

**MANUSCRIPT  
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# Manuscript

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WILKES COLLEGE

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# December's Song

*by Steve Kish*

Through the tremblefingered  
caresses of time,  
I came.

In another awful age,  
I sought her soul,  
but came away  
Weeping and emptyhanded.

As we talked and walked  
on distant, sandied shores  
I cried out lovewords  
And she heard.

While I grew old  
And even as her soft breasts  
pillowed my head, and hid  
the stargleams,  
Came the withering.

And through these tremblefingered,  
Mocking, caresses of time,  
I came away,  
weeping emptyhanded,  
and dying.

## The Storm

*by Edward McGinnis*

All stripped and ripped by whipping winds,  
The trees are playing war  
In howling winds of hurricanes  
Outside my silent door.  
Their wooden weapons — branches — flaying  
As supple swords and arrows slaying,  
While watching brother branches dying  
And hearing mother nature crying.

# A Matter of Life and Death

*by Joe Handley*

When Life's breath has departed,  
Taking with it all that's real,  
Then the mourners gather sadly,  
Respectfully showing how they feel.

When the hand of Death descends,  
On he who formerly was our friend,  
We pause to think — to muse — to plan,  
Of when, of where, of how our end.

Then when our Life's busy rut,  
Steals the passing time away,  
We, deceived, are kept from our plan,  
And, old by this time, there we lay.

Now Death's stillness shadows us,  
And forms the counterfeit of a man,  
Our past-time friends gather once again,  
And pause to think — to muse — to plan.

## Testament

*by Allen Pilikian*

Faint scribblings upon the sand  
Tell-tale traces of love at hand  
Now a salt-green wave draws near:  
Love is consumed, the sand swept clear.

# On Seeing A Magician

by Matt Fliss

(verse and prayer to be read aloud simultaneously)

I Cannot help but Wonder  
Why Magicians need so  
many pigeons  
To perform their Acts

*Hail Mary*

*full of grace*

*the Lord is with thee*

It seems a violation of Natural  
Law  
And yet it gives me so much  
Awe  
And enjoyment too

*Blessed art thou amongst women*

*And Blessed is thy fruit of thy  
womb*

*Jesus*

I cannot help but Hope  
That God's a great magician  
And I enough a man  
To be a pigeon

*Holy Mary, Mother of God*

*pray for us sinners*

*now and at the hour of our death*

## Too Late . . .

by Chip Reynolds

Is it the end of the world?  
Just because people  
ski in September and swim  
in March, that doesn't mean  
anything.

Just because the gals can  
be seen wearing shorts on Public Square  
in February, and flowers bud a  
few months earlier, and the seasons  
seem a bit out of order, does  
this mean anything?

Just because we've been  
junking up the moon a bit and  
rattling around in the  
firmament,  
does that mean anything?  
Does it?



# untitled

*by Susan Kallen*

Cold, granite reality —  
A starkly massive slab of truth  
Which casts a shadow on my heart.  
It towers before me, craggy-faced,  
Jeering at my grief.

Hopefulness and reverie —  
Mute implements which I employ  
To chip the jagged, taunting rock . . .  
To hollow out the concrete core . . .  
To smooth the rough-hewn crust.

Artful fantasy —  
I sculpt the monumental truth,  
To carve out unsubstantial dreams  
Which crumble, even as I watch,  
And leave me undecieved.

## Atom And Eve

*by Matt Fliss*

There was a time when Eve  
brought about the darkness of man;  
All men are eve-l.  
Now atom bringing about the  
evening,  
Eve's dropping  
deluge of darkness,  
falling houses of the mind  
above the wind  
Owww pain.  
Now it's his turn,  
Atom's smashing;  
All men shall be eve-n  
In the dust:  
With atom we began  
In Eve we shall end.

# Untitled

*by Susan Kallen*

The windows wept.  
Half opened to the stormy night,  
They streamed with tears, and seemed to wince  
Against the hurtled blasphemies  
Of howling, angered gales.

To shut out grief,  
I closed the casements watching dark  
Destruction. Still, the full-mouthed wind  
Roared vehemently, cursing trees,  
And flowers, and love, and me.

I paid no heed,  
Though tears streamed downward from each pane;  
For, mirrored in the glassy black,  
Were bright reflections from my past —  
Unravaged by the storm.

# Waiting

*by Michael Kaufman*

In windswept doorways of bottomless winters he huddles  
clinging nothingness,  
as the refuse and sagebrush of a city whips past  
leaving a front page hugging a fire hydrant  
amidst chipped paint  
dreams.

And it is here, and always, that life in suspension  
is time that is pain.  
But oddly a no man's nomad  
comes craning in eagerness, almost wagging its tail  
in a flickering chance to curb  
emptiness.

Unreluctantly a form is cast out from its niche  
late, weathered, life-like — a king,  
for his already torn pants' leg is again being tugged  
by a whole wagging body,  
and paws and old shoes mingle in one precious path,  
clinging everything.



# There Is No Tomorrow

*by Anne C. Aimetti*

I fathom and follow your shadow  
On the court in the afternoon sun.  
You serve your ball as if  
The sun will sizzle away  
Today and bubble off into space.  
When you are playing tennis under the hard  
Sky, your heart goes soft with determination.  
I like to hear you swear at the ball  
Gone spinning out of your reach. I like  
To see you swing and pivot, bounce and jump,  
Run and skid, and arch and slam. That ball  
Is a satellite of your virility. The sun blinks,  
Your wrist snaps, your face screws, the sweat and the  
Dust make you feel good to be alive. I know it does.  
I like you best when you make a Spartan arch and  
Then a Grecian thrust, then melt to liquid marble.  
It is an easy life under the sun's spitfire,  
But it is a hard game to lose.  
You smile. Your body is taut  
And tired. The sun falls into  
The patch of dandelions  
I picked from.

## a child's prayer

*by Anne C. Aimetti*

this child,  
andre,  
is good  
and mild.  
i stood  
and herd. . . .  
"god bless  
mama,  
papa,  
jacque, tress,  
darla,  
and ann.  
'member  
dear lord,  
my herd,  
my bird,

and dog.  
let it  
soon rain  
and swell  
the siene  
waters.  
bless france,  
and king.  
advance  
all things  
to good.  
dear god,  
bless me  
in all  
i do.  
thank you.

farewell,  
i do  
hear bells  
of gold,  
and wings—  
pretty  
angels'.  
oh, well,  
good night.  
and, oh—  
amen."  
(he blessed  
himself  
and went  
to bed,  
and dreams.)

# The Winter Daisy

*by Anne C. Aimetti*

I know a daisy cannot grow  
In the cold and heavy snow of winter,  
But, yet, here I stand, looking down  
With this daisy gazing back at me.  
It is perhaps a vision — a holy vision —  
Like a burning bush or fiery cross  
Or writing on the wall, but visions — even holy ones —  
Do not breathe as does this daisy in the chilling breeze.  
Charmed and child-like, I drop to my knees  
In the frozen, crusted, silent whiteness.  
Reverently I cup my hands about it —  
Afraid to touch, yet unable to restrain.  
It's petals, delicate as flakes,  
Make the snow seem dull and gray.  
It's yellow face so bright and sunny  
Sets my countenance aglow.  
The sturdy stem and plucky leaves  
Are straighter, greener than virgin pines.

