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LETTER AS FOLLOWS (BRACE LINE UP)
P'AN KU 58NC

"PLEASE CHECK"
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S05
PK1
Spring 1985

A Celebration of the Arts

P'an Ku-Central '85



- *Short Stories*
- *Poetry*
- *Photography*
- *Artwork*

Broward Community College

Central Campus

Spring '85

April 1986



P'an Ku-Central '85

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P'an Ku is
 the ancient
 Chinese
 god of creation.

Anyone
 who is
 endowed
 with creativity
 is possessed
 by the spirit of
P'an Ku.



*It is a funny thing about life;
 if you refuse to accept anything
 but the best, you very often get it.*



-Somerset Maugham

Delivery

Freshly sharpened pencils
 next to stark white linen bond
 awaiting words as yet unborn.
 Locked deep within the poet's mind
 like protoplasm taking shape
 gestating there they form.
 And when the birthing hour comes
 they push with brutal force.
 The poet pants and writhes with pain,
 push harder,
 work,
 bear down,
 coming now,
 it's almost here
 and finally
 the miracle . . .
 a poem is born.
 How beautiful,
 perhaps more perfect than the last.
 Proud poet rests
 and smiles,
 but not for long.
 For thoughts and dreams
 will fuse like sperm with egg
 and
 once
 again
 the poet's pregnant images will grow.

Planned parenthood be damned,
 the fertile poet has no choice.
 A poem must have its right to life.

Leona Brauser

A very special thanks to Ms. Nancy Fried,
 Ms. Mary Ann Leiby, and the photography
 and printmaking classes under the direction
 of Mr. David Isenberg.

LIBRARY
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TOAD TALE

Toads,
Loads of toads
That live between
Umber earth
And shaggy ferns of green.
Unseen, they linger
Quiet as stones
Beneath the canopy of ferns



Toads,
Slumbering in
A dormant swoon,
Laze
In the torpid afternoon.
Thunder grumbles,
Clouds birth rain,
Waking time is here again.

Toads,
Eyes pork-pied,
Move boulder slow
Safe
Within the dampening flow.
Flopping, plopping
Through the shrubs,
Comphy-fat and full of grubs.





Toads,
Never seem
To like the sun.
And
When the teatime shower is done
Melt into the summer flood
And metamorphose
Into mud.

Toads,
Hop slowly,
Puddles splosh
As
Flabby bodies flip and flop.
Voices raised in raucous song;
Discordantly,
They slosh along.

Jeindre Villani






 LOVE'S FREEDOM
 

Love, you did not tarry long
 But when you came my way
 I caught the beauty of your song
 And tried to make you stay.

In haste I wove a golden net
 In new-found ecstasy
 And sought to hold you close but yet
 You struggled to be free.

An, Love, you went your way one day
 You were the first . . .and so,
 How could I know you only stay
 When you are free to go?

Sylvia Mitchell



John Brower

MEMORIES

Mirror on the water
 Traces of memories past,
 A time when days were hotter
 Dreams that never last.

The one that I love
 No longer to be found,
 Like the flight of a dove
 Gone without a sound.

Now the wind blows
 Lonely whispers to my ear,
 The heartbreak flows
 Resounding in every tear.

The emptiness that follows
 Tears apart my soul,
 Echoing in the hollows
 A being no longer whole.

Jacquelyn Doubleskey



LOVE IN THE DARK

Someone turned the lights way down
 My heart is beating 'round and 'round
 In the dark, secrets come to light;
 The time is right, we will love tonight
 Lift me, never let me fall.
 These are modern days after all.
 Were all going to die someday,
 and if you want
 We can taste a passion play.
 The time is right, we will love tonight.
 Contact...a kiss in the dark;
 I can hear you from heart to heart
 Lovers' crying in the rain
 Is part of this lovely game.

James Nolan



LOVE'S AMBIANCE



Love, you are a strange one . . .
 Hovering on the edges of my life
 Now here, now there, touching with
 Incandescence the pulsing tendrils
 Of my heart

Wrapped in the gossamer wings of your love
 You fill me to bursting with the warmth
 And brightness of your soft light,
 Then, as suddenly as you came
 You are gone and I am alone again
 In the dark.

Sylvia Mitchell

K. Sharrow

My love is like a red red rose
 That's newly sprung in June;
 My love is like the melody
 That's sweetly played in tune.

-Robert Burns



"HOW DO I LOVE THEE?"

LET ME COUNT THE WAYS."



Elizabeth Barrett Browning



Karen St. John-Vincent



Lesley Lloyd/Linoleum Cut



S.S. Smith/woodcut

WHERE HAVE ALL THE ROBINS GONE?

Nuzzled in the canyon wall
 beside shallow Indian Creek,
 my kitchen window
 looks upon a robins' nest.
 Pyracantha twigs, long stripped of their red berries,
 dry hydrangea leaves,
 and yellow stalks of wild weeds
 were carried to the top limbs
 of California laurel.
 I watch them as I wash my plates;
 they nestle on blue eggs.

One day my creek will be
 covered with cement.
 Water stored in reservoir,
 no scent of mold or bay.
 Instead of trees and nests and twigs
 cold structures will evolve.
 Space will be disseminated
 up through the very clouds.
 Square and white and unadorned
 but safe from marauding squirrels
 these nests will all be peopled.

How I shall miss
 that warm red vest
 hovering in his lofty nest.

Cherise Wyneken



Lesley Lloyd

THE PAST PERFECT

If you remember the kind words spoken
By some worthy soul you may know
You'll find the sad empty shell of you left behind

If you remember to hear the kind words spoken
It gave the inner life of your heart a chance to soar;
If I had known the troubles you bore

If you remember the kind words that ring in your mind
Of some mystic realms we shared
The cares we shared, and they gave no warning

If you remember the kind passions
Of the kisses on your burning lips;
Embraced---while the sweet dews
Of flaming climax that brought the ecstasy
Of our souls to rise into the universe above

If you remember the kind and fond memories
To tell you all for one brief space
Of Paradise we shared alone----

If you remember the kind light that shone
In the clearing where we lay spent---
For the eyes beamed and sparkled together
Of enchanted islands where sweet-voiced birds
Fill the music in your heart with song.

Winfield



Lesley Lloyd



Dorothy Shorr sat in the visiting room and waited for her mother. She blinked her eyes in the brightness of the sunlight as it glared through the long barred windows. Bars everywhere, she thought.

She sighed and looked around the room. Although filled with sunlight, it had a cold, empty look. It was a large, rectangular room with bare plaster walls that were once bright blue, but had grown dirty and gray with age. It was furnished with small, round tables of pale laminated wood surrounded by sturdy wooden chairs. At the far end of the room, a sliding glass window separated the nurse's station from the visiting area.

She brushed a strand of hair out of her eyes with the back of her hand and sat primly at the table, listening to the drone of conversation and the hustling sounds around her. She wondered if anyone noticed that she was there.

