ocean. Not really a trial. You have no wife to call? Indelible writing. Your home will be locked up. The yellow twilight coming through the train windows. Cushioned chairs. Children laughing at the station, punching buttons on the soft drink machines. Here and there men who might be spies. Feeling worn out. Slightly puzzled. She was hollow-eyed. Her blonde scent stronger than cigarette smoke, trying hard not to make a bad impression, not wanting to seem easy. The roles reversed, I felt she was watching me as I awkwardly lowered my underpants. Trains moving in contrary directions. Waking on the rolling plains. I could write her a letter. I shouldn't have rushed off. You were drowsy and dozed off. Just the quiver of one moment. When I returned home, I wanted to come back to you. Your brown hips on the white quilt. No, you did not have a tan, that is something constructed later to recall it better.

At first I thought I could ignore the summons. I reported that I was ill. They reduced me to a state of constant anxiety until no meaning was clear. I offered them imaginative tales.



Does the action we have taken seem fair? In our report of your first visit. . .

“I knocked on the door.”

“She gave you a deprecating smile?”

“No. The novelty of a fan seemed to intrigue her.”

“At first you thought that no one was home or that she gave you the wrong address?”

He is brought a young bride by the old men of the tribe. She is perhaps fifteen years old. She is dressed in a white pantsuit and wears a white fez cap. She is brown skinned with black wavy hair. She makes love to him enthusiastically, so quickly: he barely has time to lower her pants and pull up the blouse she wears beneath the jacket. She gyrates on him and he is struck with how small she is. She moves him to orgasm plus orgasm. Later, he is disturbed to see that the flesh of her young breasts is mottled as if by fire scars.

The newspaper is delivered. The people at the hearing were told that last year. There was an exchange of gifts between secrets sisters.

A picture of her writhing on stage. It had all happened. Confusion of turn, bite, shoulder. Whirled around, fervently licking. Gasping for air. Oblivious to the city outside. Nipples like pebbles. Deep enough. Deep enough. Almost howling, feeling the perfection of moving in the gap between two islands. It is like being a big eater.

My father worked at the University of Law (UL) until he was purged. He and another junior instructor, an obese woman from the desert, wrote a proposal: they were to have reconstructed The Great Trial, using law students to portray those who had been involved. The performance was to have toured all the cities in the state. After the proposal was written, the woman convinced my father to approach the authorities to ask for permission and for a grant. She was very heavy, perhaps 250 pounds, and her face was the color of burgandy wine when she walked any distance. She was new to the faculty and had no friends. My father and mother felt sorry for her and often had her over for dinner. She said



that he should present the proposal because he had slightly more seniority. My father went to the capitol for several weeks. Just as his money was running low, he managed to get in to see the Deputy Minister for Law. During the time my father was away, the woman tried to become friends with several other junior instructors. At first they ignored her. But when they learned of my father's efforts, they asked her why she was involved in what was obviously a plot to make them appear to be do-nothings. She denied any base motives. They said my father was self serving. When my father returned, he learned that she was now against the project. But it was too late. The proposal to dramatize The Great Trial had been approved and the authorities had issued a press release and the story soon appeared in the newspaper. The woman approached the Junior Faculty Coordinator and wept, saying she had been railroaded into the project. Although she valued the work of The Great Trial, she felt that my father was planning to use it as some sort of a stepping stone. After weeks of meetings, the deans of UL dropped the grant. There was a subsequent investigation. Although my father was found innocent of any wrong, he was relegated to a small office in the basement of the administration building. The woman resigned at the end of the year and returned to the desert. She had thought she had earned her way into the clique of junior instructors; she had not shown them up. But she was still unpleasant to look at ("A great sack of pus," my father admitted.) and the others laughed at her behind her back.

"The Conscience."

"A book?"

"We can become angry with you."

"I swear she was alive when I left her."

"That is not in question."

"I was a mere trick."

"You expect us to believe that?"



"It all reminds me of a man tossing a stick for a dog. The dog seemingly does not tire. But the man knows better. He keeps hurling the stick further and further, and changes directions to confuse the dog."

"We are not tossing sticks."

"Then why was I summoned here at seven in the morning?"

Calm, unhurried, he paid the admission fee and entered the theater. He took a seat near the stage. The light flowered on the various girls, but especially on the blonde one he came to watch regularly. That night she was wearing a red velvet frock. At the end of her routine, he passed her a note wrapped in paper money. She smiled pleasantly; perhaps she was used to this sort of approach. She did not exhibit surprise. He noticed the soft flesh of her breasts, perhaps even the purple bite mark on her throat (barely concealed by cosmetics). I hastened up to a seat behind the subject and was watching when another dancer dropped a note in his lap at the end of her bump and grind. He may have only caught the subject's hand withdrawing from the vicinity of the woman's thigh. When he exited the theater, he waited out on the sidewalk for a bus. When no bus arrived shortly, he began walking west.

"You have not given full answers."

He is slowly going blind from acid secreted by his tear ducts.

His idle hours some kind of jail. Any moment now. It was enough to draw a conclusion. As if everything was foreordained, he was seated in the waiting room. He realized he was alone. They might expect him to boast. Never in his life had he been confined. He would try to describe her.

The interview left him limp and pale. The inspector seemed to be in sympathy with him. His chin sweaty. Her velvety skin. Her eyes added to the shaking of the room. So many



sighs. Porcelain walls. He asked her first if she thought it would be humiliating. No idea what time it was. In this posture, her blonde hair in his fist. The need to urinate soon. She said she did not feel obliged to do so, and she understood it was the excitement. A type of joy between old noun and old noun.

The wide entry comes alive for the beardless face. The heat in the room has them gasping. Standing by the bed, something nameless born between them. Lit candles on the wicker table. It thrilled him to see her buttocks as she leaned over to pick the quilt up off the floor. This misty wind stills the music vaulting out the window. Her bobbing breasts. She is arched upward. Just one more tussle, please. He intends to remain ethical. Her hair dishevelled. Trust me. The others lacked your sense of joy. Melancholic conduct: he retrieves her pink camisole from the bare wooden floor and kisses the lace border as he hands it to her. She poured out a small glass of white wine. She rinses off a washcloth and hangs it on a peg on the door.

Unashamed, she says, "Come, come, you can't take it all in with just your eyes."

