

TOWERS  
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TOWERS is published twice yearly by the Xi Delta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honorary, at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

Volume XXIX

January, 1968

## AWARDS

### Towers Award for Poetry

Jim Perrie • Two Dreams of Wine  
Robert Gundelach • Umbrella Thoughts

### Judge

Lisel Mueller • Poetess and Poetry Critic,  
*Chicago Daily News*

### J. Hal Connor Award for Creative Prose

Joe Bauers • Cully and Others  
Sandra Hupp • The Vigil

### Judges

Donald Skiles — John Muller

### E. Ruth Taylor Award for Critical Writing

James Quivey • W. B. Yeats and the Epigrammatic  
Traditions: A Study of Technique in the Four-line  
Poems

### Judges

E. Nelson James  
Gerald Ketelaar

### Maude Uhland Award for Freshman Writing

Renee Shechtman • Morrie

### Judges

Jesse Ritter — Cynthia Parker

### Art

Barbara Curtis

### Judge

Harold Joachim • Curator of Prints and Drawings  
Art Institute of Chicago

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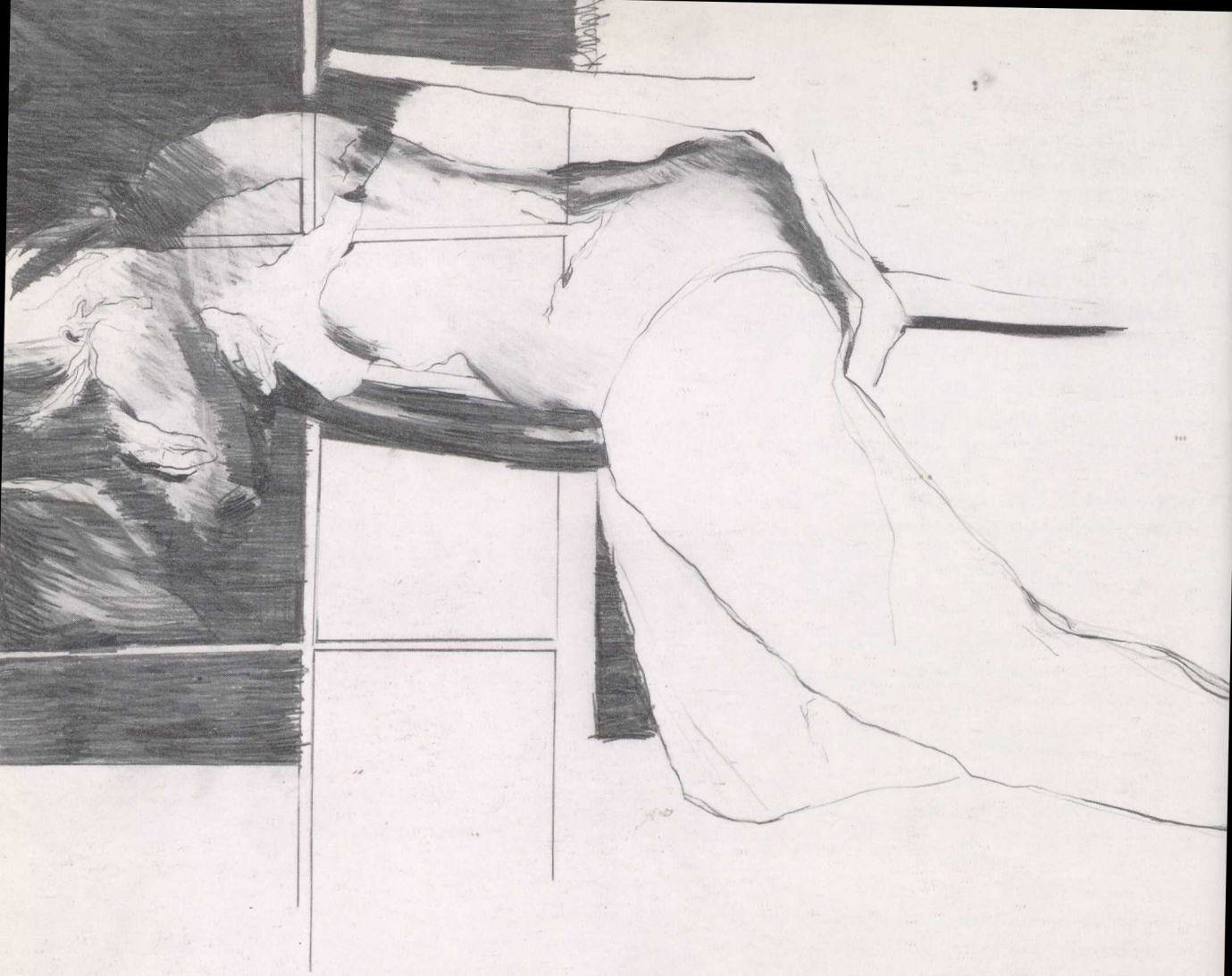
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## LOSS OF INNOCENCE

Limping homeward with the  
ruptured hymen of my mind,  
And a trail of blood from the  
open sores of my world—  
All of them crying.  
Limping homeward I shall  
pass my childhood home,  
And the withered threshold  
of the years behind,  
Withered since that day  
When the appleman invaded  
my treehouse and towers,  
“Walk with me,” he was saying  
with curling arm and waving palm  
And tomorrow looking stare.  
My mother, I think, found  
by our white picket fence  
A ragdoll, dusty, and face-down  
on the ground. Holding it,  
She closed the gate.  
And we, we strolled through the orchards  
And down the shady lanes.  
We dashed through fields of flowers.  
Cut hay, sugar sweet, appealed to me.  
I smelled it as I smelled the dung,  
Farms are dirty close up.  
While we chased the rabbits  
I punctured my foot;  
there had been a rusty nail.  
Limping homeward to a new home,  
I still smell sweet hay,  
Although I bleed.

*Marilyn Blitzstein*

## CANNING FACTORY ROMANCE

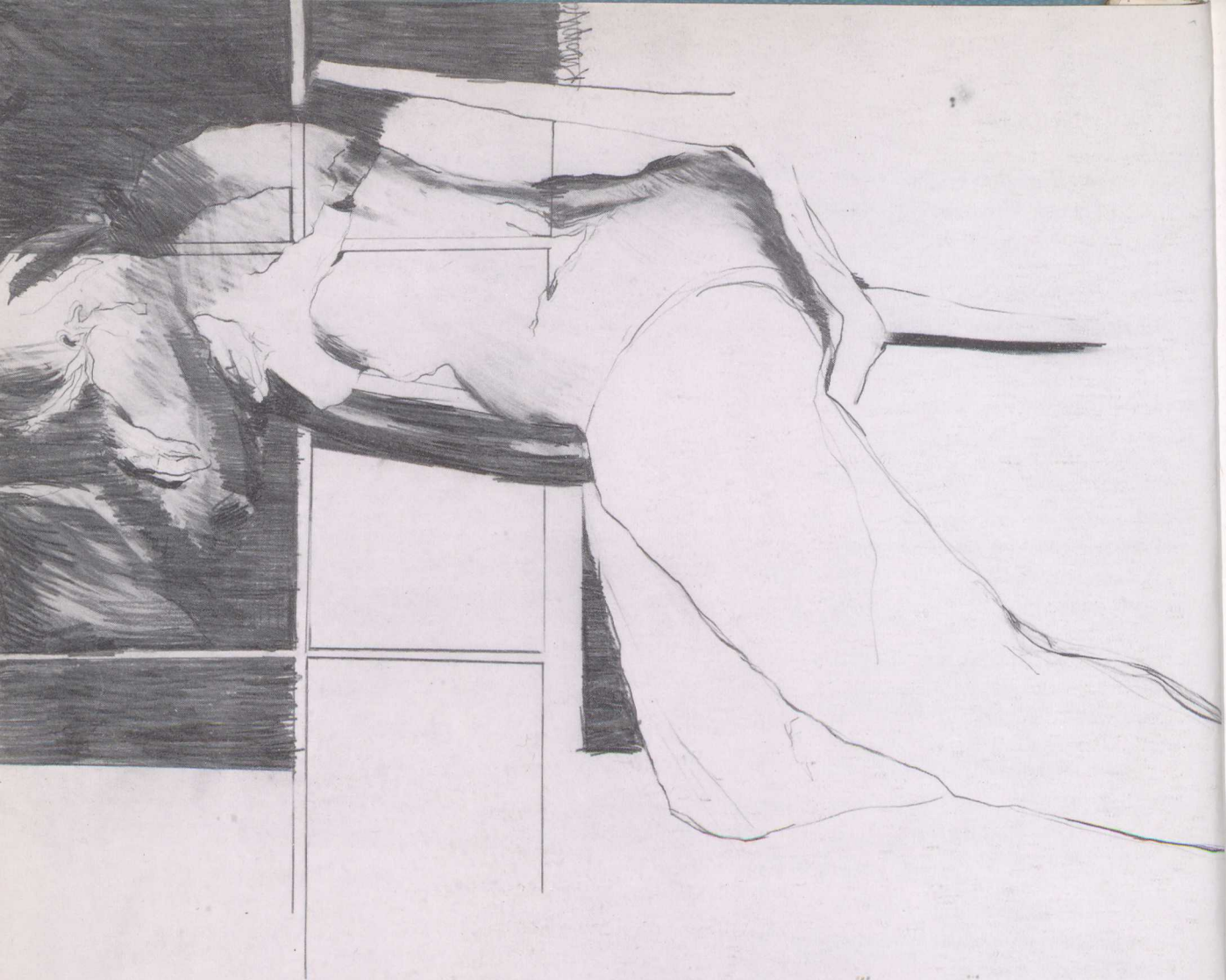
I came to you in a daydream  
And stayed for summer.  
We counted moons,  
Tangled in kite trees,  
Peeping out the chimney,  
Hanging bulb-like  
On telephone lines,  
Resting on the fluffy carpets  
Of summer storms,  
And bored-half trying.  
You sought a marriage,  
And I some consummations.  
We settled on thoughts of both  
And different autumns.

*Charles Childs*

Only that morning  
he had seen it  
from the window,  
the frozen body of a boy  
made soft again by sunlight,  
burst with flowers.

But when the others told him,  
when the news  
came from Archangel  
that the ice had broken,  
he laughed  
and swore that, no,  
it could not be.

*Lawrence Schrieber*



GIDE from a novel,

THE BONDED TRIAL OF FREE CIA

He was the seventh of seven sons. His mother, who was Catholic, joked about it, but his father, whose faith was rooted in Chinese tradition, said that made him a witch.

He was much like his father. He had round, stubby hands that were always soft, even when he worked at hard manual labor in the wind and sun. He had eyes so dark someone had remarked that it seemed he had no pupils. He had skin the ochre color of a beach he had known in Morocco, but it was not dry, like the sand. It was always shiny. He once had decided it had to be an excess of oil, and as a young boy he had developed scrupulous habits of cleanliness, but the glistening oil that shimmered on his skin could not be washed away.

None of his brothers looked so Chinese as he. In all of them, the French had emerged, robust and handsome, with red in their cheeks, and dark curly hair. Each looked like the others, and all looked like their mother. But Gide, who might have been another woman's child, was his mother's favorite.

She told him that she had always known him, since his conception—that from that moment she had felt his warmth. Bearing him had been painful—he would not be still, and though she made amusing remarks about it to others, he had hurt her. "I knew you would wander," she said. "You were so anxious to get out." And yet she had carried him ten months, her body loath to release him. When he was born, he was like yellow taffy, sticky and squirming. From that day on she neglected the others. They grew up strong, healthy, independent men who cherished their mother and cared for her in her old age; he grew up always aloof, and had seen her less than ten times in twice as many years.

Soon after he was born she announced that she would go back to France. Her father, who had been a diplomat and a good gambler, had left her a sufficient income, and

she could buy a little house in the country, and drink cold milk, and eat calves' liver every week. But there were things to do before they left: the other boys to teach their manners and their French, clothes to mend, and another winter to bear.

