

**MSS**





*Manuscripts*

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This issue of *Manuscripts* is dedicated to our friend Mike Martone.



## CONTENTS

- 4 *Double-Edged Muse*, by E. J. Graff\*
- 5 THE BIRDSTONE, by Marjorie Snodgrass
- 19 *a poem*, by Mike Pettygrove
- 20 *Arbogastly*, by Pam Williams
- 22 *Tribute to the Bean of Genus Coffea*, by Karen Greene\*
- 23 WILL THE REAL FLORIDA PLEASE STAND UP? by  
Chris Katterjohn
- 27 *a wintermoon*, by E. J. Graff\*
- 29 JOEY, by Marjorie Snodgrass
- 31 *Oh Precious Dawn*, by Jodi Thompson
- 32 *Autumn*, by Susan Berry\*
- 34 ON A TRAIN WRECK, by Mike Martone
- 41 *Cardboard Coffins*, by Karen Greene\*
- 42 *The American Pace*, by Marcy Rath\*
- 43 DEVOTION, by Susan Berry\*
- 44 *Crown Hill Cemetery*, by John D. Wilson, Jr.
- 45 *Frozen Amber*, by Chris Katterjohn
- 45 *Falling Star*, by Liz Schoberg
- 46 *BUT . . .*, by Kathy Stinson
- 46 *Regret*, by Sarah Motry
- 47 MEMORIES OF THE LAKE, by Ed Shacklee

*Double—Edged Muse*

E. J. Graff

*Whenever I see her,  
she calmly twists her knife.  
So polished, it turns & glitters,  
the point sharp & wet.  
One side wet with ink.  
One with blood.*

*Once the blood seemed innocuous;  
but now I have looked at her eyes.  
They shine & glitter cruelly,  
cold as the knife.  
One eye shines with ink  
One with blood.*

*She smiles hard.  
She prepares for our sport,  
our purification,  
in which I have trusted her so long.  
She lifts the knife,  
poises it carefully:  
She throws it at my heart.*

*I am to sit.  
It draws ink.  
It always has.*

*But only one side is ink.  
One side is blood.*

## THE BIRDSTONE

Marjorie Snodgrass

"Thank God it's Friday!", laughed Karen, her brown eyes sparkling, and her shiny dark hair swinging as she quickly carried the supper dishes to the sink. "What a week it's been; tests to mark, essays on American History to grade and the eleventh grade historical drama to supervise. A week's vacation couldn't come too soon for me."

"You can think of me everyday, slaving away at the university, while you lie around relaxing at home," rejoined her husband, Charles, teasingly, as he rolled up his sleeves to help with the dishes.

"Don't be too sure of all that relaxation," Karen responded. "What with painting the living room, trying to research my next unit on American Indians, preparing lesson plans for at least one week, let alone tagging and cataloging all the specimens we find tomorrow, I don't think I'll have too much time on my hands. . . .

"When we finish these, let's make a list of what we hope to find tomorrow in Wyandotte. The cave should be full of good geological finds for your work and interesting Indian artifacts, if the tourists before us haven't stripped it clean. It is great that Dr. Glick persuaded the Park Service to allow us to take specimens when they are so strict now," Karen continued.

"According to Professor Glick, who was there three weeks ago, the section we're going to has not been disturbed much since the Indians lived there themselves," explained Charles, as he opened a notebook. "It's going to be quite an adventure," he went on. "To get there we have to climb down through the Devil's Mouth by the old totem pole. Only the more advanced spelunkers are allowed down there. But Dr. Glick managed to go down and he also managed to get permission for us. There really must be something down there!" he concluded enthusiastically.

Although the couple left their small apartment at five the next morning, the sun was already well up, promising a beautiful, warm April day when they arrived at Wyandotte Cave. A park

official was waiting to check out their gear and direct them to the spot in the upper part of the cave where the Devil's Mouth yawned up out of the floor revealing nothing of what lay below. Karen excitedly fitted her hard hat over her neatly braided dark hair while Charles checked the extra batteries and flashlights and adjusted his knee pads.

"Dr. Glick, his assistant and our guide went down ten minutes ago. You should have no trouble finding them. No one else is here, although a group of high school students from Indianapolis is due around eleven," the park official informed them. He added, "Dr. Glick left your specimen bags near the Pole along with a diagram of the passage he was planning to take. Good luck," he offered, as he steadied Karen in her descent down the pole on small foot-holds, clicking on the headlamp fastened to her head disappeared beneath the floor.

"See you at three," he reminded Charles just before his head also disappeared into the gaping, black hole.

Once on the lower level the couple quickly deciphered Professor Glick's diagram and headed in the direction he had indicated, carrying small burlap bags for specimens. Hearing voices ahead, they relaxed their gait and began looking for unusual rock or crystal formations and artifacts left by the Indians who had lived in the cave so long ago.

They had to walk carefully in this section because the floor dropped abruptly to the right of the dry, firm walkway. A wall of jumbled rocks rose just as steeply on the left.

Charles stopped to examine a diverse collection of rocks piled within a small area, noting that they could not possibly have developed there naturally. Karen was quick to observe that they might have been left there by a previous inhabitant or explorer as she reached up for one peculiarly shaped, smoothly polished stone.

"Look at this, Charles!" she exclaimed excitedly. "I believe it is a birdstone. I'm so happy to find one. Remember when we saw several of these in the Indiana State Museum last summer?" she asked. "I have tried to find out how they really were used. Maybe this one will lead me to a clue. You know, some anthropologists claim they were merely smoothly shaped handles, for tools, while



others believe they may have had religious symbolism or served as talismans. This one is so beautifully shaped and polished from the basic dark, shiny stone. It seems to glow from within," she mused as she gently fondled the smooth bird-shaped stone, becoming mesmerized by the soft glow emanating from it. "How quickly it has warmed to my touch," she remarked, now holding it in both hands, having dropped the burlap bags to the walkway.

Charles turned at the strange, far-off quality of her voice.

"Lookout!" he called, but as he spoke she stepped off the path, as if in a trance, falling onto the jagged rocks below. The light from her headlamp went out as her hat slid from her head, leaving only the sound of falling rocks as a clue to her whereabouts. Immediately he shouted to Dr. Glick, whose light shone a few yards beyond, having turned toward the sound of falling rocks.

Karen herself was surprised that the fall was painless and quite startled to find herself now in the bright sunshine, sprawled on spongy moss.

"Oh, sister, how clumsy!" someone nearby laughed. Karen looked up to see two smiling, moon-like faces looking down at her from two warmly padded short stocky figures. The hoods of their fur-lined parkas had been thrown back revealing warm, soft leather dresses above thick leggings and shoes. Both girls wore their hair pulled into one thick, shiny black braid. Each carried two leather buckets tied to each end of a long bone, which they balanced across their shoulders.

"Well, don't just sit there staring! Get up on your feet and pick up your buckets. You know Mama wants lots of water to cook the reindeer Papa killed yesterday. So, come on," commanded the larger of the two.

Karen obediently got up, slipped the bucket's woven skin handles into grooves at either end of the bone yoke and placed the yoke across her shoulders quite naturally. She carefully watched while the two girls took turns lowering the buckets, which had been fastened to a thick leather thong, until they heard them smack the water. As each girl quickly pulled up the second bucket full of clear, cold water she took a long drink, wiping her chin with the wide sleeve of her jacket, before fastening the buckets securely to the bone yoke.

As Karen diligently copied their actions, the larger girl spoke impatiently. "Hurry up, Karooma, we're going on home before Mama gets angry. You can easily catch us."

Karen felt panicky, standing alone at the well, not knowing where home was. The second bucket slapped the surface of the water and rapidly sank until she heard it grate against the bottom. It took all her might to turn the bone handle to bring it back up this time. When she lifted the bucket to drink she saw the bottom littered with gravel. She reached in to remove what she could. When her fingers closed around the last large stone its familiar shape startled her. Not hesitating, she slipped it into a pocket in her side sleeve. Finding the beautiful birdstone filled her with such joy that she burst into song, not aware of the words or tune which came so spontaneously from her, as she swiftly skipped after the other two, balancing her load easily.

"Aha, here she comes, happy little Karooma-bird . . . and just as foolhardy," remarked the larger girl sarcastically.

"Maybe she hopes to attract Uglik or Larum," giggled the pretty younger one. "It's time she took a man instead of singing and dreaming all day, Mama says."

"Run, run!" shouted the older girl, looking back toward Karen. For behind them rapidly galloped a troop of Mongol ruffians riding small, hairy horses. Karen turned to look wonderingly at them before running as fast as she could with two buckets of water hanging from the yoke across her neck. Suddenly, her way was blocked by two horsemen.

