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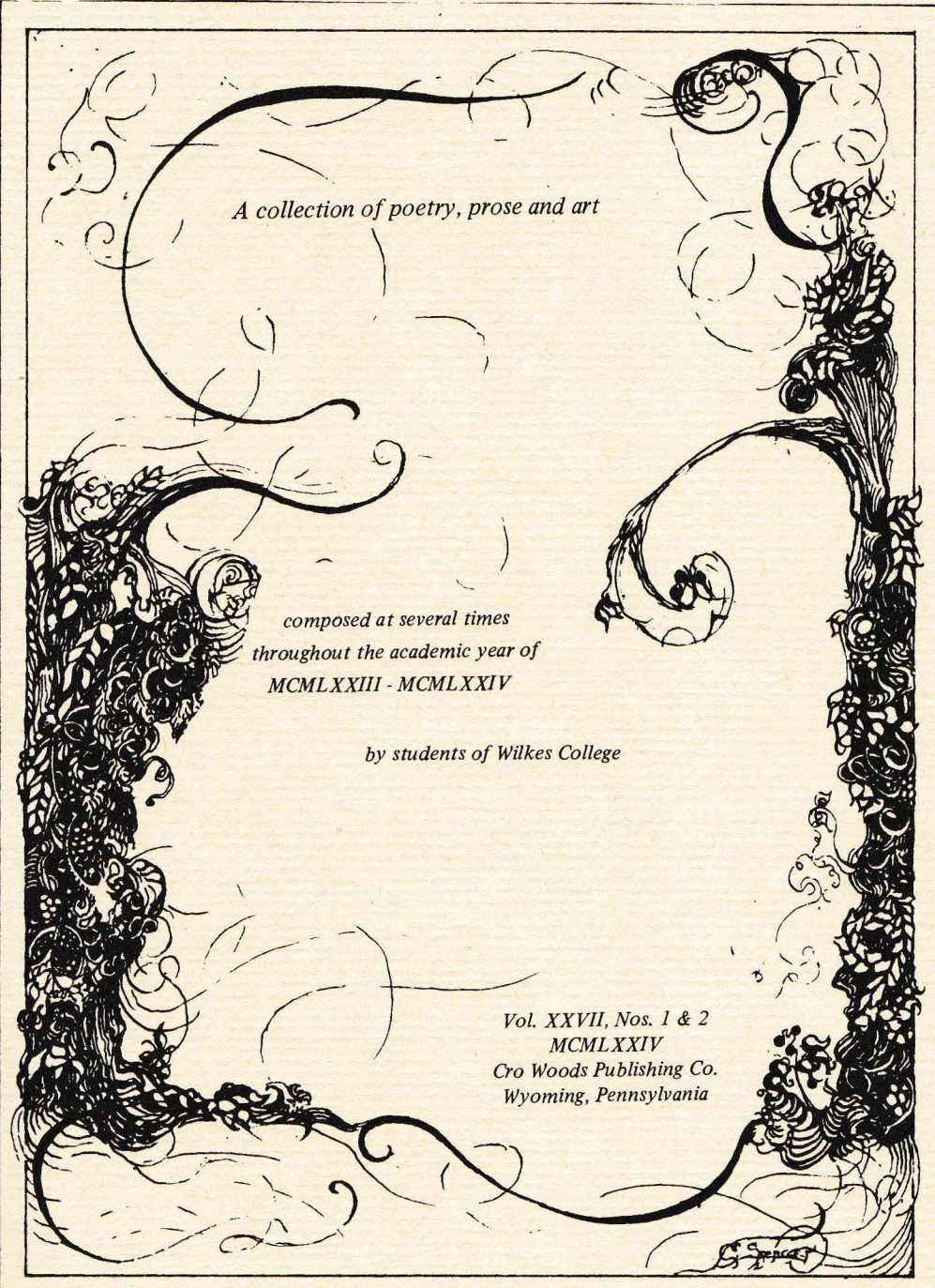
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*A collection of poetry, prose and art*

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Winner of the Manuscript Prize for Poetry  
selected by the English Department

A Poem Writ In The Light Of Consequences  
But With Full Regard For The Age



I've a casting eye on you, slimly trained  
to snatch the time of instability wherewith  
I plunge my barbs far into your fumbling  
foundations or merely dangle the implement  
'til the meeting of you with every position  
in every askew spot finds you finally upon the hook.

This instrument of death is strung, held fast by man's conceding weight.  
And waits the one that cord to pluck and dangle men twixt now and fate.

Of all the men I entreat, none is more  
pleasurably inticing than a huge man or  
woman thoroughly drenched in the  
profundities of the earth. Aside from  
the inexplicable delight I gain from  
nurturing and instructing such an  
individual in more bombastic tendencies,  
I do achieve such inexorable ecstasy  
from recounting the rings of fat on a  
leg or arm or perhaps a neck, recalling  
the delicious moment of insufferable indulgence.

But slacks the string for poets' love, and mellow chords resounding ring  
to cure such men as would scoff the tune this blind historian sings.

Am I to understand that there is no relief from  
the ceaseless wish of mankind to put aside his past!  
Is this present brood so like the rest in their culture  
devoted to the destruction of other men's pyramids!

Seas rise in swells of similar hue and grace.  
Nymphs knew of their ancient history, but would  
ride them to journey past where their own energy  
could bring them. Man would burn these seas to  
alter one swell's hue.



Now tries the cord of man of special aim to wrench more taut his vision of  
desire to place men in the dimmer light of fame by final triumph o'er

I've a plan for liberty (to see what lackless speck you are).

For this change let Man's heart be unchained from bonds of history.

No champions before you ride, no white fire columns as your guide,  
no arch angels with which to fight - unhinge the doors of day and night.

Emotive powers be resolved. Uproot, cut through mind's well tied lace  
(release these sanguine fools apace).

Sweet rime departs on Lydian airs, and clears the frieze of pathos' shade.

Then Bacchus lends us leave of cares to tap the sudden void-filled frame.

But out rips man proud Bacchus' sprite despite his favor on their sport,

And lays his soul of true delight on rocks of nowhere's farthest shore.

Last walks that manly Lord in holy light who bares the marks of their redeemed sin,  
Who by his loathed sight one shriek they cry aloud and press him to the tree again.

Sing Man the father of no man. Sing Man, the Dame of children slain.

Fling op'n the lock of heaven's door and into his own garden stroll.

Sing Man, the child of no man. Sing Man, you peerless, godless god.

Reclaim the fruit, ambrosial power, blend art and life in one regained power.

None tend that intemperate garden earth.

And dust hurls swallowing objects.

Green shrouds the plain and parches the  
molten center of this sphere.

And as Man draws lines with the Master's compass,  
that sensuous fallen angel begins to play his subtle string.

What god of heaven now can wrest Issac from his father's fate?

Cathrine Spencer



## On Venice, A Lament

I

"Oh that my head were  
waters, and mine eyes  
a fountain of tears, that  
I might weep day and night  
for the slain of the daughter  
of my people!"

Jeremiah 9:1



They are wise who sport the juicy diadem  
And revel in the broken skin of grapes.  
The bursting pap strung on the bowing stem  
Sings sweetly as the object of escapes.  
The harvest-sage, whose tongue is wise and shapes  
The frothy air with brimming fantasies,  
Totters through Neaera's tangled grove and gapes  
Upon his blasted visions in the breeze.

But, laboring at a careful art and ease,  
Rooted in the toil of Adria's fretful brows,  
The chisel and the stone strike harmonies;  
Dry harvest salts the ground where sea allows.  
Let me embrace the lunge and paw of wear  
That I may mourn though murder what we share.

