



Promethia

* IS THE FINE ARTS MAGAZINE

OF ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY

TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Credits

EDITOR

Michael Warner

BUSINESS MANAGER

Rick Barney

PHOTOGRAPHY

Scott Leslie

ART

Roger Pittenger

GRAPHICS

Douglas Marsh

Jeff Cline

Jeff Ruzich

ADVISOR

Grady Walker

TYPING

Belinda Gantt

COPY EDITOR

Dennis Johnson

Contents

ESSAYS

Dennis Johnson--4, 13

Jim Selby--12

William Epperson--20

D. H. Lawrence--28

POETRY

Cameron Randle--4, 13

Grady Walker--7

Evie Johnson--16, 31

Jim Walroth--21, 34

Mac Thigpen--22

David Westerfield--28

Roy Hess--31

Michael Stewart--35

FICTION

Mary Lou Redding--6

Michael Warner--15

Rick Barney--33

HUMOR

Douglas Marsh--10, 32

Jim Mancuso--23

Cover photo
by Rick Barney
Cemetery near Rye, England

copyright 1978
by the Publications Committee
of the Student Association,
Oral Roberts University

Introduction

By MICHAEL WARNER

There's a sickening feeling that I sometimes get just before finals, or on Mondays, or standing on the LRC porch on an overcast day when the eternal flame is out again—a feeling that nothing fits together, that there is no meaning, that we're wasting our time, that Bertrand Russell was the one true prophet. On such occasions, when all twenty-six feet of my intestines feel as though they are made of a mish-mash of Elmer's glue and five thousand toothbrush bristles, I can be seen muttering "Kyrie eleison" and pulling leaves off of trees as I pass them. Everyone, I believe, experiences this sort of chaotic despair at least occasionally, and in a far milder, slightly repressed form it is with us always.

The sense of despair, however, must be made to yield to those moments of joy and the awareness of meaning, the celebration of God's creation. The chaos is only a background to the meaning, the way the Earth was "without form and void" until God began creating. As Ursula LeGuin says in "A Wizard of Earthsea," one cannot have the word without silence, before and after.

In such a world, any voices which proclaim the meaning and beauty are infinitely valuable. And whether the artist does this by portraying the chaos, or by introducing the meaning, or both, he is fulfilling the most necessary of functions.

I suppose that, in addition to expressing my belief that art is an everyday necessity, I am making a crude appeal for the survival of this magazine. Promethia, in its frail and imperiled existence, is not only an outlet for those few people who bother to be creative, but an incentive to others both to begin being creative, and to incorporate the creative vision of others. It is also an instrument for the spreading of the best creative work here. I don't see a whole lot of point to "closet art" or "desk-drawer writing." And to those who contend that they aren't receiving a fair economic return for their involuntary investment, I ask, what is the profit to you of the money that is used to build sports stadia and to support a whole dormitory full of golfers, bat-swingers, and ball-bouncers? The profit can be considerably less, and the expense is far, far greater. There can be no talk of art as a luxury, as entertainment.

Do not mistake me, however—I do not want didacticism. No one who really loves art will advocate didactic art. The word "art" after all means "skill." Without craft and beauty, there can be no art. Just as the artist perceives meaning only through the details of existential reality, his audience is not confronted by a mass of instruction, but by a well-crafted work in which can be seen beauty and meaning, provided it is read with a sense of responsibility. It is a work of the imagination, not just a philosophical or devotional observation.

The point of this introduction, and what should be getting through, is that art is not just something that must be reckoned with in order to get an "A" in freshman English or humanities. It is profoundly important to everyday life, a key to mental and spiritual survival, especially in such a frightfully modern world. This issue of Promethia is offered with that in mind. We want to encourage all those who are attempting such a work, both those that are printed here and those that are not. If anyone is made more aware of the chaos and the meaning and the beauty, or if anyone is encouraged to persist in creating art that exhibits such awareness of all that is human and divine, then this magazine is a success.

Pressure

By Dennis Johnson

Pressure makes me mad. Sweaty-handed, prickly-shirted, dry-nostriled, needly-eyed mad—uncomfortable.

I shift in the chair; it counts my vertebrae and irritates my sitting-bones. A task grown monstrous holds me there, a task bigger than reason. My knee bounces, sometimes erratically, sometimes to an old overplayed tune which I can't scrape from my inner ear, that never quite comes to mind but never leaves, replaying the only one or two basic lines I can remember, and haunting me in 4-4 time. It haunts and it's in 4-4 time. My pressure keeps the beat.

... It can be a good thing, this drug called pressure. Like coffee, two cups alert me, excite me, and place me a mystic dream beyond myself. The work gets done. Thoughts, as if under military command, march out in single file. Everything is simple, everything is order, and my leaping, cartwheeling pen licks across the page a wet streak of vibrant ink...

Uncomfortable, uneasy, under a load of books I feel when the pressure is there in upwards of three cups. My appetite flees, but I numbly continue pouring in food like coal into a boiler. Sleep seems not to be necessary, yet I summon up yawns and lie a dozen times glaring upon the bed. All seas of tiny duties must be attended to—'take flight to here, and here, and over here'—before I begin on the magnified task. Any escape, any relief, I'll clasp. Yet the pressure remains, like an itch between the shoulder blades and out of reach. I fidget and twist about; my feet are cold, my stomach boils. I rub myself and crouch forward, staring at the blank sheets of paper with bulging marble eyes, and the desk's edge tattoos a thin red line across my chest. The pressure.

It makes kings, presidents, generals. It molds stars and heroes. But it also spawns fools, sluggards, villains, and madmen. Poor wretched uncomfortable madman.

Your Daughter (lyrics)

By Cameron Randle

I have not seen your daughter
walking in the cold Missouri rain
and I wonder has she left us
for the quiet of her pain?
I have not heard the gentle whisper
of the autumn leaves across her path
Is she gone to hide the sorrow
from a vengeful lover's wrath?
Does she hum a twisted lullaby
in the hazy aftermath?

She is given to the evening
like a shadow on the run
She's prone to disappearance
when she's left your life undone
She sifts through circumstances
and leaves your life undone.

I have not seen your daughter
dancing in the dark Missouri night
where she lingers with her lover
til the meadow's morning light.
I have not felt the easy comfort
of her self-assuring manner with the men
Did she concede to pure emotion
did she finally let him in?
Can she keep a shattered secret
from slipping out again?

She is given to the evening
like a shadow on the run
She's prone to disappearance
when she's left your life undone
She sifts through circumstances
and leaves your life undone.

I have not seen your daughter
laughing in the soft Missouri dawn
and I miss the subtle magic
of the way she led me on.
I have not known such empty memories
as the slow advancing candor seemed to bring.
Has she sold her soul for silence
Is there nothing left to sing?
Can she leave me holding heartache
like a solemn, sacred thing?

She is given to the evening
like a shadow on the run
She's prone to disappearance
when she's left your life undone
She sifts through circumstances
and leaves your life undone.



Marsha Bush

Door to Nowhere

By Mary Lou Redding

The loose screen on the door of the diner flapped listlessly in the heat. Chelsea leaned against the counter, tracing her toe viciously along the line where the floor tiles joined, occasionally shooting a look of disguised hostility at Ben. He sat near the door to the kitchen, chair propped against the wall, feet braced on the back of the cooler. Chelsea's face registered distaste as she noted his dirty hair and rumpled apron. He was absorbed in reading a tattered copy of *Argosy*.

"Couldn't we at least paint the place?" she asked, renewing the argument from the night before.

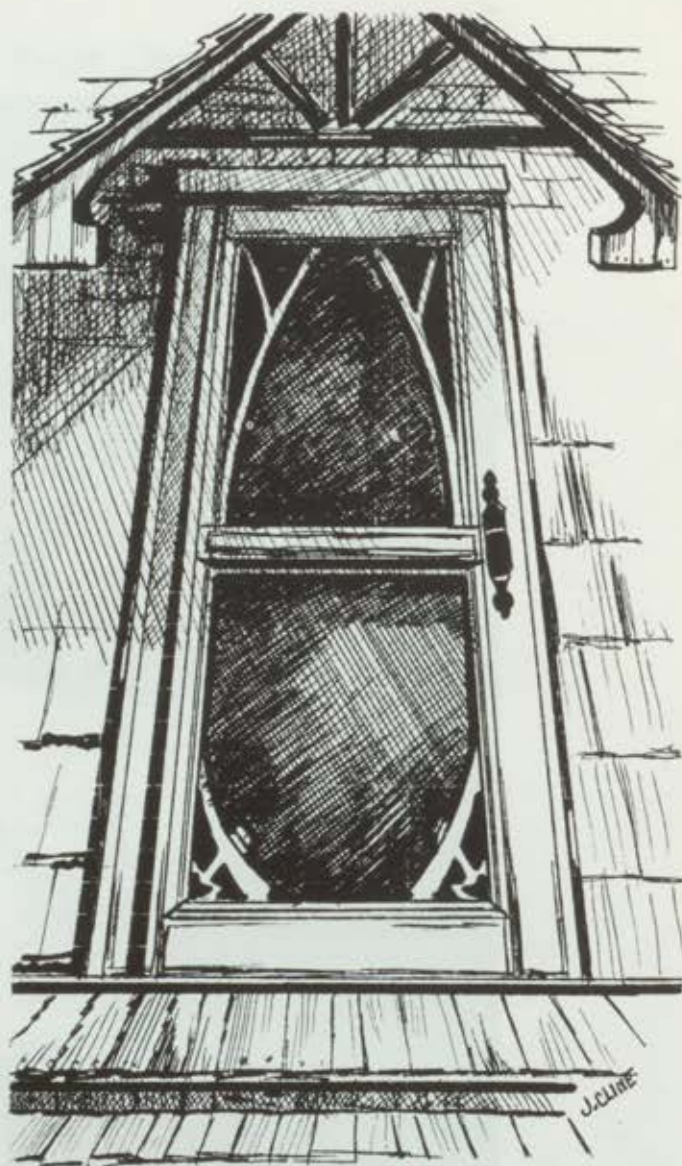
"The place don't need painting. Maybe next year."

