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GRIFFIN
71

design by Pam Barnhart

GRIFFIN

*"This creature was sacred to the sun, and
kept watch over the hidden treasures."*

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THE WALK

*The trees are people's eyes
grown to branches, trunks, and all.
The shallow moan of the bright moon
wails down the field edges
and swallows dart like bats crying
"lost, lost" over the arms of the wood.
I am moving with the night;
my step is nameless on each twig
and every parted branch is like a fading smile.
I miss time passing and share the sorrow
as mute trees begin to spill their saltless tears.
The earth is rocking all people to sleep,
to sleep beyond the owl's deep swoop of death,
where death comes like my walk
and where the wind sweeps over the ear
like rain sliding weightless across a hill.*

-Kurt Rupnow

MORTALITY

*While on the shore
the child
whispered sand thru fingers
the sons built castles
with pebbles then stones
for the altar when the father
denied the garden
and left the rock
where he prayed*

*Anointed with oils
filled with balm
fluid like the palms
which waved or were laid
down to rest
to bless or be blest
then flamed
and withered
to ashes and dust*

-Quentin Hughes

PENGUINES

*I play wood and fire,
She is storm and air;
She is verb, feathers,
Cowboys, the last frontier.*

*My quiet breaks windows,
Bodies drift through my dreams;
I am tiddle to her wink,
A puddle to her streams.*

*Her end is her beginning,
She keeps her gardens spare;
I rumble through her valleys,
Wear flowers in my hair.*

*We bop, bang, and tumble,
And keep our evenings free;
We circle through each other,
Save music, light and poetry.*

*We decide against shelter,
Live naked in the cold;
Our nights are our beginning,
We fumble, buzz, and hold.*

-C.B. Carlson

MARCH PENDULUM

*Big clumsy red squirrel
swaying down to reach the buds--
Hungry March pendulum
waiting for spring.*

-Edward Zimmer

HAYTOR I

1

*Contorted granite
dominating the skyline for miles
from wherever you stand
you turn towards it*

*And that tattered crow
coming from nowhere
flaps past
in a dead straight line
drawn to the rock*

But what business could it have there?

2

*The crow
seemed to drag in its wake
a moving shadow
so that the air
darkened behind it.*

*

*Landing
it ran forward
a few steps, then settled*

*Should it run on two legs
when most birds hop?*

3

*The body lay on its back
arms and legs outstretched, pegged down*

*Other birds had been there already
and opened the belly*

*

*Inside the dark pit of blood
the entrails were moving
growing to replace
lost and mutilated organs*

*The crow ran forward
a few steps, then settled*

*When it dipped to feed
the body howled.*

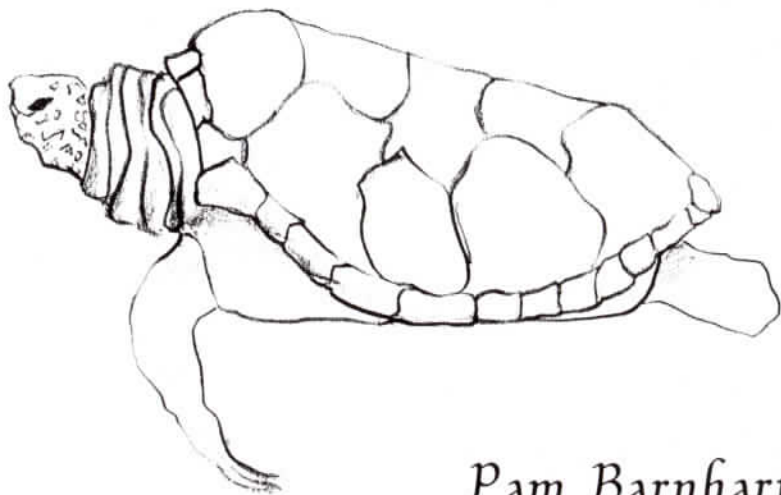
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Then the air was black with hungry crows

5

*And when they were gluttoned
and flew heavily off
to sleep in their bloodstained hiding-places
and craggy head, almost as old as the gods
came to rest
and the body lay spreadeagled on the moor
like unsculpted granite.*

-Paul Merchant



Pam Barnhart

THINKING OF GOODBYE

by Ted Costantino

All very dreamlike. . . some music back there, like the Airplane, but I'm thinking about the Stones, the music just sort of coming out to see. . . just drifting outdoors, looking around, not something that you could really believe. . . Things like this always take such a long time, but afterwards it's like so fast you're not sure it all happened. . . I remember a long time ago I was talking to this girl I hadn't seen for about two years, we had been really good friends, and I just said, well, I'll see you, and she said you're not very sentimental are you? and that sort of stopped me for a minute, because you can't work up any kind of sentiment at that moment, its not that sort of thing. I stood there thinking, and I thought, what do you want me to say, and that's just what I said, What do you want me to say? We both looked at each other, because there isn't anything to say. . . my mind was just sort of drifting all over while all this was going on here, and I kept on trying to tell it to just Concentrate, man, this is really it, but it kept wandering. . . I kept thinking of that line in the movie of the wizard of Oz, Dorothy's just standing there while Glinda drifts off in her bubble, and these millions of tiny little Munchkins, and she says My, people come and go so quickly here! I always remember that line, but its not a line you can repeat and have people know what you mean. . . I know every line in that movie. When it comes on I can sit there and talk right along with everybody in it. . .

