I remember the trees... 
Pines in their natural formation 
randomly cover the hills at noon. 
We visitors are about the lunch procession: 
Cadets marching to a mid-day meal. 
We each observe; 
and I have my impressions, 
but hold them in suspense; 
matching my integrity with these surroundings. 
The steel cathedral rising to the skies 
points with the evergreens close behind. 
Yet neither competes now with this parade. 
I must choose my words as wisely. 
True to thoughts and fairly 
I see this formation of youth pivot 
in a movement that must come to no meaning 
in time, with practice. 
Men and women emerge, 
contrasting even as trees grow to these hills. 
All to leave this merging as one mass. 
Pushed at last, to different duties, 
and a similar discipline. 

I am always nudged by sadness 
by such a place as this. 
Resentful that I can neither confront nor conform. 

I forget how it was for me when I marched. 
As they will forget. 
As we must remember.

GREGORY E. SANCHEZ 
Captain, USAF
This issue of *Icarus* commemorates the United States Air Force Academy’s 25th Anniversary—twenty-five years since President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into effect the Bill which established this institution. The planning and foresight which went into the designing of USAFA and the coordinated effort which went into the making of our 18,000 acre “campus” showed imagination, creativity, and sensitivity. We believe that these same qualities—imagination, creativity, and sensitivity—have been carried on through the cadets’ creative expressions since the Academy’s inception and more recently since 1969 and the founding of *Icarus: A Magazine of Cadet Creativity*. Their writings and drawings link that past with the present.

To illustrate that link, we have included an essay by a member of the Class of 1959. The essay, a class assignment subsequently published by the Department of English in *Chandelles*, describes the author’s feelings when he visited the assembly chamber in the House of Representatives Office Building. Just a class assignment, really. But convincingly done because of its sincerity and because of the obvious meaning the experience held for Harold W. Todd, the first Academy graduate to earn the rank of Brigadier General.

To the other selections, from the past ten issues of *Icarus*, we add this year’s contributions which again represent the best from the Cadet Creative Writing Symposium. The fifth winner of the Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award is James C. Keener, Jr., for his narrative poem, “Storyville.” Mrs. Paul T. Cullen first provided for the Cullen Award in 1974 in memory of her late husband who fostered a love for creative writing about flight. Through Mrs. Cullen’s generosity and kind understanding, the award has been expanded to include creative excellence on any topic by an Air Force Academy cadet.

Through the efforts of our contributors, those who are published and unpublished and whose numbers continue to increase each year, *Icarus* remains true to its purposes: to
promote greater proficiency in written communication and in creative expression; to provide public recognition for those cadets who recognize the importance of and strive for that proficiency; and to record for posterity one measure of our cadets' intellectual growth.

Such an undertaking could not be possible without the assistance of our judges who carefully evaluate all manuscripts and who provide written comments which we return to the contributors. Our judges are volunteers; they devote considerable time and energy to their task; and they constitute the heart of the Symposium. In our Instructional Technology Division, divers hands take part: Mr. William M. Redding, supervisor; Mr. Ansis Berzins, Mr. Paul Baker and Mr. Robert Williams, layout editors and graphic designers—all artists in their own right; Mrs. Carol Mohr, Mrs. Marilyn Selby, and Mrs. Becky Shute, composers; and in the printing plant, Mr. E. M. Dietrich and his staff. For everyone's assistance and continued support, our warmest thanks.

The opinions expressed in *Icarus* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty and staff of the United States Air Force Academy.

We are pleased to present *Icarus 1979* as our 25th Anniversary Issue: Happy birthday, USAFA.

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Department of English  
United States Air Force Academy  
25 January 1979

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THE BRIGADIER GENERAL
PAUL T. CULLEN AWARD
Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen USAF, disappeared over the North Atlantic on 22 March 1951. Still listed as missing, General Cullen leaves behind an envied record of military and scientific accomplishments. Equally important, moreover, was his love of flight, a love reminiscent of the French pilot-author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. It is fitting that General Cullen, a man of high ideals, calm personal courage, and rare intelligence, be thus remembered by cadets at the United States Air Force Academy.

The Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award

STORYVILLE

Author's Prefatory Notes: to “Storyville.”

Storyville was a very ethnically mixed section of New Orleans. Its origins stem from an 1897 city ordinance which confined prostitution to this section. This ordinance did not legalize prostitution, but merely tried to limit its practice. Many people associate the French Quarter with Storyville, but, in actuality, Storyville far surpassed the limits of the French Quarter.

During its peak, 1897 until the Navy officially dissolved the area in 1917, Storyville was the most famous (or infamous) city of its kind in the world. Its notoriety was equal to or greater than that of the Reeperbahn in Hamburg.

The main focus of this piece stems from my interest in the origins of jazz. The self-professed originator of jazz was Jelly Roll Morton, who played piano in many of Storyville's "houses." Storyville's atmosphere, color, and racial diversity were all factors which helped to develop one of the true forms of American music (the others being ragtime and the blues).

The Moan of the Blues

Say this alderman

Sidney...

Sidney Story

Didn't want none of them whores

Anywhere but this certain area.

This place gonna be between Customhouse Street and

St. Louis Street,

Hell, that's 'bout forty blocks!

A regular town,

Town called Storyville!

You walk the streets
And there is music:
coming out of clubs,
and houses (the big houses),
anywhere that a piano is or where the men
can get together.

And there are people:
the damper St. Charles’ millionaires,
the pimps,
the regular goodtimers,
the high class whores,
and the other kind (standing outside their
cribs, singing, waiting).

And there are lights:
the dull glow of the street lamps,
the candle in the cribs,
The Christmasy lights of the high class
whore houses.

Why you here, girl?
You got somethin’ for everybody?
Sing ’em,
Sing them blues,
Ain’t been home since I was ten,
Ain’t been home since I was ten,
Lord knows I ain’t goin’ home again,
or maybe
Fix a little cowein, whiskey, and wine,
Gonna Fix a little cowein, whiskey, and wine,
Have a little party, have a high ol’ time.

Girl, you lookin’ for someone?
Non, not less you got money
then I sure be lookin’.

Chippie,
Stand outside your crib:
twenty five cents?
one dollar? too much!

Well, why don’t you just go on downtown?
If we’s too lowly for you,
Why don’t you just go to that mansion?

That mansion in the sky? Huh?
Hear that boy? Play trumpet like Gabriel! Bettern!
And that boy on piano,
Must have three hands! Lord!
Ivory ain’t been made he can’t mess up!
Play that song, Winin’ Boy, play that song!

You want to hear the soft moan of the blues,
You walk the streets.
You want to hear that jazz,
You go in the big house.

The big house,
Got them fine ladies, look like queens!
(Come down the stairs when John comes to the door)
You got money you pay the professor!
We don’t want no cheap johns in here.
(mirrors everywhere)

A Big House
Basin Street

Here are the girls now.
Girls, I’d like you to meet Mr. Theodore Lamond.
(Teddy)

Mr. Lamond, this is Sarah,
Cora,
Mabel Anne,
Pearl and
Lucille.

Sarah, why don’t you show Mr. Lamond,
oh, excuse me, Teddy,
the bar. He’s probably thirsty after his long trip.

(Sarah Hamilton,
late of New York City...)
real name: Padawski.
Father worked the docks, 
loading, unloading... 
And then only came home to beat his wife. 
Mama used to yell! 
I'd be awake and cry.

At fourteen Sarah was rarely home. 
Mama ran off with one of the Upton boys, salesman or something. 
Daddy couldn't beat her no more so he beat us kids.

At sixteen Sarah read about New Orleans. 
A magazine called it "The Pleasure Capital of the World!" 
Of the whole world! 
I had to go, 
Besides I couldn't stay at home.

At seventeen Sarah was in a big house.)
Come on, Teddy, let's dance. 
Sure we got music! 
See that piano? 
Go give the professor something and we'll dance. 
(Gave him twenty dollars!)

Professor... 
(A Creole in this white, silk and satin dream world.)

Got his hat at a cocky angle, 
Tapping his foot, 
Smiling, 
And whooping a song 
To the jazz his hands are playing. 
Got on a hundred dollar suit, 
And sports a diamond in his front tooth.

Place busy now, 
Money keeps flowing in. 
Outsiders (non-Storyville) 
May say jazz is whore music 
but as long as he can pull in a couple hundred a night, 
he ain't gonna stop playing it. 
Besides, he's the greatest! (He says so.)

Jelly Roll Morton, also known as Jelly Roll Lord, 
Winin' Boy, 
professor.

(Jelly Roll Morton, 
past and present of New Orleans... 
real name: Ferdinand Morton. 
Brought up “proper,” took piano lessons... 
Lot of work, but he became the best.

Jelly Roll's father wanted him to work: 
playing piano wasn't work! 
How can you work when you can make more money playing a piano. 
Sure I got in trouble, because I was young and wasn't supposed to be in the tenderloin district. 
But all the money I made soothed things out.

Played around, played around, 
and then developed what they call jazz. 
But to us it was just hot music, had people moving.

And I was the best, 
Always had a job, 
Given the piano wherever I went! 
"Everybody step aside and let Jelly Roll Lord play!"

Sure, there are some guys that are good,
but... they're not the greatest!

You look tired, Teddy. Why don't you go tell Miss Ruby that you're going upstairs. She'll tell you where to go, I'll be waiting...

(Go on up the stairs, Sarah, Don't stop to think that in five, maybe six, years, you'll be a little chippie, with your nine by seven crib, a chair to seat your sorrows, and a song to cry to the world.

Sing 'em, Sing them blues...)

Hey, girls, Winin' Boy's gonna be at the Frenchman's in the morning! We'll go listen for a while, okay?

Walking the Streets
French Quarter

Everybody's on the streets.

The sports: trying to make a girl, looking for a sweet mama. and they're dressed to kill. pants and coat don't match. (that's style) they lean against poles or a building so as not to ruin the crease in their pants. (a crease that could cut steak) and then they're the guys with the bulb sticking out of their shoe. when that light comes on that girl is his! Nobody better come around!

The bums: stumbling around, wandering into a bar hoping for a free drink. (Hey, Johnnie Mac, do a dance! You do a dance I'll get you a drink!) voices so softened by tuberculosis they wave their hands for emphasis, eyes enveloped in a red mist, or cataracts. nobody really pays any attention to them, and they're usually killed, or die in their sleep behind a trashcan.

The pimps: the hustlers, walking with long strides, drumming up business. the established, stand outside the doorway, don't look up unless spoken to, and then it's with a sideways glance. (you want what I got? good. you don't? plenty more of you! any of a thousand out tonight.)

The rich: dad sure wouldn't believe this! he'd kill me if he knew I was here! (Teddy's son) this is Storyville, Mr. Desmond! the finest forms of entertainment to be found anywhere in the world! and let me assure you, Hilliard Brothers wants to make your stay in New Orleans...
nope, ain’t goin’ home.
she ain’t gonna run me around!
hell, I gotta do the work and then she...
don’t ’preciate...
don’t need her nohow!
hey, girl!
you, girl! come here!
(toutes gaigen la misere!)
let me show you this great spot I found, Bill.
called the 25’s.
unbelievable!
we’ll get a couple of drinks,
then head over to Basin.

Everybody’s on the streets.
Everybody’s going to Storyville.

(Some are looking for something they lost,
maybe a long time ago,
so long ago their memory is clouded.

They all have their fantasies,
their desires,
with a thousand aging summers
which they try to fit into one night.

Some are looking for something new,
something different,
variety to add to their life.)

The Road to Paradise and the Street of Make Believe.

This place be dead come morning, but at night it lives! When
that sun disappears behind the taller of the three- and four-
story houses, people start to wake up. You can hear the clank
of bottles from the clubs and bars, and the ‘tenders sweep
the stoop or walk in front of their place, and boys clean the
glass, replace lights. Pretty soon the men start walking about.
Some carrying their instrument cases and as the clubs fill up
and the cigar and cigarette smoke starts creeping out the
door, the music starts. Some places are small and only have a
piano, or a couple of string players. The high class places have
bands, some with five, six, seven members. The drinks start
and the ladies come out. Some work the streets, some the
clubs; each has their own locale and usually their own special
customers. You can hear laughter, shouting, cursing. People
in all forms of dress and from every imaginable country.
When it’s plenty dark the big, black cars start pulling up. Men
who you just don’t notice. The one’s whose wive’s better not
find out they’re here.

And each place lights up. The signs in the windows of the
clubs; a new band, an old favorite, drinks for such and such.
The houses light up; the red lights, the porch lights, come
on in we’ve got the best.

If you work down here, that’s fine, that’s how you make a
living. You live off other people’s fantasies and desires. You
give them something they want, something they can’t find
nowhere else. You live off their hopes and dreams. They walk
down the Road to Paradise into the Street of Make Believe.
Storyville!

JAMES C. KEENER, JR.
Class of 1980
The path to the barn is hard, the frozen red clay swept clean of the leaves which litter the forest around me. Overhead the trees sweep the cold grey of the winter sky with barren branches. I have walked to the barn along this path so often that I could do it on the darkest of nights. It slopes and curves down the hillside, pauses at the gate, and continues its uneven course to the batten board doors that open onto the loft of the barn. The wind stings my face with needles of cold as I come onto the brown turf that serves as the barnyard. The brown leather jacket I wear holds the wind at bay while my hands search out the protective pockets. The cold is devious and breathes down my neck as I finally reach the bolted door of the barn. My fingers stick to the cold steel, burning with an icy fire as I undo the latch. I give my hands a shake to revive the circulation, and shove them deep into my pockets where they will be warm. I lean against the door till the familiar squeal and rumble of the track tells me that it has opened enough to let me slip inside. I step in where it is warmer and pull the door closed behind me. Inside it is dark, the smells of animals and summer hay a pleasant contrast to the sterile breeze which blows outside. I climb up in the hay and lay back on the bales, the cool dry grass pricking the back of my neck. It is peaceful here.

My eyes soon grow accustomed to the dim light, and I can see the cat playfully creeping up to me. He stalks me in mock battle, placing each paw carefully as he advances in a low crawl to where I rest. Out of the corner of my eye I see him
tense and ready himself for the attack; he thinks his victim is unwary. He coils and springs, hoping to catch me asleep, but is surprised when I reach out and grab him in midair. I have the cat in my arms and he scratches to free himself. Using his teeth in sudden ferocity, he wins his freedom and bounds to the middle of the floor gazing back at me with haughty green eyes. I get up from where I lay and jump threateningly at the cat, and he races to his refuge behind a pile of woodscraps. Leering out at me I can see he hasn’t changed; in the two years I have been gone he hasn’t changed at all.

Below me, in the stalls on the ground floor, I can hear the sounds of breaking ice and the steady crunch of feeding horses. I lay on the floor and gaze through the cracks into the dimness below. I can see one of the mares blowing steam through her nostrils in steady breaths as she contemplates the business of eating. A hand reaches out and strokes her neck, pausing to feel the matted wool of winter hair. I watch as the hand cracks the ice of a water bucket, and another hand appears with a hose of running water. The hands are my brother’s and the chores used to be mine. My brother reminds me of myself at that age as he goes about watering the horses. His tall, lanky frame shows how much he has grown since I left home. The time has gone by too quickly; I hope he can learn to enjoy the present while it lasts.

He calls to me now, his voice muffled by the oak floor and the baled hay. He wants to know if I am ready to go back to the house. I tell him yes, so he lets the horses out into the pasture with the thunder of racing hooves. I slide the loft door open once more and wait for my brother on the hill. Looking down I can see the pasture where the horses graze on the last brown wisps of grass.

My brother approaches and unconsciously I stare, thinking of the times when we both were younger and the cold did not seem to bother us so much. He asks me what the matter is. Nothing, I tell him, shaking myself of my melancholy mood. The times have changed and so have we, but some things never change. Like the cat in the barn, some things will pass undaunted by the seasons. The winter grey is fading slowly into night as my brother and I turn and take the winding path home.

TIMOTHY P. BRENNAN
Class of 1980
The friendly fall sun, settling behind the rolling mountains to the west, sent rays that filtered softly through the colored leaves, filling the whole area with a pinkish-orange glow. And, in the valley to the east, it lit up the tops of the trees with a brilliancy of haphazard color, as if a painter had stumbled and spilled his paints on the leaves. But the cottontail rabbit took no notice of this. Hungry and alert, it came hopping hesitantly through the brambles and briars which were clustered about the trunks of the tall trees. Finally, it reached the edge of a small clearing where it froze, sniffing the gently eddying air currents, and searching every shadow and every bush that bordered the tiny meadow. After some time, it took a tentative hop into the open and, propping itself up on its haunches, again scanned its surroundings, all of its senses straining for a reaction to its movement, the nose quivering, the ears perked straight up, and the eyes darting back and forth. Then the soft, brown eyes rested on the delicious, blue-green clover that flourished in the center of the meadow. The rabbit hesitated no longer but hopped directly to the clover and began to eat.

But its movement did not go unnoticed. High above, effortlessly soaring the updrafts on broad, strong wings, a red-tailed hawk missed nothing. Its sharp, frowning eyes picked out the rabbit as soon as it hopped into the clearing. Lazily, as if it had no interest in the rabbit, the hawk drifted lower and lower until it reached its desired altitude. It hovered here for a moment, every muscle beginning to tighten, only
the tips of the wings beating rapidly. Suddenly, the wings folded up and back, and the hawk plummeted earthward, its eyes narrowing to slits, the wind screaming through its feathers. The ground rushed up towards the buffeting bird, as it only concentrated on the nibbling, ignorant rabbit. At the last possible moment, the hawk brought its wings down, cupping them close to its body. The flaming red tail spread wide and the angry-looking head snapped down on its breast. At the same time, the faloned feet shot out, sinking deep into soft, furry back of their hapless prey. The force of the blow knocked the rabbit flat, but instantly it was up, screaming and struggling wildly. The hawk held on, merely fluttering its great wings to maintain its balance. Finally, it saw its chance, and in a blur of movement brought its powerful, hooked beak smashing into the skull of the rabbit, killing it instantly. For some time, the hawk tore at the rabbit’s body, making sure it was dead. Then it flew off, the rabbit dangling limply from its talons, leaving only a few tufts of fur and a few drops of blood on the delicious blue-green clover.

THE KILL

TIMOTHY P. GREYDANUS
Class of 1981

SOMETHING SPECIAL

It’s finals week. If I wasn’t on the top bunk of a three cadet room, I’d crawl back in bed, but I haven’t the energy. It seems as if someone opened my head like a suitcase and stuffed six textbooks in, and sat on it while he zipped it back up. Now I am ready to explode. Looking out the window I see a familiar face, the mountains. The mountains have been my best friend during my doolie year. They have made me warm and happy when I was alone. Most of all, they made me realize that there is more to life than falling in and marble strips. Turning back the pages of my journal I relive the days that “my mountains” gave me something special:

13 Sept 78

This morning, when I was leaving Fairchild Hall to get to the library, I slowed down to a snail’s pace, as usual, to admire the view to the west. It’s always beautiful, but today it was more beautiful. It looked happy and carefree, probably because that’s just how I felt. The day had started off perfectly, as everyday does for me, but today it was already ten-thirty and nothing had gone wrong yet. It was a little cold out, but there is nothing like a brand new athletic jacket to keep you warm and raise your spirits. New clothes always make me happy; I don’t really know why. The sun was out and it warmed my face, I wanted to take my hat off but knew better than to do that. I almost forgot where I was going; I even almost forgot where I was. All that I knew was...
SOMETHING SPECIAL

how good it was to be right at that spot at exactly that moment. A very harsh, “Don’t you greet, miss?!” cut my ears. I sheepishly answered “Yes sir. Good morning, Sir,” and tried very hard to hide in my mound of books as I hurried away. My wonderland had vanished, and I did not look back.

Today my mountains looked different. This morning they didn’t, but after school on my way down to the pool, they looked completely changed. All the low bushes had beautifully colored leaves. There were splashes of color in between the proud evergreens, and the clouds cast shadows here and there along the mountainside making their contribution to the picture. It was so much like a picture, I felt as if I couldn’t touch it, like it was behind glass and only for display. Maybe it is just a picture; if you try to climb it and feel it and be part of it, it’s lost. You get a new picture, a picture of towering pines and mosses crawling over rocks, and sunlight sifting through the majestic roof falling on decaying layers of leaves. I am never really part of the picture, but that’s o.k., I guess I don’t really belong there. I wish I did.

Tonight an upperclassman lent us his jeep; seven of us piled in and we were off for a hot time. It was funny to watch each driver take his turn at the wheel, it has been so long since anyone has had the chance. At first they are shaky, but soon regain their confidence and are pressing to find their limits. After cruising around town a while, and picking up something to eat, we drove up Cheyenne Mountain. We didn’t even go all the way to the top before we stopped, got out, and climbed some rocks that overlooked Colorado Springs. What a beautiful sight, a sea of lights that sparkled and danced and hypnotized all who watched. What a contrast to New York. Everything in New York is vertical—the buildings form menacing profiles against the sky. Every-

thing about the City looks noisy and alive and hard. The lights in the Springs could never even compare. The whole world was horizontal, nothing violated the still, dark night, and everything seemed to be asleep. The harsh music of the city did not belong here, and for a while I could not even remember it; I didn’t want to. Someone broke the silence—“Home is nothing like this.” “This is home,” I answered slowly and without even thinking about it. I listened to myself as I said it, and the funny part is that the words did not feel strange at all. The thought did not weight heavily on me, although it should have. Maybe three months is not long enough to tell, but I think I finally left home.

10 Oct 78

I rushed home from swimming practice today because I had to write a letter home. The need to write a letter was so urgent that I practically ran back from the pool; I burst into my room and barely mumbled, “Hi,” to my roommate who sat on her bed looking very confused at my early arrival, and my apparent preoccupied state of mind, while I tore off my jacket and planted myself at my desk. I carefully took out a clean sheet of paper and wrote the date above the very official-looking letterhead that I have become so proud of. The paper stared up at me, but I could not write a word. I have so much to tell you all, how do I begin? “Dear Mom & Dad and kids,” no, that’s not what I want to say. I want to hug them all until my arms get weak; I want to tell them they are as precious to me as my stars at night. I want to tell them the sun was out all day and kept me company when I was alone; I wanted them to see my mountains and feel the heaviness in my limbs that only sleep could cure. I wanted to send them a smile, and watch them smile too. I wanted to see them; I wanted to feel them in the same room; I wanted the security of having them close by. And now all I wanted to do was cry. I didn’t cry, I couldn’t cry. I lifted the empty note from my desk and let it fall into the waste paper basket,
and watched it settle under yesterday's newspapers. I think someone was talking to me, I don't know. I just gazed out at the horizon; it wasn't beautiful or breathtaking today, I don't even remember what it looked like.

FIRST SNOW

This morning when I jumped out of bed at 0530 I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. I stayed up two hours after taps last night studying for a Russian GR and I'm sure that's why I feel so lousy. I resolved that it was too early to be grumpy, so I put all thoughts of getting (or being sick out of my head. I tip-toed over to the window (my roommate likes to sleep "late") to see what the morning could offer me. What a shock, what a wonderful shock; I was hit all at once with the realization that it had snowed. I stood there a long time with my nose flattened against the pinching, cold window pane, a little cloud was forming at the place where I breathed lightly. At first I admired the beauty of the mountains after their metamorphosis. The emotions of awe and tranquility I felt at that moment I had experienced before, during cold winter days when I used to share my closet-sized room with my older and younger sisters while my three brothers tried their best to keep warm by huddling together while they slept on the heatless porch of the small, second-story apartment that was my home. I soon slipped back into the little world where we may not have always had heat, but we did have each other, and that was always enough. One of us always seemed to manage to get up without waking the others, but that was just the beginning of the adventure. After getting quietly out the door, the next task involved creeping up the steps to the next landing where everyone had diligently placed his wet boots to dry the night before. He would snatch the first pair he could distinguish which was,
unfailingly, the largest pair there. Don’t put them on yet—it would create too much noise going down the stairs; carrying them under his arm, it is apparent that the boots are neither warm nor dry and that the only change that had occurred overnight was perhaps the growth of a little mildew. As he flies down the narrow, creaking old stairway he grabs a parka off the hooks outside the door he had escaped from minutes earlier. He doesn’t even notice it’s not his as he slips it over his pajamas while taking the steps four at a leap. As he pushes the door open, he suddenly remembers, looking at his bare feet. He jumps into the big yellow fireman boots, that were meant to be worn with shoes, and trips over his own feet as he dashes outside into the virgin snow. To a child of ten there is no greater accomplishment than to be the first to put your mark in the snow. Before Mom even gets to the window she senses a new snow fall; as she mechanically puts on her robe and slippers, she knows one of us is out there. She rinses out the coffee pot in the sink as she watches the comical little man below walk back and forth in the street laboring to spell out his name as an eternal monument for his mighty accomplishments. Mom smiles to herself; it is then that you can see the cares and burdens that such a family has placed on her shoulders. You can see it, you can feel it, deep in her eyes, eyes that have cried more than their share. She has not yet put on the mask she wears day in and day out, and she creates a very moving picture. As we get up one by one she calls the refugee back and reprimands him sharply. He is sorry to fall out of her graces, but he knew the rules when he plays the game. I have made my share of first impressions in the snow and know the wonder and warmth and sense of accomplishment that is a part of the experience. I spent a long time at the window thinking about how terrible and how great it was at home. “Merry Christmas,” I called to my roommate waking her, “we are going to be late.” It was 0600 and we did end up late, but I knew the rules when I played the game.

