

# PROMETHIA



1998-1999





P R O M E T H I A  
1998-1999

Promethia 1998-1999

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Contributions accepted from the students, faculty, and alumni of Oral Roberts University.



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### Editor's Note

I wish to thank the entire staff for their various contributions. At one time or another each of you have given a certain amount of time and effort in order to bring Promethia one step closer to printing. Among the various menial tasks and favors performed you, perhaps the most taxing was listening to my visions, dreams, and complaints about this year's magazine. At each turn you were encouraging and helpful.

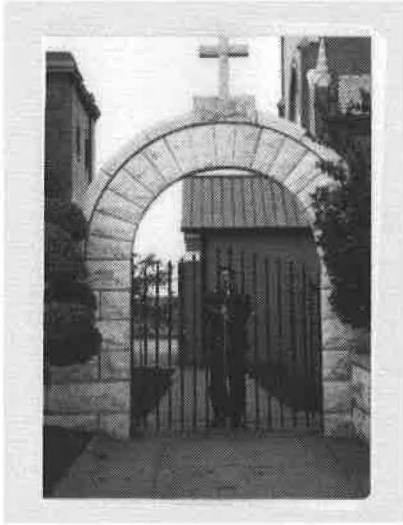
Much gratitude belongs to the English Faculty. Your willingness to work with me, your willingness to believe in Promethia, your ability to take a few on the chin to make it happen taught me and encouraged me constantly.

To Dr. Grady Walker, I say a special thank you. Thank you for your wise counsel, your oaken patience, and your stern grace. Though you always let me guide the ship, you pointed the compass, the schedule, and the hidden dangers that **laid** in our way.

Finally, to all of the writers who submitted anything, you are Promethia, you provided the spark which is now the fire. I am honored to have published some of you, and am honored to have read all of your works. The Editorial Staff, the student body, and I thank you.

Lastly, I thank those who have gone before me. John Affleck who pioneered Promethia's resurrection two years ago, and Geoffrey Wright who secured Promethia's place as ORU's official literary magazine last year. For the first time in my life I actually felt my feet were too small to fill the shoes I wore. Thank you for the chance to serve, to carry the torch. This year we have established Promethia's endurance. Of all the eternal flames associated with ORU, may the flame of this magazine warm more hearts, do more good, and yes burn even longer than the Prayer Tower.

## Grass Fires



That day my fascination with fire mingled with fear. Several small fire departments were called and there erupted a great chaos of screaming men, frightened children, sirens, water hoses, and hot terrible flames. I stood still in the middle of it all and felt the most confusing mixture of awe, terror, and guilt I had ever known. I watched the chaos I had created and for the first time became familiar with an awesome paradox. I was ten years old and had started a fire in a tall grass prairie. The July sun and anxious prairie wind had taken my small fire and turned it into a force I could no longer control. Up to now, it had warmed my feet and roasted my marshmallows, now it threatened my life and home.

This sort of paradox runs throughout the human condition. We are limited, finite, and sinful yet we have been irrevocably given an imagination, a fire, with infinite, almost god-like capabilities to create. If we create recklessly the creation is out of control and dangerous to all who get near it. If we regard this fire with awe and trembling, if we carry it carefully and light those places which need lighting we are bringers of hope. We are Promethia.

The poet is an arson. Good verse sets fire to a thought or emotion giving it the fuel to grow and spread itself. A single poetic image is a spark set afloat upon a great dry sea. Its hinted meaning breathes the first rush of prairie wind, which fills the sails of the fire-bark and sends it skimming across the crackling waves.

When I first read this particular set of poems as they are compiled here, I felt as though I were standing in the middle of that prairie, that windswept waving prairie at night. I stood there in the middle of untouched grass, holding my torch. There was an orange glow from over the rise in front of me as if a brilliant sun were burning out just on the other side. The wind brought waves of hot, choking smoke amid the cold night air. As I approached the other side I saw for miles fire after fire, some raging, some just being lit, some burning out quickly in bright explosions. I heard the voices of the fire starters and those being warmed by the light of the fires. Some laughed and talked to travelers, who had stopped by to keep warm; some danced madly about with a sort of concentrated angry justice. Others ran quickly up and lit their torches and disappeared over another hill without a minute to spare. Some just sat by their fire and stared into the heat with quiet tears falling.

It felt the way you do when you are closer to understanding something than ever before, yet further from being able to explain it; a sort of vicious relentless peace, the very peak of faith. I was afraid, expectant, determined, there watching Promethia at work.

I felt on my cheek the warmth of my own torch, burning composed and peaceful, and hot in my hand. Turning back to my dark prairie, I touched the flame to the top of the dry grass and watched the fire begin to grow.

So, as you read, approach the poet's fire. Become aware of the nature of each flame; warm yourself; maybe, even light your own torch.