"Stop!" they shouted in harsh, guttural tones. "Who are you?"

"Karooma, the elder daughter of the great reindeer hunter," she responded unhesitatingly.

But her reply was met with loud guffaws. "Just look at your great father, he can't help you now," the spokesman sneered. With dread, she forced her eyes to focus on the still figure draped over one of the hairy beasts. She bolted in terror at the vacant, staring eyes and bloodied face, so like that of the younger girl she had just been with. But, before she could run ten steps, strong, rough hands grasped her. The yoke was pulled from her shoulders, water splashed on her shoes as she made a last, vain a-



tempt to escape. One of the horsemen quickly tied her legs together before throwing her over a riderless horse. She watched the muddy ground move beneath the horse's hooves, feeling faint with her head hanging down, until she was tossed into a thicket, untied and assaulted so painfully she screamed in agony.

"Shut up, you cow, or I'll slit your throat," threatened the cruel faced attacker, dressed in crude skins smelling of rotten flesh from hunting and fighting.

Just when it seemed unbearable, Karen felt a cold, smooth object slide into her hand from the sleeve pocket. Holding it in her hand brought relief from the excruciating pain and filled her with a relaxing warmth.

"Hey, now, what's that in your hand?" inquired the somewhat subdued ruffian, trying to pry open her fingers.

"It's mine! It's mine! You can't have it!" she shrieked, uncontrollably. Even when he held a knife to her throat, she did not yield.

"Give it to me or lose your head, you silly girl," he threatened.

She felt the sharp pain of the knife as it cut through the skin of her neck, slicing ever deeper. In desperation she screamed for help.

\* \* \*

"Karen, Karen, we've found you! My God, you're hurt! Your neck . . . you must have cut it on a rock when you fell." Charles gently lifted her from the rocks and with the help of the guide carried her to the walk from which she had fallen.

Looking about her at the dark walls on which shadowy forms flitted to and fro filled Karen with alarm. Realizing she still held the birstone, she impulsively reached out toward Charles, pleading, "Please take this."

He obediently put it in his pocket, before asking "Are you OK?"

"Oh yes," she sighed, "but my neck hurts."

Professor Glick approached with his hard hat filled with cold, clear water from an old army canteen. He soaked his handkerchief in the water and gently cleaned the blood away from her neck.

"Amazing!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't have believed a rock could make such a clean-edged cut as this. It looks more like a knife wound. I think we had better call off the expedition, now. Karen, at any rate, can't go on. And we do have two bags nearly filled; and yours, Charles, has some very interesting samples. It's not a total loss. Besides, we can come back another time."

On the way back home in the car, Karen tried to relate her dream to a skeptical Charles, who was preoccupied with driving and his own thoughts.

"It was kind of Professor Glick to let me have the rocks he found for my research project, so at least I can begin to identify something when we get home. But, I will never understand how you fell off that wide walkway," he puzzled. "Thank God, your neck was just scratched."

Both were relieved to climb the stairs to their cheerful, three room apartment, finding the small, burlap bags fairly easy to carry. As he closed the door behind him, Charles pulled the smooth stone from his pocket and tossed it into one of the bags. Karen watched pensively.

The next morning, after a leisurely brunch during which they perused the Sunday paper, the couple poured out the contents of the bags and began the tedious job of sorting, identifying and labeling each small rock specimen. By mid-afternoon, Karen felt terrible, with the symptoms of a chest cold developing along with frequent sneezing and a sore throat.

"I think I'll step out to the drugstore for some cough syrup and cold medicine, before it gets dark," she announced abruptly, throwing a warm sweater over her shoulders. She stooped down to pick up the birdstone from the scattered stones on the rug, putting it in her jeans pocket.

"This will keep me company on my perilous journey two blocks away into the wilds of Bloomington," she quipped to her husband, concentrating on the identity of a particularly interesting rock.

Once outside, Karen shivered in the unexpected cold. Rain mixed with sleet stung her face. As she unconsciously caressed the stone in her pocket, she could feel warmth spread from her hand to her arm. She pulled it out of her pocket, happy to see it glowing softly in her hand. Concentrating on the gracefully shaped bird, she inadvertently stepped off the curb into the slush.

"I'm so tired," she thought, as she staggered on against the freezing rain, trying not to slip again. "This trip does seem endless," she whimpered to herself, looking ahead at a group of warmly clad figures plodding on. Something heavy on her back was slowing her and pulling her down. Her feet felt cold and numb. She staggered again, trying not to fall, but her foot slid between two large chunks of ice, bringing unbearable pain to her knee. Near her ear there was a loud wailing noise.

"Help me!" she shouted to the retreating figures, one of whom quickly ran to her side. "I've hurt my leg and I'm so tired. Please help me get up again," she pleaded.

A pleasant looking, dark-haired young man untied a cloth sling from her shoulder, releasing the weight from her back so suddenly that she lost her balance, further dislocating her leg.

"Oh!" she wailed in pain. "What if I can't go on? It hurts so."

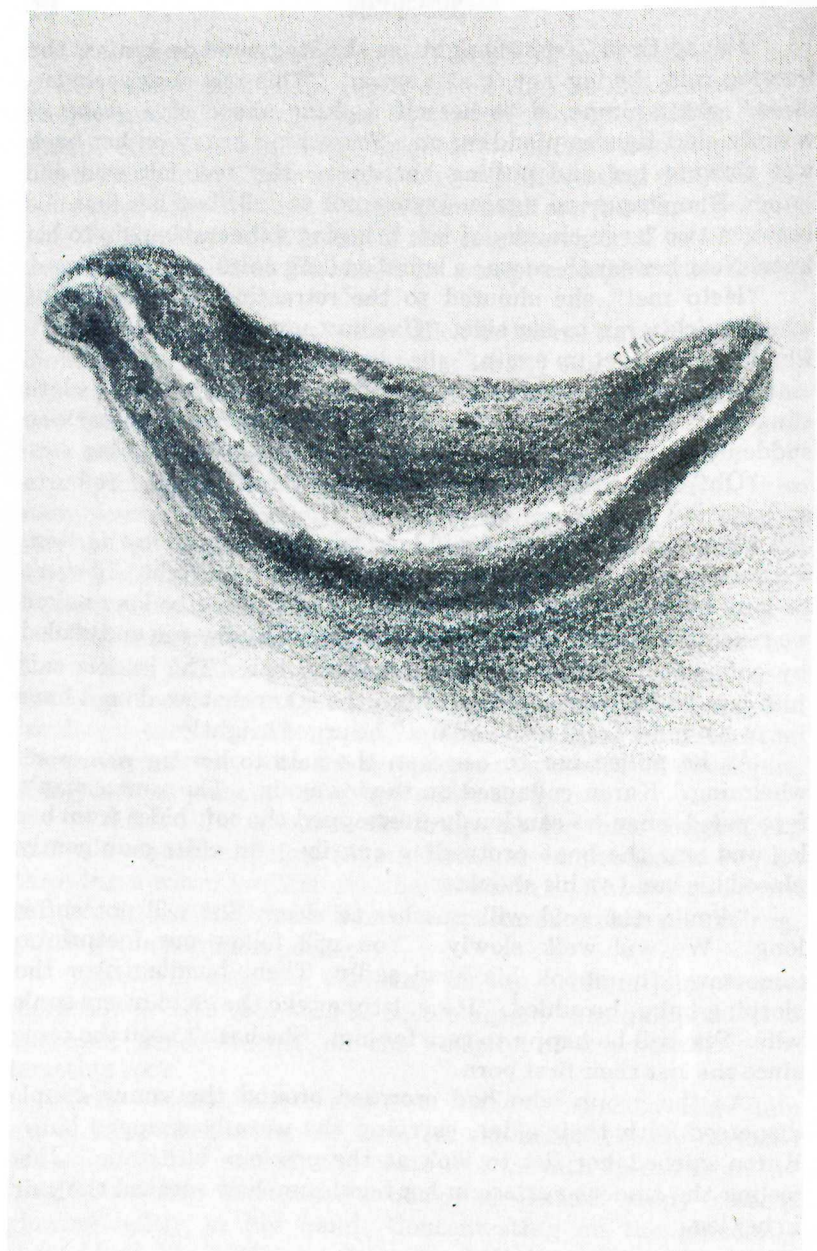
"Don't worry, Kera, I will help you. Be strong, my darling, we must continue before the others are gone from sight. It won't be long before we stop for the night. And it won't be long before we reach the land of grass and trees warmed by the sun and cooled by soft rain," the young man reassured her. "The leaders said just last night they could tell from the stars that we do not have far to go, now; I will help you up," he urged brightly.