What are you gonna do, man? I mean, this is really it, huh?

Yeah, I guess so.

Well. . . ?

I don't know, it hasn't hit me yet.

Hasn't hit you yet! Christ, what do you haveta do, wait a year or something before you get the message?

I don't know. .no, it's just like, you know, like inheriting a million dollars and still keeping track of your change because it hasn't hit you yet. You know.

It isn't a million dollars.

But it's sort of the same feeling. I guess I'll just go out and see what else I can find; maybe I can find something else just as good.

I really hope so man, because. . .

Yeah. Mmmmm, well, listen. . .I'll probably see you in a month or so, so don't, you know, don't worry about it or anything.

No, I'll get this whole thing together in a while, and, uhmm, well, you know. . .I'm right there with you. . .

Yeah, right. Well, take care of yourself.

Okay, you too.

Adios, amigo.

Adios.

And I was gone. It was easy to replay later, but like a movie. You can always remember things like that, and sometimes even get the feeling back, but I always feel guilty when I do.

Over the Dakotas

*It really rather makes the day
To wake of a morning
To hear the frank blare
Of a T.V.
Predict a cold front moving south*

Over the Dakotas.

*It makes a rather lonely night
To wander in Florence
To hear the frank blare
Of the Fiats
As their drivers look and haggle*

Over the Dakotas.

*It makes a lot of summer time
To ride a fast black cycle
To feel the frank blare
Of the engine
As it rumbles smooth and hard*

Over the Dakotas.

-James Feely



FRIGENDS

Laura Bland

CAROL'S BODY

*Sometimes there is a girl for me to watch
who has hands of green twigs, hands
that she, and I, find shaking,
pushing through the brown and graying hair.*

-Richard Brandenburg

DREAMSHIP

*Battered steamer, listing dreamer
overwhelmed by waves of words
frozen stare and groping fingers
shuddering toward an unknown shore
I'll ride the current of conversation
slip through shoal and jagged reef
bide my time with gull and mermaid
bathe in rain and salty spray.
So hold a candle high above you
send a beacon through the storm
though I don't know when I'll be landing
been so long churning on my own.*

-Tom Greer

MORNING GLORY

*Morning's bright birth delivered her.
How fair is she, draped in morn's mist.
Her delicate neck bends to each breath of the willow
In acceptance of what will be.
Suckled by day, she is nurtured.
This her sacrament, her only strength.
Hazed in hue, the sun leaves her bringing
Dark to her chamber.
Bids not she another day, an hour.
She meets her full bloom'd birth without question.
Dawn will come early and she will lie alone.
Smiling softly she passes into night.
No joy in morning's glory.*

-Carolee Ashwell

EVE

*to whatever I put any old word
on, to give you; I sigh,
that Eve (and Adam) showed
 Themselves this
 without
 even stick
 nor sand*

-Tom Simon

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES WELCH
by The GRIFFIN

Griffin: Do you want to sketch in your biography?

Welch: I was born in Browning, Montana in 1940. Browning is the town on the Blackfeet reservation. My folks live on the Fort Bellnap reservation now. I moved around a lot as a youngster. My dad worked in construction so we did a lot of traveling from one job to another. I met a lot of different people and was in a lot of different situations, which I guess helped me later in poetry. I graduated from high school in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1958 and I went to the University of Minnesota for two quarters and majored in Business Administration. I failed out and I went to work for two years, and I decided I didn't like to work so I went back to school, this time at Northern Montana College in Haver, Montana. I lasted a year there and I failed out again. So I worked for a few more years before I finally went to the University of Montana where I got a degree in Liberal Arts in 1965. Then I went to Graduate School at the University of Montana majoring in Creative Writing and lasted a year. I quit because I was doing more academic work than actual writing, and I've been writing full time ever since.

G: Has your Indian background been important to your writing and your work?

W: Yes it has. I guess there are a couple of reasons. A poet tries to write about what he knows and I know a lot about Indians. I am an Indian and I feel spiritually close to what Indians were and are today so I think I'm able to exploit that material, that background that I have. On the other hand I would much rather be considered a poet who happens to be an Indian and not an Indian poet. But the way Indians are the rage, that's hard to avoid. First it was hula hoops, then Frisbees, now it's Indians.

G: I notice in a lot of your poems a kind of controlled anger. Do you see your poetry in any sense as social criticism?

W: I don't set out consciously to criticize or make any social comments. What I try to do in the poetry is to present things as I see them, very subjectively. But hopefully to present without making too many statements, just through images so that a reader can make up his own mind about whether after reading my poetry they think the Indians are doing alright today or whether they're still oppressed and despairing. So if it's social commentary I don't try to do that deliberately, it just undoubtedly comes out. Because when you're writing about minority groups it will come out as social commentary. There's just no way you can get around it.

G: What comes first when you're writing a poem? Is it the idea or a particular phrase or is it the rhythm? Can you identify the germ of a particular poem?