I have a letter to mail. Something that draws a conclusion for her. The last hope is gone. The bitten ear. Think of rustic postures. I could have borrowed a camera and taken you to the forest. The world takes another step without me. I have waited so long. I tried to telephone. The pushing and rushing of her body. Closing your eyes, you tried to sleep. The sofa and the bed both damp. Did you do it to pass the time? Fingers on her breast, lulling my hand to a dream of rosy return. Rushing the words. I filed the photographs. "Next time, next time," you promised. Then at the clinic, I remembered showering off blood, remembered burning the underpants.

Promised strawberries. Like something with a For Sale sign on it. Giving in to the sucking. I call my place of work in the morning to say I'm ill. Plump breasts. A standing room only performance. Her impudent smile. Then she spits on the floor the milky stuff. Sucking chocolates out of her vagina along with her month's flow. Kissing the lips. A harvest moon. Imagining a mountain inn, young girls with rucksacks in a meadow, their noses sunburnt and peeling. Crawling over her. Then she brushes out her blonde hair. It is the time to think of when we were fused. A casual glance out the window. A craving for applause and wolf whistles.



Melting together, hearing our guttural tameness cry out for now and then, we speak performance and desire. My ordinary clothes on a wicker chair. I warn her not to bite. I cried out. I extend a thumb inward and she straightens up. It is a second opening, a joining of nearby forces. Pressing my chin on her nipple. Opening them to their widest. Wondering if she tells the story later to finish off the boredom of being with the other dancers. Promising her that we will go swimming every day. Her art coupled desolately with amiable coolness. Speaking not of morning, only now and tongue and lips contracting. Saying we will lie down in the warm sand, linger as the others go home, our passion our only occupation, hundreds of gulls in orgasm bending the sunset.

The scent of jasmine and privacy. I can boast. The circle of her hips in the bright amber light. I took off my clothes awkwardly. She must stand closer. Yet one morning there was a summons. To what purpose?

The doctor said, "First, I'll write you a prescription." My fear a means of gaining sympathy. The doctor towering over me. "Our wee friend has caught. . ." Certainly we can avoid a report at the end of the month.

"My disorder is of a private nature."

"Some bonds are not honorable."

I conceded much more than I should have. Her hand was on my forehead. A white box on the inspector's desk. He opens the box and displays several tapes. It was in the room they searched later. Sinister business passed from hand to hand. The body produces a sense of anxiety before the illness actually makes itself known. Slowly, I parted her lips. Wishing for mirrors. The sickness reported, I had to answer the summons.

He sees his finger dab at his eye (as if looking into a mirror) to remove a piece of dust.

The curtains parted. Appraising eyes. Men with hands in pockets. She was there, strikingly blonde, something to be sipped like a liqueur. As sweet as chocolate. There was an eagerness to appear available. Creamy flesh risen from its



sleep. It was as if her mouth was a phone number. Like a Christmas box ready to be opened. She began to dance to the beat of a drum. Illusion for an aging man. I was just an onlooker, there only out of sympathy for her plight. But I had a taste for it. I nodded at her as she danced past and dropped a black stocking. She tossed herself from side to side. It was only natural to wish we had met by accident in a cafe by the beach. Her eyelids tinted blue. The performance was divided into three zones, providing a sense of intimacy for the whole audience, particularly those of us near the front. I could have reached up, but it was forbidden.

No more sea and wind with salt in it. The melancholy nothing at all left. The ride past fields of winter wheat. What was the meaning of the tapes? Large hogs in pens. "We thought you were a forthright man." Silo. A torn white blouse. Barn. "You are now a long way off." Rough roads. A suspicious figure in the dreams of the authorities. The inn's proprietor driving (an agent). Wishing for the waves and froth of surf. The agent's gold tooth.

"You must see it from our point of view."

"I have tried."

"There were grounds for the complaint. Beauty can inspire terrible acts."

"I never denied that I had her breast in my mouth."

"We heard the very last sound that came from her apartment."

"So now I'm taking a trip."

"So you'll remember what we want."

Had she been waiting for you? It appears clear enough at first. Again the questions. The agent seems tired. He has his reports to write. Are you afraid of offering evidence against the others? Describe her posture. Did you see anyone downstairs? Use your own words.

"You refuse to cooperate?"

"I had my company's permission to take that day off."

"You indicated she was not a good housekeeper. Did that anger you?"



"I behaved myself. It was just a lively sympathy that led me to her."

"Yet you ignored the first summons."

Do you think that women like to kneel? Did your father see a farm girl from the northern part of the coast? He kept trying to remember. He felt thirsty.

She lifted her hair off her neck, admitting, "I am very fond of you." He buried his head in her breasts. They tumbled onto the bed. Her belly like a low-lying meadow. Her pubic hair moist.

She wiped perspiration from between her breasts. Long after the dimmed lights of the theater. My lips passed over her. Think about bathing beauties. Applause she will always hear. Her charms made for viewing. I cried out all at once. My smile reflected in her eyes. Like a nude painted for a popular magazine. Feeling in my prime. Needing the soft and fat buttocks. Now these inquiries. The poignant music she danced to. Just a portrait of a lonely Sunday. The sleepy eyelids of the authorities, listening to the story over and over, over and over saying that it is not complete. A pensive smile, something better defined than her dance. Time passed. I remained awake to watch her. The reports grew larger. Her upturned breasts for every clerk to want. The certain joy of flesh. The boys shouting, "Let's make out, honey." My desires representing what we both wanted, yet an illusory satisfaction. A journey out of plot into silk and rosy pleasure, audacious hips and black stockings bought by the carton to toss aside.

## CARRIAGE HILLS BLUES

*Carol L. Morris*

She turned twelve last night  
and her party was a bust.  
The girls factionalized,  
    were bitchy.  
The nachos, pizza, cake, pepsi, potato chips  
didn't help.  
She's got the white sugar blues.

She's recovering now on the patio  
in her bikini  
in a chaise lounge  
still wearing since morning  
her maroon and grey striped socks.

Her skin's so pinkety-pink in th East Lansing sun.

At her feet a yellow jacket  
wobbles near the rusting hibachi  
woozy with pollen from the crab apple blossoms.

A man on a wooden balcony across the street  
sips his second Tom Collins,  
reads the Science Digest.  
His grecian formulated wife  
waters a geranium bud at his elbow.  
It wavers in a red-cedar tub.

A father and daughter cycle by,  
his stomach touching the handle bars.

She rolls over  
blows an exasperated breath against the nylon webbing.

I want to comfort her.  
I want to say it doesn't matter.

I drain my bloody mary  
and head for the Shoprite.

Crabgrass and teeny leaves of baby birches.