The wind will drift a grotto around  
The magic flower, but I cannot  
Stay to watch. So my fingers form  
To snap the stem — to cut the cord of life.  
But my whole hand suspends itself midway  
Between the thought and the act. A single  
Tear freezes solid on my cheek.

I rise from my knees, stiff from the wet cold.  
I make my way across the crunching field  
Thinking of the roses, pansies, tulips, asters,  
And all the other garden flowers that  
This lady well may pick, but can never love.

# Tree

*by Ed McGinnis*

To think that we should ever see  
A rhyme as free as this word tree.

A rhyme whose sound is often found  
Within each mound that needs a noun;

A rhyme whose chime is heard each time  
Some poet's crime is merchant mime;

A rhyme in there to gently wear  
A path in ware completely bare;

Upon whose pate our praise has sate;  
Who imitate and gather weight.

Poems are tea for fools like me  
But only He should use a tree.



# Rommel, Count Yo' Men!

*by Ed McGinnis*

Rommel, count yo' men!  
A cry for every shell.  
Our blackened hands in Tunis sands  
Improve on Sherman's hell.

Rommel, count yo' men!  
Each round is followed by  
The sweaty screams of soldier dreams —  
Their coughing, cringing cry.

Rommel, count yo' men!  
And watch their number shrink.  
Our gouging guns cut helpless Huns  
To leave a guttish stink.

Rommel, count yo' men!  
God help your mangled corps.  
Our cannons flood to blast their blood  
And gangrene their corpse.

Rommel, count yo' men!  
There's no one left to save.  
All the geese who stepped behind you  
Are grovelin' in their grave.

Rommel, count yo' men!  
The sad eternal ends  
Of dedicates to racial hates  
Is counting out their friends.

# The Soul of a Child

*by Anne Aimetti*

There is nothing so calm as the soul  
Of a child. It has purity, gentleness,  
And a pastel-hued blush of simplicity.  
When a child is forever, his soul  
Is heavened by butterflies, whose wings  
Are softly dusted with gold from buttercup lips.  
It is scented with daisies and tulips blue  
And the robin and sparrow will shade it from  
Moonbeam glow. No child is an angel,  
But no angel bears the soul of a child.

# Untold Dream

*by Anne Aimetti*

I am charmed by faces glowing round a campfire,  
Cool nights, alive with frogs and sparks and songs,  
Stuttering hemlocks lisp the flames up higher  
To sing the leaves, to chase lightning bugs along.  
Leaping shadows, eerie, strange and somewhat  
Touched by magic, color hearts to courage —  
To trudge off tentward. Tired, inspired, caught  
Between the now and the then, a mystic spell  
Fell over me which put time to storage.  
Slumber and share this timeless dream I tell.

# Myosotis\*

*by Anne Aimetti*

Remember me at the sunset's low tide,  
When the beach is cold and wet and rawhide;  
And when the sand is mucky and dead fish lay  
Basking in the clouded sun at midday.

Remember me as the high tide washes in —  
Great breakers rolling, lashing in the wind.  
The brine air blown from the ocean's farthest depth —  
For countless years its savor kept.

Remember me in the full moon as tide goes  
Wading from the long and lonely shore  
The waves creep out silently like a beast of lore,  
Gaining each inch with child-like innocence.

Remember me when just a stream falls down  
To light the salt water in the deeper sound.  
Our shivers ran together as we stood  
On soft, cool nights sailing our boat, "The Good."

Remember me, my love, at the fresh new dawn  
When the sun climbs up to the sandy lawn  
When the ocean is brisk and bright as the sky  
Remember all this as I do, in my fond good-bye.

\*biological name for the forget-me-not flower.

# The Brooklyn Pops

*by Michael Kaufman*

The tattered flags of hand-me-down bearers,  
patternless save their tightrope-high dance  
among roof-hidden roof tops and soot-stained breeze,  
sing the unsung song of their wearers.

A chorus of wall-to-wall echoes  
backs a brick-bred youth rounding the corner  
at 96th and 2nd — the socialwork-sidewalks' third base  
to the boos of the machines closing down on the Infield.

SCREECH — the iron-clad bugler from below  
steams out its scream of steel on steel  
right under speeding feet and sweaty smile  
joyfully winging for home — home plate.

# The Apocalypse

*by Richard L. Dalon*

Sand, with its countless grains, lies  
perpetually sleeping in a silent void.  
Here, unknown to Man, a new Saviour  
will emerge: clean, pure, untouched  
by civilization's foul-smelling hands.  
Quietly reared in Nature's most guarded  
and sacred den — the desert.  
Alone, He suckles silence and gathers  
strength for the rapidly approaching  
hour when He will walk on sacred ground.  
The hour is not yet right,  
The Son is not yet matured,  
But when the time has come, such a storm  
the world has yet to know will sweep the  
Earth barren, and it will be as it was in  
the beginning: Dark, Desolate, Devoid of all life.  
Then shall He walk the Earth and sow His seed in  
the new soil, and from it will grow the Almond Tree.  
And from this will bloom His Son: the  
quiet, pink, sweet-smelling ALMOND BLOSSOM.

# “Orate, Fratres. . .”

*By Betty A. Dougherty*

Brooding in my own soul-silence  
I played the mass of the faithful,  
Responded the appropriate mumble,  
And fled in terror  
Before Communion.

Each Sunday came an iron bound barrel  
With its chalice above  
Spilling wine  
Through the century-tired air  
Of the dead brotherhood.

In a kitchen moment I turned  
To face Monday's berry thief.  
“Body of Christ,” she said  
And offered the raspberry host.  
“That's probably as close to blasphemy,” they started,  
But I had already felt Amen.

# Stark Blind

*by Edward McGinnis*

I can see the evening sky;  
    what do the blind believe?  
Can man explain reality  
    that he cannot perceive?  
Could any senseless star exist  
    if every man were blind?  
Are day and night but images,  
    impressions on my mind?

I won't accept reality  
    as only sense-expressed;  
My thoughts toward a higher truth  
    can never be suppressed.  
Existence cannot end at death  
    with the soul yet unresolved;  
If nature uses death for life,  
    is spirit just dissolved?

Can the mind believe outside itself  
    is actuality,  
Or must the mind depend on sense  
    to know reality?  
Are truth and good, love and honor  
    only sense-impressions;  
Dare we find that values are  
    just meaningless expressions?

If existence ends where death begins  
    is fear of death excused?  
I may be blind; stars may exist,  
    but maybe you're confused;  
You'll never prove that stars exist  
    when blind refuse to see,  
But even worse than blind are those  
    who see too readily.

# Acceptibility

*by Ed McGinnis*

Should I swear I am not now  
Nor ever have been?  
If I were one, I would not hesitate;  
If not, I may, but who's to say  
I must if I object?

## On The Japanese Poets

*by James Gallagher*

### *Haiku*

Nocturnal traveler  
Listen well to the frigid,  
Still air, but pause not.

### *Tanka*

Fat Guardian frog,  
Perched on moss-carpeted rocks,  
Intently watching  
A rainbow-winged dragon-fly,  
Leaps, only to split the moon.



# Resurrection

*by Matt Fliss*

Some say there'll be a second rais'in  
I cannot help but hope a primal prune  
May loose the bowels of the earth  
And purge it of the hate  
And even urge it to the better state  
Of emptiness.