W: What I try to do is get a line or two in my head first and maybe carry it around with me for a couple days or longer if necessary. With these two lines in my head I say them over and over again and think about them a lot and they sort of suggest a rhythm. So if I have these two lines and I can get a little bit of a rhythm going then I'll sit down and see how it goes. But I hardly ever. . . I guess I could say I never work with an idea in mind. I never ever know how the poem is going to end or what's going to happen in the poem because I think that sort of destroys the spontaneity of writing poetry. When you write poetry you're trying to discover things for yourself so a lot of it has to come from your subconscious. In order to get at your subconscious you have to first forget everything you know and then just let everything wander free and see what happens.

G: What criterion do you use to decide if one of your poems has been a success?

W: Well it's a feeling I get. I've been fooled at times. I've written a poem that I thought was pretty good or I guess that I thought was a success and then I read it a few days later and it doesn't really do anything for me, you know, it's like reading somebody else's poem, somebody that I don't particularly care for. I think the criterion is if you read it over and every now and then you get a shiver up your spine, then I think it's successful.

G: Do you work for an aural effect with your poetry?

W: I always keep that in mind. I like a good tight rhythm, and I like to rhyme, and I like to vary the rhythm quite a bit. So I do keep it in mind as an aural form and during the course of writing and rewriting I say it out loud to myself a lot because your eye can play a trick on you, in terms of rhythm, but your ear just can't play a trick with you in terms of rhythm. So if you say it out loud you'll catch a flat place or a place where you have one syllable too many and you'll hear it in your ear, whereas you may have missed it with your eye.

G: Do you associate yourself with any poetic school today?

W: No. Well, there's a group of writers at the U. of Montana that I've grown up with, poetically speaking. I guess you could say that we all at one time or another tried to imitate Richard Hugo, our teacher, and we all discovered that you can't do that. There's only one Hugo, there's only one way to do things like he does them. So then you go out and you try to find your own voice, and that destroys whatever school you might have been part of.

G: How would you characterize your voice?

W: I hope it's unique. I like to work in fairly tight forms, if that means anything. I'm a great believer in form, I believe in doing things through images rather than statements or harangues or whatever.

G: What historical figures do you identify with, if any?

W: I really don't think I identify with anybody historically. When I grew up, in terms of the Indian business, all of the old ways were pretty much gone. They'd been on the reservation for, let's see, sixty years and the agents and people like that made sure that they didn't practice any of their old ways. They did the ghost dance but that was approved by the government people on the reservation. My generation learned English first and if we ever did learn Indian it was through an old grandmother who lived at home and in order to communicate with her you had to learn Indian. Unfortunately, I didn't have an old grandmother so I never learned it. Since I grew up in the modern era with the old ways gone I can't really identify with the historical Indians. I can identify with the Reservation Indians, because I have lived on them and I guess I am one.



Pam Barnhart

G: When you go to heaven and you have a chance to speak with anyone, who would you speak with? What would you ask them?

W: Let's see. I'd want to talk with W.C. Fields but you probably wouldn't find him in heaven. Of course I don't think I'll go to heaven either.

G: What would you ask him?

W: Well, I don't think I'd ask him anything. I think I'd just listen. I'd like to meet W.B. Yeats, but he wouldn't be one of my first choices. I'd like to meet Chief Joseph and see what he'd say in retrospect about everything that happened. You think of certain people in terms of influence, but if you ever met them you might just be disappointed. So maybe it's best not to meet W.B. Yeats. He may have been a little too conservative for me.

G: How would you describe yourself?

W: One newspaper said I was lethargic. I don't know what lethargic means but it sounds like something I might be. Do you know what lethargic means?

G: It means slow moving, rather slothful. Dull.

W: That sounds like me. I don't have much drive or ambition in my personal life but I guess I'm kind of dry and dull.

G: How do you think other people describe you?

W: They would say I'm soft spoken and agreeable, which I guess I am for the most part. There's not much to say about me, I'm not a very colorful figure. I guess lethargic pretty much sums it up.

G: Have you written your epitaph yet or would you like to write your epitaph?

W: No. When you're young you like to think you have a few years left and it seems to me if you wrote your epitaph you would be almost asking for it. So I haven't. I do write about death a lot in my poems. In fact it surprises me sometimes when I go through my own poems and see that almost every one of them concerns death in one way or another. It's always death as kind of an abstraction. It's just something I can't understand. Maybe that's why I use it so much, trying to get closer to what it really means.

G: Do you believe in spiritual forces in nature?

W: I do and I don't. But I have no feelings about it one way or another. But I know things happen, there's something in our minds that we can get at through poetry that you just can't get at in everyday circumstances. So I guess poetry could almost be considered spiritual in that sense. If there's anything I revere it's poetry. I honestly think it's the only way to get inside of yourself, and to discover things you never ever would know unless you did actually write poetry. This makes poets unique because they do have this ability and gift to discover things about themselves. I suspect everybody has these things in them that they never let out and maybe that's why poets supposedly speak for people because they have this ability to understand relationships and make something spiritual.

G: Your poetry is very involved with relationships and other people. Do you write with any sense of an audience?

W: I guess I do. For a long time I didn't think I did. I thought I was writing strictly for myself. And I hope for the most part I am writing for myself because that's the only real purpose of poetry for me. And yet I can't help but think that since I've become fairly successful, a small number of people will be reading these poems, so I can't quite put them out of my mind. But when I actually sit down to write the poem I hope that I am writing it 99% for myself and 1% for this audience.