--Joe D. Spann  
Editor-in-chief

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## Dr. Grady Joe Walker

Professor of English

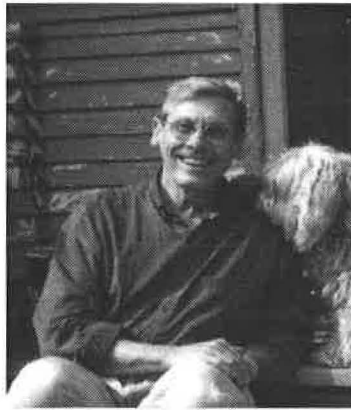
Oral Roberts University, Arts & Sciences, English Department

by Geoffrey Armstrong Wright

This 1998-99 edition of Promethia is proudly dedicated to the infamous Dr. Grady Joe Walker, who has with humility and dignity offered his service and guidance to generations of students. Dr. Walker's benevolent spirit has long been and will continue to be a fire to warm the hearts of students, as well as test them, and a light to guide them on their way.

After receiving his B. A. in English from Oklahoma City University in 1957, Dr. Walker, or as he was known then and is known now, Grady, launched his teaching career as a Graduate Assistant in freshman composition at Oklahoma State University, where he received his M. A. in English in 1959. Before coming to Oral Roberts University in 1967, Grady taught English and German at Cameron State University and Southwestern State University. Upon his arrival at ORU, Grady also taught both English and German and founded the respective English and German clubs. Later, in 1971, after completing his doctoral studies on D. H. Lawrence, Grady received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Tulsa. At this time he laid aside his German classes to focus on teaching English, which he has done with excellence and grace ever since and for which he received an Excellence in Teaching Award in 1998.

Grady has developed and taught courses on Medieval, Romantic, and Victorian literature, as well as Creative Writing, but the Survey of English Literature (held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7:50 in the morning



whether students are present and awake or not) is still his pride and joy. One of Grady's specialty courses is his seminar on D. H. Lawrence, which has occasioned student/faculty trips to Taos, New Mexico, to visit the home of Lawrence.

In addition to teaching, Grady poetry and prose. He has Soloman in Westview, a poetry and prose. Also, his Open Letter to the Editor was published in the "Laurentiana" section of the D.H. Lawrence Review. As a member of the Modern Language Association and the South Central Modern Language Association, as well as the Conference on Christianity and Literature, Grady has presented various papers at literary events across the country. In New Orleans, Grady presented "The Character of Hagen in Das Nibelungelied" in the German section of SCMLA, and in the Italian section of SCMLA, he presented "The Sacramental Frame of Silone's Bread and Wine." At the Conference on Christianity and Literature held at Northern Arizona State University in Flagstaff, Arizona, Grady presented "D. H. Lawrence, The Nemesis of St. Paul."

also does his own share of writing published the poem "Red Western Oklahoma journal of

Ultimately, it is Grady's generous heart that has made Promethia itself a reality. He has served as the magazine's Faculty Advisor since its conception, and he was an indispensable part of its recent rebirth and reconstruction.

*Grady, for these and all the other wonderful things you have done and all that you are,  
we thank you.*

*--the Students, Faculty, and Alumni of ORU*



## **The Light of a Life**

**A gift for Grady Walker in honor of His Seventieth Birthday**

Printed in 1998-99 Promethia in honor of his service to this  
magazine

He is the hoary-headed one,  
the feast-maker,  
cake-baker,  
myth-shaper,  
the vestige of a Victorian age.  
He is the teller of tales,  
spinner of yarns,  
weaver of dreams,  
builder of houses.

Like the fizz on frothy foam  
his words tickle his tongue and  
flow forward, outward to eager ears  
anticipating the wit and wisdom of another generation.  
As the hammer pounds the cold, black metal,  
so wields the wordsmith the anvil of tradition,  
this word-lover, architect of language,  
bastion of proper, precise, punctuated English grammar;  
Like a pillar that does not bend with fierce wind,  
he stands firm, the sagacious professor,  
unflinching, unswerving, holding up an immovable standard.

As Beowulf raised his arm in fierce battle against Grendel,  
monster of darkness, evil-filled creature,  
possessor of the odor of destruction,  
the page-turner lifts his voice against the dark fragrance of modernism;  
he is the new Apollo, oracle of the gods,

The room-window opens,  
yonder-light shining like the flicker of fiery flame,  
black silhouette against the transparent wall,  
the book-maker stoops, standing tall,  
the pagers turn,  
laden-leaves rustle with the restlessness of insomnia,  
forging forth the story of a life untold.

Within this ancient seer,  
a vision of rhyme arises;  
the muse speaks in mute whispers,  
an echo of the eolian harp.

Words of a lifetime of living,  
voices from the past,  
breathing in the wind of hope, of mutability,  
offering a chance to cling to clarity,  
inspiring changeless truths:  
"one truth is clear: whatever IS, is RIGHT"  
"beauty is truth, truth beauty, --that is all  
    Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Gesticulating, articulating, he proclaims  
messages measured by epiphanic moments,  
rich revelation of eternal veracities:  
He is the way, the truth, and the life;  
"More things are wrought by prayer, than this world dreams of."