# Untitled

*by Matt Fliss*

When in the long and lonely hallways of my thought  
I stumble on some dusty memory  
Or find some ball that once with childhood's  
    joy did roll across Summer into Fall  
I stop, recount my ways  
and think of all the doors that could have open stood  
and brought a little light into the hallways of my night.

# Last Letters

by Neil Brown

April 7

Dear Alma,

A lot has happened since I last saw you and I thought, or rather hoped that you would want to be informed of my present condition.

As it stands now, I'm supposed to be suffering from "severe melancholia brought about by deep emotional misgivings." I imagine that to most of the people who know me that would sound foolish as, according to my Doctor, I usually put forth the illusion of well-being but I don't think those who were capable of filtering through the screen I put up would be surprised at the good Doctor's diagnosis.

The man next to me tried to kill himself last night and they put him into the cooler. Sometimes I try to convince myself that the people with the really serious problems are in "max" but the bars on the windows are a constant reminder of my true state of- - - - - (I was going to say mind but I remembered that I dropped that word from my vocabulary, or more precisely, it dropped me.) I guess we are all capable of what Schartzbach (that was his name) tried to do, although I seriously doubt that I could ever muster the courage to pound my head against the floor. I wonder what tortured him so much, what his "raison d'etre" was.

My parents were here last week and for me the hardest thing to face is the awful feeling that I have somehow disappointed them again. Perhaps it's an unrealistic outlook but right now I think I'm entitled to it.

Alma, remember when we took off from classes and hit out for New York? I think that was about the biggest decision I ever made in my life. Everything else melts into one great puddle and I just can't remember what I did, Alma. Could it have been that futile?

Gary

June 23

Dear Alma,

My Doctor grows more and more perceptive which is why I dislike him so much. It isn't easy to have another person crawl into you and do the things that you're suppose to be able to handle yourself, especially when he enjoys doing it.

There is nothing to grab on to here, nothing to fasten myself to. It's like living in a world of jello. I've finally found out what despair is, Alma. It has no shape or form and it's empty, but it's always there. I looked into the mirror yesterday and I didn't recognize anything. It reminded me of that scene in "1984" when Smith stares at himself and doesn't know who he is looking at.

I'm trying very hard to be coherent but there are so many images clouding my vision that I guess it's impossible. They took some of us into town last week-end and I had the strangest feeling that I didn't belong there with all those people who eat and sleep and live. I'm living in a nightmare, Alma.

Gary

Sept. 2

Dear Alma,

They are moving me into max. I smashed my mirror this morning and they probably thought I was going to kill myself but I broke it because it was empty. I looked in it and there was nothing there, Alma, it was empty! What's happening to me? I think I must be dead.

To Miss Alma Foreman:

Enclosed are letters addressed to you that were found among the effects of Mr. Gary Sorenson. They are being forwarded at the request of his family.

Yours Truly,  
Dr. Jason Riskovsky  
Adm. Mount Mckenna State Hospital  
for the Mentally Ill

# Some Days It Just Doesn't Pay. . .

*by Earl Orcutt*

Here's to the days when nothing goes right!  
You walk out the door and you turn on the light,  
Your laundry comes back and the slacks are too tight,  
Your best ball-point pen just refuses to write.  
Yes — here's to the days when nothing goes right!

Here's to the days when the gadgets attack!  
Your typewriter ribbon gets everything black,  
Your car has a flat and you can't work the jack,  
You call home collect and don't get your dime back.  
Yes — here's to the days when the gadgets attack!

Here's to the days when your mind's in a blur!  
You go out on a date and forget to bring her,  
It's warm out so you wear a coat lined with fur,  
A history test comes — you forget when things were.  
Yes — here's to the days when your mind's in a blur!

It's surprising in one day how much can go wrong!  
When you're having a hard time the hours seem too long.  
But there's nothing to do — problems come by the throng,  
And you start to suspect that you just don't belong.  
But still, what can you do? You can just go along.

## The Realm of Ideas

*by Ed McGinnis*

The islandic dreams of man cannot drift with the sea —  
Though anchored and uncharted, almost forgotten,  
Always there — intruding — destroying —  
Rippling the fine watery texture of the mind.

# A Draggin' Tale

*by Earl Orcutt*

There was a little dragon  
In those long-gone days of yore,  
Who felt his spirits laggin'  
'Cause his life was such a bore.

He went looking for excitement  
On one sunny afternoon.  
He did not know what a fight meant,  
but he found adventure soon.

He had walked for half a day,  
Then sat down to rest in clover,  
But for this he had to pay,  
And his search at last was over.

For he sat down on a bee,  
Which was buzzing in the sun.  
So it stung him on the knee,  
And thus began the fun!

The dragon slapped it with his tail!  
The bee stung him on the ear,  
Which made the dragon wail  
For the countryside to hear.

The dragon said, "I know!  
I'll make smoke until it goes!"  
But the dragon was too slow,  
The bee stung him on the nose.

The fight went on for many hours,  
'Till it was too dark to see.  
The dragon called on all his powers,  
But he never got that bee!

# A Student's Prayer

*by Edward McGinnis*

O Lord, Scourge of Sinners, Opiate of the Poor,  
Sanction for all Winners, and Apology for War,  
We lift our minds to Thee for aid amidst our quest  
To keep this country free from all that we detest.  
The older generations have all been led astray;  
They've split man into nations and so to You we pray:  
Damnation to our armies! Turn our other cheek!  
Prove to all our enemies that now we are so weak  
That we will never be a threat and then they will decrease  
Their deadly, silly armament. Mankind will live in peace!

But God, alas, we realize Your works are more discreet  
And dreams so seldom crystalize to satisfy complete.  
The most, Dear Lord, that we expect is actually quite less —  
Just let us have our self-respect by keeping us 2-S.  
Please, never let them take us from this life of peace we love;  
Make them take the brave and dumb that we feel so above  
For we're Tomorrow's leaders and we must stand aside  
So when that future day occurs, we can praise those who have died.

# Sonnet Of The Sphinx

*by Edward McGinnis*

When man begins his life upon four legs,  
He dreams and heeds the word by which God begs  
For love and understanding of the right,  
And exercises his internal sight.

When on two legs at noon his spirit rises,  
It also sinks beneath the compromises  
Required by the culture of mankind  
Who poisons creativity of mind.

When three legs carry man into the dusk,  
He tears away his old and useless husk —  
Attempting to regain the leg he had  
When seeking truth as the quadruped lad.

Man dies attempting to be born anew;  
Twilight and dawn are similar to view.

# Ad Infinitum

*by Ed Luft*

"What a handsome child he is," they declared on his first birthday. "What large feet and big blue eyes. He'll be a big man someday."

He grew into boyhood and was a happy child, winning the hearts of everyone he met. He excelled in school, displaying a great promise for the future.

His adolescence was also happy. He looked with scorn upon the acne-scarred faces of his contemporaries; he was not one of them, not with his creme-white flesh and flawless poise, and he was sought after by the most attractive females . . . .

He grew into manhood, married, and attained a high position in the social scale. He was the dashing knight in his shining armour, tasting the spoils of the upper crust of American society.

Old age; The Knight grew weary. His armour became tarnished. His hair dulled and thinned, and he lost his teeth. He became irascible, he found fault with his friends, his job overcame him, his children were a burden, and his wife nagged him. Soon his friends deserted him. He lost his money, then his wife left him, and soon he sold the house.

