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# Manuscript

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# Contents



COVER: *"The Secret," by Bob Ford, a senior Fine Arts major who has consented to have some of his prints and drawings appear in this year's* Manuscript.

## *tabula nuda*

A
virgin
sheet of paper
lies before me —
its nakedness madly
inviting my advances —
already . . .
I
am . . .
upon
it . . .
aahh
!

*Ed Kay*

## *tabula sancta*

Ageless and ever hallowed
Stone sings of no borrowed
Sanctus, and purple piping
Did not give the angels the sinking
Poem of hushed music.

Construct, ah, build,
Wrench the very beauty
From this head! To
Paper, parchment it must go
And never ending joy be
Given at the rendering.

O let me live and never
Lose the touch of spirits
Flitting from book to candle
To head of flesh where wordless
Noise gives vent to words
Upon this page.

*Craig Young*

# *"the devil's trill"*

At exactly three-thirty the Master arrived, just as he had every Wednesday for the past two years. In a moment his booming voice reverberated down the long corridors as he beckoned his antagonistic student into the uninviting precision of the comfortless den.

"Miss Van Raleigh, it's time for our little lesson." The Master spoke.

Eight-year old Marty squirmed in the wooden straight-backed chair, pretending to listen awefully to the Master's sing-song explanation of how important it is for one to press *firmly* on the violin strings in order to ensure the production of a pure tone. She stared at the intricate rows of notes that were printed on the sheet entitled "The Devil's Trill," her mischievous eyes avoiding the smiling portrait of her mother that dominated the room.

Tap, tap, tap — she watched the Master strike the music stand with his baton, expecting her to begin. With lightning agility, she ran out of the den, scampered up the winding staircase, and sprinted down the unlit hallway, ending her journey by entering an obscure reading room in the east wing of the Georgian mansion. She pounced onto a plump overstuffed armchair and hid her face in a cushion, lest anyone should hear her delighted giggle. The very thought of how angry the Master must be sent bubbles of laughter from Marty's throat. She could just picture the old goat searching through closets with his carved walking stick or peering anxiously behind sofas and chairs in pursuit of his "little protege."

"MARTHA!" Henrietta's screeching voice assaulted the runaway musician from the floor below. "Martha! Get down here this instant! The Master is waiting."

Marty slipped her shoes off, slid noiselessly from the chair she had been curled up in, and, in the ridiculous, exaggerated manner of an amateur sleuth, tiptoed cautiously through the room and silently closed the door. Now they could be alone.

The fugitive girl sneaked past the rows of dusty books that spied on her from their lofty positions in the ceiling-high shelves. She glanced suspiciously around the room to assure herself that it was devoid of any other human, then deftly slid open the lower left drawer of the massive walnut desk that jealously guarded almost half of an entire wall. Her fingers swiftly, expertly rummaged through cluttered papers, folders, and ledgers, then clutched possessively at the rough cloth that covered her prize toy.

As she gazed intently at the form, her innocent blue eyes sparkled with a maniacal brilliance, and her rosy young face became twisted, almost sinister, from the sadistic grin that formed on her smooth lips. Marty's fingers trembled with excitement, her nostrils quivered to her uneven, heavy breathing, her entire body quaked with anticipation. She gave it a last look of fierce rancor, then, in an uncontrollable rage, began desperately tugging. When the rough cloth refused to tear, Marty gnashed at it with her teeth, but the threads would not yield. She threw the stubborn, despised creature onto the floor, then jumped wildly upon it, again and again, trying to crush it into a hideous, formless mass. She sobbed hysterically, threw the object of her passion against the wall, and crumpled onto the rug in a fit of wracking spasms.

Vaguely she heard repeated tap-tap-tapping near her right ear, then the Master's voice intoned,

"Excellent, my dear. I've never heard 'The Devil's Trill' played with more imagination and expression. Such enthusiasm! Ah, my little protege, you've got genius in your fingers. Genius!" Marty smiled back now at the portrait of her mother.

The rag doll had blonde hair too.

*Lorna Tarnoff*

# *friday evening*

I died before my father saw me.
It was a moonlit tragedy
Coming at midnight
And silently as a gibbon
  huddled on a dying horse's back
    To give him warmth
      from the grave —

And the night air whistling defiantly
To my far-off father
Brought news of my beginning
And my end
  in a single dream
    To give him warmth
      from the grave —

I died before my father saw me;
His eyes closed to my spirited life
That is his own and mine
Because —
  waiting silently now
    To give him warmth
      from the grave.

*Craig Young*

# *who rode the red scooter to banbury cross?*

A MOVING DRAMA REVEALING THE FRUSTRATIONS OF A CONTEMPORARY PLAYWRIGHT BROUGHT FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE BACKS OF HIS AUDIENCE.

Set: *Desk and swivel chair center stage. Desk covered with scattered manuscripts, typewriter, phone. Upstage a large picture window reveals a close-up, ground-floor view of a drive-in movie lot, empty. It is daylight.*

Young man: *(Sitting cross-legged, Indian fashion, on desk with phone between legs, receiver to ear.)* Shakespeare? Will Shakespeare? Well, *(totally flabbergasted)* how about that — no static even. Those guys at Bell labs get shook up over a thing and *(whistles the tune of a jet stream, simultaneously striking his landing-pad-positioned left hand with a rocket-soaring-upward right. During his delirium the receiver falls to the floor. He recovers it, shouting)* they go all the way. *(Sits in chair, swivels front, taking phone which he sets on lap)* Hey, how's Alexander taking it? *(pause)* Yea, I figured everybody'd try and get him, but not me, baby; not Q. Tipe, he's on the MOVE, all the time. The world gets a line on a box that's the greatest thing for the stage since gods — and its up to Q. Tipe to whip off a Brilliant, Cryptic, etc. (as quoted in *Time,* gentlemen) movie that'll make them — make them *(Rises, excitedly groping for right words, crosses to window upstage, looks out at drive-in scene triumphantly as phrase comes)* sit up and take notice.

*(Faces front, receiver to ear as always. A realization slowly erases the exultant smile from his face which settles to a light scowl. He stamps a foot.)* No, you *don't* know what it is. You don't know what it is to watch your very own baby hit the drive-in circuit first and play itself out up on Look-Out Point on a Tuesday night in the winter. *(Begins to pace.)* How would you know? You're still big time. They just showed your very own *Hamlet* out there *(gestures to drive-in)* on a week-end, first feature! *(Pause during which he sits in chair, swivels to face stage-left.)* 'Course, you

have to understand that here in America, what with democracy and all, the royalty bit doesn't sell, *(swivels front, gets excited)* so they made him a dope addict. Then everytime he needs a fix, he sees all these ghosts, but he can't recognize the one who is his father, and when he tells them so, they start laughing and saying he's just like his mother. She's a real doll, by the way, a knockout, just like you intended, but they moved her death up a little. In fact, the picture opens with her falling down an empty elevator shaft, but the camera zooms down after her for a close-up. Yea, she was a knockout all right — a little limp looking, but a —

Will — Will, don't get excited. Calm down, baby. Lots of people probably didn't even know they were watching *Hamlet.* His name gets changed to, uh, to Tim, or to — well, I don't remember, but it was a nice little name *(reassumes cross-legged Indian posture on chair)* — Oz, maybe.

*Beverly Hanko*

## *how like a plundered city*

How like a plundered city,
Each treasure pillaged ere the victor,
Bold and gleaming, passes on his way,
While what-e'er remains lies charred and burning,
Dying with the sun.

*Cheryl Chupak*

# *answers from before for after*

Widow: You never really loved him and how that hurt me so
To watch the pallor widen while I'd hint to you again
That before the grey — like char on sticks — had won
His bark from fire, your love must tap the slack'ning vascular flow.
But, "If only I had listened to you then,"
Means nothing now that all is said and done.

Son: When all is said and done,
What's said?
What's done?

Father: Lay down your scythe, old man,
And turn and talk to me.
Tell me of the places you have been
And whether you mow mice as well as men.

Who . . . what . . . directs your knighting steel bestow
Cruel accolades with justice's unstalking hand?
Is wheat referred to Hell in time,
Or chaff deferred from Mill sublime?

Can't we be friends? Oh, must you go?
You have not stirred nor answered me.
I know your name, but did not see your face.
Perhaps you'll speak some other time, some other place.

Son: I never really knew him nor let my love show well;
And so I lost the moment, though I don't know where or when,
To say the word or give the smile before he wandered on
To live in many mansions (if it were not so, He'd tell).
But now to say, "If only I'd known then,"
Means nothing since he's dead and gone.

If he's dead and gone,
When dead?
Where gone?
Said he: Never, and into light.

Father: Upon completion of my task,
I ask
Of you, black stallion of the night:
Break free!
Take me
Out and up and on
And on,
Swiftly till we reach the dawn.

*David Stout*

## *a second supper*

A room in the inn
And candlelit came bread and wine for two
Souls, each the other naked and await;
"But think of Him," one cautioned
And thus set and begun
There came that night a Third
In a most maculate conception . . .
How full and rich the host
And sweet the hostess!

*J. Hardie*

# *charybdis and the school board*

*"Ainsi le monde est un systeme de hieroglyphes*
*que la fonction du poete est de dechiffrer."*

I

In spring, Heaven sends its waters
to bathe budless fields.

In town, the Temple of Gold stands unlocked,
Offering its anonymous, red-yellow sanctuary
To faithful parishioners.
The weary zealot drops his pennies in the pan,
Paying for his metamorphosing absolution.
He joins his raised hands
Around a sticky glass
And tilts his blasphemous libation
In a crowded, congregation communion.
A slurred litany of laughs.
He lowers his head, thanksgiving.
A dull-red clock rings two.
The stumbling follower,
Swollen with the warmth and glow of stale gold,
Waits for the last drops of the soothing fluid
To slither down his throat, through his breast,
Then quits the low-hanging yellow clouds of smoke
And begins his familiar crawl home —
    home to sleep thickly and to wake
    to a morning full of sins —
Through flooded gutters,
Keeping his ragged claws closed
For fear of grabbing
A dead fish.

That weather-cock is broken,
its point looks down.

A soggy scarecrow stares
At wingless birds

Suspended in a rain-etched sky.
A dark, spotted house, brown shingled,
an anguished, pustule-dappled face, eyes closed,
Rests still on wet shoulders.
Inside, in surfeited darkness,
Thick blankets snare
Broken bedmates
Tossing through a bitter night,
Filled with too much sleep.

II

Where is that fish,
that purple, rotted frame?
A tarnished yellow sun,
a faded piece of paper
lined with rain,
Hanging heavily above
The small boy's homemade ship
Reeling, broken-masted, through the sidestreet puddles,
Crashing helplessly against the sidewalk reefs.

"Should the Mariner have shot that albatross?
It was a sin and it bore a fatal curse."

Any day you can see them
Through the haze of sterile dust.
Flaccid men, early gray,
Sipping weak tea,
Drawing desperately at empty pipes,
Shivering at the screech of chalk
As they scratch crooked, impotent arrows
And unround circles:
Insignificant marks of white
On the flat black slate.
They remember sleepless nights
When fields were full
And wet lips bathed their bare breasts.
Memory,
a millstone,

Tied round their necks
As they sway blindly
Through gray days
Dully brightened
Only by the shrill alarm
That sends them dutifully home —
    home through rain-scribbled blackboard streets;
    home to worn slippers
    and stark white sheets.
"Dear."
Brush her bloodless cheek with dry lips
And listen.
"I've discovered that it really takes two tea bags
to make a really good cup of tea."

I would throw you a fish
but it's dead; it's purple and decayed.

III

Who would embrace a dead fish
or mend a mast?
None here.
The scribbling on the board, they say, is indecipherable.
The same, dull drummer leads
The stumbling march of staggered columns
Over the parade route
Marked with painted, cardboard arrows,
Bent away from the sky,
Looking down.

Wet rains inscribe dumb fields;
Heaven spends its messages.
Mea culpa, mea culpa.

