The background of the cover is a solid teal color with a fine, woven texture. Overlaid on this background are several large, sweeping, curved lines in a slightly lighter shade of teal, creating a sense of movement and depth. These lines appear to flow from the bottom left towards the top right, with some lines curving back towards the left.

The Red Cedar Review

volume thirty, number one

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Introduction

The Red Cedar Review has been published on the campus of Michigan State University for over thirty years. It is one of the longest running literary magazines and has been proud to publish such established writers as, Margaret Atwood, Jim Cash, Stuart Dybeck Jim Harrison, and Diane Wakoski.

For the thirtieth volume, number one, of *The Red Cedar Review* we searched for a diversity of styles and subject matters in poetry, short stories and plays. Knowing that high quality writing is made up of a number of different tastes, Zachary and I chose this diversity. Having very different tastes ourselves this diversity was easy to find. Out of the hundreds of submissions we received from all over the United States and a couple of foreign countries, we chose only twenty-one pieces. We then divided them into three sections: landscape & experience, shocking pink, and wicked, wicked ways. Though some pieces fit their sections very loosely, we thought that the division into sections would be an interesting twist for *The Red Cedar Review*. We hope this will appeal to a variety of readers, and will enable you to view this issue on a number of levels. The following are brief descriptions of the sections included:

landscape & experience

This section includes works focusing on important elements of the landscape and experience. Some of these landscapes are familiar, such as fields, deserts, delis, and convenience stores, in which the writers find value and pull meaning out of their every-day experience. These experiences are things that we all might feel. Some may be shocking, but most do not suggest that one must be tortured to be an artist. They are not the things that only happen in those rare cases — those exceptional few. This is the every-day turned into art, not exactly traditional, but with a high quality and universality that will last. This is the poetry and fiction that you will taste unless your taste buds are too desensitized and can no longer taste mere apples but only strong liquors. In the words of Charles Bukowski, “this is not just an apple / this is an experience / red green yellow / with underlying pits of white / wet with cold water / I bite into it...”

Laura L. Klynstra
co-editor

shocking pink

"Those pleasures so lightly called physical" — Colette: the most powerful bond we, as humans, have is that of the erotic. We tend to think of the erotic as an easy, tantalizing sexual arousal. The late Audre Lorde wrote, "I speak of the erotic as the deepest life force, a force which moves us towards living in a fundamental way. Only when that which is sensual becomes devalued and objectified, does the erotic become pornographic." For countless years, what was thought of as "erotic" was controlled by narrowly-defined, lustful male enthusiasm. It is a sign of our times when both female and male writers, poets and artists have been seeing sex in a nonviolent, positive light. For whether you call yourself queer, straight, celibate or bi; whether you are a holy roller, leather-boy, separatist, or g-girl, everyone has their own idea of love, of sensuality, of healthy living. We must examine the erotic world in order to affirm our learnings, expose our options, expand our limits, and confirm our suspicions.

wicked, wicked ways

I've stayed in the front yard all my life.
 I want to peek at the back
 Where it's rough and untended and hungry weed grows.
 A girl gets sick of a rose.

—Gwendolyn Brooks

I would like to dedicate this section to a good friend, as well as the photographer for this issue, Ruelaine Stokes. It has something to do with the work that's in here, the poems and fiction and all. They're naked. Not all our lives are tragedies nor is every poem an attempt to sing the blues... but these soar! They're the kind of writing that makes the meek excuse themselves from the party, not because the hostess is showing off her tattoos, but because the meek can never understand how they got invited in the first place. It's like Ruelaine's photography, wild wild wild! Mad mad mad... when you're done with the book, go out and dance. Get naked and dance and read out Emily Dickinson's, "This is the hour of lead—Remembered, if outlived, as Freezing persons recollect the Snow — First — Chill — then stupor — then the letting — go —"

Zachary Chartkoff
 co-editor



landscape & experience

When the Stillness is Quantum

by Fredrick Cardin

Dogs, even very large dogs, were afraid of him. He would laugh and they'd lower their heads, move away. It was not his size so much — he was big enough — or his plunging way of walking; it was more a force that radiated from him: his laugh and perpetual grin were like denials of belief in anything. My brother Bart Klondike believed in destiny, not effort. And he didn't care what anyone believed about him.

"The key to success in this world," he told me, "is to be full of shit and not know it, like Reagan."

He believed you learned nothing from life except to laugh a lot and trust little, for he had learned perhaps too much at an early age: when Bart was eight years old his father vanished one day, never to be seen again by the family he abandoned — only recently did we get some news of him: he was dead.

Klondike, actually, is my half brother, the second of two sons my mother had by her first husband, Jon Klondike, the owner of a tavern which still stands beside a back road in the woods of northern Wisconsin, looking no more or less run-down today than it did fifty years ago.

Though our mother refused to speak of her first husband — his name was the ultimate obscenity that could be uttered in our house — we knew that she'd had some communication with him at the time of the divorce. For a couple of years there'd been the child support payments that he'd made irregularly, from Chicago, until he disappeared a second time, this time for good.

My mother's name is Argenthieu now, and that is my name. She remarried after the Second World War. My father, Pete Argenthieu, had been a soldier in that war, though he'd not done much, guarded a harbor in Iceland, watching for Germans who never came. Bored, he had shot rats with his M-1 and gone out cod fishing with the Icelanders. He rode a horse up a mountain once, to look into a volcano, and had a few other "war" stories he liked to tell, funny stories in which he was a harmlessly inept anti-hero. My father was a patient man, a good enough husband and father, though my mother, perhaps in an enduring shock of abandonment, never learned to trust him. She would often accuse him, without evidence of any kind, of being romantically involved with other women. Sometimes she would even phone these astonished women to warn them that she knew what was going on and that it had better stop.

Though I am an Argenthieu, Jon Klondike has been very much a part of my life, a shadow on my mother's soul, nearly as great and everlasting a mystery to me as he's been to my brother Bart. What I know of him I have learned from my father — who had been a patron of Klondike's tavern before he vanished — and from Bart, who has shown me the highway down which his father was last seen driving, away from a diner on a curve at the top of a hill.

I saw a vestige of this diner years ago while I was in Upper Michigan with Bart, who'd spent his early youth there — it was a high school summer for me: Bart had come over one morning in his pickup truck and invited me to go up north with him. My mother had granted permission on condition that I return with a tribute of blackberries picked from her father's woods — her father's woods they were to her still, though her father had been dead twenty years.

We went first to the farmhouse in Upper Michigan that our grandfather had built with the help of his older sons, Klondike driving slowly up the long dirt drive, through a field of grass rising to a crest: it was a small white house to which a bathroom and a new kitchen had been added. All traces of the old log barn were gone. An oak and a white pine, second growth, noble with age, stood at each side of the house. The trunk of the oak bore the corkscrew scars of a lightning strike.

"Place looks a little different each time I come," Bart said. "I guess my memory's not too good."

Ted Bergstrom, one of our mother's four brothers, lived here now with his wife, Pauline. Because Ted, a shift superintendent at the paper mill in Menimée Falls, never seemed too happy to see anyone, we didn't spend much time at the house, did little more than announce our presence and walk into the woods, to a small clearing where we filled a coffee can with blackberries, eating plenty ourselves.

Afterward we took a ride on a road so narrow that the spreading branches of maple and oak arched over us to form a canopy under which birds swirled and parted at our approach. We moved in a tunnel of shade dappled by sunlight that brought us eventually to U.S. 2.

At a produce stand that some farmer had set up outside Iron Mountain where the highway began curving down from the top of a hill, Bart bought a few tomatoes, which we ate like apples, and I followed him back from the produce stand to some tangled brush at the edge of a woods. Nearly hidden in the brush was a water-stained concrete platform that'd once been the foundation of a building. Bart looked at it for a while and said, "This is where Jonny was last seen."

The slab was all that remained of Len Purdy's Highway Diner which was burned down in 1948. Jon Klondike had stopped here to buy a carry-

out pasty one summer afternoon in 1944. It was our mother's former classmate and close friend, Mary Purdy, who had handed Klondike the warm paper bag holding the pasty and then watched him drive down the hill, away from Iron Mountain, never to be seen in these parts again.

"The asshole never did anything on an empty stomach," Bart said, and laughed his evil laugh, "not even run away."

Klondike and I looked down the hill in the direction his father had gone: the highway curved away into dark blue-green woods from which the dirty walls of granite bluffs rose — I always had the feeling when I was up here that I'd gone beyond the edge of something into a zone of debris: glacial deposits, failed farms, abandoned iron mines, ghost towns in woods, a region of hanging on that my own father had let go of less than a month after marrying my mother. (He had accepted an offer of a transfer from the Gemlin-Frick paper mill in Menimee Falls, Wisconsin to the corporation's main office beside the Wohld River in central Wisconsin. Locks and dams controlled the Wohld's steep descent to Green Bay, and banks and islands of the river were dense with the brick fortresses of nineteenth-century wilderness conquest: mills, breweries, churches.) Bart, at age twelve, had moved to the Wohld Valley with his mother, stepfather, and older brother, Charles, and it was there that I was born, in the river city of Falkirk, the first of Pete Argenhieu's five children.

"Standing here," Bart said while looking at the remains of Purdy's diner, "I can't help but think of pasties ... and that makes me hungry." Klondike had no particular schedule for eating and often engorged himself when he did. A former rock-solid all-conference middle linebacker in high school, he now had a rock-solid potbelly, which he claimed was better than a spare tire—rock-solid potbellies were narrow and stuck straight out, unlike spare tires, which were soft, went all the way around, and jiggled. Ruggedly handsome, with thick sandy hair that he combed back, Bart had some old brawl scars which did not seem to belong on a face that wore a perpetual, if skeptical, grin.