At age sixty he was a mental cripple in an institution, forgotten by all who once had loved him and watched him grow. No longer did he think; The nurses bathed him, dressed him and fed him supper. He stared blankly from the window to the empty courtyard below.

There was a simple ceremony when he died. They lowered the cheap coffin into the earth . . . it was a ceremony conducted by people he had never met. A priest and several nurses were there, present only out of duty.

And when they had turned away from that melancholy scene, the nurses chattered busily like happy birds, about boyfriends and warm, sun-filled week-ends at the beach, and of Jack who bought a new Cadillac, and of Sandra who would have her baby soon.



# Damon

by Hazel Hulsizer

"I am old, you know," Damon said seriously.

"You don't look so old," I replied. For he didn't. He was big and all bronze, with curly hair and an unkempt beard. He laughed, making his blue eyes squint while showing straight white teeth.

"But I am, old in experience. I've lived hard. I've wanted to see, hear, feel as much as I can stand. I've wanted to put it down on canvas." He gave the painting on the easel before him a stroke, and with a quick movement of dissatisfaction threw his brush to the rock floor. We were both on the rock promontory overlooking a restless sea. He looked at the sea now. I was sitting on the jagged shelf facing the easel, the sea, and him.

"I've painted the sea in all its moods for twenty years, but I've never yet got what I've wanted. All my paintings are unfinished. I want to finish this painting! I want this one to be perfect!" He was shouting though I was only ten feet away. He always talked very loud; in fact, he roared. He would do that even if I weren't there, and I can imagine him ranting alone on the ledge, the sea echoing below.

He was pacing also, his sandaled feet not minding the protruding rocks beneath them. Because he had so much nervous energy and I had heard this same speech so many times in the past, his voice became a loud indistinguishable rush of sound. I just sat there, feeling the sun on my skin, and gazing steadily before me. After a while he looked in my direction and returned to the painting. However, he did not smile.

The same thing always happened after these outbursts. First he would stand motionless, his white bathing trunks and white silk shirt gleaming in the sun, and then he would pick up the brush, taking care to clean it with a cloth. He would rub out, retouch, start again. That was how he painted me. And I would never look at the painting, ask about it, ask questions about his life or his work. I would never intrude into that delicate area which concerned the balance of his emotions.

In spite of this attitude, we did talk. When we did, it was mostly about the resort people in our particular part of the coast of Maine. We had both wanted to get away from them; that is why we chose the rugged face of cliff hanging over the sea. Both of us had claimed the cliff as a place apart, and neither of us would give up its wild, water-lashed beauty. In the beginning there was a defiance between us. I stayed because the sea foamed on the beach below, the sun baked the rocky cliff, and, most of all, because I did not want him to think I was afraid of him. He stayed to paint. I don't know when exactly he began to paint me instead of the sea. It was such a natural development, as if he always had been there painting me, as if the cliff were the whole world.

And so he painted me all summer long. Just the one painting. When the wind blew cooler and the tourists started to leave, I could feel him becoming afraid he wouldn't finish. The outbursts would be more frequent, and, at times, I knew he wanted to pick up the canvas and hurl it to the ground. But he always checked himself, he could not be defeated.

"My art is a struggle. The experience that filled my life was really only a waste of the time I could have used to paint. You see, I haven't learned anything from it- my blank canvases still stare at me. When I was young, I guess I was running away from those canvases, filling up the minutes with trying to find out what matters. It's the blank canvases that matter! Through them I can release what's inside of me, but I don't have lots more empty minutes. So I must finish this painting!"

Surprisingly, our long days together didn't turn into harsh autumn but into mellow Indian summer. And one day Damon smiled at me. "Is the painting finished?" I asked. "No, my paintings are never finished and this one is no exception." Seeing my disappointment he added: "It looks like you a little around the nose."

It was then that I looked at the offending work. What I saw was a young frightened face staring at me out of blue gray maze. "The nose is mine." My voice broke a little on the words.

"Yes."

"Maybe the next one-" I couldn't tell him how beautiful and true I thought it was.

"Yes, the next one," he answered.

I returned his smile and walked slowly away. Later, when I was far from Maine, I wondered why, after all his turbulence, he was suddenly so calm.

# Steps To Conscience

*by Anthony C. Orsi*

The smoker was dragging,  
With mouth corners sagging;  
White bubbles of Sodom  
Emerging inside.

Bo Diddley's blues shout  
Encouraged the Sad out;  
Pronouncements by Satan  
Suggested the ride.

Salvadore's smile  
Had opened the stile;  
What more now, he thought,  
But to walk on inside?

It was done, then, and finished.  
The euphoric diminished;  
With Dis now the victor,  
Sal kissed him, then cried.

# Tired, Happy Child

*by Anthony C. Orsi*

The eyes, embraced by the watery  
trap doors of pink,  
Followed the soap suds  
mount up in the sink.  
A fudgicled fist,  
Quite smeared to the wrist  
with the long day's memory  
written in the finger paint  
of innocent kidtype tickles,  
Did not resist  
The washing of Today;  
Because youth's mind  
Spells out "Tomorrow"  
Today is quick,  
There is no sorrow.

# Haunted House

*by Michael Kaufman*

A husk, in a life after death  
stands quiet and gaping  
while youthful presence fingers  
once-youthful-pasts  
and trespasses on sacred places.

With tragic serenity, it remains  
under a fleeing moon and world  
an empty hour-glass  
for while diapers and death-sheets unfolded  
within its guardian lap  
it stood silent  
and without a sound when  
laughter and teasing and  
canes of wood  
and of candy  
rolled out the door  
in a day.

“Boo!”

“That’s where Old Hornsby made the hooch!”

“Sssh!”

“Over here, quick” . . . . . In the fireplace.”

Smash, its last pane  
of glass is sent scuttling.

Night-draped bruises lie still  
while its wings take up frustrated flutterings  
spanked by the wind.

The love seat is an Indian barricade  
and the pot-bellied stove had a foot in its mouth today.

“Bang!” A good guy cracks the numbness

“Bang! You’re dead, you’re dead, you’re dead!”

# Implosion

*by Anthony C. Orsi*

What she said crushed unspoken plans  
of ideal joy, grinding them to magenta pulp.  
Her blindness gouged out the meat of my hopes:  
a vile and bitter goulash.  
Unthinking words stabbed my bony shell and  
some thin juices of memory were all that  
nourished the pulsating, rawly naked cells.  
Treachery through words pierced my surprised mask,  
exposing not a face, but a hysterical skull beneath.  
Her emotional cataract jabbed in the blade,  
mangling my beautiful dream more than  
Clytemnestra's plans and act did Agamemnon's bath.

What will she say when the sky rolls up at the edges,  
describing the shrinking of all horizon's hope  
and  
making an ugly sound, like a carp sucking in  
death?  
Will her stomach fall to the ice chips  
of my now deflated faith  
when her sky turns purple,  
like a sea robin's liver?

## When Deviant Becomes Norm

*by Anthony C. Orsi*

When deviant becomes norm,  
In Nature there's storm;  
Tornado of mind and senses  
With Nimrod on the PA system.  
So that Man's ways might be pristine once more  
(as J. J. Rousseau said) on Vice shut the door:  
Keep Leisure and Instrumental Conditioning out!  
T. Veblin and B. F. Skinner would cry,  
But the neglected mother of the Manchild,  
Nature, would be freed from jail,  
    returning home to  
Dirtyfaced kids and daddy-o Time,  
Only to be kicked in her varicosed legs  
For being what she is,  
And nothing more.  
This, then, or shall we let her suffer in  
Peace? Who is the judge who will  
Condemn her to tortured freedom?  
Is he the same who freed her to the  
Smiling damnation of her family's neglect?