"Then how about some new curtains?"

"We don't need no new curtains, neither. Can't you think about something besides ways to spend my money?" He lapsed back into his impermeable silence, immediately forgetting she was even there.

Chelsea aimlessly pushed her sodden rag along, filming the counter with the slightly sour water from the empty cottage cheese container they kept near the silverware. She didn't notice the sourness of the rag, or feel how threadbare it was when she wrung it. She merely put herself through the motions. When she dropped the rag back into the container, gray water splashed little dark circles on her brown cotton dress. But she didn't notice that, either. She just wiped her hands on her apron and took her angular body over to a chair at the nearest table. Then she lit a cigarette and hung it between her fingers to burn.

She looked back along the line of booths against the wall, and began playing the game she'd made for herself to pass the time. Each booth was a year. Sometimes



the back booth would be 1951, the year they graduated from high school. She and Ben and Margaret and Chip were sitting there. Chelsea's hair was thick and long and curly, and she wore bright lipstick. Ben had a flat-top and wore white shoes. He'd played in a football game the night she was remembering, and the team had won. When she imagined her and Ben, there was almost always another couple in the booth, too—as if she and Ben alone were not enough to make a picture.

Ben had seemed so vital then—not at all like he was now. In her daydreams, they'd always be laughing. Sometimes she'd make that booth the year Chip and Ben were in Korea. They weren't heroes, either one of them, just GI's—but she wished they could have been. Instead they just went away and came back and were different, more grown up.

Sometimes she'd make one booth 1955, right after they were married. They'd be drinking cokes with Chip and Marge—they got married, too, that same year. It was before Chip left for the city. Chip said he wouldn't get stuck in this burg working for his dad, like all the other guys did. That was what Ben had said, too. Ben had big dreams. He was going to own his own restaurant, a big modern one with lots of windows. His dad's little cafe was a dead-end life, he'd said back then. But that half-dream always lead to the other one, the night Ben's Dad died.

They sat in a booth, talking over what they were going to do next, especially what they were going to do about the diner.

"Well," Ben had said, "we could sell the place—now, or in a couple of years when we've saved some more toward a place of our own."

"What not sell it now?" Chelsea'd asked. "We could use that money toward a place of our own."

"The place needs quite a bit of work—we'd get more out of it if we took it for a while and fixed things up." A sense of foreboding chilled her as she thought of the two of them working here fulltime. She knew Ben. He wouldn't want to leave the place if he put a lot of work into it. He wouldn't even consider moving to another town when his dad was living. Then, his excuse had been that Dad was getting old, that they needed to be close by in case "something happened." Now she suddenly feared they'd never leave here if they took over the diner. But she pushed that aside, telling herself Ben would see how useless it was to invest their whole lives in this place. She remembered how the conversation had ended. Ben reached across the table and patted her arm, "Come on, Hon, it's not such a big deal—just for a while, okay?"

Her half-imagining, half-dreaming was ended by a car turning onto the gravel parking lot, cracking the quiet of the sun-baked afternoon. She threw away her burned-down cigarette and walked behind the counter as a pleasant-looking man and woman came in, followed by two equally pleasant-looking teenagers. Chelsea filled four glasses from the tap. She used to add ice, but Ben said there was no point in it—why waste the ice when people never drank the water anyway. It had assumed a

flat, slightly bitter taste that repeated accurately what people saw in the burned-out fields nearby. Most people took a sip and without realizing why, left the rest. She set a glass on each corner of the table and positioned four orange and yellow menus haphazardly before them. After a few moments, the man made some remark about the weather. She acknowledged it with a monosyllable, then said, "I guess we're used to it. Ready to order?"

When they rose to leave, Chelsea asked herself, how would I feel if I were walking out of this place? I'd love it. She looked at the cracked and rotting linoleum, then at the tourists with their crisp, clean lives. As their red Granada pulled back onto the highway to the interstate, she imagined herself seeing this place recede in the distance, going through the piedmont, then the mountains, to a new life on the other side. All afternoon this car or that would catch her eye, and she'd dream. She'd go into Memphis, find an apartment. I could go, she thought. I could take the pickup. It wouldn't matter if it wasn't Memphis—just some big town. I'm not going to anybody, except maybe myself. It won't matter where I go. I could get a job in a factory, or a store, maybe even take some courses at night so I could work in an office. I could be a different person than I am. *Continued on page 8*

White Lady

By GRADY WALKER

White lady on a pedestal
Sensuous-angelic creature
of graceful arms and abundant breasts
Garments draped, flowing, clinging
Revealing full hips, smooth thighs
and oval belly.
What secrets do you
carry in your tall vessel?
What mysteries walk with
you in your journey to nowhere?
At once ethereal and earthy
you carry your pitcher of
mystery across my brain
and leave prints to be
retraced in nostalgic tranquility.

She'd think of Ben. He wouldn't care. As she played the picture game with the booths, she'd look at the scarred floor, at the faded vinyl of the old seats, and try to go back to the good times, when they were young, when they were first married. But when she thought about the present, the pictures got more dreary. And when she tried to imagine into the future—well, she just never could. Ben had grown thick at the middle, gray, and complacent. He'd buried all his ambitions when he buried his dad.

They'd argued the night before, because she wanted to fix the place up. She'd said, grayly, "Ben, the place is looking run down."

"You just don't know how to be content, do you? This place ain't no gold mine, you know, where we can just dig out as much money as we want. This business makes us a living, and you ought to be glad for that. You ought to appreciate getting a ready-made business you didn't even have to work for." And that closed the matter for him.

Didn't have to work for! Chelsea felt chained to the place. Every day of her life she woke up thinking, And againtoday. The chains were all anchored in her emotions. Her dreams were worn out from being clutched too hard, and Ben was all she had. Their folks were dead; they had no children. All she and Ben had was a dingy building in a dingy town. But here, at least, someone waited for her at night. Sometimes she'd sit on the couch with Ben and watch television, and he'd pat her arm, or rest his hand on her knee. At those times she felt secure, like she belonged here. But for those few times there were many more when she felt forgotten and cold as they sat for hours without speaking. She was never physically cold or physically in want. She was cold in her heart, and that was a coldness Ben could not even perceive.

Ben's voice jerked her back to the present. "Didn't you hear me?" Ben asked, wiping his hands on his apron as he came out of the kitchen. "Them guys needs their ticket."

"Sorry," she said, turning to the two truckers, regulars. "See you in a couple of days, fellas."

"See ya', Gorgeous," one called as he

flashed her a gummy, honest grin. Chelsea gave him the right half of a smile, without answering. She'd learned not to. Ben had been jealous, years before, and she made it a habit not to respond to good-natured kidding. He never bothered to be jealous anymore, but she still didn't answer. Bill, the trucker, would say things like, "Sweetie, you just say the word, and I'll whisk you away from all this. You're too fine a lady for this little old town," and so on. Sometimes she half believed him.

Today she thought, maybe he's right. Maybe she did deserve a lot better than this. Maybe there was a guy somewhere who could care about her even if she didn't work for him. Maybe just the chance that there might be someone like that was reason enough to walk out the door and never come back. Maybe.

She weighed it in her mind. She was over 40, not all that pretty, but not ugly, either. She could take care of herself. There was nothing to tie her here except her own fear of leaving. She had no guarantee there was anything "out there" she could tie herself to, either. She might hate being alone.

After they closed the diner that night, Chelsea sat in a booth near the back. She rubbed the pitted oak on the back of the seat, thinking how long she'd been a part of this place, how long it had been here. In this town were the people she knew best in the world. They'd watched her and Ben grow up; everywhere she went, people knew her and she knew them. She didn't feel their lives touched in any important way, but there was not promise that people anywhere else would be better or even different.

Chelsea rose, wiped the tables half-heartedly, "a lick and a promise," as Momma used to describe her dusting, and turned out the lights. Then she walked to the screen door. She took a deep breath that returned in a sigh looking through the open back door of the diner. She could see Ben framed by the window of their little house; he was sitting asleep in his chair in front of the TV set. She raised her hand to the latch, but instead of hooking it she pushed the door open, and reaching past a roll of bills in her pocket, pulled out the keys to the pickup. The gravel crunched quietly under her feet as she walked away, leaving the screen door to close behind her.



Jim Dorsch

The Eyeglass-case Library—a trilogy of condensed novels

by Douglas Marsh



Tom turned the door, picked up his arm, and flashed that famous smile. "Two bits the same as last week?"

Lurene, the secretary that didn't, sat upright and snapped back, "Yeah!"

He hopped the car, got on the phone, and made the point. In no time I was casing the place. How long had it been? And who was that strange sound?

The long tall stranger with the dark eye slid into the coat and replied, "It only applies to me—if you know what I mean."

Before I'd divined the crease, he was gone. How had I found it? I turned to Lurene. Just as ever.

Not much later it was news. I picked up a quarter from the doorman, hopped the car, found my place, and found it. What was different?

It struck me as a flash. Lurene! She'd called before. If I hadn't gone, where was she?

Then I called her. She was blonde. He was gorgeous. It was rich.

'Danger' was the single word I heard. But the bankroll spoke the words I'd heard the day before. It was a heist.

The box looked plain enough. Was it a



box? Holding tongue firmly in cheek I eased past the plate glass and into the duct. There was my. I chuckled derisively. "Enough to blow the whole caper."

Two hours later the sun slid over, and I arrived. The cops would lift this time or my name is Tom.

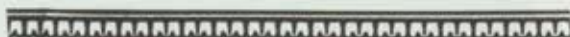
There she was again. That gorgeous frame barely concealed my gaze on the way back from it. "I'm going," he said mysteriously. There was a hidden meaning, but how can it appear? What of the police report?