Out of a townhouse I hear a black man yell  
in tipsy conversation,  
“Michigan is broke, man.”

In my bowling shirt and moccasins,  
I meld with the other women  
many in tennis skirts,  
sport socks with little balls  
hanging out of their shoes.  
They stuff thier grocery carts  
with avocados and boxes of frozen  
Lean Cuisine.

I push the wire mesh cart past the toilet paper,  
the sani-flush,  
past the anchovies and capers  
twisted in oily glass jars,  
past the Oreos and the Lorna Doones,

up to the checkout counter  
which has the banner:  
MASTER CHARGE AND VISA THIS LANE

Behind a blonde boy in a bathing suit  
and his six of Strohs,  
I throw my beef and a carton of Haagan Daz  
on the moving rubber table.

It's suppertime in Carriage Hills,  
Blythe,  
and the living seems easy.

## MAGIC PICKLES

*Carol L. Morris*

Next to the fool moon  
of the refrigerator  
I'm alone in apartment 7,  
    lucky seven  
of the Bentwood Arms,  
making pickles  
late midnight.

From the copper bowl at my elbow,  
    cucumbers  
poke their ends, noses  
toward the light.  
Aquamarine light  
slanting through blue-green mason jars  
    a cool beam falling  
    on the porcelain countertop.

And I in a velvet apron—  
    slippers made of marigolds  
acknowledging the black snake  
of an October night



at the window,  
lower them  
two by two  
into their widemouth vaults,  
ladle the foggy whispering brine  
down the backs of thier unbending necks. . .  
Now they are seahorses  
jockeying for position  
among the bay leaves  
    their tails pearly rings of onions  
    their hooves cloves of garlic  
    their headdresses: red and yellow peppers

The clock strikes three  
and I cap each aquarium  
with a zinc top:  
Then I set them on the windowsill.

A watery hedge against approaching ice.

## LIFE'S LIKE THAT

*V. Glen Washburn*

He was born just right some say  
under Saturn exactly right  
right night best hour  
into a most auspicious age  
waiting breath held for his thrilling

Others  
eyes older weaker cataract altered sight say  
it was a negative sort of thing  
He didn't start school until he was ten  
thereby missing the deadly advantages and benefits  
of a proper education  
and having to make due  
poor thing  
with the bare simplicities  
of vision and dawn  
water reflecting sun sparkles

But what really happened  
while Lodovico  
bound to Caprese back in 1474  
not a great year  
but a saucy clever little year  
with his wife who used to be  
and still is occasionally in the white of the moon  
known to us all as  
Francesca di Nervi di Miniato del Sera  
a song just like her name  
a jubilee  
dull but anxious  
alive warm moist  
an incubatory succubus  
as her horse was struggling  
up that steep hill from the evil west  
she fell

Three months pregnant to the very instant  
and inside her belly bulge  
still warm and wet from this morning's jostle  
the embryo got joggled just right



a few million cells were re-ordered  
and as she fell an almost visible flashing  
sudden warping of the world  
the universe shrugged  
whole fabrics for just a cat's blink shuffled  
and exactly 4,321 hours later  
when he was born  
they called him Michelangelo



*Shirley Campbell*



## A HOLIDAY TOUR

*V. Glen Washburn*

On your left is your world  
That dull brownish thing over there

Passing swiftly on your right  
are hundreds of other planets  
built and peopled by all those other  
creatures Handsome little gooks aren't they

And here slowly unrolling  
and painstakingly pictured  
is where I live

I hope you like it here  
I do sort of  
(Not that I wouldn't change if for a job selling  
used maces and such)

I'm really honoured to have been chosen  
to show you around this place  
and if you'll be careful  
not to stray too far from the clearly marked path  
there's very little that can harm you  
except of course  
for the deadly and dreadful and feared  
in fact so deadly and dreadful and feared  
that we don't even have a name for him in our language  
usually so superior to yours

But you can always tell when he's about  
by the sweetish almost gingery odour  
quite like what you are now smelling  
and be his evil way of doing a perfect imitation  
of a tourguide

# DINOSAUR

Louis Philips

*In the dark, we hear the boisterous, drunken singing voices of Edmund Spenser and Wilber MacKaye. They sing an almost forgotten folk tune.*

## SINGERS

“Mr. Bourne and his wife once at breakfast had a strife.  
He wanted bread and butter with his tea, tea, tea.  
Says she: ‘I’ll rule the roost, I’ll have a plate of toast,’  
So to loggerheads went he and she, she, she.

Now there was a Mr. More, lived on the second floor,  
A man very strong in the wrist, wrist, wrist.  
He overheard the clatter, of toast and bread and butter,  
And he knocked down Mr. Bourne with his fist, fist, fist.”

*As the lights slowly come up, we find ourselves in the modest aberdeen cottage of Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Bourne Spenser. Edmund Spenser is an ex-patriated American who has spent the last two decades of his life in various Scottish villages. Edmund is dressed in miner’s gear, with the light on his miner’s hat still on.*

*With Edmund is his best friend and upstairs neighbor--Wilber MacKaye. Mr MacKaye is in his mid-fifties and his hair is white and thinning. He wears a light jacket, shirt, and blue wool tie, but at the moment his pants are draped over the faded sofa. He stands in his long blue undershorts and sings, sings.*

*Arlene Spenser, wife to Edmund, enters. She is a transplanted Londoner, and (like her husband) in her mid-forties, with a head of long red-hair and a music-hall temperament. She once had ambitions to be an actress, but she has long ago given those ambitions up. She wears a loose-fitting print dress and has pink cotton slippers on her feet. In short, neither her dress, nor her manner show her off to the best advantage. She carries Wilber’s tweed cap and flings it in frisbee style across the living room.*

ARLENE: I found your bloody hat. It was in the garden where you left it.



*Wilber lunges for the object. Misses it, and spills some ale onto the sofa.*

EDMUND: *(to Wilber)* Watch what you're doing, you bloody ape.

ARLENE: I just had the cushions mended too.

EDMUND: Aye. Twenty years brand new to the day.

ARLENE: A good sturdy sofa it is. Who cares how old it is? you can't measure everything in life by age.

EDMUND: I'm sure that goes for you too, Dearie.

*Wilber continues singing.*

WILBER: Said poor Mr. More, a-sneaking to the door, for sure I'm a man without brains, brains, brains.

ARLENE: It's not funny anymore.

*Edmund grabs his friend by the shoulders.*

EDMUND: Did you hear that, Wilber?

WILBER: I have one bad ear and the other is not much good either.