# Is Beauty Dead, Too?

*by Jay Ruckel*

Plato's Triad is in grave danger of crumbling amidst the humdrum of our expedient society. TRUTH has become an anachronism in this Age of Relativity — an idealistic illusion left over from the waning Age of Absolutism. Haunted by the ghost of specialization, we dedicate ourselves to the specific while half-heartedly abandoning the general. We can learn facts, but TRUTH will never be ours. GOODNESS has been wounded first by Charles Darwin's findings and then by Sigmund Freud's introduction of the unconscious mind. It's bad enough that man is only another animal, but it seems that he is a perverted one also. Instead of the lord of all beasts, he may be only a lackey. It seems that man is out on a limb on the tree of evolution, and this tree certainly provides no nourishment for GOODNESS. Has BEAUTY also suffered in the last twenty-two hundred years since the death of its foremost champion from Athens?

We are all scrambling in a state of decay. Lines of communication have been severed. Heroes are only for fools. Sinking in the muck and slime of our own inadequacies, we look up to nothing or no one. God is dead. Man would like to die too, but he just doesn't have the guts. The Western World is searching for an instant means to bliss — pill, sugar cube, bottle, hypodermic needle — or a calculated, sophisticated mode of transportation along the respectable road of aesthetic appreciation. The Hindoo guru, the Greenwich Village "acid-head," the San Francisco dope addict, the Melanesian tribal dancer, the University of Rochester aesthetics professor, and the average United States citizen with a can of beer in one hand and the tuning knob of his television set in the other — all have one thing in common: their desire to attain a "disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone." In most cases, possibly in every case, this object is the SELF. The majority of our problems and anxieties arise from the fact that we take ourselves too seriously. We build castles for our egos in order to protect them as well as to show them off. The walls are impenetrable; the fortress is indomitable. But what precious secrets are we concealing in the dungeon? When the treasure chest is opened, we find nothing but cobwebs. Even the anticipation of Pandora's Box is nothing but a myth. In short, we don't have enough food inside our castles — we must



venture into the world of reality in order to remain alive. We simply cannot continue to burrow inside ourselves indefinitely. How wonderful it is to "step outside of ourselves" for a moment and contemplate disinterestedly and sympathetically our own image as a Hamlet on stage, a David in marble, a Christ on canvas, a Til Eulenspiegel in musical notation, or a James Bond on page and screen. All of these media are conducive to flights of imagination. The effects are the same as those of an LSD "trip", a drunken binge, or a spiritual revelation of God. The aesthetic object becomes "personified" in the sense that it has a significant life of its own. We enjoy a particular brand of satisfaction by abandoning our own existential mess temporarily and tasting the sweetness of this new vicarious existence.

Imaginative soaring is necessary to aid us in our constant war with reality. The foundation of raw human existence seems to be built upon the four corners of despair, boredom, futility, and loneliness. Our lives are firmly rooted in this adversity. Consequently, we structure our personalities so that this ugly framework is well hidden by an impressive facade. We may as well smile because it is futile to frown. Feign happiness. Find something to chase — like BEAUTY or TRUTH — and devote your entire life to the endless search. By doing so, we find "meaning" for our lives. However, when we finally stop to rest or to examine, the stench of reality stops us cold. We become bored, lonely, overcome with despair and futility. And the search begins all over again. The facade is reconstructed diligently, but we never lose sight of our fundamental human dilemma.

Society sanctions various fantasies and condemns others. Both the religious experience and the aesthetic experience are acceptable; drunkenness and narcotic addiction are prohibited. Insanity, the epitome of imaginative flight, is punished with social rejection. Castles are locked from the outside, and the inhabitants are left to mental starvation. These social "do's" and "don'ts" emphasize the genuine as opposed to the artificial in relation to the original stimulus. Religious and aesthetic experiences consist of a subjective response to an inward stimulus. This is "genuine" and agreeable. Alcohol and marijuana are objective stimulants. They are "artificial" and taboo. But is this reasoning valid? Which is better — a "counterfeit" dream induced by nitrous oxide in a dentist's chair or the same dream which is a result of "natural" sleep? Is there a difference, or is society fabricating needless lines of discrimination? The objective similarity seems to bring forward evidence against the justification claimed by society.

BEAUTY has also been affected by our Age of Mechanical and Electronic Entertainment. Contemporary standards of excellence are based upon Nielson Ratings, Oscars, Academy Awards, and Best Seller lists while aesthetic criteria are neglected. Popularity is the measuring stick. Quality is sacrificed to quantity. We are exposed to little beauty except that which is programmed for us on our vacuum tubed, transistorized T.V. sets. Perceptive senses are dulled and diluted. We are doped into dupery, working our way toward the oblivion-bent "soma" of the Brave New World.

Poetry is dying because it isn't objective. It demonstrates no significant correlations with the scientific method. Its topics of love, hate, courage, fear, anger, forgiveness, life, and death cannot be measured accurately to the nearest micro-millimeter. Poetry accomplishes nothing but stirring up the emotions. Painting tends to be too human. It exhibits many useless flaws which can easily be avoided by the instamatic, super-duper, self-adjusting, self-regulating, self-snapping Polaroid Camera. Or Kodak. The threat of automation has even reached the depths of the artist's studio. Music has slipped from its previous status of art to that of a craft. It is used in functional film scores or by the Muzak Corporation to make the customer linger longer and buy more. Musical spigots permeate the atmosphere. The concert hall has been transported ersatz to every department store.

Beauty implies an emotional response, but there is no room for emotion in a world of machines. It simply is not functional. Anything without purpose has no place in contemporary society. Thus, the aesthete is already antiquated, and aesthetics will soon be dead before it has even had a chance to live. There is one flicker of hope, however, and that is to make the study of aesthetics a science. A simple answer. The only problem is finding a satisfactory method of objectifying the subjective. This would elicit a union of the two realms in which the objective would reign over all existence. If this solution is not impossible, I would certainly consider it to be an undesirable sacrifice.

In the final analysis, aesthetic appreciation is one method of escaping from reality. "Psychical distance" is a result of man's inability to face his own existence. He needs either a mirror image to see himself disinterestedly or a window to look away from himself. The aesthetic object satisfies his need. He can contemplate the object without committing himself to a serious involvement. The goal is to lose himself, to drown in a temporary sea of existential oblivion. Seen in this light, aesthetics becomes a rationalization and

a study of making excuses. Its primary value is as a means of escape. One might as well initiate a new course in the college curriculum: Inebriation 206 — the fine art of getting drunk. However, society would disagree; and society makes the rules. We play the game according to those rules, or we don't play at all.

The aesthetic experience is essentially irrational. The undertaking of a rational analysis of this process is just about as absurd as rational proofs for the existence of God, a trans-rational being. In Freudian terms, the aesthetic experience is a form of sublime sublimation. It is a dream life. But the question arises: "Which is the *real* existence?" Can we distinguish between truth and illusion? Can we?

