

the Griffin

Fall '85

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A Cell Far From Home

Jailed in smokestacks, generators, electric plants,  
veins releasing memories of freshly mown hay and channel cats  
A lifetime ago, at fourteen, he roamed Kansas---  
harnessing indifferent horses who raised little fuss  
when he pulled a cinch, placed a singletree;  
they knew a spirit, young and free  
Days of joy and sweat. Nights filled with Prairie Dog shoots  
Saturday barn dances, pints hidden in boots

A sloe-eyed Spanish lady whipered news  
causing him to flee, on a summer night, back to Missouri  
To a city of noise and soot---black and unyielding hues  
Distant dreams broken, I climbed his knee,  
planting hugs and kisses in a bouquet of tobacco and Jim Beam  
Petals shattered by eyes searching for fields unseen

--Frank Pointer

Sonnet 49 North (to Audrey)

You scramble to the top. With hands on knees  
You catch your breath. You straighten, look around.  
The dazzle of the air above the trees,  
The quartz and granite sparkle of the ground.  
Your face relaxes. Layers fall away:  
The practiced manners, mannerisms, masks,  
The attitudes you wear for everyday.  
No one to answer to, where no one asks.  
Alone, and the involvement of your mind  
Alone detaches you from all of space.  
From motes of light, the pain of humankind.  
From spinning spheres, the laughing human race.  
One higher peak you'll reach before you're through:  
No thing between infinity and you.

--Kathy Grimm

Introspection Rejection

Sat down  
To understand  
All myself.

Reached up  
Pulled it down  
Off the shelf.

How can I  
Look at me  
And hope at all--  
At all to see  
Anything but  
Dichotomy?

--bill lengfelder

NOCHE

Candle, lamp,  
lantern & glow-worm.

The constellation  
of the arrow.

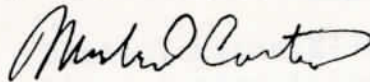
Tiny golden windows  
trembling.

& in the Northern Lights  
three dimensional crosses

rocking.

Candle, lamp,  
lantern & glow-worm.

by Federico Garcia Lorca  
translated by Michael Castro



On a Spring Day

Dreaming of quiet bloom,  
Bloom of primroses  
That open in the twilight.  
Twinkle of little evening fairies  
Under the balloon of my dream boat  
Which floats at the tree top height.

On a spring day,  
Be in love with tiny blue,  
Blue of violets  
That are striking in the moon night.  
Dance of flower princess  
Under the blue moon light,  
Dance beneath the oak tree.

On a spring day,  
Fall in love with flowers,  
The performance of the Muses.  
On a spring day  
Love you more  
Who are the rose in my mind,  
The inspiration of the true flower season.

--Yasukatsu Kudo

Dawn

Still of night  
Purest light  
Pierces like an arrow  
into darkness.

Still no sound  
All around  
Not a voice  
to be heard

All is still tonight.  
Blue-orange sky  
Stretches out  
Spreading pink dye  
To every burning cloud.

Sleeper waken  
Yawn silently  
Gaze out into  
the dawn.

The night is now the morning.  
Traffic jumps  
People slump  
You'd think  
That this was any morning.  
But the thunder sounds  
All around  
People gaze  
In frightened wonder.

The blue-orange sky is suddenly black.  
Stop and stare  
Go and dare  
To make things right  
On this late (night?)  
They look and learn  
Scoff and scorn  
On this strange day  
On the last dawning--  
of the old earth.

The Corpse

The stone face viewed  
Another life passed on  
One mystery solved.

--Nancy Spalding

Child of my changes  
Holding my heart in her hand  
My soul mate through life.

--Donna S. LaCroix

Told of freedom's joys  
America seen, not heard  
Black as night, token

--Donna Spalding

Office, kitchen, child  
Tired gender is not man  
Dreams of happiness

--Donna Spalding

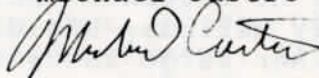
JIM IGOE'S HAIKU

Cottonwood trees

Wind

Shhhhh

michael castro



## The Agony of Winning

On November 22, Sam Seidloff sat at his scratched-up desk, twisted the neck of his red gooseneck lamp so the light was shining on the blank paper before him, picked up his pen, and--nothing. He chewed the end of his pen and remembered the sarcastic words of his publisher the day before.

"You're kidding, right?" Jack Hardwell said, pushing the thick envelope which contained six months of Sam's hard work across the desk. He grinned hopefully up at Sam.

"Come on Jack...This is good!" Sam said, pushing the envelope back at him.