*--Mark Hall*





FLOATING • SPARKS • IGNITE



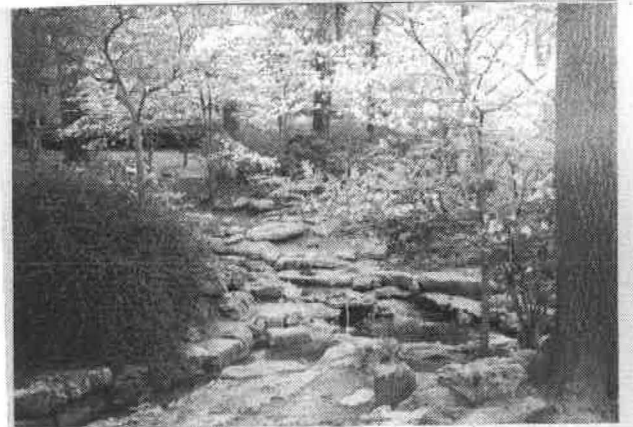


**Aspens in Spring: Florescence**

No  
Hurry  
Now  
Fourth week in May  
Will do  
For white fingers  
To sprout green  
Ten thousand feet  
In the air

**Aspens in Summer: Confidence**

No sacrifice now  
Not a crown of thorns  
But of bold green  
Florets  
Competing  
With mad blue sky  
For attention

**Aspens in Autumn: Incandescence**

Big Bang  
Blaze of glory  
Suns themselves  
Inhabit the branches  
Whisper last requests  
Then  
Drop  
With  
First  
Snow  
Fall

**Autumn**

morning hidden in  
rainy day silver blue haze  
leaves fall to the ground

--Nicole Baxter

**Aspens in Winter: Somnolence**

Now  
The Earth's surface  
Has hairs  
Slender cilia  
Pale  
Uniform  
Verticality  
Still  
But for  
A wavering  
At the touch  
Of the boreal breath  
Of God

--Keith Gogan

**The Lake**

By the time the trees had turned  
nothing was left but rusty boats  
drifting on the still lake  
and brittle leaves washed up  
to the shore then carried  
out and drowned

--Chris Dooley



### Drip, Sky

Drip, sky, to a mild,  
Overcast special.  
Dear bud of spring, like a colorful dress  
On a green girl, watch your weight and  
Don't slip. You are the covering,  
Oasis, of a lush, gaudy land—  
A sweet contrast to a man.

Drip, sky, to a mild,  
Overcast special.  
Dissolve all sidewalks with your water;  
Outlaw our geometric wasteland—  
Doing calculus to the path  
Of a splash.  
Remind me not to live so fast.

Drip, sky, for a while  
Till no one feels special,  
Only jealous when the wealth of us  
Dines on the cuisine of solitude.  
And looking at this version of a tree,  
I wonder how much gravity makes graviti—  
God bless the men of Gemini

--Jared Anderson

### Just Curious

Old hag, ragged  
big-boned bag lady  
pushing a cart of  
crusty, rusty  
junk-things  
frizzled, greasy  
mop on your head,  
could hardly be called  
hair, under that  
awful hat;  
knobbed knuckles  
clutch at nothing  
I wonder where  
you come from,  
ragged, wasted  
woman?  
wrinkled, restless  
big-boned bag lady,  
refugee,  
with your three, hole-patched  
winter coats, your  
portable junkyard, lugged  
around town in a  
Wal-Mart shopping cart  
with one wheel gone bad.  
Where are you going,  
you are always going somewhere  
where?  
Just curious, you know.

--Amanda Hall



Average

He was  
 wrinkled tan pants,  
 a practically  
 transparent  
 red shirt from  
 1985--  
 not quite tucked in,  
 socks with blue  
 stripes  
 all the way  
 to his knees,  
 shoes of that  
 plastic leather  
 with two  
 velcro straps  
 sole on one foot

His hair was thin,  
 brown,  
 combed over the  
 top to hide the  
 rounding of his head

He took pictures,  
 smiled,  
 always knew  
 everybody's name,  
 laughed,  
 never seemed to care  
 when he was laughed at

He should have been  
 great  
 He was maybe

Everyone thought  
 so the night he was  
 killed  
 Some punk kid  
 trying to be  
 somebody

I wonder what he  
 thought  
 when he opened  
 the door--  
 probably smiled,  
 remembered his  
 name,  
 saw the gun  
 too late

--*Nicole Baxter*

**Tragedy on the Twelfth Floor**

Yellow buzzing between me  
 And silence and safety  
 Cringing, furtive glances  
 Spy droning intruder's irresolute form  
 And movement flows from hand to mind  
     to shoe to wasp to wall  
 Leaving a fatal flaw crushed on white-wash.

--*Christiane Hofmann*

**Monet**

Monet sings colors.

Choral canvas harmonies

from

dissonant

pastel

notes.

Rubbing,

Bleeding

Formless lines.

Tense.

Intense

Clashing

P u l l i n g p u s h i n g c r o w d i n g

SHOUTING MOVEMENT

Always joining, flowing, forming, forever breathing, bathing bodies.

Living, loving, life; telling stories.

Beauty broken into parts.

Measures played with separate breath,

Songs heard with eyes and hearts,

Floating pieces brought to rest

Replaced c h a o t i c formless, none

With many, married, moving, one.

*--Joe D. Spann*

**Thoughts on a Metallic Urn**

Timeless portrait, forever caught

Your profile, etched in stone

Bound to brass--What souls have you

Left the same? Bound to your image,

Etched with pain. Chalky lips

Beckon my own, but I must not

Heed the siren's wail.

Hands fastened your lovely profile

To harsh metal, a cruel joke

On the urn, itself once a lovely thing.