# A Point Of Honor

*by Lex Zaleta*

The verdant moss silently gave way beneath Yuo's feet, then sprang up again as he moved swiftly through the woods. His mind raced. Visions of honor and glory swam gaily through his head, and he could picture the surprised look on his brother's face when he returned home a man. His return would mark the end of his brother's domination and the beginning of equality between them. The shadow of doubt momentarily blotted out his elation. "What if I should fail in the assignment that I am about to receive?" he wondered aloud. It was a silly question for a ninja to ask, and Yuo dismissed it quickly. Glorious visions began flooding his brain again, but these daydreams were halted abruptly when he reached the edge of the training camp.

Yuo stopped at the perimeter and slowly surveyed the scene before him. Young men were running through their daily ninjitsu training. These were other Japanese youths whose goal was the same as Yuo's: train until their prowess merited them an assignment from the master. And train they did! They were well-versed in the techniques of silent killing, breaking and entering, self-defense, and any other skills useful to a professional killer of the fifteenth century. Yuo had been subjected to the same regimen and had qualified in every category. He had enjoyed learning escape tactics more than any other course. By stepping into two hollow bamboo pots, Yuo could easily walk across streams, swamps, and moats, even through the stunt required tremendous balance, and very few ninjas at the school could execute it. It was this superiority that had prompted the master to send for him to give him his initial assignment.

Yuo moved through the maze of men, and his long strides soon

brought him to the large bamboo hut in the center of the compound where the master resided. He hesitated a moment, then scampered inside.

The master was seated to one side of the windowless hut. A book lay open before him, and the candle on the table transformed everything in the room into grotesque figures on the walls. He motioned to Yuo to sit down. Yuo bowed deeply and complied. A little time was wasted in small talk before the men got down to the business at hand. The master spoke quickly, and Yuo's gaze was fixed intently upon the man who had molded him into a potent fighting machine. This gaze rapidly changed to one of horror as the impact of the master's words finally hit him. He peered deeply into the old man's eyes to see if he were joking, but the serious look on the master's face bore no trace of levity. The old man repeated the assignment. "Your father has become too powerful, and certain elements want him eliminated. Since you are familiar with your father's castle, this assignment falls to you. Use any means necessary to accomplish this task." Yuo sat in utter disbelief. He wanted to run out of there, forget ninjitsu, and forget his master, but something deep in his mind held him back. "I will be a man after this assignment," Yuo thought. He rose slowly, bowed in acknowledgment of his orders, and left the hut.

There was no time for reflection on the way home, a busy evening lay ahead, and Yuo had not a moment to lose. When he arrived at his hut, Yuo rushed inside and began packing his necessities. First, he brought his black chain-mail suit from its hideaway. When clothed in this, Yuo would become as black as the night itself. He stuffed the seams and pockets of his coat with all manner of material: knives, poison powders, metal punji stakes, and even bamboo sections stuffed with energy-producing food. After slipping into this gear, Yuo picked up the bamboo strips which would serve to mold his walking pots. Then a rope ladder and a wooden staff were added to the array, and all was in readiness.

Yuo knew the way to his father's castle by heart, for he had spent the first fourteen years of his life there. He would still be living there if only his brother, Wan, hadn't always received all the praise from their father. Faint memories of his father's true character crept upon him, but they were overshadowed by Yuo's lasting impression of his father as a man who was never satisfied with second best. Yuo was inferior next to his brother, and, for this reason, he had run away. Now, after seven years of ninja training, Yuo was returning home.

Suddenly, all of these thoughts left Yuo's head. The instinct built into him by his years of training had gained control of his mind

and body. When he first caught sight of the castle, Yuo knew that the time for extreme caution and stealth was nigh. A powerful lord, such as his father, would certainly have guards patrolling the thick woodland which surrounded his sanctuary. Yuo's caution proved tardy, as a menacing figure loomed suddenly ahead of him. "Kill!" snarled his attacker as he sprang toward Yuo. The guard lashed out with a vicious snap kick, and Yuo was not quick enough to dodge it. The man's foot sank into Yuo's stomach, doubled him up and sent him sprawling. His opponent grinned as he slipped out his knife and stepped in for the kill. Yuo slipped a small container from his pocket and, with a flick of his wrist, flung it at his would-be murderer. The caustic powder found its mark, and the blinded foe slumped to the ground, clawing frantically at his seared sockets. His misery ended abruptly as Yuo sank his knife into the man's back. Yuo then covered the body with branches and leaves. He pushed onward, exercising extreme caution to avoid another encounter.

The edge of the moat lay before him. Yuo remembered that it was teeming with piranhas, fierce, flesh-eating fish. Yuo slipped the bamboo strips from his pants and began fashioning them into the pots he would use to safely cross the moat. When he finished, he set the pots in the water and stepped carefully into them. He jammed his staff into the bed of the moat and pushed his way slowly across the moat. The piranhas were striking at the pots in quest of the food that they sensed was near. They almost caused him to fall once, but Yuo managed to retain his precarious position. When he reached the other side, the fish disappeared into the merky depths. Yuo continued until he was near the castle wall. A rope ladder with a grappling hook at the top took off for the lone window on that side of the castle. It caught hold, and Yuo quickly scampered up the sheer castle wall and slithered through the narrow window.

Swiftly and silently he made his way through the halls that he knew so well. His father, like the halls, would not have changed in these seven years. He lived like a prisoner shut away from friend and foe alike. Yuo thought that his father would surely be meditating in the cubicle at the end of the passage. Yes, there he was, sitting quietly at the table and reading by candlelight. Yuo recognized the scene as one from his boyhood, and he thought of running to his father and embracing him. Then another picture came into focus. It was the same scene, only this time his brother was the object of the old man's affection. Yuo's ninja instinct instantly took control of his body. Yuo slipped out his long knife and lunged toward his target. The old man turned to meet his attacker, and, just as the knife descended, a knowing look flashed across his face. He slumped to the

floor, gasping and twitching violently. Yuo knelt beside the dying man and calmly slashed his jugular vein, then stood and watched as the blood oozed from the limp body. He retraced his steps to the castle window and descended to the moat where his bamboo pots were waiting. He did not allow himself to think of what he had just done.

As he recrossed the water, Yuo could already hear the cries of excitement issuing from the castle, and he knew that his crime had been detected. A moment later, the guards were on the bank behind him. Their yells made Yuo try to hurry his retreat, and his feet suddenly spread apart. Before he could regain his balance, an arrow ripped into his thigh, and blood spurted quickly from the wound. "I can't stop now," Yuo repeated again and again as his leg throbbed. After what seemed an eternity, Yuo reached the opposite bank. He discarded the pots, pulled the arrow out, and hobbled along the path in a frantic effort to escape.