Dorothy was a plain woman, neither short nor tall, fat nor thin. Her brown hair was cut short with straight bangs across her forehead, a style she had not changed since high school. She would soon be thirty-seven years old.

She glanced nervously at her watch and then focused her attention on a nearby table where a thin young girl sat rocking back and forth. Although an older man and a woman sat watching her, the girl stared at the floor; she twirled a strand of hair around her finger in rhythm to the rocking.

Dorothy took a deep breath and stood up as she saw her mother being wheeled into the room and over to the table.

"Hello, Mother," she said flatly. "You look well today. How are you feeling?"

"I'm tired, very tired. I haven't been sleeping well lately."

Dorothy hated these weekly visits with her mother almost as much as she dreaded the tiresome conversations. "Are the dreams bothering you again?" she asked. She thought of the nights she had been awakened by her mother's screams. As a child she had been frightened by them, sometimes even screaming herself. As the years went on, she would just lie there quietly waiting for them to end. Sometimes she would stand in the doorway as her father sat on the side of the bed, rubbing her mother's back and talking in a soft murmuring voice, trying to soothe her back to sleep, but her mother would lie for hours, eyes staring at the wall, as though afraid. In later years, after her father had died, Dorothy had taken his place at the bedside.

Mrs. Shorr glanced around the room nervously. "Yes, I've been having them again. It's been a while, you know. I thought they were gone for good." She sat watching Dorothy as though waiting for a response.

Dorothy's Visit

by

Virginia Wells

Dorothy shifted her eyes away from her mother and looked around the room. The thin girl had stood up and walked over to the side of the room, where she stood facing the wall, still rocking back and forth. As Dorothy watched, she wondered how her mother was surviving the nights without her.

"I hate it here," Mrs. Shorr said softly. "I can't wait until I don't have to see this place any more."

"You have to be patient, Mother. Dr. Philips says it won't be too much longer."

"Dr. Philips has been saying the same thing for six months now. He isn't going to help, you know. He smiles and tells us everything is going to get better, but nothing changes."

Mrs. Shorr toyed with the button of her sweater. She looked old. She was a thin woman with dark gray hair that she kept pulled back bluntly in a bun. For the past seven years her legs had been getting progressively weaker, although doctors could find no clinical reason. Finally, she couldn't walk at all and was confined to a wheelchair.

"I don't know why God is punishing me so," she said sharply. "I don't know why they won't let you come with me. You don't know what hell I go through every night. That nurse doesn't understand me like you do, Dorothy. I don't know how much longer I can take it."

As Dorothy watched her mother playing with her buttons as though she were shucking peas, a feeling of uneasiness stirred in her stomach. She listened, waiting until the voice grew louder, and then took her mother's hand.

"Please, Mother, it will be all right. You'll see. Everything will be all right."

It was late afternoon and Dorothy could see that the patients and their visitors were starting to say their good-byes and move slowly toward the doorways. She signaled to her mother's private nurse who stood chatting in the nurse's station. Dorothy kissed her mother and watched as the nurse wheeled her toward the door. The sun no longer blazed through the window, yet the room suddenly seemed more cheerful. She began to smile. She sat at the table a moment longer, waiting until they had rounded the corner and were no longer in sight. Then she stood, turned, and followed the others back to the ward. ■

HUNGRY DUST

Dark silhouetted flowers
Planted among the skewed
And sunken gravestones.

Under the white birches
And weeping willows
Black clouds of fresh earth
Cover the once burgeoning
Florescence of her life.

Unfulfillment, empty womb,
No more will the buds break,
Open into furry catkins.

Mourn with me,
World of starry
Spatial coldness
And muck-horn life.

Gerry Morrison

*S.S. Smith*

RED RECLINERS

The old ones practice dying, lying
In red recliners, as death waits
And watches inches away.
Arms lie limp like wings of broken birds,
While crusted mouths gape,
Like hungry graves, and
Sounds, strange and mortal,
Crawl
To the corners of the room
And whisper in the waiting silence.
The old ones try death on for size,
And when they find the perfect fit
They go away.

Deirdre Villani

LONELY LADY

The old woman sits in the garden in her rocking chair
While tears stroll down her face;
Memory of youth flashes in her mind.
Once she used to have golden hair with brown streaks falling
down her face.
Once she used to get all the attention.
Once she remembered not to have to feel lonely 'cause there
was always someone there.
Once. . .
What happens to her now?
No one seems to care.
The ones that care are strangers.
What happened to flesh and blood?
She may not be what she was years ago,
but she is still herself.
The one who is seeking for love, tenderness and happiness.
She hasn't a long way to go anymore.
As she rocks her chair.
She realizes the last truth of life.

Gina Box



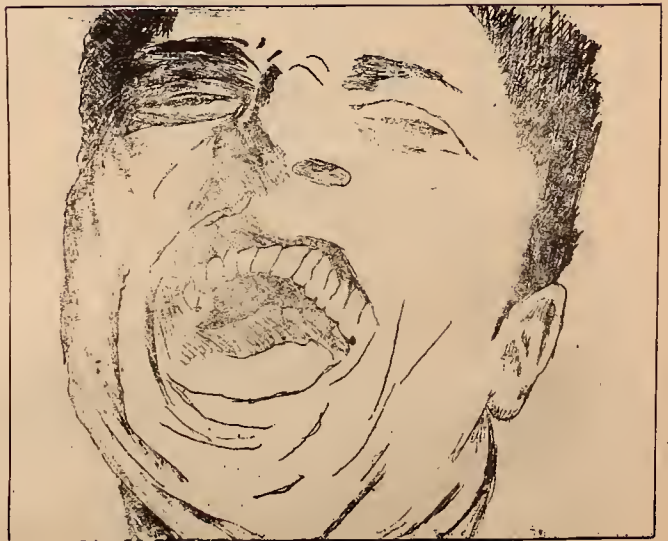
Sam Rosenthal/Linoleum cut

TORMENTED

I watch your face
 a sugarplum once.
 It waxes and wanes
 no longer alive,
 comeliness gone.
 Warmth and sunshine
 altered.
 Transformed,
 rigid, self-seeking.
 The years -
 bandits, thieves.
 Your eyes metastasize
 from round incandescence
 to cynicism,
 transparency,
 glassiness.
 They twist and turn
 in their sockets
 and begin to run down
 your wrinkled face.
 You do a Dorian Grey
 before my eyes!

Once my mentor;
 now my tormentor.

