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CONTENTS

Dialogue ..................................................Joan Reilly 4
Senselessness. . . A July Poem ...........................bonni lowry 6
A Port-Au-Prince Marketplace .......................Cynthia Ingersoll 8
Summer Dream ............................................Karlis E. Rusa 9
sailing ...................................................Barbara Trousdell 10
Two Lyrics ................................................Adrian Ford 11
The Legend of Old Ruthie ..............................Cindy Edwards 12
"People do not like night" .............................Glory-June Greiff 13
Fantasies ................................................Jody Neff 14
Parting ....................................................Kit Porter 15
Lullaby .....................................................Joan O'Sullivan 16
Poem ........................................................Vicki Kessinger 25
Words Flung to the Wind ..............................Glory-June Greiff 25
Old Town ................................................Walter W. Rudzinski 26
February Thought ......................................Glory-June Greiff 28
"April, when she comes..." ...............................Glory-June Greiff 28
Gone ........................................................Glory-June Greiff 29
Age ..........................................................Pam Smith 31
Sleep .........................................................Molly Bean 32
I Cry ........................................................Bonnie Personnett 32
Elegy to a Poet Not Quite Dead ....................Elessa High 33
Dreams and Reality .......................................Larry Gilbert 34
Exorcism ....................................................bonni lowry 36
Poem ........................................................Elessa High 36
The Rise of the Intellectual and the Fall of Civilization
.........................................................Walter W. Rudzinski 37
Shaped by What We Love ..............................E. L. Williams, III 39
Darts .........................................................Jody Neff 40
Charlie Brown—All American .........................Nancy Adams 41
My friend the night .......................................Jim Kurtz 43
The Hated One ............................................Jan Ewing 45
Thought-Ships .............................................Karlis E. Rusa 47
The Discussion ...........................................Marge Berry 48
Thoughts ....................................................Jody Neff 51
Witch .........................................................Bill Bridget 52
all come undone ...........................................Jeff Devens 55
Shades of Day ............................................Pamela Smith 56
Tragedy ......................................................Molly Bean 58
Samson ......................................................Larry Gilbert 59
I Go .........................................................Jody Neff 60
In Eternity ................................................Pam Smith 61
Poem .........................................................Dory Zatuchni 63
Stream of Thought ........................................Becky Bunch 64
Letters from the Pit .......................................Virginia Lombardo 65
"State your name please."
"Emily Louise Knickenbocher."

The prosecutor advanced to the witness stand, glared at the trembling girl, and enunciated distinctly each syllable of his next question. "Do you, Miss Knickenbocher, deny any knowledge of a hit-and-run accident on the evening of March 20, 1968?"

“Yes, I do. My father previously testified that I was baking him a birthday cake that evening. I did not go out of our house in town."

“What type of car do you drive?"

“A Chevrolet, a beige Super Sport model."

“Beige? Are you sure you don’t mean blue? Think.”

The astonished girl with a side glance to the jury braided the silk scarf hanging around her neck. She squirmed and murmured, “I am rattled. Of course it was painted blue last September.”

“What shade of blue?”

“I believe the manufacturer called it Lake Tahoe Blue.”

“Please study the color chart. Would you say your car is this shade?”

“I believe that is the one.”

The prosecutor returned to his table. With his back to the bench he adjusted his tie as if to stall for melodrama. Spinning to face the jury, he spit out a condemnation.

“Do you remember, I repeat, driving on the evening of March 20, 1968?"

“No, no. I did not drive, and I did not loan my car to anyone else.”

“Do you drink?"

“Occasionally.”

“What was the occasion March 20, 1968?”

“My father’s birthday.”

“You baked a cake for his birthday, did you not?”

“Yes—devil’s food with yellow frosting, his favorite.”

“Never mind confusing us with trivia. Were you drunk on the evening in question?”
“No.”

“How do you explain, Miss Knickenbocher, if you did not drive and you did not drink, why police discovered the next morning an abandoned car registered to you and answering the description you gave the jury? The car contained two empty pints of bourbon concealed under the front seat, and the keys were in the ignition.”

“Well—” Flashbulbs in the press gallery snapped.

“This is no time, I can assure you, to hedge. I’ll see you convicted of perjury and shipped to the ugly State Women’s Prison.”

Emily stared at the jury, then at the judge. Her eyes darted to her father, who was straining to hear her reply from the edge of his chair.

“You despise your father, don’t you?”

She closed her eyes for five seconds and dropped her chin. Barely visible was the nod of sad admission.

“Isn’t it right that you despised him since he broke your engagement to one Ralph Stuart of Johnson City?”

This time the agreement was a series of sobs shaking her shoulders and causing her head to convulse.

“I submit to this court that you were not baking a cake. You got into your car to go the bakery, and on the way you saw Ralph with another date at the movies. Is this much correct? Remember, you are under oath.”

“Yes, those facts are circumstances.”

“You were deeply distressed, and anger towards your father mounted inside you. You executed a U-turn and headed for the liquor store. I have the clerk of the store willing to testify you purchased the bourbon and drank swigs in his parking lot. Blinded by the anger and the liquor, you went for a lonely drive on the desolate Smith Valley Road. The mist of dusk developed into a pea-soup fog; driving was hazardous. You could not see the farmer in the dark overalls when he walked the road. You plowed him down. I have a paint sample that...”

Emily interrupted his presentation with an anguished cry. Her auburn hair fell into her face, and her make-up dripped from her cheeks. She rocked and moaned,

“I did. I did. I did it. I could not see. God knows, have mercy for me since I could not see. I remember his eyes. The recognition in his eyes as he crunched the hood of my car has haunted me. The panic forced his eyes wide open, and his head landed inches from mine. He hit the windshield. I killed him. I killed him. Oh, my God, Ralph!”
Senselessness... A July Poem

The heat has ravaged our cherry tree.
The leaves are brown....
the birds have eaten the blossoms.
We shall have
no cherries this year.
Have you also
gone mad with the heat?
Your words ramble,
You do not look at me,
Your tenderness is empty....
I am sick....
The birds have eaten the blossoms
We shall have
no cherries this year.
Noise is all around: the laughter of children playing, punctuated with cries from empty stomachs; the bark of a customerless banana vendor hoping to sell his wares before they rot in the blazing sun; the scream of a peasant woman bargaining for the best price for her husband’s crude wood carvings; the mournful wail of a mother who must sell her hand-woven blankets if her family is to eat tonight. Every sound reflects desperation. Even the laughter of the children is strained. They laugh because they are children, and children must laugh; it is the plan. But their laughter is one of bravery, not innocence; it is weeping with a smile. The older ones do not bother with such fronts. Their faces show a wearied acceptance of life, a painful life that seems to be without meaning. When they bargain for food their eyes betray the fear and dread that haunts them. As they yell out in protest against the price of sugar cane, they really are lamenting the price of life. The clamor in the marketplace is a song of despair.

Brilliant, vibrant colors lend the scene a deceptive air of festivity. From a distance, the mountain woman peddling her fresh yellow grapefruits looks merry and blithe in her green skirt, red polka dot blouse, and blue scarf. The playing children are streaks of blue, yellow, red, and green against a background of shiny black. The blacks and browns of wandering donkeys, buzzing flies, the filth in which they breed, and the dusty old buildings lining the streets of the marketplace cannot detract from the color and excitement of the shoppers, merchants, and their wares. Crowning this lively spectacle, adding its own dash of brilliance is a glistening, cloudless sky. A poorly focused slide of the scene would present it as a beautiful, carefree bazaar.

Over this all—the sounds of laughing, crying, shouting, pleading; the signs of despair; the color and activity—there hangs the oppressive heat of the tropical sun, heat that dries the earth to dust and turns precious food to waste. Following the heat come the odors of the market; of damp, dirty clothing; of animal droppings underfoot; of carved green wood painted with shoe polish and called mahogany; of straw woven into baskets and purses; of bananas, oranges, mangoes; grapefruits, and coconuts growing warm in the sweltering sun. These are the sounds, the faces, the colors, the smell—the feel—of a marketplace in Port-au-Prince.
Summer Dream

Karlis E. Rusa

On lawns of emerald I walk,
Above me sky of wet grey pearl;
On every side a garden spreads
And sleeps in silent noon,
    In drowsy, languid noon.

To memory are lost the years
When pestilential death did seize
The king, the fool, the gardener
Whose feet here trod the grass,
    The meekly whispering grass.