When he was sixteen, and all the boys scattered but he and two brothers, their village was raided by guerillas from the north. His father ran out to put a tarpaulin over his vegetables, crying that they were "only just coming up." A bullet shattered his face, and he died by the side of the house.

His mother took them to Saigon where they waited weeks for transportation to Paris. When they left he was excited, sick with anticipation. His brothers were uncertain, and kept wondering about what was to come, their dark rich voices girlish in their quick-paced dialect, while their mother wept, and said at intervals "you must speak French, now. No one will understand you."

Gide rose to greet a guest who had come into his office. She was a bony, thick-textured woman, with a wide mouth and yellow teeth. She took possession of a chair, and began to chatter. Gide was grateful when her husband joined them, and the talk came easier. They were laughing about an item Gide had read in the *Laredo Herald*. A constable had been caught with a woman taken from the jail to his room. It was discovered that he always took one of the female prisoners home at night, and returned her to her cell the following morning. The man remarked that he thought that rather nice—some young woman assured of a soft bed; he added that he thought it odd that no woman had ever complained, though no suspension of fine or sentence was awarded for nocturnal fraternizing. Gide laughed and said he thought that was fine—how pleased the women must have been; he did not understand why they should punish a man who did no harm!

The woman snorted at that, and gestured to her husband with an awkward twist of her arm. Her husband patted her hand and then picked up his cigar again.

Gide continued the conversation, amused at the clumsy affections of the couple.

"When I am married," he said, "I should like to have three wives."

"You're pretty ambitious," the man chuckled.

"No—on the other hand, I am merely practical. I have learned that one woman is not enough."

"It better be!" interjected the woman, her yellow teeth clicking.

"You see—I should like to have a fat ugly woman, with one eye, who should cook for me. She would be so happy and grateful if I just come in each evening to pinch her fat bosom and say 'how's the soup?'"

"Then I should have another wife, very beautiful, and very knowing. She is for me to lend to my friends, for do not friends always look with longing at a lovely wife? And they should pay for her keep, and she should bring home to me all that she learns.

"But third, ah last, I should have a young wife, white like talcum, with the body of a young boy, to sit with, and drink my morning tea. And when I look into her eyes, I will see my own reflection."

The American couple thought the story was amusing. He had, of course, meant to amuse them, and yet he was always a little disappointed with a story that met only with laughter. He did not like to think he dallied with words; they had always seemed a precious commodity. Cia had remarked to him once that he was very measured with his words, and he supposed that might be true. He disliked talkativeness in a person, and sometimes resented that his companionship was thought by many guests to be included in their bill of fare. On the other hand, he enjoyed good conversation—he looked forward to the occasional visits of the doctor from Tampico; he was always glad to greet the archeologists who worked the ruins on the other side of the Indian pueblo. But least of all did he like the company of old women, who sounded like scrawny birds pecking at grain. How many opposites

there were! — the human voice, an instrument as surely as any violin — with variations of tone and rhythm and melody, could be an irritant, a salve, or a song. He was very sensitive to the nuances of voice—perhaps that was why he had learned eight languages easily. And though he spoke English well, he liked it least. He had thought out his little anecdotes beforehand (to him there seemed to be no virtue in spontaneity), so that they were cleverly and comfortably worded. But when he spoke, he always had to translate from the French, so that the English came from his head and never from his tongue.

He wished Cia spoke French, or even Spanish. He had heard her talking some Spanish with the boys in the bar, who spoke no English, but when he mentioned it she said they always exchanged the same phrases and that she was very poor with languages. He asked her about French, and she only said, earnestly, "Je repete, je ne parle qu'anglais!" so he did not insist, though he had seen her with Camus' *l'Etranger*, in a French edition. When, in infrequent moods of special eagerness, she would ask him phrases or names of things, she wanted to know the French words for organs and acts of sex. He taught her some slang, and wondered why she asked, for after she had mimicked his pronunciation, and said the word a few times to commit it to memory, she would never again bring it up. Once, shortly before their affair ended, she had used some Spanish words that seemed to him vulgar and unnecessary. When he said so (by then he corrected her for many things), she said, in a singsong chant, "I feel a cold nose above your mouth."

Her moments of crudity never seemed wholly natural to him, but they were sometimes vicious and ugly, and she would not be stopped. Once she painted her breasts rouge. She laughed at the look on his face when he saw the livid color, and then stopped coldly and said, "Don't you understand? It has nothing to do with me!"

He preferred to remember the tenderer moments—but those times never seemed to be completely free of her



greater urgency, which she refused to identify and which he could not.

It was better to sit here, impersonally, and tell his stories, and gossip inconsequentially. But even telling this bit of his prepared philosophy, he remembered having told it to Cia.

"We should have sat across a table from one another, Gide, for a cup of tea. But when you looked into my eyes you would not have seen your reflection—you would see someone else's, for that is the only place I have left him, my eyes."

She was the only woman he had ever known who did not mind if he looked into her eyes intensely, and for a long time. Most women fluttered under such close scrutiny, and turned away, coy, or embarrassed, or both. Cia, however, had always met his gaze squarely, so that he tempered his stare, lest it glare back at him. She did not welcome his moments of study, but she did not avoid them.

Since she had come back from the States, he had scarcely seen her at all. She had gone back to her solitary habits, of long repose in her dark room, lonely luncheons early in the day. Of course, she had not welcomed his company in many months, but now her isolations seemed to exclude not only him, but existence.

He began to feel a cool, familiar desire growing in him, so that he dwelled in objective involvement over those moments when he could observe her. She was totally oblivious to him. As she lay in the sun, she seemed unaware of everything. Lately she had taken to leaving the office before he had breakfasted on his papaya and coffee. She could then catch the morning sun as it grew to noon, like a lover's passion, building from caress to fierce tenacity. She used a glistening brown oil on her body, and on it the sun danced, as on a mirror, or a shallow pool of open water. She always wore a very brief bikini, and a washrag across her eyes (she broke her lethargy at intervals, to dampen it again in the cold water of the pool). Her body

was long, and arched, like cats he had hunted in India. It had the fine supple lines of a proud animal, and it aroused in him an animal emotion, quick, urgent, irrational. But he fed it only with observation, taking his morning coffee onto the long low porch which led from the lobby to the bar, and faced the swimming area. As long as she lay motionless, he could watch, but when she rose to enter the pool, he always returned to his office. Only a few times did he stay to see her cut the water with slim brown arms, and glide beneath the green water. He did not like to watch, because she disappointed him when she surfaced. He wanted to see her splash up through the water, her face laughing, glad to touch again the hot summer air. But she came up expressionless, whatever joy she might have felt denied the spectator. When she lay down again, she might smile a little, and stretch toward the sun, but it was an esoteric gesture he could not comprehend.

She had just begun to eat, one evening about six weeks after her return, when he went into the diningroom. It was nearly ten o'clock, and the dim lights in the comedor did not catch any of the sparkle off the glasses or silver. It was a depressing area. He had thought to cheer the place up by knocking out the outside wall and putting in a round stomach of glass facing the gardens. During the day it was quite pleasant, and guests planted themselves in the sunny area, delighting audibly in the tropical glow of the rich garden colors. But at night, after the orange sun had banked behind the mountain, the tables near the great curved window were empty, and guests, consciously or not, avoided facing it. It was rather like entering the sea in a special tube—one felt surrounded by unidentifiable darkneses, creatures, sounds and threats.

Cia, though, was seated quite close to the window, facing the darkness. She seemed to have a good appetite, spooning a thick lentil soup rapidly, breaking off crusts of a dry bread. There was no one else in the room except Jaime, who stood like a store dummy, with a white cloth over his arm, as he had been trained, his eyes staring

blankly. His thoughts might have been at home, where his plump wife waited. Or he might merely be wishing he were in the kitchen, where the waiters gossiped and joked until the camion came to take them back to town.

Gide went past them, his soft soled sandals silent on the tiles. He stopped at Cia's table, hesitating, not because he did not know what to say (though he did not), but because he realized that she did not know he was there, and he wanted to see her as she was not careful of her expression. She was rolling a piece of bread between her thumb and forefinger, making it into a hard, soiled ball of starch. Her mouth was moist. She was wearing a blouse she had bought in an Indian village, of rough embroidered cotton; it dipped low, to the hollow between her breasts. He was seized with the hot strong thought that she was a monster of torment who had set this tableau to taunt him.

He might have said something—she should have been told that her indifference was a cruelty, but she turned, with a smile, and spoke to him.

"How many times have I told you not to sneak up on me in those goddamned mocassins?"

"I'm wearing sandals," he answered, peevishly.

"No matter. You crept up like you were in one of your Chinese jungles; it's only common decency to announce your arrival with the click of leather soles, or a cough, or something."

It was an old complaint, though it had always been his manner to pad quietly and cautiously over every surface.

He sat down. She tipped her bowl and ate the last spoonful of soup. Her hair fell across her nose and she pushed it back.

"It's getting long," he commented.

"Not hardly," she said. "It won't even go up."

When she had first come to the hotel, she had had very long hair. She had cut it, that first year, to please Gide, who liked it short as a young boy's.

"I have to let it grow," she explained grimly. "I want

to leave looking just as I did when I came."

"Oh, are you planning to go?"

"Well, sometimes, you know. But then, my hair grows very slowly."

"I liked it very much short."

He could sense that the conversation might be futile, or even angry. He rose to go.

"Oh, don't leave, Gide. I won't spit at you or anything."

"What should I say? There were only old women and aging virgins while you were gone. It is good to see a young girl moving about the hotel."

"I'll be twenty-seven in a few months, Gide. Not so young. Not an aging virgin," she added, "but aging."

"Somehow I always thought of you as very young—perhaps seventeen or eighteen," I think."

"You should have known me better than that. At seventeen I knew nothing."

"What were you doing at seventeen?" he asked.

"I was—"

She took a deep, tired breath, exhaling noisily.

"I was in love for the first time."

"Oh?"

"Yes, stupidly, with great melancholy. I suppose I should be glad, though."

"Why?"

"Because that grand love—that great failure, I should say, got me blithely past all the sacrificial altar stuff."

Gide started to speak, but Cia interrupted him.

"I don't mean it was cathartic or anything; I had very little to purge. But it wiped away many inhibiting conventions."

"It—is this the word—emancipated you?"

"Yes, you could say that. In a physical sense, anyway. The emotional emancipation—that has been much more recent. Behold the woman of no ties!"

"What are you going to do when you leave, Cia?"

"I don't know."

"But you must know."

"No, I don't. And please, don't grill me."

"I'm sorry. You know I believe, above all, in a man's right to privacy. I didn't mean to intrude."

He got up to leave.

Cia put her hand out and touched him on the arm.

"Gide, let's take a swim in a while, yes? I'll meet you there."

"Yes," he said, lacking a better reply.

He did not know what to expect; he had not thought she would swim with him. He sat in his office, looking at the market receipts, but his mind would not stay on fruits and vegetables.

He was not a man who combed his memory; he left that to women, who always know the words their first lovers spoke. But he deliberately thought of Cia, resting his head against the back of the wicker chair. Thinking of her was like smoking marijuana; it heightened his senses to an acute point of pain and pleasure.

In the beginning he had not wanted her, though later his desire grew in inverse proportion to her aloofness. American girls were always giddy and highly attainable. He had not wanted to hire her, but the owner, a playboy from Mexico City, had sent her, and in the end it was his money, so Gide invented tasks for her to do. To his surprise, she did them well, if not enthusiastically. She took many of the clerical duties out of his hands entirely, answering letters, sending brochures, making reservations. At Christmas and on birthdays and anniversaries of the guests she organized pinata parties or special dinners. She even repaired the ugly splotches on the murals in the lobby, climbing silently in her shorts and knit shirts, climbing into precarious positions on the paint-splattered scaffold. She led groups of guests to the caves nearby, and to the beautiful place where the River Choy began, and on Sundays to the Indian market forty miles away. At first he thought she was presumptuous, demanding that her room be at a distance from the office, and that the phone be taken out. But he could not remember half a dozen

times in three years that he had had to send for her. She usually anticipated him, so that it was unnecessary for him to give her orders at all (for which he was grateful, later, when speaking would have been awkward). Eventually he decided the meagre salary he paid her was insufficient, and he raised it, but she only asked him to put it all, each month, into the bank in her name. He did not suppose that in three years she had spent a hundred dollars. Of course, sometimes guests tipped her, and she used that money.