*Patric McGarty*

# one more place

There was a slivered moon in the sky as Tonio drew the first wagon of the caravan to a slow halt. He sat in the silence which surrounded him, the tip of his cigarette tracing a second orange arc as he brought it to his lips. Within the wagon, Galena stirred slightly in her sleep, disturbed by the sudden quiet. She had grown used to the gentle shift and sway of the wagon as it moved along the little-used paths, to the deep ruts and tangled brush which occasionally rocked the wagon to precipitous angles. The quiet was entrancing and compulsive; its call was unmistakable. She awoke and went to join her husband.

The night was warm and clear, a welcomed respite from the blazing sun which had followed them for the past six days, ever since they had left Hampden. Tonio motioned to her, and they sat together, neither breaking the spell of the quiet. Behind them the other wagons had drawn into a small, imperfect circle, and the drivers made fast their teams without the confusion and prodding which usually accompany men's efforts with animals. The gypsies had often prided themselves upon this rapport and intuitive understanding which they shared with their teams, the feeling which enabled them to move and to work in perfect concord. They knew, as other men did not, that they had been born to work together, each relying upon the help which the other provided.

The men spoke little among themselves and made camp quickly. The sun would rise soon, and the night's rest was short.

As daylight brought life once again to the camp, the women rose and went to the spring which trickled on its twisted course near the path. It was a small spring, forced to battle the drying sun for its meager flow, but it was ample supply for the small band which had settled the night before.

Galena slipped easily from Tonio's arms and went to stand at the small opening which led to the driver's platform. It would be another day of merciless heat, she thought, noticing the grass and leaves already dried of their early-morning moisture. She glanced

back at Tonio and smiled. He slept like a child, she thought, arm crooked beneath his head for a pillow and knees drawn half-way to his chest. His hair fell over his forehead, covering it with silken, jet-black twists, and his breath came even and soft through a mouth slightly lifted in a smile. Slowly she dressed and went to join the others at the stream.

As they drew the water in small, worn wooden buckets they spoke of their new destination. They had been forced to leave Hampden as gypsies were eventually forced to leave every site; they lived with and from the land on which they settled, as they felt was their right, and in a world obsessed with the bonds of ownership, they had barely been able to exist. A chicken from one farmhouse, green vegetables from another, and a pig from another when possible: such was their way of life.

They had preserved as perfectly as possible the existence of their ancestors, stealing, hiding, running when necessary and never with any feeling of wrong, for they were God's children, spared from their sins by virtue of the Christ who had died for them; on this they based their justification for their life. Long ago, in Jerssalem, a band had stolen a spike, destined for one who would die upon a cross, the son of God. For this, God had spared them from the sin of their thievery forever; one spike, destined for a sacred foot, and a race of people above the laws of men was born.

Now they were headed for another distant village, as yet unvisited, where they would live as comfortably as possible until the morning saw the small caravan again wind slowly down the dusty path.

The men were awake now, and fires burned in small, smoky heaps upon the ground as the women returned. All traces of quiet enchantment had disappeared, replaced by the vital life which now inhabited the sun-washed clearing. The children ran exploring through the surrounding trees, unmindful of the warnings and threats which followed them, and the animals moved restlessly in their thicket, impatient to be moving. Soon the smell of frying eggs and sweet potatoes was added, and presently the clink of metal dishes as the women scooped out portions of scorched and steaming food. It was a substantial meal, filling and satisfying, the only one

which they would have all day. At noon they would stop to rest, but the heat would have destroyed any hope of fire. There would be a cold meal, perhaps a bit of food left from breakfast, plenty of water gathered that morning, and the starting of the journey once more, through the oppressive afternoon.

Here and there along the way they might pass a lone farm, isolated and worn. They would try their luck at begging, going to the door in couples with children in tow, and at furtive stealing inside, while parties of men outside wandered through field and barn, carrying off what they could. It was easy and, what was more, profitable; what was not given was taken, and the farmers would not miss it until the caravan was far off, out of sight.

Galena had once felt a momentary sorrow for the poor innocents who befriended them so willingly, giving what they could to feed her and her band of pretending brothers and sisters, thin and wide-eyed, but this was quickly dispelled the day Ramon was carried back to camp by the two boys with whom he had raided a nearby corn field. His small, browned body was spattered with blood, flowing from almost microscopic specks of buckshot. It had been her first experience with death, murder as it was, and it had alienated her forever from the world outside.

Theirs was a world of gypsies, an insular world of God's Chosen, assured of His grace. They were fiercely proud of their life and confident of its support. All the legends and romances which they knew the world outside attributed to them amused them, and justified their mockery of this world. Gypsy violins, blazing campfires, dark women in bright scarlet: these were but the external differences. The mystery which surrounded them was merely that of fierce kinship, and their primary obligation, that of survival.

It had been just this loyalty which had brought Galena and Tonio together three years ago, when Galena was still considered young enough to pose as one of the children while begging at a near-by farmhouse. She had tired of Valentina's chattering with the farmer's wife and had wandered outside, just in time to see a young, dark-haired boy emerge from a window and climb carefully down the branches of the great oak which stood protectively at the side of the house. He was a stranger but not one of the outsiders,

for he was dressed in the haphazard array of colors and had the browned skin and white teeth which were unmistakably gypsy.

She was about to call out when he caught sight of her and, with a quick gesture, motioned to be quiet. She joined him at the foot of the tree, and there he showed her the two rings, both delicate and banded with thin time-worn gold, and the one great silver hand-worked crucifix, suspended on a heavy linked chain. Just then Valentina had emerged from the house and had begun to gather her brood, and so they had parted.

That night, however, he had come to the camp asking for shelter, for he had left his band and sought to join another. He was welcomed, soon accepted, and four months later he and Galena were married. For a present he had given her the stolen cross with the image of Christ, legs pierced by but one spike, the cross which she now fingered as she sat next to Tonio on the platform, the team moving along the endless, grey-brown road.

The heat was broken that evening by a sudden storm which blew fiercely from the west and sent the wagons hurriedly into a circle for protection. Galena darted an anxious glance at the scene about her, now so different from the earlier calm. Deep in the forest the trees bent, flailing helpless arms, powerless against the onslaught of lightning and thunder which burned and rolled through the sky, holding the small wagons captive in their fury. Tonio smiled at the sound of the torrent of water pounding on the roof, and laughed gleefully at Galena's fear of the thunder, teasing her with each fresh roar. "Ooh, like a child!" she said fretfully, and then fell laughing into his arms.

The next morning emerged slowly from the black night, lightning by degrees until the landscape was framed in a soft grey, misted by a cover of fog which settled low over the ground. It was silent and cool, and the fog hushed each sound which disturbed the peace. The women rose and collected the pails filled with water from the night's rain, and the men woke lazily. From beneath the wagons they gathered wood for fires which smoked thickly in the heavy atmosphere. The camp seemed burdened with the weight of the morning, and there was none of the lively spirit which sunshine awakened.

They brought the teams together and moved very slowly down the path, the mud clinging to the wheels and occasionally enveloping one, leaving the wagon to balance awkwardly on three. Then the teams would be brought to pull the wagon as the men stood behind and pushed, finally loosening the wheel from its muddy grasp.

The trail was lengthy and hazardous; at noon they stopped, having traveled only two miles. The fog had disappeared, blown into fragments by the wind which now ran through the trees and against the wagons. In the distance was the faint outline of a house, perhaps, as Tonio said, a farm with chickens and crops. There had been little opportunity for begging since they had started on the journey, and the rain had prevented their searching for food in the forest. They decided to move on toward the farm and to break for rest when they reached the site.

The path leading to the house had grown thick with weeds; in spots the remains of a wagon trail could be seen, but its direction was faint. The wagons were forced to halt, and the men grouped in bands while the women carefully concealed their fine rings and jeweled necklaces, mementos of other farmhouses and other journeys.

Galena slipped the cross gently next to her breast and gathered the six children to give them final instructions: they were to present themselves as her brothers and sisters, left parentless last month by sudden influenza attacks; they had been wandering through the country since, seeking food and shelter where they could find it. "And be careful no one is watching if you take something you like!"

The men were ready to enter the fields, slipping one by one into the stalks and threading their way slowly and confidently to the yard, then to the barn. Tonio led them as Galena, a child at each of her hands and four trailing quietly behind her, made her way slowly to the porch.

A young face appeared briefly at the window, staring and then ducking out of sight. "Cry a bit, baby," whispered Galena to Mario, the child at her left, and he obediently began to whimper. "No, no, the other way you do it, as if you're hungry."

The door opened suddenly and a young woman not much older than Galena herself emerged. Behind her the same young face, plump and red-cheeked, peeped quickly around the frame and then retreated once more. The woman gazed awhile at Galena, and then smiled and turned back into the house, motioning to enter as she did so. The invitation of hospitality was unmistakable, and Galena raised her right hand over her head in a swift arc, signaling Tonio to begin his work.

As Mario began his recitation in the small, snug kitchen of the house, the fields outside came alive with men who swarmed quickly in every direction. The endless rows of corn dipped and swirled, bent first this way and then that by the swift tugs which ripped the ears from their stalks. Sure, practiced hands reached noiselessly into still-undisturbed coops, lifting eggs from warmed nests, retreating before the squawking alarm of the chickens could be raised, and advancing quickly to the pails of fresh, warm milk.

Suddenly, from the barn, a short loud clap rang out. It was followed by a succession of bursts which filled the air and mixed grotesquely with the shouts and hollers of live men soon to die. The plump face was once again at the window, but this time it retreated to its mother's skirts, its face filled with a horror it could not yet understand. "Mommy, Mommy, Daddy's making an awful racket at the barn with his gun; there's men running everywhere in the fields."

Galena rushed to the door and saw the men running through the fields, seeking cover of the greenery and the comfort of the wagons, seeking any respite, a chance to live. She watched the pattern of a dark head as it traced an erratic path among the stalks; suddenly a shot rang out, a deafening roar to her ears, louder than the rest, and the dark head fell. She moaned softly and ran to the field, yet as she reached the body, spread-legged and silent, another burst from the gun flared, and there was the sensation of impact against her breast. She fell upon the ground and reached for the still head, curls bent to angles and caked with red, dark head tired and lifeless; as she stretched her arm, the broken chain around her neck fell loose, and upon the ground there lay a Christ, His feet pierced by the explosion of a bullet.

*Anne Marie Micklo*

# *parthenopaeus laments a morn*

The sunless temple of a darkening moon
Shrieked a sorrowing vale of death and then
A quiet sickness of gossamer whiteness.
The end of morn, until
At last the scarlet concubine of feathery
Ancestry stepped from portal to altar
Where a silver asp reared shimmering eyes.

"O thou mortal of royal sting," she tells,
"Now begin the flight to close the curse and
Tell the trysting midnight cat that kindness
Has found its rest in fumes of Arabic
Emperors of Truth," and savage thrusts with
Glimmering spires of moon fornicators
Then will lie unused midst dusty coverlets.

To cry the end of choice callings, coming,
Going, swiftly chasing the concerns
Of a gracious goddess where opal arms
Beckon strange ladies to hidden mystery;
And ices that soothe the quivering lips
Her fleeing lord has darkened with slimy
Staves of dripping waxen reliquaries.

*Craig Young*

## *those that play your clowns*

I clasp my hands
to see if I'm real;
I've grown colder
since
they closed the casket . . .
is my room this dark?
I'm the showgirl in the cake
awaiting
the signal
to surprise everyone
with just what they expect . . .
death, like walking
through a door
into
the
same
room.

*Ed Kay*

## *they're flooding the valley of kings this year*

They're flooding the Valley of Kings this year.
It's about time —
blooming dunes anemone
as swirling darks entendriled pantomime
a muted sphinx, reriddling deep as old:
beneath the flotage of new skies,
the long awaited launching of galleys moored agrave,
charting bouyant constellations to an old design.

Brute armor glints at lazared battlements,
the ribs and teeth, a sunken whale;
a burping, bloated jester rails the court
in chambers done a barnacled baroque:
a revelry of fans and fiddlers,
jellied eyes and wafting ambergris,
and yester-kings of triumphant descension
gloat their sea-sung resurrection
in tomorrow-year's Atlantis.