"If this is good, I'd hate to see bad; the characters are phony, the plot has no point...Get back to me, will ya?" he replied, picking up the envelope and handing it to Sam.

After Sam had nursed his bruised ego with a series of drinks at The Red Pub, he went home and sat, thinking. "I need to make the characters more realistic," he said aloud to the empty room. He crawled wearily into bed and fell asleep with his clothes on, exhausted.

He had the strangest dream that night; he dreamed that the perfect woman was in love with him. She was the most beautiful, the most intelligent, and certainly the most sexy woman he had ever seen. The dream was so real that when he woke up, he was surprised she wasn't in his arms.

Without wasting a moment, Sam Seidloff leaped out of bed and went straight for his desk. He grabbed his pen and scribbled furiously, describing his dream girl in the most minute detail. He named her Melinda, which was the loveliest name in the world to him. He described her as a tall, blonde, voluptuous woman with a sexy, whispering voice and a beckoning walk. He re-read, edited, and rewrote throughout the day, carefully sculpting her physique, her life-style. Sam devoted the whole day to perfecting Melinda.

The next morning, he returned once again to his desk. He re-read his lovely Melinda, and decided to change a few things. He gave her a rather large inheritance (he decided that one of her rich aunts should die; Melinda would sob prettily and still be gorgeous and become rich herself), a huge house, expensive clothes, and---friends? What about a boyfriend or a lover? He gave her the perfect lover, and then realized self-consciously that he was describing himself. He didn't care. He wished he could jump into the pages and stay with Melinda forever.

As the weeks progressed, Sam became more and more absorbed



with Melinda, dreaming about her, wishing she was real. He also found he was drinking more than he usually did. He wrote on and on, creating scenes involving her and Jonathan, the name he gave to his literary ego. The scenes were filled with lusty desire, and oh, how Sam wished he was Jonathan in them!

One Saturday night found Sam staring into the fireplace, feeling the rosy warmth of the fire and trying to get himself into a romantic mood. There was a sudden loud and insistent knocking at the front door, making Sam jump. He was angry that someone had interrupted his chain of thought, for he had been thinking of a scene for Melinda. The knocking repeated as Sam slowly dragged himself to the door. He yanked it open, and then rubbed his eyes in disbelief, for the young shapely woman at the door closely resembled his image of Melinda! Sam decided he'd had enough to drink, and he set his shot glass down with a heavy thump.

"You're Sam Seidloff, the novelist?" she purred in her sultry, whispering voice.

"Yes--yes, I am. Pardon me for staring, but you resemble--well, someone I used to know. What can I do for you?" Sam stammered.

"Well, for starters, you can invite me in," she said. Sam opened the door wider. She strolled through the doorway, her hips swinging provocatively. She went to his desk, opened the top drawer, and pulled out the stacks of carefully handwritten pages that described Melinda. She turned to look at him.

"My name," she said, batting her eyelashes, "is Melinda. Sound familiar?" She giggled. "I need to tell you a few things...Sam--SAM!!" Sam had fallen to the floor in a heap.

When he came to, Melinda was half dragging, half carrying him to the couch. "You're..." he breathed.

"Yes, I'm your character, Melinda, except I'm not the way you wrote me." She propped up his legs. "You have made me a nymphomaniac, a sex fiend, but actually, I'm a good girl.

I wish you'd quit writing those scenes with Jonathan. I mean, he's nice and all that, but..." she chatted on and on about Jonathan. Sam, his head swimming, listened and nodded when it seemed appropriate. His Melinda was real!! He decided that maybe he hadn't had enough to drink after all. He picked up his shot glass and drained it with a single swallow.

Melinda sat down on the chair next to the couch. She went over the manuscript with Sam, and he listened attentively and made changes. He didn't think about the impossibility of her being there.

The firelight was dwindling when they finally put the manuscript away. Sam began to see Melinda as she really was--more than a playmate for Jonathan. They talked for a while; she told him about life in a novel.

"It's rather--well, it's rather dry," she said. "I like being here much better." Sam asked how she got there. "Oh, never mind," she said. She changed the subject. "You know, you're much better looking than Jonathan, and nicer, too..."

Sam touched her face, and then grabbed her and held her close. "I've wanted to hold you for so long," he said fiercely.

"I know," Melinda giggled, and relaxed against him.

The next morning, Sam awoke with a start. He opened his eyes to find two surprises: the soft, silky feeling of Melinda in his arms and the cold steel barrel of a gun at his forehead. He looked up, and saw what looked like a reflection of himself.