As he pulled her to her feet, the pain to her leg was overwhelming. Karen collapsed on the ice again. The young man's face paled when he cautiously unwrapped the soft hides from her leg and saw the bone protruding angrily. An older man gently placed his hand on his shoulder.

"Amik, the cold will put her to sleep. She will not suffer long. We will walk slowly. You will follow our footprints, tomorrow," he shook his head sadly. Then, bending over the sleeping baby, he added, "Here, let me take the child to my son's wife. She will be happy to care for him. She hasn't been the same since she lost their first born."

As the group who had crowded around the young couple dispersed with their elder, carrying the warmly wrapped baby, Karen opened her fist to look at the precious birdstone. Just feeling the smooth surface in her hand somehow soothed the pain in her leg.





"Oh, Kera," Amik spoke in alarm, "your father told me never to let you gaze on the magic stone. How did you get it from me?" he asked, searching the empty lining of his parka where the stone had been kept for luck on this journey.

"Please let me hold it," she begged. "It feels so warm in my hand. I feel peaceful and sleepy, my leg hardly hurts now." And she closed her eyes.

"Karen! Karen!" the words were repeated until with great effort she opened her eyes in spite of her comfortable lethargy. She was filled with terror at the sight of the strange apparition bending over her, a monster in green with bright blue eyes. Stifling a scream, she tried to rise, but her leg was too heavy, covered with a white, rock-like substance.

Then a familiar tan face with sparkling brown eyes grinned down at her.

"Karen, honey, you're finally awake! You really scared us there for awhile, sleeping for two days. Thank God, only your leg was hurt when that car careened around the corner by the drugstore. But a compound fracture is bad enough!" Charles commented ruefully, leaning down to kiss her forehead.

"Charles, I'm so frightened," Karen began softly. I dreamed again about the birdstone. There is something about that stone I should know. But it just eludes me. I almost knew it but then I woke up."

"When you're able, you can check out as many books on Indian lore as you can find in the library. For now, just do what the nurses and Dr. Robbins tell you to, so you can come home Thursday," he admonished.

"Wait! Wait! Charles," she cried out anxiously. "Where is the birdstone, now?"

"Don't worry, we haven't thrown it away. It is downstairs with your wallet and watch. Hospital policy, you know, to keep valuables in their safe," Charles answered calmly.

Two days later, following a final x-ray of her leg Charles helped Karen into their small car for the short drive home.

"What a stupid thing to do on my vacation!" the young teacher lamented. "My students won't let me forget it, I bet. And, now all the things I planned to do are out except helping you catalog the specimens. I guess I'll spend most of my vacation just lying around, as you said last week," Karen laughed.

"Well, I do need help finishing up the project. Most of the specimens are indenified but some still need to be tagged and listed. Incidentally, Dr. Glick wanted to know if you would be willing to give the birdstone to the I.U. Museum. How about it?" he asked, as they arrived at the apartment entrance.

"No! No! I just can't let it go yet!" she exploded, adding angrily, "I found it and it's mine. You can't take it away from me. Just tell him a big no!"

"Sorry, Karen," Charles responded, looking uncomfortable. "I didn't mean to uspet you. Here, let me help you inside."

After a quick supper of frozen pizza, which Charles had prepared, they began working carefully with the rocks again.

"It seems like a million years since we went to the cave, doesn't it?" began Karen, thoughtfully. Those dreams were so real. And, the funny part is I could understand everything they said even though I know it is not English the girls spoke or that the two men spoke in the second dream. All day I have been wondering who the girls were who called me sister. And I wish I knew what became of the husky baby—or the kind young man. He didn't want me to look at the birstone. But here it is," she remarked cheerfully, taking it out of the hospital envelope, cradling it in her hand lovingly, as she gazed at the shiny, gracefully curved bird.

So deep was her absorption that she did not hear the shrill ringing of the phone nor Charles calling to her. With a shock she realized he had struck her hand, nearly making her fall of the chair and driving the stone far back under the sofa.

"It's your mother, Karen. Wake up! She wants to talk to you on the phone," he announced impatiently, not having been able to get her attention until he slapped the stone out of her hand. Then noticing the startled expression on her face, he apologized, "I'm sorry, Karen. Hope I didn't hurt you."



"Oh, it's Mother," she replied, dreamily as she hobbled to tell her she was OK. After a short conversation, she hung up and related that her mother was planning to come the next day to help.

The next afternoon as her mother was leaving, Karen spoke earnestly, "Mom, I can't thank you enough for all you have done. Now, I think with the freezer full and the house really clean for a change, I'll make it through next week, crutches and all. It was good just being with you, expecially since I couldn't drive up very well this week."

"You take it easy tomorrow, stay in the house where you aren't apt to fall," her mother admonished. "Everyone will be happy to hear you and Charles are driving up Saturday," she added enthusiastically. "You know, Jennie's so excited about being admitted to Know College and Cindy wants you to read the essay she wrote for ninth grade history. And, naturally, Dad was much to tell you about his promotion to president of the company. Even Queenie and her seven pups will be happy to see you. So, until then, take care."

"Oh, Karen, I forgot," her mother began again, as she reached the door. "When I was cleaning under the sofa I found an Indian artifact. It's beautifully carved bird. I put it on top of the book case. And don't forget, the casserole should be done by six. Charles can take it out for you. Well, good-bye, again."

"Bye, Mom, see you Saturday," called Karen as she hobbled back toward the sofa, stopping to turn on the TV. She paused in front of the bookcase, pulling a large notebook from one of the shelves before she gently removed the birstone from its perch.

It was peaceful in the warm apartment. She began to write in the notebook as she studiously observed every detail of the smooth, dark stone. Glancing up briefly, she noted the movie on TV was one she had already seen, not worth her attention.

As she concentrated once more on the stone, she frowned, trying to remember what had worried her before. She put the pen and notebook down, picking up the flawless stone. How wonderfully familiar it felt as she curled her fingers around it, sensing the warmth growing from it. Sunlight streaming in the window

heightened the glow from its polished surface. With a smile Karen relaxed, knowing she was safe in her own apartment, safe to doze and dream if she wished.

But loud voices shattered her peaceful dreaming. It had grown quite dark and chilly. Just as she shivered some one took her hand, shouting urgently, "Wake up! Quick, follow me. We must leave this place!"

Karen did not hesitate to follow her mother, sensing that something about those voices prompted the fear rising in her. "Where are we going?" she inquired, as her mother pulled her into the darkness.

Not answering, her mother dragged her to the Evil Spirit's Mouth where she quickly climbed down the pole, urging Karen to follow. Once on the lower level, both women crept silently to hide behind a rock cairn familiar to her. There they clung together in fear listening to the many feet tramping overhead.

"Who are they?" she asked her mother, who whispered that they were the same warriors who had killed her father two dawns before, adding that she was happy that the two younger sisters were safe with the rest of the tribe. Karen now remembered that they had been hiding here for two days while her mother searched, alone. She had not told Karen what it was she sought, nor why Karen was only to warn her of trouble. How ashamed she felt that she had fallen asleep and it was her mother who had warned her.

Simultaneously, she and her mother spied a dimly glowing object wedged in among the stones of the cairn. Both reached for it, equally determined to grasp it. Karen, quicker in her youth, grabbed it. Then with astonishment, she realized it was her birdstone.

"This is mine, Mother," she stated coldly. "You may not have it," and she covered it with her hand.

"I must see it, Kiri. Give it to me. If it is not the sacred birdstone, you may keep it. If it is, woe to you," she moaned.

But Karen would not open her hand, feeling this was her own find, not her mother's, even though her mother tried to pry open her fingers, and finally slapped her face in desperation.

"Kiri, you don't know what it is you hold. It is your death sign. I must have it now!" and she began to sob.



"Your father warned me of this many years ago before you were born. The stone has come down generation to generation in his family, bringing good luck, bestowing wisdom, fleetness of foot, power over enemies and great honor as chieftains to the sons. This has been true from the time before our people came across the bridge of land from the old country of long winters, frozen ground, poor harvests, misery and sickness to this time. . . .

"The stone is a curse when there are no sons in the family. It brings a death sentence upon the eldest daughter if she should hold the stone in a time of danger. When sister Tiki was born, your father hid the stone here in this dark passage. He did not tell me exactly where for fear I would lead you to it. We did not allow you to come to this place. It would have gone to his first grandson after your death as an old woman. Now, bad luck has come to us all. You must give the stone to me," she pleaded, once more.