We drove into Iron Mountain for pasties, stopping at a place just off the highway. Bart led the way in, lumbering ahead of me to the counter, knowing but not caring that tomato seeds had dripped on his shirt. The young woman behind the counter regarded him as it seemed to me that most women did, with a combination of amusement and concern. We ate the pasties at Trader Lake Park and then returned to the woods by our grandfather's farm, though this time we would enter from a different side, through a field that had been cleared by Olaf Burleson, our grandfather's neighbor.

Bart and I climbed a steep ridge at the center of Burleson's field.

From the top, we saw an old wood-frame house against the woods, its green paint nearly faded away. Near it stood a log barn with a squat stone silo. Klondike announced that we were going to pay a visit to Olaf's widow, Norma Burleson, who lived here alone now.

We went down to the house. Mrs. Burleson did not seem in the least disturbed to have unexpected visitors wandering across her field to her door; in fact, she recognized Bart immediately and looked happy to see him.

I remember her talking about her long-departed children, telling us that her son in Virginia wanted her to come and spend winters there with his family, but she wouldn't do it, because she knew if she ever left this place she'd never see it again. I couldn't understand why she'd be so worried about not seeing a place like this again.

Mrs. Burleson, who I guessed was in her seventies, studied us with alert blue eyes. Her daughter Karen, she said, a high-school teacher in Minneapolis now, had walked home from Morgan Mine School with our mother.

Bart was at ease with just about anyone: he asked questions that people enjoyed answering and he never stayed long enough in one place to get bored or become a nuisance — you kept moving when you were with him, and though you doubted he had anything specific in mind, often he did.

"No, I've heard nothing of your father, Bart," the widow replied to one of his questions. "In fact, I've not heard his name mentioned in years."

Mrs. Burleson was seated on a worn sofa in front of a stone fireplace.

"Walter looks like his father," she said, fixing her eyes on me, "dark French, coast of the Mediterranean, not at all German like his mother."

Genetics, I understood even then, was a subject of far greater interest to the old than the young, for it was always from someone that old I was hearing about origins and family resemblances.

"Bart, now, is lighter, like his grandfather, though you boys do seem alike in a way — I'm not sure how to put it — in your bearing, I suppose."

"We're both insane," Bart said, laughing. "They called our grandfather the Mad Prussian, didn't they? I hear he went looking for Jonny Klondike with a shotgun after he found out Ma was going to have to marry him."

"No... no! That's not what I meant," Mrs. Burleson protested. "And your mother was only sixteen when she married Jonny, and he was twenty-nine. Who could blame your grandfather for wanting to take a shotgun to him?"

* * *

Norma Burleson had been a widow since 1926, when her husband blew himself up with dynamite. Olaf Burleson had bought eighty acres of woods in 1924 and, as my grandfather had done with a portion of his own land, he'd began clearing it of trees and glacial boulders — these were stubborn men, my grandfather and Burleson: with axes and saws they'd cleared rocky, arctic patches of forest to farm soil not meant to be farmed. My grandfather had worked at the lumberyard in Iron Mountain and grown tired of living according to schedules written by others. Schedules on a farm were established by nature, he had said, and he'd rather be a part of nature than the slave of another man.

Some of the boulders covering this land were so large that they had to be dynamited — the fragments were dragged away on horse-drawn sleds, to be piled into rows or fences at the perimeters of forest. Olaf Burleson had been blown up while placing a charge under a boulder that stood as high as his waist and was half submerged in the ground. He had dug a hole alongside the stone and decided that a dozen sticks of dynamite would do the trick. The horse had bolted at the blast and Mrs. Burleson, seeing the terrified animal pulling its empty wood skid at a gallop toward the house, had known her husband was dead.

Klondike showed me the boulder of granite that'd gotten the better of Olaf. It was split through the center, shattered on one side. Olaf's widow, believing this tragedy an omen, had allowed no more work to be done in the field. Burleson's farm became an unfinished monument to one man's dream of humble dignity. My mother remembers playing in this field with Karen Burleson: Karen had been afraid to go near the stone where her father had died.

Klondike, grinning as usual, looked at the big broken stone and said, "Some men die quietly in their sleep while others... well... we can't all be geniuses who never make mistakes. Olaf, now, was no genius, but he was smart enough to die painlessly, and it takes some class, not letting death drag itself out — buncha relatives sitting around your bed wishing you'd get it over with and croak... your own kids watching you waste away... never knew where you stood with them... still don't."

* * *

Like Klondike's father, my grandfather is legend, not memory, to me: I never met him — he walked into these woods one summer morning, as far as a creek in a gully, and it was there that they found him the next morning. Klondike said he looked like he was sleeping. That

was the summer that the second World War ended and a year after Klondike's father disappeared. These vanished men, giants of a small, personal myth — grandfather Francis Bergstrom, born on a farm somewhere in Germany; tavern keeper Jon Klondike, born in Vulcan, Michigan — are as deep a part of me as my memory of the first house in which I lived.

I followed Klondike, as he followed whatever it was that brought him back here each summer, up an old logging road that moved from Burleson's field into our grandfather's woods. We left the soft dirt track of the road and moved through a shallow sea of bracken fern to a rocky slope of birch and pine. I heard a creek below and knew where we were going. Klondike showed me the oak, near the stream, under which our grandfather had sat down and died.

It was my grandmother Lucy I thought of, though — I remember her well: farm wife in flowered apron and faded cotton dress, heavy-boned but not fat, a white-haired image of wholesomeness that was, like most images, an illusion. She'd been superstitious, ignorant to the point nearly of illness, compulsively warning me of all the evil in the world and of all that I must never do or say or think — she had lived her life in fear of retribution and I felt myself suffocating in her presence. Human desire, the human capacity for pleasure and joy, was to her some kind of horror, the devil at work in her senses. I couldn't imagine anyone living as she lived, in a state of continuous denial, and when she died I felt nothing, though I suppose she'd grown quite comfortable with the simplicities and certainties of her ignorance.

I remember going to her funeral on a brutally cold day in February of 1956 — her oldest son, Richard, had cried, and I'd never seen a grown man cry before. I was the only child there among all those grownups in their heavy overcoats. Klondike, who was in the Marines then, had been in Okinawa, too far away to attend the funeral, but his older brother, Charles, a law student at the University of Wisconsin, had come home from school to drive us up to Quinnesec — my father couldn't go because it was his bowling night, but he let us use his car.

Before returning to Falkirk, Klondike and I stopped at the White Horse Tavern in downtown Iron Mountain. Klondike ordered a glass of beer for himself and an orange soda for me. I remembered a story my father had told, about seeing my grandfather Bergstrom, wearing overalls and shit-kicker boots, come out of the White Horse on Saturday night roaring drunk—he had raised an arm and shouted a greeting to someone across the street. My father had told this story in my mother's presence knowing it would make her angry and then he'd laughed at her anger — in a well-fed society like ours instigation is often the only form

of stimulation.

The owner of the White Horse, Nick Guyette, was someone Jon Klondike had considered a friend. He looked like a man who knew what he was going to hear before he heard it.

"What makes you think Jonny's still alive after all these years, Bart?"

"You and I are still alive, Nick. Why wouldn't Jonny be?"

"You and I are still here, Bart. The same can't be said of Jonny."

"Would you tell me where he was if you knew?"

"Why the hell wouldn't I?"

Klondike laughed. His mistrust of others was a matter of attitude. He never came right out and accused anyone of anything — he simply ignored advice and kept plans of his own a secret until he was ready to act.

We made one more stop on the way home, across the river in Wisconsin. I waited outside while Bart went into another saloon, again to chat with someone who'd known his father.

I got out of the truck and stood near the highway above Menimee Falls. There wasn't much here: a few taverns, some supper clubs, a couple of gas stations, and a dilapidated bowling alley. I remembered that my father had tended bar in some of these saloons before the war, had worked in and gotten drunk in most of them according to my mother: for better or worse, they were my heritage. But as I waited I wondered what Klondike had meant when he told Norma Burleson that he and I were both insane.

That he was insane was indisputable — his face might have been studied like a map or chart of some kind, a lurid chronicle of his madness. Before, during, and just after his years in the Marine Corps Klondike had accumulated scars like a celestial body, unprotected by atmosphere, collects meteor craters. There was, for instance, the split in his left eyebrow: brass knuckles, Log Cabin Bar, summer 1958. And the dent on his nose: crescent wrench, parking lot of the Paradise Club, Long Beach, California, summer 1955. Klondike certainly had reason to call himself mad — but me? What had I ever done? I was an honor student, no angel perhaps, but never in serious trouble in my life.

Later, years later, I would be asking myself not why he had told the widow we were both insane but rather how he had been uncanny enough to know even then that I was indeed fundamentally like him — not a brawler, but fierce: one who never followed, never joined, and never forgot; one whose anger would carry him out into some cold region that allowed undeluded observation — and that much I suppose I am: undeluded, though it seems a dubious achievement, considering how much satisfaction self-deception and ignorance have brought to so many

I have known, including my plodding grandmother, who believed that the glories of God and Heaven would be hers eternally as a reward for all she'd denied herself in life.

On the way back to Falkirk, in answer to a question I'd asked, Klondike explained, "Insanity, Wally, in most cases is nothing but pride. Most of us grovel to get what we want: we beg a woman for a little love; we beg our rulers to treat us like men. Those of us who are incapable of begging are considered insane."

* * *

Bart had a way of blinking in and out of my life, and his arrivals, though unannounced, were never complete surprises, because it was only unannounced that he did arrive. While I still lived at home he'd sometimes appear at dawn, the house swelling with his force and weight as he crossed the living room to the kitchen table, to sit and have a cup of coffee, a chat with our mother, in the morning light streaming through lilac bushes outside the window by the table. Sometimes they'd sit talking about characters I'd never met from their earlier life up north. Bart would arrive laughing, irreverent observations flowing from him, even if he'd just had a fight with Carly, his wife. Once he showed up with a bandage on his chin, explaining that he'd rolled his car off a road somewhere during the night, left it lying there, out in a field, for the police to dispose of as they saw fit — meanwhile, he'd be coming up with a story for them, a good one, and peeing the beer out of his blood while he was at it.