Once she had decided to go to Acapulco. She asked for the week off, and stuffed her pink bathing suit into a canvas bag. He was surprised when she took no money out of the bank, but she had a ride down with one of the old couples leaving the hotel (later he learned she hitchhiked back, riding part of the way in a 1938 truck filled with chicken coops). She came back darker than before, her hair like streaked flax, and said nothing of what she had done, though she stayed two weeks instead of one.

The season that they had been so much together, he took her in the jeep to his little house in Pueblo, where she made childish, sensitive watercolors, and did a lot of messy cooking. She often wore a kimono he had there, with the sleeves out crooked and short, and she was always barefoot. It was the one time he remembered her happy. He had a scrapbook there, full of pictures of a Polynesian island he had directed the development of for the French government. She bought a length of brilliantly colored material (though it faded after one washing) and wrapped it around her while she moved about the house, knotting it low on her hips, as in the pictures she saw in the scrapbook. Above the cloth her skin was firm and brown and perfect.

She was the most perfectly unembarrassed woman he had ever known. The only time she had ever been shy had been their moment of discovery.

They had been coming home from a funeral. Juano was driving the jeep, and Cia lay resting on Gide's shoulder.

der. She was a little tipsy; her remoteness resolved into child-like affection. In the dark lobby of the hotel he had thought to kiss her, but had only patted her hand. Later, the sky was exquisite, and he had started to wake her to come out into the gentle wind. If she had had a phone he would have called her from the poolside, but by the time he had dried and started for her room, he had changed his mind.

The next day he did not see her at all; he had driven to Tampico to buy new tablecloths and a blender for the bar. That night, very late, he had gone to the sulphur pool to swim before sleeping. There were no stars, and the darkness was almost tangible. He dropped into the water, hot and heavy, smelling of minerals, and his body relaxed as he glided beneath the surface. In a moment tiny beads of perspiration appeared on his forehead, and were immediately cold in the breeze.

He was not a man to be startled—five years in the French army, in Algiers and China, had taught him better than that. But he did not expect her to be there, in the water, so when he swam up to her, holding to the bank, he caught his breath in surprise.

"You are right about these nights," she said. "They are very beautiful."

"I almost came to get you last night; it was a special sky."

"You should have; I didn't sleep until early morning."

She was wearing tiny gold earrings.

"In my country—I mean, where I was born—when girls are young, their mothers put a hot needle through their ears, and little hoops like you wear. They are lovely."

She turned so that she faced him.

"I've never known anyone like you, Gide. I'm not sure what I should say."

"It's not necessary for you to say anything."

"I want you to know that I came out here to wait for you."

He moved closer to her.

She backed away, embarrassed.

"I'm sorry," he murmured.

"That's all right. It's just that, well, I'm naked."

He smiled at her, and touched her cheek.

"I only wanted to touch your earrings," he said.

She put her mouth against his, trembling, and then leapt away, splashing him. She rose out of the water before falling again, and he could see her clearly, even in the dark.

She had the body of a young virgin, her breasts startling white against her tan. She seemed so shy, so trembling, he could not bear to take her. He left her, to wrestle with his desire in solitude.

How shocked he was—how huge his bitter surprise—when she came into his room that same night. She was still naked, except for a damp beach towel wrapped around her. She stood silent, watching him. "How like a child you seem," he said. "I'm not," she answered. And she was not. She was expert, and generous, and satisfying; she gave freely and well of her body, but she reserved all of her spirit, so that afterwards he felt empty and dry inside. He wanted to give her tenderness; he tried to be gentle, but she moved under him like a caught fish, seeking her own ugly, silent, frightening release that held no welcome for him in its ecstasy. He grew, in the days of the affair, both futilely angry and futilely tender. He wanted to talk to her about it, but she would never directly answer a question.

Then he began to be obsessed with her faults.

He had definite ideas about how a woman should be (some he forgot because they were important, and Cia failed them). The minor things swelled in importance. He would take Cia's hands in his own, as if to caress them, and run his chubby fingers over her ragged nails. "A woman's hands should be beautiful," he would say, and Cia would shrug. Sometimes he would even file them for her, and she did not care, though once she did say that she did not think her hands should be made an indignity.

After that he let his criticism remain silent. It seemed that she went from careless to deliberate. She had cut her hair very short, but as it grew out, hatefully, she refused to care for it. He would be especially impatient with her when she wore soiled shorts and a wrinkled blouse, and he did not think she had ever washed her bathing suit, which was stained and faded.

They survived the short winter, when warmth was welcome, but the spring brought the new life to the landscape, and a quietus to their irregular love affair. Once he had said, "When the spring comes I should like to be like a new-washed cat, stretching in the sun," and she laughed, and laughed, until he walked away in disgust.

Another time he came upon her reading from the Bible, and she invited him to sit, and she read from the Apocalypse "... by these three plagues the third part of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulphur which issued from their mouths, for the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails. For their tails are like serpents, and have heads, and with them they do harm."

Later, he looked it up in his French Bible, but it only added to her obscurity.

They never quarreled. He thought he might have liked it if they did; it would have indicated that there was something worth dissension. As it was, she never responded to his exploratory remarks. Her favorite retort was a clumsy shrug.

The closest they had come to an argument—he had swallowed many angry words—had come because of what he thought was his concern for her, and what she called jealousy. He had gone to look for her, to ask her to eat dinner with him. One of the boys said he had seen her in the bar. As he approached the octagonal room, built away from the main corridor of the hotel, he heard laughter and music. A group of boys from the town had come to drink—young men no more than twenty, with unlined brown faces and shiny black hair. Two were playing guitars and all were clapping and singing. Cia was dancing.

He had never seen her dance before. She wore white shorts and a sleeveless, low-cut knit shirt. When she raised her arms, the shirt pulled up, showing a smooth strip of skin.

She had beautiful legs, and bare, narrow feet. Her feet were moving very quickly, and her shoulders undulated with the rhythm of the guitars. When she threw her arms up he could see her abdomen ripple. The boys' eyes had begun to burn, some watching her unbound breasts moving under the shirt, others hungrily watching her wet, open mouth. All were slightly inclined, as if a good push would send them careening into her stomach. He had seen faces like that before—jungle lonely men watching women in a village, or snakes waiting to strike. He moved toward them, to break it up, but she saw him, and threw her head back, and jumped toward him, dancing around him, almost touching, always drawing back. He was humiliated, and excited, and angry for either reason. He turned and stalked out of the bar. When he saw her later, going back to her room, he stopped her and coldly asked her if she expected to receive a bonus for her performance.

Her smile was deadly, her voice a hiss.

"No," she said. "I've already been paid."

He was furious, because he did not know what she meant.

After that she avoided him, discreetly, cautiously. No matter what his route or schedule, he never seemed to encounter her, unless it was in the office, where they were coldly polite. Eventually it ceased to be an effort, and was part of his existence. She stayed in her room for long periods, and he would realize that whole days had gone by when he did not hear the sound of her voice. There seemed to be no more resentment in her. He was loath to admit it, but she looked almost radiant, in an unexplained, conditioned way. And she did not seem to want to leave. She had no life, beyond trivial duties and solitary repose, but she seemed entirely content, and much sooner than he might have supposed possible, their affair was

swallowed by routine, and did not, really, seem ever to have existed.

Now she had said to him, like an invitation out of a tape recorder, "Let's swim, yes?"

He went to change his suit, and to brush his teeth.

She wasn't in the water. There was a cold yellow moon in the sky, which cast a grudgeful light on her. She was sitting, slightly hunched, on a slatted bench a few feet from the side of the pool. He sat down beside her, silent. In a moment she said she'd rather they went up to his little house above the gardens. He said alright, the pulse in his neck pounding, and followed her up the stone steps.

She took a drink he offered her, and turned the glass around and around in her hand.

"My father," she said. "I didn't get to go to his funeral. They had already buried him when I got there."

He was sorry that she had gone so far, for nothing.

"Gide, have you ever known anyone like me?"

"No, not exactly."

"Would you want to?"

"I don't know," he answered, honestly.

"What I mean is, would you *know* that person was like me?"

"I suppose."

"Would you treat her the same?"

"I wouldn't treat anyone any way. I react, I guess."

"But if *she* reacted to *you*—"

"Then there wouldn't be much direction to the relationship."

"Ah," she sighed. She put her arms loosely around his neck. The brandy of her breath mingled with his. Their teeth clicked, and he moved away. He did not want to make love to her. He wanted to hold her, like a child, and explain to her what he knew about her. But she was gone before he said anything.

The next day she asked him to take her to Tampico. She drew all her money out of the bank, and bought a large, ill-proportioned tombstone of badly grained mar-

ble, to be shipped to her father's grave.

Not long after, she complained of severe headaches and insomnia. He took her to town to a pharmacia.

A few mornings later the maid came to him hysterically shouting that the *senorita* was dead. He had thought she was leaving, packing her trunk so carefully, and giving gifts and tips to the employees. He had been expecting her to come and say goodbye any day.

He wondered if he could have helped, but did not think so (and wondered if that absolved him of guilt, whatever was his).

She was wearing shorts and a gay print blouse. He could not define his emotions. Then he saw that her nails were polished, and went off to get very drunk.





## LESSON

Try not to care too much.  
Forget the touch  
Of soul against soul.  
And when that's lost  
Erase the sounds  
Recorded in your mind  
So none can find  
How you passed that moment.  
Blot the spot with ink  
Then bleach it white  
And write a phrase  
Or etch a new design in it.

*Karen Backai*

## RAIN POEM

There is not a flower growing  
in the plaza, but the May  
rains run as urgently  
as ever, splitting off  
the benches. O Jesus  
where is Professor Dixon's  
little girl? I should steal her  
to the garden to crouch with me  
low in the lakewater, and while  
her skirt floats from her belly  
we will talk about growing  
and the promise of wet poets.

*Jon Knudsen*

## WAIF AT A CARNIVAL

He has not loved who ignores  
this tent-strewn prairie noon.

Here have passed old contests  
of strength. Indulge the loins  
of a cloud, with ice patched,  
translucent, over humid soil.

All this requires competitive  
spirits. These sunburned days  
have the habit of *earning* one.

Young cool breasts seem berries  
here, so are friendly, like poems  
not forged and welded for nothing.

Why do we hear, since early man,  
of best ways, or of ways at all?  
I prefer no pimples of lying in  
wait for theorems and tomorrows,  
to apologize for not predicting.

The gnarls in roots of the oaks  
attract like the best animal.

My fists are clenched for the  
purpose of their unclenching.

*Ed Manual*



## TWO DREAMS OF WINE

### I.

Frozen thoughts  
Will bust cover  
From noiseless haylofts

A swarming cloud  
Of quiet quail  
To select and define

### II.

Afterwards, liquid lover,  
Skyscraper windows with cornstalks  
I may break

Ewes, heavy with sleepsand  
From the dizzy dragon herd  
I may sort

Or, simply wander past the porch  
To vomit red verse into snowbanks

*Jim Perrie*

## UMBRELLA THOUGHTS

Dreams of floating down  
From house-tops,  
Clutching an umbrella.

Hanging upon arms,  
Folded in the sunlight  
That was once morning-threatening.

Shadows of giant umbrellas  
Upon white beach,  
Black ovals  
That stretch and shrink  
Covering entangled lovers.

Opening,  
Slide  
Thumping  
Against spring storm.

Caught in the wind,  
People dancing circular,  
Straining with umbrellas  
That threaten to invert.