Now rendered dark and oppressive as an

Opaque prison for your Alabaster beauty

How many stares of strangers have you endured?

How many lovers looked, and then walked away?

You, laughing at my mortality,

And crying for an escape from your

Eternal, ageless home.

Leave me stranded in life, as I turn away

And leave you stranded on your pot.

*--Ryan Dean Moore*



**The Road to Oklahoma**

the sun  
has long since  
dipped down  
beyond the horizon  
beyond sight  
though daylight  
lingers  
in hazy blue  
laziness of summer

beginnings of night  
make shadows  
coolness  
a six-legged  
winged world comes  
to life in buzzes  
and whirled flight  
that splat the  
windshield  
like yellow paint

our legs creak  
old bones  
stepping  
out of the car  
stretching  
our nostrils  
breathe in  
the freshness  
of outside  
welcoming  
anything  
after the staleness  
of warm, cramped  
car  
we walk in  
small steps  
prolonging freedom

a few disheveled  
travelers  
wander out  
of the brown  
and red brick  
building  
heading back  
to laden-down  
station wagons

picnic tables  
and dented green  
trashcans  
litter the lawn  
beyond  
is a row of  
hedges  
separating the  
forest from  
highway civilization

fireflies  
light up the  
bushes  
fallen stars  
flashes of  
neon gold  
surround us  
as we walk  
on cracked cement paths  
under the  
drooping fingers  
of ancient  
weeping  
trees

the hum of the  
highway is  
distant  
the smell of  
exhaust  
dirt  
pavement  
is lost

we smile  
delight  
our one  
moment in  
fairyland

*--Nicole Baxter*

### The First of the Year

My dreams tonight are runways  
salted and pulsing crimson and violet  
through the dark heart of evening.

My dreams tonight are of a spider web of city lights below,  
incandescent laces like the tendrils of a jellyfish  
needling through a black and viscous sea.

My dreams tonight are of the asphalt rhythm of highways  
bearing my family homeward through snowfall  
and drifting memories of recent days passed in happiness.

I am fitted to leave it all behind--  
to take it with me wherever I go.

I am returning from home.

--*Geoffrey Wright*

### Boston #2

On the North End  
white lights hung  
limp  
across the street  
marking tunnels which  
run beneath the  
pavement  
from one shadowed  
building to another

White lights like a map of veins and arteries  
hiding from the moon

--*Christopher Dooley*



## INCENSE • BURNING



### Another Sunday Sermon

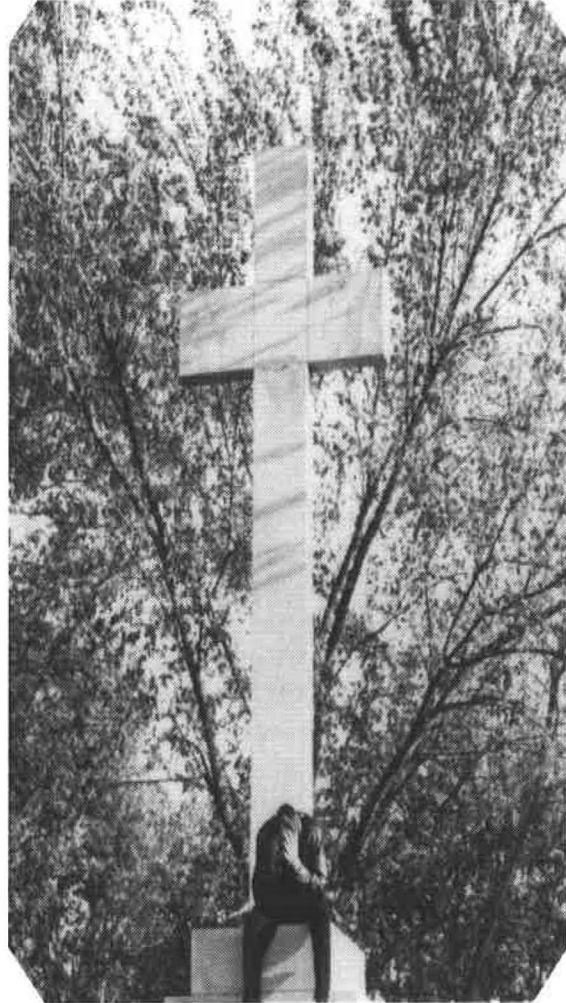
Candy-coated, goes down smooth  
the critics laugh, we warm the pews, muse,  
Joking Jesus  
lights dim, a congregation thick with  
yawning herds out like  
sheep before a slaughter,  
wet lips, ruby drips, dress shirts stained  
with too many sunday sacraments,  
distended stomachs bloat with  
bread-tokens tasted, wafers of  
Our blessed saviors body broken  
(yeahyeahyeah) belched out in  
solemn ministerial tones,  
and file our into blinding sunlight, to our Buicks,  
ready for that sabbath turkey football dinner.