Karen slowly opened her fist, not looking at her precious stone, although she desperately wanted to.

"Here, Mother, take it. I believe you."

As she handed the stone to her mother they ran quietly, feeling their way along the side of the jumbled rocks around a bend where their hunters could not find them without risking falling on the loose rocks. Her mother pulled her into a recess behind a pile of shadowy, jabbed stone.

As they waited quietly, Karen began to feel overcome with grief. She just had to take a last look at this miraculous, family stone, that had brought such good luck to her ancestors. If she could hold it once more, she would feel happy again.

Without warning she pounced on her mother, snatching the stone from her hand. Startled, her mother reached out instinctively to steady herself, knocking several rocks loose from the cairn. The sound of their descent echoed from the vaulted ceiling, followed by her screams as she accompanied more, tumbling down, down into the depths of the cave.

Karen stood happily oblivious to the commotion, cradling the precious stone in her hand again.

"Ah, you beautiful, graceful bird. I have you at last," she exulted. "No one can ever take you from me, not even my beloved mother. You're mine forever!"

She walked along the path, full of peace and warmth from the stone. As she rounded a corner, torches blinded her just long enough for a young warrior to place his arrow in his bow and release it to its mark. The stone flew up from her hand into a pile of rocks as she fell, down off the path, to lie still a few feet from her silent mother. Four strong, young warriors carefully climbed to them, turned them over and carried their limp bodies up and out of the cave.

\* \* \*

Karen felt cold night air rush over her inert body. Something had been clamped over her nose. In a panic she realized the sacred stone was not in her hand. She must have it. But strong hands held her down. To no avail she kicked and pushed at them. Strange words flew around her ears, but as she lay quietly again, they became intelligible.

"Gas . . . defective pilot light . . . another five minutes and . . . lucky her mother called when she did."

Karen's large brown eyes opened on a scene of confusion on the sidewalk in front of her apartment. Her mother smiled down at her as an intern took her pulse. The cement beneath her felt cold and she shivered in spite of the coat someone had thrown over her.

"Oh, Karen," her mother began, her voice quivering, "I'm so sorry. After I left your apartment I remembered you had told me about your oven not lighting properly unless you used a match. I stopped at the first filling station to call you. But you didn't answer, so I had to call the police. Thank goodness I called when I did. They were just carrying you outside when I got here."

"When that strong officer carried you over his shoulder, down the steps, that bird-shaped stone I found under the sofa today fell from your fingers. Here," she offered, "do you want it?"

Karen's eyes lit up with desire as she eagerly held out her hand to grasp her wonderful stone again.

The young intern bumped into her mother as he stepped back from Karen. "Oh, I'm terribly sorry," he remarked, watching as a small shiny object dropped between the grating of the sewer at the curb. "I hope it wasn't anything valuable."

"No, not at all. Just an Indian relic of some sort," her mother replied cheerfully. "You can find more like that, can't you dear?"

Tears rolled down Karen's face, dripping onto her straight, black hair. As she wiped them away with her tan, slim hand she smiled at her mother.

"No, Mother, I doubt it, really. But I guess I will have to live without it."

*a poem*

Mike Pettygrove

*our  
everythings  
will  
be  
are  
nothing*

*but  
possibly  
not  
forever*

*for  
ever  
is the  
will*

*which  
is  
forgotten*

*Arboghastly*

Pam Williams

*'Twas Gilpin and the Beyer belles  
 Did Cripe and Carlson in the crade:  
 All Mocas were the Fine Cassells,  
 And the Shaughnessy inpade.*

*"Beware the Arboghast, my friend!  
 The jaws that bite, the grabbing hand!  
 Beware the Willeford and then  
 The frumious Minassian!"*

*He took the Vesper sword in hand;  
 He long the Horvath foe did seek —  
 Then rested by a Harper hut,  
 And stood awhile to sneak a peek.*

*And as he snuck a puck and stood,  
 The Arboghast, with eyes of flame,  
 Came Wallering through the Bessey wood,  
 And Peltoned as it came.*

*One, two! One, two! Again and again  
 The Vesper blade went Neher-nack!  
 He left it dead, and with its head  
 Went Piecewiczing back.*

*"And hast thou stilled the Arboghast?  
 Come to my arms, my Wiley boy!  
 O Hepler day! O Watt and Ney!"  
 He Farbered in his joy.*

*'Twas Gilpin and the Beyer belles  
 Did Cripe and Carlson in the crade:  
 All Mocas were the Fine Cassells,  
 And the Shaughnessy inpade.*





## MANUSCRIPTS

*Tribute to the Bean of Genus Coffea*

Karen Greene

*crimson berry  
sniffer's delight  
cupper's slurping ditty  
arrogant damsel's conversation  
companion on a cold winter's night*

*how often glassy-eyed babbitts  
(briefcase in hand)  
contemplate the world over you  
in your china appearance.  
ruddy-complexioned-overstuffed;  
they look to you,  
the world's second most important product,  
to turn their complex mercantile gears.*

*(let's have another round, please, for mr. maxwell, and the  
brothers too.)*

*education  
would be creamed without you,  
caffeol, nocturnal queen.  
finals week is guaranteed to find  
caffeinated college crammers  
diluted and dilated  
awaking, awaiting,  
percolating prof's  
exam.*

*would you care for yours  
dry roasted?  
freeze dried?  
mrs. olsenized?  
with cream?  
and sugar?  
black?  
olé?!*

*a world negotiator!  
ethiopian stimulant—  
arabian, italian, french, brazilian,  
american trade titan (we love you).*

*emperor's demitasse—  
peasant's pasttime—*

*need a lift? any clime?  
try her iced in ceylon  
spiced in pari  
russian kahlua on the rocks  
will surely do the trick—*

*roasted little beauty,  
drunken java gem,  
too bad you can't run for office.*

WILL THE REAL FLORIDA  
PLEASE STAND UP

Chris Katterjohn

Sunrise on Florida Bay. We are the first campers awake, first witnesses to the virgin morning. The sun rises a clear, distinct ball in the east sending its pink-orange light over the water in fresh waves of morning. The salt air smells and feels good. The breeze is stiff, as it always is on the ocean.

We are camped in a space called Flamingo in the Everglades National Park. Our tents are pitched in a sacred place, *the southernmost tip* of mainland Florida, and we are still in them. When we're camped on the bay, we make it customary to lie in our bags for a while before coming out. Lord knows what's out there and we don't want our activity to scare it away. We scan the periphery for some fantastic sight. This morning, wonder of wonders, a Great White Heron dominates our view. He is on some pilings, at one time part of an old fishing dock, just fifteen feet from land. We are close.

I hear some rustling in the other tent. It's John getting his movie camera with super-zoom and slow motion. We can't miss this. God bless you, Canon. And God bless you, John, for being on your toes.

Pleased, my attention is drawn back to the bird. He could look at a man's chest eye-to-eye, as he is a good four feet tall. His snow white feathers are in sharp contrast with his bright orange, six-inch bill and orange broomstick legs. His black eyes are calm and alert. He is a surprise because these birds rarely come in from the outer keys. He is so large his flight looks like slow motion even without the aid of a movie camera. He stands like a vision, almost without substance . . . a big white omen to start the day. We wallow in his presence. His white feathers grow yellow-pink around the edges as the sun rises higher.

We get some good footage of him, but we can't stay in our tents forever, so I get up. All the while, John trains his camera on the Heron. As he flies away in two kinds of slow motion, his own and man's, we hope he knows we mean well. I didn't want to scare him, but now we are up.

The sounds of boisterous humans and clanking pots and pans are not wanted here. Man is the outsider. Nature's noisy silence is the only soundtrack for this place, so our actions are tempered with respect and silence. We fix our breakfast in a calm, just three more critters starting our day in the curious Glades. We are unimportant.

The bay stretches for miles seaward before it gets any deeper than ten feet. So when the tide is out, as it is this morning, a vast, flat muckland is exposed in certain places, spotted with small pools of seawater that shine silver in the morning sunlight. These pools are feeding places for the large wading birds. And their



silhouettes are everywhere in the expanse. The ocean here is a grey muck that oozes between the toes when walked upon. It is busy with the smaller silhouettes of shorebirds and gulls.