MARIANNE CAFIERO
Class of 1982

THE FINAL SOLUTION

My naked feet cringe at the touch of freshly butchered flesh—salted with lime. With each step, the cries of those not yet dead mingle with the prayers of the soon to be. Gagging, I fight to keep my last meal down. Like the Medal of Honor in an enemy camp, a yellow six-pointed brand hangs heavy on my tattered shirt. It fails to cover the tattooed six-digit number that I will wear into eternity on a shriveled wrist. I stop and turn to face the devil. His gun screams, I scream. It is over but for the touch of more bare feet.

LEE J. LORENZEN
Class of 1981
POETRY
First Place Poem

CHAMELEON

I am chameleon
Seeking my color.
There was a time when I was white—religiously white
Faithfully,
Fervently,
Fanatically white.
And you smiled until my color changed.
You gazed at the phases I went through,
Amazed, afraid.
You saw me as communistic red
And cowardly yellow
And a shade of green that made you sick.
You exclaimed, “What a strange and funny creature!”
And you laughed at my directionless wanderings
As I nosed in every crack and corner of my cage,
Changing at each turn.
You so smug
You who call yourself civilized
Enlightened with the bright, white truth.
You are ape
With your dull, accepting eyes set straight in the front of your
Head.
At least my eyes work independently to view all angles
You with your nose pressed against the glass,
Pointing at me to see out, not in.
I see both sides at once,
Yet hold no side at all.

God are you lord of this jungle?
King of the apes? Do you point
and poke at the cage with the
others? Try to dislodge me from
the perch I cling to so precariously?
What do you think of me? Do you think
A FOREST CONCERT

When the rays of sunlight from the lintel of my door
Fade into the twilight gloom, like a tide upon the shore,
The shadows take the woods about, stealing all from sight,
As darker greys supplant the day as marches on the night.

Yet ears are sharp, they listen to the whispers of the trees
As they toss their leafy heads and murmur in the breeze,
And silence absolute in pools of quiet comes to rest
In solitude, but lingers but a moment, that at best.
For now I hear the insect hum begin to fret and tune
As though a concert orchestra, awaiting but the moon.

The trees begin to glimmer as that spotlight rises high
To light the woods in silver and make day the darkened sky.
In unison the music bursts, the insects playing well,
Their instruments of living limbs in sound begins to swell.
I sit there and I listen to things I cannot see,
The music of the insects and the murmur of the trees.
REFLECTIONS UPON A BIRTHDAY DINNER

When the last luscious drumstick was eaten
When the cranberry jelly was gone
And the pie—both the mince and the pumpkin
Closed the meal that began with the fawn.

(Now the deer, if you may not remember,
Stood startled. Its beautiful grace,
All alertness, was hesitant, poised,
And ever intent on the chase.)

When all this had passed with the minutes,
There packages came on the board,
And the first on told a new story—
It's, well, something like this, M'lord.

It seems that a lad and a lassie
Went off on a mid-summer's day
To paddle a bit up the river,
Not very far—so they say.

Now he was a sailor, this laddie,
And not just a "stick-in-the-mud";
And she'd try it once if it killed her
(I guess just a trait in the blood).

So on he paddled and upward
While she, (helpful lass that she was)
Just lolled there in comfort and watched him,
(As often a lady-folk does).

They went just as far up the river
As he'd ever been before
To a falls and its preceding rapids,
It's current and rocky floor.

(You said, "Can't be true," when we told you
That it was over his head
In that pool. Thought that fact of our story
Was the single true thing that we said.)

A falls and the flitter of daring,
A push and a pull and a heave
And a hold and a haul and a pause for breath
Past the pool that you wouldn't believe.

Up and over and up again,
And on up the river they go
Not far—'cause the rumble of tummies
And the rocks and the time say "no."

So back they turn, back like the Indians
Laughing their dare to the sky
With their paddles balanced beside them
And their thoughtlessness brandished on high.

"Now backwater, Jeannie," he warned her
Then a slither, a slip and a roll
And a sputter and silence... then laughter
In ripples collecting their toll.

This is a tale of a shivaree,
Believe it or not as you will,
But maybe the minnows, or crayfish, a crab
Would kindly consider your bill.

KEITH BOSTIC
Class of 1981
DISCONNECTED
She's a wicked machine.
She eats your money, but then gives you
Heart-burn.
And it was a terrible fight.
No one could win, but no one ever
Wins
The only intermission was when
The judge said,
"A dollar, ninety five for three more minutes, please."
Then after a while frustration sets in.
You pull on her arm, carelessly,
And play with her numbers,
But you still can't let her go.
You wish you could. When will you learn
You can't win?
Then the judge comes back with another
Monumental decision.
Finally, it's over—not the war,
But the battle at least.
You've been hit, injured. You still love her, but
You can't fight like this much more.
But go get the iodine.
You feel her pocket—"she's so wicked,"
You think—but no cash.
You don't win.
You lose. Sorry.

KARL VON KESSEL
Class of 1979

[RAINING. WET NIGHTS DESPAIR]
Raining. Wet nights despair
Into traffic patterns and glare
On the way to the drive-ins.
The street lines flash neon,
No vacancy.
All night restaurants
Pass left and right
Take away one's hunger.
The vinyl back seat is cold.
This ride I get grows old.
With my hands between my thighs
I sit in the middle,
Like an only child leaning forward.
Sometimes there's heat there
Sometimes some conversation.
The heat never does its job.
My breath's a white fog.
It should freeze and break off
But alcohol doesn't freeze that easily.
A siren chills me, far off.
Red store front windows wink at me.
And I'm sleepy, behind the knees.
I'd give anything to be home,
Home and warm, safe in my room.

JOSEPH G. WEBSTER
Class of 1980
THE PIANO PLAYS RAGTIME

Author’s Prefatory Notes:

Scott Joplin was the guiding force behind ragtime, a truly American form of music which had its origins in the "cake walks" held by slaves on Southern plantations. Musicians from all over the United States came to Sedalia, Missouri, where Joplin lived, to learn from and compete with the master. For years ragtime was performed solely by blacks and condemned by whites as being immoral, the "devil's music."* It was not until the early 1900's when a white man, John Stark, agreed to publish Scott Joplin's work that ragtime really gained in national popularity.

*Such denunciations were also made toward the blues, jazz, and rhythm and blues, all originally forms of music attributed solely to blacks. But all of these forms of music went on to become the most played and the most popular forms of music at one time or another and their influence is still widely felt.

Sedalia, Missouri

I.

Maple Leaf Club
(July 27, 1899)

Hey, uh, uh, ...
Charlie, go git us 'nutter bottle.
Damn, Scott's Gonna play all night!
Hey, ya know what I heird?
Ya know Dora Hutts?
Li'l girl libs by ol' man Dunkin?
She got married!

Yup, hooked ta Sonny Hall,
Ya know da drummer fer da Hot Tree...
Hell, what would I amke it up fer?
Damn, jest go axt 'er!
Don' b'lieb me! She libs 'roun' de...
Das betta.
Don' b'lieb...
Hey, ya know wha' else?
Naw, don' stop! Keep goin', Scott!
Hell, you de bes' dey is!
Yeh, well...
Will ya girls ober der shet up?
Yeh, well,
Cain Smiff,
Ya know Cain, got ol' powder face.
Well he was ober at Mule Skin's,
Thought he could whup da whole place!
Cain ain't nutting' but ol' light weight,
An' drunken 'ell,
An' goes runnin' at Merle Higgins,
Wiff a pool cue!
Hell, Merle take dat cue...
An' jest start beatin' 'im on de haid!
Took four ta pull ol' Merle off 'im!
Hell.
Heyuh, gimme da bottle, Charlie.
Yeah, dis is it.
Li'l whiskey,
Scott on Piana,
An' a bunch ob fillies ta...
Huh?
Why don' ya jest shet up?

II.

Miss Becky's Prayer Meeting
(August 3, 1899)
I just do not know what to think, girls.
It's just downright sinful,
Plain and simple.
I took Jennifer over to the Fellowship Dance last night,
And as soon as we got near the Hall
I could hear it.
I mean, I don’t really know what it sounds like,
Don’t get me wrong,
But we got near there and
Ragtime!
I mean it was so loud
You could hear it from the street!
I didn’t even stop the buggy!
No, sir!
We went straight home!
I’m not going to have any daughter of mine
Listening to trash like that.
I mean we have plenty of good music,
*Blue Danube*, *Amazing Grace*,
And that’s always been good enough
For any moral, Christian person I know.

III.

The Maple Leaf Club
(August 19, 1899)

Scott Joplin, I’m John Stark. I’ve been sitting over there
for the last hour, just listening to you. I’ve heard a lot about
what you can do to a piano, and I must admit it’s all true.
From what I hear, you’ve been having a lot of trouble getting
your music published. If you could stop by my store to­
morrow, oh, about ten, I think we could work something
out.

Hey, Charlie!
Yea, you! Naw, da ten utter Charlies in here.
Why don’t ya jest shet up, Vernie!

JAMES C. KEENER, JR.
Class of 1980
WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER

Ya know they say it's gonna get better,
And I 'spose they're right,
'Cause it sure as hell can't get any worse.
Ain't nobody asked for a depression,
But since it's here, we might as well take it as it comes.
But, ya know, I sure am wishin' for some good times,
'Cause the way it looks now,
I'm gonna have to sell my alligator shoes.

(When the thunder rolls through Jordan,
When the fires begin to fall,
When the little men are pillars,
And the big men aren't so tall,
Then the world will stop and listen,
To Joshua's trumpet call.)

We make do, but just barely.
We sure did have a time at sending Alfred,
He's our oldest,
Through Princeton.
What with the tuition they're chargin'.
Don't seem them colleges know there's a depression.

(You got salvation on the corner,
You got God on every street,
With a little more religion,
You'll make sinning obsolete.)

Depression?
This ain't nothin'.
Me and the Missus just got back
From a two-month tour of Europe.
Now that's a depression!
Them foreigners really know how to do things big!
THE PIANO PLAYS JAZZ

There was a man I once knew,
Though it seems odd,
I traveled across the steel and ties,
And helped a drunkard to his feet.
I gave him a fresh appearance,
And he asked how he could repay me.
But I said, no,
Your gratitude is enough.
But, he walked to an old Piano,
And slowly,
Slowly,
Picked out a tune.
And he gained confidence.
And the room swelled in
New Orleans's jazz,
Of Basin and Beale Streets,
The muted horn,
And the clarinet.
And his fingers moved easily,
And he smited.
I once played in hotels,
For bands and in nightclubs.
But Time,
Yes, that old man,
Took my youth,
And others came and took my piano,
Leaving me with my bottle.
He cried,
And I cried.

I haven't seen much of him,
But, I heard he's playing
In a jazz ensemble.
At colleges,
On public television.

But, he carries a bottle,
If times ever again
Get hard.

JAMES C. KEENER, JR.
Class of 1980
WARMTH

February
The windows are frosted over with ice—
Crystal wrinkles.
Snowflakes dance on the hound-dog wind
That nips at everything and everyone.
As I gaze outside, I would gladly embrace the world
And chase the cold away,
But confined in my home I am content
To wait
For her.
I see a figure approaching trying to huddle in on itself.
I know this one.
Seeing her brisk step, I know that it is me she is coming
Home for.
Winter has reddened her cheeks and whitened her breath,
But I will fix that.
The door groans open
And she slips in on a shudder.
But before she can close it
I rush to enfold her in my arms.
At my touch she sheds her coat and hat,
Yet a tremble shakes her body.
I whisper into her ear,
"Easy, relax, I'll brush that chill away."
Calm engulfs her
And she sighs contentedly at my caress.
Pressed by the fatigue which has been frozen into her limbs,
She moves to the bedroom
Clutching my hand.
In a drowse halfway to sleep
She undresses and slides in between the sheets.
I slip in beside her.
Kissing her good night,
I smile as she breathes my name,

"Sweet Warmth,"
And drifts off to dreams of sunshine.
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“Sweet Warmth,”
And drifts off to dreams of sunshine.

MARK S. BRALEY
Class of 1979
I THINK

I think
Therefore I am
Not free
To believe.
Cold, logical
Call me Thomas
I need the proof.
To be blind
That is the key.
Take my eyes
Numb my brain
Break me down
To the clay
Of which I'm made
And pump me through
Your play-dough faith factory.
God knows I burn
To see
To know
To surrender
But
I think...

MARK S. BRALEY
Class of 1979

[TONIGHT]

Tonight
The Black Arts Concert with white people
Listening to Black boogie
It's all a joke
The Black wants to make it in the white world
While Whitney wishes he could get down
Like that Black cat up there
Why can't they be themselves
The music pounds
And the wave of bodies writhes
Likes snakes to the beat
Each one part of the pulse of the crowd
Each one being his own man.
The music and magic stop
The night's still young though—time to celebrate
"We all goin' get down Brown tonight
We goin' PARTY!" say de man at de mike
The pack o' people moves to de place an' dey all PARTY!
Some float in on the smoke they toked outside
Others waste themselves away at the PARTY!
Funny how these people lookin' for themselves
All like to mess their minds so they aren't themselves
But someone else
But me I'm different
Shit I can hold my beer
I can walk the straight line
(only my feets are crooked)
My mind's as pure and fresh as the blanket snow out there
Blanket beer in here (blankets my brain)
But man I'm cool I'm lucid
LU-CID
Ain't that how the Bro's would say it
Now if only I can get that handshake down
Hell this place is gettin' me down
The crowd's makin' me lonely
Go back to my room for some company—me
After all I been don’ all the talkin’ anyway—
To myself.
Turn on the light lookin the mirror
“Who are you man? Get outta here.”
Turkey don’t go
He just stares back
Him and his messed up hair and his screwed up eyes
(like he’s stoned)
“Well if you ain’t goin’ I’m goin’ to bed.
Maybe in the mornin’ my main man’ll be back. So get lost
chump.”
Crawl in bed look back at the mirror
Cat’s gone—probably went to bed too
Good thing
I can’t stand those turkeys
That try to be what they ain’t
Fit in where they don’t fit
Yeah a man oughta be himself
’Stead’ve a chump like that
“Hmph chump.”

MARK S. BRALEY
Class of 1979

LOVE-DRUNK

Hanging up the phone,
I sit back, stunned.
Blurry-eyed, my head is swimming
And your words whirl ’round inside.
It seems I drank too much of you
And now my stomach burns
And my mouth tastes of love-soured vomit.
An emptiness
As if my insides had been ripped from me
And sloshed into the gutter
Floods within.
I see faces passing by
Seemingly mocking with their unsympathetic stares
Laughing at my loneliness—laughing at the derelict
Slumped on the sidewalk
Your sweet wine seeps from the cracks
In my glass bottle heart
Mixing with the tears.
And in my grief
I hate the love
I hold for you.

MARK S. BRALEY
Class of 1979
**SCRATCHINGS**

Gathering all my wisdom and insight  
Bundling together my metaphors and similes  
I wandered aimlessly in search of the sages.  
To join the poets, the philosophers, the thinkers.  
Attempting to follow in their footsteps  
I was instead buried by them  
Covered by my own inadequacy.  
I who longed to be the mirror of truth  
The oracle  
Saw the truth reflected back  
In my scratchings  
Ignorant mimicry  
Futile mountings.  
How can I spout the knowledge of life  
Play the mystic spilling the secrets?  
I do not even know myself.

---

**AT THE ICE SHOW**

Lights out  
(Spectacles on)  
“Welcome to the 40th Annual Broadmoor Ice Review...”  
(Wasn’t it the 10th Annual?)  
Spotlights and drum roll as the music begins.  
(Her bones creak as she settles into her seat)  
The opening number, swirls of color, pools of motion  
(Her final number was years ago. Grey-haired now, she follows)  
Only with her eyes)  
Solo follows solo each in gliding grace.  
(It’s tougher going solo now)  
The music picks up—a spicy tempo  
(Her liver-spotted hands clap out the beat, 
Joining the crowd that once kept time for her)  
“Ladies and Gentlemen, the 1977 National Ladies Gold Medalist...”  
(1949 was a better year)  
The champion—slender, lithe, beautiful.  
(Unconsciously she tugs at the girdle she struggled into this Evening)  
A final spin, the music stops, the applause goes up  
(For a breathless moment it all comes back)  
The arena is almost empty now as the resurfacer scrapes  
The snow from the ice.  
(As if mesmerized by the machine as it crawls in ever-shrinking  
Circles, she waits and watches, frostbound)
DEPRESSION

Thick, dark night
Settles on the
Dwindling day—
Day filled
With depressing thoughts
Colorless moods that
Blacken the mind like
Coal dust in the lungs.
Willingly, no joyfully
I bask in the moonless murk.
Straining pupils see nothing.
A viscous soup
Absorbing all light.
No sight
No insight
Can penetrate this gloom
Summoned by me.

THE TREE

Roots firmly planted
Mother Earth from which he sprang
Won’t let go.
Each day’s light
Reveals the same old horizons
Never nearer.
Never farther.
Changing seasons
Once offered hints of adventure
But the years
Have clouded
And each spring was like the last
Each summer the same.
Perhaps he feels the cold of the winter a little more
And the nagging pain of Mother Earth clutching on.
Birds come and go
He watches alone
As they drift away
To places and things
He’s never seen—and never will.
Now bare and weather-worn
He withers and dies.
And Mother Earth from which he sprang
Won’t let go.

MARK S. BRALEY
Class of 1979
SONNET 17½

The wind whistles cold through unkept weeds
While bells—those hopeless, haunting chimes—
They toll the memory of one whose needs
Lay scattered between divines and dimes.

It’s sad to think that life’s cessation
(That fleeting moment that ends the earth,
And stars, and bars—mere man’s creation),
Is God’s bitter end for our net worth.

But, do we care if bodies die,
And rot beneath some slabs of stone,
And leave the children to grope and cry
For meaning and peace in lives now blown?

It still you doubt in times of strife;
The one’s demise gives others life.

CHRIS SCHROEDER
Class of 1980

ALABAMA, 1936

JAMES C. KEENER, JR.
Class of 1980
PORTRAIT

From the gate the house can still be seen,
Even with the fence and yard,
well overgrown in bushes and weeds.
Ivy grows wild up the sides of the house,
crawling over the boarded windows.
A tall maple stands to the left.
Now swaying and dropping leaves
in the fall breezes.

The porch boards are grey and broken;
The walls are older and weak.
The paint has long ago faded
as, now, does the sun.
Shadows play long in the east,
Now lengthening and imaging lovers
in memory of other autums.

Under the black gauze of dusk,
The porch swing rocks back and forth
with the rhythm of the trees.

WALK SOFTLY

Crossing uphill between highways
Through pine and brush oak
In spring,
Walk softly.
For, even then
The sticks and twigs
Brittled by winter
May still be broken.

JOSEPH G. WEBSTER
Class of 1980
REMEMBER ME

Photographs smile
More than they've worth and, a memory
Smiles for vanity,
Smiles for seduction.
Remember me.

Letters say
More for revision, if, that can be
Words in sincerity,
Words to compel you.
Remember me.

THANK YOU, LORD

In stench that’s there
And filth and slime,
Are fragments of a human mind
And hand and heart—
Rotting.

Progress is there,
And prone affords
A feast for creeping, wriggling hordes
Of parasites—
Gorging.

There's power there
In iron and steel,
But those who cash no asset feel
Save the wealth—in tons—
Rusting.

Yes, gods are there,
Both yours and mine,
All attributes of human kind,
All hope, all love—
Dying.

JOSEPH G. WEBSTER
Class of 1980

KEITH BOSTIC
Class of 1981
LOOKING FORWARD

Looking at the mountains and reflecting
That this long trek is nearly over,
All the false hopes, confusion, despair
Is almost a moment gone by.

The fading grass makes me wonder,
As it always has,
Will I only be like it?
Beauty without hope, passing.

The future gathers a lot of hope
For climbing, falling, loving.
The past, the future, the frown, the smile
Revolve around this instant: now!

So there's the sea, my home.
I turned back on it and I was alone,
But now I return to what I left behind—
It is still alive!

So, too, am I.

USELESS PRIZE

Come and go, come and go
Into the heart and out to the sea,
Bring back, bring back
All that you took for free.

Wild monkeys grope in the dark,
Grab for the nut
And die.
They cannot let go.

Need is a nut,
Desire a fist,
The sweeter the nut,
The tighter the grip.
FOOTFALLS IN THE NIGHT, PRAYERS OF LIGHT

The sun vanishes, evening sets in,
My night run begins,
My thoughts flow...

I start out fine,
The night breeze is cool and comforting,
My breathing comes easy—the air is crisp.
My pace picks up.
Dear Father in Heaven,
I commit myself to thee.
Thy Spirit is soothing,
Thy wisdom guides me.
Uphills are a little harder,
Though they will never discourage me.
I know that I will always make it to the top.
I keep running.
Dear Father, life has many trials,
The ways of the world are forever tempting me.
I will trust in thee,
I will keep believing.
As I turn the corner,
As a car races by—the exhaust fumes are
Choking me.
I keep running.
Dear Lord, as my life goes on,
I will face many troubles.
My ordeals may be many,
But I will have faith in thee.
There is a straight-away,
The fluorescent line follows the side of the road;
It glistens as I follow it.
I keep running by its edge.
Dear Father, let me follow the straight and narrow path
That will lead me
To eternal happiness.
Let me be guided by thee.

There are many pit-holes by the roadside
In the dark.
It pays to be wary, or else I might fall.
I keep running, carefully.
Dear Eternal Father, I pray
That thou wouldst keep me from harm.
Let me stay close to thee always,
Lest I fall from thy sight.
There is a big, steep, grueling hill.
It tries my confidence and my will to press on.
It tries to break me.
I keep plodding onward, with my goal in mind.
O, Lord, I pray
For steadfastness in thy gospel,
For patience to overcome the trials of time,
That I may always keep my eternal goal in mind.
There is a dark stretch of road
Where I can see nothing but darkness about me.
I hear only my footsteps in the night.
I keep running, for I see light ahead.
Almighty Lord, as I pass through Life's shadows,
When darkness and wickedness prevail around me,
Let me have faith,
Let thy light shine truth into mine eyes.
The last hill is always the toughest.
My body aches as I tred the final path.
I keep pushing my tired and weary body.
I will make it to the end.
O, Most Gracious Father, when Life's trials come to an end,
I pray for faith undying.
I long to reach my precious goal.
I will strive to follow thy ways, till the end of my days.
The end comes,
The running stops.
I am tired, yet, I feel exhilarated.
I have crossed the finish.

LISA M. REGEN
Class of 1981
I remember
One December
Afternoon
I was sitting at my desk,
Writing letters,
Sending cards
To friends that live afar.
Little Brother
Was playing with his stuffed bear,
Talking to it.
Now and then he would hum a little song
With childish glee and joy.
Silence,
All but the clock:
Tick-tock, tick-tock.
Little brother was tired of his bear,
And was now playing spy—he was watching me.
I kept on writing.
He got tired of me, so he went to his room.
Outside, I heard sounds.
Rain, gently falling
From the darkened sky.
Then it stopped.
Silence.
(Tick-tock, tick-tock.)
A car went by
Splattering water low and high.
Splash-whooooooooosh!
From a distance I heard someone whistling
“The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”
In my mind I sang along
“Glory, glory, hallelujah!”
Closer, closer, coming near.
Another car went by—whooooooooosh—drowning out
The footsteps of the whistling person.
(Glory, glory, hallelujah!)
A PLEA FOR MERCY

Darnjek slowly hobbled
Across the burning, burning sand.
Abruptly he stopped,
Sharply cocked his good ear
Towards the direction in which he could hear
A faint eerie, whining noise.
The Trakkers!
Run,
Thought Darnjek,
Run, run, run!
Faster! Must get away!
He awkwardly limped over a ridge,
Then stumbled into a massive maze of jagged rocks.
His crumpled, deformed, withered body
Found refuge in the fortress of rock.
Safety—but only for the time being.
The Trakkers
Rolled closer, with a steady humming
That droned on.
The Trakkers
Kept their wheels rolling 'round.
The Trakkers
Glided by, their droning sounds did finally die.
The Trakkers
Were no longer to be seen.
Darnjek was a Bomb Child,
Doomed for an eternity to be an outcast
By the all powerful and wicked
Trakkers.
Darnjek meekly climbed
Out of his life-saving abode.
He faced
The burning, burning sun.
He placed his bony hand in front of his distorted face
In a vain attempt to block
The burning, burning rays

LISA M. REGEN
Class of 1981
Of relentlessly scorching flame.
And he thought:
God have mercy on Humanity,
For Humanity has forgotten how.
Man will never learn unity,
He will always hate and fear.
God have mercy on Mankind,
For men are wicked, men are wrong.
I despair, for doom is near,
God Almighty,
Forgive us all.