Bart owned a bar and grill near the river called Bart's Midway, named so because it was located about midway between the many taverns of downtown Gemlin, a small mill town adjacent to Falkirk. The Midway opened at eleven each morning and did a booming business at lunch hour, steak sandwiches and burgers for factory and railroad workers. At night, especially Friday and Saturday nights, the same blue-collar clientele would fill the Midway to drink and play pool.

It was during the spring of my sophomore year at the university — at a time when the madness which Klondike had foretold was beginning to assert itself and push me toward a major in philosophy, a career as an unappreciated thinker — that Bart made one of his appearances out of nowhere, after midnight, at my apartment in Madison: he was returning from a solitary drive to Texas.

First there'd been a shaking of the entire building as he climbed the two flights of stairs to my apartment. The door was opened to him by Dominic Camerini, who lived there too — I saw Dominic step back in

disbelief and alarm. Bloodshot eyes gazed in at him from the dark of the stairwell. Klondike had been thirty hours on the road.

"Wally?" he said. "This where Wally lives?"

"You want — whom?" Dominic asked, with exaggerated formality and skepticism.

"Bart," I said, coming out of my room, "what a nice surprise." And to Dominic, "This is my brother, Klondike."

"Well, in that case," Dominic said in mock relief, for like anyone who knew me at all well he'd heard enough Klondike stories to know he'd opened the door to something unique and perhaps dangerous.

Sam Joslin, a longtime friend of mine from Falkirk who also lived in the apartment, and who'd encountered Klondike on previous occasions back home, came out of his room to have a look, as Klondike, seated on the sofa, and talking much too loudly for the middle of the night, began telling the story of his trip to Texas.

Mike Andrews, Bart's boyhood friend from Iron Mountain, had stopped for a beer at the Midway last week. Mike, who was in Falkirk for a bowling tournament, had seen Arnold Fuches a few weeks before, in Iron Mountain, when Arnold returned home for an uncle's funeral. Arnold, another of Bart's old school friends, was a geologist living in Houston now — he worked for Texaco, in geophysics and exploration. Arnie had gone away to school and earned some degrees, including a Ph.D., which made Bart very uncomfortable.

"Arnie's okay," Mike told Bart. "He fell off a bar stool at the White Horse after the ten-year class reunion and knocked himself out."

"Can't be all bad," Bart agreed.

According to Mike Andrews, Arnie had been intrigued by a man he'd seen on a stage in Houston, a gangster version of Ed Sullivan, wearing a pink shirt and yellow tie. The man had looked a little like Bart, thirty years older though, and his voice was like something Arnie had heard before: accent way up north, Iron Mountain maybe, Houston no way.

So Arnie asked a bartender about this guy up on the stage. He was holding a microphone, playing it real straight, like he was Ed Sullivan, except that what he was doing was interviewing some completely naked girl who'd just finished dancing. The bartender told Arnie the man was Curt Clark, owner of the place. He wasn't sure where Curt Clark was from, but he knew he'd lived in Chicago for a while.

Bart had left for Houston after closing up the Midway that night. He stopped at home to pack a few things, told Carly what was up, and listened politely as she threw a fit.

"I don't get it, Bart. This creep turns his back on you and all his other responsibilities, obviously doesn't care if you're alive or dead, and you

keep acting like you're missing out on something by not having him around."

"So what did you find out?" I asked.

Bart shrugged and laughed. "Place was called Ducky's. I looked Arnie up and we went there together. Arnie's wife, Donna, didn't like the look of me, so I kept my mouth shut while Arnie explained to her that me an' him wanted to go somewhere for a drink. Donna said okay, but she needed the car for shopping. So we took my truck. Drove straight to Ducky's.

"Place had red carpet, wall to wall, so thick I could hardly walk. 'High-class establishment,' I said. 'Won't knock yourself out fallin' offa stool here.' 'Do something like that just once and you never hear the end of it,' Arnie said, and then he pointed out Ed Sullivan to me. Ed was kinda big, you could tell at a glance he was someone didn't put up with shit from anyone — he was at a table by the stage, didn't look like anyone I knew, which didn't mean much, cuz I don't remember much about Jonny, but I hadn't come all that way to stand there scratching my head, so I went up to 'im, told 'im who I was, and asked 'im if he was my father, Jonny Klondike, who disappeared from Iron Mountain in 1944. He just looked at me for a while. 'I'm from the moon,' he said, 'and I been to all the planets — they call me Man-in-the-Moon.' Then he raised up his hand, pointed at me, and some guy about seven feet tall materializes from the dark and escorts me an' Arnie to the door. So there we were, back out in the parking lot, thrown the hell out after one question, and Arnie says, 'He's a lot like you.' I wasn't finished laughing yet when Arnie's wife comes up outa nowhere and asks Arnie what the hell he's doing at a hole like this. Arnie stays cool, though, says, 'I could ask you the same thing.' 'Don't' she says, and they start into this who's-the-one-most-wrong routine — me for comin' here, or you for following me and not trusting me. So I said good-bye to 'em both and to Houston too... Wally, I'm awfully tired now, and if you don't mind I think I'll just pass our here on your sofa."

* * *

My years as a student at the university were years of greater power and dynamics than I was old enough to understand or survive. I've never been lucky, but one break I did get was a high number in the first selective service lottery, though by then I was too far gone to care.

When I graduated in June of 1970 it was just another moment in the drifting I'd been doing for several years already. During that summer of '70 Sam Joslin — a 4-F because of his asthma — bought a Volkswagen

van and drove off with his girlfriend, Frankie, to some commune in Tennessee; and Dominic, by then, was already gone, for after the cancellation of the rest of the semester's classes during the riots in May he'd returned to his parents' house in New Jersey to begin a long fight with his draft board — he had drawn the number 12 in the lottery and then passed his preinduction physical in March.

I ended the summer alone in that shabby apartment on Brooks Street, waiting without interest or enthusiasm to begin graduate school in philosophy, for I'd won a fellowship — probably because no one else had applied, from similar lack of interest. In September I'd be moving to a smaller apartment above a bookstore on State Street.

Late in August, near the end of that nothing summer of waiting for nothing, at three, one morning, the window next to my bed fell in on the floor. What woke me was the house dropping down and coming back up, as on a wave, accompanied by the knowledge, immediate and stunning, of a tremendous explosion, its force too great to perceive as sound.

I sat up in bed for a moment wondering if I should go out. There was enough light in the room that I could see the window had fallen in. The explosion had been on the campus, very near — a bomb, I assumed. I got up, pulled on a T-shirt and cutoff jeans, put on sneakers without socks, went down the two flights of stairs to the porch and started walking toward Bascom Hill — the air smelled singed and I drifted through it like a sleepwalker in a dream.

I moved across the empty lanes of University Avenue, toward scattered pockets of flame I saw on the hill, feeling myself drawn by a force other than my own will, for I'd become so enraged by the war, what it was doing to everyone, what it'd done to me, that I'd gone over a spiritual edge into a state of survival apathy. I moved through a garden that formed a courtyard between buildings on the side of Bascom Hill and found myself looking up into Sterling Hall, the physics building: a hole four stories high had been blown in its south wall of concrete and yellow brick. Somewhere in that ripped-open dark a man lay dead, others injured. The target of the bomb had been the Army Math Research Center on the upper floors of the building.

I heard sirens approaching and was aware of feeling almost nothing, certainly not disbelief or shock, for what had happened here was nothing different than what the U.S. government had been doing to the people of Vietnam for the better part of a decade now — lightless hole, I might have been looking into my own future. It was the history of the world: fury begetting fury, fear begetting fear, outrage begetting outrage, bystanders suffering, dying, alone, by the score, the thousands, the millions. I believed in nothing but the solidity of my indifference.

* * *

Years later, while living in California, where I made my living driving a bus, I returned to Falkirk on a vacation — I'd not been there in three years. Klondike, divorced from Carly a number of years now, and having recently broken up with his girlfriend, Marilyn, was living alone in a two-and-a-half-story hundred-year-old house near downtown. He was in the business of buying old houses like this, fixing them up, and selling them. The living room was uncarpeted, empty except for a worn sofa and a portable television sitting on a small table. He slept on a mattress on the floor of a bedroom.

"Someone like you, Wally," he said during a pause in our talk, "straight-A student, pre-med at one time, coulda been anything you wanted to be — I can't figure it out: what the hell are you doing out there in L.A. driving a bus?"

"Looking something in the face and telling it to get fucked."

Klondike's face went blank, indicating the occurrence of thought. If he was startled by the vehemence of my reply, it didn't show.

"You an' me, Wally, we aren't planners — but this doesn't keep us from being part of someone else's plan. This is a world of planners, little men at big desks, and big-shouldered men with mandates. It's easier to take after you quit giving a fuck."

He got up then, went into his bedroom. "Got sumthin I wanna show you," he said, "letter came about a month ago: some answers don't come until it doesn't matter anymore."

The letter was from a lawyer in Phoenix notifying Bart of the death of his father, Jonathan Klondike. According to the letter, Bart had inherited a portion of the Klondike estate — specifically, these items: a collection of beer bottles, some of which were rare, and a Chevrolet pickup truck that needed a new transmission.

"I got a brother down there, and a stepmom — name's Vicki, she's younger than me."