The relentless pursuit of his father's guards was beginning to tire Yuo. "They must be stopped!" he exclaimed. He reached into the fold of his coat and pulled out a handful of those punji stakes which always land with one sharp prong pointed skyward. The path behind him was soon littered with these devilish devices. Yuo had traveled only a short distance when cries of anguish pierced the air. His thin-sandaled pursuers had not stopped in time to avoid the stakes and had run right onto them. Yuo thought that the painful puncture wounds would prevent further pursuit so he decided to rest and treat his own wound. He dragged himself off the road into a small thicket. He had hardly begun to bind his torn flesh when his sanctuary was invaded by a figure clad exactly like himself. Yuo grabbed his staff and turned to defend himself. The staff slipped from his grasp, and a smile crept across his face as he recognized his older brother, Wan. Yuo was filled with excitement and pride as he related his story. "I am a man now, too, Wan. Now we can live together as equals!" Yuo almost shouted. His enthusiasm was not shared by his brother who stood motionless and stone-faced. Yuo could not understand his brother's silence. "Wan, don't you see? I'm a ninja now and that makes me a man!" Yuo found himself yelling loudly to make his brother understand, yet Wan stood unmoving and unmoved. Yuo searched his brother's face for a clue to his silence. Had Wan come from the castle to avenge his father's death? Yuo pondered this possibility for a minute, then a knowing look crept upon his face as he caught sight of the knife plunging toward his chest. As it nestled into his ribcage, Yuo leached forward and fell. His brother knelt beside him long enough to slash his jugular vein, then he arose and walked back toward the castle alone.

# HIPPIE SOLO

*by James Morgan*

Ryan McKinley awoke suddenly and uncomfortably. He could sense that something was terribly wrong, but for the moment sleep was still shielding him. During a few seconds which seemed interminable his drowsiness cleared away to reveal the cause of the menacing sensation. It was the pain in his hands: a happening in his mind had caused him to agonizingly wring his hands as one helplessly watching his house flame-away. Their resting position made them look broken at the wrist and spastic, an unendurable position which caused them to grow numb and ache. Satisfied as to what had awakened him, Ryan proceeded to again induce sleep. As he tenderly massaged and worked his wrists his mind grew stark, black, and shaken.

A thought clawed for his acceptance like a marauding dog at a rabbit warren, and like a rabbit's inability to fend off the dog, Ryan succumbed to the thought. Wincing, he recalled the last time his



hands and wrists awakened him so cruelly — an angry young man at home in bed. He had awakened with the conviction that he needed to rebel, against college, his parents, routine — just rebel! His freshman year having just been completed at a small home-town school, he had rejected the idea of his summer job. The bank's gray check-cancellor the size of a typewriter loomed monotonously whirring. Its open slit-mouth was never satisfied and its keys beckoned to be punched. Ryan was convinced that the machine laughed when he pushed the wrong key, as if it knew of the consequences a week later when Mr. Katteter would summon him to his office. No, the evil thing was not going to control him for the summer.

It was then that Ryan announced at breakfast his pilgrimage to Haight-Ashbury, three hundred miles away in San Francisco. Father, when convinced that Ryan was serious, intoned: "you have concocted a resolve to absolve yourself of responsibility," and the words rang in Ryan's ears like the din of a bell to a ringer. It was the combined din of wedding and funeral bells, both equally noxious to Ryan's sensibilities. At noon he flat left.

Three hours of parental scorn, wailing, and gnashing of teeth was all that he could endure. Besides, he now had righteous indignation nudging him out the door. He had persuaded himself that he was driven to it. Long, dark, sensuous hair, with curly strands on the neck not yet grubby but on the verge; a lean solitudinous face deep with mystery and capable of bewhiskerment — beady piercing eyes, usually shrouded mist-like lest, if loosed, causing a squeam of their subject, capable of fire but most happy with a reaction towards stone-cold; a capable body; and a wallet fat with the fruits of four years of honest part-time labor, all accompanied him.

As he turned his back for the trip he ached for the inevitable "and don't come back," but had to be satisfied with the unsatisfying muffled weepings of a broken mother behind the closed door.

This thought could never be abolished by Ryan McKinley who would very much like to end it. Now wide awake he amused himself with his surroundings, overly pleased as he lounged on his straw tick.

The straw tick he had just acquired, two and one-half months after leaving home. His clanking steel bed was decidedly too bourgeois, and, capped with a commercial mattress, it was detestable. He knew no hippie shack-out who didn't prefer a straw tick. Haight-Ashbury was definitely lacking in ticks — let alone straw, and an expedition into the slums had produced this one; it was authentic. After the required washing in half Clorox and half water it hadn't disintegrated and became acceptable. The livestock district produced fresh straw which pricked through to thrill you that you were alive.

He nudged his Jesus beard (which also pleased him) into it and cackled nonsensically.

He doted on his pad. Two eight-by-twelve rooms on the fifth floor of a main-line building. The bare floor creaked and murmured as it was traversed by any one of Ryan's seven other padholders, and all eight of them held that the wood spoke to no one else. Free-speech adorned the walls which hosted a large photograph of Musten Baba and numerous cracks. The cracks were all that the barren windows shared with the walls, but the windows sometimes gave out light and sometimes smog. One room had a vacant television set with its tube and innards gouged out. In their place was an ancient, large brandy snifter with a broken rim but no cracks. Filled with water — brown, not clear — it housed a deformed goldfish called Cyclops. The eight prized it for its one-eyed deformity, and they religiously fed it mouldy bread. Solon, the oldest hippie of the eight, had held it in his mouth several times, but finally deemed it to be a too collegiate act. The hollow wooden legs of the television housed the eight's trip ticket. It served as their altar.

The other room possessed an anomaly. It was speakers and stereo and tape and records and it was dubbed "Baby Jesus." Lights were there and they all gleamed-out color. Ho Chi Minh smiled from the ceiling and provided inspiration. The hollow legs were tapped for this room and here was executed the "acid test."

*Ryan wistfully recalled* his first trip via psychedelics. He'd known the seven looking for an eighth barely three days. He didn't realize the possibility of being the eighth at the time, as his whiskers were mere stubble. They had invited him to the Baby Jesus and he hinted clumsily 'I hope it's a long trip. . . man.'

The trip began with the eight sipping Cokes with lights and stereo. ZONK! As Ryan finished his L.S.D.-spiked Coke he left. The floor was his friend as he squatted then flattened on it. Fluidity became its consistency as it gently rolled with Ryan gliding on it. He gently floated up to Ho, who opened his mouth as if to eat Ryan. Ryan quickly floated away, out of Ho's gobbling reach, and hid inside a purple light. He was warm and he cackled as he watched Solon, now yellow, float into the yellow light nearby. As it became too warm, and then agonizingly hot, Ryan shot from it and into the phonograph needle. The sound titillated him and then he was the sound, entering everyone's ears and brains and seeing their good thoughts. He saw Solon become a dog with long floppy ears of velvet — iridescent pink velvet — and was attracted to the ears which twitched slightly. But Solon saw him and was quick and ate him and he was no longer sound but saliva in the dog's mouth. Ryan flowed

around dog teeth and enveloped a bleeding eaten rabbit and enjoyed it. Everything was warm and moist and dark; he dripped to the floor, watched the dog's mouth close around its teeth, and was greeted by the seven who drank Coke. Ryan became the eighth.

Ryan's shack-out had been with him for two weeks that seemed like an age. She was with him now, also awake. She had seen his hands earlier and watched him think. He noticed her now, losing himself in her deep blue eyes and feeling like whimpering and crying. She murmured "Ris," which was now his name, and he hurt and moaned like a nerve being pinched. Emotion controlled him as he quivered and snuggled; she nipped his ear. Repulsed, the thought of rabbit meat in a dog's mouth — again his mind became stark, black, and shaken.