Gwen Shugerman



S. Smith/etching



Cynthia Roberts

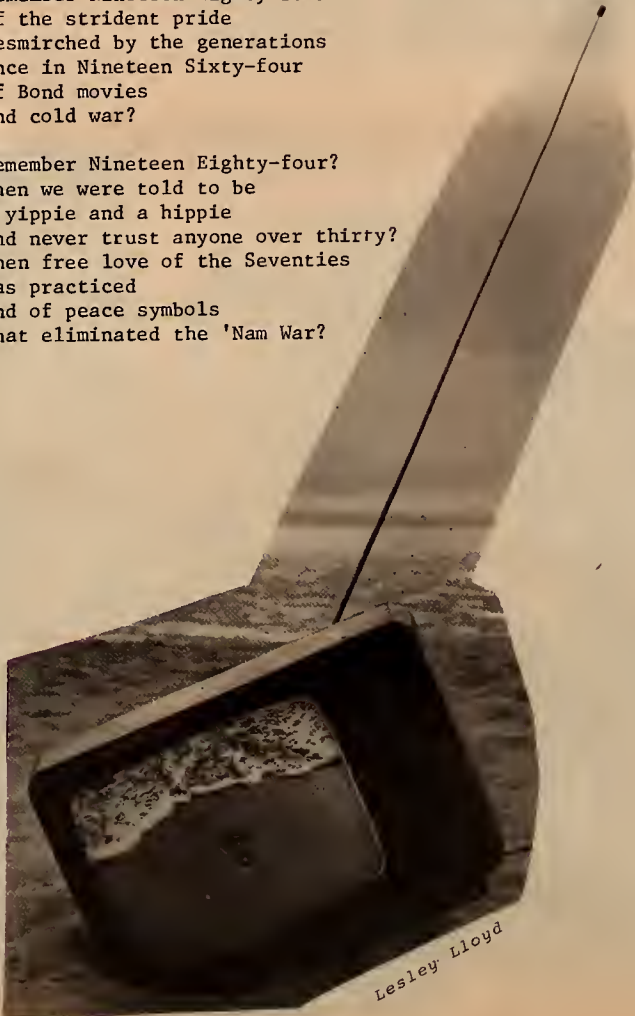
ODE TO ORWELL'S 1984

Remember Nineteen Eighty-four
Of the strident pride
Besmirched by the generations
Once in Nineteen Sixty-four
Of Bond movies
And cold war?

Remember Nineteen Eighty-four?
When we were told to be
A yippie and a hippie
And never trust anyone over thirty?
When free love of the Seventies
Was practiced
And of peace symbols
That eliminated the 'Nam War?



courtesy of Phoenix



Lesley Lloyd

Remember Nineteen Eighty-four?
When the Day After
Shattered the world's trust
Of frightened experiences
By killer satellites, neutron bomb
And elections?

Remember Nineteen Eighty-four?
When Orwell predicted
That the world of Utopia
Was controlled by (Thought Police)
And the "Big Brother Beard"
On the battered telescreen
At the Art Department?

Farewell, Nineteen Eighty-four
Welcome Nineteen Eighty-five
And doublethink! Winfield



M. Fountain

"The child is father of man;
And I wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

-William Wordsworth
from "Intimations of
Immortality from Recollections
of Early Childhood."



Diana Law-"Win the Prize"



Amy Kolb



J. Hall

TWO
(Wri

I lie on
in front
The solar
bakes my
Animals,
character
the sun
Cooked, I
to the to
a silhoue
toward me
it moves
a man, wo

There's
with a ma
and in hi
with a ma
and in hi
with a ma
Ad infin



photo courtesy of Eileenix



THE DAY MY FATHER TAUGHT ME TO RIDE A TWO WHEEL BICYCLE

He rented it of course
 on Coney Island Avenue
 one spring Sunday long ago.
 The seat was just a bit too high
 I strained to reach the pedals
 and I clenched my teeth with fear.
 He ran behind me holding on
 and shakily I rode through streets
 where pigtailed girls were jumping rope
 and men were polishing their pre-war cars.
 I never knew when he let go
 but suddenly I steered and pedalled by myself.
 Years later when I thought of it
 I knew that lesson was his legacy.
 He kept letting go
 and I kept pedalling and steering
 all by myself.

Leona Brauser



CHILDHOOD POEMS
(written in My Head)



the sidewalk
 of our house
 heated cement
 backbone
 fairy tale
 , clowns and
 magnetize my eyes
 roll over and look
 of the hill;
 te on the horizon
 or away
 up and down
 an, or child?

yellow Simonize can
 on the can
 hand is a can
 on the can
 hand is a can
 on the can....

um.

Gwen Shugerman



Linda Iacobelli (etching)



It's always quiet in this neighborhood of small hut neat houses at this time of morning.

"Late again, that moron, almost time for first bell!" said Chris as he stood waiting in front of his house. He had dark brown hair and wore a light blue shirt, white jeans, and scuffy sneakers.

Just then his friend Danny came rumbling down the street in his rusty red Chevette that sputtered and coughed. He jammed his brakes and stopped in front of Chris.

"Hi!" he said with a carefree grin.

"You're late again, man. I'm not going to serve detention again, Danny. I'll lose my job if I'm late once more," said Chris, getting into the car.

Chris gave Danny money for gas each week, but Danny was unreliable and always late for class. Chris had no choice. It was either ride with that nerd Danny or take his bike. And for a sophomore to ride his bike...well.

"Don't worry about it, we'll make it," said Danny and backed out of Chris' drive spinning his tires, going down the street in a cloud of blue smoke. Chris was so angry with Danny, he forgot to look over at old lady Smith's driveway. He forgot to look at the love of his life. When school let out at two-thirty that afternoon, Danny dropped off Chris at home. Chris looked three houses down. There she was. His heart pounded at the sight of her.

The old woman was out front raking the fresh mown grass as Chris walked over.

"Hello, Mrs. Smith, hot out, isn't it?" said Chris, eyeing the light beige 1969 Camaro sitting on the driveway. Chris wondered how an old lady like Mrs. Smith could manage the ride-on lawn mower. She was really old, at least sixty.

"Yes, Chris, sure is," said the woman, wiping her thin face on the towel she wore around her neck. Mrs. Smith was bone thin. She wore navy blue Bermuda shorts, a green plaid short sleeve blouse, and a straw hat with wisps of gray hair showing through.

"Nice car," said Chris, patting the Camaro on the hood. "Ever think of selling it?"

"Oh no, no, my dear child, Mr. Smith loved this car so. It reminds me of him. Don't drive much myself, but when I look out, I see my Simon standing next to it."

Chris patted the hood once more, said goodbye to Mrs. Smith, and headed home. He let himself in. There was no one home, because after the divorce his mother had to work the night shift at the hospital to earn more money. Chris hurried to use the bathroom; then he went into the kitchen,

Chris had no choice. It was either ride with that nerd Danny or take his bike. And for a sophomore to ride his bike...well.

pulled out cold pizza from the refrigerator, poured a Coke, and sat at the small table to eat fast. He had little time to get to his three o'clock job at Phil's Garage. Finished, Chris took his bike to the hallway and locked the house. As he rode the two miles to work, he thought, I'll paint her red, get some wheel covers...brakes should be sound, old man Smith took good care of her. He rode on a sunny street filled with children and dogs.

"Hey, look out, kid!" he said, barely missing a small boy who dashed out in front of him trying to hit the front wheel of the bike with a baseball bat.