Sometimes,
When I am alone,
Where no soul can hear me,
No one can see me,
I feel sun
Shining radiantly on my face.
I feel wind
Blowing caressingly in my hair.
I sit high atop a mountain
With billowing clouds,
Dreamlike and soft,
Drifting 'round about its
Majestic peak.
No birds call,
Not a single sound is heard.
I feel
The loneliness of my being.
Solitaire—
That's the game I play so well.
Alone now,
That's the way I'll stay.
Solitaire—
That's what I am.
THE BEAUTY OF IT ALL

As I was lying there watching the stars,  
the feeling of the soft grass beneath me  
had a very soothing effect.  
I could feel the tension leaving my body  
very swiftly.  

How relaxed the atmosphere was as I  
listened to the sounds the wind made  
softly rustling through tall,  
statuesque trees.  
Enveloped by the beauty of nature, its  
simplicity made me wonder.  

I can easily imagine myself standing  
upon a ledge thousands of feet above  
any other human.  
Alone, I could look deeply into my soul.  

Looking down from the summit of one of  
the most grand and majestic mountains  
in the world, an incomparable feeling  
rung through me.  

Alone, I stood in awe, as I wondered about  
the God who could create something  
so simple, and yet so beautiful.  
I experienced unequaled joy as I  
splashed water on my face  
from a cool mountain stream.  

Clear water was rushing down among the  
wild mountain flowers.  
The flowers that bloomed brilliantly into  
various, resplendent colors, were the background  
for small, scurrying creatures  
running back and forth. As I  

spread my blanket and opened  
the basket, I noticed something  
nice.  

It was a rising and falling sound—like music,  
coming from the trees.  
Listening to the intense cacophony of the birds,  
my mind wandered.  
I was suddenly walking along a desolate  
coast; feeling the shimmering sand between my  
toes. The only thing moving  
was a solitary seagull, swooping  
down on an unsuspecting fish.  

Waves gently lapped a weather beaten,  
paint-flecked boat.  
A small sand crab pecked from its burrow.  
I smiled, continuing to walk slowly  
with my hands in my pockets,  
I was contented.  

I watched the sun warily creeping over the  
horizon.  
It brought to mind a defiant hero.  
making his last valiant stand against  
an uncompromising foe.  

I started for my cabin before the chill of night  
had a real chance to settle in my bones.  
Burnt-orange colored flames licked around  
the fireplace.  
The crackling of the fire combined with the  
pleasant aroma of the steaks; sizzling  
slowly has a soothing effect on me,  
that few things can also accomplish.
What makes these things so wonderful to me? I guess it’s the beauty of it all.

If they only knew
That racial slurs and sexist jokes
Tend to affect a person’s performance
Maybe they would stop.
If they only knew
That all Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Females
Are here because they worked to get here
Are here because they were the best in their area
And not because of reverse discrimination
Maybe they would stop.
If they only knew
That this place is not just for Whites
That this place is not just for Males
That this place is not just for Anglo-Saxon Protestants
Maybe they would stop.
If they only knew
That professionalism
Is not racism
Is not sexism
Maybe they would stop.
If they only knew
Maybe they would stop.
Maybe they would stop
Hurting me.

HOWARD DAVIS, JR.
Class of 1982

DEXTER R. HANDY
Class of 1981
DREAMS

Darkness hushes with a shadowy coolness
As a whispering mist touches the pines about me
With a glistening slickness
In the moon's deep away light.
My mind burns weary and alone
Amidst the solitude,
So much of my life.
The memory holds no warmth of words
To chase away the damping greyness
That presses me.
The stillness quiets the thoughts of place and time.
The absolute and smothering night
Crushes the heart's fancy.
Life has no love
Save the caress of despair,
The kiss of robbing deceit.
The sun mocks with its warming touch,
Only darkness is honest
In its possession of nothing and cold aloofness.
Dreams are only illusions
To feed the starving minds of fools.
There can be no greater contempt than that
Held for oneself in the sad pursuit of these dreams.
Those who try to love and cherish
Are tormented for their blindness.
The folly of Man's existence
Is no one hears our cries of loneliness and desire
Or cares to.
The sadness of my life is truth expressed
And its end its only virtue,
This night I cross the river.

TODAY

Today I got a letter
From a wonderful girl
no less
It started out
in a typical way
But changed from me
to him

It's funny how easy things happen
when you're so far away
for so long

Strange
It wasn't painful
hardly sad

Today I got another letter
From a wonderful girl
no less
It started out
in a typical way
And ended in her poetry
so beautiful
and pure!

It's funny how easy things happen
when you're so far away
for so long

TONY WOLUSKY
Class of 1980

DONALD N. MYERS
Class of 1980
ETERNITY IN AN HOUR

The cold wind
Nips
At my face with
Bullets
Of instant moist.

A street lamp illuminates
Motionless
Dancers
Who shine and hide at my approach.

My foot disturbs
A rising ripple of white,
A wave of coolness clothed in
Symbolic Purity

And everywhere the cold, the twilight, the white-filled
Breeze cry out together

“Silence”;
“Surrender”;
“Sleep.”
WHEN THE BLUE ICE MELTS

It was a dusty land into which Jeb Ewill was being buried. His hastily built pine box would rest between his wife and his daughter. Other assorted relatives, near and distant, were sleeping away eternity nearby. There used to be a community a mile away, a farming community, much the same as Jaspar which was twenty miles west. The land had been used up by constant replanting of the same crop, and it wasn’t until the turn of the century that many of these dirt farmers had become exposed to the advantage of crop rotation. Even now, however, poor farming methods were ruining the land around Jasper and leading to its eventual demise. Such was the land in which Jason Ewill, Jeb’s son, survived.

The shovelfulls of dirt fell upon the pine box with hollow thuds. The sparse crowd muttered their individual amens and walked toward their vehicles. It was going to be a hot day, a dog day. The sun was already blistering at nine thirty in the morning. Every blade of grass, every leaf was as silent and solemn as the mourners. The ground was baked and radiated ripples of heat. Dust rose angrily beneath the shuffling feet.

Jason really didn’t feel any sorrow, at least not the kind of sorrow he had felt when his mother, Lindy, and then his sister, Melissa, had died. He just felt dry. His throat and mouth were coarse and scratchy. The little bit of anguish he had experienced came from observing the anguish of his Aunt Irma and Hattie, a second cousin. He really couldn’t understand why they had cried so much. For Jeb? For the death of another Ewill? For him, Jason?
Dust from the road began to swarm in silent clouds, like
faceless specters, beneath the wheels of the departing
vehicles. Jason hadn’t moved since the ceremony began and
now his Uncle Joe called out to him.

"Ya ready ta go, Jason?"
Jason twisted up his mouth, his train of thought shattered.
Nodding, he began a lethargic march to Joe’s 1930 black
Ford pickup. Irma stared after him, her head at an odd angle
and tears once again streaming down her face. Reaching the
truck Jason plopped into the worn, springy seat and leaned
against the door. Joe started the truck. The vehicle slid
noisily onto the dirt and gravel road and began its hesitant
journey home, a long ride home.

Melissa had been coughing steadily for half a day. The sun
had been down several hours when Jeb sent Jason for help.
Jeb had given up on every home remedy he knew of and
finally conceded in sending for Jewel, the black midwife
who had brought the child into the world just over a year
before. On that night, a year and so much more in the past,
Lindy had died in Jewel’s arms, too frail to survive again the
rigors of childbirth.
The setting, the conditions, everything was clear in Jason’s
mind. The house, uninsulated with a roof in desperate need
of repair. Repairs that Jeb had neglected. Even the boys,
Jason and his brother Stewart, never got around to them, Jeb
always finding something else for them to do. It was curious.
Was the house such a sanctuary that nothing should alter its
original timbers?
Rainy, fall weather finally imposed its malevolence upon
the members of the house. Each contracted an illness, but
Melissa was most affected. Her head cold transformed itself
quickly into pneumonia and she died before she could be
properly cared for. Jewel pulled the ragged wool blanket over
the child’s face, looked at the hawkish face of Jeb, and shook
her head. She didn’t understand him and didn’t care to.

Initially, Jeb did not take the deaths hard. It was later,
after the reality of losing his daughter had imbedded itself
into his slow brain that the effects of the deaths became
visible. His appearance, though bad before, became worse,
unsightly. The tobacco he chewed was allowed to drip out
the corner of his mouth and remain there, unwiped. He even
stopped wearing shirts; just overalls, the same overalls day in,
day out. The deaths finally stunned him, left him barely
functioning. Jeb became absent-minded and his temper
flared, especially when he was wrong and someone discovered
his mistake. What had once been simple tongue thrashings
toward Jason and Stewart turned into violent backhands. A
social call on the boys became all night and weekend drunks.
Under these conditions Jeb Ewill had died of tuberculosis,
and it was because of Jeb’s sudden transformation that Jason
was bewildered and unable to feel sorrow.

“I’m sorry, boy.” Joe leaned against the wheel and gazed
at Jason, evaluating the effect his words had on the youth.
“Hmmm.”
“If ya wants ta stay with us tonight ya can. We got that
bed on the porch.”
“Naw. Jest git me on back ta the house. I’ll be
awright.”
Silence covered the cab of the truck. Jason rolled up his
window as dust started to creep into his mouth. He bit at his
lower lip and kicked at the floor of the truck, his mind once
again racing. A tobacco wrapper crackled beneath his foot.
“Ya got ta plant soon, huh?”
“I guess.”
“Ya guess.”
The heat was becoming unbearable in the cab. Jason un­
wrapped the restraining bow tie from around his neck and
stuffed it into his front trouser pocket. As he undid his top
button he pulled at his collar and twisted his neck. Joe
looked at the boy again.
“When ya goin’ ta plow?”
WHEN THE BLUE ICE MELTS

“Don’t know if I will.”
“What?”
“Said, ‘Don’t know if I will.’”
“What.”
“Ain’t gonna keep sayin’ it.”
“Ya ain’t plantin’?”
“Don’t know, got things planned.”
“Things? Like?”

Jason pursed his lips, not really wanting to talk. He wiped his face on his coat sleeve.

“Well, boy? Ya got things planned? Ya too good fer that farm?”

“Ain’t sayin’ that.”

The tobacco wrapper bounced between his feet. Did Joe have the vent on? There seemed to be dust filling the cab. His throat was burning.

“Well, boy, I guess yer papper dies and you jest gonna leave that farm. The farm that yer gran’pappy, yer pappy, and you was born on. Where they worked and lived and died. Ya gonna fergit that and go traipsin’ off.”

“Ain’t said I was traipsin’ nowhere.”
“Well, what ya gonna do?”
“Maybe see Stewart.”
“Stewart?” Joe twisted his head sharply toward Jason, genuinely puzzled. “Stewart? Ya don’ even know where he is.”

“I'll fin’ him.”
“And then what?”

Stewart wasn’t fond of the beatings which seemed to come more often. He also wasn’t fond of any form of labor, farm work or otherwise. One day while in town to get a harness strap, Stewart decided not to return home. Jeb barely missed him.

Almost a month since Stewart’s departure (almost three since Melissa had died) a letter arrived from Kentucky. No-body but Jason was much excited. The letter told how well Stewart was doing, working in a factory. The money he was making, the letter disclosed, was regular and not seasonal.
A week and a half later another letter arrived, this one containing money so Jason could catch a bus and see his brother. (He sure mus’ be doin’ good!) Being winter, and since nothing was pressing, Jason left to spend two weeks with Stewart. He quickly avoided a backhand from Jeb as he raced out the door.

The address Stewart had written in his letter was that of a rundown tenement house in a more rundown section of town. The sky was gray from factory smoke, and even the snow covering the houses and street was gray. Jason tried to make himself believe that Stewart was here temporarily, until better housing could be found.

Jason climbed the rotting stairs to Stewart’s room and hesitantly knocked on the door. Jason’s feet seemed bolted to the floor when his brother answered the door. A mirror image of Jeb stood before him. Stewart looked as rundown as the building in which he lived.

As it turned out, Stewart’s job was sporadic. The only reason he had sent for Jason was for companionship. His bold venture beyond Jasper had failed miserably and he longed for his brother to give him encouragement, even advice. None came, at least not the words Stewart wanted to hear.

On the fifth day of Jason’s visit, he and his brother picked up some food at a store down the block from Stewart’s apartment, put it in an old sack, and headed, on foot, toward the country. Upon leaving the city they followed trails through a nearby forest.

Jason watched the fog escape from his mouth everytime he exhaled. He sucked in some air and wondered if there was now fog inside him. He looked ahead at Stewart who was slowly plodding along, taking in the surroundings.

A mile or so into the woods the brothers came upon a vast clearing. Leaving the trail, Jason walked onto the frozen lake.
WHEN THE BLUE ICE MELTS

He walked carefully so as not to lose his footing on the ice beneath the snow. Eventually he stopped and sank to his knees. Jason rubbed the snow away from the patch of ice in front of him. The ice was blue. Blue ice. It was brilliant under the steady glare of the noon sun. One huge sheet of glass covering a black eternity. Two separate layers, but the same, the same substance, the same being. Alike, yet different.

A crisp, splintering crack startled Jason. The lake was moving beneath him. He jumped quickly to his feet and ran toward shore, ice giving way beneath his pounding footsteps. On land Jason looked back over the lake. Where he had knelt and where he had run, chunks of ice bobbed up and down in rhythmic silence. In several weeks the ice and water would again become the same. When the blue ice melted the two layers would no longer be separate and distinct.

"Boy, ya better listen to me. Ain't no use runnin' off and ruinin' yo' life."
"Do ya know what yer talkin' 'bout?"
"I do! An' ya better hear me. Ya got a house, ya got lan'. Ya can be somethin' on yo' own, if ya stick to it. Make the lan' work, don' run from it!"
"Ain't nobody goin' ta do any good on that lan'!" Jason retorted. "It's po', always has been, always will be. It's gettin' worse ev'ry year."
"The gov'ment'll he'p ya out. They got programs, why..."
"Well, I ain't gonna be 'round! I'm leavin' that ol' junk of a farm!"
"Boy, that's sacrilege!"
"What ya know 'bout sacrilege? Ya ain't been near a church since ya was marrid and ya wouldn't a done that if ya didn't haf ta!"
Joe swung a backhand at Jason's chest. Expecting such a reprisal, Jason scrunched up against the door. The fist glanced up against his arm.
"Ya better watch yo' mouf!"

WHEN THE BLUE ICE MELTS

Jason sank farther down into his seat and folded his arms. He looked at the coarse, worn material of his sleeve, fingering it thoughtfully.
"It's true."
"'Yo' pappy done say ta me, he say, 'Joe, ya gotta look after my boy. He all I got lef'. Ain't gonna be nobody on this farm when he go. Ya gotta see him good. Don' let nothin' happen ta him.' He cared 'bout ya alot."
"He ain't cared fer nothin' 'cept his plug a tobaccy and his drink."
Joe swung another fist and Jason again slipped it.
"I ain't gonna have ya talkin' bad 'bout my brother and yo' pappy! Now, ya betta think and think hard!" Joe's face was turning red and his voice was a screech. "Ya ain't gonna be like Stewart, runnin' off! Not lettin' nobody know nothin'! He's prob'ly dead now! Ya don' know! Ya don' know nothin'! Or do ya think ya do? Huh? Answer me, boy!"
"I ain't talkin' no mo'."
"Do ya?"
The crunch of the truck's wheels droned steadily in the ensuing silence. Joe wondered if what he was saying was making sense to his nephew. Jason just wondered. Joe continued:
"Yer pappy might not always been right. Iffen that's what ya think, ya can do betta. Ya can learn from his mistakes. What he did wrong ya don' haf ta do. But it ain't gonna he'p ya runnin' off, off ta somewhere ya know nothin' 'bout. Ya take up where ya pappy lef off and ya be betta. Think, boy!"
After another minute of silence the truck stopped in front of a deteriorating, wood-frame, tin-roofed house. A small stable holding two horses and a cow stood some distance behind the house. All three of the animals watched the Ford door open. Jason kept the door from closing with his hand, his feet hanging over the running board.
"This is yo' house, yo' lan'. Go on git out!"
WHEN THE BLUE ICE MELTS

Joe's voice was quiet, unharsh. As an afterthought he added as Jason's feet hit the ground, "Remember, ya can come up ta the house if ya wants ta."

"I ain't gonna be here long enough it takes me ta walk ta yo' house."
Joe's eyes flared and he tightened his grip on the steering wheel.
"Ya betta think, boy!"
"Jest shut up an' git outta here!"
Jason slammed the truck's door and shuffled toward the house. Joe sat staring at the back of the boy's head and then drove away.
Images swirled inside Jason's head. Flashes of the past slammed into his brain so rapidly that he dropped to his knees. The house bounced before his eyes. The house. The house where his mother had died, silently, slipping from Birth to Death. The house where Jewel had nursed Melissa to life and where Melissa had passed away in a spasm of coughing. The house where his father had succumbed to the equally gruelling coughing spasms of tuberculosis. The house where three generations of Ewill's had faced the challenges of nature and all her adverse forces. Where they had eked out a living, learned survival and existence. That house was Life and Death for so many Ewills.

Jason stumbled to his feet and discarded his coat, letting it fall into a cloud of dust. The sun warmed his neck and shoulders as he unbuttoned his shirt and dropped it on top of his coat. Not a cloud was in the sky.

Jason walked to the stable and soon had one of the horses harnessed to a plow. With effort he took the reins in his hands and led the animal up and down the ragged field. He began to sweat and his shoulders strained under the plow leads. Slowly, his mouth and face twisted and tears streamed down his face.

The sky was a brilliant blue, so hot and clean that it looked like ice. Blue ice. As Jason began another row, whispy, willowy white clouds slowly began to form. The blue ice was melting.

JAMES C. KEENER, JR.
Class of 1980
REFLECTION

I stared out the window trying to grab hold of something with my eyes to give my brain the fuel for a dream. All I had was my own dim reflection with a background of streetlights that pulsed their glimmer and shadows across me every few seconds. The shafts of concrete rushed past with anonymous trees, blurred and indiscernible. I sat back in the plastic seat of the Greyhound and closed my eyes. The foam box for a Filet-O-Fish crunched as I shifted my feet, and the bus hummed and slid along the highway, stuttering as we started to climb a hill. The darkness demanded I sleep, but the old woman in front of me continued to jabber, and far in the back the teenager’s cassette recorder whined with the crunch of heavy metal. Not now, I thought. Music is OK, but I’m gonna be dead if I don’t get any sleep. The seat creaked and pushed at me with its obscene pattern of bumps and buckles as I shifted my body. If it wasn’t the black plastic armrest digging a groove in my arm, my legs were twisted in such a manner that blood ceased to flow to them and they began to throb and quiver for lack of air.

I snorted in disgust through clenched teeth and sat up. I let my head lean against the tinted coolness of the glass and as I did, a small itch inside the back of my head asserted itself and grew. It spread till it felt the size of a saucer and breathed to the beat of my heart. I let my eyes close now and let the feeling flow within me. Like a syrup slowly coating the inside of my skull, it moved until it came down my forehead with a pleasant numbness. It warmed the back
laughing as he brought his hands up. Perhaps this was to signify that a punch had been thrown at that point of the story. My Dad laughed, mouth closed about a cigarette, hand clasped behind his head, and head tilted back. The engine rumble, the cigarette smoke, and the laughter filled the otherwise empty street with life and reality.

My father stepped back from the bus and waved as the doors closed. The engine roared as it kicked in and the bus moved away. He followed it with his eyes awhile, standing there with his feet planted on the concrete. As the bus glistened for a last time in its universe of air, lights, and riveted seats before it disappeared over the H street hill, he looked away and let his eyes catch at places along the street. Up a few blocks a garbage can rang as it rolled away from a scavenging dog too cold to be careful. The cigarette glowed a bright red and crackled as he inhaled, staring at the deli’s window. He ground it quickly beneath his foot and walked to where we lived.

He lowered his head slightly as he came in the front door, past the mailboxes, and through the second skeleton-key lock door into the front hall. He started to climb the two flights of wooden stairs, and I heard him when he passed Marion’s place on the second floor and headed up to our apartment. I could hear the gradual tired steps, the clump of his boots, the creak of the bannister when he leaned on it, and the scratch of the key unlocking our door. His heavy blue jacket fell into the chair by the door, which scraped along the floor as it closed. A pencil of white appeared on the hallway floor as the light came on.

I sat up in bed asking myself if I should get up and walk to him. He was working overtime all week and I hadn’t seen him for a few days, so I knew I wanted to and slipped out of bed carefully. I didn’t want the springs creaking and waking up my sister in her crib, parallel and a few feet from me. I placed my feet down gently as I walked the floor, feeling for the boards that would give me away. It was a good game and made me feel clever and devious, like a spy.

The sound of water rushing as it filled the copper kettle, the slight burst of flame as the burner came on, the muffled clunk as the kettle came to rest above the heat, and the clink of glass as my Dad took out the instant coffee and sugar bowl, all tugged at my sleeve and advised caution. In the den, which was just before the kitchen, I leaned on the Motorola with the twisted gold rabbit ears, and tip-toed across the concentric hoops of grey and brown of the oval rug and crossed it. It had seemed a broad impenetrable vastness at first, but I had conquered it like a Columbus. I now stood in the shadow by the wooden arch that drew the line between kitchen and den. I was suddenly unsure if I should go in. What if Dad got mad at me? I knew I wasn’t supposed to be up, so I stood there awhile watching my father and gathering my courage.

He lit a cigarette in the burner beneath the kettle and sat down at the kitchen table. There were no curtains on the windows, only a yellow shade stuck on pin and groove which was rolled up at the top as if asleep. The view was of a brick-sided alley and a rooftop across the alley. I heard the scraping of the clothesline pulley across the roof, as the wind tugged at the rope. The light from across the street and the moon spilled into the kitchen freely and unevenly. The moon was by far the stronger and even overcame the palid light from the swinging lightbulb that hung from the ceiling. The metal bead chain clinked against the bulb whenever a draft buffeted it. It was so quiet now when my father stopped moving that I was tempted to hold my breath lest I be discovered.

His face seemed so tired, his eyes three quarters open, so empty, so sad. I didn’t understand why my Dad wasn’t smiling, so, as a child will, I dismissed what I did not understand and ignored it. Sweat had darkened a band around the neck of his workshirt and matted his jet black hair to his head. His pants were a sallow blue, torn at the cuffs with patches of black oil and grease of the subway tunnels.
He still hadn't seen me as he poured the water into his coffee cup. He bent over, expressionless, and sucked a cigarette at the corner of his mouth every few seconds like a diver on compressed air.

I let my eyes wander, as I carefully adjusted my feet on the floorboards, to the marshmallow roundness of the Cold-spot fridge that reflected a ghostly yellow in the burner's glow. I decided that it was now that I would make my move before my Dad saw me and ruined it. I saw my chance when his back was to me as he stood before the kitchen table, stirring the cream.

I let my bare feet touch the green and yellow of the kitchen tile floor methodically and with stealth-like precision. I looked down at the pattern of L's and X's that had often caught my mind as I sat fidgeting before my oatmeal in the lazy morning hours, and contemplated the way the L's would invert suddenly and melt into some X that would slide about to achieve a new shape until it disappeared beneath the sink. I always wanted to lift the sink up and see just what it did become, because it nagged on my curiosity.

I came up behind him and grabbed my father about the waist so as to secure him, but he didn't flinch. He merely reached back, grabbed my arm, and totally immobilized me.

"Uncle!" crossed my lips quickly.

"Wadaya doin' outta bed?"

"I couldn't sleep," I said, and then added, as if to smoothly change the subject, "Ya wanna play cards?"

"Ya too easy," he said, smiling so wide his eyes closed a little.

"No sir!" I tried to say as defiantly as I could muster. Shaking his head as if in disbelief that I could want to lose yet another game of Gin, he fished out a Bicycle deck of cards from a drawer full of S&H green stamps, scissors, Scotch tape, matchbooks, odd screws, and electrical tape. I sat down across from him as he shuffled the deck. It was an older deck, too fat from the bends and creases and too grey at the edges from the hands of a hundred dealers. They were all there though, and that's all that mattered. As my Dad dealt them out, I filled him in on the major points of my day.

