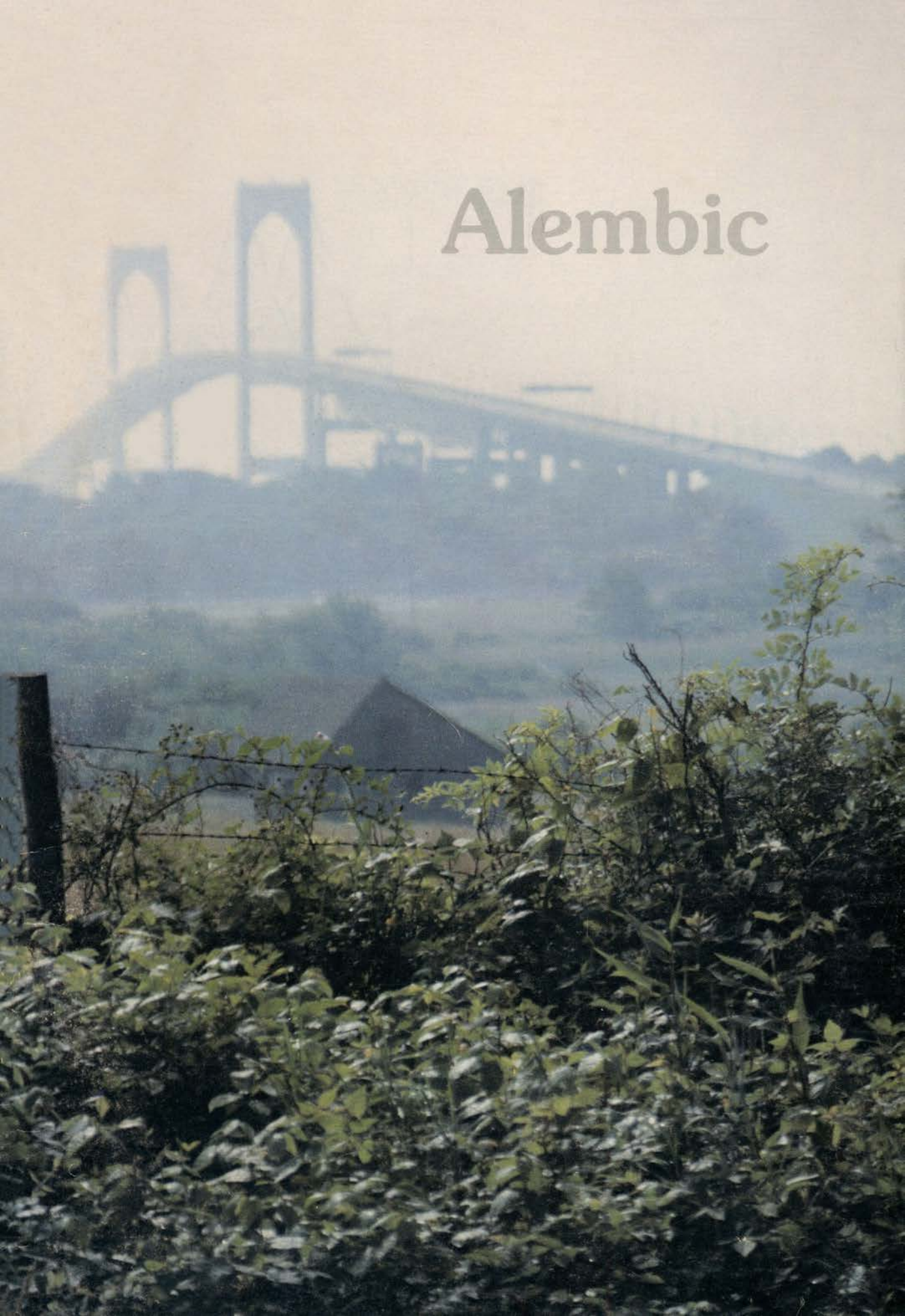


# Alembic



# ALEMBIC

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following people for their time and effort on behalf the magazine: Donald Grant, Peter Johnson, Eavan Boland, and all else who made the *Alembic* possible.



## INTRODUCTION

The *Alembic* — literally, the term denotes a medieval mechanical apparatus used in distillation. For this magazine, the term connotes a figurative “distillation” of the collective literary and artistic talents present in the Providence College community. The medieval apparatus distilled each season’s yield of grapes and produced a refined and tasteful mixture of wine. This literary “apparatus” also attempts to collect and distill each year’s fruitful yield of creativity, in hopes of likewise producing a palatable artistic vintage.

## DEDICATION

Each year the *Alembic* is dedicated to the person who exhibits an extraordinary effort in assistance to our magazine. Although he has been chosen in the past, we feel that it is in order that the 1988 edition of *The Alembic* be proudly and affectionately dedicated to Donald Grant, our publisher.