"I'm Conan the Destroyer!" he yelled and ran a little of the way going after Chris. The boy's mother called to him. Chris got to work with five minutes to spare.

"Well good afternoon, sir, glad to see you decided to join us on time today," said Phil, with his beefy hands on his hips. An El Producto stuck out of the corner of his large mouth, and he wore gray coveralls stained with oil and grease.

"Just get your butt in gear and start cleaning these bays," he shouted at Chris. The bays were littered with exhaust pipes, mufflers, and various parts removed from cars during the morning.

At seven-thirty that evening, Chris came home and looked over to Mrs. Smith's. He saw her sitting on a lawn chair, sipping a drink. He walked over to her.

"Hi, Mrs. Smith, lawn looks good," he said.

"Thank you, lots of hard work but I like it, keeps me busy and lots of fresh air," she replied. "You just get home from work?"

"Yes," said Chris, "nice car," patting the hood and went home.

Chris didn't see Mrs. Smith for a few days because it rained and she didn't go out to work in her garden. Then Chris saw her hauling newspapers to the front of her house, and he walked over.

"Want some help?" he asked her.

"Why, thank you dear. Say, Chris, would you like to help me clean out the garage? Hasn't been done since my Simon got sick."

Chris wanted to be near the Camaro and agreed to do this job on Sunday.

"Here's some lemonade," said Mrs. Smith. Chris had worked for hours and cleaned the garage. Then she took two dollars out of her pocket and gave them to Chris.

"Thank you, dear. Say hello to your mom for me. Goodbye!" She turned and started to go in. Chris looked at the miserable two dollars and put them in his pocket.

What the heck, he thought, money is money. Let's see, with the paper route money I saved, I should have at least five hundred bucks saved.

As he rode the two miles to work, he thought, "I'll paint her red, get some wheel covers."

"Oh, Chris," called back Mrs. Smith, "can you do my windows for me sometime?"

"Well, O.K., I have next Thursday off for teacher's workday. I can work in the morning before Phil's," said Chris and headed home.

It took Chris to almost two-thirty on Thursday to wash the windows because, even though the house was small and had few windows, they were the old fashion jalousies that took forever to wash.

"I'm done, Mrs. Smith," said Chris, handing her the pail and sponge.

"Hmm, lots of streaks. Children today don't pay much attention, sloppy...well, never mind, here's your money," she said, giving him the usual two dollars. Chris was angry about this but thought of the car.

"Say, Mrs. Smith, you know the battery dies if you don't drive the car," said Chris, hoping to steer the conversation toward the car.

"Well, drove last week to church meeting. It was fine, but go ahead and start it if you want. I'll get the keys."

CHRIS

by Frances Tela

Hope grew in Chris' heart. Oh boy, it's getting better, he thought waiting. The boy got behind the wheel. The beige vinyl seats barely showed signs of age. The inside smelled old and musty, but it was pure perfume to Chris. The car started right up, and Chris drove back and forth in the driveway.

"That's enough, dear, hurry on now or you'll be late for work. By the way, could you do me another thing? The kitchen needs repainting," said the woman.

Chris arranged to paint on Sunday, his only day off. He almost floated to work later that day.

She's got to sell it to me. I know she's breaking down, he thought. Chris whistled at work, didn't care if Phil yelled. He just rehearsed what he would say to Mrs. Smith on Sunday after painting the kitchen. He would say, Mrs. Smith, I have five hundred dollars saved. I'll keep on helping you. If you want more, I'll pay on time, but please, will you sell me your Camaro?"

On Sunday Chris finished painting the kitchen. The Camaro wasn't in the driveway, but he knew it was parked in the clean garage. Finished with the painting, Chris went into the garage to wash the brushes in the laundry tub. The Camaro wasn't there. Chris felt his heart beating hard.

But wait...maybe his mother was going to surprise him for his birthday next week. I've dropped enough hints to her, he thought. That's it! He went to find Mrs. Smith. She was sprinkling the rose bush with a gray powder.

"Finished painting, dear?" she asked him, eyeing the paint splatters on his faded blue jeans.

"Yes...say, Mrs. Smith, where's the car?" he asked, trying to control the lump filling his throat.

"Oh that, well Chris, you convinced me. I should really sell that old car. So I did," she said and continued to sprinkle the roses.

"You...you sold it!" Chris cried out, his heart beating fast.

"You sold it? To who...who, my mother?" he asked, tears forming hot in his eyes.

"Your mother? Why in heavens name would I sell it to her. I sold it to my friend Catherine for her granddaughter Stacy. Such a nice girl...so sweet, so quiet. Wish boys could be as nice and quiet as girls. Neighborhood would be a lot more pleasant. Well, anyway, I don't have any more work just now, but I'll let you know when." She gave him the usual two dollars, turned and went into the house. She left Chris standing on the empty driveway.



S.S. Smith

HERE IS NO WATER, BUT ONLY ROCK.
ROCK AND NO WATER AND THE SANDY ROAD. from T.S. Eliot's
"The Waste Land"



S.S. Smith



RELATIVE TO SPHERES

A lemon grows upon my tree;
 world unto itself.
 Man's life sustained
 by our star sun;
 so this golden planet
 occupies its thorny universe
 satisfying existential need.

Its evolutionary eons
 last mere seasons
 to a man.
 Yet they take their course
 and sometimes, just by chance,
 a creature from some outer space
 settles on its shores
 and bores its way inside.

SEA LURE

In the light of the dawn
 When the wind-god's wand
 Makes whitecaps leap and spring
 As they dance to the tunes
 That the westwind croons
 As it makes the rigging sing

While the sun climbs high
 In a crystal sky
 From its turquoise-colored bed
 And brightens its home
 In that airy dome
 That stretches over my head.

When the sun goes to rest
 As it sinks in the west
 'neath a crimson-tinted cloud.
 While the night spirits away
 The last of the day
 In its somber jet-hued shroud.

Whilst the stars wink down
 From that ebony crown
 Where each one smiles on high
 As I speed through the dark
 And scarce make a mark
 Betwixt the sea and the sky.

For 'tis moments like these
 That give to the seas
 The call I can't deny,
 For nothing as grand
 Can be found on the land
 Though I search until I die.

James Stevenson

Thinking there is none but
 his own sphere
 worm resides in peace.
 I pick and slice and squeeze out juice;
 toss worm and peel
 with foul refuse.

Foolish worm to think that he was safe.
 Foolish man who thinks that earth is all.
 No time exists beyond the tree
 but soon wing-ed wetbacks, from across God's Rio Grande,
 will pluck us from our thorny limb
 to seraphic spheres
 where we will grow in peace with Him.