"I went down G street hill in a go-cart me and Ricky Sweeney made and I went so wicked fast and it was funner than anything," I said as beneath the table I swung my legs, too short to reach the floor. My father smiled and nodded behind first the steam of his coffee and then the smoke of his cigarette.

"I want ya ta make sure ya make ya bed when ya get up in the morning. Ya mother shouldn't have to be making ya bed anymore, ya old enuff ta be doin' it yaself."

"OK Dad."

"Ya been fightin' again?"

"No, Honest to God, I ain't."

"D'ya win?"

Pause. "Ya."

"Wadaya fightin' for?" he said, as we picked up our cards. I swallowed (too loud, I thought) and looked at the red and black shapes on the cardboard. I focused my eyes on the Jack of diamonds as I tried to tell him.

"It was a set-up job," I said, "Somebody pushed John into me yesterday and everybody said 'I wouldn't take that from him' and Patrick Skerry bullied us into it. I had to offer him out and we went down to J street lot after school today and John went down right away when I pushed him and I felt lousy about it, but everybody said I was cool."

I looked up from my still unarranged cards to see what my father had on his face.

"Were ya scared?"

I just nodded my head and looked down at the white and speckled table and then back at my cards. I tried to explain the butterflies in my stomach the night before, the way I was so jumpy and hyped up on that walk to school, the way the kids talked to me (badgering and supporting), and how that
day in Sister Elaine’s class everybody was talking about the fight except John and me. We were dead silent, looking cool, but really too scared to talk. But all I could say in response was, “Ya I was as scared as anything.”

He seemed to understand everything I had felt and consoled me beyond any long drawn out talk by just saying, “It’s OK, don’t worry about it. It’s all over.”

Before I could think to say anything, my Dad Ginned on me and asked, “How many ya got?”

I got stuck with some picture cards and my father laughed. He grabbed the back of my neck and shook me saying, “Ya too easy, kid. Make sure ya get rid of those cards after about ten draws if you can. Ya gotta learn that kinda stuff if ya ever want ta get a feel for the game and be any good.”

As my father shuffled the cards, I noticed his workgloves on the table. They’re a faded brown, splotches of oil darken the palms, and they’re stretched at the wrist. I always wanted to be like my Dad so badly that I’d mimicked his mannerisms from the way he’d cross his legs and lean against the wall with his right shoulder to the way he spoke and how he cared so much for his family like he did, and felt the inner satisfaction of a day’s work for a day’s pay. As the cards riffled and clacked the table, I reached over and picked up my father’s gloves. They were too big for me and my hands seemed to get lost in them.

I looked up for approval and my Dad just looked at me for a long time. I didn’t understand why he takes them from me and says, “I don’t want ya wearin’ these gloves ever. Don’t ever think about doin’ the same as me. I want better for my kids.”

He looked so mad when he spoke, it had scared me. I couldn’t ever remember him being that way. Before I could think, he smiled at me and said he was sorry. I hadn’t done anything wrong; he had just had a bad day at work. I opened my mouth to ask him why couldn’t he explain to me, since I wanted so much to know, but the words would not come.

It was as if I had forgotten how to speak. The thought reeled inside my mind and I needed so much to ask, I needed so much to understand, but I was gagged. As I drowned in my terrible desire to know, I stepped away from myself and I ceased to hear what was going on. The table did not scrape as the coffee cup brushed against it, the howl of the wind was stilled, and my own breath stopped. My eyes saw myself as I sat there, and I felt suddenly alien to this place. I didn’t belong here. I was an intruder into my own life’s past. The idea of a past and how much the scene was not the present at all started to filter into me as the colors started to spill away until the whole vision was just a bright light. Reality hit me and made me open my eyes.

I was startled to feel the sunlight in my face and hear a man beside me as he spoke to me as if he had been doing so for some time, but I had been ignorant of it. I soon realized he was talking to me, and that it had been the warm light and his monotonous interpretation of the way gas stations were located to reflect geographic and economic statistical analysis that had awoken me. I was dreaming, certainly, but I could not remember what of. The deeper I searched, the farther the specifics escaped me.

As the man looked at me, in silence, I realized he wanted some kind of sign.

I said, “Sure, I guess that makes a lot of sense.”

He smiled and began the drone again. I nodded with a smile as he spoke and could not shake off a feeling I had awoken with. I felt like everything fit good, and I kept the smile as I looked out the window at the familiar buildings I had known as a child. It was good, I thought. Soon I would be home and that was all that mattered. My Dad would be proud of me, I thought, and that’s all that mattered.

TONY WOLUSKY
Class of 1980
The rattle of his sabre and the clip-clop of his pony’s hoofs on the baked mud were the only sounds that he was aware of. The vast plain in front of him seemed void of life. The tall grass, burned brown by the scorching sun, swayed and rolled like waves on an ocean. And from a distance he would have looked like a small boat making its way alone across that empty brown sea.

The bill of his shako masked his face in shadow as he rode half-sleep. He seemed oblivious to the world around him and let the pony pick its own way along. A harsh croak from somewhere above startled him into pulling up and peering out to find who had disturbed his solitude. Off to his left he could make out a dark bird whirling and wheeling high above as if part of a ballet. The older troopers called it the dance of death and so he paused to watch the spectacle. As he lifted his head one could see that he was little more than a boy. His was not a face that had yet felt a razor, nor were his features yet angular enough to proclaim his manhood. The older men back in camp often teased him about his youth, and the sergeant-major had more than once been questioned regarding his youngest trooper’s age. He claimed to have been thirteen at his enlistment, which was almost true then and was now no longer true. The shock of hair his mother had once described as “dirty-blond” was always in his eyes and accentuated his youthful looks. But the boy’s laughing blue eyes seemed to have the wisdom of an old campaigner. He had drilled like the rest of them until they all dropped from exhaustion. He had taken his turn at the flogging post for unshined boots and improperly groomed mounts. His proudest moment had come when the drill sergeant had proclaimed him a trooper with the rest of the recruits. Shortly afterward they were all packed off to join General Gordon in China, who had need of troopers, or so it was said.

Looking beneath the buzzard the boy could see the remains of a farm hut. It was a familiar scene: the burned thatch, the bloated bodies, the wreckage of war, all of which he had seen before. Nor did he care who had committed the atrocity. It might be the work of the Taipings, or bandits, or Manchus, or even British soldiers who had had more than their share of gin. It didn’t matter because what was done was done and he could do nothing to make amends. Besides they were only Chinese peasants, and were so treated even by their own government. He was a British soldier serving the Queen.

As he rode on he mused over this thought and it gave him pride and purpose. The words of his drill sergeant came back to him: “A soldier must remember four things above all:

*Shoot straight*,
Obey your officer,
Keep clean,
And honor the Queen”

Yes, he was a soldier of the Queen, and more than that, for the silver aiguilette on his right arm proclaimed him a courier.

At the moment he bore dispatches from General Gordon to Colonel Nelson in Chih-ho with the 15th Foot and the 11th Hussars. With luck he would be in Chih-ho by the evening after next. But for now he was more interested in finding water. This was not easy for drought had stricken the land, adding to the misery of the peasants. Between war and famine the peasants’ lot was hard.

Riding for the rest of the day and part of the night brought the boy to what the map indicated was the river Huai. But where a river should have flowed there was only a trickle
flanked by steep banks. He filled his canteen from a muddy pool close to the edge of the riverbank. After seeing to his pony, he allowed himself to rest from the long ride. Laying down under an ancient mulberry tree he was soon fast asleep.

So sound was his sleep that he did not wake at dawn as he intended; he slept on while the sun’s heat evaporated the dew. It was the sound of voices that roused him. He glanced in the direction of the sounds, and saw through sleep-bleared eyes the forms of half a dozen horsemen about 200 yards away. Whether they were Manchu or Taiping was immaterial. Friend was often as treacherous as foe. All that he could tell was that they were not British, and that was enough.

Scrambling to his feet, he mounted and turned in the direction of the river, hoping that he would not be spotted. But a shout proved his hope in vain. Together he and the pony slid down the mudbank and splashed across the muddy trickle. But when within a dozen yards of the opposite bank the pony became stuck and sank past his fetlocks in the quagmire. Cursing, the boy leaped from its back and into the ooze to pull his mount free.

On the bank the horsemen pulled up and shouted in a strange sing-song tongue the boy could not understand. At first they beckoned, but when the boy’s intentions became obvious, the horsemen began to bluster and wave their weapons. From where he stood the boy could make out no distinguishing uniforms. Most likely they were Chinese bandits who would kill for the buttons on his uniform, or for the satisfaction of killing a British soldier.

Little by little, with pleads and tugs, the pony drew itself clear of the mud and toward the opposite bank. Two shots rang out. Both sent mud flinging but did no harm. A third sent the boy’s shako spinning. The rest of the horsemen spurred forward, waving great swords and curved bows. With one final effort the boy and pony heaved themselves out of the slime and scrambled up the opposite bank followed by shouts and arrows. The latter were as useless as the former thanks to the bandits’ struggling horses. Upon reaching the top of the bank the boy tried to remount but in doing so provided a mark for an arrow from one of the leading bandits.

The force of the missile staggered the boy and his shoulder exploded with pain. Crawling into the saddle, he kicked the pony into a gallop just as the leading horseman reached the opposite bank. With only one hand free to hold the reins, he could not draw his horse-pistol to defend himself. So he rode. The pony, sensing the danger, leaped forward like a cannon shot to out-distance the lead bandit. Pausing only for the hindmost of their rabble to catch up, the bandits set off at a gallop after the courier. The boy raced ahead of them across an open meadow and headed for a thicket. Winning the thicket he turned the pony aside and rode toward a hollow where the undergrowth was thickest. He slipped from the creature’s back leading it into the dark shadows.

Once inside, he sank to his knees as the pain overwhelmed him. Pulling the dangling shaft from his shoulder was almost too much for him, but he managed without crying out. His eyes narrowed as he listened to the approaching hoofbeats. Stumbling to his feet, he drew the clumsy pistol from its saddle holster, and leaned against the pony for support. His fingers tensed as he closed them around the grip and trigger. His thumb forced the hammer into the cocked position. Yet even as he did so, the bandits passed his hiding place without slackening their pace and were soon beyond earshot.

He replaced the pistol and desperately sought his canteen. The water seemed as smooth as silver rushing down his parched throat. He did not stop until half the canteen was empty. Then leading his pony cautiously out of the thicket, he remounted with difficulty and headed off in the direction opposite from the one he guessed the bandits had taken. The boy hoped to circle wide enough to avoid meeting his pursuers again.
The wound had become a throb which he tried to ignore by talking softly to the pony. He paid no attention to the crimson liquid which had soaked the back of his tunic. Nor did he notice the flecks of blood on the saddle. He simply rode. He was aware only of the pony's motion and the blazing sun rising in the sky. By noon he long since finished the canteen. His head swam with heat, pain, and the buzzing of flies. He fought to control his thoughts, to remember his errand. He tried to focus his eyes on a building ahead of him. But it seemed as though he were looking through a fishbowl. The ride toward the building seemed to last an eternity. He did not hear the voice as he slid from his saddle. His only thought was to grip the reins tighter with his good hand. Finally his consciousness surrendered to the blackness that surrounded him.

When the boy awoke he was lying on his back in a bed of straw looking at a thatched roof. His eyes were slow adjusting to the darkness. His tunic was gone and there was no sign of his boots. He rolled to one side to raise himself up, but the pain in his shoulder stabbed him like a knife and caused him to cry out. Fear grew in him as he listened to approaching footsteps. He looked up and met a pair of eyes that regarded him with intense curiosity. The eyes were almond-shaped and almost black. The face they belonged to was round and smooth and topped by a mat of coarse black hair. The stature of the visitor was short and slender. There was no evidence of famine in the face which turned and spoke to someone nearby in that sing-song the boy could not understand. When it turned back to the boy, it grinned so broadly that the eyes were almost completely hidden. The boy grinned back at the face and suddenly all his fear seemed to disappear.

He remained with the peasant family for three days to recover his strength. In that time the mother tended his wound and gave him a rice porridge with bits of pork to eat. He saw little of the father, who worked the fields all day and returned only at dusk to take his supper. The son, whose face had first greeted him, worked the fields with his father but returned earlier to gather the fowl and tend the livestock, which included the courier's pony. The British courier found all his belongings had been carefully preserved, his pony cared for, and his tunic washed and mended.

At nights he would sit on the stoop of the farm hut with the peasant boy. They spoke no words but simply sat and grinned at one another as if they shared a secret. One boy would produce a reed flute and play a slow, almost sad melody that seemed to come from within the soul of this sad land. In his turn the courier would take out a battered harmonica from his tunic sleeve. He knew all the old cavalry tunes and gave lively renditions of each. But his favorite was an old Irish ballad, "Gary Owen." And so they would sit and laugh, or play their different music and laugh some more. But no word was spoken until the third night after the flight from bandits. The British Queen's soldier sat on the stoop as usual looking across the darkened valley. The only sounds were those of the crickets and frogs. He was about to turn in when he heard a different sound. It was the soft echo of a bugle playing taps, and suddenly the courier realized he must go. He spoke the name, Chih-ho. His pronunciation was poor, so he had to repeat himself. Finally light dawned in the almond eyes. Nodding rapidly, the peasant boy pointed to the north-west and repeated the name. Then he turned his back to the courier and went into the dark hut leaving the courier alone on the stoop.

On the morning of the fourth day the courier took his leave of the peasants. The father and son were already in the fields so as best he could he professed his thanks to the kind woman who had nursed him. He laid fifteen shillings on the hearth and regretted that he did not have something more fitting to give. As he turned to say goodbye, the woman, understanding his intention, caught up his hand and pressed it between her own. Then she touched the sandy hair on his forehead spoke words that, though he could not translate,
he understood. Instead of answering, he simply lowered his eyes and turned away.

As the boy rode he became aware of increasing activity. The drought had not hit this land as hard, nor had the war. He saw rice paddies and trees. He saw the peasants working the land with their water buffalo. He saw farm huts dotting the countryside. Life seemed everywhere. He did not pause until he came to a knoll which he climbed to have a better look. Just as the other boy had indicated, the courier could see a city not far away. By nightfall he would be in Chih-ho.

Upon delivering his dispatches, the young courier was quizzed by the colonel about everything, including his age. Afterward he reported to a surgeon to have the wound checked. But the surgeon could find no problems so the boy was returned to duty. Within a week the boy was again carrying dispatches, this time back to General Gordon in Wuchang. Before leaving he borrowed eight shillings from a drummer in the 15th to buy a bottle-green silk scarf such as the ones he had seen the Chinese ladies wear in the city. This accomplished, he set out on the same route he had come.

About noon he reached the knoll that overlooked the fields. The land was green and lush yet something was odd; there was no one in the fields. He had a cold sinking feeling in his stomach. The boy hurried the pony down the other side of the knoll and along the narrow path that ran between the paddies. He saw the corpse of a water buffalo along the way and quickened his pace. Passing the burned-out huts, he saw not a few bodies lying about as if they were dolls carelessly thrown aside by some giant child. Overhead was the familiar wheeling ballet of the scavengers. He urged the pony into a gallop as the anxiety mounted in him. The blood was pounding in his ears and the pony's flanks were lathered as he pulled in front of the thatched hut. But the scene was all too familiar. The hut had been gutted and the roof fallen in. The smoke stung his eyes, and in places he could see embers still glowing. Except for a few chickens, nothing moved. There was an eternity of silence. Then a sob.

Leading the pony to the rear of the stable he found the body of the woman. Over her prostrate form knelt the boy with the almond eyes, his face buried in his hands, his small body wracked with sobs. The young courier watched without moving or making a sound. The pony softly nuzzled his master's shoulder, not understanding the tears in the eyes of the Queen's soldier.

Together the two boys placed the body of the mother in the family tomb along side that of the father who had been struck down in the fields. Struck by whom? The courier did not know, nor did it matter. As the Chinese boy performed the last rites as demanded by his teachings, the British boy placed the green scarf in the woman's hands. Then he walked back to the stable where he waited with the pony. No words were spoken when the other boy returned. The courier helped the peasant up into the saddle and mounted behind. As the pony turned toward the West where General Gordon waited at Wuchang, the peasant boy took the reed flute from under his cotton shirt. And the only sounds that could be heard as they rode into the gathering dusk was the rattle of a sabre, the clip-clop of the pony's hooves, and the sad melody of a reed flute.
Honorable Mention

HEATHEN

I can't remember the last time I prayed. Somewhere during the years of sifting through the tangle of ideologies and beliefs that were thrown at me in my youth, my faith slipped away. I can, however, remember the last time my father asked me to go to church.

"You coming to church with us today, Heathen?", he asked as he smiled and tweaked my ear.

He was a big man, my father—over six feet tall, as opposed to my slight frame of five feet, seven inches. In sixth grade I had a friend tell me how he wished that he had a dad as big and strong as mine. He was a football coach, which added that extra sparkle to the image we held in our young minds. I remember how proud I was to have such a father. But as I grew older, my childhood perceptions dimmed, and that special pride faded with them.

"I don't know, Dad. I have some work I should probably do," I said, avoiding his eyes. Though he was smiling, I knew that those eyes, clear and blue, carried that pained, pleading expression. Those eyes, always trying to see through to what was right, but at the same time, like the eyes of a faithful German shepherd, never seeing anything but his master—never doubting, never questioning.

"Well, you'll just go to hell, I guess," he said, the smile never leaving his face.

That was a funny thought. I'd stopped believing in heaven, so why should I be afraid of hell? But glancing up at my father, I could see his disappointment showing through, and I gave in sighing, "Ah, I might as well go."

We arrived at church a little early, so there was time to mingle a little before going in to sit down. All the wives were hugging and jabbering like a bunch of hens. Every once in a while you'd catch a phrase: "Praise the Lord!", "I've been praying sooo hard for you," "We've really been blessed." And everyone was full of smiles and compliments. It all reminded me of the Beatles' song, "Eleanor Rigby," and about her "wearing a face that she keeps in a jar by the door." Well, here we all were wearing our Sunday faces.

It happened that this Sunday, my father was scheduled to be a reader, so throughout the service he was a little fidgety. What I felt was more like dread. He'd read in church before, and each time I was like a nervous mother watching her child perform in the school play. I always went away feeling disappointed, even a little ashamed. It's not that he was stupid, it's just that in his effort to sound like a good speaker, he would enunciate each syllable to the point of sounding like a pre-recorded operator on the telephone. And he'd trip over words or place emphasis where it didn't belong, the overall effect being that he sounded like he'd been raised on a ranch in Montana—which he had been. I think the knowledge of that fact, combined with the suspicion that people saw him as the big, dumb, football player, accounted for his attempts to sound intelligent rather than natural. Whatever the reasons for his reading style, the results, in my opinion, left something to be desired.

While he fidgeted and I dreaded, the service droned on through the preliminaries, with me spitting out the appropriate phrases at the appropriate times. The words had become meaningless, even in the modernized version. I'd said them so many times that I found I could daydream about something else and not miss a line. I even had Father Pallberg's parts memorized.

"The Lord be with you," intoned Father Pallberg.

"AND ALSO WITH YOU," boomed my father next to me.

I could feel my face turn red. He always replied louder
than anyone else, although, it seemed to me, not for everyone else's benefit. What I mean is, I don't think he was trying to show everyone how devout he was, but rather, I had the impression that he felt God wanted him to reply that way—that He liked His followers to say their praises loudly. The louder, the better. Dad even sang loud—loud and off-key. But I guess he didn't care or didn't know. He'd just gaze at the cross and sing whatever tune came to him. Any way, the thing was that I didn't like it when he turned up the volume, because I knew it attracted attention. I could feel their eyes boring into my father, though I dared not look around. I guess I felt that his behavior reflected on me; and consequently I always replied in a voice somewhere between breathing and a whisper.

"AMEN!" I was knocked back into reality from a dream walk in the mountains. Father Pallberg had just finished the collect, and my father was striding up to the pulpit. I braced myself as he began.

"A - read - ing - from - the - book - of - I - sa1 - ah
con - cern - ing - the - com - ing - of - Christ.

I slumped down in the pew and stared at my hands hoping that people wouldn't connect me with the stranger reading the lesson. However, when I thought it was safe, I darted a peek up at the pulpit. I watched as my father paused and swallowed. His tongue flicked out over his dry lips, and he picked up where he'd left off. Then, listening, I noticed that he really wasn't doing too bad a job of it. He hadn't stumbled, and he was even placing emphasis in the right places. Aside from the deliberate enunciation, he sounded pretty good.

As he read, occasionally he glanced up at the congregation. Once, when he did this, our eyes met. It was only for a split second, but something passed between us then. I wasn't listening to the words he was reading, and frankly, I could not have cared less what he was reading, but his eyes talked to me. They didn't say, "turn to the Lord and be saved." Instead I heard something he'd said to me when I was very young....

My brother and I had done something stupid, as we were prone to do, and consequently we'd been spanked for it. After we'd cried ourselves out, my father came back in our room and sat us down in front of him. Looking at both of us, he began in a soft voice, "You know, your mother and I don't spank you guys because we hate you. We love you. We try our best to raise you like we think you ought to be. Sometimes we get mad, but it doesn't mean we don't like you. And sometimes it's hard to know what's right, but we try our best because we want you to be the best. I just want you guys to understand that."

When he left the room both my brother and I started crying again, but it was a happy cry and we felt better.

That was what his eyes said to me. I looked again and saw a different man. I didn't see a man having problems speaking in front of people, but my father trying his best to do what he thought was right. No, I wasn't reborn, but a pride I'd lost a long time ago had been rekindled.

The reading over, my father returned to his seat next to me, and the service continued. After his sermon, Father Pallberg stretched out his hands and addressed the crowd, "The peace of the Lord be always with you."

"And also with you," was the reply.

At this, the people in the congregation began turning to each other, smiling, shaking hands, and hugging as they exchanged the peace. This is how the Lord works, if He exists, I thought as I watched. Peace for anybody is found through the people close to them, whether God is real, or not.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned to face my father. We stood looking at each other for a moment, and then I quietly said, "The peace of the Lord be always with you, Dad."
HEATHEN

He smiled and squeezed me hard, "And also with you, Heathen."
THE MOST IMPRESSIVE ROOM
I KNOW*

It's more than simply a large room. Size isn't the impressive thing about it. Other larger rooms would be as insignificant by comparison as a chunk of quartz crystal is to a diamond. No, it was the aura of power, of grandiosity of magnificence that made such a profound impression on me. I speak of the assembly chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

It was during the course of my job at the House of Representatives Office Building that I had occasion one night to visit the Capitol Building itself. I was walking down an empty, resounding corridor when I passed one of the doors leading into the great room. Then something—I'll never know what it was—compelled me to stop in my tracks. It was as if a huge hand had blocked my way, telling me, "Stop! Go not further!" As if in a trance, I walked over to the door and entered the room.

I found myself in the visitor's gallery, up above the floor where scores of our country's great leaders and orators, some of them now forgotten men, once stood to plead their cases to a group of representative Americans. I was stunned by the power of the place as by a blow from a huge fist. I listened.

*Chandeliers: A Magazine of Freshman Writing, 1 (December, 1955), 17-18. We thank Major William J. Wallisch, Jr., Assistant to the Dean for Information, for this discovery.
THE MOST IMPRESSIVE ROOM I KNOW

At first the only sounds were a large room's typical creaks, mimicking one another in a weird game. But I listened and I heard voices, powerful voices, persuading voices, pleading voices. I heard men with ideas, men with proposals, men with ambitions. I listened to men condemn slavery, condemn war, condemn liquor, condemn each other. I witnessed arguments, discussions, debates, even violence.

I switched on the huge overhead lights and went down to walk where these great men walked. I felt almost as if to stay too long would be to defile the wonder and glory of the place. I looked around at the rows of seats which had held (and would continue to hold) the molders of our country's destiny. I gazed up at the podium where Davy Crockett asserted his animal ancestry, where Douglas MacArthur had assured the world of the immortality of old soldiers. And I marveled. A chill, not of the cold, swept up and down my spine.

But I left. As I left, the lights remained burning. To me, a room such as this should not be left without some type of vigil.

SEARCHING FOR LOST HORSES

Jason gazed wearily at the mountain peaks at the end of the valley. There was no need to be angry. He knew they ran away, or were scared away, or stolen by a bandit mustang every spring. But the wolves were starting to come down into the valley from the Northern timber.

It was the red pony he was most worried about. It was less than one year old and his mother had died just after she kicked him into the world.

The clatter of pans, muffled through the walls of the log bunk house behind him, brought him back from his thoughts and he turned grudgingly and started to walk slowly past the windmill toward the cabin.

"Staying up here for a few days will be good for her," he thought. "It will take at least three days to round up the horses."

Besides, Seane had begged to come along, and like the red pony would have, he needed to be near his mother. It was this tenderness in him that at first repulsed, then only annoyed and finally made Jason love his son; love him with an intense obsession to protect that tenderness, as it hardly ever is or can be.