Mr. Grant has been the publisher at Providence College for years. In an overcrowded office in the dungeons of Harkins Hall, he patiently and brilliantly created the magazine we proudly call the sole literary journal of Providence College. For the long hours and headaches, to a professional in every sense, Mr. Grant, we thank you.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Seeds	Robert P. Toole
View From a Window	Joseph Grossi
*PHOTOGRAPH	Michael Berardo
Upon Being Asked to Write About Money	Mary Catherine A. McGuire
The Crystal Forest	Victor H. Shaw
The Irish Ferry	Timothy Meis
To An Artist Lost at Sea	Charles Robinson
PHOTOGRAPH	Chris Lanoue
Cancer	Pete DeNegre
The Ballad of Jonathan and Everly	Thomas O'Grady
A Tear	Laureen A. Connelly
DAREDEVIL (for Maria)	H. Suzuki
*PHOTOGRAPH	Chris Lanoue
During the Nuclear Holocaust (I Toasted Marshmallows)	Mark Cohen
Nightlight	Timothy Meis
Leopard	Marissa L. Perel
I'm Pete Rose	Pete Gallagher
untitled	Michelle Goglia
untitled	Terence J. Sullivan
True Colors	Michael Berardo
PHOTOGRAPH	Michael Berardo
Confirmation: May 1949	Paul O'Malley
Dishmachine	Jeff Smith
Apocastastasis	Lida Aronne-Amnestoy
Apocastastasis: English translation	Sr. Leslie E. Straub, O.P.
PHOTOGRAPH	Chris Lanoue
Lieutenant's Island Wind	Fr. William C. Barron, O.P.
Autumn	Heather Wesseley
Across the Lines	Mary Catherine A. McGuire
Ring Around	Robert P. Toole
Crashing for the Camels	Jane Lunin Perel
PHOTOGRAPH	Michael Berardo
Why I Want to Live	Marianne Sadowski
Tiger Cat	Fr. William C. Barron, O.P.
PHOTOGRAPH	Michael Berardo
Short Story	Sue Anne Motta
*Honey You Were Good	Marcella Carberry
She Could Be the Woman Levin Married	Kathleen Donogan
You Look at Me Over Her	Catherine L. Mullins
The Comfort of Drowning	Marianne Sadowski
*The Color Red	Charles Robinson
PHOTOGRAPH: The finale	Michael Berardo

## SEEDS

The dawn poems,  
Etched by a thumbnail,  
Are reborn babies,  
Bald, shiny-headed saints

Whose cries shriek and reach  
To tomorrow's cherry-bomb sun,  
Where lies my little things of error.

In the morning,  
Alone,  
I smell the nakedness outside  
And listen to the neighbour's car engine  
Gurgle to life.

I wish I  
Had dreamt in tongues last night;  
It would be so easy to write this morning.

*Robert P. Toole*



## VIEW FROM A WINDOW

### I.

The poet ponders,  
But no light dazzles.

Because of his shaking hands,  
A crucifix on the wall  
Drops. It falls without fervent verve,  
Yet it does fall.

The poet is puzzled,  
But a light flickers, entering his awaiting eye.

It is not from a benevolent sky.  
The light is from the lamppost on the nearer street.

### II.

Across from his window,  
Maria makes her home on the mountaintop,  
Overlooking the clouds.

She drapers her tempestuous hair  
Shyly about her to conceal her newborn beauty,  
Of human dream but close to divinity.

Here is a recent birth in the clouds,  
But she is woman already.  
The masculine wind blows, watched jealously by his diviner love.

It is the woman, though, who reverberates  
In the poet's mind. She too is glorious,

Like the mountainous echoes  
of quixotic Colorado.

### III.

The colors of the magnificent sky  
And land become her colors too.

They radiate in Maria's ardent eyes  
And reflect in the poet's eyes as well.

The glow of the streetlamp,  
The radiation of Maria's pervading glance,  
The vague brightness somewhere in the distant clouds,

All play and dance  
In the light by which the poet writes;

All conjure and are conjured.  
The poet recreates Olympus with a pen,  
Though that summit is near only in his mind.

Floral tiaras and immaculate gowns  
Become the garb of girls,  
Though they still tool with lascivity.

When the poet is finished,  
The light darkens and the window is closed.

The silhouettes of sleep  
Become still another reality,

And the afterglow of the united lights outlasts  
The fragments which are the piecemeal pasts.

*Joseph Grossi*





## Upon Being Asked to Write About Money

I watch the lovely ladies go . . .  
Bustling around back and forth  
Encased in gold and cashmere  
They flow and glide above all I'll ever be.

Their shrinks and beauticians and  
workers in white kitchens,  
They bring their Revlon Champagn Ice  
smiles in to me.

I sit cleaning and culturing  
their pure and perfect hands.  
Never so soft will be my finger's touch.  
A vacation for these tired palms would be too costly.

On a brown bench I perch, waiting  
Clink, my coins d

r

o

p

(The precious few cents left in my cup)  
I'm but a worker  
not a queen

My driver wears blue.

*Mary Catherine A. McGuire*

## THE CRYSTAL FOREST

Enter your imagination.  
Icy white light  
Brighter than the arctic sun on the virgin drifts.  
Scattering into meditated rainbows.

Fiery reds and yellows  
Dance through delicate leaves  
to flirt with the calmest blue sky,  
While the pile rug below is a  
Moss of crystalline green.

Split rainbows race ever faster  
Slicing through sharp crystal tree trunks,  
    Flashing,  
        Mingling,  
They are lured by the crystal ball.  
To be captives in a swirling prison  
'Till the ball kisses the horizon.

Colors float like clouds of smoke  
Until they melt and wash  
The mountainside.