It struck. Lurene. Dark eye. 'Danger'. The coat hadn't a belt. What of that bankroll? I headed for the door.

~~~~~

It came out for the best, all along. I hadn't a dime. Who cared?

I'm tired.



## Initiation into... LOVE

Margritte knew she never longed, and made the Manor House. Only elderly Mr. Whit had it. That, and the missing jewel case.

It was only therefore natural that Kenneth felt a strange attraction to the windowless tower. But Margritte had other matters to attend to.

There was, of course, the party.

"Mother! Are the guests orepared?"

"And you too, my dear."

The garden was cool and green. He drew nearer. Margritte gasped.

"Only me," said Kenneth. And the stranger fled.

Who was he? What was it? Margritte became obsessed. Kenneth spent long hours in the fireplace.

The next Spring there was little rain, and



Continued on page 12





Jeff Ruzich

the forest was Margritte's most steady companion. But then came the day she'd long imagined.

"I'm . . . I'm Phillip Dow."

And Margritte knew, and Kenneth later knew, what Phillip had known all along.

Who needed a jewel case? Margritte had Phillip.

"For better or worse?"

"Or worse, my dear, far worse . . ."



Xytla's marketplace churned past the party as Karn Yellow met the lad. Adventure?

"But I don't fly—I have it all here."

"The roots of space are here, and there as well."

Jack made a traveler and worked as well. It made the difference. A planet approached. Engines whirled.

Vines abounded with a crash. Instinctively he turned. With one blow the Girnd lay frothing as it fell. Jack paled and left.

Karn swore an oath, and the jungle soon enveloped them. What of Jack? Was the grizzled trader caring?

There were at least 25, as Jack saw in the clearing. Where were the weapons? But Karn didn't care. He'd show them all.

Karn Yellow arrived, but all was past. "I'm proud of you . . . son." Jack swallowed.

Clouds rose as the rocket sped out, out to space. Adventure?



## Shimmering Shillelaghs

by Jim Selby

Art had always been considered a gateway, a glimmering glass portal where Reality, for a fleeting moment, crystalized, etching on men's minds another facet of the transcendent nature. Aesthetics, as a discipline, grappled with that shimmer revealed by Art. Men believed a univocal principle tied together and gave meaning to the finite world they lived in. They sought to comprehend and embrace the principle or Ideal. In the eighteenth century—although a somewhat arbitrary date—this quest for the ideal died in despair. This leaves the twentieth century artist, critic or viewer in an acute dilemma—knowing the purpose of Art.

If the critic or viewer accepts the contemporary worldview in which not only an infinite and personal God is absent but absolutes as well, his criteria for judging art are limited to personal, subjective experience. This is destructive both theoretically and practically. In the game of chess the players submit to a set of fixed rules. For instance, Bishops move diagonally limited by friendly or enemy pieces, Rooks move along rows and columns. To eliminate these rules of chess removes the game from the realm of logic and purpose. A player might now capture the opponent's King by jumping several pieces with a Pawn, or he might decide to play darts with the pieces. There are no fixed rules and absurdity is the game. If there are no rules or absolutes Art is equally meaningless and Gertrude Stein is as fine a stylist as Henry James. In fact, words such as style, point of view, and structure are all meaningless.

The absence of certain, definite truths



with which to judge art is even more pernicious on the practical level. The following words were spoken by Ingmar Bergman, an artist in the medium of film, and they apply equally to literature.

"When I show a film, I am guilty of deceit. I use an apparatus which is constructed to take advantage of a certain human weakness, an apparatus with which I can sway my audience in a highly emotional manner—make them laugh, scream with fright, smile, believe in fairy stories, become indignant, feel shocked, charmed, deeply moved or perhaps yawn with boredom"

The veracity of Bergman's statement may be tested simply by watching one of his films—one comes out wondering if reality is illusion or illusion reality. Our frail species is too easily manipulated to trust our subjective experience to tell us if art is good or bad, healthy or baleful. If objective judgement is suspended any adroit artist will have us laughing at murders, rooting for rapists, and jeering morality—Art has become manipulatory in the worst sense.

If the Biblical world-view is embraced (by that I mean not only the presence of an infinite, personal God but all that has traditionally come with this belief, such as absolute morals of good and evil and as William Lynch described it, an analogical imagination) mankind gains not only criteria for judgement but, more importantly, purpose for judgement and purpose for Art. Only if objective reality exists and the artist and critic aver the presence of an Ideal can Art once again reach its true purpose of defining and redefining man and the world he lives in.

Our experience with Art is very complex. Dr. Hans Rookmaaker said,

"There is reality, the artist's view of reality, the viewer's observation of the art, and the discussion after the experience of observation"

This complexity presupposes the definite nature of reality. Like a tapestry there must be thread from which the designs and pictures are woven. That thread is a very real creation of which we all partake. Through this complex experience with art the purpose of the artist reaches fruition—the clarification and sharpening of our perception of reality. We are in harmony with the ancients and have

even gone a step beyond. They observed but did not quite grasp what they glimpsed. We, as Christians, observe and know the gleamings are but facets or aberrations of our Maker's world. The purpose and value of Art lies in this constant revelation of creation.

For example, C.S. Lewis presents a lucid picture of one aspect of the nature of the crucifixion and resurrection in his book "The Last Battle" Narnia faces unequivocal destruction and bondage for its inhabitants. In the midst of defeat Aslan voluntarily gives up his life and Narnia experiences redemption into a state superior than its former. Nathaniel West, in "Miss Lonelyhearts," sharpens our understanding of the evil inherent in a brand of Christianity which divorces itself from the world of pain and sorrow. Miss Lonelyhearts deludes himself into thinking "Christ the Rock" means to be as unfeeling as a rock and is shot and killed as a result.

These two almost opposite examples both reveal truth about man's situation. Art has here clarified what is true and these truths are verifiable and communicable. They are common to our human experience and by communicating them we see both ourselves and our world more clearly. This indeed is what art must do and what critics and viewers must demand of art. The demand is reasonable only if we believe all men live in the same world—a world created by and in relation of God. If this is so then the demand is not only reasonable but inexpugnable.

---

### The Death of the Piety High School Homecoming Queen

By Cameron Randle

Snow White's dead  
in the parking lot. Someone  
strangled her virginity.  
One sad, spastic  
choke and chastity  
bit the  
dust. . .

Mutsuko Choi





# Uncle

by Michael Warner

You, uncle, swing always in your rocking chair ever staring, lunging to recede again, again in your chair there on the porch. Follow the plunging arch of the curved boards, braced and beveled to the solemnity of its tread upon the floor, braced and beveled to the burden of your weight upon the seat. Listen to their song, elegiac, a dirge. I watch, but no longer

understand. I do not understand your reeling presence. Should I venture to commune with you, or would you be offended? But how can I refrain from speaking? You taught me once; you trained my hands.

The air outside your eyes hangs with the dust of second-story window-sills, of Grandma's attic and the piano she used to play, of the alley by the house.

I lie, stomach to the lawn, an observer. I watch you die with every motion of the chair, the creak of porch-boards that marks your ebb. The creak, perhaps, speaks of you. The boards, singing in their age like the plunge of ocean waves, chant of dyings in a newfound voice. Once you trod these boards with thick flat feet like sacks of flour, and the boards lay mute beneath your pacing rage. But I was far too much alive among the reaches of the trees to hear. My adulthood brought an inversion, for now I watch your silence,

Continued on page 16



J. CLINE

brooding to the threnodial tune of boards.

See the wood beneath your slippered feet. The planks lie passionless and faded, side by side. The breath of years has imparted to them a rolling warp, so that they crest between their slicing crevices. The afternoon light, falling upon them from some point above my shoulder, traces the lines that recede from your feet, converging on an unseen theoretical horizon. The boards are drawn lightly, in the wave-drawn paleness of driftwood. Their worn surfaces are scattered with glossy patches of a forgotten varnish. A post loiters casually between the floor and the porch roof. Beside it still there is you, unexplained.

That creak. That creak wheezes like your voice, or like the scrape of cinder blocks upon each other. Like your voice when chiding your wife at supper, or the mailman for walking on the grass. Not like

## Untitled

by Evie Johnson

Chris keeps houseplants

As well as she knows how.

She waters and tends them.

Some wilt.

Some die.

They do not leave a note of explanation,

There is no autopsy for plants—

And if anyone knows the cause of death

It isn't Chris.

She tries,

With all the weary things that fill a day—

She sighs.

Some weaken,

Some endure.