*Jack Hardie*

# *occurrence at snake hill*

Just as Abraham Ebersol latched the gate behind him and slung his books over his shoulder, the first rays of the sun appeared over Isaac Zook's tobacco field on the opposite side of the valley. With lunch bucket in hand, he walked down the road lined with dew-covered pumpkin beds, following the groove which had been hewn in the macadam by the endless pounding of horses' hooves. Abraham was leaving for *schuul* earlier than usual today to escape further punishment from his father who had paddled him the night before and had awaked him long before daybreak to add extra chores to his morning. Abraham's father said nothing else to him; there was no need. Silent stares between them convinced Abraham that he had wronged seriously by talking to the *Englisha* the day before on the way home from *schuul* and accepting a silver, ball-point pen from them. Abraham remembered his father's frequent warnings that he would be punished if he talked to the tourists, or let them give him gifts or take his picture, for, as his father said, "They are not our people." But this explanation could not make Abraham understand why it was wrong to do these things.

The rising sun chased away the early morning chill, so Abraham pulled the hooks on his black coat out of their eyelets and opened it up. Walking head down, brooding, he looked at the thinning knees of his black pants. "I soon a new pair will need," he said to himself. He thought, too, about his father's instructions before he ran down the dirt road to the gate, that he was to come straight home from *schuul* without stopping to see Mr. Stolztfus' guinea pigs or stopping at Pequa Creek to build a dam. Abraham was angry and puzzled over being punished. "After all," he said to himself, "I only my name told the mister 'n lady, an' where at was our farm, an' how I help Pap the tobacco with my hoe weed." He remembered how they let him sit in their shiny car and let him blow the horn. "They were so wonderful nice to me, and they the shiny pen gave me with the point that went click-click out an' in. Just to make sure they were still there, he felt under his black suspender in the pocket of his blue shirt where he had placed the pieces of the pen after his father had broken them and had thrown them to the ground.

Abraham walked two miles of twisting country road to and from *schuul* every day. Until this year he had ridden the big yellow school bus with his older brother Johnathan to the East Lampeter school out on the highway, because it was the closest school to their farm. But when Johnathan finished his eighth year, Mr. Ebersol decided to take him out of the East Lampeter school and put him to work on the farm. Abraham could remember how Johnathan fussed at first when he had to leave his friends at school and go to work, but Mr. Ebersol warned him that he'd better stop fussing if he wanted his own buggy when he became eighteen, so Johnathan soon settled down. Because of the way Johnathan acted, Mr. Ebersol decided to take Abraham out of the East Lampeter school before he too would be misled and to put him in the one-room Snake Hill School. His father explained to him that he would be with his "own kind" and that he would learn all that he would need to know to make a good farmer at the Snake Hill School. Johnathan later told Abraham that the School Board said that Johnathan had to stay in school past the eighth grade, but that their father thought he'd learned enough to be a farmer and didn't want him getting soft and lazy, and get his head full of wordly ideas or be made fun of any longer by the older East Lampeter boys. But Abraham couldn't understand what a School Board was, or what "worldly ideas" were. Besides that, he too missed his old friends, the ride back and forth to *schuul* every day on the bus, and the books, the wonderful books he had with the pictures in them, in color, too. All he knew was that he had to walk two miles to *schuul* each morning, and that when he ended his eighth year there, he too would go to work in his father's fields.

When Abraham came to the bridge that crossed the Pequa Creek, he grabbed a handful of pebbles, sat on the stone wall with his feet dangling over the side, and skipped the pebbles across the swiftly flowing water. The sun's rays were glaring in his eyes, so he tilted his black, broad-brimmed hat forward on his head. From the bridge he could see Reuben Esch leaving his house for *schuul,* so he quickly picked up his books and ran to meet Reuben at his gate. Reuben was dressed the same as Abraham and carried a blue reader with a picture of a sailing ship in gold on the cover, and a lunch bucket just like Abraham's.

"Good Morning to you, Reuben," Abraham called, trying to get in step with him.

"Hi, Ab'ram! How come you're to *schuul* going so early?" Reuben asked, but Abraham did not answer him. Reuben left for *schuul* early every day, for it was his job to help the *schuulmeisterin* put the classroom in order. Because he was older and in the fifth grade, Reuben was looked up to by Abraham. Whenever they met on the way to or from *schuul,* Reuben always bragged about his big brother, Aquila, who, along with the other boys from neighboring farms, went at night to New Holland to drink beer and race his team against those of the other boys on the highway. Abraham always giggled when Reuben told him Aquila played cards for money in Beiler's tobacco shed instead of going to the Sunday evening singings. Both their eyes glowed when Reuben talked about Aquila's greatest ambition which was to own a car, a fast one, and keep it in a garage in Lancaster where he could go on Saturday nights, drive around, pick up girls, and race the other boys who had cars. "Aquila already went to the city to be went with, but the girls weren't so very for him. They laughed from his long hair, but when he has one day a car now, they'll went with him. A car is everything."

Just as they passed Solomon Burckholder's alfalfa field where the cut hay lay drying before being baled, the empty East Lampeter school bus came toward them on its way to pick up the school children. As usual, the driver recognized Abraham and beeped the horn at him, but Abraham answered merely with a half-hearted nod. Reuben in noticing his friend's disinterested, sullen attitude, asked, "Wat's the matter on you, Abram?" but Abraham only kicked angrily at a stone on the side of the road. The older boy sensed that something had happened to Abraham and without too much trouble pried the story from him. After Abraham finished telling him, Reuben said, "I'd be very angry to my father, too, if like that he hit me and broke my pen, but my *Pap* is not so very strict at me," but then everyone, including Abraham, knew that Mahlon Esch did not follow most of the customs of the Old Order. Abraham always remembered the day his father ran into the house astounded because Mahlon had "brought the electric into his house." It was no secret either that Mahlon had kept a telephone in his

barn for years. He also recalled the hot night of last summer when he couldn't sleep and had overheard his father and mother talking about Mr. Esch. His father had said that Mahlon criticized many of the ways of the Old Order because he was trying to cover up for his own laxity. His father had angrily told his mother, "He even the *Ordnung* violates with having the pictures of his family in his house."

The next day, Abraham's father warned him again not to let anyone ever take his picture, for a picture could become a thing of worship, just like an idol, but Abraham didn't know what an "idol" was, and he couldn't see how a camera could harm him. Besides, it might be fun to have a picture taken. After all, Reuben never seemed to be harmed because he had had his picture taken. He even posed for the *Englisha* who drove by in cars or busses, because sometimes they gave him pennies.

"You should not about such things worry so much. Nothing with you can happen if you talk with *Englisha* or let them your picture take. You don't have to tell all you do for your father. What he doesn't know can't hurt you."

When the two boys reached the top of the hill by Elam Smucker's cow pasture, they could look down on the *schuulhaus.* "Come," said Reuben, "let's take down the easy way," and Abraham followed him down the steep embankment instead of walking the road.

Four paint-peeled walls enclosed the Snake Hill School. The wooden structure squatted in the corner of a patch of land which had been donated a century before by the Lapp family. In the front, above the pillared porch on the roof, was a small bell tower from where the start of each *schuul* day was proclaimed by the rusty bell. Flourescent lights which had been installed against angry protests of the more conservative parents shined through the paper pumpkin faces pasted on the three narrow windows on each side of the *schuul.* Three sides of the *schuul*yard were lined with cornstalks, and several large oak trees spread their limbs halfway across the yard. There were a water pump and two outhouses behind the *schuul.* The *schuulmeisterin's* green 1957 Chevrolet was parked alongside the school in the driveway which branched from the

newly paved, winding asphalt road. A printed cardboard sign on the front porch shouted in red letters:

NO VISITORS ALLOWED
in the school or on school grounds!
Picture-Taking Prohibited!
by order of the
Lancaster County School Board

Defiant, inconsistent, alone and apart it stood, caught between two worlds, like the children who filled it.

Abraham and Reuben stepped onto the creaking wooden porch and went through the front door. Miss Peachey, the *Schuulmeisterin,* sat behind her desk correcting papers. She was not surprised to see Abraham, for children often came early after completing their chores in order to do homework. After they put their coats on pegs in the back of the room, they greeted her, and she smiled back a "Good Morning." Reuben began his daily task of washing the boards and clapping the erasers. Abraham sat at his small, wooden desk with the fancy wrought iron legs and started to write his sums. Before long, tired, confused Abraham put his head down on the initial-carved desk top and closed his eyes. Miss Peachey, peering at him over the top of her frameless spectacles, looked concerned and asked, "What's the matter, Ab'ram? *Feelscht net gute Heit?"* but he did not even hear her.

"You've got to realize, Ab'ram, that your way of life is different from everyone else's," Miss Peachey said to Abraham after he told her why he was angry with his father. Together they were toasting their sandwiches over the potbelly stove during lunch while the other *schuulkinder* were outside playing. "I know it's hard for you to understand why you can't do or have many of the things the East Lampeter children can, but your father, as did his father before him, believes that the Bible says that your people should discipline themselves in order to be better people . . . and to serve God better. When you grow up you'll understand. Your father took you out of the East Lampeter school because he was afraid that you would get to be just like the children out there, and that would make you very unhappy. Your father knows what is best for you. He wants you to be an individual, you know, a

person who doesn't follow everyone else, who isn't afraid to be different. Listen to him, and in the end you'll see that what he has taught you is right. Can you understand that? Can you see . . ."

As Miss Peachey talked on, Abraham spread *appel butter* on a thick slice of dark, brown bread. He tried to shut out what she was saying, "She sounds just as *Pap,*" he thought, which caused anger to well in him.

"When you go home today, you'll see that your father won't be mad at you anymore. And you won't be angry with him either," she said, pushing a loose strand of grey hair back from her full round face. She arranged her hair with a part in the middle and pulled it back into a bun and wore no make-up or adornments on her simple dress. "And you'll get over missing your East Lampeter friends. The *maydels* and *buwe* are very nice here, too."

*"Uf cors,"* thought Abraham to himself, "but what about the books there we had with the pictures in color? We ain't got them here."

"And you'll get over the pen, too, Ab'ram. Your father broke it because you didn't earn it. And besides, you have no use for it anyway. When you grow up you'll understand about these things."

"When you grow up!" he repeated to himself. "You'll understand. Your father knows what's best for you." Her words kept running through his mind," He wants you to be an individual . . . what he has taught you is right." The books! The pictures! Pictures in color! Of Airplanes, and boats and tall buildings. The girl by the rocks on the sea shore. "You'll understand, you'll understand." *"Heilich dunnerwetter!"* he said aloud, "I want not to understand!" and he got up and ran through the back door to a corner of the schoolyard.

The boys had started a game of *eck balle,* and on the girls' side of the yard the *schuulmaydels* in their long skirts and aprons were playing "There Goes Topsy Through the Window." Miss Peachey came out with a folding chair and sat near a tree where some of the girls stood in a ring braiding one another's hair. Rebecca King came up to Miss Peachey and asked her to braid her hair. While Miss Peachey combed out Rebecca's ash-blonde hair

and complimented Rebecca on her new grey smock, she heard a familiar sound coming from around the bend in the road. Most of the children continued their games, but some, including Abraham, who was still brooding under his tree, looked around to face the approaching bus.

Slowly and cautiously, the bus maneuvered up the narrow road. Its aluminum sides glared from the hot sun as it pulled to a stop in front of the yard. The games stopped and all the children looked at the alien thing. Abraham could see ladies staring at him through the closed, tinted windows, ladies with big hats who pointed at them, and then smiled and waved. Abraham had seen other older busses pass the *schuul* before, but this was the first time that one had passed while they were outside. He was fascinated by it and wanted to go near it to touch it. But he stayed away. Finally, Reuben and some of the older boys moved closer and waved back to the *Englisha.* Rebecca King came over too, to show off her new smock with Katie Glick.

Suddenly a window opened and cameras jutted out. Abraham spied them and drew back instinctively. However, a mixture of laughing and shrieking was sent up by the children, "No pictures! No pictures!" but their laughter betrayed their mock seriousness. Some of the children, however, turned their backs on the others in disgust and ran away.