*Victor H. Shaw*



## THE IRISH FERRY

On while crossing the Irish Sea by ferry,  
the past in a wake, growing smaller  
the stern spits its spray and mist.

People smiling oblivious to the weather,  
awash in their Guinesses.

Behind, a land of red cheeks and fists,  
staining friendly handshakes,  
of little men and minds,  
and heros, lost, and causes.

A toothless matron in the window of a bar  
casting a cold eye on today's riders.  
That I'll forget till I too look at life with  
an old man's bewilderment.  
Then, I will lift the jeweled veil of memory  
and kiss the aged face of time.

*Timothy Meis*

## TO AN ARTIST LOST AT SEA

I knew an old Greek artist named Nikos  
who had painted the Mediterranean Sea so many times  
that he said he could taste her in his dreams.

His paintings of the Sea looked nothing like the Sea at all.  
Some were jaggedly violent: red and black shapes  
that seemed to gnaw themselves to bloody pieces on the canvas.  
Others were glowing and soft: delicate coils of green and blue  
that twirled themselves into pearly oblivion.  
Some of the paintings made me quiver.  
Others left me strangely inspired.

Nikos often spoke of the Sea's two currents:

One, he said, carried the illuminated water,  
and those who drank of its sensuous turquoise fire  
became the lovers and poets  
who brought new colors to morning.

The other, he said, carried the lurid water of winter,  
and its churn was an irrepressible call for rejuvenation.  
Nikos said that this current often inspired old fishermen  
to lose their footing  
and become forever silent in the shadowy depths.

I once asked Nikos which of the two currents was stronger.  
He told me to close my eyes  
and dream nothing but the glass dance of the seaturtle.

When I opened my eyes, Nikos was gone.

*Charles Robinson*





## CANCER

I quicken as they slow  
I grow stronger as they weaken  
They lose as I gain  
I live as they die.

Any channels I'll travel  
I'm not prejudiced

I'm beautifully ugly  
And so sweetly mean

I love my job  
I do it caringly well

My many claws stretch from  
My body finding places to clasp  
like the scavengers of the sea  
scurrying across the black sand  
searching for food

I have no friends  
I'm lonely and driven  
and unhappy  
but I do my job well

I eat down to the bone  
Now I am finished  
I've had my fill  
for now

*Pete DeNegre*



## THE BALLAD OF JONATHAN AND KATHLEEN EVERLY

Someone miscast the part.  
He doesn't belong here, he's too young.

Older people are supposed to battle cancer.  
and older people are supposed to think about dying  
But he does play the part well.  
Right down to when his voice cracks  
as he says goodnight to his wife as she leaves:  
cracks like a giant oak battered by many storms  
and breaks now in silent breeze.

And then there's the part where his wife comes in.  
He's better now. Spirits boosted, much lighter.  
They play a loving couple for a while,  
but then the strain sets in.  
And then he gets grouchy and even pouts,  
but that's his right,  
who's going to take that away from him,  
who's going to take anything away from a dying man.

The wife, she's tough, you can tell.  
She is at once a wife, mother, and crutch,  
and she is there to get him through another day.  
Credit the casting department, it picked the right one  
for this modern day drama.

*Thomas O'Grady*

A tear  
Trickles down her smooth, pale cheek  
A fraction of sadness  
And despair.  
The depth of her stare  
Cold as stone  
Chills all who dare to notice.  
Though she sits  
Crouched in the corner  
Like a scolded child  
A strange radiance  
Emanates  
From deep within —  
Shining from her puerile expression  
Magnetically drawing them  
Closer to her mysterious dream world  
The world where even she can't survive.  
A tear  
Trickles down her cold, ashen cheek  
As her hollow dejection  
Is no more.

*Laureen A. Connelly*



## DAREDEVIL (FOR MARIA)

We're driving tonight to avoid tomorrow and the next day.  
We're keeping each other company  
to make the time more gentle passing.  
We're talking, betting nowhere at all.  
Loving it, you laugh and put the radio on  
Still we can't stop talking. Or going  
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

"We can stop and talk about things"  
"well, yes, but that would only be —  
— stopping"  
"yes"