Seane was five now and although he had been in the rough environment of the Capser Ranch for just under two years, he still had not lost that basic shyness and quiet observing "softness" that other boys would begin to make fun of as he grew older. When Jason had decided to take the job as second foreman of the ranch in northern Montana, Jacquie had
doubts not for herself, but for the boy. She too loved the sensitive nature of her son, and though Jason thought otherwise and said so often, she believed he received that from his father. She hadn’t seen much of it since the war, not in her husband anyway.

“Everyone changes in war,” she would say to herself, “but they touched and drove so deep such a beautiful part of Jason.”

He had lost nearly his whole company at Dak To, and though they said that after that he had lost his nerve, he knew that it was just that he’d made his mind up—he couldn’t send any more men to die. Not like that. There had to be more to war than slaughter. Death must have a purpose, or if not that, at least a meaning beyond statistics.

And so he had been discharged and now he was here, and he still hadn’t found the answers that he had needed so badly in the war. He was quiet, melancholy, and very pensive; but he was bitter and the tenderness that had caught Jacquie’s eye when tacked raggedly to his six-foot, two-inch frame, was buried deep under the still solid muscle.

He stepped inside the door, closed it behind him, and leaning back against the jam, he began to watch his wife. The reddish tint to his blonde hair was all but lost under the yellow light bulb that hung from the ceiling, but his eyes still burned green.

His wife, a large woman, had been a model in Denver before she met Jason. Her long black hair fell across her face and danced before her in the warmth of the fireplace. Jason watched until she turned.

“Do you think they’ll be hard to find, Jason?”

“Don’t know, I guess not, if it doesn’t snow again.”

“I’ll have the place fixed up liveable in just a little while more.”

Jason said nothing. He was watching his son in the corner, playing with a big grey-streaked cat.
She continued very softly, "It's warmed up. It's likely to snow again before dark."

Jason shifted his eyes back to his wife.

"It'll be a spring snow and most of the rest has melted away. I'm going to walk up to the old mining area and see if I can find any tracks. It's not far, no use saddling Chester."

He paused for a moment, then continued, "Besides, I think I'd like the walk."

Her eyes followed him out the door and searched the empty space long after he had disappeared.

"He always gets moody up here alone, away from everything—I'm glad I came," she thought. "No man should be alone up here with just his thoughts."

Turning to Seane she smiled and said, "I'll race you to the hay barn."

Without saying a word Seane jumped up, grabbed his sheepskin coat, and bolted out the door with a giggle.

Jason stood on the slight rise of ground just above the hay barn. He had been out of the service for two years now, but his mind still thought militarily. He surveyed the higher ground, imagined five dark shadows creeping up one side of the hill toward him.

"A machine gun there! A BAR there! With fifteen men I could hold this hill—if they didn't have anything heavy." He turned suddenly, kicked a rock and said out loud, "But why the hell do it? For sport? Because my mind craves the test? Because I've tired of chess? Why? God damn it, why?"

He took two small steps, then looked up at the sky. It was solid grey, like a sheet of new cement. "Snow," he thought.

His eyes glanced to the floor of the valley, then up to the mountains. The flatiron plateau on the side of Miller's Peak showed yellow through the blotches of still unthawed snow.

"You can see where the wind has caught my words, and painted them on the mountains," he thought. "Those rocks would make a poor defense—but they'd gladly fold around two lovers and hold their heat against the winter snows..."
for?" A thing of real value cries for life, for living, not dying... and yet...

He was silent for a few moments. He looked back toward the barn and muttered half aloud, "I'd die for them!"

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a slim black-brown cigar. The wind had stopped completely and the cigar lit easily. He took a few steps, jumped the broken down single-strand fence and began to walk toward the mining area. It was much warmer; he could see his breath but there was no bite to the air. He stuck his hands into his pockets and puffing away on the cigar, which hung loosely from his mouth, he muttered, "You think too much! You talk to yourself too much and if that's not bad enough, you listen all too little."

He laughed, looked for a shadow to dance with, found none—then lifted his head to face the small canyon that led to the mining area.

"Damned horses won't stay by the hay barn where there's shelter and food. That's too easy. Hell, no. They'd rather charge headlong into cold and misery... maybe they're the smart ones though... maybe they remember the rattler that killed Smoke last spring right at the barn. Ha! Death haunts us all heh?"

At the canyon he turned left and headed up a slight grade. He was panting a little, not so much from the walk as from the anticipation of seeing all the horses standing there. They weren't there. But the red pony was.

He saw him just as he rounded the first of many mounds of dirt that always marked one of the gold diggins in Montana.

The reddish lump was hardly unmistakable. It was easy to see that the red pony was dead.

"If things bring so much courage to this world, it kills them in order to break them—the gentle, brave, good... all," he misquoted Hemingway to himself.

"Broke a leg in that damned hole; wolves finished him off most likely; coyotes too," he thought to himself as he kicked at the bared ribs of the pony.

The remnants of the horse's guts were spread around for about three feet and his shoulder and flank had been chewed away.

Jason kicked again, this time at the broken right front leg. "Again I can give you a million excuses for this, but I can't see any reasons. There just aren't any reasons to this kind of thing. It must be terrible to die after you have fallen. To have your guts torn out by wild beasts. Yes, of course it is. I know that. Those men, wounded, but being cut to pieces by beasts; throats, eyes, legs, anything they could chop at. A company against a battalion. It's better to die on the charge toward inevitable, but quick doom; better than that. Maybe that's it. Maybe we're all charging toward inevitable death, each at his own pace, some even back-peddling. But each of us knows his death is certain, and we're isolated, alone and only the world, the rocks watch. And if you're lucky, the wind will blow a mighty trumpet, and they'll build you a monument, a plaque."

He tossed his cigar as far as he could and spit on the dead horse.

"Maybe that's it," he continued thinking to himself, but actually talking to the red pony. "Maybe I should build a monument to you, Red."

Then suddenly, as if a savage wolf had jumped into him he yelled out for all to hear (there wasn't anyone to hear, there never is any more these days), "I'd like to scream out against death worship, making shrines... living as though death determined every breath... cast fame on those it took and left the rest standing in line... dreaming of their debut."

He turned again to the horse and thought, "Why don't we bury our dead? It's the living that need our attention. We need to groom them to life, not death. Seane, you've got to see that before it's too late. I was the glory kid like all the glory kids before me. But the stars turn to blood and the blood to hate to death, and then death turns to this," and he kicked the horse twice.
“A god makes it easier, I guess, but he doesn't make you feel any better as a man,” he mumbled. “But I suppose when I'm old and weary, someday when all the horses are dead or I can no longer walk in search of them, I'll turn to planning my funeral instead of waiting for spring. But 'til then I've got to keep this part of the crummy world from Seane. It seems every path a man follows leads to death, no matter. Christ, why can't we at least break the chain, put death at the end where it belongs, instead of everywhere in between?”

The snow had begun to fall again, and big flakes were settling on what was left of the red pony's carcass. Jason started to walk back to the cabin. Once or twice he turned to look over his shoulder. He fancied once he saw the dark shadows of timber wolves moving inside the line of pine trees.

“I wish I'd brought my rifle,” he thought, then, “No, just my imagination. See you still think only of death and what the hell kind of chance have I got with this damn world always slapping me with it? I don’t mind the kind that makes some sense, but there's no reason to most and I can't add one, make one up, and find one. All I can do is keep looking over my shoulder for the wolves and they come in a million forms, from everywhere ... God, I don't want to die on my belly ... I wish I could keep Seane from the world. It'll condition him ... It'll add him to the chain ... No, he's different. If there's one thing I do in this life, it's protect him ... at least set him straight ... on the right track.”

By the time he got back to the cabin it was snowing hard. The wind was still not blowing, so the large flakes dropped straight out of a now black sky. He was late. It was seven-thirty.

Stepping through the door, he stamped his feet and lied, “Sorry, honey, got a little lost when it started snowing hard.”

She looked up from the table, and smiling replied, “That's okay. Did you see anything of the horses?”

Jason stared into the fire, stamped his feet again.

“No, not a sign. Where's the boy?”

Jacquie lowered her head, paused, then said, “He's been a bad boy, Jason. I put him to bed in the other room. I told him you'd take care of him as soon as you got back. He's waiting.”

“Take care of what?”

“The cat, Jason. He tied his belt around its throat and strangled it. You've got to talk to him, I don't think a spanning would help. You've got to set him straight, now. He thought it was funny!”

Jason walked over to a chair, picked it up, turned it around and straddled it in front of the fireplace.

Jacquie's eyes followed him and after a few moments she called anxiously, “Jason?”

He turned slightly, still not looking at her, but at the object hanging in the corner from a nail—it was the cat—she'd left it there, not wanting to touch it.

“I don't know how to handle things I may never live to become proficient at. And besides, my dear, the red pony is hard on my mind and won't soon leave it.”

She stared at him, not with anger, or sympathy, or understanding. Bewildered, she asked, “What are you talking about?”

Jason turned back to the fire, remembered the imagined or not dark shadows of the wolves when he walked back.

“Nothing, nothing at all.”
The Helioid

Prologue: Genesis

I slept for eternity in darkness
And silence so deep that one can but feel
For thought was a nonentity
And there was peace.
But a dream was forged in the void.
Before the new dawn,
A dream of a word-thought called “peace,”
Triggering the existence of eons
Of swirling, chaotic vibrations
Already echoing from the shortly defined
Near-distant galaxies of my degenerating mind.
The mind that did not exist until that microsecond
That did not exist until I gave birth to Time
And Time gave birth to straining revolution madness
That was to mark the frontier of a day of sleepless nights.
And when in helpless wondering I knew the question,
“Is it good?”
The ageless noble silence wept,
The unseen lurking shadows splintered into a nova
Of color shock
So heavy that I was buried in a cloud of new unnamed fear.
But looking again I could see
That there was nothingness.
In curious panic I screamed into the womb of a dark sun embryo
“I am good?”
As forever imploded into now
With the ticking of seconds that I was no longer between,

But across.
Soon I heard the unthought laugh innocence
Of rushing water and caressing wind
For it was new dawn Spring,
And I smiled.
But squinting into the sun
I saw the eclectic death conflict
Of new life existence
As it flashed uncontrollable alien emotion
Across the mind prism of my being.
The ecstasy of my existence was challenged
By mortal unthinking purpose
In the withering agony of battle
As the wrinkled claws of firmament slashed in useless fury
At the heart of the mindless, loving sea,
Raining the shredded, mangled ruins of what was
And was to be
Upon the shore where they lay helpless,
Waiting for my new existence,
Knowing what I would soon know.
Then while I disbelievingly stared,
From the far reaches of my soul existence,
From the last star of undiscovered mind puzzle,
Rose a quivering explosion
Of careening emotion various undefined
And I wrote across the vacuum of Eternity with my seething tears
“Is it good?”
The perpetual answer silence pulverized my wings
Of ecstatic nonbeing
And I fell for eons until the confining hand
Of Time reached from my whirling mind
And I knew that it had been defined short simultaneous events.
Peering through the red mist
Seeing the fantasy of the Magic Garden
I thought maybe it was not all in vain.
But when the sun broke within my emptiness,
The haze melted in a mire of unheard, groaning turbulence
And I saw the lone, stark waterfall
Pouring its soul into the terrestrial cavity,
Knowing then that I would soon be.
Head bowed, waiting in a delirium
I heard my absolute defeat mumble
   "Is... it... good?"
Time flung me effortlessly across the wilderness
To the site of my impending existence.
Time does not wait,
For when I am able to speak
Time will be God.
In forced awareness I examined the shell
Emerging from the bleeding hole
In the beaming proud charred Earth,
Which smiled deadfaced
At the now dry overhang stream bed.
A living, life empty chunk of putrid flesh
Which reached out selfishly to take my life for its own.
Pulpy carrion as vile as the elements
From which it was spawned,
Waiting impatiently for my execution,
As a tremendous quake of disgust welled up and crushed me
As if I never existed.
But I did exist! I did!
The choice was made in Eternity
And the ever present unflinching death hand of my son
Was pushing me to my destiny.
Then I turned one last time
And looking deep into the ominous cataclysm
Glaring far beyond his question mark facade eyes,
My own eyes,
I flung an effortless sign
That radiated all the despair that was now
And to come,
Asking crying silent
   "Is it good... my son?"
The sun dissolved in a curtain of stars.
The stars blinked and died.
Slowly, new life dumpy, I opened my eyes,
Standing, fascinated by the strength power
Of my new existence.
My senses reeled from the shock of my death,
The stench of my birth.
But I thought surely I would still be free
As I clawed and scraped at the mind walls
To find escape to reality
While the wind mocked my hysterical ravings
And the sun drove a hundred-thousand unnamed pains through me.
Hate was new thought understood concept
For it burned in the laughing eyes
Of each grain of sand that I crawled to
Pleading salvation, unrealizing.
Then slowly, suddenly, every fiber in my being
Swelled within me
Clashing with knowing, feeling cataleptic force,
Flaring into an unrestrainable rebellion
That transposed reality over fantasy.
From the unknowing void of ignorance
There burst ultimate hatred
And it was good!
The instant progression of knowledge began
As thought conformed to situation.
They were new thought mortal life enemies,
I was supreme existence-appointed conqueror.
Reaching down ripping the binding nonfunction umbilical cord  
From the womb of my mother,  
The jeering slut that taught me to breathe  
But not to live,  
I was alone to fight.  
The sun recoiled its tentacles  
Sinking beyond the grave of the mutilated sea,  
And terror was on the arrogant lips  
Of the whispering wind.  
The vengeful sand parted reluctant respect,  
Plotting foiled before my strides.  
And as I raised my eyes to the site of my banishment  
I knew that I could speak.  
Then with the voice of all existence,  
Denied to the sea and the sands,  
With the thunder of a tomorrow of reality,  
I whispered the question discovery  
Of Time now God  
For I was Man.  
“Is it good?”  
And echoing from endless light years  
Beyond the fantasy creation stars  
Came the powerless unlife reply  
That I knew would at last come.  
“It is good... my son.”

Analogue: Scattered Reflections

At noon I plodded blindly  
Through a jungle of concrete rivers  
And humming aluminum trees.  
The garbled babbling of barbaric tribesmen  
Hovered waist high in castrating incoherency.

I was invisible in the smog of paper glint vacuum tubes  
And computer tape,  
But for the raving insane who glimpsed me  
In their death spasms.  
Purpose and rationality faded  
In the withering heat and pressure of civilization,  
Metamorphosing into the cold diamond strength  
Of suppressed hatred,  
As I struggled to recall the comforting gospel  
Of Darwin and Malthus.  
The viscous odor of blood strangled the wind  
And the screaming antics of a spaced-out empty mind  
Echoed my thoughts,  
But ranted on in paralyzed inability and hypocrisy.  
It cried “Peace” and fled.  
The love thighs of a whore whispered to me,  
tantalizing my gut  
With the innocence of virgin mind despairing damnation.  
Deep in her primitive maggot infested eye sockets  
I glimpsed the purity of ancient violent lust  
And grey dust death.  
She moaned inanimately from the pit of her womb life  
“Love!”  
I cringed in ecstasy and she was gone,  
Leaving me to contemplate the oil slick of my memory  
As it tumbled multicolored death stench  
To the paradise of the sewers.  
I walked through the haze of a formless  
Vaporized mind  
Without moving my eyes.  
Without moving.  
My mind was pulverized  
By the weight of growing doubt thought madness,  
The rhetorical question with the too late
Wrong answer.
Maybe I was wrong.
Maybe I thought too much and it was all for never.
But I had come too far
With the yellow glass of the sun
Pressing threateningly against my nose,
Whispering the terms of surrender to my mortal reason weakness.
I had to decide to walk
Or cut the artery of my heart and mind.
But I knew that my swollen throat
Could no longer swallow the pride strength of my existence
And I must walk.
Walk under the hidden magnifying glass
That dangled mock encourage above me in the noonday sun
Within my grasp.
The fragile glass of my pride
Invulnerable to all but my soul weakness
And the immortal chisel of Time,
As I watched it being chipped in mortal helpless fury.
I fought in apparent crazy purposelessness
To perpetuate the self torture
Of my bigotry and willing condemnation,
Knowing that death must come quickly or I would die too soon,
To live forever in hysterical happiness.
LONG LIVE THE ORGASM OF SLEEP!
The inevitable wondering permeated the rare stillness,
Again I thought undeciding of the ultimate paradox
That promises lying optimistic
To the gullible hope searching masses,
The degenerating herd stampeding politely
With cement smiles, uplifted eyes, folded hands,
Trampling innocently, door slamming.
While the emaciated blasphemer sits unsaved dead in Hell
Crying for all but himself,
Looking back into existence with swollen eyes
Oozing undying aggressive despair.
But as he opens his mouth to make his infinite last appeal,
The pious protest rings from outstretched helping facade
Hypocrite hands
That distort the realities flowing from his heresy.
Clear light rent blackness
Receding unfathomable rising tomorrow
Hissing salvation coolness footprints
Tailwagging innocence
Savage simplicity walking taller sinking
Never looking back.
Gilt calf standing deaf blind
Crushing green life vainly stretching unreaching
White flecked blue velvet crying lonely
All sitting in a corner.
Red crossed white savors:
Dripping blood cleansing weeds
Saving seeds to grow straight mindless freemen
One is right no doubt.
Silver buckle shoes walking purity
Blasting tyrant barbarian infected ideals
Building freedom jails, impaling steeples,
Ducking stool righteousness
Noncondemning guidance
Folded hands superficial sorrow
Burn, witch, burn!
Venerable scholars
Mercenary pen hand’s perfection
Rereading luckily finding mistranslations
Pointing earnestly happily
With profound intelligence above reproach
Correcting mistakes for progressive
Times are a’changing cheering sections
Thinking wildly there had to be a way to bend it
Righteously.
How big is an iota?
One must certainly be right, no doubt.
Open minded equalitarians
Shouting goodness on open ears
Eager hands in deep pockets
Losing sleep crying on silk pillows
Promising someday maybe tomorrow
Painting on righteousness
Writing dirty letters to indiscreet bigots
As they smile in self salvation
Spitting nectar in charity baskets
For creeping scum.
Burn, baby, burn!
Fading sun behind painted mountains
Rushing stars foaming whitecaps
Standing proudly looking back
Solving tomorrow let the sun shine and
The birds sing and let
Us give thanks to . . . POW!

Epilogue: Apocalypse

A wild wind screaming above
Withered hopeless charcoal fingers
Moans too late today
Tomorrow is forever here
Unheeding valiant gladiators.
Four riders satiated black hooded
Silhouetted by the evening starless day after
In the death throes’
Last receding crystal sunflake.

Four riders in the immediate distance
Leaving nameless now
Without thought-speak to curse their performance.
The beauty of the comedy is wasted
On an audience unsuspecting faith believing
No critic columns.
Many went willing optimistic fools,
Leaving none to appreciate the blind irony.
The men with pastel visions
Who painted new horizon ideals on old colorful black and white
With brilliant grey,
And searching twists of life bending confines,
Time wasting, salvation satisfied.
Finding answers to personal madness
Self convincing warning all in their disease
Of righteous safety
Condemning deviates to the fate that was on its way
To everyone’s door.
The word of all or nothing was on their tongues
Strangling the weak and new minds
Blessing with omnipotent astigmatism
Those who know not what they do.
Drawing chalk lines across the purpose of others’ existence
To erase the lines binding their own.
Free thinking two-dimensional fantasy dreamers
Drawing their own conclusions
From the same undoubtedly unerring
Bucket of qhislin.
Four riders on the way and they watched
Smiling with folded hands
Knowing inside that they were safe in lead shields
Laughing at the scurrying heathens
Doomed on the outside
Many knocking frantically for entrance,
Others with fists clenched
Drinking a last toast and balling a last bitch
Taking it in the moment of ecstasy.
Fanatics on knees inside shields laughing in self salvation
At yesterday's fools and today's lunatics.
The ground trembled unprotesting
Under the heavy crush of sixteen death shod hooves
And four names ran rampant through the ranks
Of the pagan lambs
While the selectmen in lead shields
With chalk dust folded hands and uplifted eyes
Laughed in false secure homage.
But the end was absolute
And the ironic moral was wasted
On the authors
Who watched lead shatter under the scythe
Crying a last frightened doubting tear
As the tide covered their eyes
Along with the blind.
A last tear of regret and envy
For those who lived before them,
But they all died together shield or no.
And those who were knocking went under with many tears
Trembling upper lips fearful searching
Forfeiting valuable time
But losing just the same.
While the rare few dropped with dry eyes
From clouds of condemnation,
Still in ecstatic rapture,
Into the tumult feeling twinges of regret
For leaving but not for living.
They all went unified despairing
But some went dry-eyed rational.
Then there were none to watch the Four ride slowly
Into near distance,
Now all the same without feeble manmade relations.
They rode unmoving mission accomplished
Tragicomedy played out,
Leaving a wake of no tomorrow innocence.
To float unknowing peaceful through nondimensional being.
The question mark nomad begins the long journey home
To Eternity,
To exist a forgotten nonentity,
Waiting for the dream that may never have occurred
In the infinite realm of Time
And just as well.
For I am the final monument to an existence
Of broken forgotten toys.
But I must not remember lest I regret
That I was the spirit of Man.

Dirge: Across the Plain

Rocketing transient scenes revealing emptiness
Racing timelessly across today
Toward tomorrow
Which floats precarious
On a maybe horizon
Out of sight
Standing still.
Watching waiting eyes of the players
Listening for the cue
And the Prologue fanfare,
Peering from behind curtains
Of impending reality
Noticing the stonefaced critics
In the front row
Who wait ageless callous in good humored apathy
For the new fantasy
With atomic stopwatches.
All is ready unmoving
Waiting.
The Riders clean the blood from their dripping scythes
Licking their stained teeth
In inevitable anticipation.
Time crushes the remains
Of yesterday’s already forgotten farce
And breathes lightly sighing
Scattering the dust of creation
Onto the ancient stage
In amazing new erotic patterns.
Someone in the back row watches
With tear stained awareness
Handcuffed gagged.
A fading memory flickers
As he struggles in vain.
They are gone.
They are gone.
They are gone.
They are g. . .

Replay: Continuum Infinitum

An everlasting infinitesimal pause
And the glassy ocean of nonexistence
Shatters into new hope sparkling dreams
And melted wings
In the whirling nebula of a second hand
Reborn.
The peace of unthought is shredded

Once again in agony
As the withering pain of graffiti streaks
Up and out the tender nerves
Of a crying new universe
Of being.

BRADLEY J. ROOF
Class of 1971
old Caroline was a stock-room manager in one of those ancient, rundown, perpetually broken Kresge's stores. And every morning she'd plop her round cone of a body down at the fountain, crunch chrysanthemums, and chomp-chew-chung a donut and coffee, licking the last little pieces of sugar, shining like small snowflakes (and also the dirt and grease) from her thin webwrinkly fingers. And then she'd waddle off and blow kisses of flowers at us all day through her galloping gums.

PAUL GILLESPIE
Class of 1974

From the table, to the bathroom, and to the steps, he smiled, and his mind waved a reassuring farewell to his empty house. He walked with easy steps to his place of work. He thought with soaring pride of his greatness to be out and alive at this strong hour of the day. The air was crisp and clean. Vigoratingly he whispered hope to a new day.

There alone, along the streets, he let his gaze rest on the empty buildings of this life. The beauty salons that he passed would, with the passing of a few hours, fill with bustling female life, full of hope for the miraculous transformation to come. The buildings of business and commerce would stream with life. But he would not be there.

Approaching the majestic building for which he worked, he thought gaily of the importance of this structure and its role in the life whose evidence he had mused at. He was employed in the warehouse.
By seven, he was ready to work. He had spoken briefly to the foreman; to his fellow workers he had smiled. He found that the awaited boxcars of insulation had come. Today he was to unload and deliver the fiberglass to the warehouse. Before leaving, though, would he help Joe make a delivery of sheetrock? Sure.

The sheetrock, loaded by machine onto the truck, was driven to the specified place. He and Joe smiled when they faced the contractor. When they turned away, they were no longer smiling.

Sheetrock was normally easy to deliver. It came in layers of two bulky sheets of flexible pressed gypsum, varying in size. This load was two hundred fifty sheets of eight by four feet, quarter inch thick sheets. Most often, the bed of the truck was hydraulically lifted to form an angle for easy gliding when the sheets were pulled off by hand. The sheets were then simply pulled and guided to a stack directly behind the truck. But occasionally there was a contractor, who was either cruel or ignorant, who requested that the sheetrock be carried into the house, or through the gate to the back, or any other area inaccessible by the truck. Then the stuff had to be carried.

One sheet was heavy and unwieldy, two were all that could be handled. The two sheets were lifted on end, width wise, so that their own bulk would not crack their construction; then with a man at each end, they were carried and carefully laid in the requested place. Such was what Joe and he had to do.