Bright blossoms seek I wearily,
While ancient stone walls curb my sight
And thorny hedges tower, grim.
(How heavy hangs the breezeless air!)
But there—*a gate* . . . and eagerly
    Passing through,
    I plunge into
    Flowery distance:
        Wildly singing
        Things of the air
            Flit o'er meadow,
                Hill and valley,
                    Soar 'neath low
                        Expectant skies . . .
                        Suddenly,
                        Smoldering sun
                        Parts the clouds,
                        Rends the greyness,
                            Blazes, flames,
                                Blooming bursts
                                    Into fiery
                                        Galaxies!
sailing

and you pull with all your might—
the rope burns your hand
twisting your fingers and the sail
suddenly billows
and the boat tips and rocks
and you are skimming to the
lapping rhythm of water over and across
and you lean back
and let the water
sploch your face
and the salt dries on it...
arm aching
tipping
rocking
lapping
swinging
breeziness, billowing
and you shriek and scream
and laugh...
and there is an all-penetrating atmosphere
and the wind carries your voice far
off...

Barbara Trousdell
TWO LYRICS

As highest mountains deepest shadows cast
Holding the valley in uncertainty
Flames to unfurl from their signal mast
Lifting red banners on a cloudy sea—
As the pale novice of the spreading night
Patient, within his sunset cloister lies,
His light withholding even to the right
Of solitary beauty in dark skies—
So love’s eventualities shade time
New morning suns to witness on their height
And through the copper clouds of noise shall climb
Our pilgrim-star this day locks in loud light.
   For it apsires to where its modest race
   Burn through the loving silences of space.

As a dewdrop encloses earth and sky
Shining in crystal tear the golden day
Which captive fire of the solar eye
His fluid prison 'scapes on winking ray—
So are your eyes the essence of all grace
And summary of goodness which they see
And in the upturned morning of your face
Shines the blue vastness of your love for me.
   And in your eyes my captive glances flame
   Which to their natal orbs flash back again.

Adrian Ford
Miss Bell was, I would say, close to sixty-five years old, a plump, rather tired-looking lady with wispy gray hair and sagging bosom. She invariably wore a faintly pleasant expression that seemed to bespeak tranquility and a vague benevolence. To her sophomore biology students she was a mixture of the ridiculous and the serious, and was perhaps better known by them as Old Ruthie.

Old Ruthie was perhaps the only teacher I have ever had that could look as if she were in two places at once. She could be lecturing rather carelessly about the reproductive cycle of the paramecium and at the same time be gazing fixedly at a spot on the back wall, looking for all the world as if she were pondering Einstein's theory instead. Often she would stop in the middle of a sentence, look thoughtfully up at the ceiling, bend her ear as if listening for something, then return to her lecture without skipping a word. At first we took this peculiar procedure as a sure sign that Old Ruthie was fast approaching her rocking chair and retirement pension; however, as she continued to alternately look, listen, and lecture, we would catch ourselves gazing searchingly at the ceiling or straining our ears for some distant sound that never came, only to be jolted back to reality by Old Ruthie herself, who had decided to finish her sentence. We never did find out what she was pondering—maybe it was that Great Biology Lab in the Sky. At any rate, it served to make her rather an individual in our eyes, to say the least.

I think I will never forget the day that Miss Bell got the hiccups. She was droning lazily on about crustaceans or something when I suddenly noticed that she was jerking at regular intervals, a peculiarity that I had never before noticed as being part of her lecture procedure. I immediately remarked upon this to the girl sitting next to me, and together we came to the conclusion that Old Ruthie had the hiccups. Delighted at this discovery, we settled down to watch. It was not long before she suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence, as was her custom, and regarded the ceiling with intense interest. At precisely that moment a stray hiccup chose to present itself in a most uncenemonious manner, and the room resounded with a sharp "Hic!" from her direction. Horrified, expectant silence hung over the room as every waking eye was fastened with quickened interest and high good humor
upon the hapless Old Ruthie. But she was true to form. Without blinking an eye, she inclined her head, listened for whatever it was she seemed to hear, and went on, completely undisturbed about the whole situation, if indeed she even knew it existed.

For all her peculiarities, Miss Bell did have two very important characteristics of a good teacher: an interest in her subject and an interest in her pupils. Biology was her first love, and she showed it in many ways. For several Saturdays each month she would trudge through bogs and over streams with her most interested students as part of a little club called the Swamp Stompers. Tirelessly, she explained each leaf and rock they discovered and tried to give each of them a glimpse of that rich and colorful world of natural science that she herself had found so exciting. In the classroom she always found time to help a bewildered student who was having trouble with his dissection project or who just could not seem to locate a particularly elusive amoeba under his microscope. Her patience was boundless, and she seldom became angry with a student unless he refused to follow directions or was consistently lazy.

Although her personality was not the kind to inspire students to toil ceaselessly at their biology, Miss Bell did manage somehow to drill quite a lot of it into most of her pupils, before each year was up. But, oddly enough, after a few years it is not so much the knowledge that remains as the memory of Old Ruthie—contemplating the ceiling, tromping through swamps, adjusting a microscope. When she leaves Norwalk High School, it can never be the same, for with her will go a forty-year tradition that will never return.

“People do not like night...”

Glory-June Greiff

People do not like night to come in—
They shudder and shrink inside their clothes
    and refuse to grasp its icy hand.
Its frosty black fingers beckon to me,
    carressing my raven soul.
Ebony and gold the night snickers at the Frigid-hearts.
I smile.
I know the joke.
As I in searching hopelessness pursue
Each endless hour and ever-crawling year,
I seal my thoughts that ever are of you
With remnants of a sigh and then a tear.
Each moment does reflect a life-long dream
Which fantasies of colors flavor bright,
And through my consciousness they swiftly stream
Like crimson of Aurora's lasting light.
Reaching further back into my mind
I seize the thoughts which from the depths arise
And savor them, taste each and every kind
Until, at last, the sight goes from my eyes.
These visions of idealistic whim
Belong to future's present and to him.

Jody Neff
Parting

How can I forget when all the world is remember?

I must say good-bye to a love that was more than love. . .
To eyes that talked without speaking, to a touch that could say more than all meaningless words man has ever created.

We had learned to laugh at the world together,
sometimes through tears, more often through sparkling, hopeful eyes.

We had listened to the rain together,
Even when apart, we listened to the rain together.

Our walks. . . Sometimes shuffling through leaves in the autumn wind,
sometimes splashing through rain-soaked streets sharing an umbrella.

Then there were times we labored through snow,
And I would push her down and laugh at the glittering snowflakes that rested on her eyelashes.

And the beach. Together we watched the enchanting sea
rear up and crash into the rocks, spraying the cool, soft mist over our sun-baked skin.

Together we had learned to speak with kisses.

Even now, we must part together.

How can I say good-bye to one I have given so much love,
then cried because I could give no more?

I guess saying good-bye won’t be so hard,
but I must somehow find the strength to face tomorrow. . .

Alone.
Lullaby

Joan O'Sullivan

CAST

Frannie
Hank
Al
Mary

\{ Art students
Six months pregnant
(The stage is divided into two distinct areas. To the left is a balcony attached to a small tavern. A wooden railing surrounds the porch and a corrugated fiberglass roof covers it. In the back wall are windows, through which one can see inside the tavern dimly, and steps and a door leading inside. Tables and chairs are scattered around the floor.

At stage right is the living room of a small apartment furnished with overstuffed chairs and mismatched furniture. There are paintings, sketches and pieces of sculpture scattered around the room which are incongruous with the larger pieces. Off stage right are the other rooms and the front door.

As the scene opens the apartment is in half light, but the balcony is illuminated by the afternoon sun of later summer. Two couples are seated toward the back of the balcony, quietly talking, as Fran, Hank and Al enter carrying steins of beer and take a table near center front of the balcony. They sit and drink silently, staring out over the balcony at the view.)

Fran: She’s still down there. Still in her garden—just like she’d been there all summer.
Al: Her tomatoes look pretty good. Looks like the beans are all gone, though.
(pause)
Hank: Wonder what she does in the winter.
Fran: Cooks all the stuff she raised. Makes raspberry pies or something.
(pause)
Hank: Can Mary cook?
Fran: Not very well. She made fried chicken once. She burned up a towel of mine trying to put out the grease fire she started in the oven.
Al: Gee, I’ll bet she’s really a swell housewife. Probably uses all of Heloise’s Hints.
Hank: Probably sends them in.
(pause)
Al: Hey, Fran, do we really have to go over there? What if she cries or something.
Hank: Yeah, Fran. Pregnant people always cry easily. Especially if they don’t want to be pregnant.
Fran: Hey you guys aren’t going to chicken out on me too, are you? What kind of friends are you anyway? She won’t cry—that was only last spring when she first found out about it. She must be used to it by now.

(pause)

Besides, she and George love each other—she can’t be all that unhappy.

Al: Poor old George never knew what hit him.

Hank: That’s love for ya’. Sneaky.

Al: Yeah. Too bad Mary won’t get to finish though. She was really doing good stuff in portrait class at the end of the semester last spring.

Hank: Yeah, she had talent all right. But stupid. You know? Really dumb. Scatterbrained. Lots of fun, but dumb.

Fran: Well, at least George will get to finish. I was really surprised at his parents for doing that for him. Never can tell what they’ll do in a clutch.