Brent Spencer



## AS IT HAPPENED



Once upon a time there was a sad also morose princess named Mittle Liss Laurie. She was sad and also morose just about nearly almost all of the time. To put it bluntly she was a grouch and also morose to boot. Her sister, the Hair Apparent, on her legs mostly, was just about as kind as a person can be and still not be sickeningly so. The Hair Apparent had, however, a short temper, in other words she got mad or angry quickly and with Great Dispatch, the royal dog, at her sister, Mittle Liss Laurie, on whom she would often sick the royal dog, Great Dispatch, in her fits of anger because the royal dog got mad, the King and ruler of almost all of the land that the royal palace, a split-elvel ranch style with two (count 'em, two) baths, was bult on, grew often incensed or in other words blew his top at his lovable daughters because whenever the Hair Apparent got mad or angry at her beloved sister, she was prone to smack or pummel her younger sister about the head and shoulders drawing blood and more often the ire of said sister who would then or later begin to pound upon the Hair Apparent in turn. This angered the King and their Father, who happened to be the same person, to such an extent that he was ready to take drastic measures to make the two lovable sisters cease and desist beating upon each other. He was almost nearly just about ready and willing but not quite to give them each a room of their own as ever since the time when they were babes in arms but not each others, they had slept their nights in the same spacious if not big two foot by four foot crib which was not as big as all that as they were both now nearly six feet tall if not two yards even and had to sleep standing upright and in consequence fell out of bed more often than not. The King who also happened to be the esteemed father of the two daughters who also happened to be sisters but not to their Father decided to hold a contest or tournament between or among his two often surly and/or morose offspring. He then sent a proclamation across the width and breadth of the land and also upstairs where his two beauteous if not comely even daughters were fighting or it could be said quarreling even about which one of them would get to sleep leaning up against the wall so as not to fall out of bed with such ease or lack of difficulty. The King declared unto those two girls who could also be said to be his daughters and he minced no words nor pies that whichever of the two of them that happened to be his daughters was the first not second not ever third one to crack a smile would be the lucky one who would receive not by the mails which are too slow but by royal messenger who doubled as the queen or the king's wife, a letter in a plain brown envelope that would give her whichever of the sisters it happened to be her own bed king-sized and bedroom giant-sized in a far corner of the kingdom which also happened to be the attic. Whereupon hearing the declaration Mittle Liss Laurie burst into one of her most winning also pretty smiles with all her teeth showing whereupon her sister promptly cracked her across the lips and won the contest if not the prize.

Kathryn Hadsall



# leech



1

The dread disease that is of self inspired  
More darkly lingers  
Than that which is in open duel fired  
With flashing daggers, grasping fingers.

2

The cancerous mind that to itself speaks lies  
Is breeding evil,  
Which, subtle, quickly multiplies,  
Bearing wounded children, hiddenly willful.

3

Self-seeing life, that lives but to compare,  
Soon finds perspective,  
And overthrows the hurtful unaware,  
- the blinded eye, the dull subjective.

4

Within each soul that cannot self divorce  
Are baseless visions,  
Which stand on shadows nourished by remorse  
Of guileful actions, dark decisions.

5

But I, the poet, lie in ancient place,  
The glade concealed,  
To speak in healing metaphors my case,  
- the secret fields, from shade revealed,  
To speak in healing metaphors my case,  
And foolish feel, shared fears revealed.

J. Dugan



## HARD BOILED EGGS NEVER HATCH



If we would allow our thoughts to step back to memories, to ponder for a moment the simple times, the times of eager flames and hap-hazard disposition. We might recall, perhaps a generation or two ago, our nimble youth. Such vibrant supple energies, abounding and reckless, hurried and herded together in fitfull affirmation of an effervescent universe.

The endless chatter; the stormy escapades of youth. Recall again the whim-prancer; the restless youthful soul, out-fluttering the most acrobatic of butterflies. In him pulses the senseless curiosity. We have all in our youth plucked a faithless wing; crushed the mysterious caterpillar to delight in a bellyful of mucous stuff bursting from its head, soaring across the sidewalk like a missile under foot. The spirits were free and agile. The hearts, cool and quick. We did consume, in babbling bubbling alertness, the nonsense things about us; the sensible yet to come. Like rootless tumble-weed we toppled with the gusts of our creation.

So now, the breathless vagrants of that youth, in order to pacify the faculties, indulge the witless exploration of our circumstance. Yet devouring ifs and whys with mindless hands, clawing with impatience all that surrounds us, swallowing with greedy gulps the tid-bits of our situation; constructing with timeless hearts the bric-a-brac of our fascination.

Now begins the peculiar surfacing of knowledge; a mind flood of gelatin, which seeps through the pain-thought novel; the audible murmurings of fat jeweled ladies; the humble-bumble of idoled peers.

What becomes the product of such sustained interest? What is derived from this persistent occupation? Nothing to match our youthful energy; a whirl-wind of spontenaity? We swim through the galaxy on a sea of inspiration; a mistaken aspiration; crumbling on the rude borders of despair; tied in conscious knots; we live and die, but never are we certain that our life is not death; that our death is not life.

To grip too tightly would be to crush that which becomes us, our flexibility. To hold to weakly we neglect all that we have collected. So jumbled, we stumble and tumble, we mumble, rumble, and bumble through this density that collects about us. To contain the river we build dikes and dams, we pump and strain, yet the river floods its banks, the water never crests. So let it flow freely, let it meander and spill as it will, hope it knows its own direction, hope it will eventually contain itself and rest again.

We put aside our world and dream across and beyond it — always with the notion we've somehow been forgotten, we're somehow incomplete.

What does the flux of youth know of nothingness? For those that act, nothing is not; the ears of action that will not hear a hollow moan. The language, always inefficient, always weak or flabby or drooping, always here, there and never anywhere. It rambles, maybe sometimes hinting to something, maybe sometimes knowing something it knows nothing about. A means with which to communicate our humanity. A means to scratch down impressions of something that once lived. A Hieroglyphic with no more sense than its own; sense enough! Sense enough!



To contradict becomes the race. Also, the man. To show the many faces. Energy lends itself to contradiction impressing so deeply each notion. Who can say tomorrow will be as today? Why can say it will not?

We get the urges by the gallon, impulses by the ton; blending the real and contrived. What do these exhibit but the quest; the innate anticipation; what quest? What, the quest! I feel, I think, I hope, I will, I trust, I find, I believe, I suspect, I would hope, I would wish, you would think, he would have had the sense to know more than to apply such principles to such an inventive speculation as his own, it seemed ridiculous. His theories seemed to be absolute . . . they seemed to indicate . . . they presented information (though it was tentative) it was humble. Human. How ridiculous it seemed . . . I suspected . . . I thought . . . I felt . . . I would have hoped . . . you would have thought it a shame to treat her the way he did! It's her duty! She is obligated! It is her obligation! She is committed! She was submitted. She became submissive; only to be subversive. You are corrupted! He was acquitted and allowed to live freely. To be free, he was allowed to do as he wished. Make it indicate! Point it out! In order to . . . We must . . . The ability . . . I wish to present . . . It is . . . The principles I have here suggested are the outward surgings of emotion. The directionless pulses we continually keep up so as not to become stagnant and solidified (to regain the blessings of youth). Yet we are continually fermenting, we are contained; now we may only condense and dribble.

Mac Ahmed



Poeme Inspire par 'La mort du Loup' Alfred de Vigny



Nous sommes effrayés de marcher à travers le bois noirs,  
Le silence est un monstre qui ronge à nos crânes.  
Par conséquent, nous nous marquons dans la civilisation,  
et imaginons comprendre la mort.  
(L'Hypocrisie, et moi, qui écrit, en suis coupable.)  
Mais nous sommes une sotte espèce.  
Seulement le Loup comprend,  
Il est la nature, vivant en silence en noirceur.  
Il ne tente pas d'échapper à la mort.  
Cela le rend noble,  
Car il souffre la gravité de la mort avec intensité, acceptation et  
silence.  
Par comaraison, l'homme est unanimal triste.

jeffrey cappelini



## Avery



ou are mostly large, luminous thoughts, suspended, poised  
droplets gathering enough moisture to drop.

Your squinting, cocked eye and pinched lip compelled me to question their curious position and purpose. And so I held private debates with myself for your sake. When you knew I was watching you, you looked quickly, deliberately, straight at me and smiled. Sometimes when your thoughts were far and I had forgotten all time, I could watch you undisturbed in this same position. Then we both must have looked like porcelain dolls anticipating each other's moves. Between us, I was the only one anticipating looks or words, but you were privately awaiting your own thoughts. You could have stopped the silence at any time. I could have broken the silence by asking if I did something wrong. "Did I do something wrong, dear?" It was not out of fear or a timely development into maturity that I refrained, but because I knew you were not here with me and would not be until you willed it so. So I learned not to focus on some future time when you would emerge from your nest of quiet to talk with me, but resolved, partly out of necessity, to observe the present and to watch you think.