In sidewalk crowds  
Taut half-spheres  
That float and bobble  
Like leaves upon a swift river.

Supporting the tired head  
Of an old man sitting,  
Waiting for the sub-way,  
Veined hands clasped  
Upon the carved wooden handle.

*Robert Gundelach*

MORRIE

She lay face down on the bed, her head hanging over the edge, her right arm dangling over the side, now reaching for the cigarette on the floor. She had never been able to inhale without coughing and now as she puffed away, she thought of all the ugly things she must do. There was the unwritten theme, the unwashed hair. There were all those people to encounter between her room and the washroom. And my God—if she stepped outside there were even more people, 18,000 of them—not right out in the open, of course, but they were there, in their various dorms and apartments, not knowing and not caring. But it didn't matter because there was Morrie.

The last time she had seen him had been almost a year before, at Christmas time, and although they were brother and sister, living together in the same house and having the nonchalance towards each other that most brothers and sisters do, they had something more between them. It was a kind of concern that cannot be explained in words, but, perhaps, only through the recreation of that Christmas.

It was about the twenty-fifth of December, a cold day outside and a lazy one inside. She was downstairs in the basement working on some sort of project when Morrie walked in. In his blue and brown and white-striped pajamas, his brown hair curled loosely on top of his head, and his pipe in hand, he had pulled himself out of bed and away from correcting papers at three o'clock in the afternoon to say hello to her. "Hey," he said, "you going to the wedding?"

"Ya," she said. "When is it?"

"Five, knucklehead."

She continued to work, and he, being of the punctual sort, proceeded to warn her about not being late. "Hurry up, will ya? Ma'll have a fit if you're late."

"Ya, ya," she managed. And then, "What are you so

excited about? So your cousin is getting married? So—"

"Look, I don't want to go to this thing anymore than you do, but . . ." She didn't hear a thing after that, because while she was looking at his face she was thinking back to a time two years before, when Morrie and Lyn were standing before a rabbi, when they had all the innocence of any two people getting married, and all the more beauty because they were Morrie and Lyn. And then she heard him say, "So hurry up," and she instantly returned to reality and the fact that they were separated. As she watched him disappear from the room, she thought of how absolutely alone he was—alone not only because of his separation, because at least in that he had an understanding with his wife, but because of all the people, his friends and family, who had never understood so much of what had happened.

They had been separated for eight months and were waiting for the twelve-month period to come to an end so that the divorce would be official. And although he seemed to be all right on that Christmas day, free of any scars or remorse, the ordeal eight months before of deciding to separate, of conferences with parents and lawyers, of fights and of harsh words thrust across tables, had been a nightmare. There were so many people not talking to one another, saying hateful things of either Morrie or Lyn, and in the middle of it all there they were—the two most sensible people, knowing that they loved each other, but, for various reasons, could not live together. There had been endless discussions in which Morrie had tried to explain the situation to his parents, without success. They could not understand why two people would want to get divorced after living with each other for a little less than a year. They could see no good in it. They saw their son's life going to pieces, for surely, in the life of any happy, normal, successful person, divorce is an absent factor.

"Morrie, you must look at what you're doing," his mother had said. "Your father and I had problems too,

everyone does, but they'll take care of themselves. You can't just go and get a divorce like that."

"Mom," he said, "it's not 'just like that.' It's been a year of talking and thinking and deciding. And it's just no good anymore."

"But, don't you love her?"

"Yes, but that's not enough. It's, It's," and he would wipe his forehead and continue. "We can't seem to get together on certain things, it's just not working. However much I want it to, ma . . ." And she would begin to cry. She did not cry very often, and never in front of her children, but now she broke down uncontrollably. **Morrie tried to make her understand that he and Lyn did not want to go through life together in a mediocre marriage just to avoid the rigors of divorce—that life was too precious of a thing to make a mockery of, and that perhaps they would be happier with someone else. But she rejected this, still hoping to hold them together.**

"You're foolish," she cried, "the both of you. You're young and foolish and too idealistic to believe that everything should be perfect in a marriage, that everything will have to be in order for you two to stay together. Do you think you'll be better off alone, divorced?"

"Yes, maybe. At least that way we'd have a chance to find out what's the matter with ourselves, but together, well, we'd be killing each other. It just may be that we weren't meant to live with other people."

"That's crazy, that's idiotic!"

"Nothing is ever crazy, ma. And you can't just wish two people together, they've got to *be* there."

"I don't know what you're talking about. All I know is that I haven't slept in weeks, that your father walks at night. He just—"

"Mom, I know."

"Then why?" They just sat there—there was nothing to say, then, nothing that would help. She simply put her hands to her face and cried, slowly letting the truth

sink in, gradually and painfully adjusting to it. And then, in one last outburst, to perhaps convince herself that it wasn't really her son who wanted to get involved in a messy divorce, she said, "It's Lyn. It's all her, isn't it? She doesn't want to stay with you, does she? It's her fault, it's—"

"Mom!" he screamed. "No! It's both of us, and we both know it. Can't you see that. It's neither of our faults—it's just the way things have to be."

That was the last of the discussions. Eight months had gone by and everyone had adjusted quite well to the situation, except that his mother had a deep and unfounded hatred of Lyn—a feeling that her "ignorance, stupidity, and selfishness" had caused her son's unhappiness. This feeling was shared by other members of the family and people otherwise involved, but was felt so deeply by his mother that she swore she would take her life if Lyn ever entered into his again.

\* \* \*

It was half past four when she finished dressing, and because she was off schedule and her mother and father and the others were ready, it was decided that she would go to the wedding with Morrie, so as not to detain anyone else. At a quarter to five she and Morrie settled into his bright red Triumph and started toward the hotel. It was already dark out; she realized that she had not been out all day, nor had he, and that the first time they stepped out was into the pitch black. The night was cold and bitter, and the wind brought a chill to every part of her body. As they neared the expressway he increased his speed considerably and finally hit seventy at the entrance. The car, the beautiful English beauty that seemed so stallion-like at home suddenly became meek against the other huge models on the road and seemed to decrease in power and safety as it increased in speed. She found that her coat lapels were flapping in the wind and her hair was tangling about her neck, but she did not close the window. Just as they were nearing the exit,

Morrie began to speak. "I know that you have a lot of problems of your own, and you don't need mine, but—"

She was surprised and suddenly concerned. He never spoke in such serious tones, even when he talked of getting divorced eight months before.

"I don't want you to tell anyone else about this, not mom, or dad, or anyone, because it would kill them if they knew. But I have to talk to someone about this. I saw her last week. She called me about some papers I had to sign and about some other things we had to talk about relating to the divorce. We met in a restaurant—we had agreed to simply take care of everything and then go our separate ways again, but we began talking and we stayed like that for hours. Then, I took her back to her apartment and, how can I say it? We're, oh God, we're just hopelessly in love. I can't explain it—it wasn't sex, but affection. I never felt such affection for anyone. I never could either."

"And Lyn?"

"She felt the same. I was happy. I was at the top, you know? We were there together. Even before, we never felt so much for each other because we did not know, but now." She looked at him and knew he was on his way. Yet she did not realize all the implications this had—the terrible side effects a reversal of this sort could produce. "I just want you to know because we're going to try it for a while, together, and see how it works out. We're not going to tell anyone, because we want to be by ourselves, and you know how everyone would react to the news, anyway. I think it'll work, I really think it'll be o.k., but just in case it isn't if it doesn't—" He stopped. She could see that he was under a great strain, that there was something else he was trying to get off his mind. "If it doesn't work, well," he turned and looked at her for the first time since he had begun speaking, and gave her a smile that tried to hide the seriousness of what he was saying, "if some night I put a gun to my head, you can tell them, you'll know why."

He turned away and she felt terrified, helpless—she was scared for him. She felt sure that he would not go to that extreme, yet she knew how his mind could ponder that—she knew how high were his hopes, how much he was going to give, and how little would be left of him if he was disappointed. If he could not have his perfection with her, if they could not make it together, she knew there could be nothing else for him.

As they entered the door of the hotel, he took her arm and whispered, "Now please, take it easy, don't worry. I'll be all right." They walked toward the crowd of people at the coat-check desk—toward the rubies and diamonds, the beehive hairdos and the empty chatter, toward that crowd that composed their relatives, toward that imperfection which would not understand, which could never grasp the beauty of Morrie. They dropped their things at the desk and headed for the ballroom. The elegant, carpeted walk leading to the ballroom was cleared at the stairs where she and Morrie were turning into, but was filled at the other end with people sipping cocktails. As they stepped down, he missed a stair and stumbled over to the railing, but did not fall. She ran to his side and caught his arm, and they both looked up into the multitude of faces, their mother, their father, and the others, and strolled on, she clinging to his arm.

\* \* \*

She crushed her cigarette slowly and turned over onto her back. Yes, there was Morrie.





BEHIND TWO ROWS OF CORN,  
MY CYCLE AND I STOP FOR A  
CIGARETTE

A car sounds and gravel-dusts by  
And the wind carries the field  
Into rustling cough.  
I seduce the daydream  
Of a girl in a movie;  
But a bee, finding no nectar,  
Leaves my arm unstung;  
I could not have been immoral.

*Charles Childs*

HOMESONG

A quick tune up the stairs  
I sing to my attic.  
Beams ring back attempted tunes,  
Reflecting lighter beams  
Of day most done.

Now glinting in this ring of song  
I do tune climb the stairs,  
Treading note for wooden note.  
And clashing beams in chorus join  
To reinforce my rite of climb.

In two octaves  
I scale the stairs  
And pull a shade to separate the beams.

*Charles B. Scholz*

AFTER READING SOME POEMS  
ABOUT THE SOUTH SIDE OF  
CHICAGO

Most of America  
And nine years ago  
I too plied housing developments  
and came home dirty late  
and loved the dark  
and pea-shooters

I too lagged smoothed-edged  
packets of baseball cards  
And died of joy in  
The Museum

Strike-out and sidewalk  
handball were my best  
Brennan's schoolyard my  
blank canvas  
Fenger's grass my  
place of space

I too am mixed away  
Never to lounge upon  
upended milk boxes  
and listen to the summer night  
exhaust guns from 115th street

*Jim Perrie*

## PENANCE

A some what poem in six parts with sympathetic interludes and an epilogue

### I. LILA

Black Lila in the orange  
Dress struts on  
Bayonets scratching the sidewalk

Eyes in the heavy  
Face sunk to drop a stare  
Stockings ripped to hole in the thigh  
A horny drunk would bleed a prayer  
Across Division Street  
To see her  
Just once.

Many and I have gone along  
To be her trick.  
When, asks the naive young gentleman,  
Will you, Lila, be someone's trick?

\* \* \*

As I lay there inside  
Of her  
My mother warned me  
What I'd do

Hoping to save her pain  
I crawled out anyway,  
Despite the fact that I was  
Strained by the light,  
And really missed the darkness  
From where I had come

### II. YOKEE

Yokee was a slick spick  
Red handkerchief and black Cadillac,  
With a jack-hammer he could,  
Smiling, write his name  
In concrete,  
And draw funny hearts and things near  
Same.

We all found him rather dumb,  
However, and a bore.  
He seldom, when asked, even knew  
The ball score.

\* \* \*

*An account in the News today  
Tells of the Biograph,  
One of the city's oldest movie houses,  
Where they used to show thousands  
Of Gable and other films,  
Where once John Dillinger went  
The night he was killed.*

*Leaving the place that night  
John caught seventeen slugs in his gut  
Because a lady friend  
Was in a rut,  
And had decided to turn him in.*

*Now, the theater's manager relates,  
The place is a strip-tease house.  
Although he realizes the act  
Is nothing new,  
He hopes he can make a go of it.*

*No longer, he says,  
Can a man make a living  
On the children's matinee trade.*

### III. THE PO-PIEDMONT CLUB

On Sundays at the club  
Over canasta and wine they discuss  
The White Sox and the War,  
And how far the blacks have crossed  
The city this year.