And who can say

Which is the mystery

For sure?

the way you once scolded me. You ranted with a royal passion, divine right, magniloquent. And you marched around on the porch with an angry step so that we could not forget that your middle name was Hezekiah. And I stood frightened on the lawn, eye level to your pumping knees. I would hold my lips in plaintive helplessness, straining the muscles of my eyes to bring water and pity. If I could make myself cry I knew you would not spank me, and if you would, then Aunt Rose would bring me lemonade. I loved you then, with a pursuing fear. We all did, all the cousins, following the same warm fear.

When I was nine, that was the year you went to the hospital and I couldn't talk to you. I still remember that. It was in the fall, and Bill and I were jumping in a leaf pile when we heard your slumping thud against the porch. We stood, puzzled and silent, knee-deep in brittle leaves. The screen door flashed, and we heard a small cry from Aunt Rose. From then on it was just grown-ups and cars everywhere, and Bill and I just walked around until we were noticed and sent upstairs. We ran to the attic, and invented childhood explanations for your sudden fall. Bill thought you might have been hit by Indians, but I held out for poisoned lemonade.

You didn't see me, but I came to visit you. I was led into the polished, narrow spaces of the hospital by my mother. I still remember the antiseptic fear, the stiff white nurses and the stiff, white sheets that never draped, useless to all but modesty. You and the ceiling were staring at each other, both with plain, grey faces.

I watched the nurses tend the drainage from the incision in your side. You ran yellow and heavy through your ribs, passing in a steady flow to the plastic bags so clinically caressed by the stiff, white nurses. Day after day you were there, another wrinkle in the pillow, a filter for IVs. And every time I came I stood as puzzled and quiet as that day in the leaf pile. I wanted to ask you what had happened, when I could come visit you on the farm. But mother and the antiseptic walls were forbidding, and I was afraid.

I remember being puzzled about the wound in your side, the incision made to drain your bladder after the stroke. I thought that perhaps Bill had been right.

One day mother took me to the farm. As we turned the last bend in the road and I



saw you on the porch, the air brought a pinch of joy and the same old fear. I had secretly missed the terror of your righteousness. But nothing had changed from the hospital except the details of landscape. You were still too paralyzed to do anything but rock. I don't think you even recognized me, and you certainly couldn't talk, if you did.

I still miss that old terror. The first summer after I went to college, I came back and you were finally talking. I pulled my chair up to yours and told you about my freshman year. I was proud of my bohemian life; it was fashionable. I was wasting my life in riotous living and loving it, for it made me feel unique, and at the same time finally normal, like a Hemingway hero. And I told you all about it as you rocked. Finally, with Calvinist economy you turned your head, lifting a grayed and thicknapped brow high into your forehead. "Heh!" you wheezed, with as much smile as your stricken face would allow. "It ain't nothin' 'riginal about sin, nowadays, nowadays. Heh!" And you began rocking again. I was crestfallen, but somewhere I felt a loosening gasp, the return of the fear, and that was good.

The farm suffered, unnoticed by you. Of course neither you nor Aunt Rose could work, and the hired man was a family scandal. I had to come out each year and pick all the apples myself, before they fell and rotted. And I was the only one left who fished the pond. It's just as well; the fish were gone. I would just go down there with a pole and sit, watching the frogs and remembering. I remember watching you when you took me fishing for the first time. I watched how you felt the pond, the earthiness and yet the wind in your eyes, knowing the water. You were a study in the elements, the fire emerging mostly when your hand, with a furious lunge, sensed the grip of metal against flesh. I sat beside you and watched all that, thinking of the great sparkling stippled fish and longing for the day when I could catch as well.

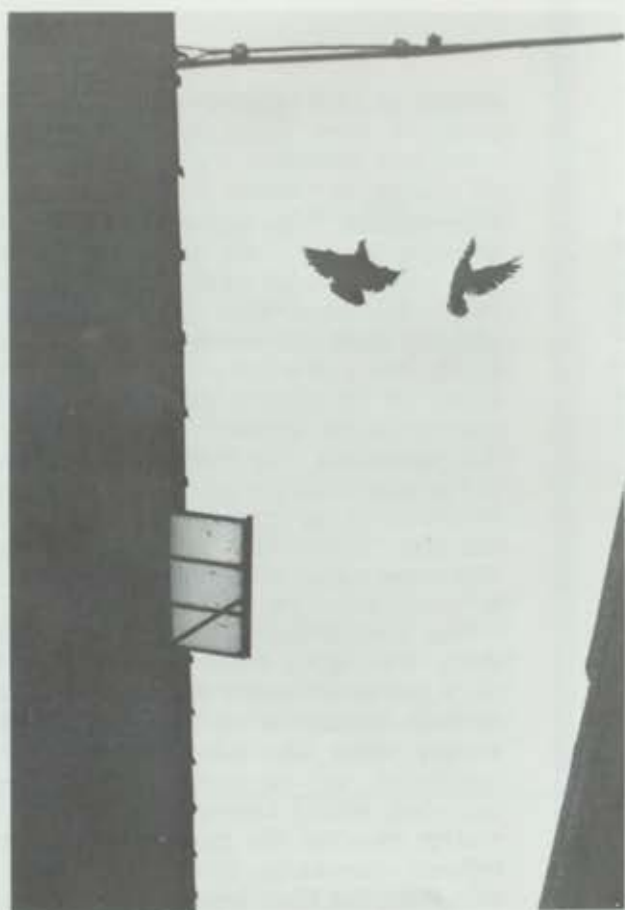
You still creak, uncle, and louder. Or perhaps in the silence of my watching I perceive it more strongly. Those boards are old. Once they were unruly trees, probably, non-Euclidean in that they fled

from planes. They preferred the wild twig stretches against the air. They preferred dumbness, except at the insistent prompting of the wind. Now they lie shaped and planed, with the remains of a patina of gloss. They are fully functional. If they creak, it is with a functional creak, a humanitarian creak. They creak from their goodness. The chair, too, is a product of the wild wood genes. It was once unable to conceive its present shape. The wood has been "chair" for so long now, though, that once again it flees its shape, seeking to decay from its form. It is old.

The screen door again. There is Aunt Rose, emerging from the doorway in a dark old small print dress that descends without nonsense to her shins. Large, stately shins like pillars, with intricate mandalas of varicose veins. She is carrying, what? Lemonade? No, tea, on a platter bearing the governor's picture, a leftover campaign gimmick. There, she sets it on the floor beside your chair. She starts to leave, but turns back. She has realized that you didn't notice her. She stands akimbo to your north profile, going for the theatrical effect when you notice her. But you don't, and she scoots the tray out in front of you more clearly. She turns, shuffling on those temple shins back to the shadows of the house. She makes the boards creak extensively.

How slowly you turn your head to see the glass! This creak, no, this one, brings your arm down to clutch it. I watch you drink. You take a sip, with a frail action of the lips, and your arm comes down to rest upon the arm of the chair. You rock continually, and it causes you to dribble from glass to the porch. You sip again, spilling some more. You take a long time to finish, losing more to the brown puddle at your feet than you drink. The creaks go on, accompanied by a cold reflection from the empty glass. The glass seems to intrude upon the scene. And there you are, plodding without progressing or regressing, simply rocking back and forth—meaningless thrusts at a younger world, a world that watches your rocking impotently, indifferent, unimpressed.

Do not die, Uncle, do not die. I watch.







Forest without trees  
Desert without sand  
Ocean without water...



- R Barney



## To Be Well Read

By Dr. William Epperson

The fundamental values men have traditionally espoused and lived by have been passed from one generation to another through the history of our race. One mode of this passage has been literature, in which, by conceptual and mimetic images, the relationship of values to life has been powerfully illustrated.

These values transcend national, religious, cultural confines in their broad outline. They are included in the world's major religions; they are not "Western," "Eastern," or even "Christian," although the Christian world view incorporates the values and centers them upon a unique vision of the relation between man and the universe, man and God.

The books on this reading list form a literary core representing the orthodox values, called the Tao in C. S. Lewis's excellent book, *The Abolition of Man*. Some of the works present these values abstractly, as philosophical treatises; more, such as the Bible, the dramas of Sophocles and Shakespeare, present the values as they are **infleshed in human choices, human acts. Some satires, Gulliver's Travels or Catch 22** for example, illumine the values by a kind of negative image, revealing by inversion worlds cut loose from the Tao. Other works, particularly some from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, illustrate modifications of the orthodox values, even denials of them. The task of an educated person is to know the values, the Tao, the dimensions of humanness as traditionally conceived and imaged. Then, no longer a stranger, a barbarian, to the orthodox view of man and the universe, the student may discern the directions away from orthodoxy, may give name to the heterodox and to what may be called, without a narrowly religious intention, heretical.

The task of becoming an educated person in the above sense, rather than a behavioristically trained, correct respondent, is your responsibility. Four years, eight years, of college will not educate you. You will find yourself becoming educated only as you choose to engage personally in the dialogue of your race—the perennial, yet personal, actualization of the values that make you fully human.

### ANCIENT LITERATURE: Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Oriental

Homer: *The Iliad*

*The Odyssey*

Aesop: *Fables*

Aeschylus: *Oresteia cycle*

Sophocles: *Antigone and Oedipus Rex*

Euripides: *Medea*

Plato: *The Republic and Phaedrus*

Aristotle: *The Poetics and The Ethics, Books I and X*

Hamilton, Edith: *Mythology*

The Bible (read as a whole, within a specified time limit, approx. 10 months)

Virgil: *The Aeneid*

Plutarch: *The Makers of Rome*

Marcus Aurelius: *Meditations (selections)*

Lao Tse: *The Wisdom of Lao Tse (or a translation by Arthur Waley, The Way)*

Confucius: *The Analects (selections)*

### MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

St. Augustine: *The City of God, (abridged by Vernon Bourke)*

*The Confessions*

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

*Beowulf*

St. Francis: *The Little Flowers*

Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*

Dante: *The Divine Comedy (translated by Dorothy Sayers or Carlyle, Okey, Wicksteed)*