Since I could not expect words I imagined your thoughts as words unsaid. Then your eyes and brows told of exclamation or query and were a measure of every other change in a belabored sentence. The slant of your head, whether skyward, earthbound, at short range or long, showed me your chosen perspective. Your lip indicated the intensity of your concentration in search of those perfect combinations of words to produce something, anything worthy of being attributed to fictitious imaginings. You were a man caught in the flood waters of poesy with no hope but to flounder for floating objects with which to ride past the maelstrom of ignorance and avoid the water-spouts of pride. When I decided that you had made all possible combinations of movements and thus, I thought, all possible imaginings, I waited for you to plunge out of your silence with a "Well, that's it, sorry to keep you waiting, but I'm finished now." But you never did. I would turn away thinking you might be part of the wall or bookcase I had imagined into a person but when I turned back, there you were again in that same way. I had missed something. I must look again for whatever it was you saw with those self-contained eyes.

Occasional moments of interest and awareness animated your eyes as if a charming sprite had descended in your view. Then, could this hollow time mean waiting for you too? Have you walked a distance from now to a cove where sacred rocks bleed holy ointments of understanding? And once being touched, do you meet this earth to perform that knowledge.

Your thoughts recline in crystal shells  
Whose shape abides each move to grow  
Which racing round to sate the swell  
Then sweetly drops and poesy flows.

Cathrine Spencer



Modes of the Sense of the Sibling  
(Major and Minor)



Oh, too cruel comedy,  
that wipes its runny nose  
on the skirts of an older dame;

that would gnash between razored teeth  
characters of pompous ignorance;

that would ascent the golden staircase  
to the height of fallen angels;

that would mock the mockery of the tragic  
and tear the heartless tongue assunder  
in the mock of mockery's blunder.

Oh, you elder dame  
that wipes its flowing skirts  
across the nose of a new-born babe;

that would suckle and nourish  
characters of pompous ignorance;

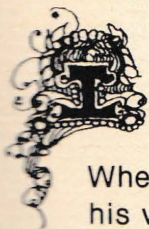
that would humble itself  
on the bottom step of God's lower throne;

that within the midst of the comic  
it sates mockery's blunder  
while itself is never torn assunder.

A.B. Nauroth



Comedy or Tragedy,  
The paradox of humourous perfection or,



Is the postlude of speech, then, to clasp the speaker in embrace?

When words flow out as rightly as they intended,  
his vision and form have nothing to do with him.

If what he has said is perfect,  
he stands thus manless before men.

He can, with humour, deny his position,  
mankind will then acknowledge him as their own.

Or he can say, "Truly it hurts to speak these words."  
Then can you say if we should pity or praise him.

He can not ignore all the perfection he sees.  
Is it not our only recourse to hold him in human love?

Cathrine Spencer



## Girl!



o you wonder  
who it is  
who stares so brightly back at you.  
in a daze

Yet sentient  
from the mirror near your face,  
unamazed,  
no sentiment.

One so calm and self-assured,  
Other now looks back in pain,  
Face so wild and then demure,  
Will you meet, you two, again?

2

At the crossroads,  
by a stream,  
in a land of rain,  
cautiously,  
in secret tryst,  
in a time insane.

J. Dugan





As once the fire burned when timbered nights  
were long,

So, too, must ashes frozen on the earth  
Flee and scatter, mix with sand and mud  
The murky ember dying in the  
morning after birth

Forgotten children —

How oft you go unnoticed on that Floor  
As day by day we fly past you  
Clipped — winged beast — we hide!  
Your song birds song that sings no more.

Yet heard again in search of wood  
when a heart is weak  
and weeping with the cold  
It stumbles on the bust that once was  
she

And foul bewildered dreams of old  
will mourn themselves  
in ash.

JP



Roaring, unsettled are the people, city, street,  
where the sound of monotony changes.

They rush but never their deadlines meet-  
as prisoners escaping from their cages.

Bickering with dissatisfaction they desire  
all their ruthless tongues obtain.

The circumstances are not that dire;  
Then why such clamor for gain?

If man is strong

Silent remain-

For not to be wrong

Quiet sustain.

Sounds shall diminish

Peace never relinquish.



## Moment



ike the Midwife of my mind  
You've brought forth issue  
from the boudoir chamber  
where rising raff clears  
silent smoke made-haze

Watch it waft upward  
Spiralling into a rococo arcadia  
of translucid twirling fantasies

Playing a joyous game  
it forms an illimitable love catena

Elsewhere,  
outside, I think  
Naked rain pummels the aberrant plateau of Catharsis  
Where big kids die weaving spurious patterned fabrics

Meanwhile,  
elsewhere too,  
a salient fleer glances briefly  
from its tremor-void  
and then escapes  
To ride the arcane realm of a clock made moment  
and pierce like an augur  
the sacred veil of habit

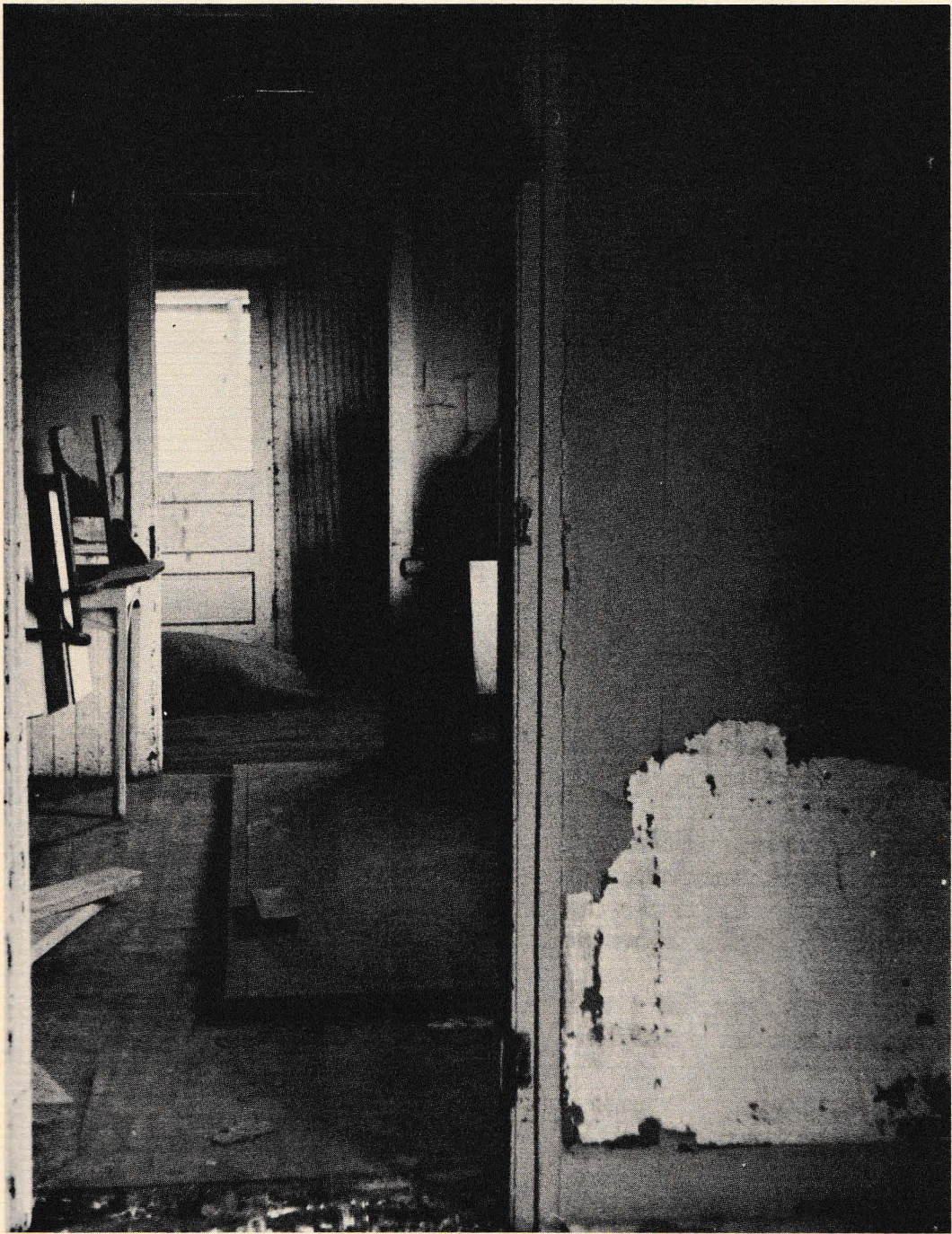


In a tizzy I see Tiu  
                    and laugh at him  
                    and his makers  
            and their imperial kingdom  
Lured by druid epigrams  
            of lurid pastel visions  
            I move among painted modulations  
            suspended by several shapes  
            of shaded chiaroscuro apparitions  
            All spinning without direction