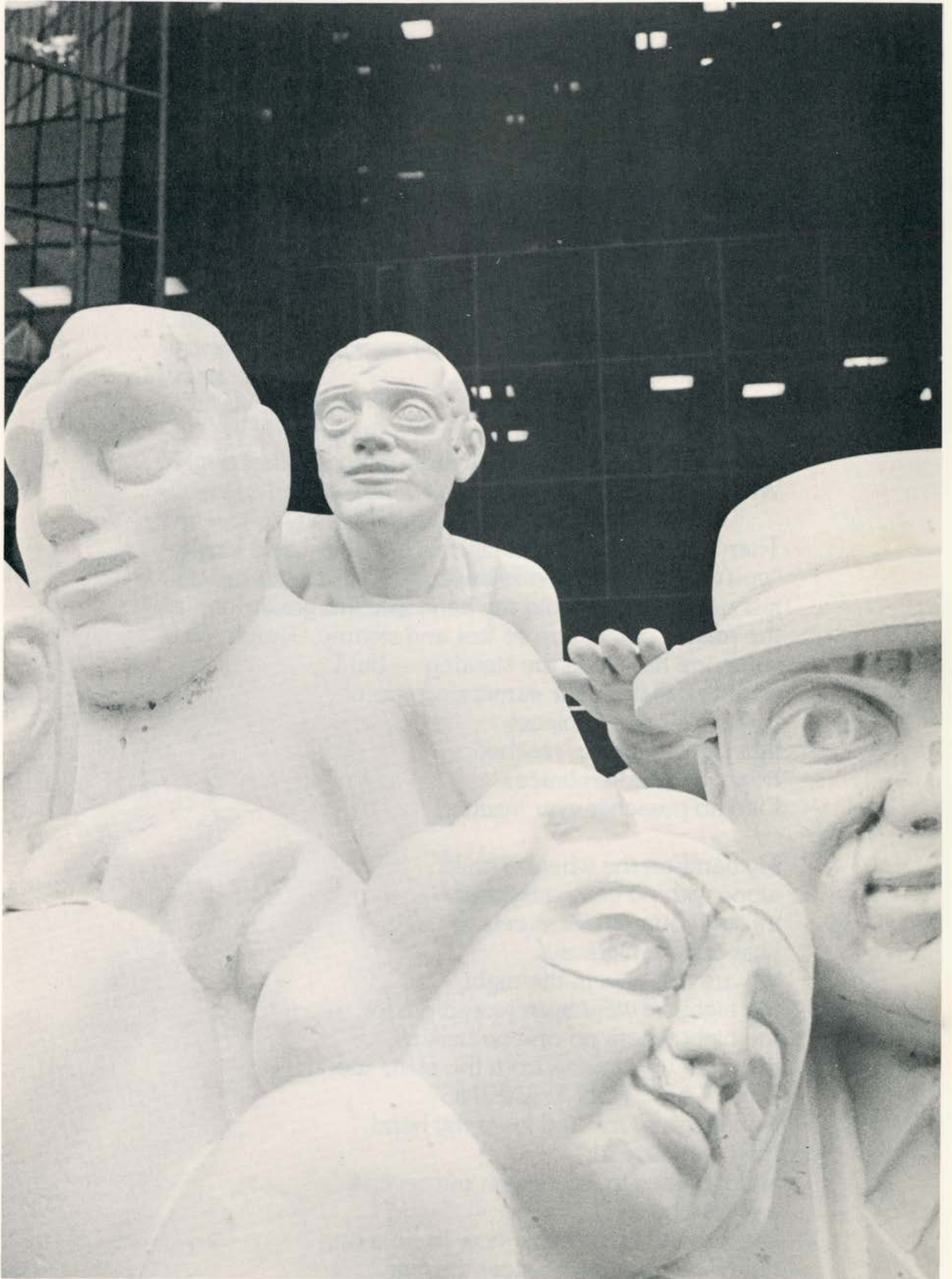
We must keep on moving,  
the road beckons us with silver promises.  
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Then an electric sermon fills this car of lost and lovely:  
"you've got to learn to live with/what you can't rise above"  
just now you grab hold my hand and I'm gone,  
the road is coming up so fast and steamy,  
someone has to do the steering — but I  
want to call out your name, sing you of  
how we'll scale to places  
that no junkie ever reached  
how we'll hold embraces  
Like no preacher ever taught

My hand on the wheel, a child  
alone with no coat, guides us  
through dumptruck streets to  
blue angelic highways.  
We are lost now in the night,  
the night we were born to and die for,  
the night where no one bothers us,  
the night we breathe from the same mouth.  
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

You laugh to me and keep my hand  
(you can have it),  
and it comes to me now in our reverie,  
a revelation  
like needles in my back: how to hold on,  
how far to go, how to steer through?  
I've lost myself to you.

*H. Suzuki*



Two lost models to your

1940s

1940s

**DURING THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST**  
(I Toasted Marshmallows)

During the nuclear holocaust  
I toasted marshmallows.  
It was unseasonably warm  
That fine December day  
And I could have worn my shorts  
(Had it not been for the fallout).  
I hear that tensions in the Middle East  
Have ended.  
In fact, I hear that the Middle East  
Has ended.  
Today's weather will be cloudy  
With 100% chance of death.  
Oh say can't you see  
There's no dawn and no light  
As radiation hails  
At humanity's last gleaming.

*Mark Cohen*



## NIGHTLIGHT

Across the bed it lays  
down its moist melody,  
soft and slow jazz.  
A whispering sax curls  
around the couple,  
twisting its rapture of remorse and broken simplicity.  
Ella Fitzgerald twirls Count Basie on her tongue  
like a cat's tail round a bed-post.

*Timothy Meis*

## LEOPARD

I am the jumps that roar  
up. That go up to the highest mountain.  
I drool with thirst. If you touch me  
you will see that I bite. Blood goes  
down ruby red. And I feel like the fur  
that sheds down death.