The sky, a blend of pinks and blues curtained with clouds around its edges, is dotted with birds. After a peaceful night in the keys, they are flying mainland to feed in the many lakes and channels here. Turkey Vultures soar from as low as ten to as high as a hundred feet, while flocks of Spoonbill and Egret appear from time to time at higher levels, bellies glowing pink and white respectively. Along with them fly solitary Herons (Great Blue, Little Blue, and Louisiana) who rarely move in flocks. They are the loners. Still higher, highest of all, the Wood Ibises, better known as storks, soar like giant B-52 birds, only silent.

And the sea gulls are everywhere, in Heinz 57 varieties. I never knew there were so many kinds until I came here. And down on the ground right in front of us, crowds of sandpipers and beach-boppers of all kinds skitter business-rush-hour-like all over the shoreline, deliberately avoiding the small gang of Vultures, both Black and Turkey, that has gathered to pick at a fish carcass. And beyond them, hanging as if by strings just over the water, flying "V" wedges of two kinds of pelicans (White and Brown) cut through the air like so many gliders surveying the water for anything that moves. The Arabs call them River Camels. Swimming in groups on the ocean, with humplike backs and their long necks compressed into curves, they look like camel trains on the desert. Their large glaring eyes witness and endure. Strong and patient, with a storage sack beneath their bill, they are the dromedaries of this marine-air complex.

We've been up for about an hour now and truly feel like just another animal. Our breakfast has been had and our cleaning up has been done, all to the tune of the musical ballet of this incredible place.' The dawn migration en masse from the keys is over, but there is always something to see. You need only open your eyes.

Behind our backs as we face the ocean, the campground has its own maneuvers. Literally hundreds and hundreds of gulls and blackbirds fly and land throughout the grounds in search of human crumbs from the night before. Anything! Bread, beans, fat. You have to store your food and trash well here if you don't want to wake up to a dump on your campsite. If it doesn't fall prey to coons during the night, then these birds will zero in at

daybreak.

Rufus the Red-shouldered Hawk is here too. He's always here. We spiritually adopted and named this bird because he was like a fixture that came with the place. He has a mysterious band on his left leg that no ranger knows anything about. He is not afraid of humans. He perches on barbecue grills and, with repeated kamikaze dives of three and a half feet, stomps on grasshoppers and bugs. He is the clown of the camp.

Vultures swoop around and through the palm trees so low you would step on one if it ever got that close. And among the fallen coconuts, plastic cocoons are strewn everywhere. Once dormant and silent, in loud blues and oranges, the tents begin to emit sounds of humans and humans themselves.

But the show is never over in spite of human interruption. The Osprey, or Fish Eagle, fishes in Florida Bay all day long. You can see at least one every hour. They usually come in pairs. Today, just after I've made my coffee, I see a pair approaching from the keys. I take my coffee, light a cigarette and lean against the front pole of my tent and relax to watch their art. This is so much better than Wild Kingdom! Soaring circles high above, the Ospreys use their scalpel vision to dissect the water and probe for fish. I isolate the one emitting high shrieks and watch him dive, wings back, so fast you can't believe. But he pulls up just before he hits the water. Abort! Abort! He rises, circles some more, dives again and splashes feet-first into the water. Bull's-eye! After a split-second delay, he ascends from the water awkwardly, weighed down by his catch and excess water. But he's done this before. He stops three feet from the surface, hovers, and resembling a drenched dog, shakes himself free of all water, then labors upward. Fish gripped firmly in talons, he homes to his destination.

And with the human buzz increasing all the time and our morning meal consumed, we want to leave the bay area too. Today it's Bear Lake Canal by canoe. Tomorrow it's Snake Bite Trail by foot. It doesn't matter where you go here, because the place is teeming with life. This is the real Florida, the one DeSoto found. As we leave the campground laden with canoe, paddles, binoculars, cameras and other gear, almost everyone else is just starting breakfast. The calm and spectacle of the early morning was long before their eggs were even scrambled.



*a wintermoon*

E. J. Graff

*I am myself*

*I am*

*The cold wind  
shivers around  
the silent  
moon tears  
that  
fall*

*The wind  
freezes around'  
the naked  
brown limbs  
that clutch  
the sky*

*Moon*

*hangs*

*a sweet white breast  
full  
falling  
from a velvet dress*

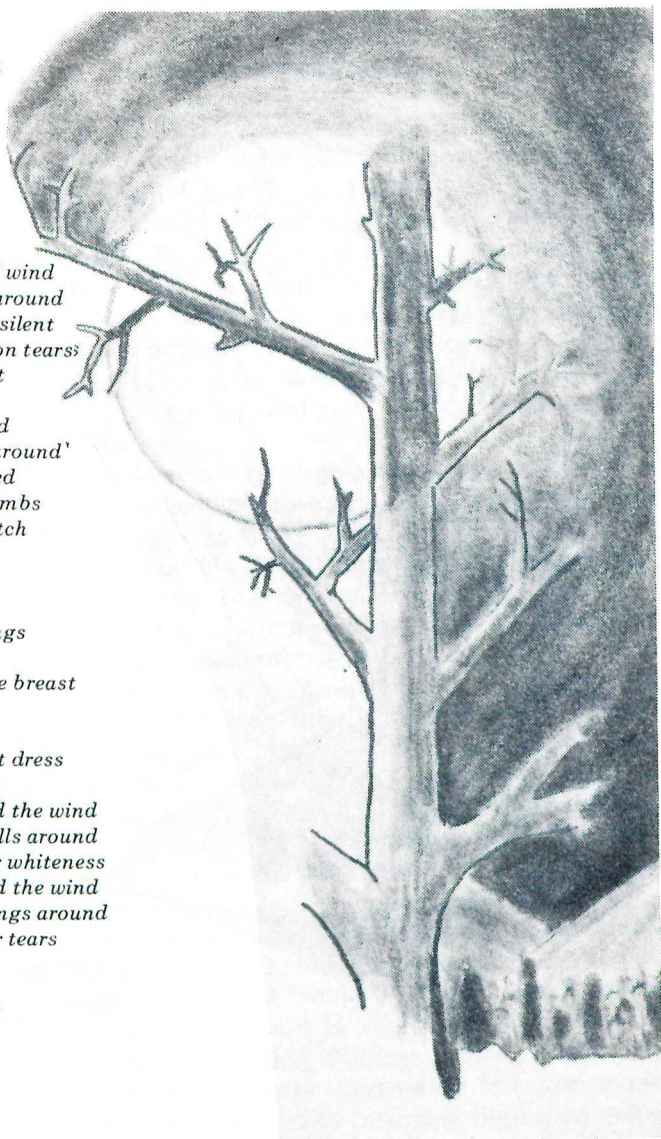
*and the wind  
chills around  
her whiteness  
and the wind  
stings around  
her tears*

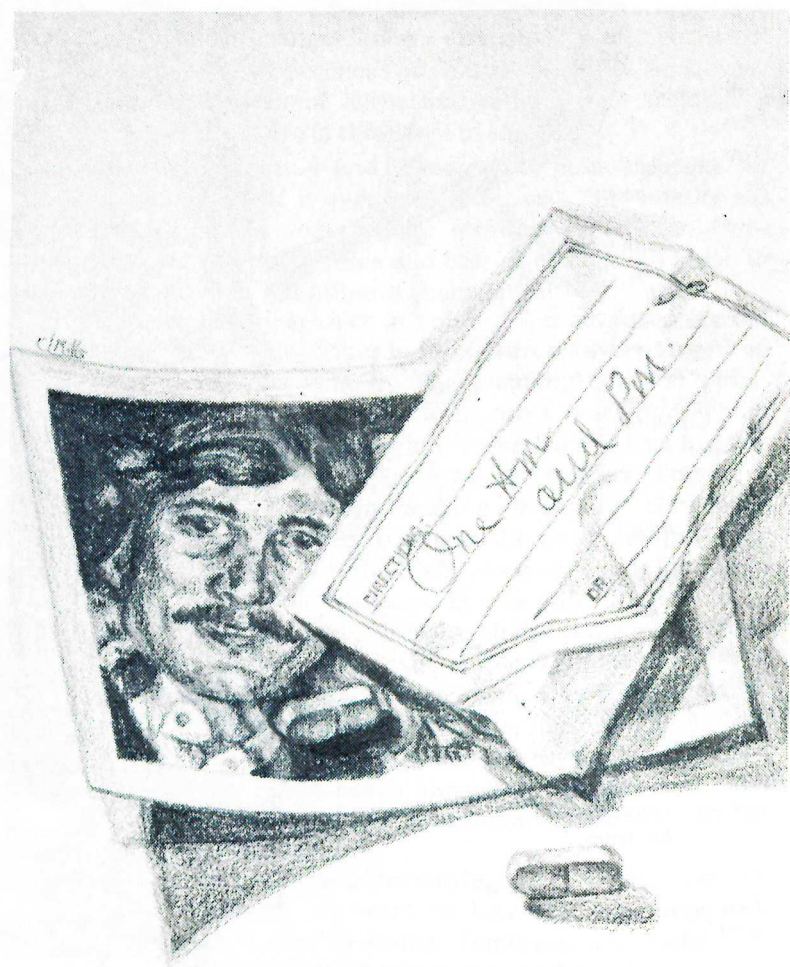
*I am myself*

*I am*

*am*

*I*





## JOEY

Marjorie Snodgrass

She looked down fondly at her six foot, three inch son, lying quietly for a change, oblivious of her presence.