G: What is your favorite poem that you've written?

W: Well I have two or three favorites. Probably the one people like best is one called "Harlem, Montana: Just Off The Reservation". In the poem I lambast the white people who live in these small towns just off the reservations. I've talked to a number of Indians and they assure me that just off every reservation there is a town like Harlem in which the people feel so much whiter than the Indians and they treat them badly. They don't mind taking their money but they certainly don't do it with a smile. A lot of people like that poem very much, I don't know why, I guess they would like to see the lot changed.

G: Can you quote it without getting us into copyright trouble?

W: Well, I'll quote the last three stanzas;

*Goodbye, goodbye, Harlem on the rocks,
so bigoted, you forget the latest joke,
so lonely, you'd welcome a battalion of Turks
to rule your women. What you don't know,
what you will never know or want to learn--
Turks aren't white. Turks are olive, unwelcome
alive in any town. Turks would use
your one dingy park to declare a need for loot.
Turks say bring it, step quickly, lay down and dead.*

*Here we are when men were nice. This photo, hung
in the New England Hotel lobby, shows them nicer
than pie, agreeable to the warring bands of redskins
who demanded protection money for the price of food.
Now, only Hutterites out north are nice. We hate
them. They are tough and their crops are always good.
We accuse them of idiocy and believe their belief all wrong.*

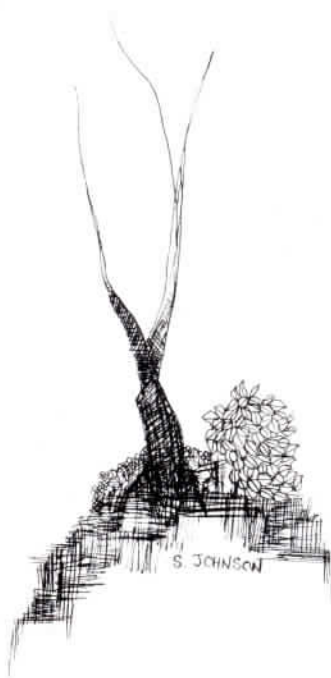
*Harlem, your hotel is overnamed, your children
are raggedy-assed but you go on, survive
the bad food from the two cafes and peddle
your hate for the wild who bring you money.
When you die, if you die, will you remember
the three young bucks who shot the grocery up,
locked themselves in and cried for days, we're rich,
help us, oh God, we're rich.*

NEWSREEL

*The squirrels
are crabby today
in the very unJanuary air.*

*They wait,
probably panting;
twitch, glare, then*

*Spring up branch scream for leap from ground
around snarl up tree through screech down
over ground sailing*



*Stop.
Probably panting;
sprawled head down,*

*Stretched bear-skin-rug-like around the trunk.
No casualties:
Each his own trophy.*

-Edward Zimmer

MY MAIDEN AUNT

*A brass partridge and copper kettle
Rest on her mantle.
She's a gray cardigan life who
Takes delight in children's smiles
Over chocolate mice.
The lilac scent sits
On her chair
To mingle with the warmth,
And the tapestry ship
Made years ago
Sails above the cooling hearth.
The children leave, the fire is ash,
And she turns to face the clock.*

-Pat Monaco

IN MORNING LIGHT

*leaning against sleep,
she bends towards me
as heavy as the fog--
she encloses my thoughts.
the sounds of the night reflect
as evening footsteps on the corridor.
the mist grows lighter,
sleep leans backward--
i am awake
in morning light.*