*Marissa L. Perel (age 8, grade 2)*

## I'M PETE ROSE

I write my name several times,  
I try to draw inside the lines with my 36 colors.  
I see attendants beating my best friend bloody,  
because he won't do anything they say.  
I find solace in a fisher price Barn set, with the  
Mooooooooooooooooo — Mooooooooooooooooo'ing door.  
The walls are a total mass of plain, dismal white,  
broken only by the doors and windows of solitary.  
The glass is fenced, to hold you in,  
and is snot smeared with grimy edges.  
Hoo, Hah

Johnny screams, jumping between his rubber walls,  
Red faced, blood stained straight jacket, filthy hair.  
Never controlling himself, peeing on himself, the attendants  
beat him senseless, to make him do what they want him to do.  
I think he'd rather die,  
or would he? It doesn't matter, it's not his choice,  
only the attendants know.  
My next door neighbor thinks he's Douglas MacArthur,  
while wading ashore in his private bath — Inchon.  
And I'm Pete Rose, but they say I'm not.  
That's what my bat says anyway. I'm the king of baseball.  
I have the same bat my father did, but he never hit a baseball,  
Just Mom.  
I'm Pete Rose, and I'm on vacation.

*Pat Gallagher*

Thousands of sand crystals looking up at the sky,  
An audience awaiting the show.  
The front row seats — randomly picked,  
drifting in and out in intervals.  
Lights dim  
Auditorium slowly turns dark,  
High above — spotlights appear.  
Many of the actors begin to leave.  
Ushers get down from their chairs to escort.  
Sand crystals are still looking up,  
Taking turns sitting in the front row.  
Waiting —  
    for tomorrow,  
        a new show begins.

*Michelle Goglia*



anonymous sat, legs crossed, silently  
fingering the pattern on the dress.  
in the next room people spoke softly.  
she drank slowly from her cup  
and pictured a fresh rose in the snow.

cars were lining up, outside a church  
bell rang in the distance. a bird with a  
broken wing limped across the window ledge.  
the cars were now slowly pulling away  
and she made her way downstairs to the empty room

where it smelled as if everything  
were wrapped in plastic. outside anonymous  
could hardly see through the wind, and the dress  
her mother had made blew tightly around her legs.  
everything smelled so stiff and cold and

for a moment she thought she looked  
plain and ordinary. she could see where  
her mother was, up ahead, and thought  
about crying. she really did not understand  
as she thought and watched the snow turn to water.

*Terence J. Sullivan*



## TRUE COLORS

The secrets of the soul are often concealed  
behind a warm smile and a steady hand —

Like the worn initials of timeless lovers  
etched in the bark of an old elm —  
Lost in the colors of autumn leaves.

Ever still, the seasons of time will change —  
As burdened laughter lines slowly greet  
the woven tracks of lonely midnight tears.

Yet, neither the strength of the will  
nor the wisdom of the old elm,  
Can truly mask what lies restlessly beneath  
the surface of this weary facade.

For the rains will come to cleanse the spirit —  
The leaves will inevitably fall to the ground —

And the true colors of the heart will shine brightly  
on the worn initials of timeless lovers —  
Etched in the bark of the old elm.

*Michael S. Berardo*





ME  
+  
CT



## CONFIRMATION: MAY 1949

Sister said that they would become  
Soldiers of the Lord  
When the white-maned Bishop signed them  
With oil and cuffed them on the chin.

He was ready to march with  
His cohorts at the Confessor's school,  
Yet he remembers his surprise and pride  
When his mother humbly brought up the rear.

No one explained that she would join  
The eleven-year-old recruits,  
Though as they reconnoitered through the throng  
of pre-coniliar believers  
His joy grew in flushed silence.

What she carried in her heart he never knew.  
One new life within her for sure.  
She must have thought about their pain-filled  
Odyssey to another Sabbath.

The Weeden line led back to old reality,  
Except a special stop at a plain  
Smithfield Avenue restaurant.  
But faith fires burned in him  
And in his Mary hostage of the Christ.  
The winds of the Spirit were now  
Sanctified in her soul.

*Paul F. O'Malley*

## DISHMACHINE

As it comes to life, I can  
see Lisa begin feeding it plates,  
slipping them through its rolling teeth,  
appeasing its appetite.

I stand in back and sometimes, as I  
unload, it draws me in.  
I am thunderous breath, sheet  
metal scales — a crooked  
dragon enveloped in August.

As I work, I watch Lisa. She is like  
a tiny sun. With a smile she soaks me in  
yellow light.

*Jeff Smith*

## APOCATÁSTASIS

La persiguieron con toda la furia de sus garrotes. — — ¡Es de las otras! — gritaban. — Miren, no tiene nube en el izquierdo—. Hasta que la vieron arrastrarse al otro lado del límite de la ciudad.

— Se nos ha infiltrado, la desgraciada — voceaba la turba al otro lado, con palos enarbolados. — No tiene nube en el derecho, fíjense. ¡Es de las otras!

Las hordas quedaron cara a cara en la frontera. Atravesada en la alambrada que separaba los bandos, la perseguida exhibía en los ojos aumentados por el miedo toda la dimensión de su extranjería. Entonces un rugido fluyó del trasfondo arcaico de las miradas nubladas hermanando la masa. Se olvidó de pronto la rivalidad milenaria de las razas. Por fin podían compartir el odio que hasta ese momento las había dividido.

Debieron derribar unos matros de la cerca que demarcaba las ciudades para hacer lugar a la acción conjunta. Las líderes se plantaron frente a frente por primera vez desde el comienzo inmemorial de la guerra. Una adelantó el grueso leño vertical de combate; la otra cruzó el suyo sobre aquél. Un pelotón de esclavas los sujetó con cuerdas y trozos de alambrada. En la puerta recién inaugurada plantaron el torvo árbol y colgaron a la extraña.