Mr. Del Pri is in a frenzy.  
"Just this far!" he screams,  
With his stubbed-fingers drawing  
An imaginary line on the beer-slopped table,  
"That's as far as we'll let them go!"

But his talk is really meaning-  
less,  
Later he'll order pizza with the rest  
And sit outside on 25th Street  
To watch the young girls in their  
delightfully  
Taut clothes.

There is, among these men,  
Little or no  
Sense of movement.

\* \* \*

*I am working toward a meandering  
Attitude about what  
Happens*

*This morning, for instance,  
I was awakened by a knock at the door  
And was surprised to note the milkman  
Standing there,*

*Surprised, because I have no milkman.  
He apologized, there was some mistake.  
But I invited him in anyway,  
He might have been a whore  
Among a car-full of eager adolescents,  
He was so, so welcome.*

### IV. CONNIE

Connie, are you there?  
In ladies' eyes I see it coming  
The metaphor—  
She bleaches girls' hair.  
From old brunets to new blonds  
She leaves them sit under dryers  
For years,  
And pushes them out to play  
With lowered ears.

Please believe me, I see it coming  
The metaphor.  
Connie, are you there?

\* \* \*

*Once near a sandlot prince's castle  
I heard the lilacs have a quarrel.  
Much to the disappointment of those near  
They didn't shed a tear  
But kicked each other's respective  
Groins,  
And, breaking from the stem,  
Fell to the ground to be, later,  
Raked up.*

### V. FLAVIO AND EMILIO

Two new Italian laborers arrived at work  
today  
On a Lambretta motorscooter.

But let's not call them Italian,  
Our young foreman advises,  
Or Jewish or Irish or Negro or anything.  
Their only distinguishing feature  
Is the fact that they're dead,  
And plan to spend the rest of their lives  
Working for a living.



Hearing his little speech  
The two laborers seemed  
Frightened.

We all, well,  
We couldn't help  
But laugh.

\* \* \*

"*You can do it!*" cried Benny,  
*With a rhapsody in his swivel chair.*  
"*You can sell this guy!*"

*Leaving the office a bit inspired*  
*I took a walk along the lake*  
*And met a girl.*  
"*You can do it!*" I remembered,  
"*You can do it!*"

*So, a little out of my territory,*  
*I tried.*

#### VI. PERLICK

Perlick, big man,  
A gunner in the War  
Beat down six Japs  
From a raft with an oar  
And spanked their little foreheads  
With an axe.

Perlick, big man,  
Sitter on tractor seats,  
Fat-assed sitter on bulldozer seats,  
Found a recent whore  
Who tried her luck with him  
And never paid her income tax.

\* \* \*

*She visited me in the hospital*  
*When I died, a little late.*  
*So, keeping her warm, humanitarian spirit*  
*About her,*

*She ripped off my clothes to give*  
*To the Salvation Army.*

#### EPILOGUE

He had it made  
Had a day off or two  
Slow-motioned through the park  
And had nothing to do  
But notice the girls and stray  
Cats, who looked like each other's  
Shadows, they moved so much the same.

Along the street the people stood dis-  
Interested.  
Cupping their hands to their mouths  
They shouted in dialects strange  
To him,  
He would have loved to scream "Hey,  
Pizan,"  
But no one could hear  
Or begin to notice his presence.

He stood around in the middle.  
Or in the middle of the round.  
The traffic hummed a language  
Dead in his throat.

*Joe Bauers*



## ONE DOWN

for James L. Hutchinson

So you  
were groovy  
so I  
hear.

You could not  
read.  
I might have  
read

for you  
so you  
could not  
write

that is  
worse.

Who dug  
you grooving

Stud on  
stud  
Galahad  
high on  
horse

And you  
in shades  
of newsprint  
gray

shellacked  
on my wall  
high

on my wall

swinging

cap askew

who were  
you and how

were the basements  
spades

and she.

Who were  
you  
plastic Christ  
when

will you  
rise

again?

*Sandra Hupp*

Joe Bauers  
CULLY AND OTHERS  
AUGUST, 1958

*Recollections of a Small-Town Tragedy*

Larry

*Trees above me and a ball game laughing sweating behind me their footsteps, the ball in a one-handed bare-handed catching grabbing pulling in, to my body my chest, running up the ditch to the road around the corner seeing it coming, the orange*

*Best Friend (Cully) As Eye-Witness*

Along the ditch I could see the combine angling for a cut. A rabbit wiggled under the tarpauline at the side of the road and lit out. Behind me the factory mumbled like an idiot. The doors were all open, you could hear it plain as an echo.

It's the sound of things that brings it back. Like the combine loafing around the end of the row and lining them up, then something in the machinery inside slitting them at the base and tossing them up the conveyor. And the sound. Like old Chevies, you can tell one when you're in one, you don't have to know cars.

The combine worked down the row and slivered past, cutting. Sometimes I notice it around the punch presses, like air escaping or cutting. Both recall the scraping along the road, blue jeans scraping on the pavement and bumping at the tar strips along the road. I hear it and sometimes see it when I'm around the punch presses. Or notice the combine in the field.

*Larry with mitt at second base where Matty and sometimes Joe would join in we're here, us, at second base and arguing and Larry with mitt and ball in the webb running back from the field under trees and Larry hollering something but I pretending not to hear because I am mad at Larry about the ballgame so I pretending not to hear and not hearing until there are blue jeans scraping along the pavement*

The job was such a pity. I mean pity me, not the job.

Each night is an inevitable headache. Working around the punch presses makes for an easy headache. But the money wasn't bad and she said you'll be thankful in the fall and I said ya, I guess you're right, so I took the job despite a two mile walk along all that corn and watching the combine.

*A man along the road he looked up and I looked up about the same time but I didn't see as much as I heard because I looked away a little. But the hearing, you know, you can't miss the hearing.*

*Man In Garden As Eye-Witness*

What I first thought it was, it was kind of funny, I first thought it was this little kid out there on the street humpin at it like a dog in heat. I was out around the tomato plants cause they switched me over to second shift on account of the vacations so I spend most of the afternoons out in the garden. Like I say at first it looked like this little kid was out there goin at it.

Then I could see what was happenin. Funny how something like that strikes you funny at first.

*Best Friend As Eye-Witness*

She's a reasonable girl most of time. Sometimes days after the doctor are a bit short, though, the days seem like it but it is really us, we, it is our own conceptions that are a bit short. She will mention it casually but I am aware of a motive, it seems a plot to me and I'll answer her harshly and in a hurry to get to something else, something we can giggle and tease about. But once in a while she won't leave well enough alone insisting on filling up her speech with vivid descriptions of the cuteness of her sister's children or her brother's children or the grocer's children or children anywhere, on the streets or in the gutters as we drive through the slums in Chicago, climbing on the wire fence along the schoolyard down the road. I tell her and sometimes scream to her *I am aware of the children* I see them everywhere I can't help but see them see them *I am aware of the children* and sometimes just thinking *I am aware, can't she see I'm aware?*

Seldom do our squabbles last more than an hour or two before she'll be coming near to tickle or act like nothing was amiss. But always I am aware of her a week or sometimes a month later saying *Just go to the doctor with me*. She cannot seem to leave well enough alone.

### Larry

*Peeking over shoulder and winking saying Let's give him the business, so standing out there facing the orange and sticking my thumbs in my ears and sticking my tongue out and standing out there giving him the business facing the orange but feeling like, Gee, I'm not going to get out of the way in time, so just standing out there until the orange is all around me.*

### Best Friend As Eye-Witness

Hillbillies, incredible hillbillies, they come out of the walls around the place. I'll sit down for damn coffee break and one will say Mornin and I'll say Mornin and he'll talk of draggin down on the weekend for some fishin and I'll say that sounds pleasant enough, but really I hate fishing and I hate lying, but I have to shut him up. Maybe if they had a cause like the colored I'd be living with the Polish people. But it's old feelings I'm living with, I'm educated enough to know that.

My brother sometimes sells them insurance policies, then laughs recounting their ignorance. I don't know which repulses me most.

*A kickball game at Lemke's and me maybe a seventh-grader and maybe three or four years after Larry and big brother rounding first base heading for me, the bully, he always was a bully and rotten son of a bitch, so I scream You rotten son of a bitch! and he says Do you know what you're sayin about Ma? and I say I'm not sayin nothin about Ma, I'm talkin about you.*

*But really I was talking about me, too, I realize that now.*

### Truckman

The best way to describe it I spose is I just never saw nothin. Hell, I just cruised around the corner and fought

with that bitch gear box and couldn't see nothin in front of me cause I was fightin with that bitch gear box (it's a bitch to back these pigs into second) and, besides, we sit so high in these pigs you cain't see nothin, anyway.

Nothin that small.

### Best Friend as Eye-Witness

The man at the market said he could give me a real nice cut if I could wait a second so I sad Sure and noticed one of the sideburned characters from the factory standing by the cold-cuts and he nodded and I nodded and then the saw started buzzing.

Wondering whether today, too, she will bring the subject up again (it has been nearly two weeks, now) I hear and sometimes see the saw knifing through the loin of beef, cutting.

*The tall man with tar-black hair and tattooes and sideburns limbered out of the enormous orange truck. I reckon I didn't notice the little varmit, he mused, and allowed a shrug and embarrassed grin.*

*Red milk spilled out of the little boy, like coming from a gallon jug.*

### Larry

*Reaching up and seeing fingers grabbing metal cold but wrapping fingers under the lip and gripping it tightly feeling the rubber dig into me*

### Best Friend As Eye-Witness

Summer evenings linger into eight and even nine o'clock so we go to the park and bring a scratch pad and scribble notes and tickle and after a while she tires and I dabble at the pad and write 'I have witnessed the execution' and she says Can we go and get an icecream? and I say All right, and think *I have witnessed the execution* and she says I need twenty-six cents and I say Sure, here.

*I have witnessed the execution of my best friend by a City of Chicago garbage truck, my theme starts out, and I think it will be good. The topic is Things That Happened To Me This Summer, but Sister says Write about the nice things, Honey, like your vacation, but we didn't*

go on a vacation this year so I write 'I have witnessed the execution,' and anyway, am proud of my vocabulary and spelling.

*My father, who cleaned up the mess from the street that day, says I have a way with words.*

My brother writes of prosperity in the suburbs. I used to think of it as the country. When in high school I had a Schwinn with three speeds and hand brakes and used to ride to the pit and get chased out and then to the swimming pool. Sometimes after school I'd walk by the old corner lot but it was overgrown and was no use to walk through, so I'd just stand on the shoulder and chuck rocks into the lumber back there. Even if somebody hacked the weeds it wouldn't be any good for a ball game now, it's so small. It would only be good for real little kids, like third-graders. Like I was when I played there.

*Someone suggested to my mother that the driver was a drunk. A couple of weeks later I went to his dad and asked Could I maybe buy his two-wheeler? and he said, Sure, you can have it for free.*

*A few weeks after that, they, the family, moved away.*

\* \* \*

I crossed the road and at seven the morning sort of spits at you. It's the walking that gets me down. Someone said there's an old Chevy for sale at the Texaco down the street. Probably a fifty dollar bargain. It would beat the walking, anyway. Besides, I love the sound.

*Larry with mitt under trees* big brother wants a reply so I'm tempted just to drop him a postcard with 'You rotten son of a bitch!' scrawled right across it. In his neighborhood even the postman is a status seeker, it'll get around in no time.

The factory sprawls out in front of me, the doors wide open as usual. *She said you'll be thankful* even if you arrive early you've not a moment's peace from the noise, the sound. It is seven and early and punch presses hissing with the air escaping and *Larry with mitt under trees* and the usual greetings and *Larry with scraping underneath*

and a nod and mutual nods and yawns, lots of em at seven, and *I have witnessed the execution* and she said Dress warm, it's pretty nippy this morning. *The tire drove through his groin to his stomach, as if in sex.*

Across the field from the scrap dock door I see the combine lurching from the barn. I see it clearly crawling into the field. Does the farmer never sleep? Already I can hear the cutting. *Larry under scraping under trees and scraping*

Later she turns and says You're strangely quiet today. I'll brighten up, it's getting dark and time to go in. She mentions nothing about it lately, the children. She knows I am aware, she knows, I tell her *I am aware of the children.*

I walk across the yard to the hammock where she lies. She moves about and yawns and shuffles toward the steps.