-Tommy Buell

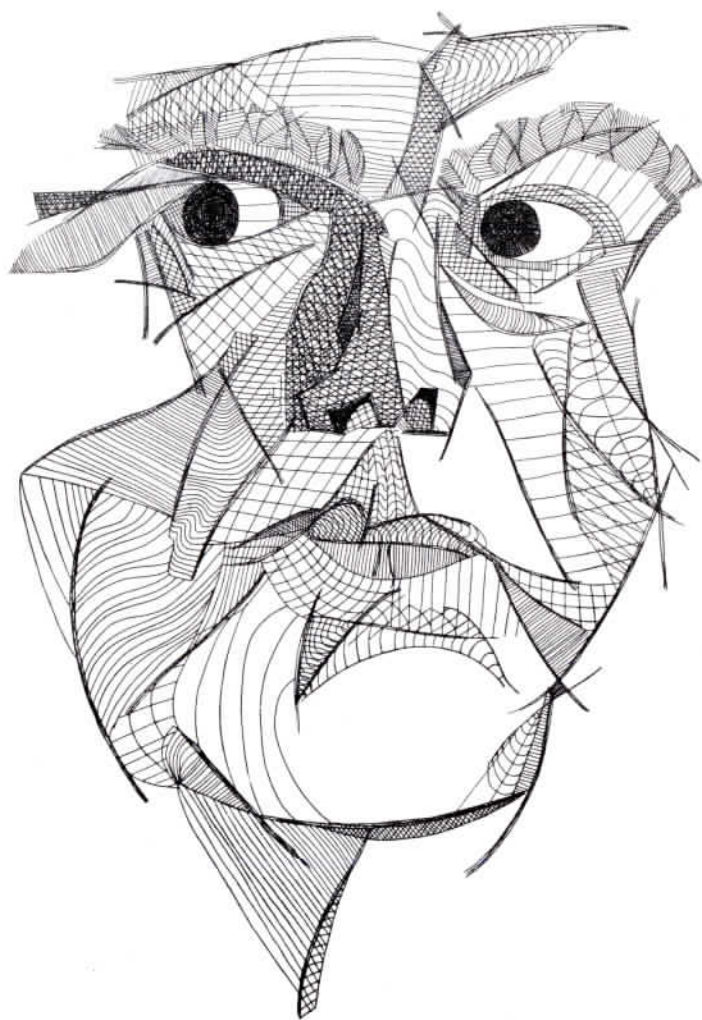
ROWING TO BYZANTIUM

*I am still waiting for the bang of glory,
the nightingale's song, a burning bush.
Lurching in these crazy seas, dizzy from currents
and cross-currents, soggy in the sun.
Whirlpool eyes burnt out of brine, my hair is singed seaweed.
With a sunburnt brain I wear a watery emphasis.
A mouth without words, I plummet at the depths.*

*The past echoes off the rocks;
all the Golden Codgers belly up in the sun
who floundered these same seas before me.
But in this half-savage country, this
nation which never knew salt or heard the billows roar,
the past cannot hold, will not take root.
Here everyone has a watergun and is prepared to attack.*

*I learn to save sunsets, the glitter of fish;
find strength in crabs, the gnawing criticism of mice;
gather rats, friends, the tall summer grass.
In this mimic world let America keep the oceans.
We'll band in forests and evergreen mountains
preaching, singing and propagating our own kind--
mad canoeists in a mad, queer land.*

-C.B. Carlson



Steve Johnson

NUCLEUS

by Hila Jahsmann

Shad in the living-room. He is being punished. The living-room is punishing him. The clock on the mantelpiece above the fire ticks, taps, accuses, waits. A bowl of flowers on the table. His father loves flowers, tends, with violent care, his plants. There is a photograph of his father who stares and a photograph of his mother who stares. There is his father's armchair and his mother's armchair. They stare. There are all these ornaments that point with their handles and spouts.

He watches the eiderdown drying before the fire. In the bedroom above, his mother switches on the vacuum cleaner. It sucks up the mess he made. It howls.

He was playing up there with a clockwork toy and knocked over the vase which spewed flowers and water all over the bed. His mother ran in and rushed him downstairs, telling him to guard the eiderdown until it was dry, and woe betide him if a spark should land on it. Then she flew back upstairs. Flushing of toilet over his head and the roar of descending sewage. Then her feet thumping the floor as she bends and stretches, rubs and polishes. That is the dance of waiting for his father.

His father is outside. He has gone for his Sunday afternoon walk.

He gazes into the fire. Sullen gray smoke erupts from the black coals his mother has just thrown on, twisting, hissing, yellowish with sulphur, convulsed clouds in which a little flame leaps, vanishes, leaps again, stays, is joined by other flames devouring the smoke until cockerels fight in the blaze, brilliant birds with fierce eyes and flashing wings, stabbing beaks and spurs. Wild cats spit and snarl. The fire is their blood, teeth chew throats, claws rip bellies, arteries burst, and the cats fly up the chimney dissolving. Above the red mass little sparks fly to and fro in the soot. He presses hard on his eyeballs with his fingers. The clock groans, whirrs and strikes four times. Soon his father will be home. Once Shad took the key to wind the clock and wound and wound turning the key in the belly of the clock until it broke.

Rain on the window. His father is out in the rain, walking, walking, thinking of his son, and all the problems of the week gone by and the week to come, and when he comes home he will sit down at the big table and write those letters that have to be written. He will smoke. His son will watch him smoke. Will see the worried frown of his father's brow, and the smile on his father's face when he looks at his son, and will see the blue cigarette smoke filling up the room and will cough and choke.

His father walks in the rain. Regular firm stride, arms swinging a little too high front and back. Military ancestors in his blood. Gardens huddled under the drizzle, remains of torn chrysanthemums. He compares them to his own, wondering when he will be able to afford a better place, although none is better kept than his own. His son is very young, the photograph album shows him in his first school uniform against a tree, against a wall, running to the sea, winning a race, storming on into those black pages that are still to be filled.

Coins clink in his pocket against his thigh, these coins that he removes each night, before he goes to bed, and lays on the dresser, and replaces in his trouser pocket each morning; each night and each morning the same weight of small change, of little but heavy coins, and all the time the rage in his heart that he might have done something else with his life, but then his son shall do it for him. He walks, and the coins chink chank against his thigh that is white and covered with black hairs that look ridiculous on this limb that was once supple and young but now atrophies under office desks, but he walks on through the Grove and the Avenue, the Street and the Mount, and lifts his head high as he turns for home, and for the only son he loves, the son who shall make all these sacrifices worthwhile.

His galoshes splash on the glistening pavement. An ice-cream van passes with somber chimes.

Shad hears them. Like silent black birds they wing slowly over the roof through the soggy air. He turns, touches the eiderdown, traipses to the window, pressing his forehead on the pane. It vibrates with his mother's tread. It is cold. If he presses too hard it will break. His nose will be cut off like his mother said it would, and he will get glass in his eyes and down his throat and the bits of glass inside him will slice him up.