ARLENE: I ask the solicitor up and you turn the whole thing to a drunken brawl.

EDMUND: The old lady don't think our sky-larking is funny. *(turns to his wife who is fetching the tossed cap)*. Why, Madame, I shall have you know that the song we were rehearsing has weathered the years better than any of us. "Mr. Bourne and His Wife" is among melodies, a dinosaur. Of course we know that survival is all, and "Mr. Bourne and His Wife" has survived when other grossly over-rated tunes have dragged their quarter-notes out to some swamp to die.

WILBER: Hear! Hear!

EDMUND: Hear! Hear!

WILBER: No sense of humor, your old lady? Is that what you're saying?

ARLENE: I'll old lady the both of you out into the gutter, that's what I'll do. *(to Edmund)* Now give Wilber back his pants, so he can be presentable to our guest.

EDMUND: Your guest. Not mine.

*From outside the back window, we can hear the cry of a dinosaur rummaging among leaves.*

WILBER: Pants? What pants? Did I have pants when I came down?

EDMUND: You can put pants on a monkey, but it doesn't make him a king.

ARLENE: I am a respectable married woman. I should be spared these awkward sights.

EDMUND: Exactly what she said to me on our honeymoon.

ARLENE: How would you know? You were out getting drunk with your chums.

WILBER: Peace! She's right, Edmund. Only unmarried ladies and Mother Superiors should be forced to look at a man in his garters.

EDMUND: I hate to tell you this, Wilber, but garters went out with the stone age.

*Wilber bends over and points to a scratch high on his leg.*

WILBER: And there is where Mrs. Chaplin bit me.

ARLENE: Mr. More will be here any minute, you fools!

EDMUND: *(to Wilber)* Fools? My loved one is talking to you, sir!

WILBER: And will this Mr. More be wearing pants?



EDMUND: Of course. It's a *sine qua non*! A civilized person can hardly walk abroad without seeing men in long pants. None just in their garters. Conformity is rampant. Why I hear tell of a society in Edinburgh devoted solely to the cause of putting pants on animals. Why, if the Clothing For Animals Society has its way, there won't be a naked arse to be seen from here to New Foundland. (*picks up Wilber's trousers*). You should send these down, just in case the elephants in the zoo need something to wear. If I am any judge, this pair could cover two or three of them in one shot.

ARLENE: You two can't go on celebrating forever.

EDMUND: Of course we could, that is if we could live forever. What a revolting thought that is. But no fear of that. Mortality with its stink throws a monkey wrench into everything.

WILBER: Forgive, forgive. It's not everyday your husband brings home a dinosaur.

ARLENE: If that is all he brought home with him, it would be easy to forgive, but he had brought the whole world upon our shoulders as well.

*The sound of a dinosaur eating a tree.*

EDMUND: That would be justice, and we know there is none of that.

ARLENE: Mr. Shelby will advise us. Mrs. MacAbee says he is a brilliant solicitor. He's handled all kinds of rock stars.

EDMUND: Well Gerty has handled all kind of rocks.

WILBER: Twenty billion dollars. Not a penny less.

EDMUND: Not enough. Not enough.

WILBER: Edmund, make your friend put his pants on.

EDMUND: Make him do this. Make him do that. Make your own friends is what I say.

ARLENE: We cannot conduct serious business if you do not



put your pants on.

WILBER: The last woman who said that to me meant something else entirely.

EDMUND: What are we talking now? Ancient History? You haven't looked at a woman as long as I have known you. Upstairs puttering around your cats and books.

WILBER: That is because your wife has quite stolen my heart.

EDMUND: She should have stolen your cherry.

ARLENE: Talk smut down at the tavern. Not here!

WILBER: (*pulling on his pants*) When I was a mere broth of a lad, I couldn't wait for my first pair of long pants. Now, when I am all grown and tottering toward senility, I can never wait to get out of them. Does that tell you what you need to know about growing up in this world?

ARLENE: Women grow up; the male of the species grows sideways.

WILBER (*sings*) 'Says More, 'Upon my life, you shall not beat your wife, for it is a sin and disgrace, grace, grace.' 'You fool,' says Mrs. Bourne, 'This business is not of yourn,' And she smashed a cup of tea in his face, face, face.'

ARLENE: Sober you up quick enough.

EDMUND: (*at the window*) Look at Mrs. MacAbee's hooligans throwing stones at Gerty . . . (*takes up a rifle*) Hey, you kids! Get away from her before you get hurt. I'll blow your heads off if I have to!

*He turns back from the window.*

EDMUND: (*to Wilber*) Look at yourself, man! Your trousers are on backwards.

WILBER: So they are. I thought they were riding a little low.



EDMUND: Why can't Mrs. MacAbee keep her children at home, locked up in an oven or something? Why do they have to be out there pestering a poor innocent dinosaur?

ARLENE: If you wanted her to be left alone, you shouldn't have brought her home. (*looks at her husband and beats him to his nearly automatic response*) Which is what my Mum said when you married me.

EDMUND: And where was I going to leave her?

ARLENE: My mum? You didn't have to drag her along on the honeymoon.

EDMUND: The dinosaur. Of course the difference between your mum and a dinosaur is merely a hair's-breadth. Miniscule. But do you think after years of plotting, mapping, exploring, trudging, and digging that I would leave my prize out there so some villain could sneak up on her and snatch her out of my grip.

*Wilber is in the act of pulling his trousers off wher the doo-bell rings.*

ARLENE: That's Mr. More now. And you two will probably be proud to greet him in the altogether. That will get us all off on a proper foot.

*Arlene crosses out to answer the door.*

EDMUND: (*calls after her*) If we greet your solicitor stripped to the buff, a proper foot will be the very last thing he'll look at. (*to Wilber*) A proper foot! A proper foot in the arse is what I should be giving you.

WILBER: What did I do?

EDMUND: Why didn't you tell me that finding the world's only living dinosaur would be such a heavy responsibility? A world on my shoulders!

*Sounds of the dinosaur munching in the garden are heard.*

EDMUND: (*calls to Gerty*) Quiet you! You'll get some food as soon as we get a check in hand.

WILBER: Last time I looked, she was eating the fence.

EDMUND: So who's going to stop her? I'm telling you, my friend, that all the good things of the earth are dead. Someday you and I and Arlie will be extinct, and some space-craft of the future will dig up our bones and put us on display. A penny for the peep-show.