One hundred twenty-six trips of twenty-seven steps both ways—he counted them—and he was willing to curse the thoughtless son of a bitch who was too above them to stoop to even one trip such as that and had calmly and easily asked them to make one hundred twenty-six. But that could have been borne; it was the knowledge that these were unnecessary trips, that this grueling task of stamina was imposed on them without proper justification in reasons for the sheetrock’s transfer. The sheetrock could have been unloaded there, by the truck, and there it could have been cut by the carpenters. The smaller, lighter pieces could have been carried with little difficulty, and the mess created by the action of cutting the gypsum would not have required a major clean-up in the building under construction, inside which the sheetrock was now to be cut. The illogicality of it was heart breaking—all the more so in that it was immoral to approach the subject with the contractor.

But he walked the three thousand, four hundred two steps crushed under white gypsum board. Each time he returned twenty-seven steps to lift and carry the burden another trip. No one felt a sympathetic jolt of pain when the heavy boards slipped to smash a toenail into months of violet discoloration. Even though Joe went with him every step of the way, he was violently alone under the crushing weight of that pure white gypsum.

Six thousand eight hundred four steps later, Joe and he were in the truck. The cool morning had seemed to turn to blasting heat while they had labored with their task, but now, again the coolness kissed the smiling faces with the wind that the truck created as they drove and talked of the proper place of unloading sheetrock.

When they returned to the warehouse, he learned that he was to take a truck on to the boxcar. Joe was taking another worker to deliver shingles. He found himself wishing that this had been the delivery that he had accompanied Joe on. Asphalt shingles were heavy, and it took work to deliver them. Two men stood on the truck bed and lifted the shingles to the carpenters on the roof. But here, this work was necessary; the lifting to the roof was the most efficient way. If the shingles were dumped onto the ground, the poor carpenters would have had to strain their backs in carrying the heavy shingles from the ground to the roof. But, too, there seemed to be something else. There was no superior contractor to look on in idleness, only the flushed faces of the carpenters who shared their load, having to carry the
shingles from roof-edge to roof-peak. Instead of being separated by a long expanse of impersonal white board and facing only their distant goal, avoiding each other's wearied eye, Joe and he would have been facing each other and smiling into the other's familiar face, separated by only a small expanse of three feet of friendly color impregnated gems, small rocks of green, white, black, or whatever. But such was not his fate; he had been taken to deliver the white sheetrock.

Now his task was with a boxcar. To this he looked forward with eager expectation. No foreman, contractor, or boss to create obstacles for him to surmount. He would simply unload the rolls of feathery pink and yellow fiber glass, deliver and store them here. It seemed almost glorious, a substance which all men begged for to serve as their protection, like armies to withstand enemies on two sides. In winter, the armies would fight the heat to force it in, and struggle against the cold to keep it out. In summer, the armies' battles would be to keep the coolness from retreating from the building and battle the heat to keep it from rescuing the cold from the interior's prison. Such were his hopes of feeling.

He had unloaded many boxcars, but this was his first experience with insulation. The bundles ranged in size from the thin strips rolled to a little larger than the size of a living room hassock to the thick strips packed in paper packages as tall as a man, twice as wide, and twice as thick. The small ones he could throw to waiting men on the truck outside the boxcar. The larger ones he carried and rolled to be stacked and shoved onto the truck. The task was rapid and enjoyed. The wind sighed and whistled, whipping up the almost invisible loose particles of glass that were shaken from the tight bundles. He smiled as the ropes were tied to secure the bundles for their ride to the warehouse.

He traveled as a happy companion of the insulation to the warehouse. When they arrived, the foreman pointed to giant wooden shelves forty feet above the ground. There, he said, was to be the insulation's resting place.

He felt the first anxiety for his immediate future, but he soon laughed. The truck, twenty feet tall with its load of insulation, was driven to a place below the shelves, and he had but twenty feet to go. Hah, he thought, those bundles can be easily thrown.

And so it was, with the small hassock size rolls he threw from atop truck and insulation. But as he went down, and the distance became greater, and the bundles bigger, he found himself cursing the man who decreed that the bundles go so high.

With each bundle he threw, he created a greater distance, a greater requirement for taxing his power more to hurl that bundle over his head, and the glass glittered in tiny needles reflecting the sun as they returned. He tried to hang onto the advantage of height that he had by maintaining a stairstep. He dragged the undense substance made heavy by the manufacturer's stuffing of bulk into one package laboriously up his stairstep, and from here he hurled it to waiting arms that caught it up above. But despite his efforts to hang onto the spire and boon of height, the time came when he hurled it up to see it slow in mid-air, to stop, and then to speed itself to bounce and crash on truck bed from whence it came. His inward soul would have given a little unnecessary silent whimper, but again he must hurl it til that timing of muscles gave it enough height that the catchers could grasp it and haul it to its stack on the shelf.

When the truck was empty, and the last bundle of this load hurled, he leaned against the cab and took the time to notice that he was sweating heavily. He returned to the boxcar and the light task of removing it from the boxcar to the truck, tying it down, and riding it to the warehouse. Here, his losing battle, to maintain height while he tore at the substance of his height, was waged. A truck emptied, and the cycle repeated.

Thus it went. He toiled through the rest of the morning and ate his greasy lunch at a greasy cafe. About the third trip,
it had hit him. The painfully remedyless suffering fire of insulation. The tiny little crystals of sparkling glass that the wind and the sun had played so joyfully with had been whipped into his skin and eyes. The irritated surfaces cried when so abused, and when his fingers sought to relieve, the tiny fibers were driven abrasively deeper, and the fire flamed. The meal he could not enjoy; he burned.

Through the long afternoon, this man labored. The sweat flowed to tell him he was over heating his body. His muscles coiled and uncoiled to fire the weight into the air. And always his stair to height shrunk to aggravate his work. And always he burned. The time of easy loadings from boxcar to truck seemed to be short moments; and from truck to shelf, endless eternity. Always the stair shrunk.

He apused to feel and watch. A swollen drop of sweat poured off his heated brow. The drop departed his bowed head and formed a tear as it dropped from him to another brown paper package of insulation, as tall as he, twice as wide, and twice as deep. It occurred to him that these bundles were about the shapes of coffins.

After five, he passed the streets of this morning. Behind him was the warehouse and its waiting task of tomorrow. His back receded from the magnificent building.

He was there, outside the commerce and salons. The streets moved and flowed with the activities of the people. The painted women streamed from the salons. His muscles ached. He was among and passed many people.

He looked above the cobbled streets only with difficulty; somewhere deep within him there was a wish to cry. He didn’t know why. He drew each breath in deep sighs. He felt weak. He thought it was only because he was tired. And his steps dragged.

Finally at home, he washed a little and sat to rest. Lonely, he was. When his bones collected the will, he ate his supper, cold and heavy. When darkness fell, he slept.

STEVEN R. MABERRY
Class of 1974

First Place Poem, 1972

A TAPING SESSION OF THE BRAIN

Once
I hurried
down
Long corridors of sleep
In desperate search of my self.

I knew it
to be hidden deep
within my Brain,
Locked in some dark, cold
Room,
Shivering and Bleating,
like a young and lost sheep.

I wanted my past.
I wanted to run
it by
like a TV recording tape
And shine
on a technicolored screen
For me
And My Psychiatrist
to see.

I tensed with curiosity,
about past traumas
and complexes
and deep-seated sexual urges toward my mother.

So
I connived and sought and finally
Bullied
a convenient Neuro-surgeon,
of sadistic vein,
to operate
on me.

He
Trepanned my brittle skull,
peeling back limpid skin
stuck through
with pores and hair.

He invaded
the gullies and recesses
of gray, nacreous
thought,
And then
brought shining rapiers,
trailing wires and thrusting
long shafts of electricity
into me.

"Here . . . or there?"
"A little to the right."
"Here?"
"Oh . . . That's it!
Now I see!"

The tape
on well-oiled wheels
ran smooth,
and my eyes were seared
by light and life and
vivid imagery.
They flickered
in their sockets
over long-lost events.

I relived diapers,
the smell

of hairless children's bodies
immersed in peculiar sweat
and their own narrow worlds,
Puberty
and awkwardness,
unrelieved
anxieties and fears,
until
there came the present me.

But
No surgeon came
to pull the plug,
put back my skull
like a manhole cover over its pit.
or stitch
my porous skin to fit
in zig-zag symmetry.

The tape ran on
smooth and uninterrupted,
like a river,
it's unchecked, free,
and it hurries still.

And I'm lost to me.

CHARLES L. HORTON
Class of 1972
MANUEL'S LAST TEMPTATION

"Actually, I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he; sure of my present life and of the death that was coming."

It was August 8. In seven days it would be the feast of the Assumption, and Manuel began preparations for his journey east to Chihuahua. It was a five day trip through the hot North Mexican plains that at this time of year were their hottest, but there was something about the cathedral and the big city that drew Manuel there annually. Certainly he attended mass in the tiny village south of his small adobe house whenever the priest came, but Manuel needed these trips to Chihuahua, if only to prove to himself that the outside world still existed. It was not that he was envious of the fast moving, modern life in the city or the city people with fancy clothes and automobiles; in fact he even preferred his simple way of life, but knowing that there was more besides himself and the villagers of San Maria del Rio gave him an inner feeling of satisfaction. Also, there were the cathedral and the high mass offered on the blessed feast day that did something indescribable to Manuel. He had lived his entire life in the Roman Catholic faith and had never thought to question it. To him God was someone who made him and had power over him so if he did not wish to burn for eternity, whatever that was, he had better follow the ten rules God gave him. This Manuel tried to do. It was in the cathedral though, in the ritual of the high mass, that Manuel truly perceived his religion. This was essential to a poor peasant for whom the great pressures of living could not be assuaged by faith alone. The bishop who wore such regal garments, the majestic alter, the smell of the incense, and the chanting of the choir, all these brought forth some strange emotion in Manuel that he could feel manifest in the back of his neck and the tingling in his spine. It was as if God were present in the cathedral for all to sense. For these reasons Manuel took out two weeks a year from his small farm and much of his hard earned money to go on the pilgrimage.

It was evening now and Manuel came in to his meager house from the fields where he earned his living. Actually it was too big for him alone since the house was meant for a family of at least four. He had a wife once, but she died giving birth to Manuel's first son who had also died. After the incident Manuel prayed to God for the strength to overcome the tragedy, even though he could not understand why a God who loved him would permit such a thing to happen; but after all, God was all-powerful so Manuel stifled his doubts and lived and prayed on. It was after this that Manuel's trips to Chihuahua began.

He had already told his friend who grazed cattle near his farm to come by daily and see that his crops were irrigated, and now Manuel was laying out the two large water sacks to be filled tomorrow before he departed. Since there was no water between his home and Chihuahua, the skins had to hold enough for himself and his burro for the entire five day journey. Next he got out some money, food, and a few possessions he wanted to take along and then rolled them up in the blanket that would be his bed for the upcoming days. His preparations finished, he ate supper and then prayed in a corner of his hut before the small wooden crucifix which was mounted behind a clay vase full of wild flowers that Manuel picked regularly. Naturally tonight he included a special prayer to St. Christopher for a safe and uneventful trip.
Manuel awoke early the next morning, ate, filled his water sacks, loaded up his burro, said a small prayer and departed for Chihuahua. As he left his home, the bright yellow disc of the sun had become complete over the horizon. Already the coolness of the night had dissipated, and the heat had reached proportions where only one who had lived his entire life in such a climate could continue. What little trail there was Manuel had all to himself since most life in Northern Mexico was carried on in a north-south direction, and few people ever journeyed east or west. In his four previous trips he met only one other traveler who seemed quite well-to-do but wasn’t very sociable, however. Often, for lack of company, Manuel would have little conversations with himself, his burro, or with the things around him.

His first two days progressed uneventfully as he had beseeched St. Christopher. On the morning of the third day his travels began with sunrise as they had previously and throughout the morning his journey was quite routine. It was as the sun neared its zenith and the horizon in all directions was nothing more than a blur because of the intense heat waves, or false water as Manuel called them, that he got off his burro to ease its load in the sweltering heat. Manuel looked at the blurred image of the mountains off in the distant south and thought to himself that no matter where he went there always seemed to be mountains off in the horizon somewhere. At his home there was the large range in the west, today they were in the south, in Chihuahua they would be off to the southeast.

“You mountains are like the false water,” he said to himself. “I always see you far away but can never reach you.” He really wasn’t sure if they existed since he had lived his entire life on the plains that were between all the mountains.

“Well if you are or if you are not, I am glad to have you on this journey with me as these flat lands are not much company.”

It was as he finished saying this that a rattlesnake struck out at his burro. Darting quickly to the left, the animal’s right front leg slipped on a loose rock and buckled under its body, and the burro fell on its side. The snake slithered away as the burro fell upon the two water sacks bursting them, instantly sending the life sustaining water seeping into the desert sand. Manuel’s lips quickly formed the familiar phrase “Jesus be with me.” He soon saw this was not to be the case as the cries of his mule signified its pain. An examination revealed the protruding bone on the right leg which meant the only remedy was an end to its misery. Taking his knife Manuel cut along his friend’s neck until the blood gushed freely and it died. Finding some boulders he covered up the carcass as best he could to protect it from the always persistent vultures which had already made their appearance from hell, or so Manuel presumed since that is the only place where such despicable creatures would be permitted to live. As the final portions of the body were covered, Manuel stepped back and said, “Please Jesus, whatever heaven You have for burros, please accept this one there also, as he has always done what I have asked and been faithful to me always. Amen.”

It was now over an hour past Manuel’s noon rest break and already his mouth was dry. Gathering what few possessions he deemed absolutely essential, he started off on foot. He walked till the sun was on the western horizon when he concluded rest was necessary. After eating some food he then cut into a large cactus to get what moisture he could. Manuel rested until the stars had become visible overhead and then refreshed himself from the cactus again, “You cactus will give me the strength I need to finish the journey,” he said as he got up to continue on.

Manuel walked for about six hours into the night, conversing with himself most of the way about the stars, the desert night, and other elements of his world. He had already accepted God’s new plan for him and had put the tragedy of that day out of his mind. It was after two o’clock when, overcome by weariness, he laid down to sleep.
MANUEL'S LAST TEMPTATION

When he awoke the next morning, Manuel realized his
error in travelling at night: he had lost the trail. While
drinking what he could from a cactus, he thought about his
situation and concluded that the trail was more reliable in
direction, and he had the slim possibility of meeting some­
one. So instead of heading east, he decided to get back on the
trail. Looking at the mountains in the south, Manuel noticed
that they seemed closer than yesterday so he reasoned that
he had wandered off to the south during the night. “If you
mountains are real or not, you have helped me find my
way,” he said while starting north confidently.

It was five hours later when Manuel realized that he must
have been deceived by the mountains. Having already wasted
enough time, he turned east and forgot about the trail as it
was useless to him now. By this time his thirst was intense
and could no longer be satisfied by the cactus. His strength
was also greatly diminished, and he began to notice the
effects of his weakness as he often stumbled and getting up
became harder with each fall. “Please legs,” he pleaded, “you
must continue, please do this one thing for me.”

Talking was evermore difficult because of the dryness in
his mouth, and now Manuel was forced to stop every few
minutes for the moisture of the cactus. “You cactus are real,
and if I survive, it is because of you,” he whispered. Manuel
found himself praying more and more for the strength to go
on, but he began to realize that it was up to his body in order
for him to survive.

It was by late afternoon on the fifth day that Manuel fell
and found himself unable to get up. “Why do you desert me
in my time of need?” he questioned his body. “Why can you
not continue for one more day?” But his body did not
answer nor did it get up, so Manuel crawled until nightfall.

The next morning he got up but had the strength to walk for
only an hour. With the intense heat of noon, even crawling
became impossible so that Manuel just sat by a cactus where
he moistened the cracking skin of his lips and mouth. It was
then that he saw the familiar black silhouette of the demon
vultures circling in the sky overhead. “Get away,” he shouted
with what little strength he had, “you will get no nourish­ment from me.” For the remainder of that day he lay there.

With the coolness of night he continued his walking,
stumbling, crawling routine till daylight, when he found him­self lying near another cactus, where he planned to spend the
day. “Sun,” he said as it climbed ever higher in the sky, “you
are so like God, you are necessary for having life, but when
you want you can take it also.” Manuel again noticed his
travelling companions, the vultures, but tried to ignore them
since he would not allow their presence to discourage his
struggle for survival.

“Perhaps it is all a dream,” he said. “But what if it is,” he
replied as an after-thought, “the pain, agony, and despair are
all real to me now and that is what matters.” In his state of
delirium Manuel did not notice that a vulture had lighted a
few feet from him.

“Why don’t you quit this senseless struggle Manuel?”
“Who is speaking to me?” Manuel replied with a start.
Looking up all he saw was the vulture next to him. “It
cannot be; I am being deceived again.”

“Does it matter?” he heard the buzzard say. “I am asking
you to stop this struggle for life in which you persist.”

Realizing something supernatural about, Manuel quickly
took the subordinate position at which the Mexican peasant
is so expert. “But Señor vulture, what good would come of
my quitting?”

“I would like to ask you, Manuel, what good has come of
your life? Look at the pain and agony you suffer now, look
at your past—a life of poverty and sorrow. There is no one
who would even shed a tear if you were to die now.”

“Señor, you look at pain and sorrow as things that should
be always avoided, or that take away from life. I do not
agree. I think they are a part of life, and it is one who has
lived a life without them who is missing much more than I.
Also, you forget that I had many happy and joyful times—my marriage, seeing my wife with child, working my fields, and many more; so I really did not live a life of poverty, but it was full of all the things that make up life.

"If you wish to look at it that way then you have lived life to its fullest, and there is no reason why you should go on."

"I think you are trying to confuse me, Senor. I admit that I am not a very smart man, but I do not think my life will be led to its fullest until I am dead. If you want a reason why I should continue to live, it is because I have enjoyed my life, and I think I will continue to enjoy it. Surely I am of a poor lot now, but I still believe being alive is good; and although I cannot put my reason into words, I prefer to lie here in pain and be with my friends the sun, the cactus, the mountains, and the land—all of which I am a part—than to die without a struggle. All my friends must struggle daily, the sun with the clouds, the cactus with the land, the mountains with the plains, and this is what their life is about. Even you must struggle with life for food to survive. If everything quit its struggle, there would be no mountains, no cactus, no sun, and you also would soon perish if there was no death for you to feed upon. Should I not also be expected to struggle for my life?"

"Suppose I were to tell you that I know you will not survive this ordeal."

"Senor, I have known for always that I would die in the future, so be it this afternoon or next year why should I stop now?"

"... and if I were to tell you that your God for whom you persist in this folly does not exist..."

"If I am on the edge of death as you say, it is too late for me to do anything about that. He gave me strength in the past whether He was or whether He was not, just as the mountains gave me company whether they were, or whether they were like the false water. Also, this struggle is for my life, not God's."

"I have one more thing to say, Manuel, before I go back to the sky and watch your unsuccessful struggle. If I promise that neither I nor my friends will touch you if you submit willingly to death but will devour your flesh to the bone if you persist in your struggle, then will you give up?"

"Senor vulture, after I die my body will be like the rocks or desert sand; it will be useless to me."

With this the black demon took to the sky in a flurry. By now it was well into the afternoon, and Manuel again refreshed himself from the cactus and lay back to await the night when he could proceed to Chihuahua.

"Padre nuestro, Que estas en los Cielos, ...",
Without Manuel there to believe, God, the mountains, the sun, the vultures, none would exist. All that mattered was his life, that he was living it and trying to hold on to it. If death should come, he had no control over it and would accept it as part of the natural order in his world.

By now the sun was well off in the west and just as a lone cloud blotted out its rays from Manuel, his hold on life lost its grip. The expression on the dead man’s face was more of one who had just lost a good friend than someone who had died of thirst.

First Place Poem, 1973

DOWNSNOW

Skis slap powder.
Ski poles stab deep.
White mist rises as virgin snow is sliced.
The nylon skier slithers across the downy blanket leaving a zig zag crease.

Sea of blue
Desert of White flash of green
Face tingles muscles tense
Breath of ice Sound of space Taste of cold

The body descends the mind detached
The mind ascends the body detached
Exhilaration... escaped

Skis halted.
Poles planted.

JOHN PETRO
Class of 1973

DAVID DALEY
Class of 1974
[THE SKY]

the sky:
Freedom
  freedom to roll and loop
  freedom to poise and swoop
  to prove the pleasures of the hawk
  to fly beyond the ritualized limits of leatherbound gods
a place to strive to new maximums
  to everfresh ecstasies
divingclimbingrollingspinning
  pulling out and feeling (just for an instant)
    the gray g-circles tighten around your vision
like Aphrodite
  incomparably beautiful; always alluring
  primeval paramour of men
    at times coquettishly cruel to yesterday’s lover
    forever teasing and enticing
where one can
  see forever
hurl sun bolts at the finite ground
carouse and roam and search
  and find respite from a gravitybound subsistence
the camaraderie of the windrush
unknown to the thrashing masses
thermal born and borne; tenaciously enduring
  above a plastic panorama of bondage
    no airy-faery fiction, fact.

JAMES A. MCCLURE
Class of 1974

FIRST PLACE STORY, 1974

Jemmie Hodge had put on a good show tonight and he knew it. He whistled as he climbed the wooden ladder behind the stage which led to the loft; he could hear the rustling of costumes above—he glanced up in time to catch Geoffrey’s smile. “Hodge, you old mossback, how are you?”

Jemmie shrugged his shoulders, answering, “Not young enough to take these climbs.”

“Great show tonight, Jemmie, great show,” responded the burly man. “Here, can I give you a hand with those? Let me see, if I remember right that’s Brandy Nan and Old Paddy. Please to meet you in person. How lucky you are to have such a fine master!”

“Yes, thank you, Geoffrey, if you would take Paddy.” Jemmie pushed the dummy within Geoffrey’s reach, still clutching Brandy Nan as he pulled himself up the remaining rungs to the costume loft. “Nan’s got a bit of a problem. I think it’s her leg—seems to be falling off. I won’t be staying late tonight; Maggie’s expecting a visitor, some friend coming in from the Potteries. Thought I might get home a little early, so I’ll have to fix the leg tomorrow. Won’t be using her for another few days anyway.” Reaching the top he shook Geoffrey’s hand. “Been a long time, Geoffrey. What brings you out, as if I might not guess?”

“Ah, you know that Ginny’s always had that sparkle in her eye for me! She’s down changing now; we’re off to the Cider Cellar in a minute.”
“The Cider Cellar?” Hodge stammered. “The entertainment here isn’t good enough for you?” Jemmie held a puzzled grin on his face while he examined Brandy Nan.

“Nonsense! With you and Ginny here, no other club could boast of better entertainment. No, Ginny has a friend who works down in Fountain Court at the Cellar—just got back from America. Thought we’d pop in on her.”

Jemmie was busy fumbling with the dummy, apparently not listening to his friend. “I say, I ought to have Ormann look at her; my eyes are getting too bad to do the delicate work involved, and I’d hate to throw her out on account of her leg! Seems to me the same thing happened with one of my puppets last year. Remember my act with Matthew, Mark and Teufel?” Jemmie questioned.

“I do indeed!”

“Oh was it his arm? I can’t remember; I did that act well over a year ago. Do you know, Geoffrey, that that was the last time I ever used more than two dummies on stage? What’s the use, I kept asking myself. Frightfully hard to handle. And no other ventriloquist in London uses three dummies! Did you tell me that you were going to visit someone who’d been touring America? You might ask her whether she’s ever seen an act where the ventriloquist used three dummies!”

“Yes, gladly, I shall ask her,” Geoffrey replied, starting down the ladder. “Well, Jemmie, good to bump into you; my best to the missus and by all means see to that leg! Brandy Nan’s one of your best acts—everyone was roaring! Ciao!”

Jemmie watched as his friend climbed down the ladder, reaching the bottom just as Ginny emerged from the curtains. She was a flower-like girl of twenty-four, who when on stage was a saucy charmer. Jemmie realized that her act was fetching the audience, although knowing that did not bother him, for it gave him a larger crowd to entertain.

The couple disappeared, leaving Jemmie examining his puppet in the dim glow of the stage lights beneath. What he had said to Geoffrey was true; in his withered condition his eyes had begun to fail him; he squinted for a solid minute, motionless. Then abruptly he began to stroke Nan’s auburn hair, catching her sparkling crown before it toppled from her head. “Oh, Nan, you are in a state of shambles! But we’ll wire you up in no time.” Opening a box, he gently set the dummy in it, then returned to the ladder which he descended with awkward movements. Finding his overcoat backstage, he slipped into it and buttoned the collar snugly around his neck. When he opened the stage exit, icy fingers of winter gust wrapped about him, pinching his unprotected nose and ears.