In the windows opposite, lights, but the light does not survive long in the murk under muddy clouds. School tomorrow. Where he must do well so that his father will be happy, his father who works so hard and comes home with snow on his hat and his face blue with cold so that his son can go to such a good school.

The ice-cream van comes down the long, straight road and stops. He cannot have an ice-cream today. A door opens in a house. A child runs out clutching a coin. It disappears behind the van, then reappears scampering with an ice-cream towards the open door. It trips and falls. It screams with pain, the ice-cream covered in dirt. The mother runs out and leads the child back into the house. The van moves off.

The chimes fade, coming to him now from far away, speaking of something sadder than he will ever understand.

A small white dog sprints furtively out of a gate, freezes suddenly, hesitant in the gloom, quivering on short, stiff legs.

He turns around. Darkness has seeped into the room, walls and furniture float ghostly.

Upstairs his mother is quiet. She rests on the bed for a moment, relieved that disaster has struck, and she has no need to watch now for things to fall or throw themselves from the walls. It has happened. She sighs. Through this little hole in the dike the tide of her anxiety enters and rises, and now there is nothing to be done except listen to the lapping of the tiny waves against the walls.

He clenches his fists. Wants to smash one thing, just one thing of all these things that stand around him. There is the dancing shepherd boy. There was a dancing shepherdess and he smashed her and for a moment heard them all die, these things that are there for him, but then they all rushed back at him malevolent with the love that bought them. They are too strong. It is too strong.

He picks up a book and sits in his father's armchair. It is big. The chilly leather wraps itself around him. It is a book about Gardening. He drops it on the floor. His mother calls out in alarm. It's only a book! What? A book, I dropped a book! Watch what you're doing! Her feet begin to bump across the ceiling again.

Jets of yellow flame pop, throw stealthy shadows round the room. He sits down on the hearth-rug between the eiderdown and the fire, takes the poker, digs holes in the glowing ash, breaks up coals, scrapes soot from the grate. It burns, turquoise.

He gets up again to fetch a banana, eats it, sits down and sticks the poker through the skin. It screams softly as he shoves it into the fire. Street lamps go on outside, the crowd of shadows thickens and he thinks of his father before whom he will be on trial at the supper-table.

His father walks faster to get in out of the rain, passing in and out of the lamp-light, his shadow swelling, lengthening, dwindling.

The poker is red-hot in the fire. He takes it out and holds it up, bringing it closer and closer to his face to see if he can bear the pain, and then more pain, and then more, until he is forced to groan with pain. The incandescent metal shines with a fierce light that rapes the dark, a thing incomplete without another thing to torture, as though it and his eyes should make one flesh.

Such infinite possibilities of cruelty hypnotize him. He begins to burn a woman, the photo of a woman in a swimming suit, in a newspaper beside the fire, her eyes,

her neck, her lips, her breasts, her belly, until the paper roars with quick flame and in a panic he pushes it onto the fire. His father will not be pleased. It is the "News of The World".

He touches the eiderdown. It is nearly dry. He caresses it, feeling the soft silky surface, the yielding feathers of this precious thing that belongs on his mother and father's bed upstairs there in the bedroom where his mother thumps with heavy monotonous tread.

BURN IT! BURN IT WITH THE POKER!

Like an owl diving, talons stretched to catch a mouse, the thought swooped on him.

No. Not that. The eiderdown would catch fire, set light to the chairs, the curtains, the room, the house, burning him and his mother. His father would come home to find only smoking black ruins.

Terrified he thinks of the great catastrophe and the great punishments he can bring down on himself, and trembles, holding the poker deep in the fire, afraid with a fear that is sitting down beside him now, an old voluptuous fear, fat and obscene, with big rolling eyes dribbling tears and big white hands stroking his thigh.

He moves the poker slowly towards the eiderdown, not, not going to do it, but filled with an excitement that is like a hysterical giggling deep inside him, coming up louder and louder, the purple policeman at the seaside, in a glass case at the amusement arcade, who rolls and yells and howls with laughter, and you don't want to laugh but you have to laugh and you laugh with the tears streaming down your face, retching and moaning.

In a sudden complete icy silence it is like an invisible hand that seizes his and jerks the poker through the eiderdown.

Released his hand pulls out the poker. No fire but he can hear the hiss of smoldering feathers. He rushes toward the light-switch, cracking his head on the table. His frantic fingers find the switch and in the avalanche of light he sees the yellow smoke gush from a black hole that menaces him like a huge spider.

He runs to the window, opens it, flaps his arms, but the heavy air imprisons the smoke that now thickens under the ceiling. He beats the eiderdown with his hands but it only smolders faster.