Cherise Wyneken





FAT LADIES

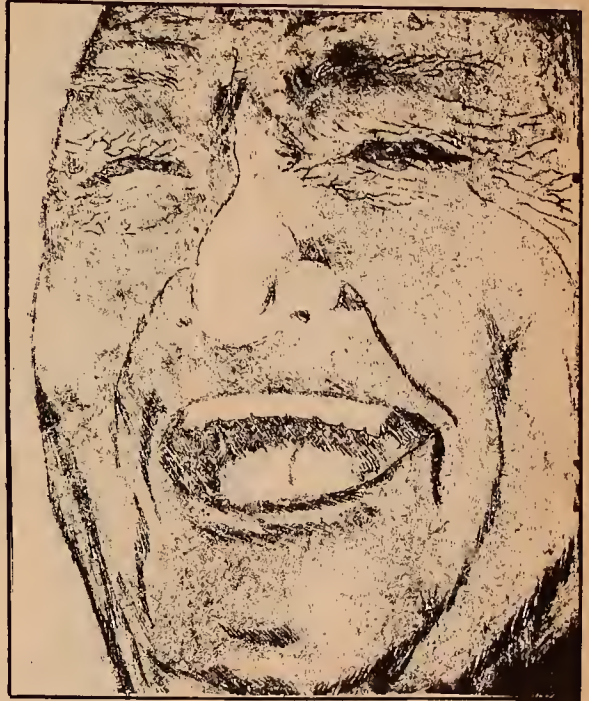
I envy the fat ladies
 who waddle by me
 proud and plump ducks
 in the Easter parade,
 with round, reddened faces
 they peer through
 pinpoint eyes
 that blink behind puffed lids
 and beneath furrowed brows.

I marvel at their
 multiple chins
 atop accordian necks
 fleshy in suspended motion
 wonder at their graceful journey
 down grocery store aisles
 to gather sugar, flour,
 butter pecan ice cream,
 Lay's potato chips,
 (of which no one can eat only one)
 and diet soda.

I sense their eyes
 on my lithe frame
 clad in a skirt
 exposing skin
 five inches above my kneecaps
 that scarcely tremble
 as I totter on stiletto heels.
 "You're much too thin, dear.
 Need some meat on those bones.
 Why you're nearly anorexic."

I smile as my gaze falls
 on chubby fingers
 bejewelled in diamonds
 imbedded in swollen skin
 and wonder
 do men need more to love
 than what Cosmo would lead us to believe?

Karen St. John-Vincent



S.S. Smith

BREAD LINE

chocolate people
 with beefstick arms
 crossed
 bide time.

I stand apart
 white confection
 they smile
 at bravado
 blatant in designer camouflauge.

rhythmic laughter
 buttery banter
 drips
 pink tongues
 roll across
 lips of plenty
 between the languid language.

high noon
 chocolate faces soften
 in the sun
 I melt among them
 cafe au lait.

Karen St. John-Vincent



FIVE CHILDREN --
ONE OF WHOM CAN HEAR

Exclude me from your soundless
language of waving arms,
That meaningless fencing of fingers
wiggling worm-like,
Snapping and poking in the air.
Save it for our parents, it means
nothing to me.
Take your gaze from my lips, my
words are not for you.
And don't talk to me in that sound
of shouted growling I will not
comprehend --
That hollow booming that resembles
language only in the barely
discernible hint of consonants
and vowels.
I did not choose freaks for
siblings,
So pity me, brothers and sisters,
Remain apart, do not assault me
with your hoarse bellowings,
Spare me your flat unemphatic
monotone,
That tortured measured slurring
you think has meaning.
I am the afflicted one,
You the fortunate that cannot hear
your own ridiculous bleating.

John Vardamis



Eve Gordon

BRaille METHOD

I use the braille method
to fit the pieces
of this jigsaw charade
together once more,
frustrated with darkness
that covers the designs,
fumble their impressions
with tender fingertips,
to differentiate
one intrinsic piece from another
endlessly questing
the proper union,
the perfect synthesis.
Frustration surges,
anxiety peaks,
I seize my white cane
and sweep the fragments
helter-skelter
in one maddened motion,
piercing you through the obscurity,
bloodying the tip red.

Karen St. John-Vincent

MY THOUGHTS

Slow as a snail, quick as lightning,
Dull as grey, colorful as a rainbow,
Peaceful as a stream,
Angry as a father,
and as
Clear as mud,
That's how my thoughts are!

Simone Finnis

THIS-SUNDAY'S YOURS

For all those poor
Oppressed women who,
Out of love for
Their spouse to have to
Bear all of the
Abuse that comes with
Listening or watching a
Fistless ball game:

Thank You.

David Weisenberg



OUTLAW LOVE SONGS

I've been searching for you,
Dynamite.
Like a streaking screaming bullet
You've exploded in my world
And brought chaos to my life.
You're Satan disguised
in a shroud of divinity.
Like thunder rolling
You've arrived
And ravished my being
with self-indulgent lies.
I've finally found you,
Dynamite.
And I'm strong enough
to battle you
On mutual, exploding ground.

Sheri Daw



Franciso Pifano

ODE TO A PRIEST

IF

If the waves do not ripple
across the meadow lake
With the sun shedding orange
onto the bounding wake;

If the wind does not whisper
its secrets through the trees
As the mocking bird beckons
to its mate "Come home please";

If the bees do not scurry
among the vibrant flowers
While the crickets wing their music
for countless many hours;

Then I do not wish to live
for yet another day
Because life for me is over
when nature has passed away.

Jacquelyn Doubleskey

In cross-bearing chasuble
With humble heart
He stands upon the Altar
Our example of Christ.

As appointed by God,
He prepares the Eucharist
While revered by all
As holy and righteous.

The Sacrament given
and blessings bestowed,
He leaves the Altar
To remove his robes

Becoming a man
Dressed in black
With reversed collar
Significantly white.

Approached as Father,
Known as Priest,
The loving shepherd
Sent by Christ

To guide His children
Through His message
That they may live
In His protection.

How sad for him
Whom God has chosen
That he is lone
In his devotion:

For though he shares
Life with his brothers,
In being human
He too needs others.

His people see him
As upon the Altar,
One without sin,
Without imperfection.

When viewing their Priest
Few have ever thought,
There lives a man
Beneath that holy cloth!

Liz O'Donnell

It was a cool February afternoon in Florida. Orville Ferguson was limping along the boardwalk at Hollywood Beach. He was unshaven, and his unruly strawlike hair rearranged itself with every breeze. His filthy pants and torn shirt were his uniform. Most people shunned him. Some even changed direction to avoid walking near him. Orville limped toward a tourist.

"Excuse me, sir, do you smoke?"

"I'm very sorry, I quit two years ago."

"It's a bad habit, you're lucky. I haven't been able to quit. As a matter of fact, things haven't been going too well lately."

"Well, I've got to be going, goodbye."

"Wait a minute, please! I haven't had anything to eat for two days. Do you think you could help me out?" Tears formed in Orville's eyes.

"Well, yeah, here's a couple of bucks. Get yourself some food. Nobody should be hungry in this country. Good luck to you."

"Thank you and God bless you, friend."