*--Amanda Hall*

### Confession

Over lunch  
My friend tells me  
Some mornings  
She gets up and  
Has to chip away  
At the block of ice  
That encases God  
And I smile  
Half nod  
Seeming sympathetic  
Until  
I remember  
Some mornings  
My hands too  
Feel  
The hardness  
Of steel  
The chill  
Of solid water

*--Keith Gogan*



**On the Eve of Good Friday**

Choir children born  
In fountains of water and wine  
Echo their mourning against  
Cathedral walls clear-cut  
Like broad incisions  
In the asphalt fabric of city streets  
and frosted with starlight  
distilled in forlorn  
remembrance of children  
murdered in cobblestone streets  
and mothers who flung themselves  
on the killing swords  
and a child hanging atop a hill  
while his mother watches  
behind shadows parted low like curtains  
and weeps into a chalice for her tears  
to spatter over her doorposts  
as a ward against memories of an angel  
who once feathered by  
and posed a question  
which she answered  
yes

*--Geoffrey Wright*

**Madonna with Child**

Blue robe, black eyes--all I remember  
Your being, incarnate  
In eyes, lips, and clothes  
And gentle hands holding the world's weight  
As if a feather lay upon your palms  
Always a smile for me, gentle as rain  
And for all who, weary, weeping, creep to you  
Beholding in your face the peace from pain  
That mirrors still the form within your arms:  
The sleeping babe birthed from your wounded womb.

*--Christiane Hofmann*



**Corpus Christi**

Corpus Christi, carrion fruit for flies,  
Cross hung corpse, the criminal sigh,  
Where is the kingdom now? Parables turn cries.  
The dove marked man left meat for crows to dine.

Twelve fled. One split his body on the stones.  
They fed this taste of death with silver, cowardice, despair,  
And fled the cursed unbroken bones  
That strained a bloody spill served by a spear.

One centurion tongued confession of the Son  
Known dumbly by the world in numbing darkness.  
Temple curtain rent, what light has flown?  
Shades walking in Jerusalem, do they curse or bless?

Mary receives her Son God's tree bears;  
Fruit for a harvest feast, this planting--death prepares.

*--William Epperson*

**Sonnet 1**

With trembling hand she reaches through the rain  
That falls from stark trees stripped of their clothes,  
And cold wind beats tears back; unhardened pain  
Reveals itself, all secrets now disclosed.  
Chastity chased and body all but dead  
Unvirgined by the mongers who'd held her  
From Harlem, spirit's brothel she had fled  
To these woods forever seeking shelter.

He meets her in the woods that final one  
And she falls down into the bed of leaves;  
With years of unloved wounds she falls undone.  
Compassion mov'd, he lifts her to her knees.  
His holy hand touches her spirit's flesh  
And she her head lays on her Savior's breast

*--Joe D. Spann*

## The Sad Clown

I cried last night

When I saw the circus clown,

When I beheld the artificial face saddened, reflecting a painted and bruised heart,

Trying to make the audience laugh and feel good through his pain,

Hearing the whisper of hurt,

Seeing lovelessness wrapped like a snake around his waist

In black, blue, and red colors.

His shoes, a size 20, someone said, were too big,

I could not walk in them--

Me, a child of eight, at the circus for the first time,

Listening to the rhyming of the ringmaster,

The trumpeting of trained elephants,

The roaring of rebellious lions,

But my eyes were transfixed on the man-too-big-for-the-red-fire-engine,

The misfit whom everyone derided

Because that's what you do to castoffs.

My hands reached out to him, trembling fingers desiring to touch the painted-on frown,

But he did not see me, did not touch me, did not hear me.

Hoping and questioning, yearning to love,

Seeking to soothe his pain with the hug of a child,

I failed; I forsook him.

I cried last night

When I saw the crucified clown,

When I beheld the spittle-covered face saddened, mirroring a broken and bleeding heart,

The rusty, re-riven, red nail-spikes--

Wound-makers,

Spirit-smashers,

Heart-breakers,

Driven into the hands of God.

Longingly, lovingly, I tried to touch the stained face--

The red, blue, and black colors,

But I was not tall enough to reach him

And I could not fit into his shoes--

My eight-year-old feet were too small.

Me--forsaker-child,

Could not give him water for his thirst,

A rag to wipe his wound,

A hug to help his heart.

He whispered--

I could not hear,

But my face felt the fury of the wind,

And I knew

The one who further-fled was forgiven.

--Mark Hall

**Rainbow: Covenant-Ribbon**

Bark-battered, rock-shattered, boat world,  
Teeming ark-life, ani-man smells, breath;  
Brain-flickers, like a Pentecost-consciousness.  
Life-flickers; worlds on worlds, each after its kind.  
Stamping straw, straining reins, moving for expanded space;  
Tense nerve strains in man and beast,  
Exit-anticipation heightened.  
Doves diving downwards, scattering olive branches,  
Piquing the panthers, tormenting the tigers, raging, encaged

Rumble-thud, boom-bounce, shuddering beams strain  
Tarred strappings, trying the skill of the ark-man.  
Boat-base, bouncing the boulders and peaks of Ararat;  
Shifting cargo, mingling masses, maddened reptiles and monarch butterflies.  
Raven, dark-winged deserter, camping on corpses,  
The first to escape the confines of ark-safety,  
Dove messengers going and coming  
    For seven days  
        and  
        seven days  
Final freedom from that raucous bird-cage  
Silent message reaching the ark-people  
And self-confined God in the depths of the wave-house.