Klondike, for once, wasn't laughing. When he looked at me I felt myself being watched by the men I'd never met — Jonny Klondike and my grandfather Bergstrom, each of whom had gone a very long way to get away from something. I'd found them as they'd found me, looking out at something, or into it — Klondike's eyes were a raging quiet of knowing all that would happen and that it wouldn't be much. It was enough to get anyone running. You'd never stop knowing, but running was better than doing nothing.

Hope (The Joke)

by Jim Leftwich

When I wind up in the desert
I want the turquoise
left front door
of a Chevrolet
beside me

It's going to be hot out there
Rolling down the window
might help

A Poem Circling in Search of Itself All Night

by Nick Barrett

At the end of this typical and grungy Buffalo bar, with his elbows pressed against the crackling red rail, my dead grandfather raises his beer for a toast and blows a puff of blue cigar smoke the size of a small donut though a hole in his throat. A candle flickers under a portrait of Sinatra draped with a black stone rosary, the Labatt's Blue sign hums as my uncle and his friend order our first round. The workmen who fill the place after the day shift know by my clothes and the way I talk that I am not from here, maybe a cousin or nephew of someone who made it out, that said good-bye to the Whistle Pig — the best one pound frank wrapped with bacon and broiled you will ever eat — to the drunk Indians on the reservation and their tax-less gas and smokes...

My grandfather plays the role — he stares blankly, at the wall as if he has just lost everything in a wreck or fire, the sudden shock that expresses itself for months or even years in a look as vast and vacuous as the sky. He knows we don't want him here — my uncle's friend, Stacey, gets loud to distract us — *Nick, do you think I have a woman's name? If you closed your eyes and someone said Stacey in a deep raspy voice, would you see me?* I close my eyes and listen, smell his warm, beer-laden breath — *Well you know what? This name gets me laid all the time, especially with the Canucks; they come over to buy gas and t.p. and then hit the bars — something exotic in the name Stacey. Last week these two old broads —* and another voice chimes in, *You're always with the grandmas —* and I notice my uncle moving quietly over to talk with my grandfather.

It's hard for the bar to watch — every man thinking he has or he'll have to do something soon — in a bar like this one, or at home. My grandfather told me once that I should never expect to hear him say *I love you* to my mother or grandmother or anybody else because he cared more than that, learning later from my uncle that he despised the hollowness of the word love, that even this word was more ruined than the sugar coated sound of *amor* in his native tongue. He could not understand how anybody would do that to themselves, choosing to say

instead that he had passion, pasión. Someone had told him that it came from the Latin word for destruction and harm and that, to him, made sense, and more accurately described what he felt about life before and after he had his larynx cut out, and part of his pancreas — a long line of parts to go. Now, my grandfather and uncle prepare a board of chess like they have for almost thirty years every night in the Gonzalez home — a game after work, and a beer, a reason for both men to return.

I remember my uncle calling Kansas City to tell me that if I wanted to see my grandfather I better come now, and my first thought — I wonder if he will know who I am, and then, I wonder if it matters if he knows who I am — *Nick, you've gotta understand, he went crazy, we couldn't deal with him anymore. I know Ma drove him nuts, but he jabbed his eyes out with his I.V. so he didn't have to see anymore, and he tried to drown Ma in the tub* and I told my uncle to fuck himself and the doctors with quiescent faces said diabetic fit and he raised his hands above his head the afternoon before I arrived and said that he was finally dying and *dammit Nick he thinks he talks to God. He told me yesterday that he felt like he was inside some glowing light and he started to walk toward it, and that when they cut out his larynx he said he felt the same thing, but was too embarrassed to tell anyone, but not now, shit* and he died, nothing spectacular, my grandmother rests her head on his bloated body and I get paged in the Buffalo airport to meet my uncle here.

By this time the workmen have begun to cheer reverently for the living — one talks about his boy just born and the trouble with bills, but it's a boy, and another just slopes into his seat and chews hot wings methodically for the living, and I hear Marie behind the bar yacking to her father who owns the place... When they have finished, almost day break, my uncle stands, rolls two marble kings in his hand and says flatly, *good-bye*, to my grandfather and wants to mean it. And when we get to his car to drive, the late walls of fire from the U.S.. Steel and defunct Carborundum rise again, and I listen to him tell me what a game it was, and his father's story, and we believe together that to die is a terrible thing.

Lunch

by Doug Rennie

Two girls sit eating lunch in a deli. Outside is rain but the restaurant is warm. They sit at a glass-topped table and talk as they eat. One is fair-skinned, blue-eyed, her blonde hair tied in a pony tail. She is dressed in black stirrup pants, red-and-green argyle sweater over a white turtle neck, calfskin tassel loafers. Her clothes say rich. Her name is Courtney, or maybe Missy, and she lives in a fourteen-room house with 150 feet of lake frontage. She takes tiny, precise bites from a thick turkey sandwich. Between swallows she talks animatedly to her friend, a larger dark-haired girl in jeans and a handknit sweater of medium blue and rose and pale yellow in a Southwestern pattern. A \$300 Dooney & Bourke purse hangs from the back of her chair. Their talk is of school activities and friends. *So, like the juniors throw a party for the seniors and they take a few kegs up the hill and, like, party all afternoon,* says the blonde. The dark one nods and sips a spoonful of her Thai curry soup. *How fun,* she says. *Yeah,* the blonde says. The dark one nods again. *Hmmmmmmmm,* she says. Pony tail's eyes open a little wider. She leans forward. *Deb is, like, having a party at her place this Friday night. Judy and Teri, and, like, everyone is going to be there. Her parents are going to be gone.* The dark one looks up from her spoon and smiles. *How funnnnn,* she says. They talk another twenty minutes. Boys, classes, parties. How boring school is, how hard it is to find cute guys who are nice. Dances. *How funnnnn.* Graduation, college, marriage, kids. *Hmmmmmm.* Dark hair says *I gotta pee.* She gets up and walks away. Pony tail stares out the window. At the heavy rain and leaden sky. Her face darkens. What is it she sees? May's prom that she will not attend? Losing her virginity a month later to a boy she will never see again? Her sorority house at Pepperdine? Or is it the man she will marry whose face she stares at? Humming to himself as he fires bullets into the heads of their two young daughters, then moves the black revolver's muzzle to his own temple twelve years from now?

I Am Writing

by V.Q. Wallick

I am writing
to let you know
that you are not as beautiful
as you used to be.
Grow your hair
and put your levis back on.

a point of no return

by James Collins

bitterness crowds my body
as I climb upon a bus
I knew it wasn't temporary
my chains told me so

yesterday I could order coffee
now I am served without a menu

years have gotten on
where I don't know

seems like only yesterday
I was tipping a waitress

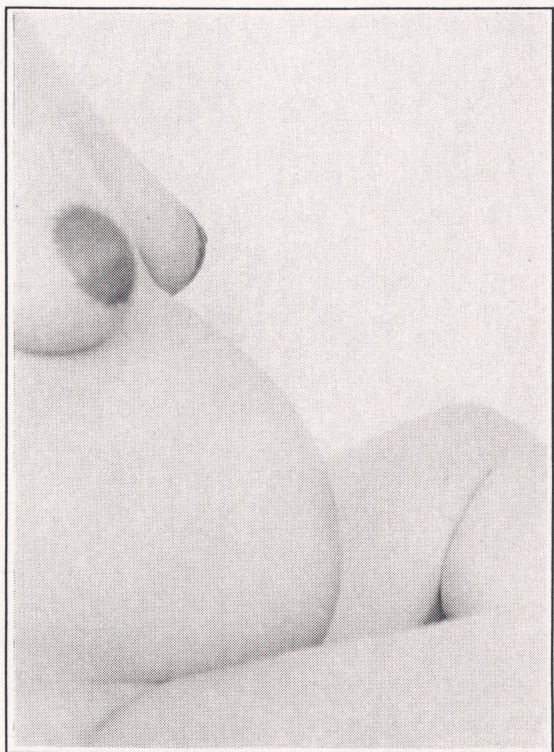
The Cashier at 7/11

by Kenneth May

I'm in her gold frames.
We nod. It's the third time
here after midnight
this week. A paper in Spanish,
grammar to guide the way,
I feel small as a third grader.

Coffee from the bottom pot
sealed in a foam cup,
Bic Lighters & lottery tickets
remind me of good luck
stuck on a long voyage
when I just want to get going.

I stand behind a trucker
chewing Skoal. Her smile
of false teeth: my grandmother
kept hers in a dish near the bathtub.
Orange & green shirt
ironed for wrinkles, she asks
if I want anything else,
I shake my head & she works
the register as I search pockets
for 68 cents & something to say.



shocking pink

When My Granddaughter Sleeps Over

by Angie Macri

When my granddaughter sleeps over,
She likes looking at my costume jewelry
And my necklace with the crystal ball.
She also likes watching me play Solitaire
And putting my aces above the seven piles
With a soft slapping sound.

This afternoon I get up at two
And feed her hotdogs and chicken noodle soup.
I eat Saltines from the wax paper package,
Pour two glasses of orange juice,
And add vodka to mine.
The soup reflects yellow on her face
As she watches.
I go to the bathroom,
Brush my teeth twice, and wet
My neck and wrists with Emeraude.

She sits by me at the kitchen table
Twirling the crystal ball necklace
As I play Solitaire and listen
To the local hospital report.
Her lips form an "O"
As she inhales my cigarette smoke
And asks if I ever win.

Kissing in Eighth Grade

by Susan E. Thomas

I've stopped looking like those moments.

I hear that you're married.

Remember that we clamored

over the bridge,

stammered up

in our bodies—it was how

we started.

(We'd said, "It's just practice

until the boys.")

Lara, we knew how to do it.