The drabby figure limped down the boardwalk. A young couple was talking as he came up to them.

"Excuse me, sir, do you smoke?"

"What do you want? Can't you see we're talking? Get the hell away from us, you look like you got the plague or somethin'. Piss off, bum."

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry I disturbed you."

He continued south on the boardwalk and sat down next to an elderly man who was sitting alone on a bench.

"Excuse me, sir, do you smoke?"

"Son, tobacco is the weed of the Devil. You look as if you've fallen out of God's grace. Why, you're a pitiful sight."

"Well, things haven't been going too well since I had an accident. I guess I am forsaken. When I was a young man, my mother wanted me to go into the ministry, but life doesn't always work out the way you plan it."

"The ministry? The protestant ministry?"

"Why yes, that's what we were before everything went bad. Say, I haven't eaten in two days. Could you help me out?"

"Son, here's three dollars. No Christian is going hungry while I'm around."

"I... I don't know what to say."

"Don't say anything, boy. Just promise you won't buy tobacco with that money."

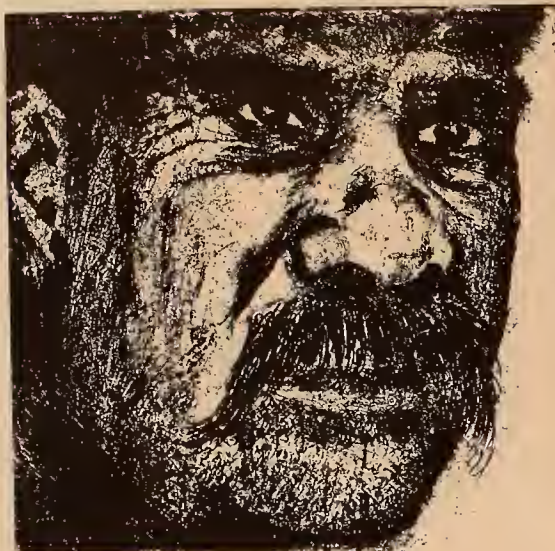
"I promise. Thank you so much. You'll be rewarded in Heaven, friend."

Orville hobbled away. The limp appeared to be getting worse. He walked out into the soft sand. He stopped by a woman who was under an umbrella.

"Excuse me, ma'am. Would you mind if I sat down for a minute? My leg hurts really bad."

"You don't look too well, you'd better sit down here in the shade for a while."

Orville



S.S. Smith

by Joe Pappas



S.S. Smith

"Thank you, ma'am. It's been a pretty tough day for me."

"I know what tough days are like. My husband Sam died six months ago, and I've had to fight every day just to make it."

"Gee, I'm sorry, lady. I had a wife, and a good job, too, once."

"What happened?"

"We had a car accident about three years ago. That's how my leg got hurt. Well, anyway, Sarah didn't make it."

"I know just how you feel. What happened to the job?"

"I couldn't hold it, I was drinking too much. I lost everything."

"That's really a shame, I wish there was some way I could help you."

"I really hate to ask, but could you spare a couple of dollars? I'm hungry. I promise not to buy whiskey."

"Here's a few dollars. It's the least I can do. Get yourself some food."

"I'll be forever grateful, ma'am. Thanks for letting me rest here."

Orville made his way back to the boardwalk and continued south. He came up to a tall young man who was smoking a cigar.

"Excuse me, sir, would you have an extra cigar to spare?"

"Nope, last one. About all my wife's lawyer left me."

"Divorced, huh? Mister, I know just what you're going through. My wife Diana took every cent I ever made. Those damn lawyers are the real crooks. They ought to be in jail, all of them."

"You look pretty rough, pop. Is that what divorce does to a man?"

"Well, I had a lot of bad luck. That doesn't mean you have to end up like me."

"I sure hope not. Say, you look starved. When was the last time you had a meal?"

"It's been a while. Could you spare a few bucks?"

"Sure, here's three. Looking at you has taught me what to steer clear of. That bitch and her lawyer ain't worth thinking about. See ya, pop."

Orville started south again when a familiar voice stopped him.

"Orville, how in the hell are you?"

"Arnie, you tramp. You look as shabby as ever. Hey, have you got a smoke? I'm about to have a fit."

"Don't pull that crap on me, Orville. I'm a professional, too."

"Come on, Arnie, just one cigarette."

"Sorry, chum, I'm all out. Say, how'd you make out today?"

"The same old line, you know. Three Christians, a divorcee, and two widows. Didn't do too bad, though, made twenty-five bucks."

"You know, Orville, one of these days the cops are going to nail us for vagrancy."

"Not me, Arnie. I always carry my American Express card."



David Mellard



Phoenix



Edie Shaw waited patiently, wanting to be the last passenger to get off the Grayline limousine she had taken to the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

"You getting off here, miss?" The mustachued bus driver peered curiously at her in his rear-view mirror.

"Yes, yes, I am," Edie said with a tinge of anxiety to her tone.

Awkwardly, she pulled herself to her feet and proceeded to slowly make her way down the narrow aisle. Though the bus was air-conditioned, she was beginning to perspire as she moved her two hundred and twenty pound frame down the steps to the sidewalk. She stood just over five feet high and wore a full, black, cotton skirt and a thin, white blouse that was already damp with sweat. She carried a large, worn, red plaid suitcase and a white shopping bag with the words Saks Fifth Avenue written across the side in bold letters. Her brown hair was pulled back tightly in a bun at the nape of her neck, with stray pieces of hair falling against her pudgy face in disarray.

"Good-bye. Thank you," she called over her shoulder as she stepped down into the blazing heat of the afternoon.

The bus driver did not reply as he closed the door behind her and pulled away from the curb. Edie walked over to the makeshift desk on the sidewalk filled with brightly colored tickets that indicated destinations for checked baggage. A smiling, black skycap stood behind the desk.

"Afternoon, ma'am. Check your bag?" The beads of sweat glistened on his ebony forehead.

"Yes, please. I'm going to Detroit," Edie said, showing him her ticket. "Where is the gate for the Detroit flight?"

The black man smiled at her. His teeth were whiter than those she had seen in toothpaste ads in magazines. "I believe that'd be Gate A4, ma'am."

"And is that near a newspaper stand? I guess I should get something to read. You know, on the plane." Edie wondered how he could stand the heat.

"Upstairs. They're both upstairs, ma'am." He was still smiling.

"Thank you so much," Edie said, fumbling through her handbag and pulling out a red, plastic coin purse. "Here, this is for you. You've been very kind." She shoved two coins into his outstretched hand.

The stout girl moved down the aisle past all the faces. In the periphery of her vision, they were a kaleidoscope of colors, whirling and turning, constantly changing their pattern. The faces. So many. So varied. Variations of peaches, of pinks. Complexions. Some sunken, some bronzed. Some wrinkled with the tale of a lifetime, some a smooth page waiting to be filled. Eyes all staring into

The stout girl moved down the aisle past all the faces. In the periphery of her vision, they were a kaleidoscope of colors.

space, at each other, and at the fleshy girl holding the bag with the words Saks Fifth Avenue printed on the side.