Hank: Can’t tell what anyone will do in a clutch. Like I never though George’d really go through with the marriage bit.

(pause)

Al: What a joke, you know? What a real joke. Can you see George as a father? George?

Hank: Can you see Mary as a mother?

Fran: Poor kid.

Al: Which?

Fran: The new one. Well, maybe the three of them will all grow up together.

(pause)

God, I hope so, anyway.

(pause)

Al: Look at all those crazy cars down there. All those guys risking their necks like that just to rush home to their six room Valhalla in Fair Oaks Suburban Development.

Hank: And the little women who’ll start nagging them the minute they walk in the door.

Fran: And the sweet little kiddies who’ll fight straight through supper until they finally give up and go to bed.

Al: And the barking dog.
Hank: And the TV dinners.
Fran: And the TV!
Al: Marriage must really be a wonderful thing, huh, guys?
Hank: It's a zoo—just like the rest of the world. Come on, let's get this over with if we're going. (They leave as the lights fade out on the balcony and fade up on the apartment. Mary enters, humming softly, with a vase of large, bright paper flowers which she places on a table in the middle of the room. She moves about straightening pillows, emptying ash trays, picking up newspapers. When she is finished she sits in the sofa and begins to light a cigarette, but changes her mind. She jumps up and pulls several bags from behind an armchair. Sitting on the couch, she opens them one by one and pulls out different articles of baby clothing. She spreads these carefully on the sofa around her, then picks up a pair of satin booties and examines them minutely. While she is doing this, the doorbell rings. She runs to the button on the wall and buzzes back, then hurriedly stuffs the clothes back into their bags and stashes them behind the armchair again. As she finishes there is a knock on the door.)

Mary: Come on in, guys. (Fran, Al and Hank enter right. As Fran hugs Mary, the boys stand awkwardly at the door.)
Fran: Frannie dear! You look great! How are you? Well, don't just stand there, you silly boys—come in! Is this all that came? Where's the rest of the group?
Hank: Well, everybody was pretty busy today—since it's the first day and all. They said to tell you hi, though, and that they'll be around soon.
Mary: Well, come on. Sit down people. You just don't know how good it is to see you. This place has been an absolute morgue all summer. George and I almost went crazy. And there were all kinds of tourists and strangers down at the City View, so we didn't even go there. Which reminds me—how about a beer? All we can afford is Blatz, but...
Fran: Oh, thanks, Mare, but we just had one. We stopped in at the CV after class for a minute.
Mary: Oh. Well, you can stand another one, can’t you? Hank?
   Al? Don’t tell me you guys are turning down free beer!
   I don’t believe it!
Al: No, that’s ok, Mary... but thanks anyway.
Mary: Well, ok. If you say so.
   (pause)
   Well, how was the first day of classes? As wild as the last one?
Hank: No, it was really a drag. Hardly anyone’s back this year.
   They’re all new people.
Al: Yeah, but some of them are really good—did you see that girl in portrait class? With the short blond hair? Really good stuff she was doing.
   (pause)
   Uh, I saw George for a minute this morning, Mary. I didn’t get to talk to him though—I guess he was in a hurry.
Mary: Oh, he doesn’t talk to anybody anymore—no time. Not even me. He gets off work at ten-thirty and goes straight to bed ‘cause he’s so tired. I don’t know what he’ll do when he has to start studying. Good thing he only has one year left.
Hank: Yeah, well, the baby will keep him awake, anyway.
   (pause)
Fran: How are you, anyway, Mary?
Mary: Oh, just fine, unfortunately. Healthy as a mother hippo, as my dear husband says. That’s in reference to the fact that I’ve already gained twenty pounds and the kid isn’t due until the end of November. George says not to give up hope yet, though.
Al: Hope for what?
Mary: Oh, he thinks maybe I’ll fall down the stairs or something fun like that. He makes me carry the groceries up and we do all kinds of fun exercises and stuff, too. But nothing works.
   (silent pause)
Hank: Hmmmm. That certainly is different.
Mary: So’s my condition.
   (pause)
   You know, our luck is simply amazing. Just amazing. I read that the pill is considered to be 99.9% safe—like it
works for 999 women out of a thousand. So who does that one percentage point turn out to be? Me, Naturally. With our luck we're bound to have at least twins.

(pause)

Fran: I really like your apartment. You've done a lot with it. Did you make the flowers?

Mary: Yeah. That's about all we have money for—I mean I can't afford canvases and stuff because we're always running out of money anyway. Pretty soon I won't have time even for paper flowers, though, so it really doesn't matter, I guess.

Fran: Is your mother coming out to help you or anything?

Mary: Ha. No, I rather doubt that she'll make it. She isn't too hot on the grandmother bit anyway. Makes her feel old or something.

(pause)

Hank: What's the kid's name going to be? Got it all figured out already, I'll bet.

Mary: Well, as a matter of fact we haven't made the final decision yet. It's a toss-up between Fluke, Mistake and Long-Shot.

Hank: Hmmmmm. Yes, I'd say you do have a problem.

AI: I've always been partial to family names, myself. I was named after my great uncle—a circuit court judge, no less.

Fran: Very impressive, AI. I'm sure he'd really be proud to know you're carrying on his name in such grand style.

AI: Oh, he does. He's ninety-two. Just wrote me out of his will, as a matter of fact. "If you won't cut that hair, I'll cut you, Boy," he said. And he did.

Fran: Yeah, family names can get messy that way.

Hank: Gives the kid so much to live up to and all.

Mary: A social stigma. That's what George said.

(pause)

Fran: By the way, Mare, how's your cooking coming? Been cooking much fried chicken?

Mary: Well, no. Not recently, anyway. We spend an awful lot of money on food. 'Course George drinks about a gallon of milk a day. Certainly hope the kid doesn't take after him—I hate to wash dishes.

(pause)
Oh, yeah—the food. Well, George cooks sometimes, and it's pretty good then. And sometimes we go out for hamburgers and stuff. And when I cook... George says I should cook all the time—like if I eat all my own cooking we won't have to worry about the kid anymore. He may have a point there, too.

Hank: Sounds like you're really a gourmet, Mary. What's your specialty—hot dogs?

Mary: No, I always undercook those. Let's see—it's not spaghetti, 'cause that always comes out pasty, and it's not eggs, 'cause they're always greasy. Hmmm. I must have one. I guess I'd have to say peanut butter and jelly on rye. I really make a mean peanut butter sandwich. Just happened to have a few lying around if you'd care to try one, Hank. I like to keep a few on hand for our guests, because they always ask for them, you know.

Hank: Oh, well... I'd really like to Mary, but, uh... it might spoil my supper. Maybe next time, ok?

Mary: Well, ok, Hank, but you just don't know what you're missing. It's strawberry jelly, too.

(pause)

That's really a great dress, Fran. Did you get it in the Village?

Fran: Yeah, just a few weeks ago. There's a new shop on Greenwich Street.

Mary: You don't know how I missed New York this summer. Cincinnati's ok in the winter, but it was really hell this summer.

(pause)

I thought about going home for a while, but George didn't think it was too good an idea with my mother the way she is now.

(pause)

The thing she really minds about the most is the wedding. 'Cause we didn't have it in a church or anything. I don't know why it should matter to her if it didn't to us, though.

(pause)

She never writes or anything.

Fran: She might change when the baby comes, though, Mary. Babies do that to people.
Mary: Yeah, maybe she'll like it so much she'll want to keep it. That'd solve all our problems.
(pause)
Well, it was just a thought.
(pause)
Know anybody who wants to buy a baby? We'll give them a good buy.

Hank: You'll change too, Mary. And George. Wait'll you see it for the first time. You'll feel...

Mary: Nothing. That's just what I feel right now. Nothing. I'm supposed to be all radiant and expectant and happy, right? Well, I'm not. And I don't care if I never even see it.

Al: Well, why the hell are you having it, Mary? God, you can't be that stupid. Why didn't you get rid of it a long time ago? There are ways, you know. George knows too. It isn't fair to the kid, you know. It really isn't.

Mary: (jumping up) That's just it! George! That's exactly it, Al. George wouldn't let me do anything after I told him. He wouldn't let me take anything or see anybody or anything. I wanted to, but he said this was the only thing to do.
(pause)
It wasn't me. God, I don't want a baby. I don't want one ever!
(Fadeout no apartment. After a moment, fade up on balcony. It is the same evening. Fran, Al, and Hank are seated as before, smoking and drinking steins of beer.)

Hank: I need another one. How about you guys?

Al: Yeah.

Fran: Ok. (Hank leaves.)
(pause)
I should go home and eat supper.
(pause)
I don't think I could.
(pause)
Al, what's she going to do to that poor kid? I mean, she could really kill it or something. She'll kill it with hate if not anything else, the dumb bitch.
(pause)

Al: Stewed tomatoes.
Fran: What?
Al: Stewed tomatos. They’re having stewed tomatos for dinner.
Fran: Who?
Al: The garden lady. Down there—third window in on the right.
Fran: She’ll probably serve them all winter. Her husband will get sick of them.
Al: Start a fight.
Fran: She’ll cry.