I watch for noises in the sky.





*Sandra Hupp*  
THE VIGIL

While the doctor was inside, Joella sat out on the swing behind the garage. Her father had covered the wooden seat with a piece of upholstery from the Studebaker. (The fat-hooded car, with its ridged running board, sat uselessly in the musty garage.) Under the swing, Joella had made a ditch, worn in the red earth by her feet trailing as she swung back and forth. Her feet caught the dust between her toes, and made pale puffs that settled again on the dry ground. It was almost noon, and the sun seared through the thin leaves of the pecan tree, burning through her dress into her shoulders. Inside her dress, she was hot. Prickles of heat scratched at her neck and crawled down her spine. Perspiration ran down her inside thighs, turning to thin mud on the back of her dirty knees.

Joella didn't mind the heat, though. All the summers she had known had been the same—hot, long days that somehow eventually ran into September, when the dull brick school opened its doors once again. Joella liked school; she liked Miss Price, and for her would empty wastebaskets and dust erasers and wash down the boards with a wet-chamois. The first week of school, she would read all her texts, and then begin to read books from the library. It didn't occur to her that she might read during the summer. The school was closed, and there were no books in the house, except her father's cowboy stories, which came in cheap paperback editions and did not interest Joella. Her cousins, who lived down the block, had comic books in their bathroom closet, but Joella had read them all many times, summers before, and they never got any new ones. She used to have two Nancy Drew books, her very own, which Dr. Lou had given her. She had kept them in a cigar box on the table by her bed. But her grandmother had seen them, and said Joella was selfish not to share her books with her cousins, and had taken them away, though she let Joella keep the cigar box, on

which she had pasted colored pictures from *Life*. At the beginning of the summer, Joella had seen the books, in the bathroom closet at Aunt Eulah's. Some of the pages were stuck together with gum or jelly, and there was a mustard stain smeared across the cover of one. Now Joella kept other things in her cigar box: colored ribbon for her hair, stray buttons, a rat-tailed comb her mother gave her for her birthday, a postage stamp that had come on a letter to Miss Price from Mexico.

There hadn't been any rain since before school let out. At supper tables all over town, everybody talked about the dry summer, and how it was hurting the crops, but there weren't so many mosquitos this summer, were there? Afterwards, while the grown-ups sat in the back yard, Joella chased fire flies and put them in a mason jar.

She thought it would be nice if it rained. Right after, before the sun baked everything dry again, there would be damp shady spots under the sparse trees, and the unpaved streets would run cool with rusty mud, and out in the alley the puddles would be full of tadpoles.

But the sky was clear and yellow. Joella leaned far back in the swing, stretching her arms taut from shoulder to rope, her legs out in front of her, her pink and blue and yellow dress high on her thighs, and she flew through the hot still sunshine like a skinny-winged hummingbird. The song in her chest burst out shrill and unmelodious, catching in the noon stillness and dropping, flat and joyless, to the dry earth. She stopped singing and whistled, going from flat note to note. There was no other sound, except the grating of the tree limb, and the skitter of a bird across the rotting hulls on the ground. There was only the creaking of the swing, and Joella's tuneless whistle.

Inside the dirty stucco house, Joella's mother was dying.

No one had told her; sometimes Joella thought perhaps no one knew, except her. Her grandmother had come during the winter and stayed, washing the linens, baking dried fruit pies and salt biscuits, sewing pillow cases and dresses from print flour sacks on the ancient Singer in



the kitchen. She was always busy, even in the long summer evenings that hung endlessly orange and red in the western sky. During the long twilights, when a thin breeze might blow across the plains and through the town, she would sit on a chair in the backyard and shell peas, or mend. She was always busy, till after Joella was in bed. Then, if she had not fallen asleep, Joella could hear her grandmother in the bathroom as she took her teeth out and scrubbed them with a wire brush and put them in a plastic cup on the comode top. Joella did not think her grandmother knew.

Her father might have known, and she would have liked to ask him about it—her mother's illness, and other things, too—but he was gone sometimes for days. Joella never questioned his absence; he had always gone away without saying when he might be back. When he was home, he sat in the parlor with his feet up on the brown hassock, the radio playing loudly. Sometimes he read his paper novels; sometimes he played his harmonica with the songs on the radio, stopping to hum or shake his head in rhythm to the music. When he was there, Joella's grandmother went around the house with a sour, angry expression, stopping to glare at the back of the man's head on its square, bullish neck. Joella had never heard her father and her grandmother exchange a word, not even at the supper table, where her father reached for the biscuits or the gravy or more peas without a word. Joella did not think her father knew. He never went into her mother's room, and she never asked for him, though Joella remembered that at one time her mother had sat on the back porch and sung *Deep Purple* while her father played his harmonica.

In the evening, after supper, her aunt Eulah and her cousins came, to sit outside and talk about the weather or patterns for the girls' school dresses, or movies and movie stars Eulah had read about in her magazines. Joella didn't like her cousins, except for Sidney, who never came anyway. When her cousins spilled into the yard, noisy and

rude, Joella often went around to the front of the house, into her mother's bedroom. She went very quietly, for her mother always seemed to be asleep, a damp cloth over her eyes, the quilt up across her breasts, even on the hottest days. All the blinds were drawn, and the white curtains hung limply on the windows.

On the other side of the big bed was a white wood cedar chest. Inside, Joella's mother had put her baby clothes, and her school papers, the Christmas ornaments and paper necklaces, the birthday cards and poems—everything Joella had made was in the chest.

There was also a high backed chair with no arms, a stern, stiff chair, against the wall, at the foot of the bed. There Joella could sit, watching her mother breathe. It was as if she were waiting for the breathing to stop, wanting the waiting to be over; but it went on, steadily, silently, beneath the fading patchwork quilt. As she sat there, she imagined what it would be like when her mother died. She saw herself sitting there, saw her mother's body, saw herself jumping on the bed to plead with her mother not to die. She imagined Miss Price coming to the funeral, putting her bony, warty arms around her. She imagined her father in a black suit, stiff and silent at the grave. She wondered if her grandmother would go away again, and who would iron her starchy cotton dresses. All the time she thought of these things, guilt and awe and fear tight in her stomach, she sat in the stiff backed chair and watched her mother breathe.

Usually Dr. Lou came early in the morning. He would have a cup of coffee with Joella's grandmother, and sometimes a biscuit with tomato preserves, and then he would see her mother, and go. Today he was late. He was a long time in the dark bedroom, and Joella wanted to go in the house, to see what the doctor was doing, but she knew her grandmother would send her out again, so she sat in the swing, scuffing at the dirt with her bare feet.

In a little while the doctor came out of the house, carrying his bag. He put it in the car, and then came over to

Joella at the swing.

"Pretty hot out here, isn't it?" he asked. He knelt on one knee in the dust before Joella. She felt funny with him there in front of her like that.

"I guess."

"I think your grandmother has some lunch for us."

"I'm not very hungry."

"Is that why you're so skinny? I ought to give you some vitamin pills."

She turned her head away sullenly. She felt afraid of what the doctor might say, though she did not know why.

He got up and went around behind her, to give her a push. She soared up, away from him for a moment, but as he started to push again, she leapt out of the swing and stood across the patch of worn grass, facing him.

"What do you want?" she demanded.

He looked hurt, as if she had hit him. She almost ran over to him to throw her arms around him, as she had when she was little, but she stood unmoving, staring at him hunched on the ground behind the swing seat.

"Joella," he started, slowly. "You know I—I love you as if you were my own daughter."

"I'm not!" she spit at him. She did not know why he made her so angry, but she felt instinctively that there was some great danger in what he said, though she did not know whether the danger was to her.

"Of course not," he said. His words were slow, as if it were difficult to force them out of his throat. "You have a father—a fine father."

"He isn't here!" she said suddenly. She wished he had said when he would be back.

The doctor did not seem to hear her. "A fine father," he said again, surer of the words. Then he stood up. "Let's have lunch," he said, reaching his hand out for hers. Joella started to take it, and then walked in front of him into the house.

They had sandwiches of thick bacon and bread, and Joella drank chocolate milk. The three of them sat silent at

the table, which was covered with a red and white checked oilcloth. Her grandmother took each bite deliberately, as if it were very important to eat the sandwich properly. The doctor ate his quickly despite her disapproving glance, saying that he had to get to the hospital. Joella drank another glass of milk while her grandmother washed the plates and the big iron skillet. She thought her grandmother would say no, but she asked if she could go to the moving pictures. The heavy, sour-mouthed woman gave Joella two quarters, and seemed relieved to send her out of the house.

As she walked to town, rivulets of perspiration trickled down her arms, and made gray circles around the armpits. She carried her shoes in her hand, walking barefoot on the hot sidewalks, careful not to step on a crack. She smiled and waved at Mrs. Lowreny, who lived on the next street, and was very old. Her cousin Sidney, who was sixteen, and got all A's in school, said Mrs. Lowreny was almost one hundred years old, and still had all her own teeth. The old woman sat in a rocker in the shade of her porch, with a fan backwards in the window behind her. The fan was old, too, and made a clanking sound audible all the way out on the sidewalk. Mrs. Lowreny wore a black Chinese type wrapper, which looked strange to Joella, with the old woman's gray hair falling around her shoulders like old string. She didn't wave, but nodded her head and smiled towards Joella, showing her yellow teeth.

Before she went into the movie, Joella went in Woolworth's and walked around. She stood a long time at the counter where the hairbrushes lay, clear pink or blue, or speckled brown. Her hairbrush used to be Aunt Eulah's. It was stained, and many of the bristles were broken, and it pulled her hair when she brushed it. Joella had long hair, which wasn't a pretty color, but a very plain, dull brown, yet she was proud of it. Her grandmother wanted to give her a permanent, like she herself had, but Joella hated the smell, and the tight jumpy curls it made. Her mother had short hair, shingled in the back, with long bangs that

...damply to her forehead. Her hair was the same color as Joella's.

Beside the hairbrushes were rows and rows of bobby-pins and barettes, and sticky green setting lotion. Beyond that were the little red boxes of eyeliner and Maybelline mascara. Once Joella had stolen one of the mascara boxes. In her bathroom, with the door locked, she had rubbed the black on her eyelashes. She got it in her eyes, and it stung, and then she began to cry. In the end she had taken the mascara back to Woolworth's, and sneaked it into the clutter of makeup on the counter, and then she had felt immensely better, though for days afterwards she expected the store to call her mother and tell what she had done.

Coming out of Woolworth's, she saw two nuns across the street, in white bonnets. They were laughing, and carrying packages. Joella ran to the corner and crossed against the light so that she could pass them. She walked toward them slowly, amazed that they were laughing. From animatedly, and especially that they were laughing. From under her crisp white wimple, the hair of one nun had slipped out, and little black curls shone against her cheek. Joella stopped and stared at them as they passed. Her grandmother had said that nuns shaved their heads, but she was sure it was hair she had seen around the face of the nun. A girl Joella went to school with, Claire Summer-ville, had lived in Oklahoma City, and had had a neighbor who went to a Catholic school, and she knew for a fact that there was a tunnel under the street from the rectory, where the priests lived, to the convent, where the nuns lived. Only neither Claire nor Joella know why they would want such a tunnel, or why it was so terrible, and of course they couldn't ask the girl in Oklahoma City, so they forgot about it. But Joella had never seen nuns here before, where there wasn't even a Catholic church. She thought it rather pretty, the way their heavy black skirts swayed as they walked, but she thought they must be terribly hot under all their clothes.