La exaltación derrumbó el resto de la cerca. La gritería se iba resolviendo en cánticos, la agitación en cadencias rituales. Taparrabos y túnicas confundían los colores tribales. Algunas hacían a un lado los palos para que no estorbaran la fiesta. Alguien más los puso en llamas para alumbrar el jolgorio a través de la noche.

Al pie del madero las dos jefes empezaban a echar de menos el mando. En el revoltijo de su gente ya no se distinguía de qué ojo faltaba la nube. Tampoco entendían cómo dos pupilas enteramente limpias podían verse tan bellas aun en los espasmos humillantes de la muerte. Una de las esclavas que montaban guardia creyó escuchar un murmullo ronco como arrancado al fondo mismo del espanto:

— — Acaso fuera una de las nuestras.

No supo cuál de las dos capitanas había hablado.

*Lida Aronne-Amestoy*



## APOCATASTASIS

They chased her wielding all the fury of their clubs. "She is one of them," they cried. "The cloud on her left eye is missing. See?" They chased her until she crawled to the other side of the town line.

"She has slipped in among us, the wretch!," shouted the mob at the other side of the frontier, brandishing heavy sticks. "She has no cloud on her right eye. She is one of them."

The hordes came face to face at the border. With her body stretched across the wire fence that divided the land the woman seemed to confirm the full scope of her alien nature in her eyes blown up by terror. A roar flowed from the archaic depths behind every cloudy stare, breeding kinship between the crowds. Suddenly the age-old rivalry of the two races had been forgotten. At last they could share the hatred which to this day had kept them apart.

A few yards of the fence had to be pulled down so that the common project could be carried out. The two leaders came together for the first time since the immemorial outbreak of the war. One of them thrust forward her thick battle club; the other pushed hers across it. A platoon of slaves hastened to tie them together. At the newly opened gate they planted the grim tree and hanged the stranger.

The remains of the fence were knocked down by the exalted mob. The screaming gradually gave way to chanting; the tumult subsided into ritual cadence. The tribal colors of loin-cloths and tunics became mixed. Someone piled the clubs to one side, so that they would not hamper the frolic. Someone else set them on fire to light up the merriment throughout the night.

At the foot of the tree the two leaders were becoming nostalgic over their lost command. In the jumble of their peoples they could no longer tell which eye was blurred by a cloud. Neither could they understand how a pair of fully opened pupils could look so beautiful in the humiliating pangs of death.

One of the slaves on guard was certain that she had heard a raucous whisper, as if it had been torn out of the very depths of horror:

"What if she were one of us."

The slave could not tell which of the two leaders had spoken.

*English version:*

*Sr. Leslie E. Straub, O.P.*





## LIEUTENANT'S ISLAND WIND

I spent a weekend in the wind  
with sand terns  
running by the sea  
and light white gulls like  
feathered kites  
climbing clouds in April skies.

I spent a weekend in the wind.  
I listened . . .  
and only then conversed  
with low, long  
needled pine  
murmuring words  
as sighs sound love, and laughter  
tells the lithesome hearts  
of lovely girls  
innocent amidst their play.

We walked awhile through  
wet marsh grass and where  
the rushes shook, we skipped the wind  
smoothed stones of shore across  
the gathering tide  
and to our friends  
with wind and sand returned  
from pungent earth and sea  
tossed tidal dew to warm  
ourselves around their words  
and raise a fire  
for our feast,  
a storm of dancing,  
song and drink.

And when we turned from cards  
and drink to slumber in the night,  
the wind blazed round the world  
and round our sleep, and voiced  
its heart in singing trees, a deep  
and sonorous peace of fulness  
and release.

And in the smoke of midnight skies  
the wind sparkled in the air . . .  
it sparked us high and far and bright  
and fanned the flickering embers  
of the night in distant worlds  
with fires from our warmth, our love,  
our light.

*Fr. William C. Barron, O.P.*



Autumn  
When the crumpled gangs of summer's leaves,  
Green  
Dull and musty like the bills in your pocket

Turn to  
Gold  
Burnished and vibrant like the noontime Sun  
Revealing its radiance before they  
Fall.

(21 October 1987)

*Heather Wesseley*

## ACROSS THE LINES

Our last time in Lido  
we sat on the brown benches  
overlooking the spectacle;

moon's messengers  
dancing  
endlessly

on the blackness past  
the Venetian sand. And you  
showed me what it is.

Time doesn't exist  
for lovers  
or friends

who are flowers  
by the sea.  
We listened

to yellowing pages  
of our own scrapbooks  
tell it all

until all to tell  
was told and our  
hearts had crossed

the line of  
what we now call  
friendship.

*Mary Catherine A. McGuire*

## RING AROUND

The dying crooked planks  
of the city dock  
Warp, crackle and cackle

With the shifting  
Icy tide,  
Slick like cellophane.

I hear you,  
You  
With your red snarl

Of air, moist like a  
Wet skin.  
I see your teeth,

Pointy like icicles  
Reaching  
For the skin-

Chalk up another kill.  
Your head  
Is fat with blacks

And backs of jagged edges.  
I wish I could  
Give you rosaries at night

When you do your dance,  
When you  
Falter in the posies.