(pause)
I’m never getting married, Never.

(Fade to half light on balcony. Fade up on apartment.
Mary is sitting on the couch with her shoes off, drinking a bottle of beer. She hums softly. She begins to chuckle then laughs out loud. She recites the following melodramatically.)

Mary: ‘Nothing. I feel absolutely nothing. I don’t care if I never see it.’ (laughs and addresses her stomach) Oh, that’s really funny, huh friend? Sorry to talk about you like that, dear, but we mustn’t let them suspect. Mustn’t let George suspect. Not even suspect.

(pause)
Ha. And poor Mother. (sadly and wistfully) ‘She never writes or anything.’ No, but she calls twice a week, doesn’t she, dear? What a coach. Well, we caught the prey; now all we have to do is wait for the right moment for the reconciliation of the estranged mother and daughter and we’ll all be happy again. Even your poor daddy will be happy. He’ll come around to liking you soon enough. And once he starts making lots of nice money we’ll like him more, won’t we?

(pause)

Your poor daddy. If he ever had an inkling... (She finishes her beer and starts for the kitchen. As she goes she sings the tune she has been humming.)

Hush-a-by, don’t you cry
Go to sleep, little baby.
When you wake, you shall have
All the pretty little horses...
One intoxicating volatile hope I fling at you—
Your fingers on my face and a feverish smoothness spreads
I put myself in my eyes and lay them in your lined palm
My arm blends into yours with painful texture
I stroke your taut shoulder and its cool draughts
soothe my inflamed hand,
Your face evolves half-carved on my spirit
in the quiet
dark.

Only the soft splashing
of the
fountain.

Glory-June Greiff
Butler University

WORDS FLUNG TO THE WIND

i. rush roar mighty wind
sway those supple trees
while you wrench my soul from its desires
swirl my thoughts
scatter them far
let them soar
let them be free
if not me

ii. wail oh whining wind
carry my soul
far from this earthly limbo world
and all its false warm dreams of love
that once seemed so sincere

iii. laugh you wild wind
mock my struggling untamed soul
you are so wise
someday i will learn your secrets
believe me
for i yearn too much not to be satisfied
The street was of contemporary design—complete with contemporary filth. The filth contained no refuse (the big, white city sanitation trucks had swept the refuse away), but the unremovable stains of a big city—the scum and the condensed fumes clung steadfastly.

The street was there for two purposes: one, to support a start-stop spurt of rubber-bottomed, metal-clad, gut and blood-filled, exhaust-belching cars.

The second reason for the street’s existence was not so concrete. It was as if the city were once an aggregate of buildings (like a single-layered pile of blocks with no space between), and the street, along with its brothers, had darted in and out of the clusters like small rivers grooving out the mud of a delta. Each rivulet had many children on her banks and usually baptized them with no other first name than a number. Their surnames were always distinctive, however, and this particular street called her cement steel offspring North Wells.

But it was many years ago when the buildings were born and named. The Brothers North Wells became old men. They had lived full lives and were ready to die, but something happened so that the wrecking crews were never called. The students and immigrants and artists and thinkers found the old places cheap to live in and came in hordes.

The young people of the mind and the Old Town of North Wells Street were compatible lovers, and they lay together along the filthy street. And out of the filth grew the flowers.

The flower-people were different and interesting, and now tourists came and stared almost as at the circus or zoo. The outsider with his fine sport coat and tie, camera and full wallet stumbled about like the Cyclops Polyphemus with one big, dazzled eye.

Some of the Brothers North Wells were changed into discotheques and top-less go-go bars and coffee houses and swank restaurants,
But most of the venerable old buildings stayed the same: the tiny antique shops, the old art studios, the quaint restaurants with foreign accents. Order was nonexistent, but no one cared. Square and flower-men smiled at one another (both secretly despising, yet envying the other). The filthy street divided two crowds—one examining the rhythmical undulation of sweaty, sweet breasts; the other examining their lives with heads bowed, emotionally urged on by a man of the Lord.

The Old Town of North Wells Street became the catharsis of a city through a never failing excitement. The executive with an ulcer and his middle-aged wife with hidden gray hair basked in the warmth of spirited jazz and more spirited whiskey. A little girl, blond hair very straight and long, munched a soft pretzel and sipped an Italian lemonade. She was fifteen: a week ago she was a girl, now she was a woman. Her mini-skirted loins thumped with excitement at the thought of last Saturday night and her "initiation into womanhood." At least that was how Tommy Vatsayana had explained it.

Everyone laughed in Old Town. You had to laugh. It was the biggest and wildest circus on earth. It had the wildest freaks and the most beautiful women. It was a never-ending show. Even the filthy street was not noticed in the din.

Lights were everywhere. They flashed and blinked and dazzled. Both neon and incandescent tubes spelled out commands, pointing, pleading. The whole rainbow and all the stars, the sun, the sky had mixed, clashed, mutated, splashed over the whole street.

Old Town’s smell was like the rest of the city but distinctively more flavorsome. The aroma (or odor, depending on viewpoint) was a mad concoction of Hungarian goulash, sweat, beer, incense, and soft pretzels.

But even in the gay flower-town of North Wells Street exploitation was not unknown. The bearded young fellow wore a necklace of fresh blossoms, and a white candle flickered in his hands. He sat on the curb and meditated freedom while the invisible puppet-strings of a profiteer played him as a breathing neon sign. The little shops began to charge prices far above a fair charge.

But even with the exploitation, the excitement of Old Town was real, personal, irresistible. It was the excitement of people and existed because people are exciting. It was the mad circus on the filthy street called North Wells.
February Thought

I am giddy with the ecstasies
of a spring not yet come.
There is beauty in neutrality—
brown woods and white swamp
and invisible hands
hidden in the breezes,
that guide my wandering way.

“April, when she comes . . .”

April, when she comes,
will whisper softly in my ear
and say, “You silly sad child,
come away, and wander with me.”
Wistfully smiling, I will follow—
together we will roam the early-flowered meadows
under soft skies,
and our laughter will ring in the fresh damp woods.
Bleak winds chill me now, no cheering zephyrs
run with my heart.
Mud March is my guest now, and keeps me home,
but April, when she arrives, will say
“Come away,
and wander with me.”
Gone

A night that reluctantly dies into dawn,
raindrops casually caught in his hand
and tossed away,
golden leaves carelessly strewn in his step,
thus am I
to him whom all the earthly angels once adored
when we as one
soared to their heights
throughout the nights
that had to end.
Now I descend
into the dark valleys
of the river Why.
Manuscripts

Age

Coldly, sadly descends

Age
And we from youth
Can watch it come down
Like a shroud.

It is strewn with

Hopes;
And oft we forget
That Age is coming
Like a tortoise.

Pam Smith
SLEEP

How delectable—dropping off to sleep—
The noises grow fainter—fainter—
The piano’s simple tunes—
Bumbled through by inexperienced fingers—
Are the only tie with reality.

Thoughts—vague—wandering—
Impossible—
Blending strangely with reality—
Tangentially taking off
Into a pleasant—pentothal—existence

I Cry

Bonnie Personett

I cry when I am sad and think of people sadder than I.
I cry for those who are sad, and alone, and unhappy.
I cry for the sick, the needy, and the poor—
The poor who have much and are still poor
And the poor who have nothing and are only poor.
I cry for those who have lost and for those who have not yet found.
I cry for every cause and every grief,
And no suffering passes before me that is not seen.
Yet I do not move my hand towards them,
Nor comfort them, nor give them aid.
My actions and speech do not support their cause or console their suffering.
I am not moved to act, only to cry.
But at least I cry.
Elegy to a Poet Not Quite Dead

A voice in life's song
Off-key.
Plinking, strident, sharped into difference.
The right note,
But the wrong key.

Words of beauty
To lead a way.
The wrong language, meaningless jibber
To closed ears.
A rainbow at night.

Warm spring rain
Caressing an ever-frozen earth
Belittled and cursed until gone
And all that remains is new life—
for others.

He is there.
That stone pale and cold
Is not his marker
But crimson leaves;
That dance,
Chanting with the wind upon his grave.
He is not dead.
They whisper his words,
Eternal Truth.
A rustling message for no one that listens.

Elegy to a poet not quite dead,
but never alive.
Deep wrapped within the folds of sleep,
Sweet Morpheus, your date I keep;
I float in dreams out through a door
Which ‘opes unto a mystic shore—
There air is pure and life serene,
With fields of flowers flowing clean;
No famine, war or discontent
Defiles this world with harsh lament;
Nor baby screams, nor widow wails
But only happy love prevails.