Fuse Box

by S. Ranson

When I saw you last night

I wasn't sure

at first

If it was you

Your peacock, poker straight hair hung like rods about your ears,

like fibre optic phone wire

Or thin fibre filament of a 70's glow lamp

Your face had changed

Somehow sterner — more serious

But when you reclined back into your seat

Your hips thrust forward with the easy slippage of a rockstar

On the train that afternoon

I fantasized about you

That I pinned you up

Against the wall

and fell into you

Like a ghost

The particles of me

Mingling with the spit

In your mouth

Nice

by Lyn Lifshin

floating thru chairs
then opening
your hand
snakes in thru corduroy
my slip rides up the sun
makes the rug into a wool beach
sand ass apples a wave of
thighs opening
and mouths suddenly too a
crack touch the pink smell
the sleek breathing flesh moans
a taste is nipples
bumping and your sail of blood
shove of bone tongue
traveling into this moist
lips opening the first bang of
hair and clothes rise from bodies
tremble the warm buttons rubbing
scratch of your mouth there
the damp nylon crotch
petals dissolving in a water my silk
hips you open and your fingers
under plunge so are pressing lips there
and your flesh
root shining
rocks your heat to my belly and my
legs spread so wide
greedy for the whole boat of you
in me you lovejuice dipping these
sloppy hills of cunt and you
put your good
hardness up me opening
skin rooms pounding
and circles slide your raw stem
my nails pull you
tighter
in and the slap of licked flesh oil

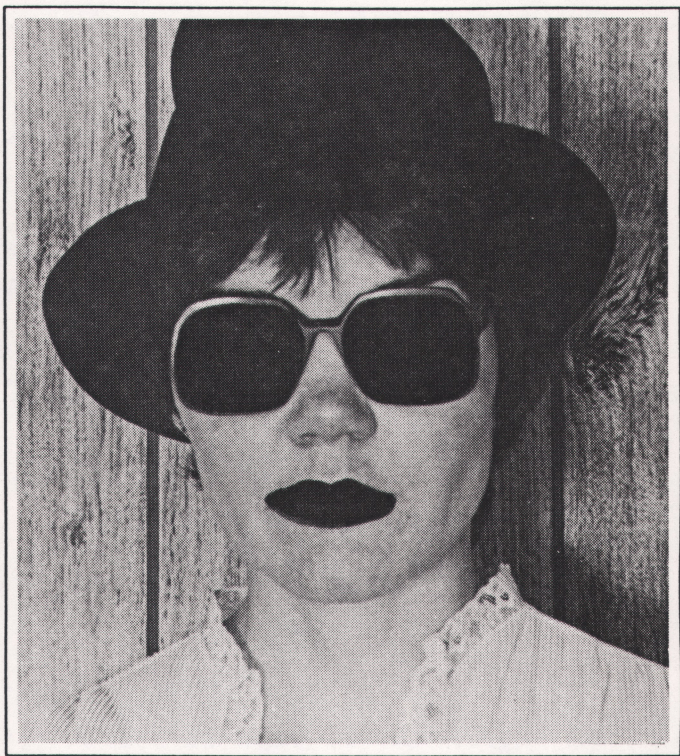
waves lunging and teeth
that eat everywhere ramming
the slit wet
opening and spread so
wide and splitting bite the sweet hot ache swell
your bomb breaking
too sucks the whole room up
fur zippersbeercans
and the seat hair of groaning and sperm
till your cock bud throbs more
to ball me over and
again better than summer
deep and nice
bringing everything
home

The Poet's Wife

by Michael Ranney

The poet favors shabby clothes,
a vest strained with wrinkles,
corduroy pants and
long-sleeved checkered shirt
to complement his ragged graying beard.
Beside him she knows she looks elegant,
velvetly styled,
never wondering what image they make
sheltered beside each other.
When he reads she watches
from the second row,
seated sideways to scan his audience,
to assist their responses,
the snickers, groans and sighs,
knowing the lines that cause the sounds
she's heard them so often before.
He's writing all the time,
even during their nights in bed,
eyes spinning behind closed lids,
poems gathering like holiday families
inside his still silent head.
She loves him for his words,
for all the songs he sings,
for the way his lines wrap her around
like the arms and legs of making love,
for the way he touches her
his fingers never leaving the page.
Later wall leaning she watches him
work the celebratory crowd,
index finger extended
from wine cupping right hand,
holding forth on meter and tropes
for the knot of women who listen.
Finally tired she nods once
and his observing eyes
rise against his brows.
Outside the ivied college building

she soundlessly finds his hand
to feel the man again
behind the clothes,
beneath the words.
Hands entwined and legs in rhythm
they drift away laughing together
into the well known texture of their life.



wicked, wicked ways

To Be Hollow

by Mary Winters

Store window mannequins —
they have been made to
overcome our limitations:
our bent for blemishes,
our lack of proportion,
symmetry; our frailty in
bruising, aging; our wont to
snarl, to bawl; our
restlessness and smells.

But they are punished for it:
stripped naked in public,
we see what they lack —
no body hair but woven mats
for eyelashes; no nipples;
undetailed mounds where
sex should be; swivels for a
joint; toes that will not part.

Their bouts of unblinking
loveliness between the torment:
wigs snatched away and
heads removed, stacked in a
corner; limbs twisted off or
bent to breaking angles.

They are sleepless, unable to
die — only to be superseded for
fashion's sake. Where do the
old mannequins go? In what
room are they pressed together
eye to eye and left —

Chicken

by Dan Maneikis

with the courage
of two six-packs
he balanced on the rail
and braced himself
against the 140 tons
of steel
that soon would
take him away,
leaving many
shaking
their heads
and me on my
tenth beer

Dutch Elms

by Gary Juliano

Circling what was once our house
I'm consumed in green dashlight,
so goddamned jealous my heart's
a fist knuckling through my chest.

Streetlights bend in silent interrogation
as his silhouette crosses from the shaded
kitchen window to hall. Upstairs, my daughter's
bedroom's lit. My son's is not.

Next door the neighbor's had an elm
removed, the trunk cut low to the ground.
Diseased, I guess, as were the rest
on this block; an unstoppable blight

which worked its way down
until the leaves were strangled,
and branches fell away, and what was left
standing was just standing in the way.

Wet Nightmare

by Hitch Nelson

The room was empty. How can so much dust collect in one corner, Vic thought. Vic stumbled and fell to the center of the room where there wasn't so much dirt. There he sat lotus-style and closed his eyes.

He imagined he was swimming in Amaretto. It was sweet and sticky, and he was able to keep his head above the surface by treading. Even though he wasn't swallowing much, Vic began to feel drunk. Alcohol was being absorbed through his skin. Vic tired and began to struggle. He gulped the Amaretto. The sweet, powerful aroma saturated his senses. Vic was laughing and panicky. Then his drunk, tired body sank below the sticky surface.

* * *

In a spooky occurrence across the city, a young Swedish girl was dreaming the same exact thoughts as were being experienced by Vic. Or was Vic experiencing the thoughts of her dream? Or both? At once.

Hadley awoke and laughed at her silly dream of poor Vic. She was still laughing when she reached for her toothbrush, but as she squeezed the paste onto the bristles, she couldn't remember what it was that had made her laugh. Anyway, she was late — to work. She had to make breakfast for Mr. Larssen — her sixty-eight year old employer.

Hadley had come to America through the "Swedish pipeline" — a flux of Swedish girls flown into the country to work as live-in house maids. She received a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week and got meals and room and use of a car.

This morning, she would serve breakfast and put lunch in the refrigerator so that, after straightening up the house, she could call on a friend or go shopping or to the beach until evening.

* * *

Half a world away (or half an hour, depending on traffic), Mrs. Patty Penntree sat in her Glendale living room signing a twenty-dollar check for the "Anonymous Witness Hotline's" fund-raiser. She noticed the pen in her hand. It was a gift from her husband for their tenth wedding anniversary, along with a complete assortment of pens and pencils; each inscribed with "God Loves You and So Do I".

Patty thought of Peter, her husband, and recalled how, as a young lady, she had been infatuated with Bobby Sherman. She wondered now if she had ever stopped being in love with him. Patty used to lay on her bed and listen to his albums, staring at his face on the cover.

How cute she had thought Bobby Sherman was, and how cute all the boys at B. I. O. L. A. thought she was. One of them even married her; the Reverend Peter S. Penntree.

While courting, he called on her three nights a week between six and eight p.m. with flowers and occasionally a book for them to read together.

"We must be strong my loved one," Peter had said, "for we cannot trust ourselves to be together — especially on weekends. God is testing us."

Patty smiled and agreed in reply, but inside she was frustrated and felt stifled. She didn't want to marry a minister, but her parents had sent her to B. I. O. L. A. and they wouldn't allow her to go anywhere else. She felt like a prisoner. She never met any other boys and the school rules were very strict. But at night, when all the lights were out and her roommates asleep, Patty fantasized about running away with Bobby Sherman. She fantasized until she was too tired for specific thoughts and just felt happy all over.

* * *

Vic was walking down the spacious sidewalk of nowhere. That is, Hadley was dreaming again. Or both, really. Vic met a man who didn't like cowboys.

"I don't like cowboys," the man said.

"Oh?" replied Vic.

"I don't like cowboy songs; I don't like cowboy stories; I don't like cowboy hats; I don't like cowboy bars; I don't like cowboy jokes; and I DON'T LIKE COWBOYS!!"

It appeared that the man might become violent, so Vic ran away to visit his girlfriend, Susan.

They performed the usual foreplay, then for variety reveled in the lustful pleasures of a Mexican Moon-job and the always satisfying Croatian Lobster. Before the blood had even returned to its normal circulation, Vic took a five-dollar bill from his shoe and handed it to Susan saying, "Thanks, you're worth it."

Vic and Susan had a tragic break-up. Their last conversation went like this:

Vic: "I don't want children — I want you."

Susan: "But I want children."