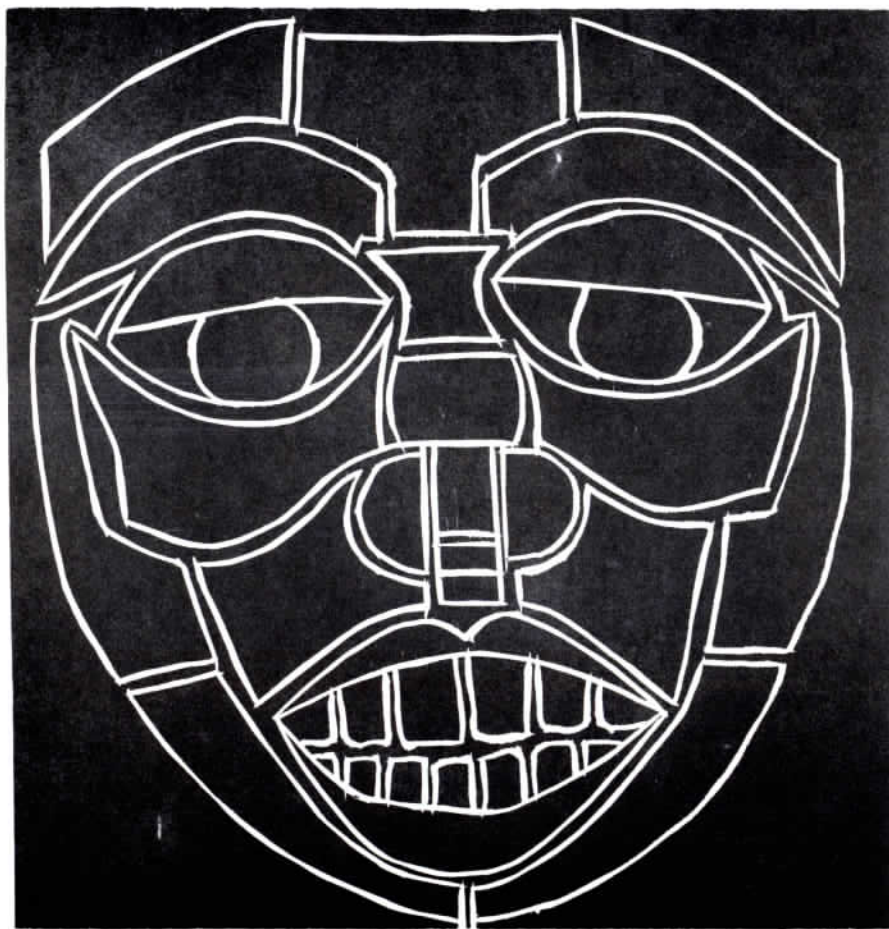
His fear that was so fat before now is thin, capering and sniggering, poking a bony finger under his ribs. The rolling thunder of his mother's footsteps stops, and his name strikes him down like lightning.

She is in the room pulling him through her sewing machine, the needle rattling along his spine.

She does not hit him. She is frightened. Why on earth did you do that? Oh what on earth possessed you to do that?

If he weeps it is because the nonsense of tears is all that comes, and the cry from his mouth as he falls at her feet and her head rises to bump against the ceiling, wobbling grotesquely like a carnival mask.

And outside his father walks, nearly home, through the lamplight. Swelling, dwindling shadow, wiping the rain from his spectacles.



Steve Johnson

MISSOURI INTERSTATE

*The moon,
flashing over the hammered surface of a pond
half hidden by a feathery cloud
making even Missouri Interstate
as subtle as a Japanese print.*

-Edward Zimmer



UN693L6D

Laura Bland

THE CABOOSE

*why must I always be
the caboose on your train of thought?
why is it you see me
some lamp or chair, a thing that's bought?*

*you keep your likelies up ahead;
you keep your own sweet home.
so why give me the wayward bed,
when I give you this poem?*

-Tom Simon

BIT OF HONEY

*I am all bee and bumble
swollen with pollen in this
conspiracy of birds, sun and pom-pom girls.
I buzz through gardens,
dreaming of girls whose breasts are canteloupe,
whose thighs are valleys trembling
beneath the lightning
that seeds my spring.
Full of halts, emergencies, far-off lights,
the cold intensity of spirit,
I am all unsteady and out of focus--
a stiff quill spine
in a suddenly balloon world.
Ah, such cold waltzes.*

-C.B. Carlson

JACKIE

*I could stay
and watch you eat ice cream
for a long time.
I won't father you,
but mirror on me
the finest little child person ever.*

-Richard Brandenburg

*The graceful butterfly,
a petal dropped from God's hand.
His small rainbow.*

-Kathy Lenthoff

THE SWEETEST THING

by Paul VanDevellder

Day had been dark in Paris since dawn. A drizzle came in the shadows before morning and a mist had made everything wet and slow in the street. There was no sign that it would let up before dusk, and night began falling earlier than it usually did. You couldn't tell clearly when night did begin because some of the street lamps had been on all day long like it was when Paris was in a bad fog. The buildings had turned darker, and the hanging mist muted the city like a thick snow. It was too dark and wet for anyone to be outside on the streets because the freshness in the other Paris was gone. The bark on the trees became black in the wet, and without their leaves they looked wicked like carved stones against the street lamps. There was no wind on St. Michel because the rain fell without spattering and none of the filth or loose raff had washed into the gutters. The streets were still shining like the porcelain in the street lamps when the mist became drizzle again, and there were very few people out anywhere to break the quiet.