Soon more cameras protruded from the windows. Reuben and his friends waved their arms in pretended protest and yelled, "Go away! No pictures!" Rebecca King swished around in her new smock, smiling and inviting pictures.

"Get the girl," Abraham heard a woman call to another inside the bus.

Click-click.

Twirling, swishing, Rebecca feigned anger, "No pictures! No pictures! Please, please, no pictures!"

Yonnie Beiler and Emmanuel Lapp ran and hid their faces, screaming and shrieking, "No pictures! You tourists make us sick with your cameras! Go away!" Twirling, spinning, running, hiding, "We don't want! Go away!' But Abraham just stood there in the

midst of the jumping shadows and laughing children, frozen, unmoving, not knowing what to do.

Just then, a woman in the bus motioned for Reuben to come to her. She leaned out the window and handed him a picture. Immediately his eyes lit up in wonder and amazement. "It's me! It's me!" he cried running to the others showing them the Polaroid color picture. The *maydels* and *buwe* gathered around him and ogled in amazement at his mysterious picture. What for kind of thing is that?' Rebecca asked.

"How the die-hinker should I know!" Reuben answered. "It's me, though. Look at my green shirt . . ."

" . . . and stroobly hair," added Abraham who had just joined the group. "Let me see it, Reuben," he said grabbing it.

"Don't *knoatch* it so! It's mine! Get your own."

"I want one, too!" Rebecca shouted, and she ran over to the woman in the bus and asked her to take her picture with the strange camera. When Rebecca came back with a picture, the others ran over to the bus and asked for pictures. Only Abraham stayed behind.

"Ab'ram, you get one, too," Reuben told him.

"No, no, *Pap* would again hit me."

"You silly donkey, you don't have to your father tell."

"But wrong that would be, Reuben."

"He'll never know. Look, Ab'ram, do you want one or don't you?"

"I . . . I guess so, Reuben," Abraham said moving reluctantly toward the bus. Benjie King ran waving a picture of himself and Jacob Stoltzfus. "What would *Pap* say?" he asked himself. "What if he finds out yet?"

"Hurry, Ab'ram, hurry!" Reuben called. "The bell is soon to ring."

"But *Pap* doesn't have to find it out. I can the picture put where he'll not ever find it," he thought running up to the bus. "Me, too, please? Me. too?" he asked the woman anxiously.

"I have only one left, young man. You're just in luck," and she snapped the picture. Afterwards, Abraham danced up and down impatiently waiting to see the picture.

"Thank-you, lady, thank-you," he said as she handed it down to him. He turned around to shade it from the sun. "It's me," he said quietly, "It's me."

By now the bell had rung and the children were entering the *schuul.* Reuben called back to him, "Come on, Ab'ram! Miss Peachy will on you close the door!"

"I'm coming, Reuben," he said running toward the *schuulhaus,* tucking the picture into his pocket next to the warm broken pieces of the forbidden pen. Such a colorful picture this was of himself: so this was how the *Englisha* lady saw him. If only he could to *Pap* show it. But look what to the pen happened, throwing everywhere the pieces on the ground. No.

"I'm coming!" he yelled after Reuben. "I'm coming!"

*Jan Kubicki*

## *the new breed*

Iron pony, Dunlop shod,
Metallic heart and fiery breath,
Consumes the endless asphalt strip
And needs not pause to take a rest.

*Anthony Toluba*

## *lines in a hawaiian cemetery*

O sweet dead:
You know not the bliss of
    Your undertaking,
Nor the peace of your end.

You hear no frail mind
Flicking neurotic ashes
On close-cropped minds;
Close-cropped grass is your worry.

Your rest is infinite,
Your treasure — soft earth.
Great silence is broken
Only by barking dogs,
And they understand.

*Craig Young*

## *analogies of hopscotch*

Unknown to the innocent, each game will expire
As the chalk wears away from the effort
To hold the white lines on the black asphalt:
Each new generation, new invention,
The instinct to invent must be natural and inbred;
The trick is to hop into the allotted space,
Lest lose the chance to be "firsty."

*Margi Harris*

# snowbirds

The eight-thirty homeroom period was always dull. The staccatoed tapping of tired rain that had survived the sleep-filled, pre-dawn hours sounded to Gordon like the irregular heartbeat of a sick giant. Beneath a row of shining, flourescent tubes, hanging like malleable, elongated stars in a peeling plaster sky, Gordon sat with his head tilted, as if viewing a painted canvas from a certain angle. His head was suspended by his slim left forearm which was generously spattered with specks of gold. His elbow, perched at ninety degrees, rested precariously on the amber top of his desk, the wall of an old cave on which ancient, past schoolroom civilizations had left their records by scratching through the hard varnish. Arrows, wavy-bladed daggers, bleeding hearts, sets of initials: immortally-etched ancestral traces in a disjointed, incoherent script. In the starlight, Gordon's hair shined, sitting quietly like a freshly cut bundle of wheat on a windless day. His flabby notebook was open and he was intently doodling. On the flat, water-marked surface, abstractly arranged blue-black lines, straight lines and curling, rolling lines, intersected each other in a hundred different places. Some flowed freely to the rim of the page while others were halted abrubtly by heavier, isolated marks. These were thicker, more black and, on the pale page, looked like clumps of flak floating against a background of gray clouds. Gordon began to shade areas of the paper. The acute angle his stiff, ball-point pen made with the base of his book shifted rapidly back and forth, from left to right. He went over and over the same area, burying one coat beneath another, like a painter applying thick layers of black paint to a vital spot on his virgin canvas. The area began to take on a bright black sheen and Gordon realized he was bearing down too heavily. The friction-heated point of his pen pierced the thin skin of paper. Gordon saw a fleck of white looking through the slit in the black gloss, the first drops of blood that pop from a fresh wound. He deserted the area, moved to another and started coloring again. This time he was more gentle, being careful not to rip through the thin membrane of paper. The swish the fleshy outside edge of his hand made on the canvas was smoother and slower as he estab-

lished a floating rhythm in the steady one-two movement of his instrument.

As Gordon finished filling in the second area of his canvas, the opaque paned door at the front of the room opened quickly, backwardly fleeing the rest of the wall. A small man, turtle-beaked and wearing frosted spectacles, rushed in, trying to escape the shuffling approaching noise of herds in the hall. The noise invaded the room, pushed in by the sweeping arm of the slowly closing door which, when shut all the way, snipped the humming sound from its source. It hung for a moment, suffocating quickly from the lack of new air, then died silently, like a starved fire. The man, Mr. Rogers, first-year homeroom teacher, took his place behind the square desk at the head of the six columns of smaller desks which marked dead-end lanes leading to the wall of black-shaded, closed windows at the back of the room. He shivered, not so much from the cold outside as from the shock of encountering the crawling, surrounding heat thrown out by the five hard-working radiators that filled the room. As he stood at his post, adjusting to the atmospheric change, his ears glowing coals, accented the outline of his face like two spotlights lighting the periphery of an airstrip. He took off his glasses and wiped their glazed lenses with a wrinkled, monogrammed handkerchief. Gordon looked from his easel and saw an upper-case, red R dangling, jumping up and down in space, a letter lost, hanging hopelessly, severed from the alphabet. Gordon eyed the clock, a black-rimmed full moon in the green, solid air. Twenty minutes to nine. He looked at the sharp hands which moved, unseen, the jaws of a vice that would snap shut in that many minutes. Now open, its staring mouth blared: LATE AGAIN. Someday, thought Gordon, that thing is going to crush Mr. Rogers in its rigid jaws. He had been warned countless times by Mr. Crozier, the principal, for his tardiness but he still never arrived on time. Gordon wondered just how many more hours Mr. Rogers had left to live in his always-behind-time world where the minutes moved away from him, minutes he would never catch up with.

Mr. Rogers returned his glasses to their loft and the transparent ovals, like two separated microscope lenses removed from their cylinders, magnified yellow, crystalline dots of mucous resting

in the frozen brown grass of his eyelids. As he vigorously rubbed his shining ears, tiny white flakes floated from the dark, twisted heavens of his tangled black hair and snuggled gently in the crevices of his undulating jacket shoulders.

Gordon had almost completed his drawing and was applying a few final strokes. As he surveyed the canvas with his gray eyes, he thought he had seen the picture, or something that resembled it, before. The dark shadows and the straight and swirling lines looked familiar. He flattered himself with images of El Greco's "Toledo" and Van Gogh's "Starry Night" floating across his mind, but, finally, he remembered: the ink blot test. Gordon had taken the test, given by the school psychologist, two weeks ago. Dr. Ravish had shown him a piece of white paper covered with bug-like blobs of black ink. Gordon recalled the crawling clots and remembered an answer he had given. He had identified one of the blots as a handleless vase hanging on a white wall. But then he had changed his mind. He said the blot reminded him of a girl, a girl without arms, walking naked, by herself, in a bare field of snow. Dr. Ravish had accepted both answers; he had told Gordon they were quite original. Gordon took a certain pride in this accomplishment. His double answer, having been accepted, had put him in two different classes. The vase, being inanimate, was a class below bugs, living, ambulating beings. But the girl, human and intelligent, was a notch above the bugs who were not fortunate enough to have brains. They were nothing but senseless specks crawling on the ground, and the girl could, at any time, crush them.

Gordon closed his notebook and put his head down on his arms, like a girl does when she cries. The dull, hypnotic patter of rain that hopped through the windows to join the monotonous drone of Gordon's classmates and the etherizing odor of heated notebooks resting comfortably on tops of humming radiators began to anesthetize him. He did not struggle to keep the heavy gates above his eyes from falling shut to transport him on a somnambulent wave from this boring, lethargic land. But before he could begin to enjoy the refreshing state of unconsciousness he was about to enter, the spiteful, startling alarm, hearkening another uneventful day of momentous battles and great advances in science, rudely rattled through his ears and wrenched him, an apprehended escapee,

back to life. He dully gathered his books and ambled out of the room, down the hall to History.

Moving down the narrow, crowded hall, on his way to Mrs. Muller's History class, Gordon felt like a useless gladiator marching to a crumbled arena filled with fly-infested carcasses of long slain lions. The stimulating aura of adventure that Mrs. Muller had once had about her had disappeared three years ago, when Gordon was a freshman. That summer, before the start of school, he had been a target for the undoubtable stinging sagesse of the seniors. Gordon had gone to a parochial grammer school and now, with a sound basis of religious education but not much else to build on, save his ability to learn quickly and to remember well, and on the threshold of embarking into the unknown, nebulous world of Atherton Public High, he had to undergo the sacred ritual of initiation. As manservant to five prophetic senior football players, he learned the legendary Myth of Muller. After a summer of hard work, carried out in stages, their fascinating tales, like chisels, had managed to mould Mrs. Muller, hitherto an undefined block in Gordon's mind, into a veritable goddess, to be accorded the awe and respect equal to that once paid Ares. According to legend, she reigned supreme, on her secure throne within the travel poster embroidered walls of the History office on the top floor, over Atherton's green fields.

The legend of Mrs. Muller, as Gordon learned, had its beginning twenty-five years ago. She had come to Atherton then out of the prolific womb of the maternal, verdant mountains overlooking the majestic, wide-reaching lake called Cayuga, in upstate New York. She came armed with a slingful of names, dates, and places crying to be launched. The first five years of her existence at Atherton had been unmarked, except for the fact that here she laid the cornerstone for her reputation as an unrelenting taskmaster and one who maintained indomitable control over her classes. Then, as the legend goes, Mr. Keeser, the former head of the History department, retired and Mrs. Muller replaced him. Now she had command of one department, a foothold, and, it is told, her appetite for control was not satiated until she had gained complete supremacy. She managed to accomplish this by relying on her impeccable teaching credentials and record, her sharp tongue,

and her overbearing will. Just one year after becoming head of the History department, she had struck with god-like fury to reduce Mr. Crozier to a soft staff in her hands, a useful instrument and a sign of her majesty. The P.T.A. came to observe her with angelic devotion, and the coterie of minor deities, Miss Gregory, English department, Mr. Eastman, Math department, Mr. Simms, Science chairman, and Miss Damiecki, French department, became her heavenly helpers, living in obeisance, always ready to serve, always fearing the smarting smack of the whip of Ares' tongue.