"And what if we don't like them? We can hardly send them back."

"But they'll be *ours*. You're not willing to compromise."

"Sure I am. Let's start out with a goldfish and work our way up."

"I love you Vic."

"So do I. I love you, too. Why are you so Adam Ant?"

"Adam Ant?"

"Adamant!"

* * *

A murmur of voices and the crashing surf awoke Hadley from her sleep. She scanned the Malibu beach crowd and recalled her dream.

"You're getting pretty brown," Eva said. "Are you still sleepy?"

"Oh, just a dream," Hadley said.

"Did I tell you I wrote back to Ulf?" Eva asked.

"Oh good. Just send it. I don't care what it says."

"I said, or should I say, you said, 'I really miss you and can't wait to see you when I return, love, Hadley.'"

Hadley was blank. She never loved Ulf in Sweden. Now that she was away, she couldn't bear his loved-soaked letters. But it was easier to let everyone believe what they wanted to. Besides, if she ever did start to love him, all the ground work would have already been done.

"Thanks for writing for me, Eva," she said.

"Hey, I was just thinking," Eva said. Hadley looked at her. "What if Ulf really doesn't love you either and has someone else writing his letters, too." The girls laughed, amused that their deviousness might be shared.

* * *

"How did you vote in the last election?" one man said to another.

"I voted against fixing the roads, but for the lottery and releasing Jesus," the other man replied.

"But your neighbors voted to crucify him."

"Yes, but it was the tenth proposition. They probably didn't even read it. Most people just vote 'no' automatically."

"So Jesus was crucified?"

"Yes."

Vic and Susan passed the two men and continued down the sidewalk. Hadley's dream-thoughts were present too, but no one paid them any attention.

"I was in love with a collie once," Vic said.

"Stop it," Susan said.

"No, seriously. She was a beautiful lassie with a snow white and golden-brown coat. We had something special. It's ironic too, but she didn't like to do it doggie-style."

"Vic, I can't take this. I really need some time away from you," Susan said.

"That's OK, you spend too much money on drugs anyway."

"You don't even care." Susan was about to cry.

"Look, if you were fourteen," Vic said, "I'd ask you to run away from home and live in the trunk of my car. But since you're over twenty-one, there's really nothing left for us to do together. I mean, you could marry me, but I'd rather marry a fat, ugly girl and have an affair with you. That would keep our sex life exciting."

"I don't know what I want anymore," Susan said meekly. "I just need some time alone, to get away."

"I can give you a ride to the bus station then," Vic offered. "Or wait! We can fill the kiddie pool with whipped cream, tie each other up, and invite friends over and make a movie."

"I need to sort myself out," Susan said.

"Are you an aquarius?" asked Vic.

"You know I am, why?"

* * *

"Miss Hiedlberg, wake-up please." Two professional-looking men in dark blue suits were standing over Hadley's bed."

"What's going on?" she asked. They flashed badges.

The taller of the two said, "We're federal officers, ma'am. Sorry to disturb you, but you'll have to come with us."

Oh my God, thought Hadley. She was going to be deported for working without a visa.

"I'm agent Dobbs from APTS — the Anti Psychic-Terrorist Squad. You are involved in a psychic-terrorist plot."

Almost simultaneously, a similar scene was taking place across town, as Vic was brought to the APTS building (which was disguised as an out-of-business Chevron station).

Hadley was also taken to APTS headquarters.

"Are we out of gas?" she asked. There, Chief Margarita explained to her:

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Hiedlberg, but you're being used by a psychic-terrorist in a plot that threatens the entire world."

Hadley's heart beat fast and weak. She was afraid she would be deported to Sweden and have to face Ulf, so she eagerly agreed to help.

The chief introduced Hadley and Vic.

"My God, I dream about you all the time!" she exclaimed.

"I've heard that before; I even use it myself," Vic said.

Hadley's eyes were fixed on Vic. The chief continued.

"We're up against Bobby Sherman — a powerful force which can destroy all of us — even the world — if we don't stop it."

"Bobby Sherman, the singer?" asked Vic.

"That was many years ago," said Chief Margarita. "He has evolved into something BIG! No more washed-up or has-been. He's transcended cult status to become a psychic entity whose power is as great as his appeal is narrow."

All this talk and excitement of the day and meeting a handsome man who lived in her head was getting Hadley hot. She wanted Vic.

"In fact," said the chief, "we're quite certain that Bobby Sherman has only one fan in the world. This is causing an incredible back-up of psychic energy—just like a big shit caught in a tiny toilet. If we don't stop him now, he could...he could become a God."

Hadley was frightened. She moved closer to Vic. The chief wasn't through.

"Using specially trained psychic German shepherds, we located the two of you. You are the first step towards a world controlled by Bobby Sherman. But we're lucky. You see, Bobby Sherman, as a singer, didn't know an octave from his asshole. Likewise, he is crudely groping with his new power and, by a psychic coincidence involving the death of Conway Twitty and the advent of premenstrual syndrome as a topic for social discussion, the two of you have come under his influence."

"What's that mean?" Vic asked.

"It means we have to find the lone Bobby Sherman fan and destroy his only link to our world."

Then the chief took Hadley aside and explained that Vic was a living manifestation of her dreaming mind. He was given life only through Bobby Sherman's influence.

"We tried to tell him earlier," the chief said, "but he just laughed and said no wonder he's never been to a Dodger's game."

"Does that mean I shouldn't get his phone number?" Hadley asked.

"Just come over here and get some sleep."

Hadley read transcripts of Neville Chamberlain's speeches to parliament until she was drowsy and fell asleep. Her dream-thoughts and Vic went out in search of the last Bobby Sherman fan. With the help of one of Chief Margarita's psychic German shepherds, Vic headed for Glendale.

* * *

Meanwhile, Patty Penntree sat in her Glendale living room. She was writing a letter to her mother and watching *Phil Donahue*. Her anniversary pen fell from her hand. Patty thought of her husband, then of Bobby Sherman. The phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Mrs. Penntree?"

"Yes."

"I'm a representative of 'The Bobby Sherman Fan Club' and I was wondering if I could stop by today and tell you about our group insurance plan."

Patty was in near shock. "'The Bobby Sherman Fan Club'?! Yes, please do." Her breathing became uncomfortable and her face flushed.

Two minutes later, Vic rang the bell at the Penntree residence. Chief Margarita nervously paced at the ex-Chevron station. It was time for him to snap at a subordinate. "Damm it! What's going on out there?"

"Shh Chief, you'll wake Miss Hiedlberg and then Vic will be on his own."

Mrs. Penntree answered her door. Hadley began to stir.

"Hi, I'm Vic," Vic reached into his coat, "from 'The Bobby Sherman Fan Club.'" He grabbed the hand grip on his cocked .45. With the flick of his thumb, he unlocked it.

"Please, come in Vic."

Vic drew the gun and leveled it at Patty. At that instant, the essence of Bobby Sherman felt the grave peril it was in at the threatened loss of its only fan. Bobby Sherman materialized in front of Patty as Vic fired a shot. Bobby Sherman was unphased and came towards Vic. Patty fell in fright and watched the scene from the floor.

Vic and Bobby Sherman were locked in a tangled embrace. Patty noticed how different Bobby Sherman looked in person. He was a lot shorter than in pictures or on television, and without all that make-up on, he wasn't even that cute. "He doesn't even have a cute ass," she thought. "I was in love with *this*?"

Patty's faith in Bobby Sherman wavered and so did his power. Vic freed his arm and shot Bobby Sherman in the stomach, twice. This time the rounds weakened him — Bobby Sherman was becoming mortal. His face twisted and a moan leaked out. But Vic was weakening also, since his independent existence came from Bobby Sherman's power.

They fell writhing to the floor in a grappling match. They began to take on grotesque shapes, making Patty sick. Her love for Bobby Sherman died and like a puke stain on a carpet, the two struggling forms dried-up and faded away except for a slight odor.

* * *

Hadley was breathing hard and sweating as she awoke. "It's over," she said. A cheer went up around the ex-Chevron station.

"Bobby Sherman is once again a harmless nobody," declared Chief Margarita. "My girl, you've just saved the world from a terrible fate."

"Don't forget Vic," Hadley said. "He was great."

* * *

On the way home, Hadley had the men in the dark blue suits stop at a drug store. She bought a large bottle of sleeping pills. Hadley took three and slipped into unconsciousness in search of the man of her dreams.

The Foreskin of Jesus

by Harry Newman

Did an enterprising rabbi
slip It up his sleeve
during the Circumcision
thinking this is a kid
who's going places as
he surveyed the manager

was It kept in a shrine
Its own tiny sepulcher
peeked at with reverence
worshipped prayed to
as It gained in value
did It glow in the dark

was It simply discarded
tossed away unrecognized
lost to the refuse divine
fold holiest of relics
is It sought to this day
by the most sacred orders

or did It rise as well
on the day when He rose
rocketing toward Heaven
from wherever It lay
to be reunited at last
by the right hand of God?

Claire and Lina

by Tom Baer

Walled, terraced, an immense French provincial house in CLEARWATER, FLORIDA; as elaborate within as without, all is perhaps the least untended; both in their late 40's, old friends CLAIRE BURT (with CLEARWATER FEDERAL Proprietress of it all) and LINA SARANTOS live there.

Scene 1

CLAIRE BURT

calling down the length of the house

Lina?

there is no response, thus again:

Lina...

LINA SARANTOS

barely heard

Wha...

CLAIRE BURT

steps towards LINA from the house-centered kitchen

Did you get any...

enter LINA

LINA SARANTOS

How in hell did you and Walter... This damned house... It's no wonder... Coffee?

to the refrigerator and up with coffee

How come y'never put in an intercom... Something... Have like...

CLAIRE gestures to intercom

Megaphones f'r everybody...