Edie walked on, wishing herself invisible, trying desperately to become oblivious to those gawking eyes. Could they see her beefy fist tightening, then relaxing around the handles of the paper bag she carried? She wiped her moist forehead with the back of her hand. She felt warmer, as if all those piercing eyes radiated a burning heat.

Edie recalled the uncomfortable warmth she had felt that day at Saks. She remembered entering the store from the mall corridor. A slim, blonde girl with manicured, screaming red nails and carefully coiffed hair had stood at the entranceway beside three mannequins in evening gowns. She had worn a grey silk suit and four-inch heeled, black alligator pumps with black textured soles. She had held a bottle of Opium perfume in her left hand and had offered to spritz the more fashionably dressed, moneyed women as they came in, saying, "Would you like to try an exciting new fragrance sure to make your lover's blood flow?" And then she had held their eagerly offered wrists and sprayed a little cologne from the tester bottle. Edie had ardently looked forward to her chance to try the mysterious essence, but the blonde merely glanced over her. Edie had smiled, lowering her eyes and looking away with calculated nonchalance.

"Excuse me, miss, can I get through here?" A bearded man in a charcoal grey business suit was standing beside her.

"Sorry," Edie mumbled, stepping back to let him reach for the Time magazine. She stared at the selection in front of her, trying to decide what would be best to read during her flight to Michigan. She glanced briefly at the fashion magazines but decided they were over-priced. Finally, she settled on the National Enquirer, a tabloid that bore the headline, "Three Hundred Pound Woman Finds Her Way into Burt's Heart."

Edie had ardently looked forward to her chance to try the mysterious essence.

She ambled over to the counter, reaching it at the same time as the bearded gentleman with the Time magazine. He motioned for her to go before him, but Edie shook her head, noticing that a few more strands of hair had come loose.

"No, no, you go ahead. I'm still looking," she lied, unable to bear the thought of him standing behind her heavy frame. She did not want him to have the opportunity to study her weighty body. At least, with him in front of her, should he turn around, maybe his eyes wouldn't settle on her body. She was glad she had put the blue eyeshadow on this morning. It was the blue of the sky on a clear day, and Edie was convinced it made her hazel eyes stand out more on her pudgy, freckled face. She had applied it carefully, following the instructions printed on the back of the box by Maybelline.

"Will that be all?" snapped the pixie-nosed girl at the cash register.

"Yes...uhh...no. I'd like these, too." Edie pushed three chocolate bars towards the girl.

The girl frowned, looking at Edie. Her name tag read Cindi with an "i" instead of a "y."

EDIE

by

Karen
St. John-
Vincent

"Will that be all?" snapped the pixie-nosed girl at the cash register.

Edie's best friend in junior high had been Cindy Lawson, a tiny girl with big, blue-black eyes and long, shiny black hair. She always wore blue jeans and sneakers. And she loved chocolate almost as much as Edie. They would always stop on the corner at the Little Big Store on the way home from school to buy confectionary delights. Sometimes the chocolate would melt and get all gooey on their fingers before they'd finished eating. Cindy would wipe her hands in her blue jeans, because she said that it never showed. Edie always thought that Cindy had needed glasses all along. Then one day, Cindy had worn a blue jean skirt and brown loafers to school. After that, Edie had always stopped for chocolate bars on the way home alone.

Edie pushed the magazine and chocolate bars into the white shopping bag. The lounge beside the gift shop looked busy as she made her way through the tables trying to find a seat. She found one in the back corner at the end of the half-wall that separated the lounge area from the main lobby. It was a bright room, as one wall consisted of nothing but windows that looked out onto the field and runway. Rows of tiny, wooden cocktail tables filled the room. They were each surrounded by two or four wicker-backed chairs, depending on the size of the table. A waitress approached Edie's table, wearing an awful orange uniform and a smile.

"Hi, hon. What can I get you?" She had startling blue eyes.

"I'd just like a coke, please."

"Look, hon, if that's all you're having, you should go next door to the snack bar. This is for cocktails." Her smile had disappeared.

"Well, I'd like to watch the planes."

"Fina," the waitress said, turning on her heel.

A couple of rows away from Edie sat three bronzed men in t-shirts and worn blue jeans. They had rugged young faces and looked to be in their twenties. Edie could catch only snatches of their conversation. The most boisterous of the three had flaming red hair and a gregarious laugh. He looked up and caught the heavy girl with the hazel eyes studying his muscular build. Leaning over, he whispered something to the other two at the table, and the three laughed uproariously. Edie blushed deeply. The laughter subsided, and the red-haired man bent his head to light a cigarette. The gesture reminded her of Whitey.

It had been raining steadily all afternoon. Edie had arrived late in the day when all the regulars usually came in for happy hour after work. Whitey had been sitting at the end of the bar with two men Edie knew only as acquaintances.

He looked up and caught the heavy girl studying his muscular build.

"Some rain we got there, huh, Edie?" Whitey had said, smiling as she had come and sat down on the stool beside him.

"Yah, and I got caught in it, too," she had said, laughing a little and looking down at her damp clothing that clung to her beefy arms and breasts.

"When you'll certainly join me in a little shot of Irish whiskey," Whitey turned to the bartender. "Joe, a shot of whiskey, Irish whiskey, for Miss Edie. I'm giving her the night off. Oh, and another round for my friends here. And of course, another for me."

They all laughed heartily as Joe set out the shots of Old Bushmill's Irish Whiskey and mugs of draft beer.

"I'd like to propose a toast to Edie," Whitey had said, raising his jigger. "To the great lady who fills my bar with her grace and charm."

"Here, here. To Edie." Joe had touched his glass to the others.

"To Edie." Both men beside Whitey had chimed in.

Edie had never been the center of so much male attention. She had blushed deeply. She couldn't be sure if it had been their compliments or the mellow whiskey warming her insides. All she knew was that she wanted this feeling to go on and on.

Barefooted, Edie had waltzed over to the jukebox and punched in 279 to play "Misty" by Nat King Cole. She had swayed gently to the music with unusual grace for a woman her size. She could feel Whitey watching her and caught his eyes as she turned to face the bar.

"May I have the pleasure of this dance, ma'am?" Whitey had asked, bowing.

"Why, certainly," Edie had replied, attempting a curtsy.

He had taken her left hand in his right and slid his arm around her lightly. They had moved about the floor slowly like two awkward teen-agers at their first dance. Edie's head had rested on his shoulder, and she had hummed off-key to the songs as they played on the jukebox. She had imagined herself to be a beautiful princess at a ball with Whitey, the prince. She was slender and wore a long, silk dress, like she had seen in the designer department at Saks Fifth Avenue. And they danced all night long and she didn't turn into a pumpkin. But then the music had stopped. And Edie continued to allow Whitey to hold her in his muscular arms. And she had ached with a longing she never knew existed until that very moment.