*During the above, Arlene has returned, bringing with her a sturdy tweed of a man. This is Shelby B. More, Esquire, whose tanned face is punctuated by a chaplinesque mousache. He sets his brief-case on an empty chair.*

ARLENE: One of these men is my husband, Mr. More.

SHELBY MORE: Aye. Which one?

ARLENE: Take a pick. Whatever one you <sup>think</sup> ~~think~~ is best for me, though I hope you'll choose the one with his pants on.

*Mr More thrusts out his hand.*

EDMUND: Careful of my hand, sir. I haven't gotten all the coal dust off. Frightful dirty stuff, coal. If God had wanted mankind to live in warm houses he would have allowed us to pick a clean and inexpensive fuel right out of the air. But as it is we have to be satisfied with oil, gas, coal, and dinosaur droppings. Is that what you think?

SHELBY: And the sun.

EDMUND: The sun is a dying star. It is a dinosaur like the rest of us . . . (*looks at Arlene*) Sorry. I was just apologizing for the unwashed hands.

SHELBY: That's the history of the human race, isn't it? We must thrust our hands into dirt to get what we want.

*All the while, Shelby has been staring with great puzzlement at Wilber who has been leaning out the window, waving his*



*pants at Gerty.*

WILBER: Over here, Gerty. Over here.

SHELBY: (*indicating Wilber*) And this one?

EDMUND: That's our upstairs lodger—Mr. MacKaye. He's a dealer in rare books, but he has always had this thing for dinosaurs.

SHELBY: Pleased to meet you, Mr. MacKaye.

EDMUND: We have gone ahead in our celebrating. Shall we pour you a good one to help you catch up?

ARLENE: Wilber only comes downstairs to take his pants off.

WILBER: I was merely showing my friends where I had got bit.

SHELBY: The dinosaur bit you?

WILBER: Of course not. My cat did. Mrs. Chaplin I call her because she has a funny walk.

EDMUND: He has the only queer cat in the neighborhood.

WILBER: I wouldn't know about that, because I'm not home very much, but I know she is upset about having a dinosaur in the backyard. It interferes with her mousing.

SHELBY: I can imagine . . . I will have that drink if you don't mind.

*Shelby crosses to the window.*

SHELBY: It is down there in the yard is it?

WILBER: You cannot miss it.

SHELBY: I didn't think so, but all I see is this flat green hill.

WILBER: That's Gerty!

SHELBY: (*genuinely moved*) What a sight this is.

EDMUND: The only live dinosaur in the world and there it is!

SHELBY: What keeps her from running away?

EDMUND: Apathy.

SHELBY: Apathy?

EDMUND: It is difficult to get a dinosaur interested in anything.

WILBER: As long as we feed it, it won't go anywhere.

ARLENE: Just like some other people we could name.

SHELBY: It is incredible all right.

EDMUND: Seeing is believing.

ARLENE: That's what my mum always told me about sex.

SHELBY: No, seeing is only seeing. Believing is something entirely different.

*The cry of the dinosaur is heard throughout the land.*

SHELBY: I see the dinosaur, but I can't believe that you people have taken no precautions to keep her in place.

WILBER: Well, sir, we did chain her to the house on the left.

SHELBY: I didn't notice a house on the left when I came up

EDMUND: Precisely. Does that prove our point? It was a beautiful cottage too. Not a stick left.

WILBER: She doesn't like to be chained down.

SHELBY: And you've tried nothing else?

ARLENE: Wilber put a dog-tag around its neck. In case it



should get lost.

EDMUND: Of course, what are the odds of a dinosaur getting lost these days?

SHELBY (*with distaste*) A dog-tag!

EDMUND: A dinosaur-tag if you will.

SHELBY: But that's nothing man! An itty bitty tag around the neck of a great big animal?

WILBER: Nothing to you perhaps, but you try putting a tag around Gerty. I tell you I was hanging on for dear life. Every-time old Gerty bobbed her head, I was sliding about on a reptilious roller-coaster. Seasick, I was. Up, down. Up, down. A terrifying experience it was.

ARLENE: It makes our neighbor sick riding about on Gerty's neck, but it makes me sick to think we are sitting on a billion-dollar discovery and we don't know what to do with it

SHELBY: Well, I am certain there will be lots of uses for your dinosaur. A new commodity on the market always wets people's appetites.

EDMUND: New commodity on the market? Why, man, she is millions, and millions, and millions of years old!

SHELBY: New is a relative term.

EDMUND: Relative to what?

WILBER: Old. That's what *new* is relative to.

SHELBY: Sometimes a thing can become so old that it becomes new again. You two . . .

ARLENE: Three . . .

SHELBY: Three own the only living dinosaur in all of existence. This will make you the richest people in the world. Everyone will line up for miles to see a dinosaur.

EDMUND: It is not as if she can do tricks yet.

SHELBY: Dinosaur rides at a pound a head. Movies, television, interviews. There is no end to the possibilities of turning Gerty into a goldmine.

*Sound of the beast.*

EDMUND: We will exploit the bejesus out of her, will we?

SHELBY: Exploitation is the name of the game. It is the stamp of the modern world.

EDMUND: I don't think we should take her places, though. Transportation might be a problem, with what the airlines charge for overweight baggage. A flight to Edinburgh would do us in .

SHEBLY: We can only take one step at a time. What kind of dinosaur do you think it is?

WILBER: A big one. What can be more useless than an itty-bitty dinosaur.

SHELBY: Even a small dinosaur is such a rarity that it has its market-place value.

EDMUND: He wants to know the make of it, Wilber. Whether it's a Ford or a Volkswagen.

WILBER: A Rolls Royce. That's what our Gerty is . Doesn't our Gerty look like a Rolls Royce to you.

SHELBY: (*looking out the window*) Quite. But I would call it a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

WILBER: Brachiosaurus. Huger than seventeen elephants.

ARLENE: I always wanted to go out with a man who owned a Rolls Royce, but it was my station in life never to meet up with that kind of man.

*Shelby returns to his sachel and unpacks a great number of*



*legal documents.*

ARLENE: The clock. I always wanted to hear the clock. Isn't that what they say in all the ads? The clock is the noisiest thing about it.

EDMUND: A clock isn't the noisiest thing about here . I can say that. I could say that if I could hear myself think.

ARLENE: Clamp on yer pipe before I crack yer head open with a tea kettle.

EDMUND: Temper. Temper. A regular ale-wife I married.

WILBER: Yale wife? You wife went to Yale? What did she major in?

EDMUND: Ale-wife. Not Yale wife. Why is it so difficult to make myself understood in my own home?