A journeying gaze through the ming travesty  
where long before  
            Assembled herds listened unheard  
            to master hazing praising some gift  
                                or Something  
                                or Something  
                                or Something  
                                or Something

Frank McCourt





Stephen Bachak





Cathrine Spencer

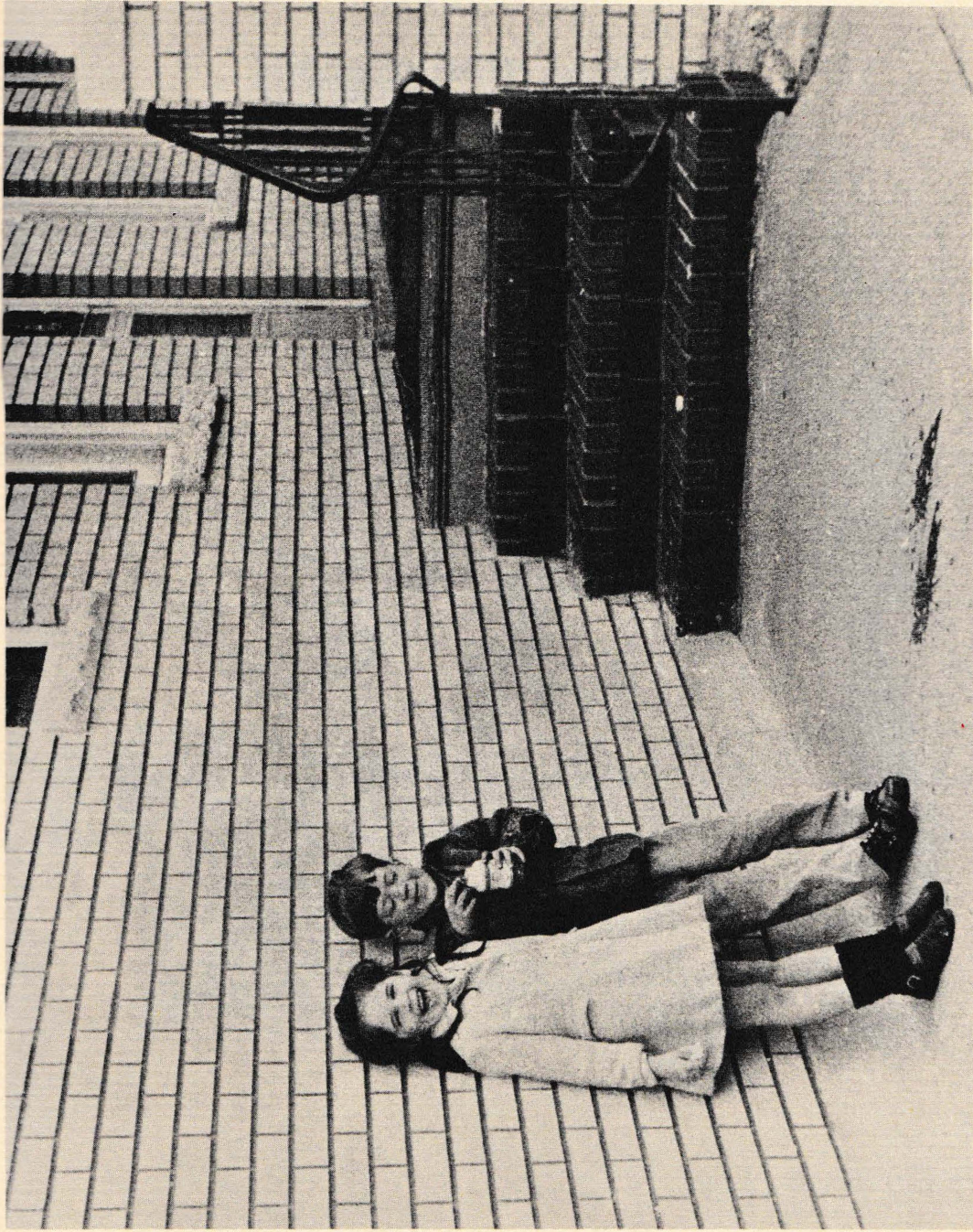
'Bound By Nature'



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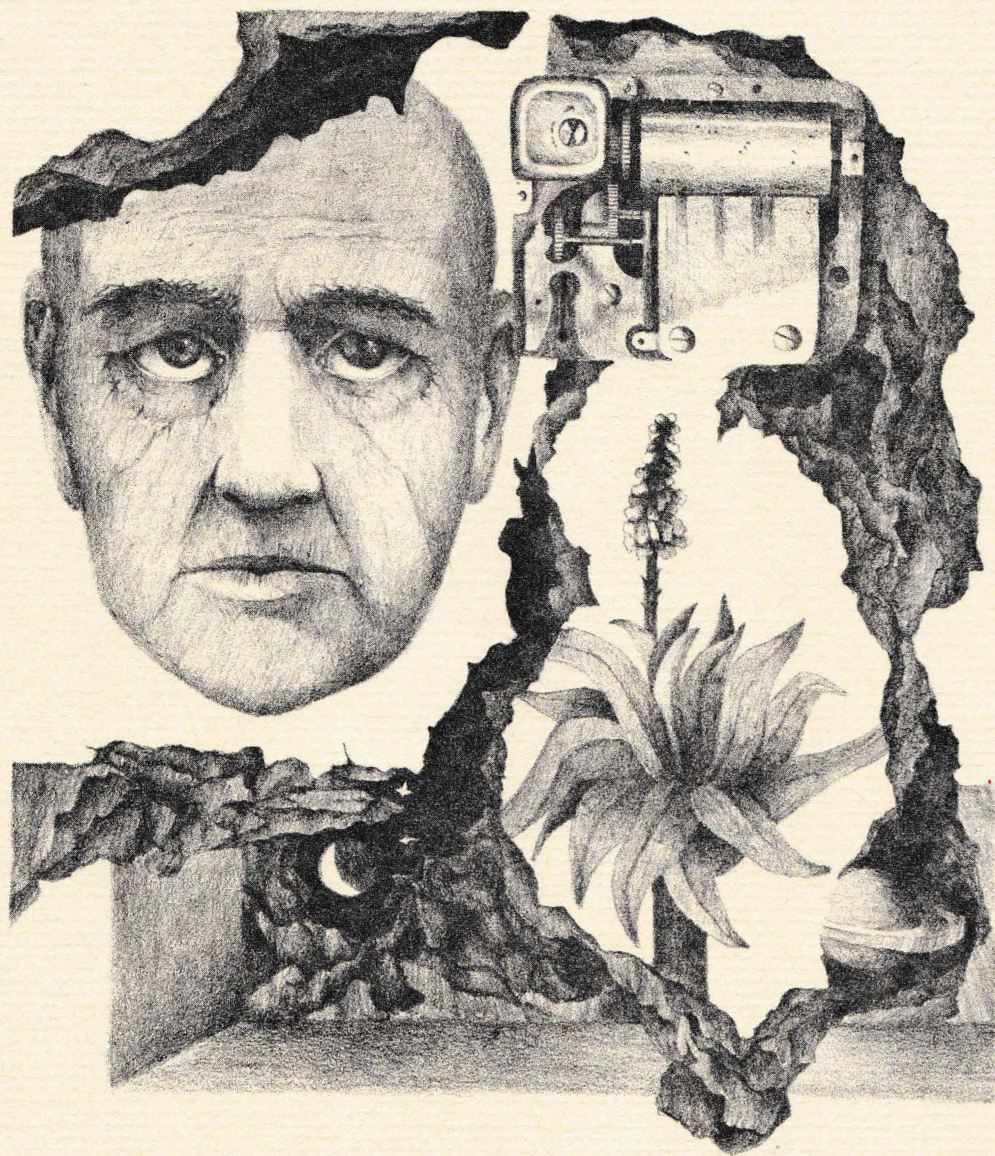






Stephen Bachak





Marilyn Jones





Lynn Steck





'Hysteria'

Cynthia Witkowski





Marilyn Jones



## Beginning



Careful neonate!  
Fresh from warm, secure,  
Familiar walls of protection  
Into a world of  
hate  
and injustice.