Cramped, cradling His treasures, Noah and Sons, Inc.,  
Speaking His mind and His will to Noah:  
"Go forth of the ark....wife and sons and wives  
And cattle and creeping things, after their kinds."  
A thousand eyes on the holy man Noah  
As he advances on unsteady sea-legs  
Moving toward the massive portal,  
Last swung on hinges by God's hand.  
Massive movement behind him, swarms  
And spirals of winged creatures  
And ponderous paws of long-lethargic beasts of prey  
Padding now into magic order for the exit,  
From the haven now turned prison.  
Sons of Noah chink at the hardened pitch

Clanging tools of iron biting into wood and tar  
Chiseling holes for the eager and blinding sun to penetrate and explore  
Suddenly, as if moved by explodic breath from impatient God,  
Bulky beams buckle and crumble, exit becomes entrance,  
Into a new world, purged of poison, the  
Bursting of life, to replenish and multiply, one more change to please and amuse the almighty.  
Mazy movement into frenzied rush to escape into the blue air.  
Spreading ver the land, each after its kind,  
Not minding bones and slime from the receded flood,  
Grazing new grass and leaves, recycled life-chin.  
But Noah, higher order, conversing with God  
Knowing His mind, finding and fitting stones,  
Building a sacred structure, altar to his God.  
Sacrificing clean animals and clean birds  
Covenant-table, stony slab, evoking the Sacred Presence.  
Suddenly, spanning the space, forming itself out of  
Mist and sun, mixing colors never seen before,  
Words of Holy God forming themselves into color strands  
As He thunders out His promise, covenant code:  
"I do set my bow in the cloud....a token of covenant."  
Splendor-slivers, delicate-vivid, reassuring man of His infinite fidelity.  
The bow of a promise, one foot planted solidly in lost Eden,  
Spanning the world and all time, revealing the other foot in apocalyptic splendor!

Rainbow, covenant/promise symbol, His ribbon and  
Bow, Noah now to infinity--  
    Gift-wrapped promise package,  
    Mine!

--Grady Walker

EMBERS • RED • AND • WARM





### All-American Thanksgiving

A feast of feathers  
(God be thanked),  
Of fruits of others' labors in vain to overcome  
The bills and rainless summer dust,  
Celebrate tradition unbroken  
Since great-great-grandma's sweat  
Brought forth groaning table abundance.  
Please pass the cranberry sauce,  
The congealed blood of a nation  
That feeds the lawyer in his dusty cell  
Beside the single-working-almost-mother  
Of Dreams--

The fat, belly-filling bird stares stupidly  
Headless among the stuffing  
That's come out of lives since the tax crunch  
And the welfare farewell  
Hidden in the sweet potato casserole;  
The minimum wage of pies  
Has risen,  
Fattening thighs without nutrition,  
Thin cotton padding for designer winter coats.

*--Christiane Hofmann*

### Mr. Wilkee's Winter

Leaves falling, brown, yellow, red,  
Bushy-tailed rodents bolstering caches,  
Stinging air sweeping, comforting,  
Corpuscles attempting to compensate,  
Reddening faces of wee ones.

Inside, fire burning, mommies calling,  
"Come on in kids!"  
Children leave off attending their companion,  
...and daddy's fire.  
Three-fingered man, black teeth smiling;  
He knows they'll be back, maybe give him a hat.

But I turn, leaving white world, icy home,  
Facing red brick, central heating, empty halls.  
Shutting the door, glancing once more into past,  
I turn the television on.

*--Iain Little*

## Great Grandma's Grapes

Purple...  
pressed from the pulp  
of my mother's womb.  
Umbilical cord around my neck.  
Not enough air.

I came to believe  
in never enough.

Great Grandma Mabel rolled  
concord grapes  
from the palm of her hand  
into her mouth.  
Eating them seeds and all.  
"Waste not, want not."

I imagined those seeds  
taking root.  
Her body plump and ripe.  
Clusters of grapes spill  
from her mouth,  
until I cry  
Enough!

I...eat only the skins,  
preferring sour to sweet,  
preferring pulp to meat.  
It is enough.

--*Scott Aycock*

October 1996

Green leaves are turning now to brighter death;  
 The wanderer clasps his cloak against the cold,  
 And winter threatens daily with his breath  
 The countryside in silence to enfold  
 But for the scrape of branches now stripped bare  
 And the leaves that rattle dry upon the ground  
 None can escape the wind that's everywhere.  
 Though he may shut his ears against the sound.  
 But with the leaves my heart is turning too;  
 It soars with them against the deep blue sky.  
 Though all around decay may meet my view,  
 My soul with outward seeming won't comply,  
 But rises like a bird upon the wing--  
 Though winter comes, inside my heart it's spring.

--Christiane Hofmann

### The Apprentice Woodsman



I made a path into the woods  
 Where green ferns grow in spring  
 And wilt tobacco brown in fall.  
 Under landmarks oak and elm,  
 Branches to my solitudes  
 In shades of summer suns,  
 Shining idylls of yesteryears,  
 Where I no longer live.  
 I knew where my path ended  
 And left me a wanderer  
 In my own wood,  
 Searching for familiar places  
 Not so far from the home  
 To which I always returned

Now new apprentice woodsmen  
 Walk my path  
 Discover my wood  
 Use my path to forge their own  
 And then to find their way back  
 Home.