A noise suddenly made him listen, then he knew that the floor was talking so he mulled slowly. Realization of uneasiness always made him mull, which for him became difficult and led to a trip. The stereo came to life and he lit for Baby Jesus. Blue eyes watched and wondered and sensed as tears appeared. She rose mincing after Ryan whom she saw contemplating Solon and another; they turned with eyes on her, enjoying her tears.

The remaining five heard words from their floor beckoning them to Baby Jesus; a window was open and dark — light smog drifted on warm air. They nudged their shack-outs and drowsily joined the congregation.

Solon snarled "Ris, here's one stick; closet-up, and let's blow grass."

"Amputate the tubeless. In after we joint-up and roach," said Ryan as he and Solon left for a closet, each with a marijuana smoke.

When they returned the congregation was settled as an old Buddy Holly record revolved with the lights. They all took sugar cubes and some laid back but Ryan needed more. Blue eyes still watched him since she hadn't taken any; Ryan leaned on her small chest as he supped a second cube. He still felt rotten and when he turned-on everything was dark. He was inside a blue eye that was closed. When it opened he saw a funeral parlor hosting his dead mother who reposed in a casket. He left the eye and went inside of his mother to see. She was cold and embalmed. He ran out and away and jumped through the slit of an open window.

A crowd gathered to gape at the body. The hands were broken at the wrist and spastic. An old man with a white Jesus beard looked up and saw blue eyes in a fifth floor window. An ambulance came, taking Ryan McKinley's body to the morgue.

# Untitled

*anonymous*

who mourns for Joey  
because he died  
owing everyone except  
himself.  
debts, they say  
depts

and stand weeping

over his coffin with pocketbooks  
open and hungry.  
such a good man

but

god does not repay debtors.  
who will mourn for Joey  
because he died  
and took  
his soul with him.

# Old Books

*by Anne Aimetti*

Yellowed pages, hand-worn bindings,  
Titles long as Spanish cognomens —  
Best I love the Victorian volumes,  
Fresh with faded pastel pictures,  
Quaint with perfect, solemn people  
Staring up from speck-soiled linen  
Covers. Time and yeast will ferment  
Wine to amber ruby — liquid  
Gems — and age the finest cheese to  
Mellowed yellow. Time and time and  
Time again I read these fallow  
Pages and ask how far can  
Autumn hide from winter?  
Summer from the autumn? Spring  
From the summer? And all this from  
Time and time and time and binded dust.

# Art thou art?

*by David Cowan*

His thoughts are running rampant,  
as the damn thing comes unglued.  
The specks of paint now reach his tie,  
pink decorates his shoes.  
He'll plug it in and make it blink,  
It's not a silly thing.  
His name is Andy Warhol,  
and It's just a happening!

# King of the Wood

*by Leona Sokash*

Answering the summons  
of your branches, I run  
out of the warm, bright  
danger and into the safety  
of your cool shade.  
I only want to stay inside  
(or is it outside?)  
where I can lay on the  
greenness and caress your trunk.

I need no rosemary  
to recall the ecstasy  
of the rose; the hoary  
rituals are not lost  
to me since I never  
chose to jump from the  
temple and into the blinding  
wilderness where the others  
water their stones and grow their prisms.

Instead, I rise, float and fall  
in the liquid splendor  
while I hear the  
breeze softly chanting  
through the leaves the song  
of life and death.

# Helping

*by Leona Sokash*

I cut underneath  
in order to protect myself  
since I could not allow  
the lacerations to surface.

Each day I flayed her soul  
and only she and I  
saw the meager strips of flesh  
clinging tenaciously to her mind

In time those strips also  
became jelly, and then  
she began to scream aloud.

The others heard her then.  
Too late. (Some people are  
so stupid as not to look into  
the face.)

One gently led her on,  
but no one could heal the  
vermilion wounds inside.

I remained and  
saw another.

# Compact

*by Leona Sokash*

I pricked my vein  
and scratched the  
red signature on  
crisp, white paper.

While the blackness  
took me in,  
the startled priest,  
shaken by the sacrilege,  
could not perform the sacrifice.  
He dropped the chalice  
and the blood stained the stone.



# Age

*by Leona Sokash*

Those old people who are wise defied life;  
They refuse to fall apart and let loose  
the beast-like anarchy of the self.  
Control, they discovered, was part of the  
secret for understanding the universe.

They also had the pride to develop  
the cohesion, resulting from the  
ability to love, which gave them the  
strength to live, and to stay whole  
after seeing  
husband die,  
first-born die,  
children fail,  
and children's children  
suffer even to the third generation.

These are the people who kept  
flames near their souls even though  
wild, ruthless hurricanes threatened  
their fire's disintegration.

They knew when to seize the  
calm, the stillness, that invariably follows.  
They knew how to intensify the pleasure  
of the blueness of the sky and  
the greenness of the earth on those  
bright days when flowers are picked.  
They knew how to endure the journey —  
too proud, too loving to surrender.

## Second Love Sonnet

*by Anne Aimetti*

So close to you I always dwell, so near  
I make my bed, if earth divides us then  
Universe unites us. I see, I hear,  
I feel, I taste, I smell through stimulation  
From your fiber. My tears are but your sweat,  
My heart is but your hand; my thoughts, your words;  
My breathing in, your breathing out. Forget  
The pain I gave you. Let us fly like birds,  
And again my ascent is your descent;  
My song is but your silence; my feathers  
But your shadow. . . The mirror has its magic spent,  
My reflection is your face which tethers  
My image to your very soul; it ties,  
It binds my blindness to your perfect eyes.

# Sincerely Yours,

*by Anne Aimetti*

I loved you all to well,  
I know. Foolishness grew  
To fondness; caring to love.  
I'm sorry life has cast  
It's web on you and me —  
I hardly recall shadows,  
Eyelashes, pitch of cough  
I loved so dearly. Good!  
I'm gone. I'll leave the past,  
The odds and ends of wine  
Gone sour, stale and bitter.  
I know, you can laugh last,  
You loved me not at all.

## Counterpoint: The Realist vs. the Idealist

*by Anne Aimetti*

...And before that was Nothing, only god  
And silent shadows slowly moving upwards  
To find mystery. Search and search for birds  
And beauty. Falling figments found the sod;  
These mystics planted seeds and kept the herds.  
The shadows sought still greater grace  
Of purer beauty over commonplace.  
The earthy shadows took dust form — stalwarts  
Of love. Persistent shadows showed no face  
And lost their gift to gain the world with Men.  
They plucked their eyes and tried to pray 'amen';  
Their prayer was hollow, empty like a vase.  
The stalwarts hallowed gods and learned to care  
For crops and sheep. For woman's unbound hair.

# Impressions

*by Michael R. Hamilton*

Fireflies and stardust  
Floating around.  
Brighter lights a must?  
Silence profound!

Their thoughts are drifting,  
Their minds are lazy,  
Any contagion  
Can drive a man crazy.

Reason, reason,  
Rhymes with treason,  
Risk an illegal thought?  
Penalties for being caught!

Over there. . .  
Why's he drinking?  
Five'll get you ten  
It's to keep from thinking.

Toy balloons and butterflies  
Receive more attention  
Than thinkers' cries,  
Or dreamers' invention.

Think, think,  
Maybe she'll wink.  
Bod's in a craze. . .  
Mind's in a daze.

Freud, Freud,  
A doity woid,  
He took a hex  
Off the word sex.

Fireflies dead  
And stardust settled,  
Activity in the head  
Can leave you nettled.

