Warn him of this planet Earth,  
Can he call it mother?

Guide him to the promised land of  
love  
and hope.

Seek truth for this bewildered  
Product of mankind.

Brian Boston





harled hand, white head, weary black eye:  
Reaching, turning, pleading  
For an extra moment  
of loneliness -  
Salted tears mix with caked morsels  
Negligently left near the mouth  
For a later time of day  
When someone is looking - oh!  
No one calls; there are no visitors  
Here anymore -  
It matters not that clocks move forward:  
This life stands still . . .  
Still . . . Yet . . . Always . . .  
Never -  
Nothing but time to kill -  
Born evermore by whom?  
The hungry earth is ulcered and bleeding -  
This is no place for you, boy.  
Take up ground elsewhere  
Until you find  
No one has time, anymore.  
Not even you.

Karen Toslosky





There was a small kingdom in the green hills of Far Away, yet not too far away, where a king of mighty dignity ruled. He was a terrible king, a beastly tyrant who taxed his subjects beyond all of their capabilities. There were income taxes, and real estate taxes, and breathing taxes and walking taxes, and loving taxes, and living taxes, and taxes that taxed the taxes of the people who were unable to pay their taxes. And (under penalty of death) all of the king's subjects were unbearably delighted with the general economic condition of the kingdom.

Now, there is an old law among kings that prohibits anyone from becoming a king unless his father was a king. Consequently, the monopolization of this particular occupation gave vent to a lesser-known but equally ridiculous law — it was the moral right and duty of a king to uphold the law of monopolization by haranguing the public with the virtues of his lineage.

One day while he sat poring over his family geneology, noting the virtues of each successive ancestor, a brilliant thought came to him. He would present some sort of solid evidence to his subjects that would further prove his claim to kingdom. Calling the court horticulturist to his throne, the king unfolded his dastardly plot.

"We shall create a tree," said the king. "A tree of beauty and grace unsurpassed in stature and coloring. We shall graft together the finest of species, and create a masterpiece that nature herself never dreamed of. And if we fail at first, we shall graft, and graft, and graft again until it will stand tall and firm as a monument to all of my ancestral kings and their successive progeny. I shall call it The Family Tree, and I shall be the one to plant it in the most fertile of soils down near the royal duckpond where all who live in the villages below can gaze at it in awe of its noble glory."

"But, Sire," squeaked up the horticulturist, "It's not possible. I cannot produce a tree such as this: a family tree."

"And why not," bellowed the Sire.

"Well, your lordship, a family tree is only a chart on paper. It merely—"

"Merely! Merely? How dare you say 'merely' to one such as I; a king am I! And not merely a king, but a king from a long, long line of kings. I will have none of it! No, none of it at all!"

The horticulturist, cowering from these majestic vituperations, had no strong desire to lose his head over such a silly argument, and turned to dissuade his king in somewhat softer tones of explanation.

"Please, I beg of you, Your Majestic Lordship and Honorable Grace, I—"

"That's better," soothed the king. "Go on."

"Well, you see, Sir, there simply is not enough biological knowledge at this present date to transform striplings of such fine species into this wonderfully endowed symbol of might and nobility that you so desire. It, a, well; it's impossible."

This startling bit of horticultural heresy resolved the king to use more productive means of persuasion with the intention of instilling enough confidence in the horticulturist so that the poor fellow might at least give it a try.



"Off with his head!" shrieked the king, and instantly an overzealous executioner removed the aforementioned — forthwith. The enraged king, watching his hopes roll across the castle floor, again let loose those awful words.

"Off with his head!" and again the zealot swung his axe. In a perfectly executed maneuver, he sent his own head bounding loyally behind that of the horticulturist. Then the king spoke in a voice low and filled with mysterious determination.

"If I am bereft of my horticulturist, then I must turn my own hand at the task of grafting myself." And in a threatening crescendo of beckoning strength, he cried, "I shall surely create my family tree, as sure as those two souls do flee!"

The king set to his task in the royal greenhouse and immersed himself in his obsession for the three winter months of that year, never emerging from the glass gardens until the fertile spring.

Finally, success brought him forth. The grafting was complete, even if the tree was not. Such a pitiful-looking, undernourished, bastard son of nature was never before given the light of day. The insignificant weed that the king bore out of the royal nursery satisfied none of the aesthetic qualities which he originally attributed to his vision. But, the king was satisfied.

In a public ceremony, which all subjects were required to attend, this frightful imitation of a sapling was interred in the fertile soil near the royal duckpond. A plaque, describing the virtues of kingship and geneological descendancy, was placed nearby and all who could read the inscription on it were commanded to do so under penalty of death. There was much praise on behalf of the tree, and the subjects swooned in affected appreciation. However, it was all they could do to constrain themselves from laughing out loud.

Observing this solemn fiasco were the ducks. Being understandably curious about the invasion of their private domain, they sidled up to the tree. The leading member of the herd, observing the plaque nearby looked at it in silent wonder, as if he were perusing the king's commemoration of family and family tree. Seeing that there was nothing of interest in either the plaque or the tree, the leader of this webby group quacked exuberantly. The crowd was aghast with fear. The king was red from raging indignation. For, you see, the quack of a duck, exuberantly articulated, is rather like the sound of unsuppressed hilarity.

"How dare you! How dare you laugh at my family tree! How dare you!" squealed the king.

But the duck remained visibly unimpressed. He turned to his fellow critics and quacked again, as if he were seeking a more objective opinion. These, his lackies, concurred with a unanimous quacking that roiled the royal blood of the king. The problem was one of royal honor, and therefore required a royal solution; unimaginatively repetitive as it was.



"Off with their heads! Off with their heads! Off with their heads!"

The king's executioners, themselves a small herd, were upon the bewildered ducks in an instant. In the melee which followed, there arose such a quacking and fleeing about on the herd's part; and such a fruitless swishing of battle-axes on the other herd's part, that no one could help but recognize the uproar for what it truly was — first class entertainment. The people, rollicking in ecstasy, screamed in delight at the ridiculous spectacle before them. The king, who was not laughing, drew his sword from its buckler and charged into the thick of it. His anguish gave his weapon an indiscriminant swing that sent the crowd into a general guffaw of appreciation which enraged the king to even greater heights of ridiculous behavior.

As he neared the plaque, he saw the duck-leader hiding behind the beloved family tree. With his only well-placed stroke, he smote the head right off the defenseless duck and simultaneously severed the tree from the earth. The silence that rushed in on the scene was tumultuous. The tragic end of the two opposing heroes was shocking. And the king, who now faced an angry mob of disappointed spectators, was weeping for the loss of his legacy. With irrevocable finality, the people converted the kingdom into a republic.

MORAL: Don't stand too close to the family tree.

A.B. Nauroth



## decadence



see burnt and bitter forests  
Wander dull with woeful blight,  
Sullen landscape bares, revealing  
Seeds of sterile, cutting strife,

Wasted, empty rooms where enmity  
Yet ruled secret in the cold,  
Tyrants raging in their quarters  
Against the foolish and the old.

Passion turned inside itself,  
Aging, mateless men coerce,  
As innocents with opaque smiles  
Are competing to be first.

Hollow brotherhood, convenience,  
Raised his arm and bid us sleep,  
Mindful of what we forget  
And of what we choose to keep,

Still I find myself among them,  
Blunted faces in the dawn,  
Sleepless knives drive into dreams,  
Making visions turn to stone,

There are piercing cries for succor  
In a universe with none,  
Just incestuous seduction,  
Colored blood and painted sun,

The insidious destruction,  
Wrathful worm within the mind,  
Makes unwritten works grow weak,  
Scatters solitary lines,

Amid unforeseen confusion  
Masked men sweep up afterbirths,  
And the afterdeaths still after,  
Casting shadows on the earth,



In a time when petty poets  
Stand like voyeurs in the streets,  
Hiding visions in their pockets,  
Deaf to truth's timely defeat.