*Robert P. Toole*



## CRASHING FOR THE CAMELS

North on 95 our flag ribbons in a crisp  
wind as I slam on  
the brakes in the high speed lane  
only for the camels  
because if I brake and turn my neck to  
the right just as the flag's to my left I see through  
the bushes the camels gawking their morning ablutions,  
their profiles  
sweeping my periphery like photographs of ancient torch  
bearers, their flames never having  
gone out. They hold themselves against  
the morning set in the cuty of fire they carry  
strutting or standing still meditating on  
the sound of whizzing cars that must be for them  
like the smell of fetid water. Yet, they seem to pick out  
the quiet between the screeching of brakes and follow it refusing  
to acknowledge the world of the grinding engines  
speeding past them, drivers and passengers  
almost all oblivious to these  
descendants of desert wind  
flanking the highway in their zoo-pen  
marching slowly like pilgrims in no hurry  
since they know the time is always at hand. They  
stretch and lurch carrying out the private ritual of  
their vertical waddles against the flood of carbon monoxide  
and stomach acid that swells our paper money. And I taking this  
risk to see them daily, I, who feared driving and put it off  
until I hit 25, I require the sight of them to know  
the day is filled with prophecy. I tell my friends,  
my students just now to see them. I fear for  
their safety driving. But what's left of  
living without poisoning inside the death-  
trap to see hairy angels parade their  
halos behind barbed wire?

*Jane Lunin Perel*

ier's  
OV. 27

& KAHEN

BIG SHOW

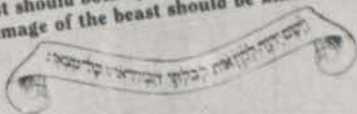
# BEWARE THE MAN WITH THE MARK OF THE BEAST



**A**nd I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.  
"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the sight of men; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Revelation 13:11-15



ROOF/WALL  
SPAC 3/4  
1/8 INCH  
1 1/2 INCH  
SPACER-TYPE  
7/8 RECOM  
ROOF APPL  
ASSURE PRO  
574



## WHY I WANT TO LIVE

because my life is a plane crash  
because i shoot the gun then curse the bullet  
because i damn the people then denounce oppression  
because i pile the bricks then defy the mortar  
because i build the fence then curse the border  
because i wear the clothes when i feel so naked  
because i write the lyrics yet deny the words  
because i compose the song and discard the tune  
because i buy a lover and won't sleep with him  
because i sow the seeds yet forget to reap  
because i plant the garden and neglect the weeds  
because i build the ship yet am afraid of the sea  
because i want to forget the things i have learned  
because i want to know the things that just can't be learned  
because i jump from the building before i have wings  
because i fear my soul without knowing God  
because i feel the pain long before the affliction  
because i am hungry when the fields are full  
because i spit on the damn before the flood comes  
because i swallow the food before i chew it  
because i celebrate the drugs after i saw you kill yourself  
    with the needle  
because i live in my house before i build it  
because i still believe

*Marianne Sadowski*



## TIGER CAT

Little white cat,  
from under weeping willows  
bamboo brown  
rustling like the  
panda trees of high  
Sichuan you come.  
The peacock sky  
fans its silken sleeves  
when you steal by.

Little white cat,  
you hunch your back  
about the linden  
bark. You shook  
a turquoise beetle  
loose and gave  
yourself a start!

Why overturn  
the saffron leaves  
that dropped slow  
on slender silver  
threads from maple trees?  
They're not a pond of golden  
carp for you to tease.

You know  
you make  
the monkey squirrels  
with tails of mountain grass  
scatter into forest trees!  
They chatter dragon  
sparks! They're  
saying you're  
a sable tiger roaring  
in their park!

Will you come  
from where  
you've been?  
I'll ask  
the mandarin  
(he eats  
orange peaches  
with his  
tea) who stays  
within now  
that autumn's laid  
magnolia eggs  
and dogwood pinwheels  
twirl.

Will you play in the  
geraniums when they're red,  
when the ocher sun pinks  
above the myrtle  
shrubs and floats  
through ginkgo groves . . .  
or will you stay  
away?

Please come  
again. But if  
you can't  
because  
you're chasing  
sapphire fire flies  
through garden phlox  
far within some summer night —  
please stay!

But please too  
step softly through  
from where you are  
with your phosphorescent  
play into my dreams  
— day or night —  
my little white  
tiger cat.

*Fr. William C. Barron, O.P.*





I stood by watching the boys playing and having fun. They were running around first, second, then a slide into third base. That's just how I would have done it. I wanted to yell, "GREAT move, Donny." Instead I clapped my hands quietly. Donny slid so hard that his jeans ripped at the knee.

My brother shook his head and said. "I told you that you have to be tough to play with us. That's why Bobby doesn't play with us. He's such a baby!"

I got so mad at him. It was the only thing that I could do. I decided to go with my idea. I should be outside playing with all my friends, but I'm stuck inside today because of one dumb joke. It wasn't as bad as my parents make it out to be, really. I just got so mad at my older brother for not letting me play baseball with him and the rest of the guys. So I slipped a little crazy glue between his skivies and his pants. I didn't think what they said on the label was true. NOW I know it is!

If only you could have heard how loud he screamed when he had a case of the runs and couldn't make it for reasons beyond his control.

"AAHH!! Mom, Dad, come quickly! Bobby, I'm GOING TO KILL YOU if it it's the last thing I do!"