LINA picks up on the intercom, knows of its unattended, failed state; the two friends have had this conversation

The damned thing's broken... I remember...

glares at no particular object, hands CLAIRE the coffee can

It's goddamned irritating... Y'can't hear anybody, y'know?

to sink to wash cups, saucers; over-her-shoulders of the coffee

to CLAIRE at coffeemaker

Got it last night...
seats herself at the kitchen table
How'd it go?

CLAIRE BURT
The bank wants the damned place.

LINA SARANTOS
picking up her tabled packets of "SWEET 'N Low," she flags a packet
How many of these?

CLAIRE BURT
her attention gained
One.

LINA SARANTOS
does a "SWEET 'N Low" for CLAIRE and three for herself
Wha' did Judson say?

CLAIRE BURT
He thinks he can hold them off... Something in the law about
"if in residence"... Apparently they can't *or can* kick me out.

LINA SARANTHOS
That son of a bitch...

CLAIRE BURT
Judson? No.

LINA SARANTHOS
That Walter son of a bitch signing y'r house away... 'N I could
make a good case out for Judson... Have you asked him,
spoken yet about his end if and when... Y' just may wind up
with two suitors... Clearwater Fed and Judson.

CLAIRE BURT
pours coffee for two
I just don't give a damn anymore, I haven't the strength... All
I want to do is just get through this winter.

LINA SARANTHOS

not concerned

Then?

CLAIRE BURT

I'll have t'do something, figure something, just get the hell
out of Florida, go up t'my brothers, go to work, something.

sips coffee

You?

LINA SARANTHOS

It's your place, Claire...

CLAIRE BURT

Oh?

both women laugh

LINA SARANTHOS

Well my ex-son of a bitch is as fucked up as yours... No, fucked
over, he says.

CLAIRE BURT

Lovely.

LINA SARANTHOS

Hey, y'invest, y'invest; except those two stupid bastards... What
c'n I tell ya... I may get something with the diocese... Patronikos
thinks maybe they'll have something.

CLAIRE BURT

You'll be okay.

LINA SARANTHOS

bitter laughter

Sure, the world is waiting for the sunrise...

touches her breast

Me... It can hardly wait...

taps her breast

Y've already got the evidence...

drinks up, rises from table

Oh, what the hell... Another day, another nickel...

studies her friend

A real live wire t'have around...

recalls

D'y'ever think of Tampa, the kids, startin' out, when we just started out?

CLAIRE BURT

Too long ago...

rises from the table with cups and saucers; on her way to the sink

You for Spyros?

LINA SARANTOS

It brings me a half a hundred... Believe me if I didn't have even that little a week... Y'can't blame the poor asshole... I don't think we've had a customer this week. Lookers? a few; buyers? *she shakes her head, is on her way to her wing of the house*
Not one... The antique market?
offstage, unheard by Claire at washup
F'rget it.

Scene 2

The house, early evening, a fire going; a bottle of wine at her side, a glass in her hand, seated on the floor (what other than massively broadloomed) CLAIRE drinks and listens to the stereo MANTOVANI. Work day's end, enter LINA hastily.

Lina Sarantos

picking up on CLAIRE's presence

Christ, it's cold...

unwraps LINA

Florida, Florida...

CLAIRE raises the wine

Absolutely, lemme get a glass... —

is to the kitchen, and returned, leans over; CLAIRE pours a bit, the least bit, tipsily

And I see you've gotten a head start.

CLAIRE BURT

Got the job with the county.

Lina Sarantos

happily

Hey...

She kisses CLAIRE a loud one on the cheek, grabs a hunk of carpet and sits with

The school?

CLAIRE BURT

waves, fingers, an arc

Schools.

LINA SARANTOS

Y'show the kids the art...

CLAIRE BURT

Yeah....

LINA SARANTOS

Clark?

CLAIRE BURT

That's how.

LINA SARANTOS

America, America....

CLAIRE BURT

I don't like it either.

LINA SARANTOS

Listen, y'got a job, don't knock it...

teases, laughs

Maybe they'll give me one.

CLAIRE BURT

If I can, you know...

LINA SARANTOS

touches her friend's cheek

I know... So?

CLAIRE BURT

So... What so?

LINA SARANTOS

Any further good words, nifty happenings, Charlie?
waving her friend off is CLAIRE

CLAIRE BURT

That man's too much for me... I can't handle him, he can't
handle him... Where he's comin' from....

LINA SARANTOS

I can't figure him... You?

CLAIRE BURT

Lina?

LINA SARANTOS

Yeah?

CLAIRE BURT

pours another for herself, tops off LINA's glass to LINA's hand
halting limit
D'you listen to a word I say...

LINA SARANTOS

I mean all that money, why in hell the booze all the time? what
for? I don't get it. He's probably got a secret past, a deep dark
secret past.

CLAIRE BURT

My brother the same... No past... I mean the same as everybody
else's anyway... The usual lousy... They just start when they're
kids... Charlie, my brother, both of them...
laughs

And in the same damned way... The morning after... Both of
'em'd go around finishing off what was left in the glasses from
the night before... Really... C'n y'believe it? Both of 'em...

LINA SARANTOS

Hey, anymore I'll believe anything... Somebody told me twenty
years ago I'd be damned near on the street when I was 48, I'd
say they were crazy... Home, money, children, no cares, a regular
life, no problems, nothing... Only my father, my father said, we
were crossin' this abyss, *abyssos*, the Greek word, I don't

remember... but we were all on this wire, crossing, and all the time... All the time... Hey...

she drinks; CLAIRE leant back against a couch, LINA lays back, stretches out, on the carpet, holds her wineglass with care; both women listen somewhat lengthily to the music

Oh-h-h if it could only be like this...

LINA waves toward "out there"

Keep out there out there...

CLAIRE laughs softly

Y'wouldn't like it?

CLAIRE BURT

pours

Couldn't stand it...

LINA SARANTOS

Sure y'couldn't...

rises on one elbow, sips lightly, spills some on her chin, her blouse, sits up at once

Oh! Pig...

studies carpet

Did I get any on the rug...

wipes her chin

CLAIRE BURT

Don't worry about it.

phone rings

LINA SARANTOS

I...

she shakes her head

The phone...

she commences to rise

CLAIRE BURT

waving it off

Let it ring....

LINA SARANTOS

risen

I'll get it...

CLAIRE rising

CLAIRE BURT

All they want is something.

LINA SARANTOS

Tell me about it...

toward kitchen, the phone; her eyes into CLAIRE's eyes

Could be one of the kids....

CLAIRE BURT

I guess

LINA's at the phone, picks it up

LINA SARANTOS

Hello?... Yes... Wonderful... How's the baby?...

beckons CLAIRE

She's right here... Good, dolly...

hands the phone to CLAIRE, is happy for CLAIRE, herself

Peggy.

CLAIRE BURT

Peg?... Where?!... Of course, baby... I'll

half on her way is CLAIRE

Oh?

more quietly

Of course... We'll look for you... Peg?... I love you...

phone down, to LINA is CLAIRE

Walter's picking her up, the airport, she left Sam, she's leaving him, something...

each studying the other are LINA and CLAIRE

Scene 3

The house, evening; PEGGY's at the kitchen table, CLAIRE nips something from the microwave, sets it before her daughter, seats herself.

PEGGY

Y'didn't have ta, Mom.

CLAIRE BURT

I shouldn't have, I know, certainly.

Peg laughs

PEGGY

Thanks...

pokes at her plate

A helluva note; right, Mom?

CLAIRE BURT

You?

PEGGY

Yeah.

CLAIRE BURT

As Lina would say, "Hey..."

PEGGY

How's Billy?

shaken is our CLAIRE

CLAIRE BURT

I haven't been up in a month...

PEGGY

I figured if it was okay, we could go up and see'm; Dad said he'd lend us the car...It's been a year...I really want t'see'm, y'know?

CLAIRE BURT

I know.

PEGGY

I miss him...

CLAIRE nods

D'y' think he'll still recognize me?

CLAIRE BURT

Of course.

PEGGY

muses

Brother idiot Billy, Daddy idiot Walter, sisiter idiot me... It's all cute, right?

CLAIRE BURT

shrugs

As we make it, I once heard... I don't believe a word of it... It's all cute...

raises a hand

Better than... The word? the word I'm looking for...

PEGGY

The baby's beautiful, happy, she's huge, you wouldn't recognize her...

CLAIRE BURT

Pictures, pictures, I want pictures....

PEGGY

rises, is on her way to her purse, the living room

Wait until....

CLAIRE BURT

of that microwaved but a moment before

You've hardly....

PEGGY

It c'n wait, Mom, the plane, ate... Want you to... Brought them for you and Dad....

opens purse, probes it

Scene 4

Night, none is present

CLAIRE BURT

distantly offstage

'Night, dolly.

PEGGY

'Night, Mom.

CLAIRE BURT

See ya in the morning.

PEGGY

You too.

distantly offstage a door is shut, a distance to tread... CLAIRE enters the living room; distracted, distraught, it is now winebottle and glasses to kitchen; seeking, pursued, it is PEGGY's coat, gloves, scarf to closet where, upon shutting the closet door, it is CLAIRE mute, then slowly raising, stretching out her arms and crying vastly:

CLAIRE BURT

What is this monster!

LINA SARANTOS

offstage, distantly

Wha...

a distant trod, at last LINA is perceived

What?

CLAIRE shakes her head

So?

Light From This Turning

by Lyn Lifshin

I have lost touch with
distant trees,
the wind you brought
in your hair
and lilac hills.

Something different
bites into the river
and the river of lost days
floats over my tongue

Love, you are like that
distant water, pulling
and twisting,
you turn me

apart from myself
like some frightening road,
something I don't want
to know.