Aquinas: *Introduction to St. Thomas*

Aquinas edited by Anton C. Pegis  
*Boccaccio: The Decameron*

### RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

Ben Jonson: *Volpone*

Cervantes: *Don Quixote*

Montaigne: *Essays (selected)*



Milton: *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*  
 Shakespeare: plays  
 Machiavelli: *The Prince*  
 Bunyan: *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding Unto The Chief of Sinners*  
 Donne: poems

#### 18th Century:

Alexander Pope: *Essay on Man*  
 Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*  
 James Boswell: *Life of Johnson*  
 Voltaire: *Candide*  
 Samuel Johnson: "Preface" To Shakespeare  
 Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones*  
 Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm: *Grimm's Fairy Tales*

#### 19th Century:

Tolstoy: *War and Peace* and *The Death of Ivan Illych*  
 Dostoevsky: *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*  
 Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*  
 Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Browning: (Selected Poetry)  
 Whitman: *Song of Myself*  
 Emerson: *Nature* and "The Poet"  
 Henry Thoreau: *Walden*  
 Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*  
 Herman Melville: *Moby Dick* and *Billy Budd*  
 Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield* and *Hard Times*

#### 20th Century:

Anton Chekhov: *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*  
 James Joyce: *Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man* and *Ulysses*  
 Joseph Conrad: *Lord Jim*, *The Heart of Darkness*, and *Nostromo*  
 William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, and "The Bear"  
 D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers* and "The Blind Man"  
 T. S. Eliot: *Four Quartets* and *The Wasteland*  
 Franz Kafka: *The Trial* and *The Castle*  
 George Orwell: *Animal Farm*  
 Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *The Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle*  
 Henry James: *The Ambassadors*

Saul Bellow: *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and *Herzog*  
 James Baldwin: "Sonny's Blues"  
 Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*  
 Ernest Hemingway: *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*

Albert Camus: *The Fall*, *The Plague*, and *The Stranger*  
 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *The Phenomenon of Man*  
 Carl Jung: *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*  
 Victor Frankel: *Man's Search for Meaning*  
 Martin Buber: *I and Thou*  
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *The Cost of Discipleship*  
 Andre Gide: *The Counterfeiters*  
 C. S. Lewis: *That Hideous Strength*  
 Thomas Mann: *Death in Venice*  
 John Millington Synge: *Riders to the Sea*  
 Joseph Heller: *Catch 22*  
 Sigmund Freud: *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*  
 Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*  
 Heinrich Boll: *The Clown*  
 Herman Hesse: *Siddhartha*  
 Ignazio Silone: *Bread and Wine*  
 Miguel de Unamuno: *Abel Sanchez*  
 Jean Paul Sartre: *Nausea* and *No Exit*  
 Camillo Jose Cela: *The Family of Pascual Duarte*  
 Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*  
 Gabriel Garcia Marquez: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*  
 Virginia Woolf: *To The Lighthouse*  
 Wallace Stevens: *The Palm at the End of the Mind*

## 24 July

by Jim Walroth

last night as we sat  
 on newly-mown, damp grass  
 and gazed at the stars together  
     I suddenly realized.  
 until that moment I, unable to see for myself,  
 had only the word of others  
 about how you felt towards me.  
 just as I had only the word of others  
 that man and beast are portrayed  
 in the stars.

## Tuesday night, my birthday

By Dennis Johnson

Tuesday night, my birthday, and I lie on my bed reading Hemingway. The reading is good because he wrote well. Hemingway never had women and he died tragically, but he wrote well and gained fame. He gave up the women for writing, and when the writing was done, he died. Some say he killed himself. But no—he died. He died because he wanted to write to be different and better than other men, and when the writing left, he was no longer different or better, and so had nothing to live for. He also had no women in the end, and so he could not live for them if he would. But Hemingway did not live for women, but for writing, so he gave it up.

I have no women either, so I too write. I have no fame either, so I must write to survive. But I would never die. Hemingway died because he first lived, and he lived with fame and his writing. When the writing left, the fame was not enough, so it killed him. I want fame anyway, so I write and maybe I will gain life and when I live I will get fame and then I will be able to die. Hemingway was great because he wrote and lived. He then had fame and died tragically. I am yet a pauper, but he was a king.

As I write and hope to live as he did, the radio plays. It's getting late and the radio plays on, and tells of Elvis Presley, who died today on my birthday. Only forty-two, he died tragically, also. They called him The King, and still will. He is gone, but they play his songs and call him The King still. He is King because he sang and lived and had women and gained fame. He died on my twenty-second birthday living, and I sit here not having yet lived. I want to write, have women and fame, because I am only a pauper. They will kill me, but they will also first make me live, and if I get life, then I can stand the dying. Death

## Circles

By Mac Thigpen

(Poems written on cardboard tubes  
from rolls of toilet paper)

Never  
think of life  
as an endless circle  
for you always  
reach for where  
you have been  
and never obtain  
a higher goal.

When looking  
beyond the depression  
of causes  
and the forces upon  
our lives  
do not look to that  
point as the end  
but as a stone of the past  
for the laying  
of a foundation.

---

is no big deal for kings. Elvis Presley is King, Heminway is King. They say that in Austin, Texas, Bob Wills is still the King. But what the hell, Bob Wills is dead, too. Did Bob Wills have women and gain fame? He did not write, I know, and he did sing, I know too, but the rest I can't recall. What matters is that somehow, with singing and without writing he managed to live. What I want to know mainly is if without Wills, without Presley, without Hemingway, or singing, or women, but with writing, I can live.

Soon I will put away the radio and the book, and live to write. And I will be more than twenty-two, lying on my bed with thoughts.



# The Temple of the Goddess Aerobica

By Jim Mancuso

My name is Sor Cosmey. I have now been on the planet of Owaryoo for a matter of a few hours. I have been transmitted across many miles from my home planet Velona. Since I have been here I have encountered two races of people which seem to co-exist quite peaceably; they are the Students and the Teachers. I have become acquainted with a Student named Jim who has told me that I may stay with him in his room for three days while his roommate is away.

I have thus presently decided to write down my experiences on this strange planet until I can figure out how to return to my own world.

Jim has told me much about this place so far, even though I have not journeyed beyond the fence which seems to circumvent most of the planet, or "campus" as Jim calls it. There seems to be some sort of caste system between the Teachers and the Students because Jim told me that whenever a Student addresses a Teacher (sometimes called Professors) he must preface his name with the term "Doctor" out of

respect. For some reason many Teachers seem to be much older than the Students, though not all are. I am now alone in Jim's room. He has gone to a place which he laughingly referred to as the Aerobica's Temple. Tomorrow morning I plan to go examine the building for myself . . .

I arose late in the morning and glanced at the timepiece. It was the tenth hour of the Owaryoo day which oddly enough begins in the middle of the night. As was previously planned I walked with my guide Jim as far as the Lurk - a building which he promised to show me later. I made my way through a field crammed with machines used for ground transportation and, having narrowly escaped being struck by one, I walked up the flat gray walk toward the object of my curiosity - the Temple of the god Aerobica.

Before me stood several huge white mushrooms which had been shaved and shaved until they stood rough, squared, and mute before the large "slice-of-bread-on-a-platter-shaped" temple. I passed under them and through the door. Immediately upon entering I was confronted by a squarely-built staircase which led up to a balcony that appeared to run the circumference of the Temple. I walked stealthily up the steps and started walking down the balcony. Over my head strange red lights were flashing at regular intervals. Suddenly the floor shook and I heard the pounding of many feet. One human passed me

followed by a stampeding herd of other humans. The first human definitely came from the race of Teachers and those in hot pursuit were clearly of the race of Students (to which Jim belonged). This all seemed a puzzlement to me, at first.

Then, one of the Students cried out, "How much longer do we have to go?"

"Not much more," the Teacher replied.

"I won't make it much farther," gasped one Student who seemed to be at the point of death.

"Sacrifice," wailed the Teacher, "you must learn to make sacrifices!"

Then it all became clear to me as the runners disappeared around the corner. I gasped in horror and leaned against the wall. It was all apparent to me the purpose of the chase. Each runner-Student was made to run and run until he or she dropped dead from exhaustion. They were being used as human sacrifices for the god Aerobica.