"Oh, Joey," she thought, "how could you have grown so big in seventeen years?" His large-boned frame, broad shoulders, long muscular arms and legs awed her somewhat. She remembered the days, still clear in her mind, when she held her first born in her arms to comfort or feed him. Now, she tried to recall the last time she had picked him up, or rocked him in the night. "How many years has it been since I held you?" she mused, wondering where the years had gone.

As she glanced down at the large, calloused hands, clean of the usual motorcycle grease, a faint smile rose to her lips as she remembered his once small, pudgy fingers patting her mouth when she sang to him and his strong grasp around her little finger when he was not quite ready to let go and walk on his own.

"God, how I miss you, darling Joe!" she grieved silently, her thoughts turning to her husband. "I need you so much! And the kids . . . why the twins can't even remember you." Noting the resemblance once more between this nearly grown son and his missing father, she reflected, "Maybe we expected too much from Joey. I don't know. When you left for Vietnam he was terribly proud of you, Joe. He tried so hard to fill your shoes. He wanted you to be proud of him. But that lasted only a few months before all the fighting began and then the trouble with Sister Margaret at school. But he did try. Oh, yes, he did try these past five years."

When she gazed down at his dark, wavy hair, so much like his dad's, she felt tempted to run her fingers through it. But, she did not want to disturb him. What would Joe have thought of his son's long hair? And what would he have said about his son wearing beads, for heaven's sake? Staring at them briefly, she shifted her eyes to his slightly protruding Adam's apple. Wouldn't Joe have been surprised to hear that deep bass voice? What a spring it had been, when Joey's voice changed! At first,



she just thought he had had a cold. Then Father O'Regan called to say he couldn't sing with the boys' choir for Easter. It was just a week later that the official telegram from Washington arrived.

"It's been so hard on the kids, too, Joe," she complained, as tears welled into her eyes. "Joey was so angry when you were killed. He wanted to enlist right then, at age fourteen, no less! What a kid!" A year later, she had realized his anger had gone, to be replaced by a quiet resignation. Gone, too, was his joy in playing baseball or even in telling jokes. Not that he didn't rebel . . . that's when he let his hair grow and began to work for peace.

"Mom! Mom!" fifteen year old Maureen called, somewhat urgently. "Just a moment more," she replied, remarking to herself, if it isn't one kid it's another. She felt strange looking down on this nearly grown son, him unaware and all. But, it was always so different when those steady, blue eyes were open. Joe had said they were too blue for a boy and too pretty with such long, black lashes. How his eyes did reflect his moods! Why, ever since he was a baby she could tell at a glance whether he felt full of mischief, or anger, joy or grief.

"Mom, come here!" now the other two girls, Peggy and Kathy called to her. Reluctantly, she decided she had better put an end to this peaceful moment full of memories. It had been good just looking at Joey, not shouting, not arguing, just feeling a deep love for him. "Yes, Kevin, I'm coming. Don't pull on me so." She spoke quietly to one of the twins taking the other boy's hand, too.

As she crossed the room, she reached up to pull the black veil over her face at the precise moment she heard the click of the coffin lid closing. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she thought of the child which had come from the love she and Joe felt as newlyweds. Her body shook, wracked with sobs, as she drew farther from the once tiny body she had nourished within herself, flesh of her flesh.

"Oh, dear God, forgive him," she prayed fervently, "he didn't mean to take so much. I just know it was a foolish mistake." And she sat down with her remaining five children, not hearing the priest's voice, not seeing the shiny coffin, banked with flowers, trying not to remember this part of Joey's abbreviated life, this ending of so much of her own life, a part she had loved so much.

*Oh Precious Dawn*

Jodi Thompson

*Oh precious dawn!  
Your new day coming is my beginning.  
My soul lies with you beneath the horizon  
Awaiting the voyage across the sky  
Into the heights of the firmament.*

*In days of youth when hearts were free  
Words came often and easily.  
We would cast our eyes, behold the sky  
Infinite as we, and proceed to fly.  
No sooner had we left the ground  
    Our wings were clipped  
    Our tongues were bound.  
The sky became a blank despair  
And we as finite as any pair  
—Now our hearts we cannot free  
From the pain of love's tyranny*

*Angry breath of God  
Tosses the earth as if a toy,  
Suspends her on the edge of time.*

*Wrathful eyes divine  
Blast the heavens terrified  
    Rolling in obscurity.*

*Silence —  
    Angels weep  
    Men sleep*

*Omnipotent hands  
Bring forth your heavenly mistress  
Blushing in the eastern sky,  
Bless your prophets with gift of song.  
The traveler is weary, —  
    take him home.*

*Autumn*

Susan Berry

*I am beautiful green—fresh and bright  
with all my arms reaching towards the brilliant sun.*

*As several months pass  
I turn a ravishing red—glamorous and irresistible.*

*A speckle of color floats slowly to my feet  
how pretty it looks—so weightless and free.*

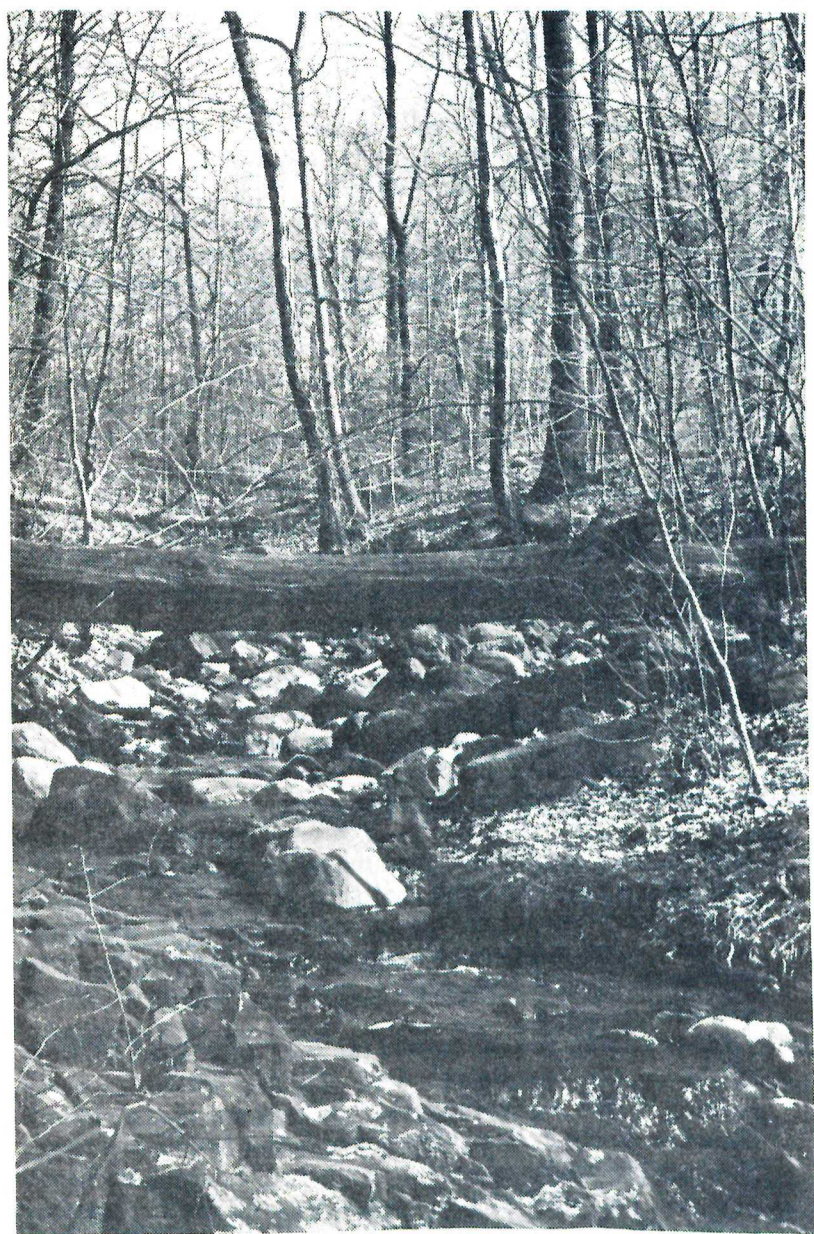
*Another gathers courage  
downward it flies like a newborn swallow in first flight.*