Common interest is corruption,  
Public love is private hate,  
Feeble hands of untried poets  
Move to slowly masturbate.

I await the mimic-maker,  
Desolation to survey,  
To mold practiced, mystic arts  
To illuminate the day,

So his light shall doubly blind  
All wise dullards, prophets dim,  
Permit failing sense to find  
Common entities within,

Forming figures fresh with light,  
Vigour banishing the hours,  
One calm, clear and common voice  
Echoing our natural power.

J. Dugan



## THE COUNTING HOUSE



he chestnuts were out. And they were dropping like pennies from heaven in the full-blown breeze of autumn. In the sprawling front yard of old Mr. Adonias was the mother-lode of chestnut trees. Nowhere else on the block, or even in the whole town, were so many chestnut trees clustered in one yard.

The children of the Jones' family lived two doors away from the front yard of Mr. Adonias, and as autumn blew its tempo of rhythmic gusty winds the chestnuts fell and the children came running. With boxes and bags and old crates on the little red wagon, the Jones' kids, Chris, Billy, and Carla, hurried to the chestnut trees to harvest the fruits of the mother-lode. Tearing at the prickly green outer shells, Carla held the first opened chestnut up and stared at its gleaming core. It shone like a brand new copper penny. A newly minted fruit from nature.

The trees formed a spreading canopy over the wide and deep yard so that if Mr. Adonias were around he wouldn't be able to spot the children stealing from his trees. Like stealthy cat-burglars of city-fame, the youngsters crept about the shade of the yard and picked at the fallen harvest spread beneath their feet. They filled the boxes and the bags and the crates on the little red wagon, and when they took their fill, they headed home to count the booty and divvy-up the take. On the back porch of the Jones house the three small ones stashed their loot. Three separate crates, each full, lined the pantry wall and stood as mute justice to the honor among siblings, for each crate held exactly 152 chestnuts.

On the morning of the following day, Billy discovered that one of the crates, Carla's, was missing from its place on the porch and that the stock in each of the other two crates was somewhat diminished. There were only 100 chestnuts in Billy's and Chris only had 93. The wrath of a child against his sister at such a young age is rather frightful. Carla, after feeling the pain of their enragement, went crying to mother and father Jones. After hearing the story of the chestnuts, the parents told the children to return the chestnuts to Mr. Adonias and ordered them to explain how they took them.

Mr. Adonias was a kind and gentle old man and he understood the fascination that kids have for chestnuts. But at the same time he realized that they were being taught a lesson by their parents and so he wisely chose not to interfere. Putting on a stern demeanor, he reprimanded the three offenders with a gruff voice and a terrible wagging finger that scared the death out of them. The remaining two crates were returned to old Adonias and the Jones children went back home with their father. Chris and Billy were too terrified to think about their loss. They only wanted to get back to the safety of their own house. But Carla was a child of more than usual pluck and her thoughts dwelt more on the chestnuts which she still had. She had hidden them in the far corner of her closet up in her bedroom and had placed her spare blanket over them so that no one would find them. Now she could count them and put the copper shine back into them whenever she pleased.



The incident of the chestnuts was soon forgotten and the joy of the changing seasons left Carla's chestnuts all but forgotten. Autumn was winter and winter became spring and the chestnuts grew old and lustreless. In the third week of spring the Jones' cleaned house like all families do in the spring. In the far corner of Carla's closet underneath her spare blanket, Mrs. Jones discovered rotten chestnuts with worms crawling over and about the little closet making a nauseating spectacle of themselves. Mr. Jones was furious, and for the second time, Carla was punished for hoarding chestnuts. Mr. Jones made Carla clean up the mess by herself and then she was ordered to return the chestnuts with the worms to Mr. Adonias so that he could see what her greed had done.

For the second time Mr. Adonias looked up at Mr. Jones and listened to the story that was told and he understood just like he understood the first time. Then he looked down at little Carla. The old man knelt in front of her and asked if she liked chestnuts. Carla looked into his face and told him that she liked them when they were brand new and shiny-bright; but that when they got old and rotten she got sick just from looking at them. Then Mr. Jones smiled at Mr. Adonias as the old man stood up. He looked into the father's eyes and told them to wait at his door for a few moments. Soon Mr. Adonias returned and he gave each child a roll of shiny new pennies for them to do whatever they wanted with them. Mr. Jones protested as a good father should and told them that they would have to give the money back. But Mr. Adonias insisted with the insistence that accumulates with the wisdom of age, and he prevailed upon Mr. Jones to allow the children to accept. And the father did so graciously. Mr. Adonias asked the three young ones what they intended to do with their new found wealth. Chris and Billy looked at their father who looked at them with a you-know-where-it-goes look and both boys told the old man that the pennies would go into their piggy banks. Carla, who had been looking down at the fat roll of new pennies, turned it over and over in her fingers touching it very gingerly. Mr. Adonias asked her what her intentions were. Carla looked up at her father and told him that she would like to help pay for a new blanket to replace the one that the worms had ruined. Mr. Jones looked at her with a start and told her that that wouldn't be necessary and she should put the money in her piggy bank like her brothers were going to do. Carla said no — she wanted to buy a new blanket. Mr. Jones got very angry and told Carla that maybe she should give the money back to Mr. Adonias. The old man took the roll, gently offered by little Carla, and, turning it over in his own fingers, he gazed into her eyes, perceiving what she could not express herself. He handed the roll of pennies to Mr. Jones. He told the father that it was most proper for him to keep it. Mr. Jones looked astonished and faltered with slow-coming words. In a shaking voice Mr. Jones asked why he should take the pennies. Mr. Adonias explained that he should accept them as a gift from Carla to be spent on a new blanket. Mr. Jones could only ask the old man why it should be this way and old Mr. Adonias turned to the father and told him that Carla didn't want the pennies to get worms. As the old man disappeared into his home, Mr. Jones took his three children and the three rolls of pennies back through the blooming chestnut trees wondering all the while what a strange man their Mr. Adonias was.

A.B. Nauroth



## Icicle



Melting, melting,  
constantly melting.  
Never ending till the freeze.  
Standing as a crystal  
reminder of the storm  
which was once present.  
Soon the clouds depart,  
the sun taking their place.  
The daystar glistens  
upon the frozen diary,  
showing us the pages  
that should have never been read.  
Painful reminders of a life  
which was never really ours to have.  
Yet the cold wind remains,  
never against our backs.  
My face soon becomes chapped,  
sore from the roughness.  
Hoping the wind will die,  
making the reading easier.

Warmth returning,  
it begins again.  
The stow, silent,  
necessary melting.

Tears.

Bob Klein



## Le Jardin japonais



La maison est trop vaste, mais du côté nord  
Dans l'ombre, j'ai trouvé un petit jardin de pierres.  
La porte est cachée; c'est ici où je veux rester  
Pour regarder la mousse qui s'agrandit si lentement,  
En silence, journallement, dans ses murailles.

Comme ils s'agitent là-dedans, quel bruit!  
Comme il est tranquille parmi mes pierres!  
Mais la porte! La porte du jardin! Il ne veut pas ouvrir!  
Je ne peux pas rentrer; ils ne me trouveront jamais!  
Il faut rester ici, comme la mousse qui s'agrandit  
En silence, si lentement, dans ses murailles.

Je suis emprisonné dans mon jardin secret.  
De la salle à manger viennent des sons du dîner.  
Ils ne m'ont pas cherché, je suis oublié.  
Comme la mousse et les pierres, je vivrai en silence,  
Et mon ouvrage serait, en mettant des pierres  
Chacun constamment à côté de chaque autre,  
De voir si j'aurais créé quelque chose.

Et la mousse, il s'agrandit, en silence, si lentement,  
Parmi les pierres, journallement.