O think!, what joy is there to hold,
When reached at last this blessed abode
Is placed within my outstretched palms;
And I with some adoring psalms
Reverberate my praises high
Against the tabernackled sky.

Now let my mirthful spirit sing—
My revelry will surely bring
Forth the Fairy populance
And they will join me in my dance.
O hear the music, beat and throb,
Which animates this merry mob;
O see them promenade and spin,
(and hold your ears against their din)
As they their elfen voices blend
With mine, as I songs upward send—
Again in thanks to him who lent
My journey to this firmament.

Eight hours will last this gala spree
I’ll find the magic, fairy pace.
Till, stooped at last on bended knee,
Too much for earthly men to face,
Then ragged, worn and drunk for sleep,
Into a pixie bed I'll creep;
And home on morning's wings I'll fly,
As tiny hands wave fond goodbye—
Until that time when once again
Dreams bid me dance with elfin men.

_But Then I Wake. . ._

But when I wake I am a man
And feel once more the joy and pain
Of life. I feel the sultry breezes fan
My sweating brow, and hear my name
Recalled by one who's called in vain
Before. "Arise and live! Hear you me?"
Arise? And live? These words in me remain
Like Echo's sad refrain for he
Who doomed her unto eternity.

I feel with pain my body stir,
Again the world to face as best it may
Since I (myself) am but a blur
Which flits on earth from day to day.
With body and spirit divided I but play
At existence. For the pain of life to be requited
I must find means to guarantee
That flesh and soul will be united—
For only by their union is Truth incited.

Truth, the salve which cleanses daily hurts,
Is also that which makes life real;
For he who misses Truth merely flirts
With life. Often is this elusive Grail
Sought by Man, yet many are they who fail
Through sloth, or fear of Truth's intent.
My fears are great, yet still my soul for life does wail,
And though I have fear I can yet repent,
And still may I live before my life is spent.
In absence of Truth, Man finds reality
Within a child’s world, or so it seems.
But armed with Truth He can bear adversity;
Then can he endure life, and have no need of dreams.

Larry Gilbert

EXORCISM

blue black shadow song
bird song
but not being sung for me
And where have you gone
And where will you be
And when will I again hear your voice
Ah but the bird knows
the dead birds always know
their glassy eyes are wise
And they alone dare
answer infinity

bonni lowry

What of rain that does not fall down,
But sideways?
Though just swirling mist,
Tiny slivers of aimlessness,
Freezing splinters of hopelessness,
Still water but lost.

What of rain that falls up?

Elessa High
Once, long ago, in a faraway land called Scholastica, men shouted praise to learning. They had seen the wonderful things learning had done for them—freedom from disease; power unimaginable by breaking apart a speck of matter; boxes of colored, speaking images; beauty; wealth, and prosperity—and they made the Intellectual their hero.

But the Intellecutals began to assume authority in areas outside of their knowledge. The prophets cried, “Sham,” but they were ignored. In Californiam (Western Scholastica) an entertainer of men became ruler. In the capital, a pediatrician became an authority on the conflict with the Yellow People in the East.

The Intellectuals began to think their beliefs were beyond question. In the schools the Intellectuals gave their students only certain books and told them what to find in them. The students learned well. They knew all of the great periods of literature; they could tell an eighteenth century rationalist from a nineteenth century romanticist. And when tests came, the students wasted no time in filling-in the little black boxes. But somehow the Great Ideas meant little to them and were quickly forgotten after the test.

In the government, also, the Intellectuals could not bear to see their authority questioned. Some students who thought the fight against the Yellow People was not fair were jailed. The students became angry and talked so much against the government and so much for the little Yellow People that they began to believe that the little fellows were really good.

Then a new and explosive condition arose in the East—the Yellow People had united and started a terrible war against all of Scholastica. The Intellectuals again assumed authority outside of their knowledge. They became the generals (and were the first to succumb). The men of Scholastica knew the difference between an eighteenth century rationalist and a nineteenth century romanticist, but they could not respond to this personal situation. They knew what they were supposed to feel, but they had no thoughts of their own. . . .

And the little Yellow People feasted upon the bones of the Intellectuals and the rotted fruit of Scholastica.
Sometimes life is boring. It becomes a game of monotony, a fixed pattern of thoughts and actions, and Friday is no different than Wednesday or Monday. When my boredom reaches a limit, when my mind cries from the endless cycle of sleep, eat, study, I do something marvelous. Sometimes it happens in the middle of the night. Sometimes it happens during school, sometimes in the summer. Days start
looking grey, people start becoming numbers, statues seem to say more than poets. When I become weary you will most likely see me walking out of Ross Hall, walking away from work, any hour of the day, my suitcase swinging at my side. I call my friend and ask her if she wants to go window-shopping. I'm off for the world, away from monotony, away from the indifference, numbers, lectures, money. I'm away beside some river, some pond, looking up at the stars, leaning on an elm tree, kicking stones if I'm walking, throwing them if I'm sitting: window shopping for the world. Times like these belong to me. When
my friend laughs at the wind or tosses a flower into it, I realize how delicately shaped and fashioned we all are by what we love.

We all are traveling like nomads towards what we love. One way or another it is our constant migration. We’re window-shopping for ideals, buying goals, looking in on all sorts of gifts, pledging our lives to whatever it is that makes us love to love our ideals. We’re like two lovers wearing clothes to please each other, buying records to please each other, going places to please each other. Only we are in love with ideals such as democracy, peace, freedom, God. Whatever it is, we cling to ideals because they are the reincarnation of people loving. We are not only shaped by what we love, but we also shape what we love, add ourselves to it. We bend every thought towards it, turn every free thought unto it, and live with the vision imbedded in our minds. For me, love is traveling away, away from the indifference of the crowd, into the night, picking up my friend. I become anxious with the thought of freedom, with the utter simplicity of two people together. I am wooed by freedom. You can be free, shaped by the ideals you love, loved by the shape of your ideals, lost in them. And you go your way; I go mine. Sometimes it may be towards opposite goals. But if our dominant ideals are identical, then I’ll meet you just around the corner of today, my suitcase pregnant with gifts, my friend’s arms full with souvenirs. I’ll meet you ‘round the bend, window-shopping.

Jody Neff

Darts

Love, so close to hate and yet so far,
Why must you tear at hearts and cause such pain?
I cannot love, but that it turns to war,
And all misunderstandings come again.
Sometimes I feel as though I stand alone,
And life goes by and does not see my soul;
Each person leaves, and hurts like darts are thrown;
They hit my heart, the love from which they stole.
The cartoon or comic strip has become as much a part of American life and lore as the hamburger or the foot-long hot dog. Children fight over the funny paper and old folks chuckle over it. More often than not, a cartoon is just enjoyed without much thought as to what makes it enjoyable.

Leading the pack of the most popular comic strips is unquestionably Charles Schulz’s much loved “Peanuts.” It’s hard to find a person who doesn’t like “Peanuts,” although no one seems able to pinpoint just what it is that gives the strip universal popularity. Most folks, when asked, laugh and say that it is easy to identify with one of the cleverly drawn characters, since nearly all of them can see in their everyday lives a person resembling one of the “Peanuts kids”; or perhaps they simply like Snoopy. Schulz has apparently been able to capture in his appealing little people a human warmth, honesty, and fallibility that make his strip more than funny; they make it meaningful. It is so meaningful, in fact, that it has been used as a vehicle for political comments, social satire, and even a Gospel analogy!

One of the first traits noticeable about “Peanuts” is that all the characters (with the obvious exception of Snoopy) are children. No adults are ever seen or heard from and rarely are they even spoken about. Yet the small stars of the cartoon discuss world problems, philosophy, social stigmas, religion—all with a precociousness far beyond the behavior of real-life children but at the same time never being offensive. They present honest, ingenious, and funny ideas about these massively heavy topics, sometimes giving us “from the mouths of babes,” surprisingly intelligent and workable solutions. All these are skillfully worked into a simple setting featuring a few characters, each with a personality distinctly his own yet remarkably similar to individuals around the reader. Realistic words arising from a situation that is totally unrealistic but never contrived, this is the charm of “Peanuts.”

In addition to its philosophical appeal, “Peanuts” offers us both a friend and a scapegoat in a set-up which strikes a familiar chord in our subconscious. Each of us has met a Linus, tangled with a Lucy, or felt ourselves to be a Charlie Brown. Thus, we rise in righteous indignation when Lucy launches a new assault on the world, and we
know exactly how Charlie Brown must feel when he finds himself her major target—again. It’s happened to us! Occasionally, too, our allegiance shifts exactly as it would in a true-to-life situation, as when we feel sorry for Lucy when she sadly observes, “Nobody understands us crabby people!” On our bad days, each of us has felt the same persecuted way.