Yves thought it was a bad night to be eating alone, but so was every night. He sat in a window seat at a small square table. In the dim light from the street he brushed the bread crumbs away and wondered why he came to this dirty cafe so often. But it was a very cheap one with good women, when there were women anywhere in Paris. It was a terrible night to be eating dinner alone, but that wasn't his fault. The stone trees stood still in the dampness, and looking out the window into the street he wondered what might be coming. When Catherine was late that meant she wasn't coming at all, and that wasn't his fault, because prostitutes left and came back when they pleased. The dead man across the street woke him from his nausea, and in a pointed instant, settled him back in it again. It became thick as the darkness, and he did not know why he had come out at all. But the dead man was not unusual there because many dead men were in the streets on the best nights. He studied the man's position and considered that if anyone should die this would be the best kind of night. Being anywhere in this kind of night was a sort of death, and Yves saw out the window that everyone had escaped it and had left the night open, like an abandoned grave for a dead man.

It was too dark inside to see anything except that the cafe was empty after the few insoluble strangers. Yves continued watching the dead man and tasted a sweetness in his mouth when he thought the dead man must have been content. It must be good to die like that, to be comfortable

in the rain and cold. He left us in his misery; yes, and that would be the sweetest thing. Yves felt stillness, and thought he could envy the man if he was sure he knew him. Yves could have very well because he knew most people in the Latin Quarter who would die like that. It would be the best thing for anyone of them, because everything else they had turned sour. The bums and the pimps and prostitutes there knew each other because it was their only protection against the outside, and it was the outside that made anything they had good, into sourness. Only the naive young who did not have the skills ever had problems getting on the inside, and that was easy to learn in Paris, even for the prostitutes who were always in trouble with names and faces.

The Greek waiter stood over him and offered to take his order. He knew the Greek was new because he still tiptoed around and cleaned tables. Yves looked up surprised and watched the man standing over him with wide open eyes in the dim light.

Yves remembered Catherine for an instant, and turned back to the window pointing out at the dead man with his little finger.

"Why hasn't anyone done anything, about him across the street?"

"I suppose-no one cares. But someone will. He's been there all day long and it's about time now. May I take your order, sir?"

"Well please, listen. Doesn't anyone care?"

The waiter lightly shrugged himself.

"Who is it, do you know, because I might know him." Yves twisted around to see the waiter's face against the street's dimness.

"I'm not sure myself, sir, no one here's gone over to see, but someone from that direction came in an hour ago and said it was some fellow named Dupras; Yves Dupras, I think, but I'm not sure."

"I'm Yves Dupras," he said quietly.

The waiter's new face fixed itself cautiously for a few moments before he made an effort to laugh. Yves did not care enough to be indignant. He was more concerned about the dead man.

"Then I guess the man was mistaken, sir, he must not have seen him up close," said the waiter.

"You should have done something about it, you should have done something about it," he said louder the second time addressing the bartender. The bartender did not respond except with an expressionless flat colored face.

"Well," said the waiter, "there were very few people out today, and," he said trying lightly, "we're not paid by the city. And the gendarmes don't come around on Sunday, but they'll be back tomorrow. May I take your order?"

Yves started up from the table and walked to the door. "No thanks, I was only waiting for someone. I'll go see who it is, and tell you, so you don't kill somebody else."

The waiter stood by the table and followed Yves out of the cafe with his small eyes. The Italian at the bar laughed out loud at whatever might have happened and began discussing it with the bar tender. He finished his drink and watched Yves cross the street after the door shut closed against the mist.

Yves hugged himself together against the cold and felt the slippery pavement under his feet. The street lamp on the corner reflected in the puddles but did not reach the far wall because of the angle. When he skipped up on the sidewalk, he stopped standing over the corpse and bent down pulling one hand out of his pocket to roll him over. But he was too heavy, and Yves began to hear a loud gathering when he started pulling the man over. He tried to ease all of his weight down as if the man was still living and could feel it if Yves dropped him. He fell the last way onto the sidewalk like stiffened rubber frozen in the dampness, and Yves bent the rest of the way down on his knees to the wet cement. The muted sounds of the crowd coming from somewhere were blunted, and carried as if they were shouting into a pillow. In a moment they came into the light that showed the other end of the street, and he rolled the dead man back and standing up looked down at him once more before he left him. He did not go back into the cafe, and walked away in the direction of the subway. He escaped quietly and quickly away from the outside intrusion, and he disappeared from them into the mist because it did not matter either way to him when he could not see the dead man's face in the dark.

LINES ON A PAINTING OF THE
INFANT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,
WHICH I AM TRYING TO PROVE IS BY EDWARD HICKS

*I've seen his ancestors:
putti,
Christ Childs,
shepherds by Murillo;
the whole plump sweet curly tradition.*

*More specifically,
I found his grandparents:
the face in long copied engravings from Raphael
in New York bibles;
the scene and pose and lamb in a Reynolds.*

*His blood had flowed through all those,
yet is closer to the heart
and fresher than the Reynolds and engravings:
they have not been young since Raphael;
their fathers didn't love them.*

*I'm looking for his father
to give the bastard child a name
and to learn his secrets
of putting new blood
in old lines.*

-Edward Zimmer



'RUN,GR9P,3ALL,D9E,3CY' Laura Bland

All artists and writers, whose works have appeared on the previous pages, are students at the Lindenwood Colleges, with the exception of:

*C.B. Carlson, Chairman, Communication Arts
James Feely, Chairman, English Department
Pat Monaco, student, Temple Buell College
Kathy Lenthoff, St. Charles, Missouri
Paul Merchant, Exeter, England.*



GRIFFIN STAFF

*Tommy Buell
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