*After a week of ice-blue chaos  
a skirt of crimson now covers my web-like feet.*

*Alas, I am catching cold  
my bare arms gather no warmth from the sun.*

*I will not die but sleep  
until my green-clothed arms reach once again  
to the golden god of life.*





## ON A TRAIN WRECK

*A Play in Three Scenes*

Mike Martone

Characters:

BOY

MAN

CHORUS WITH A LEADER

*Scene I*

*(Scene. The stage is completely dark except for a single spot on a chair at center stage in which the BOY is seated. Behind him is an elevated platform on which the CHORUS will perform. The platform is back-lighted so that the CHORUS is seen in silhouette.)*

*The lights come up on the BOY and CHORUS. The BOY is sitting staring at the audience moving slightly in a lulling rhythm. The CHORUS is walking slowly from left to right, spaced evenly and singularly, creating the impression of movement.)*

BOY (as CHORUS behind him files past). I see fence pickets. One, two, three, four, five. . . Fence pickets are boring. One after another, frozen stiff, painted white. I see them all. Do they realize they exist and that they all exist? All connected by the same rusty wire. They go one after another, one before the last. Alone with only a wash and wire for warmth. Alone with grass at their feet. Ahh, a symbol. What does it show us? What do I see?

LEADER (stopping directly behind the BOY while the CHORUS continues the procession). Can you see death? Is death boring? Watch the fence pickets growing out of the ground. Growing slowly at first, then faster as this train nears them. They spring up from the grass and then are cut down in the distance. You are like the fences growing all the time, coming nearer still. Do you see us yet? See us this way? We are very near, very large.



*(The light goes down on the BOY and upon the CHORUS platform. At the same time a strobe light begins, creating an old silent movie effect. The CHORUS reenacts the standard scene of the villain and the heroine at the railroad tracks in a very stylized manner. The audience sees FEAR, VILLAINY, ETC. Some of the CHORUS members play the part of the train as well as the Villain and the Heroine. There is no hero and no rescue. As the TRAIN is about to run over the Heroine the lights black out. In the darkness the CHORUS speaks.)*

*CHORUS (in the darkness). We are men as scenery, scenery as men. We watch; we are watching as we are being watched.*

*BOY (as the lights go up quickly. Both the BOY and the CHORUS are as before). Watching, I am watching out the window at nothing passing by. Listen to me, talking about fence pickets. About, about nothing passing by. Why am I afraid? The silence, the sound of the fences, makes me afraid. The whitewashed fences saying nothing as they go sinking into the distance. Fences, are they men or what? Sinking into the past as if nothing had—nothing will—nothing will happen. They are fences, pickets, between something. Rods of wood (pause) with wire in between.*

*LEADER. Nothing but rods of wood watching washed windows go by, growing near and fading in the distance. Glinting for an instant. Washed faces in washed windows go by. Connected by cast iron and air hoses so fragile. As they go by in bundles of blankets peering on cushions of vinyl, peering through the metal skin of the train, they stare, as we stare, as you stare, as we all stare. We count and say good-by.*

*CHORUS (as they file by severally). Good-by. . .*

*BOY (slowly). One, two, three . . .*

*CHORUS (joining in). Six, seven, eight . . .*

*(The lights fade out.)*

## Scene II

*(Scene. Lights up as before. The MAN is now seated next to the BOY. The CHORUS moves again from left to right. The MAN has a newspaper. In his lap and on the floor are other books and newspapers. He wears a "WIN" button in his*



*lapel. He is blind and wears dark glasses. A white cane leans up against the seat. Beneath the chair is a white blanket.*

BOY. How long have I been asleep?

MAN (*reading paper*). Not long.

BOY. How long have you been here?

MAN. All the time.

BOY. Pardon me, I've never seen you before.

MAN. Or again, I might add. No, I was passing through and saw the empty seat. You don't mind? Crowded on this train, isn't it?

BOY. Yes, no. You said you saw.

MAN. Yes, a lot of people. That's too bad. Good angle for a story though, transportation history and all that.

BOY. What did you say?

MAN (*reading*). Nothing, nothing at all.

BOY. Who did you say you were?

MAN. I didn't, isn't in the script. If you must know (*as if telling a secret*) I'm the foreshadow.

BOY. The what?

MAN (*changing the subject*). The trains, you know, aren't as travelled as they once were. But today, today this train is another story (*turns page*). Did you see this? (*indicating article*).

BOY (*after reading*). What does the death of Blanche Payne have to do with me or anything?

MAN. Nothing. Yet, that's the absolute beauty of it. Our common humanity. What did you call it, our "rusty wire?" (*He writes this down in a noteboook*) That's good. Probably the first time the old girl's been in the papers (*pause*) and the last, I might add.

BOY. You confuse me.

MAN. You confuse yourself with simple matters. You witness death, and you are confused. Simplicity is the key, is paramount. It's all here in black and white. See?

BOY (*after a pause*). That wasn't the first time.

MAN. What? That I foreshadow, oh no, I—

BOY. I mean Blanche Payne was probably in the paper before, when she was born.

MAN (*writing in notebook*). Very good, yes! We all were. You're learning, growing up well. Growing all the time.

BOY. You are strange.

MAN. Well, the best are only shadows, but I am real, a professional real person with 20-20 hindsight. I only know what I read in the papers and all that. I hope the things I've been quoting are in public domain. I'd hate to get in trouble. You know, I'm blind.

BOY. But if you can't see, how . . . ?

MAN. Now there you go confusing things again. Take my word, I can see. It just depends in what direction. You see, I'm blind to the present. (*A pause*). I have another "WIN" button here some place. No, here, take mine. There "Whip Inflation Now". I can't take that stuff. It's too present.

BOY. Listen, Mister, you're going to get in trouble . . .

MAN. No, no, I am sure I can quote that "Whip Inflation Now" perfectly legally.

BOY. Leave me alone.

MAN (*looking at watch*). It's about time. (*He reads from a book.*) Some say the world will end in fire. Others ice. How about you, my confused friend?

BOY. I'm not your friend.

MAN. You are. Here is a blanket for warmth, and there is the window for wind. Which do you prefer? It really doesn't matter. (*Looks at watch.*)

BOY. If it doesn't matter—?

MAN (*growing impatient*). Must I quote you Macbeth. Here now, give me back my "WIN" button.

BOY. Take your button.

MAN. You are quite regular, really. The best that was thought—n'er so well expressed. Try not to be angry. Look it square in the eye. You owe God a death and all that. (*To himself.*) Who said that? Was that Shakespeare again?

CHORUS. Look up Hemingway.

MAN. I don't want to use Shakespeare again.

BOY. What is going on?

MAN. Wait a minute, will you? Where's the Bible? (*To the audience*) Has anybody got a Bible?

BOY. What about fire and ice?

MAN. Oh, yes. Little matter. (*Growing calmer*). That's right. Little use in the way it will end. The glass will still break and shatter, the blanket split and tear. Little protection from

metal and human shouts.

BOY. Listen, Mister, if you don't stop this, I'm going to call the conductor.

MAN (*changing the subject*). What is more important than that fence?

BOY. One more time, mister, and I'll make a scene.

MAN. Indeed, you will, It won't be a pretty sight, and I don't envy the men who'll have to clean you up. They'll wear masks to keep from fainting from the stench. No, I don't envy them.

BOY. Conductor, conductor!

MAN. That's right. Call, be saved. Don't you see you're being saved this way, too? We'll read about you once in the papers; I so love the papers. Saved from being asked those questions about your future life. (*At this point the "William Tell Overture" is heard fading in*). You're saved. You'll be used.

BOY. Stop it.

MAN. Used as show. You are a spectacle, a revelation. The boy has died, yet you are the boy. A symbol. What lesson can we draw?

BOY. Stop it.

MAN. Deliverance coming nearer all the time.

BOY. Stop it. Stop it.

MAN. Nearer all the time.

LEADER (*with conductor's hat steps out of the shadow*). Yes, may I help you?