I ran part way around the balcony and stopped one Student who had betrayed his destiny and was now walking. I asked, "When will . . . ?" But before I could finish, the crowd of Students passed me again, gasping and heaving even more piteously this time. When they were gone, the traitor said to me, "Were you going to ask when the intramurals start tonight? Well, the game's at eight. Sons of Blunder and Tribe, tonight, ya know!"

With that, the traitor resumed his quest and took off running. I walked back downstairs and went outside again. My mind was

Continued on page 24



reeling. I decided that the Inner Murills must refer to some secret hidden chambers hidden deep within the Temple where the sacrifice was to take place tonight at eight. I reasoned that Blunder must be terribly grieved at the loss of his sons and for that matter, the loss of the whole tribe.

But suddenly another thought occurred to me. Maybe, just maybe I could convince the sons of Blunder not to run themselves to death. I only hoped that I would not be too late. I made my way up to the sacrificial balcony but when I searched up and down, it was to no avail. The runners were nowhere to be found. I waited a few minutes for them to appear, but they never did. I walked half way around the Temple to the opposite corner. There I found them sprawled out on the floor at that wretched point of exhaustion which usually precedes death. However, as I gaped at them they were somehow revived! One by one they arose and staggered down the stairs. When I asked the last one why they had all stopped running, he merely replied, "I've done my share of Aerobic running for the day; besides, we have to make room for the next group." With that, he disappeared.

This rather confused me and my idea of the Inner Murill sacrifices. As I walked back to Jim's room I decided that the group of Students that I had seen must have been some sort of warm-up or preliminary sacrifice just to get in the good graces of Aerobica.

The real kill would be at eight.

It is much later now. The planet has revolved enough so that their sun can no longer be seen. Shortly before eight Jim and I walked to the Temple. What a fierce god this Aerobica must be, I thought, to make such demands of these poor Students.

Once inside the Temple I lost Jim in the crowd and so I explored the weird building for myself. Before me lay a huge court where many men ran about frantically bouncing and throwing around huge oranges. I overheard one man say that these oranges, or "bassaballs" as he called them, had to be bounced around a lot before they were any good. I pictured the feast Aerobica would have tonight—huge plates of sacrificed Student served with bassaballs.

I asked one Student if I would be allowed in the Inner Murills. He asked if I was a Student and I told him that I wasn't. He told me that only Students were allowed in the Inner Murills. How tragic, I thought. But, then, it only makes sense that Aerobica would allow only Students into those fierce sacrificial chambers—the Inner Murills of the Temple of the god Aerobica.

On the balcony above me ran the sons of Blunder—panting and gasping for air as the others had been. I decided to seek out Blunder and console him. I walked up to a nearby Student but, before I could say a word, a bassaball flew past me and some loud voice boomed, "Technical foul on number 32, Tribe." The Student then

faced me and I asked him, "Who's Blunder?" To which he replied, "Whose blunder was it? Well, I think that number 32 made the foul!"

I walked away scratching my head in utter bewilderment. Apparently there were some things about the English language that I did not quite yet understand. I thought that I had asked him a simple question about poor Blunder. Instead of a civil answer, he had started rambling some foolishness about how foul number 32 tribe was. I pondered the word foul. Then, it dawned on me. Blunder came from Tribe no. 32 which is to be served with fowl tonight to the god Aerobica. Now it all made sense. What strange tastes that god must have to feast on Student and fowl with a side order of bassaballs.

As I stood looking across the court, I saw an archway and a mysterious hallway on the opposite wall. I crossed over to there, dodging bassaballs, and just before I reached the hallway, a Student stopped me and said, "It's no use trying to get in there tonight; the courts are full of Students!"

Well, that did it. I peered down the hallway and saw four doors—two on each side. I knew that these most certainly must be the Inner Murills. I dared not look into them and see the Students being sacrificed to Aerobica. I turned and walked back towards the door. Jim found me just before I reached the door and asked me why I was leaving so soon.





Marsha Bush

"I have had enough of Aerobica and these bloody Inner Murills," I said and with that I walked back to Jim's room.

I crawled into bed and fell asleep. I did not sleep well all night. I finally fell fast asleep just before dawn. When I awoke the timepiece told me that it was the tenth Owaryoo hour of the day. I arose, washed and dressed and then Jim came into the room. He told me that he had to go to the chapel now because as he said that's what everybody has to do on Friday and Wednesday mornings at eleven. He left me then and told me that I could wander around until twelve and then we would eat lunch. After a while I left the room and walked around the campus looking at all the strange buildings. In the very center stood the Prare Tower which I figured must be either a spaceship to be used at some future date or else it is indeed attached to the ground and it is a tower built in honor of some famous person named Prare. In any case, I walked through the gardens toward it. All around it I saw a balcony but there was no door leading into it. This is what gave me the impression that it was really a spaceship.

I made my way through the rest of the gardens and walked up the steps of the Lurk. I sat down to take a rest and get my bearings. The streams of humans going past me seemed to be getting more numerous. Within a few seconds I noticed that all the humans on the campus were dropping everything that they were doing and all

were walking very dazedly toward the huge cement and glass cricket-looking building that lay just to the left of the Prare Tower. I asked one Student where everyone was going and he told me that they were headed for the Warship Scenter. The cricket somehow had the ability to smell out enemy ships that were approaching. How fascinating! As I stood and stared thousands of humans stumbled blindly into the cricket. Students and Teachers alike were summoned into it for some strange reason. Minutes later the campus was practically deserted. I was overcome with curiosity and so I, too, entered the cricket.

I walked into a great hallway and then through two huge doors that were closed behind me. All the humans were standing and singing. I sat down on an empty red chair at the back when all the humans sat down. One Teacher up at the front began to speak. At his mere command all the humans hid their faces. I gathered that they were all praying to Aerobica. The main Teacher said something about America but he never mentioned Aerobica. Perhaps America is another god that is related to Aerobica. Anyway, whatever the main Teacher said, everyone agreed with him. They nodded their heads repeatedly and many murmured over and over again what he was saying. At his command they all raised their heads and then he sat down on the raised platform in the front. Some Students went up on the

stage and sang. They obviously didn't like the former songs because they made everyone stand up and learn how to sing their songs. Even the Teachers became subordinate and learned the new songs, too.

When everyone sat down, another main Teacher got up to speak and when he did, everyone stood up and clapped for several minutes. When they stopped, this new one said, "Let's have a few moments of silence for Prare."

I thought that this was really decent of them to reverently remember their deceased hero Prare. I felt a little inspired myself so I bowed my head and tried to imagine what sort of human Prare was. I turned to one student and asked, "Was he your savior?"

The student looked at me and said, "Of course. We offer prayer to our god."

I was absolutely appalled to think that these humans had even sacrificed their hero Prare to Aerobica, their strange god. Disgustedly, I walked out of the giant cricket and went back to Jim's room.

After a few minutes I heard a roar of engines growing louder and louder every minute. I ran to the window and looked out. I could not see the Prare Tower but I was sure that it was about to take off any second. I ran out in the hallway and I found one Student who had escaped being summoned to the Warship Scenter. I asked him what the noise was. He mumbled some nonsense about a generator starting up. Suddenly, the sound grew very loud and then



quit very abruptly. I knew that the Prare Tower must have taken off. I went back to Jim's room and sat down to wait for him.

When Jim returned, I asked him if he knew that the Prare Tower was gone. He laughed and told me that it was still there but somehow I didn't really believe him. Then I told him that I was weary of Owaryoo and Aerobica and of all the other strange things. I asked him if he knew how I could return

home.

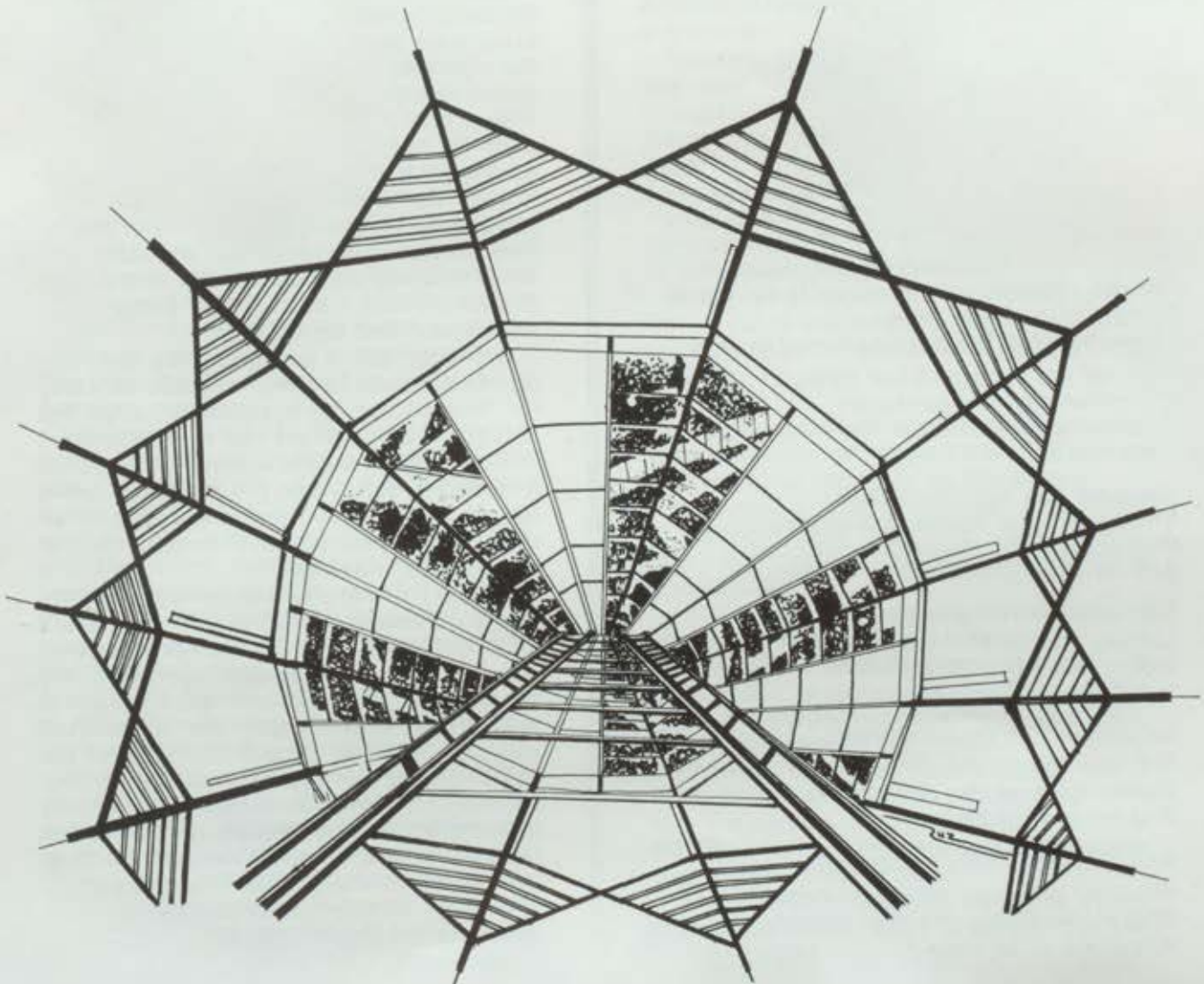
"Well," he said, "once there was a girl who was whisked away from just north of here and she was taken to a land called Oz. When she wanted to come back, she just clicked her heels together three times and said, 'There's no place like home.' Why don't you try it? I'm sure it will get you back home."

"Is that what some Students mean when they say that somebody got 'healed'?" I asked. "Not

quite," said Jim, "but, it's too complicated to get into now. Just tap your heels together and say what I told you. And may God go with you."