From a purely aesthetic standpoint, the “Peanuts” strip is drawn cleverly and appealingly. Simple lines and consistent characteristics, like Charlie Brown’s striped sweater and Snoopy’s snoozing posture atop his doghouse, make it easy and enjoyable to read. Each little face retains its own personality and its relationship to the others, and the adventures that befall the youngsters follow a pattern. In summer the kids play baseball, one losing season after another, and in winter Snoopy stalks the infamous Red Baron with his trusty Sopwith Camel. Lucy continually picks on Charlie Brown, chases Shroeder, and yells at Linus, while poor Charlie Brown (notice he is never referred to as just “Charlie”) woos the little red-haired girl from afar. Rarely does a new character enter the strip or change the course of action, but for a reason which bespeaks the artistry of the author, each adventure has one new twist which prevents the recurrence from ceasing to make us laugh. In association with the simple consistent pattern of “Peanuts,” it is interesting to note that no character plays the title role. Perhaps Schulz selected the name “Peanuts” because his cartoon deals with bits of many topics, or because his characters are children, or possibly because it had absolutely no relation to the strip; we speculate but don’t know.

Although it appears I have overlooked the most lovable character in the strip, I haven’t; I merely feel that Snoopy is entitled to a paragraph of his own. It isn’t clear exactly how one identifies with this little scamp, for he isn’t a person but he seems more human than canine. He adds humor by his imaginative antics on his doghouse, and gives the reader an opportunity for a mischievously vengeful grin with his impish harassment of the disagreeable Lucy. His philosophy of life is charmingly pertinent and may be summed up well in his sermon, “Dancing is good for the soul! If you can’t dance, you should at least be able to do a happy hop!” In this, as in most of his remarks, much of the appeal is derived from the artful way in which lovable little Snoopy is drawn. A beagle face that never looks truly doggish reveals every thought in Snoopy’s crafty little mind, and his whole body is
constructed to accentuate his moods. The reader need only look at Snoopy in one of his poses—a vulture, or the World War I flying ace behind enemy lines—to find himself chuckling at the warm reality of so unreal a character as a dog who plays shortstop. Snoopy seems to speak for some underlying part of each one of us, the secret cache of our mischief and imagination.

Whatever bit of magic has made “Peanuts” the nation’s best-loved comic strip is undoubtedly a trade secret. That bit of magic makes nearly everyone an addict of the strip after only one or two exposures, and I often wonder whether the charm of “Peanuts” may be akin to the charm of a cheery companion outfitted with a sympathetic ear and a kind compliment!

Jim Kurtz

My friend the night

Walking alone going nowhere,
with my friend the night.
We have a lot of secrets together,
that I can slip behind its veil of darkness.
My footsteps are unguided,
I can lose myself better alone,
The paths I have crossed are meaningless,
no one will ever follow after.

What I have done many have done better,
so I just hide again.
An hourglass and a teaspoon,
can measure me.
Caught in a stream of indecision,
don’t speak out you may be wrong.
In the darkness the world can drift by,
I will pretend.
Prufrock and I see life curled,
in dark window panes.
Dust collecting upon my every thought,
and the clock is striking twelve.
I feel my next step is where,
the fool has lost his way.
Look out for the harsh wind,
it may be stronger than you.

So wonder only until always,
I am what hinders me.
Small footsteps are quickly blown away,
by winds echoing deep within my mind.
There are many lights in the night,
but I won’t look at them.
They may lead to my street,
but like the star it’s out of my reach.

No hope for the future,
all I have is the present,
and I know it shall never last.
Eternal silence of the infinite terrifies me.
Gather all I have and construct a hope,
a citadel to guard my fears.
But it shall be open before my soul,
and crumble before my eyes.

My unsteady pace may cause me to stumble,
and fall to which I came.
But I will be helped up again,
and dust off the pain of my faults.
It covers all my anguish,
and the lonely tears that no one shall ever see.
It is my shield,
My friend the night.
When I first met Sergeant Stoe, my knees were shaking. I was standing before him, all six feet, two inches, and two hundred pounds of him. His sandy hair was cut very short, and his small blue eyes were set close together. When he spoke, he had the look of a bull ready to charge. For me it was a case of terror at first sight. He was explaining to me what my duties as an R.O.T.C. sponsor would be.

"Your main duty will be inspecting the troops every Friday. Now I don't want to see a single cadet pass inspection for the first month," he ordered. "If you can't find at least one thing wrong with every boy, you are not doing your job as inspecting officer. Understand? Now about your uniform. It looks terrible. Next week when you come back, I want that white shirt spotless and I want your brass and shoes so shiny I can see myself in them. Your sponsors are going to be sharp."

He turned quickly and stalked out of the room. I just stood there for a few minutes, shocked by the abrupt "welcome" he had given me. Then I sank weakly into the nearest chair and tried to keep from crying. This was going to awful. How could he expect me to reach the standards he had set. It just was not possible!

Every Friday one of the cadets would escort me from class to the inspection. Every Friday I inspected the boys, torn between the knowledge that most of them looked perfect and my fear of what Sergeant Stoe would do if I passed any of them. Every Friday Stoe would be angry with me for something I had done wrong. Every Friday I swore I would quit my post, and every Friday I cried because of my frustration. I had shined my shoes and brass for two hours; my skirt had just been cleaned. Yet Sergeant Stoe was not satisfied.

Marching was even worse. We practiced on the football field for two hours every day, and then he would say we needed three hours more. He yelled and swore at us for a half hour every day after practice, and then the officers would have to stay for another half hour for more of the same.

After only a few weeks, I had made up my mind that the military was not for me. The cadets did not like me because I never passed anyone. Sergeant Stoe did not like me because he knew I wanted to give the boys good reports. I decided I could not take this constant battle any longer. We were to march in the Veterans' Day Parade downtown in the beginning of November, and then I would tell
Sloe I was dropping out.

The day of the parade was cold and wet. We waited in the rain for almost two hours before the parade began, and we had to stand in formation at attention or parade rest at all times. There was absolutely no moving around, so everyone felt like frozen lumps. Our eyes were weary and our noses were red from the cold, and the only sound throughout the troops was an occasional sniff or a cough. I was inwardly hating Sergeant Stoe every minute, and I was determined to show him that I was not cold, that I could take the rain, that I could outmarch any other girl in the city.

Sergeant Stoe left to be seated in the reviewing stand, and I began to visualize what would happen when my unit walked by. The instructors from the other schools would say, “My, that girl certainly carries herself well. What a proud, military bearing she has. She must be at least a major.” Sergeant Stoe would, of course, have to tell them I was only a second lieutenant, but he would begin to think about how valuable I was. He would realize the corps would just collapse without me, and he would begin to appreciate all I’d done for him. Then when I turned in my resignation, he would beg me to stay. I would show him! My chin went up a little higher with every thought of how I would get back at him.

Finally the parade began, and we were moving down the street. It was no trouble for me to keep “head and eyes straight forward” because I was watching for the reviewing stand and my hated enemy. As we marched past the stand, all the troops had to salute and look to the right because of the many military officers who were being honored. During this “eyes right” I looked straight at Sergeant Stoe, ready to knock him over with my haughtiness. My eyes nearly fell out when I spotted our sergeant, eyes shining with tears, beaming at our snappy unit. The pride that was evident in him absolutely glowed, and I could tell he was thrilled with our performance.

As the parade drew to an end, I was confused. Why would a man as cold and as rough as he actually cry just because his cadets were in step? When the answer dawned on me, I almost laughed aloud. Sergeant Stoe wasn’t cruel after all. His gruff treatment of us was only to make us determined to prove our military abilities to him. Being fired with this determination, we had won first place in the parade for having the best unit. Everyone said, “Just wait till that parade. We’ll show him!” We had “shown him,” and that was just what he wanted us to do. His strategy worked perfectly.
When Sergeant Stoe walked back from the reviewing stand, the tears were still in his eyes. He shook the hand of every cadet and every sponsor, about one hundred-fifty in all, and when he finished his only words were, “You guys sure put on a hell of a show.”

Karlis E. Rusa

THOUGHT-SHIPS
a prose poem

Often it is that strange and beautiful ships are seen to put in at a certain vast port; they are bright argosies that come gliding from the unseen horizon on days which are as songs of azure and gold. The sea then is of lavender, and reflects the mellow skies where burns the never-consumed sun. And the argosies have sails for the most part dazzling white, or of varied joyous colors, and perhaps some that are as the raiment of Harlequin. And on these merry ships are borne ancient chests of spices from sunken worlds, and thousand-faceted gems whose brilliance makes men laugh in glee, and unknown instruments that can play rare music, music arousing suppressed feelings in those who hear. But ever and anon, when the port sleeps a heavy and drugged sleep in the sultry glare of day, the argosies of mirth enter it in vain; for then there is no one on the wharves to unload the graceful vessels, and they must depart the way they came.