"Another coke, hon?" It was the waitress again, looking more bored than before.

"No, thank you. Could you tell me where Gate A4 is?" Edie squinted in the late afternoon sun coming through the windows and searing her eyes.

Cont'd on p. 24



JOEY'S MOTHER

by

John Vardamis



They found parts of Joey's body, painted in different colors, scattered around the United States, in places like Bar Harbor, Me., International Falls, Minn., La Jolla, Cal., Apache Pass, Tex., and Biloxi, Miss., and after they'd reassembled the corpse--except for the head, which they hadn't found--everyone agreed with Sheriff Sparky Greenlick that the killer had a definite flair for painting.

"Look here, fellas," he told a group of reporters. "Look at the smooth-flowing texture of the different shades of blue and orange, and the harsh discordant contradiction of the pink and aquamarine. It's an almost surrealistic nightmarish combination of art and violence, notwithstanding the violence of the crime itself."

"Do you have a motive, Sheriff?"

"It's obviously a throwback to early Jackson Pollock or Gorky."

"No, I mean the murder."

"Oh, yeah. It looks like a drug deal gone sour."

"Joey was a bad boy, Sheriff,"

Joey's mother told Sparky later in the day in the doorway of her home.

"Do you know anyone who could have done this to him, ma'am?"

"No. All his friends was bad, too. Come on in. You want some cookies and milk?"

"Why, yes, thank you. Gee, I haven't had cookies and milk since my mother died. She used to bring them to me."

As Joey's mother went to the kitchen, Sparky noticed some paintings hanging in the living room of men and women engaged in various sexual acts.

"Did you paint these?" he asked Joey's mother as she came back carrying a large platter of cookies and a pitcher of milk.

"Yeah."

"My mother used to paint. But not pictures like these."

"You don't like them, don't look."

"No, that's not it. They're really not that bad--artistically speaking. I know quite a bit about art, actually, and I can tell you've got some talent. Do you mind if I smoke?"

During the next few months, Sparky spent a great deal of time on the case and interviewed Joey's mother almost every day, always having cookies and milk while at her house. One day, while looking at the paintings on the living room wall, he said, "You know, you've got a real sense of erotica in these."

"You want to go in the bedroom, Sparky?" she asked.

The reporters asked Sparky one day if he'd made any progress in solving Joey's murder.

"Well, boys, we've got several leads, which I'm not allowed to

"It's an almost surrealistic nightmarish combination of art and violence."

discuss, of course."

"Did you know that Joey's mother had a half-million dollar life insurance policy on the kid?"

"Sure, I know. He was her only means of support. I see nothing suspicious in that."

"But, Sheriff, I've learned from a reliable source at the bank that Joey's father also had a half-million dollar policy on him when he died and that Joey's mother had just run out of money when the kid got killed."

"Hold it right there, fellas. I don't like the direction this conversation is taking. We're still working on the drug angle, anyway."

One afternoon, while Joey's mother was taking a shower and Sparky was lying in her bed, he started rummaging through her nightstand looking for a match, and found some gasoline credit card receipts. Checking the locations of purchase, he found that they more or less made a circle around the country. He found some matches and burned the receipts in an ashtray, lighting a cigar on the flames. Joey's mother came out of the bathroom, drying herself with a towel.

"You know, I admire creativity in people."

"Really?"

"Oh, definitely. And great creativity, like your Van Goghs and Lautrecs, seem to transcend accepted behavior and conventional conduct. Their art puts them above the human plane."

"So?"

"Well, I think you are one of these gifted people. I want to help you and encourage you."

Joey's mother raised the towel to her head and began drying her hair. "How?" she asked, the towel muffling her voice.

"I think we ought to get married. We can go away, start over."

"What about your job?"

"I don't need it. I've got some money saved up. You have some, too, don't you?"

"Yeah, but that don't last forever, believe me."

"Don't worry, we'll make out."

Just then the phone rang and Joey's mother answered it.

"It's for you."

Sparky listened a moment and said, "Where'd you find it? Valdosta, Georgia? That figures. Uh-huh. Say, what color was it? Oh, wow! Hey, that's perfect!"

He hung up the phone and smiled at Joey's mother, the towel still draped shroud-like over her head. ■



WHEN I WAS SMALLER

Watching cartoons on a cold
Saturday morning Dad,
I wait for you to rise.
When you came down the stairs that
morning Dad,
I felt safe and somehow more alive.

Hugging you good morning Dad,
I told you what I did in the snow
the day before, and how much fun
I had.

Helping you shovel the snow off the
walk Dad,
I tried so desperately to keep up
with you.

Looking back at when I was smaller
Dad,
I realize I knew nothing of the word
love.
I knew only of admiration and pride.
Which does add up to love, Dad.

David Carr



**"Knowledge is of two kinds.
We know a subject
ourselves, or we know
where we can find
information upon it."**

Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (1775)

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Eddie-Con't

"Through security." The blue eyes darted about the room, checking the glasses of the other customers.

"And a ladies' room, where is the ladies' room?" Edie was feeling a little sick.

"Through security." The waitress was already moving away and onto a thirstier customer.

Edie had trembled at his touch, her mind whirling back to her childhood. Second grade. Bless me Father. His breath hot against her cheek. First Communion time. For I have sinned. Good girls don't do dirty things with men. Good men don't do dirty things to good girls. Forgive us our trespasses. But the alcohol had softened her perception. Her body was no longer fat and repulsive. She was tight and slender. And he had pulled her closer to him. As we forgive those who trespass against us. She tilted her head back and parted her lips. She felt his mouth descend and cover her own. And led us not into temptation.

"Ticket, please." An owl-like creature scrutinized Edie.

"Just a minute. It's here somewhere." She nervously dug through the shopping bag. It was getting warmer.

"I can't let you through without your ticket." Her tone was severely even.

"Yes, I understand. Here, I've got it." Edie fleshed the ticket. She was going to be sick.

"Please, place your bag and pocketbook on the table." The owl still studied her.

Edie placed her belongings on the table to be checked. Deliver us from evil. Afterward, she could only remember the pain. A soreness between her hefty thighs served as a constant reminder. Amen. She would be away from all this soon. Maybe then she could begin to forget. Betrayal. Where was the ladies' room?

Edie pushed the door open. The stench of humidity and human excrement combined with industrial disinfectant. She was sick before the stall door swung shut behind her. She knelt before the bowl as her body retched. Gradually, the nausea passed and she was able to stand and lean her forehead against the coolness of the stall door. Turning the cold water on full blast, she leaned over, slapping it repeatedly over her face, washing away any traces of the sky blue eye shadow. She straightened up and pulled a rough, paper towel from the dispenser. Carefully, she dabbed at the water on her face, watching herself in the mirror. She looked so much older than her nineteen years. She wondered if her mother would recognize her when she got to Detroit. She placed her right hand against the roundness of her belly. Her memory of Whitley stirred inside. ■