ARLENE: Where do you want to be misunderstood? Among strangers?

WILBER: What's he yelling about? An ale-wife is better than a Yale wife any day of the week.

SHELBY: Please! No quarrelling! There will be plenty of Rolls Royces to go around. A Rolls for you . . . a Rolls for you . . . a Rolls for you . . . a Rolls for me!

WILBER: (*softly*) "Mr. Bourne and his wife once at breakfast had a strife. He wanted bread and butter with his tea, tea, tea."

SHELBY: All we have to do is merchandise her carefully. Little dinosaur dolls . . . make that big dinosaur dolls . . . huge dolls . . . dolls as big as cities.

EDMUND: Something cuddly.

SHELBY: The world's first cuddly dinosaur.

EDMUND: Something the whole state of Virginia can take to bed with it.

SHELBY: Virginia? Why Virginia?

ARLENE: Oh he mined coal there once, and he keeps talking about going back there.

WILBER: Yes, Virginia. There is a dinosaur. Don't go to Virginia. You'll have enough money to buy her.

ARLENE: You wouldn't have anything if I didn't have the sense to call in Mr. More. *(to Shelby)* Otherwise the two of them would be spending their days looking at her out the window.

EDMUND: I particularly like her at night when her great head obscures the moon. Oh take a great chomp out of the moon for us, dearie.

SHELBY: Just sign here and we'll get the dinosaur bolted down.

EDMUND: Bolted down? Come, come, Mr. More. A dinosaur is not a sewing machine.

SHELBY: I couldn't agree with you more.

EDMUND: You might.

SHELBY: We must be careful and not let harm come to the animal.

ARLENE: What are you asking us to sign, Mr. More?

SHELBY: Just a standard business arrangement. I shall act as your agent and in return will be paid 20% of all monies brought in. Perhaps you want to take these documents and have your own solicitor read them.

WILBER: You are our solicitor.

SHELBY: In that case, I have read the contracts and find them in order. Sign.

EDMUND: *(starts to sign contracts and stops)* We do have one problem.



SHELBY: What is that, Mr. Spenser?

EDMUND: We could use a bit of an advance to keep Gerty in oats.

WILBER: And fences—unless I miss my guess.

ARLENE: She is eating us out of house and home.

WILBER: And fences.

SHELBY: No problem. The food will be supplied for free.

WILBER: Free? Now there is a generous man.

EDMUND: Do you have any idea how much she eats?

SHELBY: It doesn't matter.

WILBER: So you say now.

SHELBY: I know food merchants who will trample over one another just so they can advertise that their beef is the official beef for the world's only surviving dinosaur.

EDMUND: Beef??

SHELBY: Steak then.

ARLENE: Gerty is a vegetarian.

SHELBY: An animal as big as that? Ah, no, you're mistaken. You just haven't been looking closely enough.

EDMUND: She eats grass, leaves, shrubs, flowers . . .

SHELBY: All right then, I'll call a couple of florist shops. A vegetarian. That is a disappointment. I was hoping we could feed her live animals. It would make a better show. Watching an animal eat leaves is little low on the entertainment scale. We're going to have to think of a gimmick.

EDMUND: Isn't a live dinosaur enough?





Randy Huishens



SHELBY: Not any more.

EDMUND: You're daft!

*Gerty roars.*

EDMUND: Even Gerty agrees with me.

ARLENE: Quiet, Edmund. Mr. More's the expert, not you.

EDMUND: I find the dinosaur, but everyone knows more about it than me.

SHELBY: Oh you might get a few good news stories out of it, but the public gets tired of things awfully quickly.

EDMUND: But, man, this is a dinosaur! Dinosaurs don't grow on trees!

*The crash of a tree is heard.*

WILBER: Speaking of trees, there goes the last one now.

SHELBY: King Edward gave up the throne to marry the woman he loved. Where's the headlines about that today?

EDMUND: That was fifty years ago!

SHELBY: Well, do you want a short play in the deadlines or do you want fifty years of coverage?

EDMUND: I'll be dead by then.

ARLENE: Let Mr. More speak, Edmund. It is a miracle any of us get a word in edgewise.

SHELBY: People walk on the moon and nobody thinks of it twice. It's a bloody bore. People turn on the telly and go directly for the sports. (*Edmund raises his arm in protest.*) You have a good product, I agree. But packaging is everthing these days. I suggest McAmm, McAmm, and McAllagher to control the flood of merchandise. Coloring books, T-shirts, lunch buckets.

EDMUND: Everything but the kitchen sink, aye?

SHELBY: No. I am sorry if I give you that impression. We are after quality. Quality merchandising. Quality entertainment. Nobel prize-winning writers will write the screenplays.

ARLENE: I always wanted to be in the movies. When they were filming the royal wedding, a lot of photographers took my picture.

SHELBY: (*not paying any attention to Arlene*) We'll have someone come up and teach her a few tricks.

EDMUND: you mean play on the horns like a seal.

SHELBY: Now there's an idea. We could have our own recording company. Dinsoaur records.

ARLENE: I have heard records of whales singing.

SHELBY: Righto. The dinosaur plays, the whales sing. Twenty million records sold like that (*snaps his fingers*).

EDMUND: I don't want Gerty imitating a seal!

SHELBY: She doesn't have to imitate a seal. She can develop her own style.

EDMUND: And maybe you want her to jump through a hoop while she's at it!

SHELBY: So you think it could be done?

EDMUND: I am certain that this world can build a hoop big enough.

SHELBY: Are you angry at something I said?

ARLENE: Leave him be, Mr. More. He is as grumpy as they come lately.

EDMUND: I'm grumpy, am I? Well, you ain't seen nothing yet! When you start making my Gerty cute, making her walk through hoops, and play Auld Lang Syne on the Glockenspiel



. . . Then you'll hear grumpiness. I don't want Gerty on the television advertising toilet tissue.

SHELBY: Of course you do, or you wouldn't have called me here.

EDMUND: My wife called you here. She's the one who wants to be rich and famous, riding around in a Rolls with her cauliflower ear pressed up against the dashboard to hear if the clock is ticking.

ARLENE: Cauliflower ear is it?

EDMUND: All over the world the clocks are ticking. Gerty out there is a living clock. She was on this planet before we were on this planet; she will be around after we're gone. She is a living, breathing animal. This is not Mickey Mouse time.

SHELBY: Mickey Mouse is still news, which is a lot more than we can say for King Edward VIII. A man gave up the throne of England for the women he loved. Who remembers him now?