--John Affleck

**Front-Porch Chess War**

Wooden armies, eager for carnage,  
 Face off, swollen with pride-rage,  
 Brain-torture-pleasure, like witches' pots,  
 Seethe and boil, point of explosion,  
 Held in check by age-old iron rule.  
 Stone-faced, helmeted front-line  
 Pawns, first-line defense,  
 Dispensable indispensables,  
 Stare with cold-hot hate  
 Across the empty, bloodless field  
 Soon to be soaked and fertilized with  
 Rich fertilizer, red and rich,  
 Life going to life, drain-stain.  
 Hooves, iron-clad feet and  
 Spear-butts pounding dirt.  
 Heart-drums thunder as  
 White pawn darts; first  
 Move, studied and deliberate,  
 By power beyond pawn,  
 Bubba's battle plan,  
 Chess-book genius, altering  
 Goddish defense power in  
 Opposing force above the  
 Royal Couple, bishops, knights  
 Castles, dark in their mystery  
 Still subject to bubba-  
 Power on opposite sides of the  
 Board battlefield, Spiritual-mental  
 Conflict, forcing lighting-and-  
 Long-pondered moves of  
 Subordinate royalty and  
 Spiritual hierarchs and beyond them,  
 Gods of war, present always when  
 Clashes develop, taking sides,  
 Forcing thunder-bolt moves;  
 Tauting wwar chants after  
 Victory rips and tears  
 Float mockingly over gashed corpses:  
 "Whatcha gonna do,  
 Bad Boy, Bad Boy?  
 Whatcha gonna do when  
 They come for you,  
 Bad Boy, Bad Boy?"  
 Dark-Bubba tenses as  
 White-Bubba exults and gloats,  
 Mars and Jupiter mock and  
 Rock terrestrial citadels, over and  
 Across the Bubba-kings as the  
 Conflict plays out on the  
 Board-field on all its levels:  
 Illimitable-gods, heroic men, and

Wood-marble figures on the Chessboard slaughter-slough.  
 Another bloody Sunday afternoon on  
 The front-porch plain on  
 Quanah Avenue

--Grady Walker

**On the Boardwalk at Dawn**

Cool, wet fog hovers on liquid salt,  
 resisting the sun.  
 Soles of sandy shoes grate  
 on drenched, black wood.

Hands clasped in ignorance,  
 not knowing what lies head,  
 or what is now behind,  
 they walk together.

Waves smash on age-old planks,  
 supports that may not hold.  
 Bravely, they walk together.

Well-worn guards line either side,  
 limits established by others.  
 Assured, they walk together.

Invisible gulls, white on white, soar,  
 calling down with scorn.  
 Undaunted, they walk together.

Pressing close,  
 wispy wind whipping wet hair,  
 engulfed in longed-for misty shroud,  
 they kiss.

They walked together.

--Iain Little

ASHES...



### The Woods Behind My Grandmother's House

Robin redbreasts jingled spring tunes  
like a wind chime among callused  
fingers of winter branches  
arthritic and brittle and  
scrabbling in the air,  
raking it for rain,  
for gleaning dew and  
weaving from Black Widow's gossamer  
and wisps of Maga's silver curls  
a veil of memories  
shaken out into days and decades  
and billowed over the coffin  
of her firstborn son  
bedded down in folds of dead  
oak and maple leaves  
pillowed at the gray feet of stones  
suatting by the oxbow of Willard Creek  
where he and his younger brothers  
dug for salamanders but found a toy  
gun and a pack of cigarettes.

*--Geoffrey Wright*

### Were I to Die

Were I to die  
Tonight  
A rush of tying  
Up loose ends  
Would cme tomorrow.  
    Meetings cancelled,  
    Substitutes brought  
    In to handle classes.  
    Papers signed,  
    Prayers said,  
    A body dutifully  
    Shed, along with  
    Tears, and some  
    Insurance.  
Missing in action for  
Awhile I'd be--then  
only missed--  
And for long times  
Forgot.  
It would be hard,  
But I think, old  
World you'd make it.

*--William Epperson*

## Webs

She preserves  
yellow photographs,  
curled on the edges.  
Fragile as ashen leaves.  
She touches the picture of a cradled infant,  
remembers the smell of her breast milk.

Veins betray the thinness of skin.  
With her finger she traces  
tiny purple webs  
spidering up her leg.

When she was a little girl  
her father told her,  
"Find your name in a spiders web, you won't grow old."  
She laughed then.  
Her eyes, now, weary with webs.

On her birthday she dreamed a web,  
"My name was in it.  
Taking hold of a silky thread I began to dance,  
spinning,  
    spinning,  
into ever tightening circles."

She awoke to find her body blanketed  
in butterflies, multi-colored.  
She wondered why they did not fly.

*--Scott Aycock*



### Ode to the Dusk

People, like fire, burn at both ends  
Until all that has been borrowed on this earth  
Turns to ash.

Smoke and Spirit mix in the twilight of our lives  
And the warrior sings one more ode to the dusk  
Lifting voice with the nighthawk and coyote,  
Crying out to the amber light and turquoise sky.

He paints himself the color of sunset.  
It is enough!