Jemmie lived a short ten minutes from where he worked, so he told his friends. In earlier days he could make the walk in ten minutes, but old age and vigorous winds hampered his efforts to make it home in less than half an hour. Although it was not yet ten o’clock, the street was quiet, with only an occasional car horn or streetlight to disturb the dark hush. Hodge had lived with his wife Maggie on the Strand for almost twenty years. At one time he had worked at the Cider Cellar, which was why he was surprised that Geoffrey should mention it. Over the years, however, he and other performers were replaced by “fresher blood” as the owner put it.

Halfway home he paused to look back on the deserted street. For a moment he resented the fact that as he aged, the neighborhood actually grew younger! Why, even the breeze was more spirited! He could remember the days when he would skip down to the confectioners, where old Mrs. Merriam would slide a pie across the counter. Strutting back to his service flat to surprise Maggie with the treat, he would greet Bob Harker, the Chemist, standing outside his store. But now the wooden counters had been replaced with stainless steel, and great sliding panels of glass covered the once open shelves. The young, cold salespeople no longer seemed to care about much more than selling their wares, as they scurried about, often staying at one job no longer than three weeks. Why, since Harker had left, it was quite difficult to
find a clerk in the store, small as it was; so often they seemed to hide behind high shelves of bottles, peeping out only once in a while to insure that their flashing fluorescent lights and those ghastly electric displays of hopping cardboard figures holding signs heralding "Vito's Vitamins" were still running.

Climbing the stairs of his flat, Jemmie could make out the voices of his wife and the visitor. Jemmie thought how odd it was to hear such a commotion from within, for seldom did the Hodges entertain. When the ventriloquist performed at the Cider Cellar, he would often invite friends over, but through the years both he and Maggie took less of an interest in such a busy life. These days, when Jem would open the oak door to his home, Maggie would peek out of the kitchen and greet him with a steaming bowl of porridge or thick split-pea soup, for Maggie now spent a good deal of time in the kitchen, often baking all day Saturday for Sunday church picnics.

But tonight when Jemmie opened the door he seemed so stunned at the sight of a visitor that he just stood in the doorway. "Jem, the door!" Maggie shouted across the room.

"Brrrrr, it's a cold night tonight," Jemmie murmured, clearing his throat.

"Jemmie," Maggie repeated, "the door." Getting up from the sofa, Maggie walked over to her husband and helped him out of his overcoat, after which she quietly shut the door.

"Jemmie, you've met Elaine. We were just talking about your latest act; 'Laine has said that she saw it just last week. I scolded her for not dropping in on us afterward, but she said it was a chilly night like tonight."

"Oh?" Jemmie asked, while looking for a hanger for his coat.

"Aye, your Drunken Nan," Elaine exclaimed. "Beautiful work on 'er, Jemmie, beautiful!"

"Nan?" Thank you, Elaine. But I'm afraid my lady's having some trouble—seems her leg's falling off."

"Oh, that's a shame, Jemmie, with such a beautiful cos-
child visited Uncle Jemmie he was forever tearing about the place, jabbering so much that conversation was at best a one-sided affair. Yet Jennie never seemed to tire of the boy. By the time Poppy was five, Jemmie no longer worked at the club on the Strand, so the old man had much more time to spend with the sprite.

“How did you make them talk, Uncle Jem?” the little boy asked.

“Who’s that you’re talkin’ about talkin’?” Poppy giggled, “You’re so funny! How did you make the puppets talk? I’ve never seen a ventrokiss.” The lad said this somewhat apologetically, for he sincerely believed that Jemmie had to have been the greatest ventriloquist of all time.

“Well, I held them in my lap and asked them questions,” answered Jemmie.

“Is that how you’re making me talk? By holding me in your lap?”

Jemmie laughed. “Ah, but you’re asking me the questions. No, I could make their lips move, while at the same time I could speak without moving my own lips. As a result, it appeared as through the puppet were speaking.”

When the little elf asked how a person could talk with his mouth closed, old Mr. Hodge laughed. “Young man, if there were a ventriloquist act in town, I’d surely take you.”

“Two years after Jemmie’s first performance for Poppy, the old man died. During the next few days friends passed through the big oak door of the flat, stopping by to console Mrs. Hodge. Even Mr. Ormann heard of the old ventriloquist’s death and stopped by. Elaine came, of course, as did Geoffrey and Ginny. Young Poppy came along, clinging to his mother’s hand. This was the first time he had ever sat for more than five minutes in the same seat in Hodge’s flat, as he was always so restless. In the early evening as the three adults were sitting in the front room, Poppy sneaked into the bedroom. Cautiously he opened the door to the closet; slowly and quietly he climbed the stairs, perhaps afraid to wake the puppets above. When he reached the top he peeked around the small room, but the dim light of the sun peeping in through tiny holes in the window-blind was insufficient to make objects discernible. Sliding his hand along the wall he found a switch. He shut his eyes tightly, then turned the switch. Nothing moved, so he courageously opened one eye. What he saw made him gasp.

Grabbing the railing, he ran down the stairs, whimpering when he saw it. When Jennie sat down and propped the puppet on his knee, Poppy drew in close so that only Jemmie could hear, and whispered, “What’s his name?”

Hodge was taken aback for a moment. “Why, I haven’t named him yet. Just finished him last week; what do you think he’d like to be called?”

The boy smiled and gazed out into the distance, thinking. Then he looked at the puppet’s face, rubbing his hand over the dummy’s whiskered cheeks. “Let’s call him Whiskers!”

“So be it! Poppy, meet Whiskers; Whiskers, Poppy.”

“Pleased to meet you, Pappy,” uttered the puppet, coming to life.

“Poppy,” laughed the lad. “Hey, Uncle Jemmie, he talked without you helping him!”

“So he did, Poppy, so he did.”
all the way. Finally landing in the bedroom he ran toward his parents, yelling “Mommy, Mommy, Uncle Jemmie is upstairs! He’s upstairs!”

Ginny exchanged a feverish glance with Mrs. Hodge, then held her arms out as Poppy approached, in tears, “No, no, Poppy; Mr. Hodge has gone away.”

“But Mommy, but Mommy, he’s upstairs,” cried Poppy.

“No, darling. Now hush; you’re upsetting Mrs. Hodge.” Ginny whispered in his ear.

“Ginny,” Geoffrey broke in. “I’d better check what it was he saw. May I, Maggie?”

“Why, yes,” answered Maggie, “but be careful. Little Poppy shouldn’t have gone up those stairs; I haven’t been up there in ages—who knows, there may be rodents up there!”

Poppy wriggled from his mother’s arms and followed his father as he entered the bedroom. “Daddy, do you believe me?”

“Sure I do, Poppy; I believe you saw something up there, but surely you’ve mistaken it for Uncle Jemmie.” Geoffrey grabbed the railing and slowly climbed to the attic. Reaching the room, he shook his head in amazement at what he saw. The very likeness of the old man himself! On a chair in the center of the floor was a large puppet which bore a startling resemblance to the old ventriloquist. On his lap sat the image of a familiar smiling cherub, little Poppy. All about were the puppets which Jemmie had brought to life in his performances, plus a few, like Whiskers, which Poppy recognized as newcomers. Brandy Nan held a banner which read “Long Live the King.” The puppets sat attentively, as though listening to a story which Jemmie was revealing to Poppy.

“See, Daddy, Uncle Jemmie.”

“No, Poppy, that’s no more your Uncle Jemmie than that is you sitting there on his lap. Now go downstairs, I’ll be right down.” Poppy lingered a few seconds more, then dashed down the stairs.

“Great show, Jemmie, great show,” Geoffrey uttered under his breath. “Yes, old man, I can almost feel your presence: ‘Long Live the King’! Touche!” Turning around, Geoffrey clicked off the switch. Slowly he descended from the darkened room, whispering, “You’re a fighter, Jemmie; you’ll be around for a good, long time!”

MARK C. ALSPAUGH
Class of 1976
HERITAGE

A gold coin from Russia,
with the face of the last Czar, shot at Ekatrinaberg.
A gold tie-pin with the purple stone in the head of a horse,
from the senile old lady who was real nice
and used to go to church all the time and
say many prayers for vocations and the family’s well-being.
A gold wedding-band
from grandpa
too large for fingers not used to loading bales onto ships in the harbor.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

The Birgadier General Paul T. Cullen Award, 1976

corporal jones legacy

his son would have made a million
said i do three times
squandered his treasure through a cork
perished in the street
his little girl
remember bouncing emily on your knee
would have married a construction worker
reared six strong sons
the seventh died of smallpox
and three cocker spaniels in upstate new york
edna
she would have passed on at general
on a tuesday after they removed a lung
but there were lots of flowers
everybody was there
and everybody cried poor grandpa
and that favorite grandson
he didn’t really have a favorite
would have washed dishes at hals
and become the best cancer researcher in connecticut
just on the verge of a breakthrough
and emilys second
wasnt he there in ’69
no more war
and the third
wasnt he going to teach eighth grade in florida
and wasnt there going to be a big get-together
next july
up at grandpas place in michigan
when all the baldness
and the long hair
and the wrinkles
and the bikini figures
and the black sheep
and the shining stars
crunched corn on the cob
and watermelon until it ran down their chins
and played croquet on the front lawn

if—(but don't weep now)—
if
a shell had not burst his helmet
at belleau wood

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The Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award, 1977

THE CRACKING OF WATER ON DRY STONES

"It is a dance we do in silence
Far below this morning sun
You in your life, me in mine
We have begun"

—Jackson Browne
OUR LADY OF THE WELL

I. COMIC DEBRIS

On their bellies
sprawled
across the countertop
every moment
they witness
the crucifixion
of the world:
Their sides are pierced by crystal spears,
drawing Blood & Whiskey from tap veins.
Every night
the moon
hurls vertical beams...
. . till No one answers
every moment
from every
light is shed
unearthed casket:

Rats scamper across our bellies,
searching for an ugly death.

LANCE PERDUE
Class of 1976
II. MORNING CALLS THE SPECTRAL GHOST

"ex nihilo nihil fit" 1

Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
che la diritta via era smarritita. 2

Last night it snowed for the first time.
And, next morning, the magpies couldn’t
dance their silent shadows in the sun,
couldn’t cackle, scream, or pounce
upon the weighted branches;
just to share a moment’s pleasure, prancing
their dilatory ragtime,
in the morning’s
presence.

How many angels dance on the head of a pin? How many?
Vade retrome, Satan!
"Vedi Napoli e poi mori"
requiescat in pace est non sequitur
quo vadis, quo vadis?
heretofore, being neither eloquent or impartial, rudely
struck
by this melancholy in its fashioned manner, measure
by measure
for each
for all

for some of us are dreamers,
and all of us are fools . . .
In furtive, creeping movements I crawled
across the terrazzo

and paused and once again
looked up;
that embroidered cloth that
twists and spends its hour, dying
to the strain of restless chords, of rope on iron.
Between the movement and the thought
rolling across the mountains, enveloping everything
in reach, the clammy cold
tentacles that grope for the apathetic
the searching, the unknowing
Indeed, this rolling gray stillness has found a solid home.

The distant echo of voices . . .
The fog
from the car’s exhaust
swirled and turned and tumbled in startling crescendo
and dissolved into
the fog
And so we passed, like an epic triumph,
to the sea below us
from the darkness, from
the fog
from the hill,
crushing and cracking the ice
Beneath us.
Standing in the cold for an hour;
“I’m ggonna freeze ma ass off!”
“Ah, c’mon, ----, you can’t be late for this one!”
I thought about the frostbite in my
foot.
Some friends pulled up. got out.
Sighs, short and inconstant
awaiting a flood.
sharing the cold, sharing pain.
And the ghost was there beside us,
Flamingblueeyeswhitetetetsquarejaw
scorning that painful cold,
silent laughter . . .
But—it was more than this; more than that, in the end, it's better to trade injustice for unanswered questions.

... to understand a thing so simple and so huge
aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait
The crowd,
The finger reaching for a button
the whirring of motors
like some processional vision,
this yawning gash of earth
we stood above,
the steel precision, the stated moment
face to face
the careful folds on an embroidered cloth;
  Somewhere, far off in the
distance, a white gyrfalcon sat on a window perch
  blinked,
turning her head, gazing out voicelessly
  into
the fog.
and the words were issued from their lips, their selves sotto voce
but somehow the feeling still wasn't right
The snow draped in its rustled veil—a gossamer shade
  80

And the spectral ghost was there beside us,
and the icy fingers of his
upraised hand spread apart and closed
  in one swift movement;
In the shadow of a Norwegian pine,
some tired fellow
squeezes a few precious notes
from his freezing lips, drops his bugle to hang
  by his tired side.
with a little patience,
with even less understanding.
Glass shattering on pavement

The distant echo of voices . . .
with the echo of the final gun's report,
the past is gone.

So—with sullen eyes thrown upon our somber feet—we stood,
as the crowd slowly dissolved, as I went down on my knees,
but ah, sweet jesus, how I wanted to cry
But—God, I don’t know.
how.
why?

Ed elli a me: “Le cose ti fier conte,
  quando noi fermerem il nostri passi
  su la trista riviera d’Acheronte.”

The sullen coach
crawled out of the lot,
expectantly, waiting as eight shivering people began again
  the slow ascent into
the fog
prepared to resume their rightful place
Among the living.
  And, in the afternoon . . .
my friends strolled back across the terrazzo,
laughing and joking and glad the day was over
Wishing to hell the year was over, passing a half-staff.
And a falcon soared above me, the earthbound fool,
  with obvious and evident enjoyment
(though immeasurable to me),
And the sun finally broke through the clouds . . .

3 Dante's Inferno; Canto 3, 76-8: In this scene, the poet Dante and Virgil (Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory) prepare to cross the river Styx, the waters of death:

And he replied: “These things
  Will be clear to you when we pause
  On Acheron's sad shore.”
Stronger
than any burst of reason.
And, again, the magpies
began to cackle and scream,
dancing their silent shadows

We buried him this morning.

III. ARROGANT TRUTH

Dream
inconsistent content
follow through, wake
rake across your eyes
feel your fingers, fleshless
tear the shadow of the skies
from a hollow nest
You
inconsistent being
built in harmony,
but not accord
silent laughter, insufficient
trading off

IV. THE CALYX
—quotidian tertian

And in the somber, hastened gaiety of these hordes, so he hastens to admit not doing rather than
doing nothing
the silent being, the very moment of life, where life exists with even the notion—thought destroys Neither fish nor flesh nor the bored, disinterested, hollow scream can state its worth.
Sirrah, be kind be gentle for this my subjective hosannah

Full, the wind catches the sail of your gown’s sleeve dancing crested shadows on these hills, the pond the cattails stretch the fingered breeze, and the wind fills the eye of the sunline.

i
bend and bowed my ear to listen to you the hollow god
Smiles turn to certain raindrops that cling romantically, tenaciously, ostensibly, audaciously with some felt tenderness to broken boughs eventually they’ll fall

it was not the words he wrote it was not the life he gave.
V. THE CRACKING OF WATER ON DRY STONES

i. Enter, All fools Depart

The peace which passes understanding, mindless words
Which cannot say in passing moments when they pass away.
Struck with this didactic and unclassic pose, Death's shroud
When swept before the throe is like... but it's just a joke, these days,
Yet, It walks among us; It doesn't stammer, thrust amid the crowd.
Along the corridors we passed, where love's transgressions still occur,
And the visage of those sterile grins will never fade,
Standing at his bedside in the final moments like some dark and silent blur,
The wraith gazed up from broken eyes. His wife
I had never seen her cry.
She stumbled on her words (but of course it's understood).
We left.

Not thinking clearly, we stumble through revolving doors.
And as we passed away, the world turns, the locks crawl
Inch closer to the turning toward this peace.
It's not my worth to prove my life or that I'm sane,
The hand that reaches from the grave, this song will call me home
again.

ii. The Falcon

Melting streamed lines in images abound
The arched embrace of fireflies dancing on water,

This autumn beauty descends on mute, wordless figure,
lying
Discontentedly on my fist, quixotic
Idiot, so be it, distracted by the hovering humming
Bird that circles, and descends,
That turns, circles, and prepares
Only to return again.
That caresses anxieties that once you saw,
Recalling reeling wild duck's cries;
Disguise in the ambushed vision
Of your eye. This autumn bounty
Ascends on two figures straddling a brook,
Death waits patiently, by the speechless, hooded falcon.

iii. Sic Transit Gloria Mundi

And when all the laughter dies in sorrow,
And all the planets bid their deepest sorrows die,
All fools depart. Yes, even I, by soundless laughing borrow
From the lives of thieves—Endless whispers, sighs, the sigh
Of Life—my bleeding rage erupts!
Tumescent aegis beneath these rotting fluted Doric columns
(Of interwoven choice), we different fools corrupt
In varied ways, the weary, burnished, solemn
Faces of implored and then imploring loss. So we lose inside
Ourselves, though poets stammer for this lost intent;
Surrender is the cruellest moment, breeding lies
From faith to glorify the worst offense:
I die, indeed, each moment of the day
To be as well, life's birth by twisted ways.

the unicorn was dying
VI. TONAL

in the blue night
after the moon-set bends
breeze before sunrise
padded soft thud among the firs, where
snow blue-white haze
held close fades
the sky, the frost, the stars.
the creak of hiking boots.
squirrel tracks, bear tracks
i am alone,
an uneven murmur

PETER HEARNS LIOTTA
Class of 1978

AUTHOR’S NOTE:
As ludicrous as it may seem, when submitting a manuscript in competition, I feel “The Cracking of Water on Dry Stones” deserves some words of introduction, precisely because it is such an important poem to me. Succinctly put, the work concerns Death. Over the past two years in my life as a cadet, my existence has been scarred and struck by its immediate reality. Although the individual movements, of which there are six total, may vary considerably in tone and form, I regard them as a collective whole. I cannot separate them. And if they mean as much to me, whether concerning a homage to Ezra Pound, the pain at being a pallbearer at Col James C. McIntyre’s funeral (former Officer-In-Charge of the Cadet Falcons), or the simple achievement of peace in the forest snow, they mean also a great deal to those who are close to me. I intend them to mean a great deal for the reader. I am not intentionally trying to be didactic, but have written the poem in the same essence as thought Conrad when he said that art must deal “in matter as well as in the facts of life, with what is fundamental, enduring, essential.”

The Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award, 1978

THE TIRE SWING BRANCH

The desk was of a hard wood, made harder by years of exposure to young hands. The pattern of the grain still showed clearly through innumerable initial-scratchings and pencil marks. At the top, the slash which was meant for a pencil holder was stained a shiny lead-black. The seat was wooden, also, and a lovely golden color, although the rest of the desk was a dull metal.

Lemuel ran his hands along the edge of the desk until he found the smooth part of the wood with his thumb as he looked up at the speaker in front of the classroom. Today was Mario’s day for a class report. Lemuel knew Mario would do well; he always did. Mario had a big papier-mache tooth and was explaining the control of tooth decay. Lemuel wasn’t very interested. He certainly knew how to brush his teeth, although many of the other kids probably thought he didn’t. He continued rubbing the patch of wood.

His hands were small, but then Lem’s was a small body. His childish features reinforced the illusion that he was the youngest of his peers. His father always told him to expect a growing spurt, “Any day now.” Lem didn’t listen to him much anymore. After all, he had been telling Lem that for over two years now. It didn’t matter. Another hour and Lem would be high up in his tree. Then he would be big enough ...

“Lem... Lemuel Foote?”

Lem started; the class was leaving and it was his teacher calling him.
“Could you come up here please, Lemuel?” she asked.
He grabbed his book and his knob and hurried forward.
“Lem,” said Miss Heartley, “I just wanted to remind you
that next time it’s your turn for class report.”
Lem clutched his knob tightly and muttered, “Okay.” He
turned and ran out the door into the dimming October sun.
As Lem started down the path for home he examined his
knob. It had come from a ornate old chest-of-drawers and
was a dark red wood, rubbed smooth from weeks of
clutching. The only irregularity was a small dragon carved on
the front. He had added the dragon himself, though it didn’t
look much like a dragon to anyone else.
Suddenly Lem’s thoughts were interrupted by a stinging
pain in the back of his neck. He whirled around to see Mario
and three other boys bearing rocks. They stopped Lem beside
the school’s incinerator, from which a high flame leapt,
lighting the faces of the five boys.
“What you got there, Lem?” offered Mario, stepping for­
ward, “Let’s have it.”
Lem looked into his hand, then closed it.
Mario continued, “C’mon, Lem, give it here.” He made a
grab for Lem’s hand, but the smaller boy recoiled.
“Got nothin’.”
Mario turned to his friends and whispered. Lem turned and
began to run for home. The moment he moved, Mario and
his pals were after him. Within ten yards, Lem was covered
by the four bodies, all grabbing for his knob. Mack Frizzo
came up with it and jumped away from the melee.
“Damn, it’s just a little doorknob,” Mack said after exam­
ingen the wood. He tossed it skyward. The tussle stopped as
the boys watched the flying knob. Lem’s muffled cry came
too late; the knob descended into the incinerator with a dull
thud.
“No!” Lem cried and scrambled away from the others. He
ran home swiftly and was not followed.
It was really a perfect branch, this oak branch. The broadest branch of the tree, it was fifty feet from the ground and level. Lem looked up at it, then began to climb. First he found the small cleft where his right foot would fit; this boosted him up far enough to reach a small branch. He swung his arms, then pulled himself up monkey-style. A few more stepping-points and he was there; on his branch, in his tree. It was a dead branch, but it was big. Lem lay back in the hollow middle of the branch. As his weight crunched the thick blanket of dead leaves, their sleepy October smell enveloped his senses. Gazing straight up, Lem began to methodically examine each of the branches and twigs above him. Everything looked right. It would be better with the knob, but still...

It had been easier with her around. She had been frail ever since bearing Lemuel, but she always spent time with him. They used to take long walks in the forest while Jud Foote was away at the mine. In the winter, they would throw snowballs and build giant men of snow. On the way back, they always broke icicles off the sassafras trees for mock swordfights. The springtime always brought a refurbishing of a well-worn swing made from an old auto tree. The rope was old, but the oak branch was plenty strong. It would last all through the summer until Jud Foote took it down. Then it was autumn. Autumn was the best of all. Lem and his mother would construct mounds of leaves and fling themselves crazily into them. She always worried about him. "Close your eyes, Lem, or you'll get a stick in them," she would warn before diving headlong into the colorful pile of leaves. He always remembered to close his eyes. It was more fun that way, anyhow. Last fall had been the best of all until the doctor came. He had visited the little house before, but this time he came back every week and finally every day until...

The oak tree's big tire swing branch had no new leaves the following spring. Now it was autumn again and a scrap of rope still clung to the high limb. The wind blew the tattered ends in crazy spirals as more dead leaves fell from the higher, living branches.

Lemuel heard his father call from the house, some 200 yards away. Well, it was getting pretty dark. He scrambled down the tree truck until he was close enough to jump to the ground. He took one last look up at the branch. No one else had ever seen the world from that branch. Lem stooped down to pick up a broad red leaf. He thought how funny it was—a leaf could be so beautiful when dead. He ran for home, taking the leaf with him.

Inhaling sharply, Lem looked around the classroom. He saw twenty wooden desks, all with children behind them. He looked down at the podium which his fingers were tightly gripping. It was wooden too, but had been painted white. "Go ahead, Lemuel," Miss Heartley said from the back of the room. Lem picked up his red leaf. He held it up for all to see.

"This is an oak leaf," he began. A smattering of laughter began in the back corner. Lem continued, "It came from a tree out in the woods back there." He pointed out the window and the laughter was repeated. Lem looked down at the podium, swallowed, and went on: "What I want to tell you is an oak is a deciduous tree. That means a tree that loses his leaves every year. Pine trees are different; they're evergreens."

The class was quieter now, but Lem could see Mario, Mack and the others huddled over, whispering.

"Evergreen trees stay green all year long. That's how come we use 'em for Christmas." Lem was almost finished. "The easy way to tell in the summer, when everything's green, is that deciduous trees have wide leaves like this oak does. An evergreen has needle kinds of leaves like a Christmas tree." Finished, Lem hurried towards his desk. The class was quiet now, but two of the girls whispered, pointing at Lemuel. He began to rub his desk's smooth spot with his thumb.
“That was fine, Lemuel,” said Miss Heartley, and she began the spelling lesson.

He knew they would be along; the question was when. Trotting down the path home, Lem looked warily from side to side. Sure enough, he spotted Mack’s blond head behind a bush some twenty yards ahead. Lem darted into the bushes on the opposite side of the path, and sprinted for the oak tree. The four larger boys were after Lem instantly. They regaled him with shouts of, “Hey, Tree-Boy! Whatcha runnin’ from?”

Lem had a fair headstart, but as he reached the oak, he could hear the others crashing through the undergrowth. No matter, though; Lem knew they’d never be able to figure out a way up this oak. Right foot into cleft, swing across the first branch, and at last Lem was safe inside the hollow middle of the tire swing branch.