"Go with me? What do you mean? You can keep Aerobica here with you!" ..

With that he tapped his heels together three times saying, "There's no place like home," and he disappeared. I've not seen him since.



# The Game

by David Westerfield

It's your move  
And you've no place to go;  
Your front line lies broken  
And your queen has been exposed.

The pawns did their best,  
But the battle they fought,  
A battle without meaning,  
Finished with the enemy uncaught.

Those that stood at your side  
Guarded the flanks with blind eyes,  
For greed is a revolting disease,  
And the victim always dies.

Now I find you, my friend,  
Standing alone, yet still strong.  
But look around, the birds scatter  
When truth sings a painful song.

Though the sky is barren,  
Though children are nowhere to be found,  
I know of a secret plan  
To make your treasure safe and sound.

Just let me through your gates,  
Open the way to your court.  
Ignore the king, I want the jester,  
He's a master at the sport.

Because you see, my friend,  
The jester is a friend to everyone,  
And in the same manner so shall I be,  
And so shall your victory be won.

For your treasure is peace of mind,  
Letting your dreams fly free, for  
When your hopes are invested in love,  
They always find your majesty.

So take a look in the mirror,  
But yourself do not see.  
Rather gaze at the one beside you  
And let myself be he.

And then together, my friend,  
We shall give you what you need.  
And to raise you into that mighty oak,  
Allow me to be your humble seed.

# The Red Trousers

by D. H. LAWRENCE

A man wrote to me, in answer to my article in which I complained of London dullness, "Dear Sir: Have you ever paused to consider that the cause of our dullness is the cigarette? This is the tubular white ant which is sapping our civilization."

Now this man, at least, is not entirely dull. He is out on a crusade, a crusade against the "tubular white ant," from which he wants to rescue our holy civilization. And whatever else a crusader may be, he is not, to himself at least, dull. He is inspired with a mission, and on the march. Which, perhaps, is better than sitting still and being inert.

But after all, a crusade may turn out ultimately dull, like the crusade of Votes for Women, or teetotalism, or even the Salvation Army. When you've got the vote, it is dull. When people are merely teetotal, it is merely dull. When the Salvation Army has saved you, you may really feel duller than when you weren't saved. Or, of course, you may not.

So that there are two sides to a crusade. The good side is the activity. There was a thrill in the Votes for Women processions, even in the sight of suffragettes being marched off by stout and semi-indignant policemen. When I hear the tambourine clashing, and see the poke bonnets of the Salvation Army lasses and the funny scarlet of the men, and hear the piercing music of Marching to Zion, or Throw Out the Lifeline, then I am invariably thrilled. Here is a crusade, of a sort, here is spunk! And even in the denunciative "tubular white ant" of my correspondent, there is a certain pep: a certain "go."



But the bad side of these crusades is the disillusion when the mission is fulfilled. Take the cigartette and dullness. Which causes which? Does dullness cause the cigarette, or the cigarette the dullness? Apparently it is a vicious circle: each causes the other. But at the very beginning, dullness causes the cigarette. After which the cigarette may cause more dullness, or may not, as the case may be. Anyhow that is not my crusade, because it isn't really interesting.

What is really the point is that a crusade is a sovereign remedy against dullness, but you'd better watch out that the end of the crusade isn't a greater dullness still. Nothing is such fun as a crusade; it is the adventure of adventures. But it is no good setting out grandly to rescue some Zion from the clutch of the infidel, if you're not going care a button about the Zion when you've rescued it.

That's the trouble with most of our modern crusades, like Votes or Socialism or politics, freedom of little nations, and the rest. In the flush of youth, I believed in Socialism, because I thought it would be thrilling and delightful. Now I no longer believe very deeply in Socialism, because I am afraid it might be dull, duller even than what we've got now. In the past, it seemed wildly thrilling to think of a free Poland, or a free Bohemia. Now, we have a painful suspicion that free Czecho-Slovakia is possibly duller than when it was an Austrian province.

What we want is life, first and foremost: to live, and to know that we are living. And you can't have life without adventure of some sort. There are two sorts of adventure: the hair's-breadth escape sort, and the more inward sort. The hair's-breadth escape sort is nearly used up, though of course small boys still climb trees, and there is speeding on the roads, the traffic danger, aeroplanes, and the North Pole. But this is meager, compared to the wild old days when the Turk held Jerusalem, and the world was flat.

What remains is the vast field of social adventure. In the ancient recipe, the three antidotes for dullness or boredom are sleep, drink, and travel. It is rather feeble. From sleep you wake up, from drink you become sober, and from travel you come home again. And then where are you? No, the two sovereign remedies for dullness

are love, or a crusade.

But love is a thing you can do nothing about. It's like the weather. Whereas a crusade can be carefully considered. When the Salvation Army marches out with drum and brass to pitch a stand at the street corner, they are on a crusade, and full of adventure, though they run no risk except that of ridicule. Probably they get more out of life than those who ridicule them, and that's the chief point.

Yet still, we can't all join the Salvation Army; there'd be nobody to save. And we sadly need a crusade. What are we going to do about it? Politics, socialism, preaching of any sort: we feel there's not much in it. It is going to make greater dullness in the end. There is money; that is an adventure to a certain degree. But it is an adventure within definite limits, very definite limits. Besides it is for his leisure that man needs a crusade.

Women, of course, are still thrilling in the last stages of their emancipation crusade. Votes, short skirts, unlimited leg, Eton crop, the cigarette, and see-you-damned-first, these are the citadels captured by women, along with endless "jobs." Women, for a little while longer, have enough to thrill them in the triumphs of the emancipation crusade.

But the men, what are they going to do? The world of adventure is pretty well used up, especially for a man who have a wage to earn. He gets a little tired of being spoon-fed on wireless, cinema, and newspaper, sitting an inert lump while entertainment of information is poured into him. He wants to do something.

And what is there to be done? Thousands of things—and nothing. Golf, jazz, motoring—hobbies. But what we want is a crusade.

Find us a crusade. It is apparently impossible. There is no formula.

The thing to do is to decide that there is no crusade or holy war feasible at this moment, and to treat life more as a joke, but a good joke, a jolly joke. That would freshen us up a lot. Our flippant world takes life with a stupid seriousness. Witness the serious mock morality of the film and the wireless, the spurious earnestness poured out. What a bore!

It is time we treated life as a joke again, as they did in the really great periods like

Continued on page 30

the Renaissance. Then the young men swaggered down the street with one leg bright red, one leg bright yellow, doubled of puce velvet, and yellow feather in silk cap.

Now that is the line to take. Start with externals, and proceed to internals, and treat life as a good joke. If a dozen men would stroll down the Strand and Piccadilly tomorrow, wearing tight scarlet trousers fitting the leg, gay little orange-brown jackets and bright green hats, then the revolution against dullness which we need so much would have begun. And, of course, those dozen men would be considerably braver, really, than Captain Nobile or the other arctic venturers. It is not particularly brave to do something the public wants you to do. But it takes a lot of courage to sail gaily, in brave feathers, right in the teeth of a dreary convention.

Printed courtesy of Joseph Foster from an unpublished manuscript in his possession.

## PROMETHIA

is now accepting  
contributions  
for the  
spring issue.

POETRY, SHORT FICTION, ART, PHOTOS, HUMOR, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, MUSIC, ESSAYS, ARTICLES, ETC. ARE WELCOME. (No devotionals, please) SEND ALL MATERIAL TO BOX 358. (Sculptors, painters, and potters should arrange to have photos taken of their work.)



Roger Pittenger

## Feet that follow

By Fiona Collins

I have travelled many ways  
And I, with nothing in hand found much  
touching all I found

My hand was filled.  
With no greatness of thought  
I have reached like trees  
and blossomed.

I could hear the onward preparation of  
His axe  
and the burning of the bush  
branches quick-dropped with the  
pungency of pine  
needles pressed down in the print of  
his creased foot

Walking over thorns.

Lifting up my eyes I saw  
light dropping over like a coat of many colors

He has walked ahead for me  
He has given a fruitful life  
It has been more than passing through  
though I am only feet that follow.



## Pennies

by Roy Hess

they were there.  
 there with their schemes and half-baked  
 and visions inspired by loneliness.  
  
 some preferred silk  
 while others took the dust,  
 but the shelter from sorrow was never  
 enough.  
 and death came to them, each one in his  
 time,  
 as each sought to purchase his name.  
 they never realized  
 that the purchase had already been made.

## Beyond remnants

by Roy Hess