*--Scott Aycock*

### I am a Knife

I am a knife  
To cleanly cut  
Each moment.  
A sharp edge  
Shears in two  
A present task  
And into past,  
Like halves of  
Orange, casts  
Off. No dulling  
Of this edge in time.  
I cannot turn to flat  
To touch with greater  
Breadth, or tenderness  
Or pressure, this  
Now. I move too fast--  
To cut and cast  
Away.

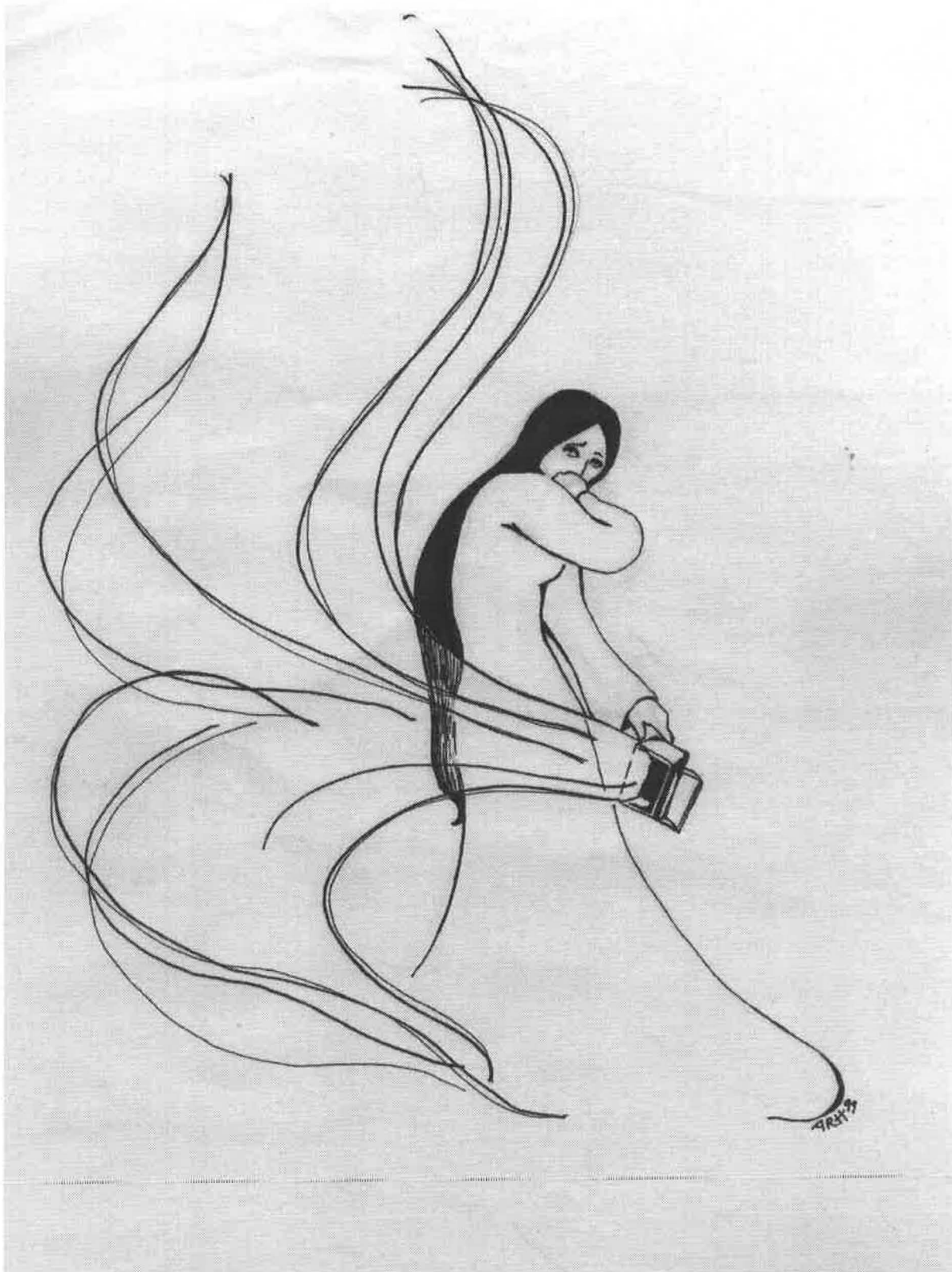
I want to be a stone  
A boy tosses in an edge  
Of stream--  
To sink and slowly  
Feel the flow  
And hold the wet  
Against the cut and  
Drought of time.

*--William Epperson*

## Time and Rythm

heartbeat  
flower  
winter spring  
summerfalls  
and children sing.  
then comes  
seasons and the  
weather  
changing things and  
drifting feather  
floating on unknowing wind  
broken things that cannot mend.  
the sun comes up  
the moon goes down  
and all the while the world  
goes round.  
people live and  
people die  
tears roll down  
and we ask why.  
The waves roll on  
the sandy shore  
sometimes in peace  
sometimes at war  
the mountains sing  
the water speaks  
the answer is found by  
one who seeks;  
who seeks to know and  
understand  
and holds on tightly  
to the nail-scarred hand  
  
sometimes life is hard  
to fathom  
but we're all a part of  
time and rhythm.

-- *Julie Elizabeth Pape*



--Amanda Hall