Bob Salsburg



## moralities



he tiny little children don't sing and dance  
they puff on butts and curse their elders  
mocking old ladies passing by  
looking for a kick not realizing  
that is what they need  
and a good one too  
a kick in the right direction  
to be god-fearing and prosperous  
like their parents  
who sit on stools in front of  
white effervescent heads  
away from the screaming brats  
and the dusty unmade beds

r.s. fabbrini





he morning moon, full and bright  
peers through the thickened mist, as  
it stealthily descends behind the  
Lonely mountainside.

a cool breeze runs through the  
frail branches of the nearby willows,  
gently tossing their weary limbs to  
awaken them.

across the pond

little ripples appear, swell  
and fade away, quietly joining  
the opposite shores.

The reeds sway to and fro, heavy with  
the fresh dew of morning.

Voices of tiny birds are heard  
as they flutter in and out of the  
tangled willows. In the distance  
a bright ball

appears through the mist,  
poking its long golden rays  
of sunshine through the  
heavy clouds. Ever so slowly the  
mist reluctantly rises from the lake  
and disappears into the air as  
morning declares  
herself.

Judi Keats



## The Reverend Andrew Sears



his town reeks of Sodom and Gomorrah, while that idiot Brunelleschi, the great politician, sits like a stone in his thirty-thousand-dollar-a-year bank job which is nothing more than a celebrated receptionist's position. It doesn't matter that his bank does all of the city's redevelopment work and is paid handsomely with the nullification of a zoning ordinance here, and has first bids on some newly acquired property there, while his fees roll in for arbitrating, consulting, managing, supervising, and realizing." It was not unusual for Elizabeth to hear the Reverend Andrew Sears, her husband, start the morning this way. The city's political conflicts of interest preceded the morning prayer which always began as a plea for a sign of his worthiness as a servant of God and an interpreter of man. Subjects of his morning prayer included issues of relevance such as blessings on today's meeting of the "Disillusioned Wife's Citizen's Action Committee," "The Day Star Children's Organization Rummage Sale," and the "Young People's Folk Group of Human Understanding." His tone became more solemn as he invoked not only blessing but also pity and mercy for the mistreated children in the Charity Hospital and the drunks and junkies of the world, ". . . both in spirit and body, Amen."

In the meantime, Elizabeth was caught midway between the kitchen and diningroom, frozen by the call to worship she stood with the oatmeal and eggs steaming her glasses. When the Amen was sounded, she started straight for the table with no faltering since this was an everyday occurrence. It was as if the Reverend Sears tried to catch her by surprise with the invocation, thus making her off-balance to the point of falling into prayer at a disadvantage.

"Ah, eggs, Elizabeth, you're kind to me. And oats, the meal of the beasts, even of the lowly ass who rode our beloved savior to his death." This emotional analogy caused the Reverend to raise his eyes heavenward and sit motionless in a seemingly divine trance. Elizabeth lowered her head in respect for the moment and with joy that she had prompted such a reaction with her meal. "It's not whipped, Elizabeth," the Reverend said. "It's simply not edible, unwhipped." The Reverend was used to having his oatmeal whipped until it had a frothy texture which, he said, separated the starchy hulls from the grain meat. This was the process for all meal, potatoes, and other mashable foods. "Elizabeth, you know these hulls get caught on the walls of my stomach and irritate the dickens out of my condition."

"I'm sorry, Andy, I just thought that you would rather just eat since you were late getting up and you have an appointment with Mrs. Solcumson."

"Elizabeth, you thought wrong because number one, my stomach can not stand to have anything other than what's good for it, and number two, you grossly underestimate Vivian Solcumson's power of forgiveness. So please be kind enough to finish preparing my meal. Oh, also, I just remembered, don't expect me for lunch."



Elizabeth retrieved the meal and headed for the kitchen. About midway there the Reverend bellowed, "Remember the pepper for the eggs, you forgot! Remember!" This final reprimand made her lunge into the kitchen through the narrow archway as if she just barely escaped the pellets of a prankster. Then inside the kitchen, she stayed to the right of the room. That side was not in his view. Immediately she began whipping the meal and pacing around that side of the kitchen. She mechanically hummed some song over and over again until she was finished whipping. Now she had to cross over to get the pepper. This was done with great care as not to be noticed. Nothing happened. She was relieved but a little bit out of breath, when she finally stopped holding her breath. She calmed herself and looked around the corner to the diningroom and beyond into the hallway. The front door was open and she could hear the voices of the Reverend and a lady. In the background she could hear the singing of a child. The voices faded as the singing child walked into the hallway, pressing one side of a bandaid that wouldn't stick to her arm.

"What did you do to your arm, young lady?"

"It was the doctor, not me. He took my blood out with a shot."

"Oh, I see. Do you think you need a new bandaid?"

"Maybe just some glue; this other bandaid part is still sticky."

"How about some tape for the unsticky side?"

"O.K." Elizabeth rummaged in the junk drawer in the corner cabinet, the drawer with everything everyone needed. She found the tape and some hard candy which she gave to Anna. She began to tape the bandaid. "What's that lovely song I heard you singing?" Anna's eyes looked dark and she wrinkled her forehead as much as a four-year-old can.

"That was a song I was making up about trees."

"It was pretty. Can you sing it again?"

"No, I have to be outside when the trees move and hum; then I want to sing."

"Then can you sing me a song about something in the house?" Anna took a stern stance and looked around the room until she saw the table with the eggs and newly whipped oatmeal. She began to sing.

"I like whipped cream for breakfast in the morning. I like it at night or for lunch but it's good to have it in the morning." The rest of the song was cut off by the boisterous laughing of Mrs. Solcumson. Reverend Sears introduced Mrs. Solcumson to his wife. Then he asked Elizabeth to get coffee for everyone. She obliged him and went into the kitchen. Anna started after her and Mrs. Solcumson called Anna back. She lifted her up on her lap and started to caress her hair and talk about Anna's charms to the Reverend.

"She's my baby if her mother ever decides to let her go. I'll take her. I might even steal her someday."

"You're quite a pretty young lady, Anna. You have an angel face," said the Reverend.

"Let's kiss Reverend Sears, Anna." Mrs. Solcumson lifted her over to the Reverend where she pecked his cheek. The Reverend noticed her bandaid and the patch job.

"Oh, you need a new bandaid, Anna. Elizabeth, when you come with the coffee bring a bandaid."

"O.K.," Elizabeth returned.



Mrs. Solcumson explained, "I took Anna for a blood test, she's such a lethargic kind of child. When she visits, she just sings and watches outside, she doesn't want to play house and those sorts of things so I told her mother I would take her to a good pediatrician. He checked her physical state and said she was fine. Her mental state appears stable but not relatively normal for her age." Reverend Sears nodded in agreement.

"Aunt Vivian, can I have whipped cream for breakfast?"

"No, certainly not, it's dessert food."

"Then maybe when I'm older can I have whipped cream for breakfast?" she asked, pointing at the oatmeal. Mrs. Solcumson did not answer but looked at the Reverend for some help with an answer. The Reverend was looking stern as if he'd been asked what faith he belonged to.

"Anna, run out to the car and wait. We'll be right out," said Mrs. Solcumson. Anna frowned and looked at both her aunt and the Reverend and then headed for the door.

"Reverend Sears, I'm very sorry you had to witness one of Anna's troublesome moods. The Reverend straightened up and left his chair to get his coat.

"Oh, don't worry, my wife's a queer sort of person that way, too, she doesn't know how to live with people. Elizabeth, forget the coffee! We're going to the church! Expect two more for lunch! Bye, dear."