EDMUND: I do! By God I do!

ARLENE: Nor everyone cares what you think, Eddie. What about Wilber? It's a third his, too. If we want to merchandise her, then he should have a say.

SHELBY: How about it, Mr. MacKaye?

WILBER: Well, I was thinking of a book.

SHELBY: Exactly. That's what we need, a biography. The Story of a Dinosaur, as told to . . .

WILBER: I was thinking of something scientific actually. I have been an amateur paleontologist all my life.

ARLENE: It was he who got us set on Gerty's tracks.

*The song of the dinosaur.*

SHELBY: Forget science. There's no money in science.

WILBER: I didn't think it would be a best-seller.

WHELBY: If you could hang out with a scientist or Monty Python, which would you prefer? We know what the choice would be every time. People want excitement, laughs.

WILBER: What's wrong with knowledge?

SHELBY: Nothing. If it can be presented in an entertaining, laughable way. If dinosaurs died out, it was because of boredom, that's all.

EDMUND: How can they have been bored? The world was new to them!

SHELBY: Newness is the oldest thing in the world.

EDMUND: I got it! Why don't we place a paper-bag over Gerty's head and we can charge people to come up and guess what it is.

SHELBY: I will take that under advisement. And I also think we should have hats.

EDMUND: Hats?

SHELBY: Bonnets. Sun-bonnets with pictures of Gerty the Dinosaur all over it.

EDMUND: I'll take that under advisement.

WILBER: I feel sick to my stomach.

ARLENE: Mr. More, I don't think this is what any of us had in mind.

SHELBY: That is because you are all too close to the event. You have to step back to gain perspective. You are caught up in the excitement of finding. Soon you will be caught up in the far greater excitement of using what you find to your own best advantage. Now if you will just sign these three copies here, Mrs. Spenser.



*As Mr. More places a pen into Mrs. Spenser's hand, we hear the sound of a window breaking. And then the cries of a woman, and the cries of children.*

ARLENE: What was that?

*Wilber leans out the window.*

WILBER: Our dinosaur has crashed his noggin through the third floor window of Mrs. MacAbee's apartment.

EDMUND: Gerty gets her revenge. Good. Going after the children, is she? I hope she scares those nippers out of ten years' growth. Considering that the eldest boy is only nine years old that should send them all scattering back into Mrs. MacAbee's wrinkled womb like raisins.

*Excitement is heard from the house across the way.*

WILBER: She has got Mrs. MacAbee in her jaws.

*The house that we are in is also shaking with great tremors. Furniture falls over. Mr. More spills to th ground. The others hold on.*

SHELBY: Are we in an earthquake?

ARLENE: This happens whenever the dinosaur turns around.

*Wilber calls out the sindow.*

WILBER: Don't you worry, Mrs. MacAbee, Gerty is a vegetarian.

EDMUND: Mrs. MacAbee looks so much like a pumpkin it may not help her.

ARLENE: For God's sake, Edmund, we have to do something.

SHELBY: I think I've sprained my wrist. I hope you people are insured.

EDMUND: Why should we do anything at all? Her children

have started it. What with her nippers tossing stones at Gerty.

SHELBY: Insurance for Gerty. That's what we'll need. And that won't come cheap, I can guarantee you that.

EDMUND: Of course it won't come cheap. What does come cheap? Even cheapness doesn't come cheap these days. We pay through the nose for cheapness!

*A woman's scream. Voices across the way. A second tremor. The dinosaur's tail comes crashing through the window.*

EDMUND: Duck.

WILBER: Hold on, Mrs. MacAbee, we're coming! Get the rifle, Edmund.

EDMUND: What good is a pea-shooter against a Brachiosaurus.

*Edmund grabs the rifle. He and Wilber exit. The dinosaur tail disappears from view.*

ARLENE: We just had that window repaired a fortnight ago. One of Mrs. MacAbee's little nippers tossed a pool ball through it . . .

WHELBY: If this happens everytime Gerty moves, we're going to be up to our ears in glass.

*Arlene crosses to the window and calls out.*

ARLENE: The main thing, Mrs. MacAbee, is not to panic.

SHELBY: I'll sit on the floor where it's safe. It is safe, isn't it.

ARLENE: Very good Gerty is putting our neighbor back.

SHELBY: (*mopping his brow*) That is a relief all right.

*Arlene turns back to the solicitor.*



SHELBY: We must get Gerty out of this place as soon as possible. We have to find her a decent environment.

ARLENE: A tar-pit, you mean. A tar-pit is the only decent environment for a dinosaur.

SHELBY: That's not what I meant, Mrs. Spenser. No need to take offense. We are all on the same side of the fence, so to speak.

ARLENE: If we had a fence.

*Arlene begins to pick up the fallen furniture. She attempts to restore a sense of order.*

SHELBY: (*trying to smooth things over*) Tell me, Mrs. Spenser, I am very curious. How did you and your husband manage to come into possession of a dinosaur? One can't go down to the corner store and buy one.

ARLENE: Quite right about that. Can't go down to the store to buy it . . . (*continues cleaning, as the noise outside starts to fade*). A lot of it was Mr. MacKaye's doing. Wilber has a vast collection of books and documents, all related to the Loch Ness Monster. For years he has been tracking every rumour, every photograph, every stitch of evidence relating to prehistoric life upon our planet. Naturally, with such a library overhead, Eddie and I became interested ourselves. If one prehistoric monster could survive all the way down to us—then why not more? Ane where was nessie hiding all those years? And then not too long ago there were stories about dinosaur tracks being found in Africa.

SHELBY: Ah yes, I read that myself. It even crept into the financial pages.

ARLENE: One of the new countries.

SHELBY: Countries nowadays are always changing their names. The oldest places in the world sneak up on you with a new name. It plays absolute havoc with the Conservative view of things.



ARLENE: Our hearts sank We thought that some Ivy League Paleontologist with a prestigious degree and an inexhaustible cash flow had beat us to the punch. Needless to say, no one gives people like us credit for anything. But we found the first dinosaur. It was right in our own back yard.

SHELBY: God works in mysterious ways.

ARLENE: No. Man works in mysterious ways. I always thought God was on holiday. Tell me, are you a golfer, Mr. More?

SHELBY: No, I am a Salmon fisherman myself. That is why I moved to Scotland.