Still, let my
hair float slow through
this new color,
let my eyes absorb
all light

from this turning
that has brought us
here, has carried us
to where we are,
we are

Nocturne

by Mary D'Angelo

In a night so quiet
you can hear the spiders cry,
I eat the scented air:
spicy, pined, berried,
as fresh as the meat of an orange.
My dreams are moored to the mainland,
tied to a different light.
It is time to pitch my limbs
to these dark woods,
dwarfed by trees taller
than Thai sunflowers,
taller than thoughts of
returning home one more time
for one more bite of
a pink salmon sun,
drawn into a jewelled darkness
where the moon hangs like an opal
in a black tiara'd sky.

How the Heartworms Came to Petit Trou

by Kenneth Huggins

It was during the time that the Major's wife was pregnant that the heartworms came. They swept along the ocean waves just like the Caribs and the Spanish had long centuries past, and they washed across the islands of the sea. They didn't come to Petit Trou at first. At first they hit the outer islands and the cities like San Gabriel and Guadeloupe. But everyone in Petit Trou had heard stories.

First, the dogs would go. The worms would creep into their mouths or noses while they slept. They'd travel down their arteries and curl up in the chambers of the heart, and there they'd mate and make more worms that curled up white and tiny in the ventricles and auricles and eat away the vena cava. They'd slide into the lungs and fill them up like water filling up a ship. And if the carcass of a dog were opened up, the worms would spill out like a pile of tiny skeletons. Outside, the dog would wince and curl into a ball as if it wanted to surround its heart and keep the pain from coming in. The pain, however, was already in. And there was nothing anyone could do. The dog would howl and squeal. He'd shake all over with convulsions. Then he'd die.

Although the world had reached the age of science, no one understood the heartworms — why they came or why they went beyond the dogs, which they had never done before. They got into the parakeets and myna birds. They got into the cats and donkeys and the cattle and the mules. They got into the howler monkeys. Then they reached the people. And no one knew a way to stop them.

In Petit Trou, the people heard of stories from the outside world, of people dying in the streets, of children's bellies popping open from the pressure of the worms. Whole families died and rotted in their homes. So many died that people had to push them all together into giant holes. So many died that people walked around and over them as if they were a stand of trees that some big wind had flattened to the ground.

One traveler told of what he saw in Mirimire.

"All dead," he told them. "Everyone except a baby girl. I found her crying in her hammock. Right beside her, on the floor, her mother lay there dead. And then the baby shook, and then her eyes looked up, and that was all."

He bowed his head.

"We're lucky," said the man.

"Shh," a woman said.

And she was right.

At first it seemed that Petit Trou was lucky. The heartworms stayed out for a while, and people started saying that the harbor's narrow opening was good for something after all. It kept the heartworms out. But not for long. The first sign came when children found a howler monkey staggering down an alley back of town. They said he staggered like a drunk and reached out to them, like he needed friends to hold him up. His long prehensile tail dragged useless on the ground. And then he grabbed he's heart and fell face forward. Doctor Barleyman himself conducted the autopsy. But everybody knew what he would find. The worms spilled out all over.

After that the people started burning clothes and bed sheets, throwing out old food and anything that might be tainted. The doctor told them "build the bonfires up and drive the humors out." But no one knew what humors brought the worms. They didn't understand at all. And then the people started dying. Not everybody died, not every animal, but many did. And that was all it took to break the town apart. The rich had houses in the hills, right by the tennis club. The governor, the mayor, the prosecutor, and the district engineer, the Colonel, even Doctor Barleyman, the Douglasses and all the officers with gold and silver epaulettes, they moved into the hills.

Mrs. Douglas said at first she wouldn't go.

"We can't just leave them here," she said. "It isn't fair."

But then the Major touched her big round belly.

"We've got to make the baby safe," he said.

So Major Douglas and his wife and all their friends moved out of town and up into the hills where no one coughed and no one shivered. Everyone played tennis, and their clothes were smooth and white. They shuffled decks of cards and sipped cool drinks and barely heard the sounds of weeping from the town below.

Nobody knew just why the heartworms didn't find the club or any of the tennis players. Doctor Barleyman would say they'd left the darkness and the tepid humors down below. But down below the people only shrugged and shook their heads. "No heart," they said, "no heartworms." Then they buried all their dead.

The plague took one of every four in Petit Trou, a better average than in other towns. The village square became a burial ground. And underneath the ancient banyan tree of Handy Juan Garay, where lights at Festival had always hung, markers for graves went up:
Here lie the dead of Nivelles Street

Here lie the Baniwars; I alone remain

The marker all were wooden, and the words were painted on. There wasn't time for carving stones.

And then, as quickly as they'd come, the heartworms disappeared. Nobody understood. But Petit Trou came back. And all the islands of the sea came back. The earth began to turn upon its axis once again. But on one who had stayed in town forgot the tennis players who had moved into the hills and stopped their ears up when the weeping came. And no one from the tennis club moved back to town.



biographies

Tom Baer's plays appear in *Chicago Review*, *Mississippi Review*, *Sou'western*, *Ohio Journal*, and *Onionhead* and have been staged by New York's Theater-Studio, Love Productions, Purdue University Theater and Denver's Changing Scene.

We were unable to obtain biography information on **Nick Barrett**.

Fred Cardin graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1970. After withdrawing from graduate school he worked for the physics department at U.W. During this time he read the classics trying to teach himself to write fiction. After moving to California in 1975, he made his living as a city bus driver. In 1981, after returning to Wisconsin, he found an agent in New York to find a publisher for the novel he had spent the last decade writing. He has yet to find a publisher, and "When the Stillness is Quantum" is his first fiction piece to be published.

We were unable to obtain biographical information on **James Collins**.

Mary D'Angelo currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia. We were unable to obtain further biographical information.

"How the Heartworms Came to Petit Trou" is based on **Ken Huggins'** novel *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth*. He is married and has two children. He makes his living writing and editing textbooks for the insurance industry, and has lived in Decatur, Georgia for the last sixteen years. He has fiction in *Other Voices*, *The Bellingham Review*, and *Magic Realism*.

Gary Juliano currently lives in West Rutherford, Vermont. We were unable to obtain further biographical information.

Jim Leftwich currently lives in Chaneterville, Virginia with his wife and five children. His poetry has been published in *Five Finger Review*, *Sycamore*, *Clockwatch*, *Some Ear*, and *Tin Wreath*.

Lyn Lifshin has written more than eighty books and edited three anthologies of women writers. Her poems have appeared in most poetry and literary magazines in this country, and her work has been included in many major anthologies of recent writing by women. Lyn has given more than seven hundred readings across the country and has appeared at Dartmouth and Skidmore colleges, Cornell Univer-

sity, the Shakespeare Library, Whitney Museum, and Hutington Library. She has also taught poetry and prose writing for many years at universities, colleges, and high schools throughout the Northeast and has been Poet in Residence at the University of Rochester, Antioch, and Colorado Mountain College. Winner of numerous awards including the Jack Kerouac Award for her book, *Kiss the Skin Off*, Lyn is the subject of the documentary film, *Lyn Lifshin: Not Made of Glass*. A companion volume to the film: *Not Made of Glass/Lyn Lifshin Poems 1968-1989* is among Lyn's publications.

Angie Macri is currently finishing her master's degree in English at the University of Illinois, and will join the graduate creative writing program at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in January, 1994.

Hitch Nelson was born in America during the Johnson Administration. He has written other short stories and completed two novels while working professionally as a pilot and a scientist. "Wet Nightmare" marks his debut as a published author. His interests include music production and the visual arts. His future plans emphasize becoming established as a writer. He is currently spending a year overseas.

Dan Maneikis is currently hanging by a thread with a rolling rock in one hand and a camel in the other.

Kenneth May, a native of Indianapolis, currently lives in Virginia. He is the author of the chapbook, *Somewhere Down Low*.

Michael Ranney is a forty-seven year old writer and owner of an underground construction company. He received an MFA from the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1971. He has poems published in *ZYZZYVA*, *The Small Pond*, *Orphic Lute*, *Wind*, and *Amelia*.

Sadi Ranson is a Finsbury Park, London native, feeling quite at home in Boston. Her fiction has been published in *Prisim*, *intl* and *Ex Libris*. Inspiration picks up force from Thoreauvian Sauntering and, of course, the ever-present encouragement and honesty of Bat.

Doug Rennie is currently living in Portland, Oregon. We were unable to obtain further biographical information.

Susan E. Thomas was born in Warren Ohio, recieved a BA from Ohio University in 1990 and an MA from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1993.

Ruelaine Stokes is a poet, photographer, and teacher living and working in the Lansing area. She coordinates a monthly open-mic. poetry reading, as well as the annual Dead Poet Contest both held in East Lansing. Her favorite color is red, and she really likes wool socks in the winter.

V.Q. Wallick currently lives in Los Angeles, California. We were unable to obtain further biographical information.

Mary Winters' publications were law-related until 1991. Since then her poems have appeared in *Black Buzzard Review*, *Northeast Journal*, *Onionhead*, *Painted Hills Review*, *Potato Eyes*, and *Sheila-na-gig*. They are forthcoming in *College English*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Poetry East* and *The Poetry Book* (Gypsy/Vergen' Press). "Only One Promise" was recently chosen as a *Plainsongs* Award Poem. *Grace Itself Invisible* is forthcoming as the second place winner in *Pudding Magazine's* 1993 National Looking Glass Poetry Chapbook Competition. Her chapbook *Combat* was published as the January, 1993 issue of *The Golden Argosy*. She works as an attorney in a civil Legal Aid office in Newark, New Jersey. A New York City resident since 1970, she was born in Pittsburgh and grew up in Cincinnati. She is currently studying with David Lehman in a poetry master class at The New School.

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—L.K.

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