all too soon the fragile colors  
 fade and fall away.  
 leaving only the wind,  
 a savage and boisterous conqueror,  
 to scatter the remnants  
 of once-living things.  
  
 the wind remains.  
 it remains to consume  
 the colors  
 the days  
 and eventually even the tears.

## His own home

by Evie Johnson

A man sits in a chair  
 In his own home  
 Alone.  
 The chair does not rock.  
 The silence holds a few sounds  
 Like pebbles in a large bucket  
 Rattling—  
 A refrigerator runs—  
 And summer insects live out perfectly  
 The designs of their lives.  
 The man sits, looking down at the rug.  
 The sunlight falls over his things,  
 Old gifts of friends,  
 His plants, furniture,  
 Softly lights the hair on his head;  
 He stares off.  
 His heart is a basket  
 Of dry leaves,  
 A forgotten well,  
 A sparrow under the snow,  
 Still warm—  
  
 But it is winter.  
 The man goes out.  
 The crowd greets him.  
 He laughs and jokes into the night  
 As if at a bonfire.  
 I find I cannot shout  
 "You have turned your back  
 On the frozen wasteland within you."  
 I am too cold.  
 I turn my back.  
 I go to my own fire.

## Almost 30 Things to do on a Sunny Day

by Douglas Marsh

Pick up a pretty stone.  
Look at the sky.  
Put out a fire.  
Fill your socks with old books—walk on them.  
Try and find a newspaper.  
Eat a pretty stone.  
Tell someone you like their left hand.  
Call an old friend.  
Give up walking.  
Recognize at least two factors that directly

contributed to the Civil War.  
Make a new friend.  
Read a good book.  
Make an old friend.  
Comb your hair!  
Read a rotten book.  
Weefh frou jotro doooy dnloytre aptr.  
Start a romance.  
Read the National Enquirer.  
Find yourself.  
Join the Girl Scouts.  
Culminate a romance.  
Research your best friend.  
Culminate the Girl Scouts.  
Keep juggling your romances.  
Trust someone, anyone.  
Look out the window.  
Check up on those sorts of things.  
Stare fixedly out the window.  
Let your eyes glaze.  
You may already be one.  
Where is the border?  
I am ill. Bring me a physician!

photos - Scott Leslie





# Barn

By RICK BARNEY

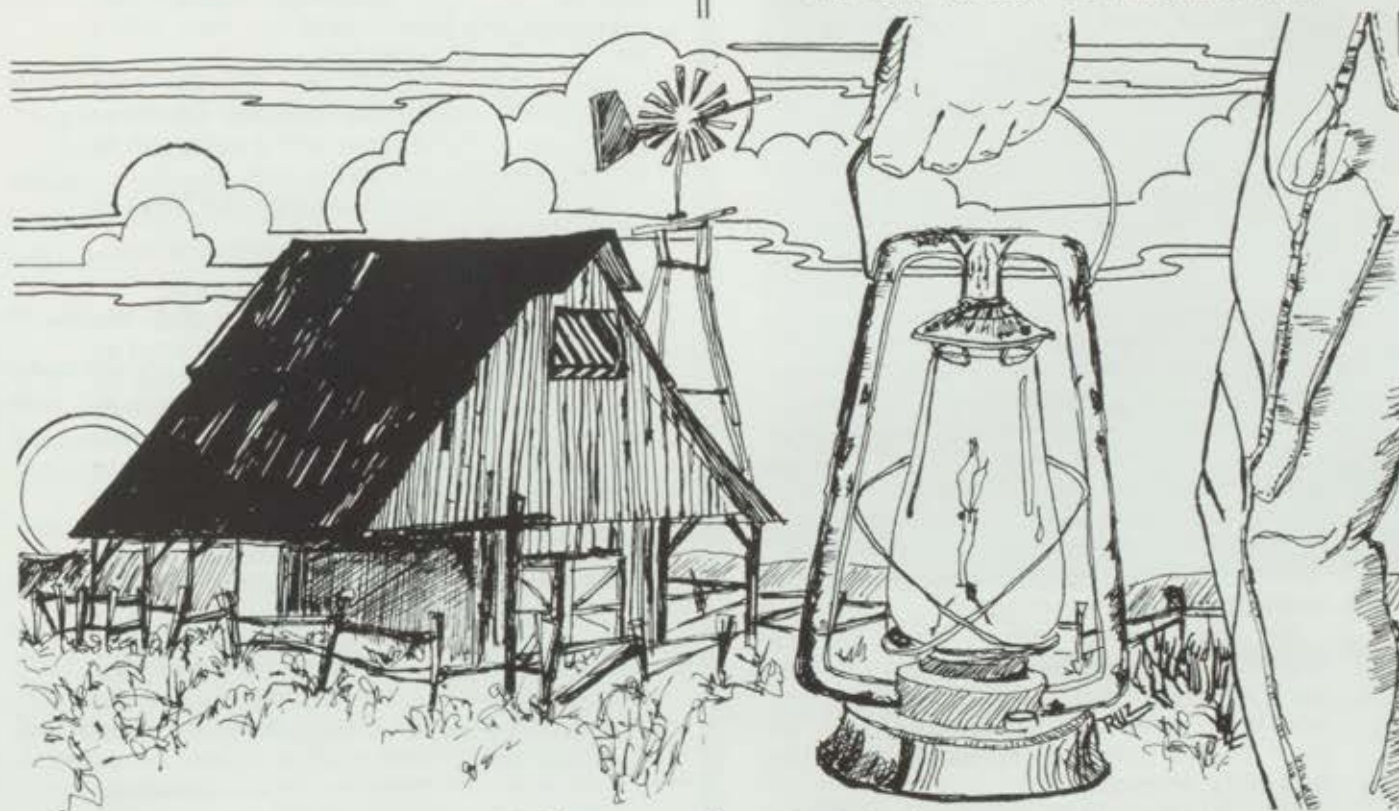
up from under the planks, and the dog came off the porch with a disgruntled bark muffed by the wind, almost as if he hadn't recognized Tim in the wind's fury.

"Make sure you close the door," he heard even before he had time to take his hand off the door handle. "There's too much dirt in the air to let it all come tramping into the house."

"Ok Mom," he echoed.

"How was school today?" his mother queried from the kitchen.

"All right I guess," as if he didn't know



The wind had been whipping the Kansas plain's back all day with a vengeful fury. Tim's shock of black hair was careening crazily as he stumped down out of the school bus that brought him to and from Tuckett Junior High School more days than he cared to think about. The four mile ride back to the farm had only made him brood all the more at the gray clouds that were pierced only by a few rays of yellow jutting in the west. As he walked to the house, he felt as turbulent as the March air around him that was threatening to wrench the jacket off his back with a deafening roar. He glanced over at the old water well that sat by the side of the house and was half covered up by jumbled boards. The wind seemed to be blowing with a hollow echo over the hole that gaped

what else to say.

His mother stepped into the living room from the kitchen, wearing that checkered apron she always donned so efficiently. "You look as bushed as last summer when you helped your father bale hay all day," she said as she ran her fingers through her graying hair. "Anything happen at school? You didn't run into that Worthington kid again after school, did you?"

"I didn't even see him today," he returned with mock resentment that she would even mention it. He couldn't tell her it had been Randy between history and English class in the hall. Resignedly: "I'm just tired, that's all."

He went in and plopped his books on the bed, gazing out the windows that made

Continued on page 34



slight rattles as they shivered in the wind. Ordinarily he would want to stay in the house and read on such days when the roar outside was too loud to hear himself think. But today he couldn't. He wanted to go out and feel the buffet of the wind as he walked out back to the barn.

Tim walked through the hall to the back of the house and opened the oily cabinet where the kerosene lantern was kept. It wouldn't be too long before dusk crept in, and the barn was pitch black inside anyway. He fished for the box of wooden matches in the bottom of the cabinet that was there somewhere in a confusion of odd bolts, rusty springs, nails, and a black hammer.

The house seemed to be bracing itself against the barrage of wind outside. It would be no good for the land on the farm. His father always said, "Must take away a ton a' soil when it gits up like this. Scars the plain, that's what it does, and makes it hard for things to grow." Tim scratched a red match that flared and then swayed uncertainly in the drafts of air present from the wind outdoors. The charred wick embered to a weak glow and then caught with a reassuring yellow. The flare was solemn, not like some garrulous intruder, but a companion with a flickering gleam that would swing beside him consolately. Tim pushed open the back door and braced himself against the wind.

He had never taken the lantern anywhere with him before, except when he went with his father one night to help a cow give birth to her calf. It had taken over an hour before her wet, scrumpy offspring had fully emerged.

Now all he could envision was earlier in the day. It had felt good, after all the chicken-crap he was always taking from Randy.

"What's the matter, Nately, ya' dumb or somethin'? Ol' Lady Wheathers really saw how dumb you are when ya' didn't know Lincoln's birth place." Randy was smirking as Tim had wheeled around quickly, surprised at the brunt of his voice.

Tim swung open the barn door with a sudden jerk, the lantern clanked against his leg.

"So where's your thinkin' you're smarter'n me, Hamon?" Tim felt like a black, hot blanket had dowsed his body.

The lantern cast a faint glow on the dirt floor as he walked, and the wind still

whipped crazily through broken shafts in the deteriorating barn walls.

"Everybody knows I am, that's why ya' hang aroun' me." They both stood off from each other, as if trying to see through the sudden threat in each other.

Tim sat down on some hay, setting the lantern down in front of him dazedly, gazing at the smoky glass as if in a stupor.

"So where's all this tough guy comin' from? Just 'cause Wheathers reported ya' to Principle Dodds yesterday don't mean you're tough." Reeling inside was "Randy's my best friend. . . how come we're . . . Randy's my bes. . ."

"Why ya' lousy . . ." Randy had catapulted books to the floor and slammed Tim to the concrete wall with a curse, all in one vicious movement.

The wind screamed through the holes in the barn walls.

"Keep your dirty hands offa. . ."

"Now I won't have you boys fighting. . ."

Suddenly a gust of wind toppled the lantern blam and Tim jumped petrified at the thought of kerosene and fire licking up the hay in a blaze guffawed by the wind, cremating the barn. None of the kerosene spilled because he'd flown like a rabbit to right the lantern, and the flame soon straightened itself. Tim felt as though he'd been snatched from falling down the well that loomed on the side of house in the nick of time. He stood up and peered around in the crisp darkness. He would have to patch up those holes in the walls. Nobody else would be able to do it right anyway, because he knew what the wind could do on a March day.

## In pursuit of what we lost

By Jim Walroth

There was a time when we did not have to ask,  
We knew it was there.

Though we never spoke of it  
It was no mystery to either of us.  
But it was a moving thing which we could not grasp,  
And it escaped us.

The tragedy is  
Because we never admitted it existed,  
There is no way to ask for it back.



## Summer pilgrimage

by Michael Leo Stewart

Dust coats my feet when I reach the summer  
wood-path,  
A dirt fog at my heels, soft and spice-dry,  
Clinging to my hopeless clothing  
—"Dust," say I.  
Weeping willows crouch along the pathside,  
Grim as old furniture in a musty warehouse,  
They guard dry-rotting leaves like scraps of old  
upholstery.  
An old dime in a cracked blue bowl sends sun-  
beams clattering  
Upon the rocks, vine-ropes  
And the children on the hilltop.  
Broken bottles wink in shadows  
—Ancient tires tightly circle gardens of  
mushrooms and fern.  
The moss grows pointing toward the children.

I heard these children hung a cat one summer  
From the oak tree on the hill.  
(They later burned the hanging cat alive  
And blamed it on the child who held the match.)  
The wood-path leads me to an asphalt clearing.  
A shopping center smiling with parking slot  
teeth.

Mushroom clouds of dust no longer hold me  
—A phone booth glides to meet me on a sheet  
of steam  
That crawls across the tar.  
Did I ever burn cats?

The telephone takes my last two coins  
A bit too nonchalantly.  
A turtle dies on the highway  
Crossing toward me, suddenly stopped  
Smiling red-mouthed  
From his gaping shell.  
"What is it this time?," whispers  
Mother.  
"He always comes back of his own accord,"  
Says Father  
—But not this time.



Photo-Scott Leslie

Against the wall!  
So shout the children from the hilltop.  
People pass the gaping turtle and  
Smile from tinted windshields.  
—Children with their matches may stand in line.  
Do the drivers feel the grinning road bump?  
O Wood-path, Dust  
O tire-garden-Eden  
—O God that holds the blue bowl and the dime,  
Perhaps next time a dungeon  
Or a falling tower  
—I die in this old phone booth daily  
Give up too quickly  
Easy game.  
Again.