The Reverend's church stood as a stubborn monument to the faith in the center of the city's business district. It was a Romanesque Revival church, one of the first of the late nineteenth century, and it looked, as all the others of the period did, like a heavy-bottomed fat man, sitting. The Reverend called it solid, ". . . like our faith." The huge stone campanilli had an electric chimer which sounded every hour just like the two nearby banks and the newspaper building. First the two banks would sound on a given hour, simultaneously, then the newspaper building sounded. About a half minute later came the church chime. But no matter what time it was, the church chimes only played one gong and went on to sing a hymn or two. "This is faith transcending time," said the Reverend. The musical air travelled down the tower shaft into the chapel where its high dome swirled the sound around so that it seemed like a legion of bells in oratorio. When the last note stopped, a harmonic chord remained. "The only day I have not seen fit to sound the chimes is Sunday which is the Lord's day of rest. The chimes sometimes begin too early and on Sunday this could muddle the sermon or the postlude, so I have programmed it out of Sunday," said the Reverend. "I reformed a lot of things when I came to this church. It needed a recreation room in the basement, a fully equipped kitchen, secretarial offices and even now we're replacing the heavy wood doors with glass ones, and rewiring the sanctuary for more lights." He continued as they led Anna to the east door where she followed one of the church workmen to the nursery. Mrs. Solcumson followed Reverend Sears to the sanctuary door. "For heaven's sake, I've told that stupid janitor not to lock this sanctuary door. It's not good for business!" The Reverend fumbled with his keys until he found the right one. As he



almost had it unlocked, the janitor jerked it open from the other side. The Reverend stumbled slightly forward into the sanctuary. "Well, Robby, you finally opened the gates!"

"Yes, Sir, I finished my other work; now I can watch the sanctuary for you."

"What if someone else wanted to come in, how would you know? Someone might have wanted to see me and couldn't get in. Robert, you'll just have to watch more often and neglect your chores a while!"

"Yes, Sir," said Robby..

"Oh, Rob, go put on the lights. I'm dreadfully sorry, Vivian, but he's been heading for a lecture for a while and this was just the time. Now down to our business at hand. What would you like to know about first: our procedure for transfer of membership, our coffee hours classes, our women's club activities, our tithe plans? What? Just ask."

"Well, Reverend, I was really interested in your choir."

"Excuse me, Vivian. Robert, give us some lights!"

"Yes, Sir, but the electricians got them switched off and they're on break. They'll be back any second!" The church's only lights except for the hanging ones were the small rose windows at the very top of the dome and the lit gas candles to the right of the altar.

"Vivian, we'd might as well go to my office. All this information is there anyway." They tried the door to the left of the altar; it was bolted from the other side by the carpenters. "Well, then would you like to go outside, Vivian?"

"No, that's O.K., they'll be back soon. We can wait." There was a brief but definite silence. The Reverend looked around nervously and tried the door once more. The darkness made him uncomfortable. He started off toward the candles.

"I guess you wonder why we use the Catholic convention of prayer candles in a Presbyterian church? Well, we're very eclectic about our religion. We use any established means available to consolidate the meaning of faith. God moves mysteriously, but we have only each other and earthly things to work with. So we must use every fiber of our knowledge and talent to serve God and man. The church should then bring forth and consolidate all talents. Well, these gas candles are the best representation of eternal faith I've found. Every day my secretary calls around to the member families who we know have a critically ill person and see how they're doing. When things look bad, I light a candle. Those two are from the same family, the others are for mostly old women or young children. These two are the most pathetic. They are for a man and woman in their early thirties. Very sad." The Reverend silenced the room again. Mrs. Solcumson stepped quickly up to the choir stalls and said,

"Is this where we sing from?" The Reverend looked up. The front door had opened and there was a figure in the shadows taking a seat in the third from the last row. Mrs. Solcumson watched the Reverend stride down the aisle until he reached the right row. The figure remained seated and hunched over. It did not respond to the Reverend.

"Who's there?" said the Reverend. The figure looked up.

"It's me, Joanne."

"Oh, is it Joanne Dawson?"

"Yes."



"How is your family?"

"Well," she said. There was a short pause. The Reverend leaned over and began again in a deep, quiet voice.

"Did you come to see me, Joanne?"

"No," she replied. The Reverend straightened up again and stood still between the two pews. The darkness between them magnified their breathing. That was all they heard. The woman looked forward with her hands poised near her face. Her breathing could barely be heard. The Reverend slapped the back of the pew and groaned. She did not move or lean forward again. The Reverend did not turn to walk. Mrs. Solcumson could only see them faintly, but she saw the figure get up and the light from the front door come in. The Reverend then came back up the aisle.

"That woman has something on her mind and she won't tell me! She doesn't come to church, doesn't tithe, doesn't join our women's club, but she comes in here on off-days either to avoid collection or steal something! I don't know!" He was pacing nervously in front of the candles which waved objections to his wind. Mrs. Solcumson was about to speak but the Reverend began.

"That reminds me, Vivian, I have to know how much you want to pledge. We're printing up the tithing envelopes this week. If you want to wait and figure your earnings, I'll call you tonight. Anything is O.K. It doesn't matter if it's today or tomorrow." Mrs. Solcumson sat down.

"Need my gifts necessarily go to the church fund?" She was smiling and settled herself in the pew. The Reverend turned to her and sat down on the edge of the opposite pew.

"For instance," she said, "I can be of service in your choir. I sing soprano well." The Reverend paused.

"Well, certainly you can. I need another good soprano, my wife and another woman usually hold the line. They're kind of weak and the altos drown them out. You'd be perfect. Your voice is probably very strong."

"Oh, the church needs me, then. That's comforting to know."

"Of course the church would be glad to take you and your talents and fulfill them for the glory of God."

"Singing is the most perfect talent I can offer the church."

"And, it is one talent most rare."

"Oh?"

"Why, yes, there are very few good sopranos, as I have said, and we would be more than thankful to have you."

"I've heard that the reformed church even pays for rare commodities to make more beautiful its image to God and men." The Reverend paused and slowly pushed back in the pew.

"Yes, Vivian, I . . . suppose we should, for the glory of God, have the best of every man, even if the church must give to have it."

"Good, very good!" she laughed. A little corner of light came in the sanctuary from the front door. Anna followed. Reverend Sears and Mrs. Solcumson did not notice her. She was on the side looking at the heavy stone font, feeling the smooth inside. She saw a beautiful statue bending over at the knees with its hands out-stretched. She could not reach the hands to touch them. She touched its feet.



She walked in among the pews and saw the tall black walls that led to dark rooms over-shadowing the sanctuary floor. She walked in the aisle and turned around to see the heavy wooden door with a crest of white where the light leaked in. Above her was the circle of the dome. She followed the round light from each window as they crossed each other in the center. Below, she saw the light of the candles. She ran a little way toward the altar and began to sing a birthday song. The Reverend rose and ran to the pulpit stairs.

"Stop . . . stop that vile, selfish irreverence in my Lord's house!" He climbed higher to the pulpit trying to see who it was. Then, in fiercer tones the chimes began and travelled from a hollow drone to the sanctuary where the wind wall of music separated Anna from the Reverend. The first notes flew past and raced up the dome. She heard him again through the void ". . . this place will not allow it!" Now the notes came down and met the hymns to form a double blast through which Anna only saw him moan.

Cathrine Spencer



## The Song of Golgotha



Surely I come quickly,  
Pale and secretly to steal  
From those who do not know my face.  
Beneath the feet of men, I creep,  
Below the grass, from blade to blade,  
And shake them into agonies.  
I am no idler.  
I found my beginning when  
Bleak-eyed Simon struggled to my summit.  
His chest bursting and nostrils flared,  
He heaved the base of his cross burden  
Deep between my teeth and jaws.  
I found my hunger then.  
Next, the Proud One came,  
Was fastened to his perch  
And I did laugh to see it.  
His swollen veins burned  
Bright behind his skin.  
Every muscle's twist and tortured cry  
More firmly fixed his oppressive post;  
And I did quake with joy  
To feel the slow ooze of his  
Blood slide down it,  
Into my infested gorge.  
I sang to him,  
"When this event has passed,  
And you locked in the vaulted earth,  
My journey shall begin.  
Your pain has been my happiness,  
For my thirst has been awakened  
And my hunger is at hand.  
There is pleasure in the feast  
And my diet shall be man."  
Now it is my business  
To swarm from field to village



And dance the hectic measures  
Of the owlet's deep alarm.  
I come, relentless, through  
The wake of cares and toil  
To steal the lives of men  
And plow them under earth.  
Yet, seek no safety in the grave,  
For I pervert the paths of roots  
To crack the fragile housings of the dead.  
Splitting their firm and waxy cheeks, I  
Worry the pulp from its hollow shell  
And this has been my art for ages past.  
So, when the Great One's trumpets  
Shatter the eventful sky,  
What man will lift his head from grave,  
With flakes of flesh and populous with worms,  
What man will rise resplendent to his lord?

Brent Spencer



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