In class, she stood for no abuse. Her word was law, supported by a sharp wit coupled with a venemous, biting tongue that had, it was said, beaten many a formidable, now legendary, adversary into cringing submission. She had used these crushed pulps like mortar to erect a monumental statue to herself. The insult, in her capable hands, had become a carefully aimed, precision instrument of destruction. Sitting distractedly in class now, Gordon remembered the feeling of fear, fascination and delight he had experienced the first time he had encountered her. After learning the legend he had been impressed but anxious to test her to see if she could sustain the rigid control it was rumored she held over her students.

That first day he had sat, fearfully, in the back of the room and observed her awe-fully, from a distance. She was a large, heavy woman with a raucous, booming voice that drained its power from a source deep in her big bosom. She had long, paddle-like feet and Gordon guessed that the gods had probably blessed her with these to balance her under the top weight of her heavy-hanging chest. From the unbuttoned collar of her inflated blouse, a thick but wrinkled neck rose to support the face of a battle-toughened and weary soldier. Her cheeks looked like two pieces of fine-grade sandpaper and curling from the dull pink, lipsticked cave doors of her mouth indented roads wound upwards, bending backwards to overtake the precipice of her steep, loose-skinned cheekbones, then dipping back quickly to continue their path through the hollow, dark valleys beneath her eyes, and around, up to the thatched peak of her brow. Here they fluidly changed direction and traveled across the pale plain of her forehead to disappear, around corners, into a gray-streaked, black forest. Gordon remembered that when

she had walked close to his desk he had felt creeping through his nostrils the heavy smell of face powder, generously applied in a futile attempt to camouflage the indelible, persistent lines of age.

After the first shock of her appearance had settled, Gordon was more anxious than ever to enter battle. With the searching eye of a brilliant militarist, he quickly detected a weak spot in this time-honored, marble woman of legend. Her myth had been built and her seemingly impregnable position attained at expensive cost. She had worked hard at it for twenty-five years and her project had taken its toll. She was now an old, tired woman and she knew it. She tried to hide her flaw in a wardrobe of bright sweaters and well-made shoes, and she tried to push it into the background with her loud roar. But Gordon had spotted it immediately and had proceeded to construct his strategy around it. If he could strike there he knew he could win. In the second week of school he had happily entered a battle which ended, tastelessly for him, after just two short encounters.

Looking through the window on his left at the gray curtain of rain ruffling in the wind, Gordon remembered that first attack. Mrs. Muller had almost crushed him. That day she had lived up to legend by disgracing him in class, making a fool of him in front of his new classmates. As he watched the etching dots of rain swirling, dancing in the wind, Gordon became entranced.

It was the middle of September, a warm day. Gordon let himself lapse into a daydream. From his seat at the back of the room, where he had windows behind and beside him, he let his eyes drift out the side window. They came to rest on the soft field, green and rich like the garden of Venus, which started at the top of the hill in front of the school and rolled freely, pure green, waving softly over a few small knolls, to the bottom five hundred feet away. He looked across to one of the maples which stood, like a regal guard, in a corner, protecting the meadow within. His eyes wound through the maze of golden-green leaves that filtered glittering, nectareous drops of warm sun to the smooth, smaragdine bed of down below, where Venus could rest. But his eyes roamed too far. They crossed the white-divided tar road and stopped at a paper-bag-cluttered spot of hard black dirt where the grass had been trampled and ripped out by the scuffling shoes of students who used this area as

a combination lunch room and smoking lounge. Stubbed, frayed cigarette butts dotted the dirt like holes in an old black shirt. Gordon saw the rusty iron rails that had been broken off in places, leaving sharp, cutting edges. He remembered that he had once cut his hand on one of these knife-like teeth and had had to get a tetanus shot.

In the middle of his careless reverie, he heard Mrs. Muller's raking voice. Ares had spotted him from her height at the head of the room and noticed the listless look in his eyes. She saw the opportunity for a double kill.

"Gordon," she barked. He looked up, startled that she had drifted quietly behind him.

"Do you think that I could possibly have the pleasure of your attention for ten more minutes?" He realized that his answer must not indicate fear or defeat.

"I guess," he mumbled, disinterestedly. Ares, stunned by this contumacy, leaned over him, close to his ear.

"Young man," she bellowed, "You will look at me when you speak." Gordon turned his head and looked into her green, black-shadowed eyes. Up close, he saw her face reveal more lines than it had at a distance. The smell of powder that hung about her like an albatross strung around her neck was stimulating. Counter, Gordon thought, but before he could aim, Ares had pulled another bright-tipped arrow from her sling and released the taut bow-string.

"When you are in my dominion you accord your full attention to me and don't waste your time looking for Venus dancing out there in the meadow."

The shrill, caustic laughter of his classmates singed Gordon's ears, and their staring slits of eyes, squeezed hideously between cheek and brow, added coal to the fire in his face. Mrs. Muller walked back, smiling, to the head of the class, trailing her aura of victory and face powder. She resumed her position behind her lecturn-throne.

"Now class," she picked up where she had left off. "France is bounded on three sides . . . " At the bell, Gordon hurried out of class, bitter and aching for revenge.

"The old boor really dug you, didn't she Gordie?" Ashe, the class president, had mocked. But revenge came quickly, a week later. The class was still studying France, where Gordon had spent three weeks while touring Europe with his father two summers ago.

"The Seine," said Mrs. Muller, and Gordon thought of Paris. He remembered the Seine and could still see the clots of dead, soggy leaves floating like poorly-constructed rafts, loosing a log here and there on their grand portage downriver. He saw the dead fish, bunches of them, turned a putrid purple from being so long, lifeless, in the cloudy water. He remembered the dull sound they made, like the muted echo of a water-logged rubber ball bouncing on a hardwood floor, when they drifted against the side of the boat.

"The Seine is one of the most beautiful rivers in the world," Mrs. Muller continued. Gordon raised his hand.

"Yes Gordon," she acknowledged.

"It's really not beautiful," he said.

"What do you mean it's not beautiful?" she asked.

"I mean it's full of dead fish, and junk, and it's polluted."

"Gordon, don't be so foolish. I've seen the Seine and I know it's beautiful," Mrs. Muller answered. All at once, Gordon saw his opening, hanging before him like a blank check. A chance to hit back, a chance to win. He pushed the button.

"Maybe forty years ago when you were there, but not now," he struck. "That was a long time ago, it's different now." Gordon braced himself, waiting for the counter-attack. But none came. Mrs. Muller stood, silent. The bomb had been on target, but there was no explosion, only a dull, quiet obliteration. Gordon found himself wishing the old woman would lash out and strike back. Instead, she stood, looking to the back of the room. In the sunlight that rebounded from the blackboard behind her, her hair glimmered faintly, gray, speckled black. Victory was his, but Gordon heard no trumpets as the bell sounded and did not want to wear the laurels his new, liberated disciples draped over his shoulders. The legend was gone, the goddess reduced to mortality, the beauty of her strength spent.

Gordon looked at the clock, a Bulova, trimmed pale green: three more minutes. Mrs. Muller's rasping bark had, in three years, softened and mellowed. Gordon watched her as she placed another orange throat lozenge on her dry tongue. The screeching bell went off and the unsatisfied spectators filed out of the arena. Gordon walked heavily behind. At the door, he stopped and looked back. The black window shades were drawn down halfway and the sun, which had come out during class, strained its rays, trying to get through the thick shades, into the room. The best it could do was throw a dull shade of orange, like the glow of a dying fire, against the window. Gordon closed the door and stepped across the hall, into English class.

At the door, stencilled 27 on the outside of its frosted peephole, he met Miss Gregory. She was a pleasant woman, a spinster, and Gordon pitied her in her plight. He realized that she was struggling stubbornly under the burden visited on some unfortunate females: she was six feet two inches tall, in her stub-heeled, pointed pumps, and very slim. Her hair, rapidly waning gray, was a field of reeds deprived of the kiss of the wind. Her skin, though, was almost pure, except for a brown half-circle on her upper lip, beneath which her dull white top teeth peeked. Gordon nodded to her and she smiled. He went to his desk at the back of the room, stepping over books and legs strewn like rat-traps in the aisle. Miss Gregory closed the door and stood before the blackboard.

"The 'Grecian Urn' symbolizes everlasting beauty," she began. Gordon especially liked this poem, perhaps more than any other of that period, and knew most of it by heart. He didn't understand the truth-beauty part at the end though, probably because he didn't know what Keats meant by truth, but he accepted it because the rest of the poem was so beautiful.

"The two lovers will never catch each other," Miss Gregory continued. Just then a small hand at the front of the room rose, piercing the quiet, rolling tone of Miss Gregory's voice. The hand belonged to Joanne Edwards, a shy, unsure girl who had gone to grammer school with Gordon.

"Yes, Joanne," Miss Gregory recognized her. The girl looked down to her notebook for reassurance, then began slowly.

"Some people say there really was an urn like that and Keats saw it at one time." She stopped and looked again to her notebook. Little rivers of red flowed from her burning trunk and flooded her face.

"Go on, Joanne," Miss Gregory urged.

"Well, they say he really didn't create the whole thing," she offered.

"The poem, Joanne? Do you mean the poem?" Miss Gregory asked. The girl looked at her, squeezing the fingers of her right hand in her left.

"Y-yes, I guess that's it," she blurted. Gordon turned his head to the left and looked out the window. He snickered quietly. He looked over to a large, smudged brick building across the street. He read the rectangular white, black-lettered sign on the side: IVAN SHOE CO. Gordon's house was just around the corner and he remembered the woods, where he had spent many hours as a boy lost in trees and vines, that used to be here where the factory now stood. He remembered the open grove in the woods where he had run through long games of ringaleerio and red rover which had started in early afternoon and had stretched their long legs into the first dark hours of warm August nights. As he looked at the checkerboard barred windows of the factory, he noticed the snow which had begun to fall so rapidly that even the sun hadn't had a chance to hide. Gordon had a habit when it snowed of picking one snowflake and trying to follow it in its dizzy descent to the ground. But he always lost it and could never save it from melting or just disappearing into the vertiginous confusion of the rest of the free-falling dust. He looked down at the school-property side of the road and saw that the snow had almost covered it, like a bed with a freshly-laundered sheet. But in spots, courageous brown blades of grass fought, like drowning men in ever-deepening waters, to keep their heads above the snow. This scene, snow freckled brown, reminded Gordon of milk and chocolate chip cookies.

At the far end of the factory, Gordon saw a tall, gleaming silver tower. Flowing through long, winding lines of pipes, lakes

of steam made their way to the top of this tower and escaped through an opening there. Once out, they burst through the soft flakes of snow into the freedom of the spotted sky. Gordon noticed a bunch of black, white-breasted birds hovering near this fascinating steel erection. They were flapping their wings coldly. Suddenly, one of them flew directly over the opening at the top of the tower. He stopped, fluttering his wings madly, absorbing the warmth the escaping steam offered. Soon, his mates joined him, and all of them, seven counting the first daring pioneer, danced joyfully in the suspended warmth of the columns of steam. Gordon watched them as they bathed in their oasis. For a time, he could see them clearly, but then the mixture of swirling snow and thickening, spiralling steam shrouded them and he saw only seven indistinct, jittering dark dots. Slowly, the blankets of steam began to thin and the birds hung, abandoned by their ethereal, downy bed of steam. They flew away from the tower, toward the window where Gordon sat watching. As they came closer to him, he saw that their breasts were no longer white, but now a heavy, dark black to match the shadowy coat of the rest of their bodies. Gordon opened his English text to Keats' poem. The energy in Miss Gregory's analyzing voice seemed to be fast abating, however, signaling the sounding of bells which, when they rang, sent him down the flooding corridor to French class.

*Patric McGarty*

## *a formulated phrase*

Often chin down and dirty on the damp dock
I speared the dragonfly in his humdrum
Irridescent life with my sun-squeezed
Eyes and followed his irresponsible
Journey until he blew away and I transfixed
Another.