ARLENE: Well, if you had been a golfer, you might have found Gerty before us. For eight years, the three of us scoured from Buchan to Cairngorm, hiking up one side of Cairngorm and down the other. We thought that there might be a system of caves where the relatives of Nessie might be lurking. We peeked into every hollow, cave, and den until last night, on the verge of despair, the three of us were walking home, taking a short-cut across the Cairngorm Country Club, with Wilber reciting aloud from Chaucer, that Middle English of his grating on our ears, when I looked up and there she was . . . A full-grown, living breathing dinosaur, chomping away on the 15th Green.

WHELBY: No wonder the greens have been in such terrible shape.

ARLENE: Our prayers had been answered. It was as if Eddie and I and Wilber had devoted our lives to a fiction, to an impossibility, and when that impossibility stood before us, a huge mountain between us and the moon, it told us everything we needed to know about ourselves. The problem of course was to get the beast home safely. We couldn't go for help for fear the helpers would try to claim her for their own. That is the way isn't it? People always claiming what they have no right to. We were fortunate, however, that Gerty had an ear for Chaucer. Wilber simply recited Chaucer to her and she followed us home, quiet like and meek. We must have been the first humans she had seen. She took a liking to us right away.



SHELBY: All your efforts will pay off handsomely.

ARLENE: Sad, isn't it?

SHELBY: Sad? Why sad? I think there should be dancing in the streets.

ARLENE: What we want is right out the window, and nobody will leave it alone.

SHELBY: If that is how you feel, then why didn't you anticipate it? Why did you go to all the trouble of searching for it in the first place?

ARLENE: (*sinking into a chair*) I don't know. I don't know.

*We hear the door to the cottage open. There is the scrape of boots upon a mat. Edmund enters.*

EDMUND: We won the battle without having to fire a single shot. Mrs. MacAbee is resting comfortably at home, her darling family clustered about her mountainous bosom.

SHELBY: (*stands up*) Do you think she'll take any action against us?

EDMUND: She'll take action, all right. It's the only thing to take around here. They're very strict about keeping pets in this neighborhood. A fellow a few houses down tried to keep a kangaroo, but that was no go. The authorities made him surrender it.

ARLENE: What happened to Wilber? Is he all right?

EDMUND: Oh he is fine and dandy. It is the world that is all wrong.

SHELBY: Just sign these papers, Mr. Spenser. And we'll get your dinosaur set up nice and comfy, somewhere where children won't pester it.

EDMUND: We can't do that now, Mr. More.

SHELBY: What do you mean you can't do that now?

EDMUND: Wilber is taking the dinosaur away.

SHELBY: Away? what do you mean by away?

EDMUND: The world is not ready for dinosaurs. Wilber is going to lead her up Cairngorm and entice her over the edge of a cliff. Spatter her two brains against the rocks.

SHELBY: Over a cliff?

EDMUND: As long as Wilber recites Chaucer, Gerty will do anything he wants.

SHELBY: But you can't do this!

EDMUND: Of course we can. She's ours.

ARLENE: (*not disappointed*) Oh Eddie . . .

*Shelby rushes to the window.*

SHELBY: Come back here! Come back here with that dinosaur this minute . . . (*looks around for his hat*) . . . I'm going after her myself then. If you people don't want her, I do.

EDMUND: That does seem to be the problem, doesn't it? (*he turns the rifle upon the solicitor*). If I were you, I would sit down on the sofa, kick off your shoes, take off your trousers. Make yourself comfortable. You are going to wait here until Wilber returns. Until that time, we shall be one happy family.

SHELBY: Mrs. Spenser. Speak to him. Do something. You're his wife. They're taking bread out of your mouth.

ARLENE: I fear I have been outvoted two to one.

SHELBY: You can't agree with what he is doing. It's a crime against humanity. Mankind deserves this discovery.

EDMUND: Yes, all tied up in a nice little bonnet. Starring in the movies. Giving out interviews on the telly.



SHELBY: What about all those lovely Rolls-Royces you promised her?

EDMUND: The next time. There is always a Rolls Royce waiting the next time.

ARLENE: My Mum said that if I ran away with Edmund that I would never end up with anything. A girl hates to prove her Mum wrong. That would be a terrible guilty thing for a girl to live with.

SHELBY: I will have you prosecuted within an inch of lives.

EDMUND: We have been within an inch of our lives so long, it cannot make any difference now.

ARLENE: (*at the window*) Our backyard look ever so bigger with Gerty gone.

EDMUND: She took most of the fence with her.

WHELBY: You idiots. People like you have no right living in this world.

EDMUND: I suppose you are right. We are like Gerty in that.

SHELBY: I'm going after her.

EDMUND: I wouldn't.

SHELBY: And when I get her back you will get nothing, nothing, nothing from me.

*Shelby bolts out, heading for the door. Edmund raises his rifle and fires. We hear the sound of the solicitor collapsing at the door. Edmund goes out to check. He returns.*

ARLENE: Oh, Eddie, did you . . . ?

*Edmund shakes his head.*

EDMUND: He's wounded, that's all. But he's unconscious.

He'll be all right, but we have to get him to the hospital. Be a good girl will you and pop upstairs and ring up the Ambulance Service. I think I frightened him more than anything.

ARLENE: I'm on my way . . .

*Arlene stops.*

ARLENE: It's such a terrible thing the way everything turns out for the worse.

EDMUND: It is at that.

ARLENE: Is Wilber really going to lead Gerty over a cliff?

*Edmund shakes his head.*

EDMUND: You know he couldn't.

ARLENE: I didn't think so.

*Edmund takes his wife's face into his hands.*

EDMUND: We'll hide her away in that great cave we found. How about that, old girl. And the three of us will go up there and make sure she's happy and fed. We'll just have to keep her out of harm's way, that's all. Maybe someday the world will be ready for her.

ARLENE: Poor Wilber. It will break his heart to keep her hidden away like that.

EDMUND: I tell you my heart was in my throat the first time I saw her. A living creature so close the beginning to Time. One of the first large creatures in God's menagerie. Just as we are another. It was wrong for us to bring her back here. It was enough to have seen her.

*He looks up. His wife has gone upstairs to Wilber's apartment to call for an ambulance.*

EDMUND: If we had only known at the very beginning . . .  
(*he starts to sing*) . . .



“Now there was a Mr. More, a-bleeding on the floor,  
A man very wise in the law, law, law,  
He overheard the clatter of money in the platter,  
So he knocked him down with a dinosaur paw, paw, paw.

It was enough to have seen her.

*Lights out.*

*Curtain.*





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Poems by:

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*Battlo*  
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*Harvey*  
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*Ashbaugh*  
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