“Hey, Tree-boy! Where’d ’ya go?” shouted the others. Then there was silence until Lem heard a muffled flurry of excited whispers. No matter, though. No one else had ever been up here before except Jud Foote, who had used a ladder to hand the tire swing. Lem relaxed and began to study the branches above him. He heard the scratching sound of his adversaries attempting to reach the first branch. One of them cursed a scraped elbow. Lem chuckled, he knew they would soon give up. He went back to the scrutiny of an especially crooked twig above him. It quite resembled the Ohio River, he thought. He had seen the river once, a very broad and muddy plain with incomprehensibly huge barges toiling along. Perhaps one day...

“Hi, Tree-Boy!”

Lem jerked his head towards the intruder; Mario’s head just cleared the branch on which Lem rested.

Mario sneered, “Thought you were safe—huge, Tree-Boy?” Enraged, Lem stammered, “No! My tree!”

Mario laughed, “Your tree? from now on it’s my tree!”

With this he stepped boldly onto the tire swing branch. Lem pleaded, “No! Get down. . .my tree!” He cringed in the far reaches of the branch’s hollow middle, Mario stepped farther out. Lem scrambled out past the hollow middle and clung to the dead sticks on the branch. Full of rage, Lem screamed at Mario, “Get down! ’S’my tree! Get off!”

Mario now stood squarely in the middle of the nest of leaves still warm from Lem’s reverie. Tears streaming down his face, Lem scooted out even farther. A tremendous crack shook the branch and the two boys on it. The scream of tearing, splintering wood nearly drowned out Mario’s terrified cry. The mighty branch began its journey downward, bringing lower branches with it, and creating a colorful shower of dead leaves. Lem found himself tumbling end over end and amid this deluge of red, gold, and brown. He fell for a long time. Before he stopped, he remembered to close his eyes.
THE CITY

Peter lay in bed watching the fringe of his old gold bookmark flutter in the morning breeze. It was as though the pages of his Bible had bound up the bookmark and now the wind was tempting it to escape. He felt warm under the covers, but the cool breeze across his face made him close his eyes. When he opened them, the sun was filtering into his room. The briskness of the morning breeze ruffled the curtains and caused the loose pages of his wall calender to chatter. As he lay in bed, he tried to shield out the brilliant rays by moving his head until the round, frayed, window-shade cord was in front of his face. But the round pull-tab had a hole in it and made such a task nearly impossible. He squinted at his calendar. Through the reflection off the shiny pages, he could see his birthday outlined in red. The thought of turning thirteen made him forget the sun’s rays temporarily. Finally, the glare overpowered his thoughts and he was forced to retreat beneath the covers.

Alone in the grey darkness, he thought of the upcoming day. He felt under the edge of his mattress for the envelope. It was there. He felt the clean crisp edges and checked to see that the seal remained intact. The overlapping flap hugged the envelope just as it did when the nice lady in the bank slid it under the bars which had separated them. He withdrew the small package from under the mattress and turned it over and over in his hands. He could remember that there was some type of official seal from the bank, but it blended in with all the darkness and that was not important. He wondered how such a small package could represent so much.
From under the covers he reached for his bookmarker. After fumbling for a while, he managed to free it from the tight pages. Feeling for the harder end, he pressed against the sealed edge of the envelope. It grudgingly gave with short shredding noises. When the edge of the marker ripped through the last of the sealed flap, he dropped it in the bed. He tried to look inside the now exposed pocket, but it was too dark. His hand touched the dark bills and he clenched them tightly. He pulled them out and they were cold and felt uncomfortably smooth. He tried to count them as the bank clerk had done, licking his finger and thumb between each successive passage of the bills. As the dark stack grew in front of him he shifted his position in the bed since he found his arm going to sleep. The movement caused the stack to topple and Peter could feel the money tickling his stomach. He decided not to count any more. There were a few bills remaining in the envelope and he felt to insure that the last three of the eighteen dollars were there. They were, so he gathered up the scattered bills which seemed to be finding their way under his pajama top. When he collected all the bills he carefully replaced them in the envelope and folded the top closed.

Something sharp poked him in the sides as he rolled over. In the grey darkness, he had forgotten all about the bookmarker. He grabbed at it instinctively and sat up. The sun no longer glared through his window. The cool morning air felt good and he took a deep breath. He had forgotten how stuffy it was under the covers and breathing deeply, he gulped down the fresh air. He laid the envelope down next to his Bible and then picked up the leather-bound book. Closing his eyes he opened it. Just by the feel of the thickness under each thumb, he knew that he must be in Psalms. As he pulled the tissue pages apart, he opened his eyes to the last chapter in Job. He had never made this mistake before. He glanced at the neatly arranged words, but immediately shifted his gaze to his alarm clock. It had not gone off. Noticing the time, he replaced the bookmarker and closed the book. He placed it carefully in the middle of his nightstand and felt the cold floor for his slippers. Eagerly he slipped them on and grabbed his robe from its peaceful rest on the foot of his bed. Closing the window, he strutted toward the bedroom door.

"Peter J., where have you been?" asked his mother as he swung the kitchen door wide.

"Did you call me?" I guess I'm a little late, but my alarm clock didn't go off and I ain't looked at it until seven."

"That's 'you did not look at it', right?"

"Yeah. Is breakfast ready yet? I really ought to be going soon and I don't wanna miss that train." The smell of bacon was in the air and Peter could hear the grease spattering.

Peter could see it now. He'd seen those trains streaking by every day on their way through town. Before now he had always wondered if they stopped, but they must. After all, that's what the schedule said. He pulled the wrinkled piece of paper from the pocket of his robe. Friday ... eight thirty-five, New Haven to New York. New York, and today was Friday; Friday the eighth of April!

"Sit down, son, and eat your breakfast, I already called the headmaster and reminded him you weren't going to school today. Quit messing with that schedule. Here's your ticket and I wrote your sister's address and phone number on this other piece of paper. See, look here, 107 West 68th Street. Don't worry: the train won't leave without you."

Peter knew it wouldn't leave without him. At least he hoped it wouldn't. The schedule said it stopped in New Haven and he would be there. Besides, there must be others getting on at New Haven, too. He wondered who else would be waiting for the train. Certainly there would be adults on the train, and he thought of how he should dress. He stuffed another piece of bacon in his mouth.

"Hey Mom, did you wash that blue and white shirt this week?"

"Yes I did, and don't you 'hey Mom' me."
"I'm sorry, I guess I was thinkin' about the train."

"Well, don't you lose your head thinking about this trip. You've got to call your sister once you get in to the city. Don't forget that you must be back by Sunday. It may be your birthday tomorrow, but we aren't going to miss going to church as a family because your father said you could go to the city pretending to be someone you aren't."

"Aw Mom, now don't go makin' fun of my trip to New York. This is my birthday present. I worked all last summer cuttin' lawns, and all the other kids have already bin to New York."

"If you are done get upstairs and get changed. You don't have much time before that train leaves and we have to walk to the train station because your father has the car. Oh, and don't forget to let the dog out before you leave."

Peter let the spoon from his cereal clang in his bowl as he pushed away from the table. Scuffing his slippers back on his feet he dashed back up to his room, still chewing his last piece of bacon.

Peter wondered how long he had been sleeping. Slowly he raised himself in his seat. The man in front of him had a watch but Peter couldn't quite see the time. Forgetting all caution, he leaned on the back of the man's seat and peered over his shoulder trying to see the watch which was partially hidden from view by his sleeve. Suddenly, the man turned to look at him. His cool stare and foul breath sent Peter retreating into his seat. The man readjusted his sitting position as if establishing his boundary of territory. All Peter could see now was the man's balding head and wrinkled pantleg which protruded into the aisle. He had moved his arm and it disappeared into his lap. Peter sat for a minute wondering if the man was going to say anything. He did not. But, Peter thought he had seen enough to know the time. It looked to be nine-thirty. Surely the train wouldn't be late. He thought about this for a while and then returned his gaze to the smudged window.

The train was clacking through the outskirts of the Bronx. It must be the Bronx because Harlem was the only other part of New York Peter had heard of. Anyway, this didn't look like Harlem. It looked too neat to be Harlem. The view outside rapidly became nothing more than tall red brick buildings on either side of the train.

The train ticked along the track. The monotony caused Peter to look around the inside of the cabin. The spaces above the windows and luggage racks were lined with colorful advertisements. Coats and suitcases with limp handles lay on the shelves. Many of the more colorful ads had writing and scribbling all over them. Peter wondered who would be foolish enough to waste time messing up the inside of a train. He shifted in his seat to see the ads in the rear of the car. A splash of red caught his attention and he noticed a girl in a bikini advertising a cigarette. He squinted to make sure that he caught every detail. The girl was very pretty and she held a large dollar-sign below her big bosom. The sight of money on the board made him start. He dropped back into his seat. Quickly, he felt his back pocket to check his wallet. With a lump in his throat, he thought about the time he had slept and how he had forgotten about his money. Twisting in his seat, he finally recovered the uncomfortable lump from his
back pocket. Since he never carried it to school or church the newness made the wallet spring open as he pulled it out. Fumbling with the smooth billfold, he turned it upside down and the bills of green began to slide out onto the floor. "Grand Central, last stop, watch your step, . . . Grand Central."

Peter dropped the wallet on top of the money. Bending over, he snatched the crisp dollar bills off the floor. Hurriedly straightening up, he stuffed them into his front pocket. Again he bent over, this time to pick up the wallet which lay spread-eagled in front of him. He started when he heard footsteps approaching and shifted his eyes toward the end of the car. Sitting up, he quickly folded the wallet and put it back in his rear pocket. The people in the aisle watched him with calloused stares. At first he glanced back at them, but they continued to stare so he looked down at his feet. He could hear the brakes beginning to squeak and squeal as the train lurched through the livid darkness of the train tunnels. He felt alone and the bulge of crumpled bills in his pocket bothered him. He was pretty sure that he had gotten them all, but bent over to check once again.

"You alright?" a voice remarked from overhead. Peter could feel the blood rush to his face and he sat up quickly. "Ah, yeah, I'm fine—just checking to see if I dropped somethin'."

The squat man with his funny hat had already turned and was pushing his way toward the rear of the train. Peter felt a cold dampness on his hands and he clasped them together in front of him. Taking a deep breath he sunk in his seat waiting for those people to clear out of the train. He tried to look at the watches on the different wrists as the people shuffled by his seat. Was it ten o'clock? He couldn't be sure. When the last one passed in front of him, he pulled himself into the aisle. It could have been another dollar, but the conductor's glare from the end of the car frightened Peter and his feet continued to walk.

As Peter stepped out onto the platform, he could see the last of the passengers scurrying down the cement corridor. He stood watching them disappear around the corner far up ahead. There was an empty train on the track next to him. His train was the last train still steaming. Hollow footsteps faded into the distance and now he only heard the gritting of the sand on the cement under his own feet. Single lamps tacked to the stone walls provided a dim glow. If this was Grand Central, where was everything? He began to walk faster, turning to look over his shoulder as he began to feel more and more lonely. As he looked, he could now, no longer see the car which he rode in. The darkness of the tunnel swallowed the train more and more. The sand under his feet made him dig his heels in harder and he almost began to run. The shaft of light from the corner was just up ahead and Peter felt a damp, uneasiness in his stomach. He knew he should be getting hungry, but his body had greater concerns than food. Anyway, the rank smell of the thick steam nauseated him. Finally he reached a lighted passage and began to walk again. His breath came hard and he looked for an exit sign or something to guide him. He could hear people ahead of him, and as he rounded the next turn in the hall they came into view.

Peter couldn't remember when he'd seen so many people. He was fascinated by the many different outfits of clothing the people wore. There were business men in neatly pressed suits with folded newspapers, and there were older kids in jeans with dirty packs on their backs. Everyone seemed very much at home with themselves, minding their own business and staring at nothing as they shuffled about. He walked more slowly now, glancing from side to side. A grizzled old man sat hunched in the window of a large box of magazines. Peter noticed that the magazines looked old and dirty. He looked for familiar titles, but only saw strange names like "Stag" and "Duke," and these magazines had pictures of women on them. The man wore a grease smudged apron with
large pockets which lay pitifully in his lap. As Peter walked by, the man never moved, and the dusty magazines hung limply in the racks about his head. Peter hurried on. He tried to swallow the invisible lump which seemed to be riding on the back of his tongue. The halls got wider and more people passed by. There seemed to be a murmur in the air but Peter could see no one talking. He walked on, quickly shifting his gaze to look at the ground whenever his eyes met someone else's.

The sight of a small cafe made him realize he was really hungry. He did not know what time it was, but he knew it must be nearing lunchtime. There were many people crowded around the counter and Peter thought maybe he would be better off to find another place to eat. But as he walked by he noticed a place which wasn't taken. A large man propped his elbows on the counter next to the end, but there was room for Peter to stand. Looking around to see if anyone was about to push his way in, he quickly grabbed the counter and moved in close. He could then see the waitress who was short and flabby. Her grey hair hung out both sides of a net on top of her head. She was plodding back and forth from a square box which had prewrapped hotdogs, to the counter, and then to an old lead money box. Her requests for orders came from people closer to Peter's end of the counter.

He clasped his hands in front of him and waited. When she handed the man next to Peter his change, she looked at Peter and asked, "What'll it be?" Her voice was old and tired, and it slurred with an Italian accent.

"Yes ma'am, a hotdog..."
"Somp'tin' ta' drink?"
"Oh, ah, what do you have?"
"Tha usual - Coke, 7-up, Milk..."
"Milk will be fine, thank you," Peter felt his hands tingling from his tight grip. He relaxed them and watched the lady turn and methodically make her way to the box of hotdogs. She took out one hotdog and dropped it on the counter. It made a dull, squishing noise when it hit. Steam leaked out the edges of the grease-stained wrapper. Next, she pulled a small paper cup from a container hanging on the wall. Peter noticed that the paint was peeling all around this container. As she tugged on the cup, the motion caused some of the looser chips to fall among the open packages of hotdog buns. The sight of this made that lump crawl back into Peter's throat. He looked up at the wall behind the counter trying to ignore the woman as she waddled across in front of him with his food. A plastic clock hung by a wire and nail on the side wall behind the counter. The hands pointed to thirteen. Peter looked again. He knew the clock had to be wrong.

"Noity-five cents."

Peter turned his head to see the lady standing impatiently in front of him. "Yes ma'am. . . . is your clock right?"
"What cluck?"
"The one on the wall."
"Aw, it don't wok, noity-five cents."
"Yes ma'am." Peter reached for his wallet and then remembered the bulge of bills in his front pocket. Shoving his hand into the wad, he tried to separate one of the dollar bills from the crumpled mass. When he pulled what he thought was one from his pocket, several of the loose bills floated to the floor. He bent to pick them up.

"Hey, the hotdog and drink is noity-five cents," the old woman said impatiently as she watched Peter disappear under the counter. Again he felt the blood rushing to his face and he stood stammering, "I'm sorry, I dropped my money, and, ah, here's one dollar."

The lady took the money and returned with Peter's change.
"Do you have any mustard or katsup?" Peter asked as he pulled the hotdog toward him. The lady was already waiting on someone else and she just pointed to the other end of the counter. Peter's eyes followed her finger. He tried politely to make his way through the crowd, but his thoughtfulness resulted in shoves. The onions and relish were in
separate bowls but someone had used the same spoon for both. There was very little in either container, and what was there was a yellowish-brown slop. The squeeze bottles of mustard and katsup lay open on their sides. They were empty and the little bit of each condiment which remained formed a brown crust along the edges. He picked up the small drink and his hotdog and hurried away.

Peter moved rapidly through the ever-thickening crowds of people. He ate as he walked and when he finished he folded the wrapper from his hotdog and put it in the empty cup. He dropped the bundle in one of the crumpled trash-cans on his way. He could see the main lobby up ahead, and he made no more efforts to look from side to side. His walk slowed as he entered the lobby and he almost stumbled over some small children who were huddled at the feet of their parents. Most of the people were crowded around the ticket windows. The height inside the building was immense. Scanning the stone walls, he noticed the many clocks at one end of the room. There were clocks telling the time from every country he had heard of. All the clocks looked the same, except for their times. They looked just like the big clocks in school with the same black hands. He tried to figure out which one was for New York but he could not tell the difference between them all. He studied the clocks a while longer but it made no difference between them. Underneath the clocks were small figures carved in the wall. They resembled the small angelic figures in Peter's church. Peter thought of how this room must look like the spacious temples during the time of Christ. Or maybe, this was like those coliseums where they had all the fights and things. Peter noticed that he had stopped in the line of traffic and people were avoiding him while staring with disapproval. In the center of the room Peter noticed a large round booth with information written under the many windows. He hurried to the rear of one of the lines. There were many people asking questions and he did not feel bad standing among them. The line moved forward and Peter found himself staring at the head of a middle-aged balding man behind the bars in the window. The man looked up.

“Yeah?”

“Ah, I'd like to catch a subway to 107 West 68th Street.”

“You can get one to 66th and one hundred and fifth. Hee's a map you can get the token don corridaw B, track 24, to yeh left.”

The man finished and his blank stare compelled Peter to say thank you and step off to the side. He looked at the map. The lump in his throat began to grow. He looked from the map to the many corridors with numbers, but that didn't help any. He could see corridor B in front of him, so he began to make his way through the crowds of people.

As Peter neared the edge of the lobby, he noticed that a hulking man in an old heavy overcoat stood watching him from the mouth of the corridor. This man's stare slowed Peter's progress and he tried to avoid the man's stare by looking back at the angels high on the wall. A frequent glance back in the man's direction told Peter that he was still there. As Peter passed through the opening which led down corridor B, the man began to follow him. Peter walked faster but the man was catching him. The man's footsteps were right behind Peter's and he could feel the man's intense gaze focusing on his back.

“How about a quata, you gotta' quata?” the warm throaty voice rasped behind him.

Peter kept walking without saying a thing. People were getting more and more dispersed as they continued to walk.

“Oh kid, how about a quata, you gotta' quata?”

Peter's hands began to sweat and the bulge of crumpled dollar bills pressed hard against his leg. He stopped and forced himself to look at the man. The man was dirty and hadn't shaved in a long time. His beard grew in thin patches on his face. The right side of his upper lip was pulled up in a permanent sneer and he sucked at the air through the
yellow remains of teeth. There was a strange smell about him; it was kind of a sour smell and Peter turned his head in distaste. Peter hoped that he could find a quarter or some small piece of change to get rid of this man. There was no one around to help him. As he searched his pocket, all he could find were dollar bills. The man offered to help and made a move toward Peter’s pocket. Instinctively, Peter withdrew his hand and stepped back. He stood there clutching a dollar bill which had stuck between his fingers when he pulled his hand out of his pocket. The other side of the man’s twisted mouth raised in a smile and the ugly gaps in his broken teeth wheezed for air. The man’s hand came at Peter, but Peter could not move. The man pried the dollar bill from Peter’s hand and walked away without turning his head. Peter could feel the tears swelling in his eyes. He wanted to cry out, but he couldn’t. The man disappeared in the lobby.

Peter took the remaining dollar bills from his pocket and tied to smooth them out. He put all the faces of George Washington so that they would face in the same direction and folded the stack neatly. As he put the money back in his pocket, he heard a terribly loud clatter and a shrill whistle. Walking on further, he noticed a sign that said track 24, and he could see a train rushing by to his right. This must be his train, but had he missed it? He stood watching the train disappear down the track. It seemed different from the first train he had ridden on. It didn’t have special cars at the front and end. But he figured that Subway trains had to be different. Peter bought a token and went through the turnstile. Several minutes passed and Peter could hear another train coming. He edged nearer to the tracks. The smell of the grease and the steam made him step back. Another train clattered by without stopping, but it made no difference since it was on an inside track and there was no way for Peter to get on even if it did stop. Peter leaned against the dirty tile wall. He was tired and he wondered if anyone else who came to the city ever had problems like those he had encountered. Another train was coming down the track and Peter pushed himself away from the wall. The train stopped and sliding doors opened.

There were only a few people in the car he walked into. These cars had hard seats which faced toward the center of the car. Everyone sat and tried to look anywhere but at the person across from him. Peter noticed a raggedy, old man asleep in the corner of the car. He was huddled against the armrest of the seat. His hair was missing in places and he hadn’t shaved. A crusty stain outlined the lower part of his nose and mouth. The smell was terrible around the man. He didn’t move.

The doors of the car slammed shut and Peter slid sideways in his seat as the train jolted forward. The train picked up speed very rapidly and Peter could see spots of light and dark streak by the windows. The car slammed back and forth as it rocked around turns at an unbelievable speed. Peter hung on. All the people in the car sat with their hands on the edge of their seats. No one talked and their heads bobbed back and forth with the motion of the subway. Peter thought it was funny how much they looked like the toy animals people put in the back ledge of the cars that had the heads mounted on springs. He could see the dog in the back of his Dad’s car with its head continually bobbing. It had the same expressionless stare.

Everyone in the car seemed to be looking at the advertisements in the top of the car. Peter glanced up at them. These ads had pretty women standing next to bottles of liquor and cartons of cigarettes. The women had very little clothing on and the liquor and the cigarette cartons hid just enough of them to make the posters very suggestive. Peter looked at all the posters and then looked at all of them again. Under many of the posters were words painted with spray cans of colorful swirls. He tried to read some of them but they didn’t make much sense. They said something about Black Power and a
lot of names. His gaze returned to the old man asleep in the corner. As he watched the old man, the train pulled to a screeching halt and the doors slammed open. This time a number of people rushed in and crowded all around throughout the car. People got pushed into the back of the car and one man’s knee knocked the old man in the head. The old man didn’t move and the other man didn’t even turn. The train seemed to stay still a little longer this time. A sign outside read Times Square. Peter looked for a clock but couldn’t see one. As he sat watching the old man, there seemed to be some kind of a scuffle in the car. A man in blue pushed his way through the car and upon seeing the old man, cussed at him and dragged him out of the car by the collar of his coat, and let him drop on the cold cement. His head hit with a dull thud. Still the old man never stirred. Peter felt a cold sweat on his forehead. He wiped it off and took several deep breaths. Putting his head between his knees, he tried to forget that look in the old man’s face. The conductor climbed back on board and the doors banged shut. The train thundered away and Peter sat up to see if he could see the old man but he could not. He closed his eyes and put his hands over his ears. The people in the car just looked at the advertisements, and hid behind their newspapers.

The street stops were getting closer and closer to 66th Street. When the doors finally slammed open at 66th Street, Peter pushed his way through the people and out onto the cement ramp. He walked rapidly through the turnstile. Next to the exit sign there was an old clock which read one twenty-three. Peter looked at it but turned his head to walk on. He found the steps leading to the street level and ran up them two at a time. The blinding light from the sun and the cool breeze made him squint as his head broke through the sunlight at the top of the stairs. Peter suddenly felt exhausted. He sank to the little plastic ledge in the booth, closed his eyes, and let a tear roll down into his trembling lips.
NOTES ON AWARD WINNERS

KEITH BOSTIC, 16th Sq., is from Millers, Maryland. His hobbies are hunting, reading, and chess. He is a member of the Cadet Chorale, and works the sound and lights for Bluebards, the Cadet Drama Club and KAFA.

MARK S. BRALEY, 16th Sq., is a Humanities major who has published in the Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph. His hometown, Colorado Springs, is conveniently located within shouting distance of the Academy. Mark's hobbies are reading, writing, and sports (hockey, soccer).

TIMOTHY P. BRENNAN, 21st Sq., has a major in International Affairs. One of nine children, he hails from Lula, Georgia. He enjoys writing poetry and short stories, and he likes to relax by drawing. Since he is from the country, he enjoys riding horses and bicycle touring.

JAMES C. KEENER, JR., 37th Sq., writes poetry and short stories, and he draws. He has published in both Icarus and Talon. "I regret that inspiration comes in bursts and that I do not have time to devote to all of these creative flashes." He is an American History major and comes from Valdosta, Georgia.

GERALD DAVID McCLELLEN, 4th Sq., is attending Undergraduate Navigator Training at Mather AFB. He is from Moraga, California, and his hobbies include soccer, tennis, and history. His major was Mathematics.

KARL VON KESSEL, 4th Sq., enjoys hunting, fishing, and water and snow skiing. As an Electrical Engineering major, he likes to raise plants and is in the Hunting and Ski Clubs. That’s diversity! He was born in Chaffee, Missouri, in 1957.

JOSEPH G. WEBSTER, 28th Sq., enjoys sports of all kinds, playing guitar, and listening to music. He is a Humanities major from Philadelphia.

TONY WOLUSKY, 34th Sq., comes from South Boston, Massachusetts. "I was lucky to have been given a beautiful family and a young life full of learning experiences." His hobbies "are History, pizza, parties, being with my friends, writing, Rock, and a relentless pursuit of sleep."
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