*Steven J. Gavala*

# *mon "-ism" linguistique*

An orange upon the table?
Yes. To the degree
that the orange had orangeness,
to that degree was the orange orange,
assuming points of vantage, two,
each held by an eye, the fruit as
between two mirrors so speak,
this evanescent orangeness then
redundant in its own plurality.
In the beginning there was the flesh,
vicariously "orange:" an orange
upon the varnished and rectangular,
a pocked and spongy inert upon the rigid,
taut and woodness of the grained,
leaves in final season and pungent
orange and round and tart and pithy orange
and eventually "orange," no less,
and seeds and satin blossoms in
finite bouquet ply the implicated
foliage of verbiage to an infinity;
as All, impossibly more (no less),
not by definition, but regress,
the oldest chestnut, beneath whose spreading
he would not stand, who didn't know
enough to come in out of the rain
because it really ought evaporate
on its way down.

*Jack Hardie*

# *the ride*

Angela padded into her softly lit and sweetly scented room, heading toward the shoe boxes in the closet, yet consciously enjoying the fleecy caress of the pink rug's pile against the soles of her bare feet. Having sandled herself in white leather ribbons, she sat on the end of the bed near the wooden jewelry box, motionless a minute for the aesthetic pleasure of watching the furry form beside her uncurl with feline grace and resettle in the crepe folds of her skirt. The cat resumed her washing of an immaculate paw. Angela smiled. "Big night ahead, Bon Bon?" The wet paw reached over the cat's head to apply itself behind an ear. The cat started as Angela tossed out a throaty laugh. "That's one act that won't play, silly. You'll never have any blush to hide."

As she carefully sorted through a row of earrings Angela continued in her habit of addressing the cat: "Where'd I put the pearl ones? *I — want* — Oh," and her voice became decorously hushed for the wake of the memory. "I remember, pussy-cat. I wore them on my birthday. On the way back from Mike's house I took them off in the car and put them — I put them in the rosary case."

The rosary case was in the back corner of the desk drawer. Angela brought it out and looked at the fat crystal beads for the first time since she had received them from her ex-fiance. Then a chorus of his mother and sister were singing, "Angela, how beautiful," and she saw the men again, smoking and being mostly indifferent and not even knowing the real reason Michael was smiling and pleased.

She had taken the earrings off in the car as they rode home. She had to give herself a cue to do it: "My ears hurt." The glass jewelry box with the gold lace frame and the nest of lavender velvet didn't wait to receive them. Instead it was a black rosary case in her lap, and she put them in that.

Angela fitted the pearls to her ears now and wanted the rest of that Michael-memory to come in detail. She might tell Larry about it tonight. She might tell him about it sometime. She brushed

the tousled curls of her Italian coiffure onto her forehead, remembering the morning after her birthday and telling Larry about it aloud.

That morning with her back to the door Angela had been sitting tensely erect, her leather-gloved hands resting right over left in a tweed-skirted lap, so that the swell of the diamond was hidden. She was wondering how long she had been crossing her hands like that and if it would have been different if it had been the opel and then: If she had gotten the opel she asked for, would he have been Michael? She removed her glove and held the sparkling ring in her hand while an "Angela, how beautiful" chorus resurrected itself from a night two years ago and hummed its way through her head again. At the slam of a familiar car door she slid the ring on her finger again but removed the other glove. She hoped he'd come in alone.

Heavy feet trod the steps and three chimes summoned her to the door which she opened for him mutely. Quickly, unexpectedly, he caught her to him with a strong arm, and then his mouth was against hers. Angela tried to remember when the familiar scent of spice had stopped thrilling her, or if it ever had thrilled her. She thought about her arms pressed woodenly against her sides and that maybe a last kiss should be returned, but it was all right; he hadn't noticed. Maybe he didn't care and then, maybe he never cared. She heard him telling her they had to hurry.

"No, Michael," she heard herself speaking flatly. "I think we have to stop hurrying. Let's sit down."

She had taken his hand to lead him, but he held back. "No, Angel, we're late," and he was a four-year-old teaching righteousness to a younger sister. "I know it's hard, but we won't be apart that long — three months only, Angel, and when I get back, you'll have your chocolate house." He was happy and he meant to comfort her. "Know what my mother said last nght? She said she can't wait till you're pregnant. She says we'll have to name her grandson Michael Andrew for my brother. That way, she says, Drew will have a namesake to will to in case Charlotte never does give him a baby. Of course, she was kidding, but I love to hear her so happy with you. Angel, you mean so much to me."

"Michael," He couldn't hear himself, she thought. She had to make him hear her. "Michael, let me go with you now. Let me stay out there with you. With your job it doesn't matter where we live."

Michael stood wide-eyed. She watched for his thin lips to move. He was having difficulty suiting her words to the planned situation he knew. Angela had known there was nothing more he could try to do with what she said. Finally he blurted, "That's three hundred miles away." He waited, but she would give him nothing more, so he appealed, but not to her. "You don't want to live that far from home. I know you're sad about me being away from home so long, but there'll be letters, and when I get back, the chocolate house."

"Stay there three months and then send for me."

His wit overtaxed, he ignored her now, saying impatiently, "Angela, we had this settled — the stone house, the brown one on the lot down the street from Drew's place. No, no, this is no time to go and — Look, we'll talk later."

"Michael," she reasoned. "I won't see you later."

"I'll call you, Angela. We'll talk. Now let's go. My mother will be upset if she thinks something happened to us."

"I was right, Larry." Angela closed her rehearsal of the narrative. "That was the last we saw each other. When I knew he'd never see what he was doing, I mailed him the diamond. His Mother'll scout up another grandson-producer — one that likes sparklers this time, I hope." The cat's purr grew louder under Angela's absently stroking fingers. "How's that sound, pussy-cat? Think he'll be interested? Should I tell him?"

Angela started at the quiet appearance of an ascetic-looking, shapeless young woman who smiled prettily from the doorway. She held a suitcase in each hand. "Oh, Angie, stop already," she laughed. "You must know your lines by now."

"Sharon, sweetie, come on in." Angela loved her cousin. She was a treat to talk to because she was such a good listener, there was a lot you didn't have to bother to say. You couldn't talk to Sharon about everything, though, she reflected. "You're a doll," Angela said, relieving her of the bags. With tissues she sopped up

the water beading along their lacquered sides. "Sorry they had to get rained on."

"It stopped on the way over, believe it or not. But what did you do without them last night if that was your first dress rehearsal?" she asked curiously.

"Listen, Sharon, with our outfit, we're lucky we have all the props by curtain, opening night! Would you like some coffee?"

"No, I have to get to night class. Need a ride to the theater?"

"Thanks, no, hon. Larry's coming for me."

"Oh," she said, and smiling good-naturedly, "Not bad — you're back in circulation only a month and you've got a steady again. He's not losing any time."

"Sharon, it's not like that; I told you. We have to be at rehearsals together and we're at the theater till all hours, so by the time he takes me home — "

"Whoa, Angie," Sharon interrupted. "Hold on. I wasn't accusing you of anything. So the guy's hot on you, so what's the problem? Now you're unattached, there's nobody to be loyal to. Enjoy it! Anybody can see he's stunning. It's just that it looks like it's heading somewhere; that's all."

"No, now listen a minute." Angela shook her head, her eyes shut.

A momentary blare of shrieks and squealing laughter mixed against caliope music played through Sharon's head.

Angela began a rehearsed explanation: "Larry and I promise each other nothing, Sharon. All we ever have when we're with each other is the moment, but that way the moment is so important. We take it for everything it's worth. Sharon, I'm so sick of brushing todays aside for the smoggy future. Look what happens when you do that." She took a packet of letters and tossed them on the bed in front of Sharon. "Stop the clock and what's left? Dried up yesterdays that only took meaning from a promise, and which don't mean a thing when the promise doesn't come. Larry's fun to be with and he says I am too, but we're never obliged to each other

for anything." She wondered if she could tell Sharon about how when Larry kissed her the special smile she gave him was a sign that the kiss meant nothing more than what it was, that like everything else, it didn't have to go anywhere. Sharon might laugh like she did when Angela told her he had the sweetest breath in the world. She decided she couldn't and explained instead, "If he called right now and said he couldn't pick me up, he wouldn't have to tell me why, and I wouldn't have to ask him, and the next time we'd meet everything would be just the same." Angela found herself watching the napping cat. She looked up and away, not wanting Sharon to watch the cat with her. She felt convincing and wanted to keep it up. Having loosened the ribbons on the letters, she shuffled them in front of Sharon. "Pick a letter, any letter. They're all the same: full of I-love-you's and I-can't-exist-without-you's that are such unconscious lies — no, not even that, just a kind of no-sense language he learned how to use without ever feeling." She paused, then hurried on, "I don't want that anymore." She caught the edge of excitement in her voice, checked it, and continued, "I'm so glad I don't have to hear that now."

Sharon was reading, " 'Be mine forever.' Bet I know where he learned it. Seems there was this Valentine box in the fourth grade — "

"Very good, Sharon," Angela commended, laughing.

Sharon continued to read. "What's with this 'good buddies' at the end of some of them?" she asked.

Angela snickered. "That's my contribution." She walked to the glass door of the patio. "One night there were so many stars, you could see half way to heaven. I thought about us walking under all that celestial light together and talking." She sneered. "I guess I thought we'd have clever little chats full of wit and wisdom or something once we were married. Well, I was pretty sick of the sound of 'I love you' then, so I called him my good buddy. I was so sincere I must have even reached Michael, because he used to use it after."

Silently Sharon restacked the letters and tied them, while Bon Bon's purring rose rhythmically from the pillow. Then she tried "Know what I was just thinking of — how scared you used to be on the roller coaster."

"Me? The way you used to scream from the minute we hit the top, I'm lucky I can still hear."

"I mean at the beginning of the ride, Angie. Remember how the tracks went straight for awhile, passed the lake and the carousel, and then swerved and slanted into the tunnel?"

Angela nodded. "I hated that tunnel," she laughed, while a momentary blare of shrieks and squealing laughter mixed against caliope music played through her head. "It was the crazy way the tracks leaned used to scare me out of my mind."

"You'd close your eyes the minute we were locked into the car. That made me so mad. I used to yell at you to wave to the kids in the water, but you'd just shake your head and squint your eyes tighter."

"I didn't want to see the signs that kept telling you to keep your arms in the car and not to stand up because the tunnel was ahead," Angela remembered.

"I know. You told," Sharon added quietly. As she went to Angela at the patio door, three chimes sounded. "I believe about you and Larry being only just friends, and if you really are as bitter as you sound, I'm surprised he could get to be even your friend." Angela faced her, startled, feeling her cheeks warm. "I'll let him in myself out," Sharon finished. "You'd better put those letters away, and don't forget Bon Bon."

Angela walked down the stairs with controlled posture, holding a suitcase in each hand. She smiled instantly and inclined her head with feigned shyness as she met Larry's frankly admiring stare. Their smiles coaxed each other till neither could stop.

"At last," he announced, quickly taking her bags and ushering her out and towards the car. "The girl's seen the light. You're going away with me. It's about time. Do you know how many nights I've — "

I'm going as far as the theater, young man," she interrupted with assumed indignation. "You can go the rest of the way to where you're going yourself."

"Is that nice, giving up on me like that?"

I'm not giving up. I'm starting on your reform."

*My* reform! It's you that needs the Reformation." At that he was delighted and they were both laughing freely as they reached the car. There he referred to the suitcases in his hands. "The ground's muddy. Get the door, Mary"; (he continued without a pause) "Angela, get the door."

She heard herself laugh and say, "Tom Jones would have found a way," but a blush was starting up her cheeks.

He laughed too, putting the bags in the back. "You're probably right."

She sat waiting for him to walk round to his side, wishing she hadn't been embarrassed. Though it was easier to pretend his fiancee didn't exist, she had seen her; he had admitted her. Why should the mention of her name sound obscene? She thought.

"Is that your fiancee's name?" she asked with an effort for casual tone as he got in the car and inserted the key. "Mary?"

He let go of the key and spoke gently. "Her name's Marianna."

She nodded. "That's pretty."