And there are times when other ships come roaring swiftly and ominously from the unseen horizon, and they come unbidden on nights that are stormy and wild. Blackly monstrous and ungainly are these ships, and their dark sails, whipping and fluttering in ghastly winds, are tattered and ragged. Like fierce dragons, the demonic vessels are swept over the wharves by the shrieking storm, and rage high above the cowering city ere they plunge downward to wreak ruin and woe. Then they vanish, as ghosts, but leave horror in their wake.

For the vast are rick and sere; and the grim eldritch ships are my thoughts that port is my mind, and the graceful argosies are my thoughts that bring grief and fear to me, and I would gladly reject them....
It was twilight. Papa and the red-head sat on either side of the neglected chess board talking. The talk would sometimes flow smoothly and coolly, sometimes lethargically with politeness, sometimes rapidly with twists, turns, and mild explosions of anger. After each explosion,
the talk would lapse, and they would each stare vacantly at the chessmen. Then the words would sidle back into their minds and the talk would begin again. Although she spent all mid-day awaiting the red-head's visit after supper, she no longer paid such specific attention to him when he came. It was pleasant enough to sit nearby leafing through her lessons while they talked. Previously, she had tried to follow the discussions. She had felt that perhaps these long twilight hours of talk held the key to the world of men and all that glimmered
faintly beyond her present scope of classmates and lessons.

But the more closely she listened, the more confused she became. Her father was an educated man, and rich enough to be idle and wise. The red-head wrote for American newspapers, and was well informed and careful in judgment. Yet they seemed unable to agree on any issue they considered. This disturbed her, but more disturbing was their uncertainty. When she listened closely, each man seemed to waver in mid-sentence to gather the courage to plunge on. Each seemed to try less to convince the other than to understand the subject himself. And so she began merely to watch Papa’s slow smile and the red-head’s eyes (which half closed while he listened, but flashed with an almost brutal joy when he made a rejoinder), immersing herself in the flow of talk, but ignoring its shifting directions.

The subject tonight was the war, of course. Even when she had listened closely, this subject had seemed darker for each enlightened word. She would compare the Front to the government. They would ask, which do the people want, and does that matter? They would ask which is best for the nation, and is there really a nation, and does that matter? Then they would really fail to answer any of these questions, but rather ask them again in a different way. It was strange how she understood the literal meaning of each word spoken, and how unable she was to grasp the sense of the discussion. She sighed deeply and turned another page. Then she glanced at the doorway.

Three men stood crowded there, all with apologetic smiles. All were dressed shabbily in the peasant’s black uniform. All carried rifles. Papa and the red-head broke off in mid-sentence and stared at the men quizzically. The men walked forward quickly, no longer apologetic. They knocked the chess board aside, motioned Papa to be silent, and turned toward the red-head. Then they began to beat the red-head. The beating was almost quiet, punctuated by muffled thuds and stifled grunts. Then it was over. The three men stood around the red-head, as she lay breathing rapidly. He held his head slightly above the floor and glared at the men, each in turn.

She now found herself shrunk into a trembling crouch beside Papa’s chair. It was childish to tremble, she thought, but better to tremble than scream. This thought so pleased her that she stopped trembling and observed the five men coolly. A discussion of the war began, but the peasants supported their rapid statements with slaps at Papa. She did not attempt to understand the discussion, but noted the peasants’ confidence. Abruptly, two of the peasants ceased speaking
and grasped Papa’s arms. They pulled him out of the room, down the hall and out of ear’s reach. The third man picked up his rifle and turned to the red-head. It was strange that she chose to faint now.

I know it is late, she thought. It was very dark outside, and inside the wall clock had stopped. Near the clock lay the red-head. Papa had gone with the men, but that had been hours ago. She could dimly see the red-head, who was staring at the ceiling as if he were listening to the clock, eyes half closed. She sighed and turned another page. Outside, the dawn was commencing.

Jody Neff

Thoughts

My inmost thoughts do dry like withered flowers
That once were gay and begged their petals touch
Against the sky whose blue and gold did much
To heighten aspiration’s fruitless hours.
As falling leaves my spirits lose their powers
Of breathing, seeing, but fast descending such—
Sustained—alighting on the frozen crutch
Of frosted, barren earth and icy bowers.
Goodie Grauer’s come to town
In her shroud of spider-down,
And her shoes of felon leather
Leave no track upon the heath.

Goodie Grauer, born a witch,
Nursed at the throat of a brindle bitch,
Made a dress from a mattress cover
And a snakeskin belt out of her first lover.

Goodie Grauer’s skin is fair,
Colored like her fishworm hair.
Cheek roughed with mold and lip with blood,
Scented with the smell of death.

Goodie’s rheumy eye
Could call down lightning from a cloudless sky,
Shrivel crops or stew a hen,
Smother a child on its playpen.
Sometimes people get an itch
To hang a nigger, burn a witch,
Bomb a bound’ry, gas a name. . . .
Always the result’s the same.

How it was in Salem-town,
Crazy talk kept going round,
Like: "Well, I heard Dame Stanford said
That when Old Goodie climbs in bed—"

Those true Godfearing women & men
Dragged her, screaming, from her cab’n,
(A wretched crone whom no one liked)
Impaled her on an oaken spike.

She flopped about, but soon was still.
They buried her in Miller’s Hill;
On back to town, they whooped, they crowed,
. . . She met them coming up the road.

Now there is a witch
in Salem-Town.
all come undone

pledge your troth to none but you
see exactly what you can do
for no one else can live your dreams
or imagine how you'll sew the seams
across envisioned moonlit night
of sky's orange eye, the pristine kite
that flies at dawn before you wake
and all that day is yours to take
to bed with you on satin pillows
of self-induced prismatic billows
creating a phantasmic fright
forcing you to rise in flight
to another land, never old
where trees stand tall and grass grows bold
as the ambition that you once possessed
and no one there will ever guess
you've lost yourself in prison hallways
Outside the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, nestled on a canal flowing from Lake St. Clair, sits a tiny cottage. So far removed is it from the bustle of that industrial city, so hidden by a maze of streets and lanes, that it is like many other retreats where muddy waters lick the edges of front yards. In such places the early morning has a fresh, damp chill that penetrates to the senses of feeling, smell, and taste. The steel grey waters roll slightly after each early fishing boat has moved languidly by. The far horizon is clear; the massive freighters have not yet left their berths to mar the flawless meeting of platinum water and sky. The dew sparkles on the green grass and white cottage, suggesting to the early sun that more colors ought to be brought into the world.

Too soon this dawnlike freshness is lost. The sun climbs. Its wavy light shows the canal waters like a mixture of coffee and milk, spotted with the silver bodies of fish that are no longer beautiful. The climbing sun laughingly evaporates the gullible dew, bleaching the grass the color of wax beans, making the house look like a tray covered with chalk dust. The sun works its mischief on the moisture from the dew and the murky waters, changing them into an oppressive haze that hangs heavily over the land, frying each person in his own little yellowish bubble of water. The lake laughs at the sun, though; its water turns a green-turquoise that suggests seahorses and flashing sunfish. The sky turns the rich blue of the poets, broken only by a rare cloud that is like a puff of white cotton candy. Dim, black silhouettes, infinitesimal parts of the whole ships, mark the thin line that separates the earthly from the heavenly.

But as the sun starts to lose its battle with the dark, the sky is streaked with pink and the waters with grey, like a badly blended water color. The freighter shapes turn smoke blue for a minute, then a dull steel, blending with the lake. As white lights first begin to pop on along the shore, the muddy waves become topped with foam like dirty lace. The first boats return to their night berths, further contaminating the water with their slicks of oil. As later boats slide into the canal, a darkness creeps up on this world, which forces the boats to display their red, green, and while lights and disguises the brown waters until the moon and stars flick their lights on twice, once in the sky and once in the wet mirror below. Across the water, the moon describes a pathway of golden light that leads to heaven. A sparkling coolness drifts over
the land as the waves gently lap the pilings at the sides of the canal. The stillness is broken only by the slapping waters and an occasional low murmur of a boat engine. The cottage sits quietly back as if watching for the sun and dew to bring it out of darkness, making it sparkle once again.
A tragedy—
And I quietly take my emotions in,
As laundry among the first brief spatter of raindrops.
I fold them neatly—
Place them on a shelf—
and shut the door.
Then I am able to face my tragedy
Calm and dry-eyed.
My emotions remain neatly folded
Until much later.
Then when I take them out for airing
And shake them in the brilliant sun
They are quiet and subdued—
Ready for daily use.
"Parks," the foreman said, "you’ll be working this press with Samson here."

"Samson?" Joe muttered, amazed. "He looks more like King Kong’s mother-in-law. Oh well, what the hell, maybe he’ll share his bananas with me."

The foreman waved his hand and Samson, shirtless and sweaty, swaggered over to them with a slow, rolling gait—all the while exchanging glances and mock blows with the workmen he passed. His chest really was enormous, and it tapered into what once must have been a very thin waist but was now spoiled by a stomach which hung loosely over his belt. This once-powerful frame, coupled with a too-full head of greasy black hair, reminded Joe of a dissipated Little Abner.