Through the movie, to which Joella paid little mind, she tried to imagine what it would be like to be a nun, but she knew nothing about them, except for Claire, who said they made Catholics kneel for hours every morning on a concrete floor, and her grandmother, who said they were women who had never had boyfriends, or who were jilted. Joella thought the one with the hair, who had been laughing as she passed, was much prettier than Eulah, who had five children and had been married since she was fifteen. She wished she had someone to ask, but everyone she knew was Methodist or Baptist, and they wouldn't know about nuns either.

Coming out of the movie, she saw that the sky had turned dark with rumbling clouds that hung low and thick. She looked for the tell-tale funnel that would mean tornado, but the skies were dark all the way to the horizon. The air was still; not a wisp of wind stirred. Gum wrappers and loose papers lay motionless on the sidewalks. The stores were closed, the streets empty. A sudden, terrifying loneliness shuddered through Joella's body, and she began to run.

The doctor's car was parked at the curb. She ran up the porch steps and into the house. Her father lay on the couch with the evening paper over his face, his arms crossed on his chest, his harmonica on the coffee table in front of him. Her grandmother sat on a chair in the kitchen, solemn and gray faced, while coffee bubbled on a burner.

"What's wrong, grandma? Is mother bad sick?" Her grandmother started to answer, then turned her face suddenly, and a dry, sharp sound came from her, as if she had fallen over something in the dark.

"Mama?" she asked again, and then she saw her aunt Eulah by the kitchen screen, her hands in her apron pocket, staring out at the black skies.

"Might rain," she said, in her flat twang.

"Looks like a thunderstorm for sure," her grandmother replied. "Might even hail," she said, though from where

she sat she could see through neither the door nor the window.

Joella turned and ran to her mother's bedroom. The door was closed, but she could hear the voices inside. She scratched at the door, hoping someone would call her in. Suddenly she heard her mother's voice, a hideous whine, and she turned the knob and pushed the yielding door.

At first she couldn't make anything out in the dim light. The doctor sat in the middle of the bed, on his knees, holding her mother against him like a child. She was crying, and one white hand beat at him feebly.

"It isn't fair, Louis. I love you. I don't want to die. It isn't fair."

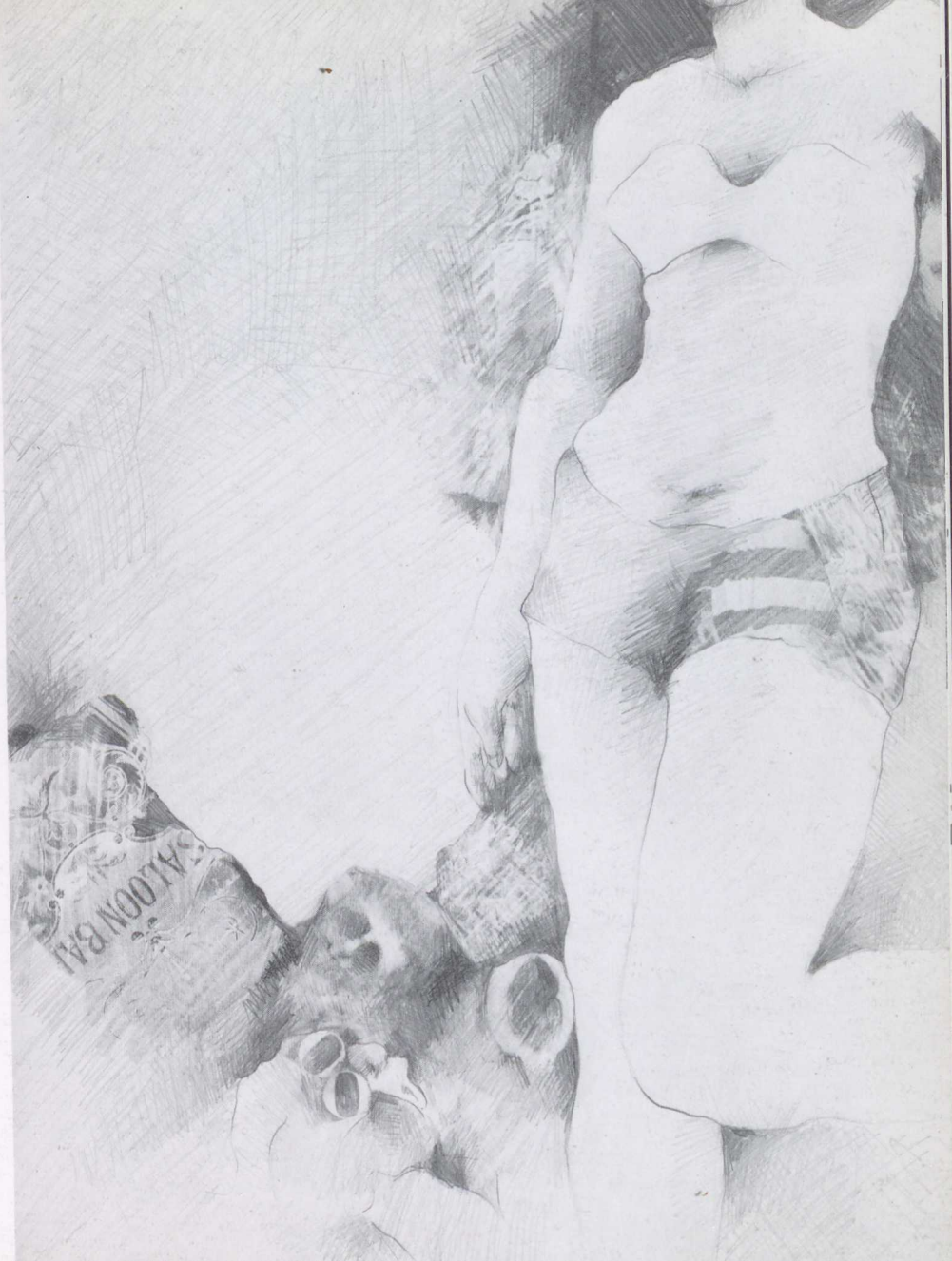
"Ssssh. Be still. Please lie down."

They didn't know Joella was there. She stared open-mouthed as he lay her down, and kissed her gently, stroking her brown bangs from her eyes. Her mother whimpered, and Joella heard her say again, more softly, "I'm afraid."

Anger—a great anger, an emotion huger than she had ever known—threatened to burst out her temples. "That's my mother!" she wanted to shout, "how dare you kiss my mother!" But as the anger grew it encompassed her mother, for she had heard her mother say "Louis, I love you" while her father lay in the parlor under his newspaper. Suddenly, in the dark sickroom, Joella understood her mother's silence, her father's absences, her grandmother's unhappy face. She understood that something was wrong, and her mother's guilt, whatever it was, clung like a bad smell to the curtains and hung in the stuffy air. She ran into the bathroom and locked the door. She sat on the toilet, her fists clenched together in her lap. "What about *me*?" she said, out loud. She heard the doctor leave the bedroom, and voices from the kitchen. They were arguing, not with anger, not loudly, but with tense voices. Her grandmother was saying something about the hospital, and the doctor kept saying, "It's no use," and then she heard Eulah's tearful voice saying, "It's only right, in

her own bed," and then her father's heavy footsteps from the parlor, and the low grunt of his voice breaking the grief in the kitchen.

While they talked, she crept back into the bedroom, and without stopping to think why, locked the door. They would be back, but for a few moments she could be alone with her mother. She sat stiffly in the high backed chair, her hands crossed in her lap. Outside the windows the chatter of the cicadas seemed deafening, and thunder broke low in the darkening sky. She could hear her aunt weeping, and a car that went by the street, casting a dim light through the curtains, and her father's harmonica as he softly played *Deep Purple*. Staring over the foot of the bed, watching her mother beneath the patchwork quilt, the anger pounded in her ears, and the tears slid salty and hot into her open mouth, as she waited for the rain to come.



## CENTERSPEED

### I

"Featured on all our models,"  
The Schwinn Bicycle Catalogue says,  
"Are red reflectors, attached to leather bands,  
Riding freely on both front and rear axles."

### II

A teen-age boy, pumping diligently,  
Can pedal such a bicycle as fast as 32 mph.  
It is a man, however, who,  
Noting the brightness of the reflector,  
Would mangle his hands  
Reaching through the spinning spokes  
At the reflector,  
Riding freely at the center  
Of the wheel.

### III

"Remaining in the eye of a hurricane,"  
A professional pilot's manual advises,  
"Is a difficult but necessary maneuver.  
For it is there, at the center of the turbulence,  
That the greatest calm is found."

### IV

Perhaps Brueghel's *Parable of the Blind*  
Says it best—how men,  
Riding always on the ferocious  
Perimeter of movement  
Can so easily tumble, one after the other,  
Down waiting cliffs, holding onto a rope  
Held by the man who tumbled  
Just before.

### V

There is a strong country farm boy  
Who has taken an interminable bicycle ride.  
He must pedal many millions of miles  
To no particular place  
And back again without stopping.

Always, however, men will wait,  
Planning while crouched in wayside bushes,  
Their next attack at the reflector.  
Their longing to touch and even  
Clench it,  
Leaves bloody hands  
Around the world.

*Joe Bauers*



from:

W. B. YEATS AND THE EPIGRAMMATIC  
TRADITIONS: A STUDY OF TECHNIQUE  
IN THE FOUR-LINE POEMS

For Yeats the epigram provided a partial answer to his desire to express himself concretely and economically, and in the volumes after *In the Seven Woods* he frequently turned to this form with sound results. Perhaps nowhere in *The Collected Poems* does one find Yeats more effectively adhering to ancient poetic traditions than in certain of the four-line poems. The purpose of this paper is to study the four-line poems in relation to the epigrammatic traditions established by the Roman and Greek poets and to reveal both Yeats's strict adherence to the traditions in some poems and the influences of the traditions, particularly with respect to structuring techniques, upon other poems. Although several of Yeats's shorter poems other than those of four lines also echo the epigrammatic traditions—most notably "Swift's Epitaph," "Parnell," "What Was Lost," and "Three Movements"—in the interest of a uniform basis for study only the four-line poems will be considered here. Rather than being presented chronologically, the poems are arbitrarily ordered in the study in accordance with the degree to which they seem to reflect the influences of the epigrammatic traditions.

One of the oldest and most unchanging forms in literary history, the poetic epigram has been practiced, and often abused, by each generation. Because the form has frequently been employed as a vehicle for the expression of obscene and vituperative sentiment, a stigma of semi-respectability has been attached to it; yet with its conciseness and its relatively rigid format the epigram is a particularly challenging form demanding intense crystallization of thought and economy of expression. Both the Romans and the Greeks passed on strong epigrammatic traditions, but long before they got to Yeats at the

end of the nineteenth century the two traditions had fused; most English epigrams contain elements from both traditions, and one normally thinks in terms of the epigrammatic *tradition* rather than in terms of two different traditions. Nevertheless, distinctions between the two are important, both in defining the form and in recognizing Yeats's epigrammatic techniques.

Although poetic epigrams have been written on nearly all the subjects that have elicited expression in other poetic forms and have varied in length from two to sixty lines,<sup>1</sup> reasonably restrictive generalizations concerning the form can be made. The epigram is a brief, concise poem that, in the Roman tradition, concludes with a witty turn of thought<sup>2</sup> or that, in the Greek tradition, sums up "as though in a memorial inscription what it desires to make permanently memorable in a single action or situation."<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the Roman tradition the epigram depends heavily upon clever manipulation through the use of antithesis, paradox, and pun whereas in the Greek tradition the epigram gains its effect primarily through sparse and clear rhetoric. In both traditions the point of the poem is made at the end; and, as a rule, two parts can be observed in an epigram, the first being the anticipation or preparation and the second the point or disclosure.<sup>4</sup> A further dichotomy between the Roman and Greek traditions is seen at this point, for while in the Roman tradition the preparation is usually explicitly stated in the poem, in the Greek epigram the preparation may appear in the title—accounting for the fact that epigram titles are often very long—or it may not appear at all but simply must be assumed.<sup>5</sup> Also, whereas the Roman epigram is often occasional in subject and harshly satiric in tone, the Greek epigram is less frequently occasional, though always concrete and specific, and is often sincere. Despite its dependence upon rhetorical structure for effect, the Greek epigram sometimes tends toward lyricism.<sup>6</sup> With respect to the epigram in general, it can be said, then, that while it may



be musical, its dominant effect is gained through conscious intellectual manipulation and/or rhetorical expression as opposed to unconscious emotional or primarily lyrical expression. The epigram is an assertive statement designed for the public record rather than an esoterically introspective expression of self; beyond this qualification an epigram may treat any subject so long as that subject is specific instead of general or abstract.