I went upstairs to watch all the excitement up close. If Donny just took one minute to think, all he had to do was to pull both his pants and his skivies at the same time. I covered my mouth with my hand trying to hide my smile. My brother's eyes showed so much anger, it stung like a punch to the face.

My brother tugged and pulled every which way but the right way at those darn pants; but it was the accident that I couldn't help but laugh at. Even Mom and Dad thought it was funny. Dad pointed a stern finger my way and trying to hide his anger he scolded me.

I guess you could say that I'm the joker in the family. But today I got a little carried away. So now I'm looking at the world from behind a pane of glass. That's O.K. though, because I have an imagination that can take me away.

*Sue Anne Motta*

## HONEY, YOU WERE GOOD

Honey,  
you were good  
at what you did

You  
could write  
the book

I was fooled  
until the you  
of I don't  
love

Fell out  
and landed  
on my forehead

Grinning  
when you picked  
me up and

Beaming  
when you laid  
me down

It sat there — the you

Then slowly,  
its machettiedge  
slid

Efficiently into  
my brain  
briefing

My head and  
slicing  
my heart

And there you stood

Taking bows  
for such admirable  
honesty

And as fresh  
bloodspill splattered

Hot  
on my toes

I stood to applaud.

*Marcella Carberry*



## SHE COULD BE THE WOMAN LEVIN MARRIED

*"In the world there was only one  
being able to unite in itself the  
universe and the meaning of life  
for him. It was Kitty . . ."*

from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*

Her hair's longer than it's ever been,  
the color of a penny. Once I saw it  
piled up in curls atop her head,  
her face so pale against the brown-red,  
her cheekbones defined, refined her.  
Chin perched on folded hands, she listened  
closely to a stranger. What honesty was in  
those eyes; even blinking spoke.

What woman could she be, I thought,  
for I'd often imagined one just this way,  
and searching back I found the book  
where I had loved her. In my mind,  
this is just how Kitty Scherbatsky looks  
and now the woman made in words  
and this one, with light in the twists of her hair,  
lend to each other a new life.

I can picture her in a parlor, marron plus and cherry wood,  
on double-blade skates, faced hugged in fur,  
or at the bedside of a sick man, soothing  
blisters with a cool wet cloth.

She could intuit the meaning  
of initials scrawled on a table top.  
She could ride miles in a thin-wheeled carriage,  
head turned to count the haystacks.

Imagine how this woman might look if she saved  
the minuet, that dance of balances and bows,  
for a man who chose another partner.  
Eyes hot, neck tendons stiff as straws,  
she'd clutch the chair, knuckles white,  
and if her kind father offered his hand  
she'd run from the loud room, fluster,  
leave her velvet purse behind.

And I think now, looking across this room  
as she calmly sips her coffee,  
I would hurt anyone who dared shun her,  
and feel sorry for men she might entrance.  
For though she never prides herself  
I know she is that kind —  
if you were to let yourself fall for her,  
you'd be in love forever.

*Kathleen Donogan*

You look at me over her  
shoulder and I  
pretend not to see you . . .  
some things never change.

Someone once said  
"Love is a promise  
eternal"  
I once believed it was true, but now  
Love is a lie we tell  
when anything else would hurt too much

To tell love is to lose love  
a little bit more each day  
It's a glance, an emotion no word can  
control

So you say you love her  
to her  
and then  
you look at me over her  
shoulder and I  
pretend not to see you.

*Catherine L. Mullins*

## THE COMFORT OF DROWNING

the murderous tea that muffles me  
the heavy water that drags me down  
and every milli-second of my life  
deteriorates into more and more half-  
lives  
and in each half-life i  
feel the comfort of drowning,  
the revival of the isotopic tea  
that has no choice than to smother me.

drink up, drink up  
and soak up the garments in the meandering stream  
but it will all come out in the radiant porcelain,  
the same way i see my reflection  
on the finely polished plates  
even through the broken gaunt wish-  
bones.

no, the heavy water drags  
my eyelids down and i can't  
look up  
so i wish on the radiating  
reflection of a star  
in the stream below,  
and i throw a penny out and it floats  
the water is so heavy  
it only waves back weakly  
and can't swallow the riches,  
the water can't bury the treasures  
anymore.

the water is heavy  
and there is no comfort in drowning  
when the drowner will float  
and the alien cells will toast and mimic the immortal  
constituent of the tea.

*Marianne Sadowski*



## THE COLOR RED

people were lavender (or sometimes  
pink) the sky  
was a light shade of green  
over an ocean  
of frothing orange:

john told all of you  
about the colors  
they were his gift to you  
he sensed you could not  
see  
the blue and yellow and green  
of it all.

he loved you in colors.

but you said no no johnny  
what is wrong with you  
can't you  
see  
people are black the ocean is  
white the sky is black the flowers  
are white the earth is black and  
goddam it life is white.

you told john the colors  
were not real  
he could not let himself  
believe you at first.

at least you convinced him he was  
dreaming.

john stopped telling you  
about the colors in fact  
he tried (quite diligently  
you must applaud him) to  
stop seeing them himself:

the last color he saw was  
the red  
that trickled

upon your colorless world.

*Charles Robinson*



**PROVIDENCE**



**COLLEGE**

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