"Samson," the foreman said, "this is your new boy for the summer, Joe Parks. Teach him all the aspects of operation of the wall-press, including shipping instructions. Okay?"

"Ah, sure boss. You mean yuh want me to show this h’yere young man how we make the walls and put ‘em on the trucks. Right?"

"Yes, Samson," the foreman sighed, "that’s all you have to do. Got it?"

"Got what?" Samson replied, slightly perplexed. "You mean the part we needed for the plywood-edger? It’s still not come in yet."

"No, Samson, not that. Look, just do with this boy whatever it was that you did with the helper I gave you last summer."

A look of glee passed over Samson’s sweat-streaked face as he turned toward Joe and grabbed his arm with both his hands. "Oh, sure! Now I got’cha!"

Joe’s face went white the moment Samson’s hands had encircled his arm, and it took him a second to find his tongue. "Okay!" he finally said in a hoarse voice. "All right, you got me, you got me!
Now let me go!"

"Let him go, Samson," the foreman chuckled as he turned to go, "else he won’t be worth a damn to us with a broken arm."

With a ghoulis laugh he released his hold and anxiously asked, "Didn’t hurt yuh, did I boy?"

"For Chris’ sake," Joe shouted, "what the hell did you do that for? NO, you didn’t hurt me but you sure scared me half silly."

"Oh that w’arnt nothing," replied Samson, acting as if it really had been nothing. "That was just a trick I learnt when I was wrasslin’ semi-pro. Here’s another Dick the Bruiser taught me," and he whirled around into a crouch, ready to spring.

Joe sprang first, but not at Samson. From a standing position he had jumped a full six feet backward and stood poised and ready to run.

"Say," said Samson, a note of genuine awe in his tone, "that was really a neat trick. I could use that in my act—ah, I mean when I’m wrasslin’. Yes sir, boy, I think you and me’ll have a good time together."

"Not if you keep grabbing me we’re not!," shot back Joe. "I came here to earn some money to pay for school, not for some operation to sew on my arm after you tear it off. You big ape, you!"

"Well now," Samson laughed, "I see we’re really gonna hit it off. You don’t like apes like me, and I don’t ‘specially care for college boys like you. We’ll have lots ‘a fun this summer."

"Yeah," thought Joe, “fun and games, all summer long."

Jody Neff

I Go

Like the wind I go,
Unseen and uncontrollable;
Like the sea I roll to meet the shores
That reach to take my hand.
I will not let them touch me though,
For they might make me stay
To blow forever in one place—
To be unfree and chained to time.
IN ETERNITY

What manner of men are we to say
   That everywhere else there is no one?
That no one else lives our today
   In life.

That no other race is made like us,
   In war or peace of existence other.
Who says they want to be like us
   In any way?

And yet sometimes they may resemble
   The fuss and bother here on Earth;
With bugle and charging horse a symbol
   In war.

And yet, their life may be the noblest
   When all have finished the wars just so
These may build a mighty obelisk
   In peace

Even as they differ, as differ they must,
   Men from infinity always have gone
From ashes to ashes and dust to dust
   In death.
Stoop tag! Run around the bends!
Jump rope! Hopscotch! Hide and seek!
Children, my friends.
Competition! Society! Woes!
Wars! Politics! Business!
Adults, my foes.

My world was so beautiful as a child. It was the sun and the moon and the stars. It was the flowers, the grass, and the trees. It was so vast and immense and filled with adventure.

But what happened to this big, wide, wonderful world? Did it disappear as I grew older? Did it vanish from my mind as I developed into a mature adult? Where did it go?

Children! Purity! Innocence unfurled!
Love! Sincerity! Honesty!
Compassion, my world.
Anti-Semitism! Discrimination!
Hatred! Confusion! Strife!
Ugliness, my life.

I lived in the “bad section of town.” The sidewalks were uprooted. The papers clung against our windows. All the homes were clustered together. But, they were our homes and we were proud of them. Negro children played with white children, Italians played with Jews, immigrants frolicked with native Americas.

Then, one day my prised world shattered. Nigger! Wop! Spic! Jew-boy! Oh, how we cried that day.

Rain, rain go away.
Come again some other day!
Please.
STREAM OF THOUGHT

Life has many rewards: the deep, exciting communication with others, the awesome powers of intellect, the joys and thrills of the senses. The state of human being is incomparable. With the full and happy life that I have I could never desire to be anyone else. But if I were granted the choice of being anything other than myself, I would choose to be a brook.

A river, wide and slow and ponderous; a stream, meandering across a valley; a creek with high and fortressing banks: these are not my fancy. I would want the wind racing with me to the sea; cool, clear water laughing through glistening rocks; sad willows and swaying reeds bowing to greet me. My waters would be fed by other streams and brooks, and I would soon be in a vast maze. I would be a mixture of them and myself, and they of themselves and me. I would keep my path, my direction, my moment, but have some of their currents and floating leaves in my heart.

I would want to skip and bubble my way to infinity. Quiet, shady nooks would be near to restore me when the trees engulfed or the rocks checked me. I would be clear and bright, a mirror of all I saw. As a looking-glass of the world, I would bid all to come and see; not as I or others saw, but only as a clear soul could reflect. I would have depth, but not be deep. I would be transparent, but not shallow. I would be easy to ford but difficult to follow. My bridges would be oaken, high and proud and inviting. Rose-dropping lovers would be warmed by the tenderness with which I bore their sacred petals to the moon. Children with boats would flock to my banks, animals would willfully come to drink and swim in my waters.

I would see much on my journey. There would be places worth the staying, but I could not stop. There would be streams and rivers worth joining, but I could not. My path would be long and lonely, but I would be happy. I would skip and bubble to meet the moonbeams.
When Dante wrote his *Inferno* over six hundred years ago, he created a place which would terrify and enlighten people of every era. In today’s world of cynics and skeptics, such a place seems preposterous and insane. It is a scientific impossibility, a contrived story intended to frighten supersitious religious addicts. Perhaps this is so. However, the lesson contained within Dante’s work is applicable even to the illustrious twentieth century. The earth still supports mortals who willfully reject God’s love, mortals whose course a Resurrected Dead Man could not change. Yet the Shepherd never forsakes his lost sheep. He allows an unlimited number of letters from the pit to break the barriers of human callousness. There is no tangible proof of these letters, and the existence of the place from which they are written is much in doubt. In fact, neither seems to exist except in the imperceptible twinges of conscience in the minds of the individuals to whom they are addressed. The following letters from the pit have been reported in the Indianapolis area.

Attn: Mr. George Harrison  
5116 Pleasant Lane  
Indianapolis, Indiana  

Dear George,

Don’t worry about me, darling. Everything is just fine. My accommodations are lovely. They are quite similar to our luxurious suite we had in New York two years ago. You remember the interesting teakwood pieces, the glass davenports, the gold accessories, and so on.

I’ve made a few acquaintances, that is, I’ve tried to. Strange, though, when I attempt to make conversation with them, no sound comes from my mouth. When I try to get someone’s attention by motioning, I receive no response. It is as though I don’t exist.

I don’t understand it. Everyone always loved me. Remember how everybody praised me for handling the Clowes ticket promotion so magnificently? What about the time the Indianapolis Star wrote that beautiful article on my outstanding community service. Well, I’m sure there must be some explanation for this uncalled for behavior. I’m sure everything will work out just fine. It always has for me.

Your former wife

P.S. Oh it will work out, won’t it George?
Attn: Mr. Harold Grant
58 North Executive Circle
Indianapolis, Indiana

It's been twenty years now, Harry. Each year, each month, each week, day, hour, each minute burdens me with ions of nothingness. Don't get me wrong, Harry, this place shouldn't be dull in the least. In fact, your living eyes would be dazzled by our surroundings here. Our establishment is incased in a pit of solid gold (you could wheel and deal the rest of your life and never accumulate such wealth) and is perfectly cylindrical in shape. The furnishings consist of ornate ebony chairs and tables, delicate couches fringed with royal ermine, and, of course, illumination is provided by a jeweled ceiling. Yes, indeed, material perfection envelopes us.

I must admit when I first came here I was quite pleased with the destiny I had chosen. Everything I had striven for in life became mine in death. But familiarity breeds monotony and monotony, thought. Soon the waxed ebony chairs and tables only mirrored my blackness; the glass couches served to penetrate my fraility, and the jeweled ceiling cut my wretchedness into prisms of horror. I have myself an eternity and it's hell.

Your former partner

Attn: Miss Catherine Sloan
3100 Hampton Drive
Indianapolis, Indiana

Cathy,

I tried to smile today but my face, so unaccustomed to that movement, could not blend to my desire. I tried to laugh but my throat could not emit any sound but a cackle. I tried to fit my hand to aid a fallen friend but it stuck to my side and would not budge.

I try to love, Cathy, but it's too late.

Your former roommate