His mouth felt dry. "Let me guess," Sam said nervously. "Jonathan?"

"Damn right it's Jonathan," the man growled in a deep, heavy voice. "Melinda, get away from him."

Melinda scrambled out of bed and stood next to Sam.

"Don't you do it, Jonathan!" she cried, trembling.

"Look--Jonathan," Sam said, trying to speak in calm, soothing tones. It was better to be safe than sorry with characters, he thought. They sure were weird. "Jonathan, you can have her back. Just go back the way you came--or better yet, I could write you another woman, a better woman. What do you say?"

Melinda glared at Sam.

Jonathan looked interested. "You mean, any kind I want?"

"Yep," Sam said, beginning to feel hopeful, "any kind."

"All right," Jonathan said, "you can have her; what I really wanted was a beautiful girl with long dark hair and big brown eyes..."

"Melinda," Sam said, "go get my manuscript."

Jonathan continued to describe the woman, and Sam pretended to listen as he mentally designed his plan. He hoped it worked, for if it didn't, he'd be a goner.

"Okay, Jonathan, he said, taking the cap off of his pen.  
"Go ahead and describe her."

Jonathan began his description, and Sam pretended to listen carefully. He began a new paragraph describing the exact scene that was taking place. The last line read, "Jonathan was talking about his girl when suddenly a blood clot that had been lodged for quite a while finally broke free and found its way to his artery. His heart stopped beating and he fell to the floor, dead." As Sam finished the line, Melinda screamed and there was a tremendous crash. Sam, startled, looked up to see Jonathan lying on the floor, a stricken look on his face. Melinda was extremely upset. "Sam!" she screamed. "what have you done?!" She broke down, sobbing.

"Hey, he was going to shoot me, maybe you...What do you mean what have I done?"

Melinda looked wildly around the room. Jonathan's gun had been thrown from his hand across the floor. She snatched it up and pointed it at Sam, her hands shaking.

"Maybe Jonathan was a little strange, but believe it or not, I loved him! Goodbye, Sam Seidloff!" She fired, and the bullet implanted itself in Sam's chest. He died with a puzzled, disbelieving look on his face. Melinda, sobbing prettily, gathered up the manuscripts and left.

--Suzy Woodford

In The House  
That Jack Built

Awaken to the spray  
Sounds of morn showers  
In side the closet  
Where the waters kept.  
Through my walls I hear  
Mist pushing against the paint  
Gentle pressure on my room.

See you searching the fog  
For some sign of self  
Always flipping the switch  
And the fan carries away.  
Fumes of late-last nights  
Up sucked and into the attic  
Where the dusty souls sulk.

In labeled boxes sit  
Web-weary and waiting  
For an inspired carpenter  
With mallet and nails  
His tools to bear  
To un-lock a way to air out  
Cross the sticky shingles.

Where downstairs whistling  
Clean children love to muse  
With pop-up puppets.

--Wes Morgenthaler

## Complexities

Monday mornings  
bossman says,  
"Say man, how's it going?"  
Jesus, I ponder, how is It going?

Ethiopian man  
knows how It's going.  
Life is thin, getting thinner.  
Bhopal window  
knows how It's going.  
Devils in the air.

Me? I'm the Earthian triangle---  
bounded by fissions and reactions  
Khadafy and Falwell  
starvation and gluttonous wheatfields.

My face a flaccid sail, I respond,  
"Ain't going bad, bossman."

--Frank Pointer

## Resurrection

Rain,  
striking winter wheat  
sails on a sea of green veins.  
Curtsying to the earth,  
bowed blades  
silently deposit a pearl.

Unburdened,  
fingers spring upward

--Frank Pointer

Poesy pebbles,  
Weany words,  
Picked and pinched,  
So precious.  
Weighty wisdom  
Plucked and plunked  
Into professor's pointed  
Pocket.

--Wes Morgenthaler

110 lbs. tonite:

Eye's riveted,  
Hand's gripping,  
To each white-dash-  
Of a highway,  
Pulling me home.

--Wes Morgenthaler

#### Stained Glass

Stained glass sings a melody  
without a tale to tell.  
Alone, its song fades  
under layers of floating earth  
until overwhelmed, it stops.  
Ah, but when the sun rises  
rivers of light wash through dust;  
all shadows of doubt are cast aside,  
and a colorless, singeing window expands from its pane.

--Douglas Joe Hogart

A Four Year Old Daughter Looks at the Stars and Asks Dad

BIG?

cosmos

SCARY?

void

REALLY?

logical

FOREVER?

infinity

PROOF?

c. sagan

--Frank Pointer

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