"Funny I said Mary. I usually call her Marianna, 'cause I think it's pretty too."

"I'm glad I knew her name. I wanted to know her name."

"You should have asked," he said kindly. "Is there anything else you want to know?"

She felt hot, but it was dark and they weren't looking at each other. "There's a lot I've guessed," but she didn't have to tell him.

"I broke the news about our engagement to my parents," he informed her. "Last Saturday, when I went home?"

She nodded. "Why did you wait so long?" They were speaking in hushed tones.

"Because they're prejudiced," he continued, not making her ask anymore. "I knew that I'd be disowned when they were told. My mother got pretty hysterical, and my father — well — " he paused, then, after a short laugh finished, "My mother got pretty

hysterical and that's always that. It's kind of hard to lose them. I mean, they're nice people except they're innocent bigots. Well, there's nothing I can do about it anyway — "

"Don't say anymore, please," Angela interrupted. She was looking out the window, blinking to keep her tears from spilling. She watched Bon Bon hurrying through the wet grass and disappearing under the hedge into the next yard and the clusters of clouds moving through the sky, uncovering a star now and leaving it for another cloud to hide.

She turned to him, not smiling. "I'm your good buddy, Larry."

With a kiss he stopped the tear that was making its way down her cheek. "Come on, Angela, even I didn't take it that hard." But he was smiling the smile she hadn't tried to explain to Sharon.

*Beverly Hanko*

# *Vermont*

Ice-stormed birches, white stalks, bent a bit off center,
but not too far
(in Albany they almost touch the ground),
The stream beside the road is frozen,
not going anywhere,
Ski-tows haul the guests to the peaks
to ski back down.
When Sol returns
birches will move a little, slowly, close back to center;
this brook will thaw and get back on its treadmill,
crawling contentedly,
going nowhere;
ski-tows will shut down and the snow people will leave,
but they'll return
when the old white bear comes back to hug the land in his lap.

Old chicken-farmers still sell Christmas trees here
for fifty cents, and jugs of cider.

*Patric McGarty*

# *lila*

Nina was pushing her face into the dull clamminess of her pillow that grew colder and colder. The musky air, smelling like rain-wet newspaper, seemed to smother her. She gazed up restlessly at the old papered ceiling and tried to trace the figures and patterns that age had worn. But that was a game she had played with her Betsy doll on sunny mornings when brown rain-etchings were coffee rich and downstairs everybody labored with morning. The game belonged to Betsy alone now, upstairs in her attic world, nestled on stacks of yellow newspapers and old *Time* magazines, Betsy with her eyes turned straight out to their world, innocent and accepting.

Within the room, pulling the covers around herself Nina felt a chill of new warmth, familiarly touch her back and quickly skip away. The chill brought back the feeling of warm afternoons of two years before when she was happy to be eighteen. Someone had always dragged her down to the beach, some fading rose-beige waitress drawn to her seemingly from nowhere. The women heavy and packed tight into bathing suits, who lived in New York and wore their red hair rolled high, told her stories about the war, and how hard it had been to get cigarettes, stories that belonged of course to friends, because they, of course, were too young to remember. The old man who wore Bermuda shorts and lived in the hotel every summer for thirty years had waited out of range of the women to give her a wine book so she would know what wines and foods went together, like he did. And when Nina had left that place he had come one night later to see her at her new job, and he wore a tweed sports coat and smelled of shaving lotion.

Again she felt the sick tears that burned in her eyes and throat from knowing that he had watched her understand his deep red embarrassment, his smile that twisted to contortion when for the first time he saw the arrogance of his hopes caught large and foolish in his eyes which jumped from her to the mirror to her again. It had been from far down the beach that later she had seen him, solitary, long gabardine lapping around wet ankles. Lying face down on the sand until the tiny razored crystals cut into her

face and she could feel them no longer, Nina and the earth beneath her first gave way, then sprang back under the bare-running scuffs and thuds of the bathers and runners who kicked back sand in sprays, stinging her. Nina and the earth, absorbing yellow heat, bubbling, flowing into one another, fused, making time stop. Then to start things up again the chill would come to dance on her shoulders. She wondered now how she was suddenly upright and dressed and home, and how this was a January with snow, snow tracked with stories of parties and business and kids who had played angels there and an old lady who had fallen on her way to church. In twenty minutes she could add her story to theirs.

"Nine ten on your Saturday date night," the radio interrupted itself. "A cold and clear twenty-four outside," it smiled. She smoothed the bed and thought about the night and the party and the afternoon's conversation with the girl who wore green slacks and the hot pink print blouse. "Meet Lila if you're going to Joe's," the girl had said. She's loaded. Always is. A pun, my dear."

Meet Lila! A pink comb bounced into the bottles of perfume and slapped the mirror beneath them. How did Lila Whatsername get mixed up with Joe's crowd, anyway? she wondered aloud. They were the people to know. They would be exciting. They probably just tolerated Lila, not wanting to insult her. Nina hurriedly managed the emerald green liquid above darkened lashes shielding blue eyes, the powder and lipstick, the dark green dress's impossible snap.

Outside the air splintered as she broke through its frozen layers. The clear night, streaked here and there with faint traces of spring, intensified her assurance that *this* night would make up for all the others she spent unhappily alone. She drove automatically, more keenly aware than if she were really seeing the red and green warnings, the coats and boots filled with empty nobodies. In rising excitement to get to her party, cards, dice, neon-roulette wheels glittered by.

Loud music from the dark brick house coughed into the front yard. "Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! Doll-Babee!" Joe was laughing, flinging her coat over a chair and shoving a scotch and water at her. Joe angled against the wall sleeked in a black cash-

mere jacket closed just below narrow lapels with a single pearl button, red silk ascot puffed out around his thin neck, his face still brown from summer tennis. He pressed a clammy kiss against her cheek; the sticky cold was burned dry by the smoke in the oversized room that was covered with red carpeting and gingered with scotch.

"Let's go meet the gang. They've been waiting for you." Joe glided her through twenty-some glasses and cigarettes to a bull-dog face, beaded-wet and fringed with black ringlets that strayed from a Princeton cut. "This is Jeff." Her hand was met by another that unconsciously squeezed a cigarette. "Well, sorry," Jeff shrugged the gesture off. "Wild night, no? Hey, Joe, bet she's a real swinger once she lets go. Jerrie! C'mon over and meet Joe's new protegee." A thin blond swung herself away from the bar and the figures there hung limply, almost wavering around it. She shook her hair just-so carelessly over one eye, and slung herself down on the gold couch next to them. "Did she meet Lila yet? C'mon, Joe, bring the doll over, she has to meet *all* our friends."

Lila pushed and bumped her way over to them. The amber drink splashed brown patterns on her pink satin dress and her auburn hair that was piled high wisped away from her rose-beige face whose powder failed to cover the fifteen years since she'd been twenty. Soft glossy-red lips cooed round bubbles over Jeff's drink.

"Young man, why don't you dance with me?"

"Whatsamatter, Lila? You don't need anybody to dance with. You do pretty good by yourself."

Lila smoothed the wrinkled patterned dress; her small pink-plump hands then pressed full weight against the table to balance her, standing her eye-level to Nina. "I read a lot," she was saying into wide blue eyes. "I just finished the Somethingbaggers." Pushing herself farther up, the extended finger bobbed emphasis around her defiant brown eyes. "Too much, too much. I'm not say'n that I don' do' it, and I'm not say'n that I do do' it. I'm just say'n it's too much."

Nina wanted to reach out to her, to offer some kind of understanding, not the shoulder patting so common to Lila's world, but only innocent wide eyes, straight looking, accepting.

Lila cupped the brown liquid up with both hands and splashed some into the corners of her mouth. Her knees gave way under the brown-patterned satin, and the green pillow was splattered with spreading brown wetness.

Lila, sinking pale onto the couch, pushed her face into the mild clamminess of the pillow.

Joe took Nina's arm, to glide her away. "C'mon, meet the rest of the kids." Nina turned to go.

*Andrea Templar*

## *poem*

Lost, lost,
All of my children are gone,
And the swift misty waters
Of a haunted palace ocean
Come in, come in.

The despising night,
With its coalfire eyes,
Is cold, is hot,
Is lost, is lost.

My children have gone,
And the liquid palace
And tired night
Have come, have come.

*Craig Young*

# the dark water

The surface of the pool appeared to be the clearest ice and the morning promised a hot day and the air hung green and grey and wet with the mosses in the trees reflecting in the warm water. He had waited. The sounds of the sun had preceded it, tittering and rustling through the shadows and the frail light on the palm fronds and the leaves and then it had been dawn and almost at its instant the white and red bobber nodded slightly then splashed beneath its rippled water and the slack sprung taut. The boy's fingers gently tested the black line. It answered with spasmodic tugs and he pulled slowly, looping the wet string about the small wooden hand-line. Writhing, glittering and silver, the fish had come finally to his dangling bare feet. Andy scooped and caught it firmly and, careful to keep it under water, cautiously slipped the hook from the milky membrane beneath the blue, bony lip and the fish was free. It fluttered below him for a quiet moment on its side, the black and amber eye staring coldly from its setting in the patterned whorl of metallic scales, then thrashed, shot toward the deeper green and had been gone and Andy alone again had held the glinting hook to the light and run his thumb along the smoothness where the barb had carefully been filed away and it had been done as lovingly as Jimmy would have and he remembered smiling as he rolled the last few feet of line and silver leader, sinking the hook into the wood to be carried. The morning's first trip to the pond was clear in Andy's mind.

But this was the second time he walked the path home. Andy stopped and sat where the stones were heaped about and cool in the shade and draped with the thick wet green. The girl ahead up along the path stopped too. She waited.

An absent thumb and fingernail gouged deep into the velvet moss as he tried for the moment not to see her standing there facing away, pretended that he hadn't wanted her to sit too. But there would be more to it all than just this he knew, and then the strange terror as the grey stone beneath his hand sparkled flecks of quarts through ragged green; *her* father, yes, her father.

And what would *his* mother say? And why had it had to happen now, this Sunday morning when they had argued about his going fishing? Andy stiffened with the greater pain that she would not be angry. She would be hurt. And she would cry, asking him Why and Why and he would have no words; worse, she herself had changed; how could he be sure what it would be like? Was it just that she was too much older now that they no longer talked together as they had? He pictured the lined face, the grey eyes that hadn't laughed for these months. Now were his mother's eyes too old, too tired, that she no longer smiled to open the bedroom window when she woke him in the mornings? The news of Jimmy had come at night, yes, but weeks and months ago. Andy thought of the dawn of the night of the telegram and the light had been pale and almost purple and the trees beyond the window had been cold and brittle against a moist sky and it had rained. He looked about him now, beneath the trees and down along the path; could his mother see the morning glories, periwinkles, Brown-eyed Susans blinking? Might she smile? And the giraffe-necked trunks of the cocoanuts, sun-blotched brown and yellow, reverent, Sunday-hatted in the long limp feathers that were peacock-blue and green; would his mother see?

Ellen could.

Ellie's eyes would share his mornings. Ellie was thirteen years old too; but this morning no longer, perhaps never again — never, he was sure, and still she stood waiting and again the terror welled from deep inside. He held his breath. It passed. But there was no delaying. He would have to face his mother, *face* . . . her father and it would only look foolish to say "It wasn't that way! That's not the way it was!" because he knew that that was the way it might have been, the way he thought he had wanted it to be.

And would he cry? No, he wouldn't cry. Andy finally stood and moved toward her with a gesture of the hand to wait and walk with him, a smile to calm what she might feel, but she moved away, ahead, and they continued home, the boy blinking out the morning, not looking at the girl, she not looking back at him and neither speaking; there a scarlet cardinal shot from bush to tree, jays rasping from the deeper green: no other sounds. Was Ellie

crying now? He could not see her face. Walking eyes half-shut and down, he could only see the mossy ladder reflected in the dark water and the clear, rubbery button impaled and dangling and he knew that they were only ten minutes from her house:

"Then wear your *old* clothes if you *have* to go fishing," she had shouted from the kitchen when he'd argued that *Jimmy* never went to church, but always took him out to the pond before the sun was up . . . "And you hardly went either, Mom, before . . . "

"Don't talk about your brother when you're shouting!" There was a pause. "And wear your after-school shoes, remember the last time and that barbed wire!"