Among Yeats's four-line poems are two that are particularly consistent with the epigrammatic traditions and that, further, stand together because of the occasional nature of their subject matter:

TO A POET, WHO WOULD HAVE  
ME PRAISE CERTAIN BAD POETS,  
IMITATORS OF HIS AND MINE

You say, as I have often given tongue  
In praise of what another's said or sung,  
'Twere politic to do the like by these;  
But was there ever dog that praised his fleas?<sup>7</sup>  
ON HEARING THAT THE STUDENTS  
OF OUR NEW UNIVERSITY HAVE  
JOINED THE AGITATION AGAINST  
IMMORAL LITERATURE

Where, where but here have Pride and Truth,  
That long to give themselves for wage,  
To shake their wicked sides at youth  
Restraining reckless middle-age? (p. 92)

In both poems the tone is satiric and the preparation, especially in the second poem, implicit in the title; in the first poem the preparation is implicit in the title, but it is also complemented and made more specific in the first three lines so that the two-part structure can be observed within the four lines of the poem without taking the title into consideration.

"To a Poet," possibly directed at George Russell who had asked Yeats's approval of an anthology he was preparing, decidedly reflects the style of the Roman epigram in its satiric tone and witty turn of thought in the final

line. Rather than being completely harsh, however, in relation to the poet addressed the satiric note is considerably softened by the oblique compliment paid him in the title by his inclusion along with Yeats in the contrast between their efforts and the efforts of the bad poets. The bite of the satire is thus directed entirely toward the bad poets, and in relation to them the tone obviously is harsh. Beginning "you say," the first three lines comprise an unadorned rhetorical statement, and the final line completes the one compound-complex sentence of which the poem consists. The turn of thought is embodied in the final-line analogy drawn between the imitative poets and fleas—both parasites—and Yeats uses several devices to point the final line and bring attention to the turn of thought. Most obvious, perhaps, are the "these"- "fleas" couplet and the marked caesura that precedes the last line; but, in addition, the shift from declarative to interrogative grammatical aspect and the rising pitch terminal at the end of the last line in contrast to the sustained terminals in the first two lines and the falling terminal in the third line further serve to accentuate the final line of the poem.

In that the lines each contain ten syllables and metrically may be scanned as iambic pentameter the poem is rhythmical and in this sense musical. However, the rhetorical stress that one is sensitive to when reading the poem breaks the iambic pattern; rhetorically, for example, "you say" is a spondaic foot and "of what" in the second line is a pyrrhic foot. In the final line, especially, the rhetorical stress differs from the metrical pattern, thus both breaking the rhythmic effect and adding further point to the line. Also of significance in relation to the poet's efforts to avoid a lyric effect in the poem are the absence of caesura at the end of the first line, thus making the "tongue"- "sung" rhyme less noticeable than the "these"- "fleas" rhyme; the high frequency of monosyllabic words which permits very rapid reading and lessens lyric effect; and the several harsh voiced sibi-

lant sounds in the words "praise," "another's," "these," "praised," and "fleas." The poem's effect, then, results certainly from wit and from rhetorical structure rather than from lyric qualities. With respect to Yeats's desire for economic poetic expression, it is noteworthy that this poem contains no descriptive adjectives and only those adverbs that are absolutely essential to the sense; he uses the fewest words and the shortest words that are logically feasible.

The second poem, "On Hearing that the Students of Our New University Have Joined the Agitation Against Immoral Literature," is similar to the first in many respects, but here the turn of thought is less obvious and considerably more complex. The preparation lies wholly within the title of the poem, and the lines are devoted entirely to the development of the point, in this case a chiding reprisal of the students who, at least from Yeats's point of view, have embraced the wrong values. Because an inversion of the expected is implicit in the situation—one normally associates the student attitude with free expression rather than with censorship—Yeats takes advantage of the opportunity it affords and suits the form of the poem to the sense by developing his point through a series of inversions of the expected. "Pride and Truth," traditionally much higher concepts than mere business, here "long to give themselves for wage"; traditionally virtuous, the two abstractions here become "wicked"; recklessness, generally associated with youth, here modifies "middle-age." Hence, the poem actually contains a series of turns rather than a single turn of thought. Although it would be inaccurate to say that the point of the poem is made in the final line—since all four lines contribute to the point—certainly Yeats's strongest indictment of the students appears in the final line; because of their heed to shallow moral values instead of to pride and truth, the students have, Yeats suggests, become middle-aged before their time; they are "restraining reckless middle-age" by usurping the principles of the middle-

aged. This final line is pointed primarily through the occurrence of polysyllabic words as opposed to the predominantly one-syllable words of the first three lines.

Especially in view of their occasional nature, these two poems probably illustrate Yeats's closest adherence to the epigrammatic traditions. Non-occasional poems which also reflect close adherence to the traditions are "A Stick of Incense," "The Coming of Wisdom With Time," "The Spur," "The Great Day," and "Statistics." . . .

Seven poems that in general reflect the structural patterns and some of the techniques of the epigram but that in varying degrees rely more heavily upon metaphorical and symbolic expression than the conventional epigram are "Spilt Milk," "Gratitude to the Unknown Instructors," "The Balloon of the Mind," "There," "Conjunctions," "Youth and Age," and "A Needle's Eye." . . .

These fifteen short poems illustrate Yeats's insistence upon precise, economical, and concrete poetic expression and his frequent use of the epigram as a form for this expression. In some of the four-line poems he adheres strictly to the epigrammatic traditions established by the Roman and Greek poets; in others he fuses the rhetorical epigrammatic structure with his own inherent feeling for symbolic expression; and in others he retains only the two-part structure and draws generously from the lyric traditions. In all of the four-line poems he achieves the precision and concision toward which he was working.

1. Martial's "On Faustinus' Villa: To Bassus" as it appears in *The Epigrams of M. Val Martial*, ed., James Elphinston (London, 1782), runs to sixty lines.

2. Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, *The Epigram in the English Renaissance* (Princeton, 1947), p. 4.

3. Hudson, p. 7, quoting from J. W. Mackail's Introduction to *Select Epigrams From the Greek Anthology* (revised ed.), p. 4.

4. See Hudson, p. 10, for a discussion of other terms that are commonly applied to the two parts.

5. Hudson, p. 11.

6. Hudson, p. 8.

7. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, definitive edition (New York, 1956), p. 92. All quotations from Yeats's poetry are drawn from this volume; hereafter page numbers only will be indicated.



## JESTER (or gesture)

In desperation,  
For the want of love,  
He cremated all the children of his fancy—  
The rushing seas and strutting, bright  
    peacocks  
of ink and paper. Their ashes  
Smudged his face. Everybody laughed.  
We all hooted and roared and pounded the  
    floor  
Because it was so comical.  
Everybody laughed like crazy.  
Not him though. Pompous freak . . .

As marionette  
He danced for us,  
And he tore out a few strings (yes)  
From his heart and played a tune.  
Sad. Deep.  
Too deep for him. Just as if he counted—  
As if he could have something to tell us . . .  
How could such a little man play such a  
    tune?  
So we all laughed.  
Everybody. Like crazy.

He tried and died—  
Him and his children, him and his tune,  
And whatever he wanted us to see in him.  
We're all going to the funeral,  
Of course—what are friends for?  
We're bringing along sneezing powder  
    and black soap  
And whoopee cushions (et cetera).  
Everybody's going to laugh like crazy  
At that damn little jester.  
Who's he think he is?

*Floyd C. Bennett, Jr.*

## TO THE SELECTORS *et al*

Snufflers of bards, be something  
on your own. Have you ever gazed  
past the greenest night,  
and drawn it about your womb?

Your nights are passed  
in onomatopoeic beds,  
feeling ironic anapests,  
tumbling motifs iambically.

Snufflers of bards, did you ever  
write a poem?

*Ed Manual*

DURING THE CIVIL WAR I LEFT  
THE RADIO ON

At three a.m.  
Elbows desk-white  
Hands chin-braced  
The radio  
And Civil War battle,  
Bull Runs and  
Facts of Radical Republicans  
Ling-ger between songs,  
When Union troops hustled  
Freedmen along burning southern streets,  
Cannon-cratered  
Body-strewn  
Fields and trenches  
Through Matthew Brady's eye in  
Black and White,  
But I see  
Red Blue-gray flashing  
Clashing armies  
Crashing at four a.m.  
Andersonville sends me  
To the refrigerator and  
Revisionists explain  
That the Brother's War  
Could have been prevented.  
  
It is too late:  
I press my fore-head against  
Grant's war-torn beard,  
Talking to the radio  
It smells of alcohol.

*Robert Gundelach*

WE MURDERED THE WOMAN  
THAT DAVID SEXUALLY  
ASSAULTED

Pipe wrench-beaten and ice pick-dead,  
She was caught hiding  
Naked in a milk cooler.  
  
She wouldn't tell  
And a shocked David couldn't remember,  
But his bloodied shirt wouldn't lie.  
  
Tried, convicted, and confused,  
He now hopes from a mental hospital  
Demanded by the perversion we breed.

*Charles Childs*

## WITH MARIANNE IN CHICAGO

It was rain all down  
the lake as we hid in the large underpass  
at Foster Avenue.

Far off we could see  
chubby girls in swim-suits, their red fat  
rolling from the beach,

fading in that storm  
like peeled tomatoes in dark soup. We both  
laughed at them.

Now, as I wave,  
you move slowly through the green windows of a bus.  
You wave back. I

reach for a railing,  
am still back in the underpass, holding  
you tightly,

watching the wind  
blow cans along the gutters and old papers  
that keep turning

over and over  
in the corners of the viaduct. I wave again.  
Wheels roar overhead.

*Jon Knudsen*

## AT THE TABLE

Olivia of the sorority  
& pierced ears  
& Bonwit Tellers  
poised on a self wrought pedestal  
becomes insulted at mildly off-color  
but  
under the table  
smugly displays her *Vogue* web  
and has Ginsberg  
in blue and red  
tattooed on each thigh

*Don Poynter*

## F. T. D.

My own Mercury,  
That tin-helmet wingfoot,  
Who now commercials wire  
And flowers  
(A trade he knows not  
yet still appears jovial)  
Quick as his silver colored chem-sake.

Why I cannot believe?  
The gods have sold out.

*Charles B. Scholz*

LETTER TO MYSELF  
AND TO SOMEONE ELSE

"innocence emerges with a  
thrust much more than  
sensuality ever gave"

—Charles Olson

Dear Earl: You're right.  
A course in physics  
would do you no good.  
You're skinny enough  
as it is. When I think of  
you, I want  
to cry half the night  
into a wad of wet kleenex.  
Not even the fat presence  
of my books consoles me  
for one skinny leg.

But two or three  
teaspoonfuls of innocence  
just before bedtime  
will put something better  
than flesh, I think, on  
your bones, on mine.

*Lawrence Schrieber*

DAY OF THE RABBIT

Riding the low wagon  
The garden tractor rolled  
I sat air-rifle lapped  
Against soft hot berm  
And Indiana weed  
Thinking of sun

Almost goring us,  
It sat small-furred  
in the quivering sand  
with death, or a fox  
behind it

Leaning over,  
Our eyes breathed through each other  
and amazingly vowed silence

*Jim Perrie*