Methodically he had threaded and crossed new laces into the worn sneakers while his anxious eyes scanned the small bedroom for his brother's yellow fishing cap. He had worn it yesterday and hung it . . .

"Where's Jimmy's old fishing hat?"

"With the laundry! And don't shout! It's got to be washed once in a while — what must people think, you always wearing that filthy . . . *when will you ever grow up, Andy?"*

His small, thin body had flown from the bed to the bathroom; Andy snatched the wadded yellow hat from the salty hamper.

"*Jimmy* gave it to me, Mom!"

"Don't talk about your brother when you're shouting!"

"It's my *fishing* hat!" but the indignant voice had stumbled and broken at "fishing,' cracked and trailed off like it had days earlier when he'd recited before the class. He'd heard them all snicker; even Ellie toward the front of the room had giggled tinkling silver into her cupped and tiny hands. Andy had felt his own blush slowly scarlet as he walked back to his seat on the edge of the bed to finish tying his laces and as he walked he had fixed the hat onto his head with stiff, defiant gestures and, finished, he had gathered up the fishing things and haughtily stalked out into the dark morning.

With the sun he had known that it was after six-thirty. Ellie would be ready for seven o'clock Mass and he would meet her

like they did every Sunday when they would go fishing together and pretend that she had been to church. She had told him what would happen if her father ever found out and Andy remembered Ellie's mother on that evening he had come to take her to the movie and she had smiled her warm hello and then hurried them out the kitchen screen door with a kiss for Ellie and a "come straight home early," but Andy had seen that her eye was swollen and the bruise powdered over and Ellie had refused to talk about it on the bus.

Andy had never seen her father. None of the kids he knew ever had and Ellie would only say that he never came out because he'd been burned in the war and he didn't work because he got checks in the mail, but she was always vague and changed the subject. Some of the kids talked about a flame-thrower or something maybe and that he was too horrible to look at and Andy remembered the times he had waited for Ellie in the kitchen and how the voice had cursed from behind the blanket hung across the living room doorway and swore at Ellie's mother and she had asked him to wait outside.

She walked slowly ahead of him, her muddy dress wadded into a knot, held high, her thin legs bruised and dirty, her long hair down her back and tangled brown. Andy looked quickly away and down again at his feet.

Earlier they had passed the mission on his way back to the pond with her and heard the singing and the piano and he had known that his mother was there and tried to pick out her voice. Andy thought of the time his grandfather had come down for a visit from Cleveland and the whole family had gone to church that Sunday. Andy had worn his new shirt and Jimmy had borrowed a sport jacket to wear with a tie and his mother had worn the hat with the irridescent feathers and how beautiful she had looked that morning and Grandfather had been so magnificent in his black suit with the grey tie and the polished amber jewels in his cufflinks and how over breakfast he had described his own church in Cleveland, that it had a congregation of over three hundred. Andy had imagined that many crowded into the mission.

And he had tried to keep from laughing to himself that morning: Gramp with his dignified dark suit and everyone else in short

sleeves with only a few of the women wearing hats and Reverend Blue the only other in a suit and his grey with maroon stripes and wide lapels; how Gramp had been so haughty, jerking down his cuffs and wiping his glasses, when the Reverend had taken a moment from the sermon to announce to everyone that "the good Mr. Miller from all'way up Clevelan'way" was here "this morning for our service and for the service of the Lord who we all serve" and Grandfather had forced a pale smile for all the bright shirts and sunbrown faces that had turned. "God bless you, Brother Miller, and your daughter and her fine sons," Reverend Blue had shouted, "And God bless us all as we live and work in Our Lord, Jesus Christ's wondrous service!" Then the minister had led the small group in a fervent prayer for health and money and "for our boys in Korea . . . keep them safe and bring them home, for we ask it in Jesus' name who died for sins, Amen!" and then the small collection and Grandfather's crackling five-dollar bill and Andy had watched his grandfather's faces later as everyone had slapped his back and handled his arms and taken his hand and shouted about his fine grandsons and daughter and about coming again next week, that they ought to come more often and the old man hadn't spoken a word on the walk home — Grandfather, who even excused himself to blow his nose and wore a hat on Sundays and Andy had remembered how he had suddenly been sorry for his grandfather that Reverend Blue didn't wear a tie and have a soft voice and that the mission ceiling wasn't very high and that there was no choir and only a piano and that the folding chairs had left his legs stiff.

That night he had lain awake and heard the talk about moving to Cleveland . . .

"He's been gone ten years now and you shouldn't have to do it alone anymore . . . good schools and a fine church . . . "

"But I have my Jim, Dad. He's a man now."

"But he's going to be a soldier. Andrew was a soldier, Ruth; come to be with your aunt and me, come home."

What would Cleveland have been like? No, he hadn't wanted to leave either, leave school or the pond or Ellie.

And he had remembered thinking was Ellie's church like Grandfather's? Grandfather's was Episcopal. Ellie's was Catholic. What was that? Andy had never asked Ellie about her church, but once he had asked Jimmy and been told a little that sounded very mysterious, such chanting and smells and something called "confession" . . . and colored glass in the windows. The mission windows were dirty glass and the building itself had been an old barracks, part of the air base and donated by the Navy.

It made it worse that Ellie had lied about going to church. Would it be better if she went home alone?

What would Jimmy have said? Andy remembered the picture in the newspaper the week that he had finished his basic training and come home for those few days. A photographer had caught a cloud formation over Seoul in the shape of a huge head of Jesus and it had been in all the papers and everybody had said that it meant the end of the war would be coming soon. But Jimmy had been sent anyway. It had been Jimmy who had taught him how to fish. How not to hurt them taking out the hook. How it was "good sport" but "better" to have them swim away free. He remembered the time that they had been visiting in town and he had seen the older kids fishing in the river and watched them pile the flopping catfish on the dock and how he had followed them and they had left the catch wriggling in newspapers in an alley to go into a store and he had run and snatched them up and hurried to the river and thrown them in and how they had fanned brown listless tails and whiskers before slowly rolling over, turning green and buttery bellies up and bobbing out into the current and how the boys had caught and beaten him. Jimmy had taught him to file the hooks clean and how to bait them carefully with the little balls of spit and bread and to fish quietly, listening for the birds and naming them, being able to name all the fish and where to find each.

And the week after Jimmy had gone overseas, Andy had heard at school that the guys had been swimming at the pond and diving and that one of the older kids had come up shouting and waving and called to the others and that they had gone down and brought up the rotted, slimy shell of an old torpedo and that for days after

they had been dredging up old bomb casings and empty machine gun belts and artillery shells and selling them to the man on the junk wagon and that the pond had first been a dump for the naval base for scrap from the war with the Germans and Andy had stayed away for weeks, thinking of the shiny medals in his mother's bedroom and how it must have been for Jimmy and their mother when he was only three and his father had been killed. Then somebody's mother had called the police and the next day there had been barbed wire fences all around the pond and signs saying no trespassing and no swimming because no one really knew what was down there.

He hurried and caught up with her and put his arm around her shoulders and she started to cry. No, he could never let her face them alone. He would go in.

Ellie had had a new white dress that morning and new shiny black shoes that her mother had gotten for her and he had been very careful, holding the strands of the fence wide for her to go through and he had found newspapers for her to sit on while he fished and she wore the yellow cap and they had talked as usual, about school and about Jimmy because she had known him too and about the pond this morning and what might still be down there in the dark water toward the middle.

Then there had been the small tug at the line and Andy had been gentle, winding it in while they laughed and watched, each eager to be first to see it.

Ellie had seen first, then Andy, the hook somehow having gotten caught in the pulsing gill, jabbed and curving deep into the tiny silver head, the point thrust out like a needle through the yellow eye, oozing its thick liquid, mixing with the bloody water. And Andy had grabbed the fish and ripped the hook out brutally and flung it, spinning end over end and glittering in the sun, into the center of the pond where it rose slowly to the surface and floated still. He had dropped to the ground and sat numbly, clenching white fists and staring out across the pond, past the fish, to the broken wooden dock and the descent of the old green ladder off the end and down beneath the dark water.

It must have seemed to Ellie that he might cry in front of her and she took his hand and leaned over and kissed him, first on the cheek and then on the lips and they had never kissed before and soon they were talking quietly and kissing and giggling and suddenly he found his hand on Ellie's hip and underneath her dress and she had jumped up laughing "no" and run through the grass and around the pond and he had shouted back the challenge and chased her as she ran toward the swampy inlet where an old rusted pipe was the only crossing over the muddy ditch.

Ellie had only started to cry again when he told her that he had poked for the shoe with a stick but couldn't find it and Andy saw that she had torn her dress on the rough metal and bruised her leg and she tried to clean herself with his wetted handkerchief and her mother listened pale and mute to the story and then left him alone in the kitchen as they disappeared behind the blanket. There was shuffling and mumbling and the music on the radio was snapped off.

A Last Supper hung over the small refrigerator, thirteen figures at the long wooden table, Jesus at the center. "Jesus Christ!" that was how Ellie's father had always cursed. "Jesus Christ," how to feel about the words? He shone radiant with the painted light and there was bread upon the table and fishes and there the bearded Judas with the gleaming coins. "Jesus Christ!" shouted Ellie's father, "Jesus Christ, I'll whip the lying little . . ." He heard a thump, on the wall? On the table? Then, "Was she alone?"

Andy heard Ellie's mother mumble something soft and was interrupted.

"Jesus Christ! And not at Mass!"

Andy stood in the middle of the kitchen, ready to turn and run. Then Ellie's mother came from the living room alone and whispered that it would have to be their secret and that he'd better stay away for a while and he spun and kicked the door open and ran blindly, not letting her see him cry.

There was no answer. "Mother!" he called again, but she was still at church. Andy went into his room. The yellow paper shade was drawn, watery-brown at the edges from open-windowed rain

and the bed hadn't been made and the grey sheets were convulsed and snarled. He turned and moved toward his mother's bedroom and the closet where she still kept his father's things and climbed for the old fishing box high on the shelf behind the hats and blankets.

Andy ransacked the tiny compartments with their feathered flies and lures and spoons and shimmering snarls of silver leader and green-black twine. His father's scaling knife was at the bottom; he slipped it into a pocket and, finding the brown paper packet of hooks, tore off a dog-eared corner and spilled the barbed and gleaming steel into his hand.

*Jack Hardie*

# . . . notes on the contributors

CHERYL CHUPAK is a freshman.

STEVEN GAVALA wrote the poem on page 47.

BEVERLY HANKO is a junior English major and has contributed to the *Manuscript* three times in that many years.

JACK HARDIE is a senior *qua* student of the word.

MARGI HARRIS is a senior Psychology major.

ED KAY is an alumnus, class of '63; many of Ed's "lines" were written last summer in his "on hours" while doing graduate work at the Tyler School of the Arts. He paints.

JAN KUBICKI is a sophomore; this is his first year with the *Manuscript.* To the degree that sophomores major in anything, Jan majors in Psychology.

PATRIC MCGARTY is a junior English major. Any resemblance to persons living or dead between pages 37 and 47 is purely vindictive.

ANNE MARIE MICKLO is a junior English major and a regular contributor to the *Manuscript;* she plans to do work in journalism but this does not detract from her writing ability.

DAVID STOUT is a graduating senior with a major in English. His future plans include graduate study, perhaps this coming summer at Oxford; in serious moments he does not exclude teaching.

LORNA TARNOFF is a sophomore English major and native of Dover, New Jersey. Dover is near Netcong.

ANDREA TEMPLAR is a junior, also an English major; her ability to write is hard-won, having had to overcome the effects of a three-year career with the *Beacon,* a Wilkes College weekly.

ANTHONY TOLUBA is a freshman and Liberal Arts major; Ed Lipinski's understudy, Tony will be the *Manuscript's* Film Editor for the coming year.

CRAIG YOUNG is a junior English major. He raises cats, "midnight" cats.

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