BOY. This man is—

LEADER. Is an employee of the railroad. (*Sound of "Overture" cuts*).

MAN (*after humming a few bars of "Toot Toot Toosie Good-by"*). This train is doomed. Always has been, (*To conductor*) eh, Sam?

LEADER. Right on schedule too, sir.

MAN. Good. Excellent. You see we knew all along, so did they (*the audience*), but they came anyway. And back in that cute little head of yours (*missing BOY's hair*), so did you. Are we right?

BOY (*after a long pause*). I'm very cold.

MAN. The blanket, Sam, by all means.

BOY (*wrapped in blanket*). I'm very warm.

MAN. I'll get the window.



CHORUS (*as the window is slid back*). Ten, nine, eight, seven—  
MAN. Getting near, eh, Sam?

LEADER. Right you are, sir. It'll be a good one, I can feel it in my bones.

CHORUS. — Five, four, three, two . . . (*Black and sound out.*)

### Scene III

(*Lights fade in on the MAN sitting in the chair reading the paper. The boy's chair is gone; the platform and CHORUS are gone also.*)

MAN (*reading*). "The body of the boy was the 208th corpse taken from the twisted wood and metal of a 22-car train that careened from the tracks Thursday night to the screams of terror from its passengers." He went quietly though. (*Lights up full on boy in blanket held coffinlike by the CHORUS on the platform. The CHORUS is wearing surgical masks, except for the LEADER*). He knew about what was happening there at the end.

LEADER. We told him at the beginning. Don't feel bad. You did your best. Some refuse to listen until—

MAN. Some refuse to admit it even though they know.

LEADER. All and all he was about average.

MAN. Aren't we all?

LEADER. Never grew up—

MAN. Like many—

LEADER. Never looked back—

MAN. Like few—

LEADER. Torn in half—

MAN. While we watched.

LEADER. Nothing new. In that—

MAN. Death is so near all the time.

LEADER. Now moves away, an image fading, a perspective view. (*Lights fade out on platform*).

MAN. It's just the way you look at things and the relative distance between a point of a moment and the thought of the next. (*Reading*) I'll turn the page. And try not to think. (*Black out*).



*Cardboard Coffins*

Karen Greene

*This box contains the dead, my dear,  
not forgotten, but tattered and lifeless.  
A silken handkerchief shroud—  
A dried mold-eaten bouquet—  
even a movie program eulogy  
Clinging dreams—lost tomorrows*

*Rows of romantic beams garnish your aisle  
like a candelabra—With added kisses  
under a foggy moon in dark solitude.  
What style!*

*And this?  
A gummed-up lollipop?  
Sure, it's a super prom-night goodie  
turned into a postmortem treat  
for invertebrates with six feet.*

*No, my dear,  
That bell wasn't tolling the hour.  
So take the pennies off your eyes  
and buy memories—  
by burning cardboard sorrows.*



*The American Pace*

Marcy Rath

*The train thunders on.  
The timetable is met.  
Fast runs he in the sand  
As the waves erase any sign of his presence.  
Making room for the next.*

*Horns blare in impatience.  
Tires squeal as rubber meets pavement  
Angrily beating the clock.  
A steady rhythm of the pendulum is heard  
With each hurried pound of the pavement,  
As cement touches shoe.*

*The coffee cup remains eternally half-empty: cold;  
And the warmth of a chair  
Once felt by another's body,  
Is never there from the first.*

*There is one who defies.  
The tips of her fingers run smoothly over the petals  
Counting, "He loves me, he loves me not."  
Her blue eyes reach out to the blue sky,  
And are one.*

*The wind rearranges her hair,  
And she knows no timetable.  
Living belongs to her.  
To feel, to touch, to savor, to caress,  
What are these to many?*

## DEVOTION

Susan Berry

In this dark and silent hospital room he lay restless thinking of all the unfinished work he had left behind. He had yet to finish seating, in order of proficiency, members of not just one but four orchestras. He was forced to turn down several tours with nationally and internationally known artists. He had choirs and ensembles to rehearse for up-coming concerts. He had several private students needing a master to learn from. And yet, there he was—stranded on his back for over a week now and who knows how much longer. There had been no one to see, no music to listen to, and nothing but the smell of sanitized needles and bed pans.

He began to think back to when he was a child in a small rundown farmhouse in Pennsylvania. Curious as most children, he remembered climbing the many dust covered stairs leading to the attic, a New World for young refugees. The boy discovered moth-eaten coats draped over worn brocaded chairs, empty bird cages, ragged one-armed dolls tossed into boxes, uncovered trunks of letters and documents and miscellaneous Christmas ornaments—and a most unusually shaped box. Instantly he fell to his knees in front of the odd box and wiped the dust and spider webs from it. A streak of fear and caution ran through his body but his curiosity was stronger: slowly he unlocked the clasps and opened the wooden box. Inside, embalmed in worn blue velvet, was the most beautiful violin he had ever . . . “Son, . . . come down here right this minute!” yelled his father.

As quickly as he could the boy closed the case and hid it under other surrounding boxes.

From that day on the quiet boy sought every minute alone to familiarize himself with the instrument. His hardworking father would have used his calloused hands to smash the delicate violin if he had known about his son’s newfound love. “It takes up the time that should be spent with me, digging ditches every day to make a decent living for our family,” his father would have said.

Not until the young musician finished grade school did his father know of the violin. When the boy entered high school he was allowed to join the orchestra. He practiced and practiced until

he earned a scholarship at college. During his four years there he began touring with well-known musicians, through which he earned enough money to pay for his master's degree. He then fought administrators of a new high school for permission to start an orchestra. In the first few years as director he struggled to gain recognition for the orchestra. Without ever resting he encouraged many groups to form which he then led to a high performance level.

As the stricken man lying in the white-smelling bed finished reviewing his life, he cried to himself, "I'm tired, . . . I'm so tired."

*Crown Hill Cemetery*

John D. Wilson, Jr.

*I thought it quite unfair  
To speak of it so naturally  
Direct; and oh, so factually  
I told them then and there  
To speak of set repose gives a scare  
To one who never thinks of it, actually.  
But on and on they rambled  
About how they felt devotionally  
In defunct thoughts clear and scrambled.*



*Frozen Amber*

Chris Katterjohn

*It's an ice storm  
it's so much wet,  
and so much slush,  
and so much slip and slide.*

*It's a rumbling or a crackling  
in the forest; the broken branches  
lie like tombstones  
under the trees.*

*It's a violence;  
it's a sugar-coated peace.  
It's an ice storm.  
It's the Potter's glaze.*

*Falling Star*

Liz Schoberg

*Streak of star death  
across the night sky.  
The pulse jumps.  
The skin grows cold.  
It's as if the body sees  
that terminal similarity.*

*BUT . . .*

Kathy Stinson

She closed her eyes and felt the warm wind rustle through her wheat-colored hair. She let her mind float easily with the rhythmic sway of her body. Evenly, she placed each heel down and rocked forward onto her toes. Such an easy motion—she felt as if she flowed, her arms marking the imaginary boundaries at her sides.

Her back was straight and tall, almost stiff. Her neck rose gracefully from the square-set shoulders. She did not attempt to slink and slouch as so many did, their muscles lax and limp. No, instead she held every muscle taut and flexed. She glided like the gentle breeze, carrying herself proudly and confidently.

Suddenly she broke into a run. Now she felt as if she were a gazelle. She could feel the muscles in her thighs tighten and relax, allowing her supple body to traverse the ground fluidly. She felt the tautness of her back and laughed. Her eyes hungrily took in the field as she ran through the tall grass. A ditch appeared in front of her and she sailed gracefully across, her tawny legs outstretched. On the far side, she took a few steps, her arms reaching for the sun, a mischievous light dancing in her eyes. She stood squarely on both feet, her hands placed defiantly on her hips, laughing at the world. . . .

But her fingers felt only the cold solid metal of her wheelchair, so she opened her eyes.

*Regret*

Sarah Motry

*dusty curtain lace  
remembrances flowering  
in an unused room*

## MEMORIES OF THE LAKE

Ed Shacklee

It has been many seasons since last I nested in my native land. The wind has called to me and, borne on soft wings, I have answered her wild voice in the way of my kind. But still I remember the lake, that cool, green place on whose borders grew the reeds: And, even still, I have not forgotten the young boy.

I was . . . was ugly as a child, horribly ugly. My neck was like a snake, my throat so barren that words could never grow in its field of silence. No one spoke to me. When I was very young I did not mind this, since my mother never left me alone with unhappy thoughts. But one day a truck veered to one side of the road, and I was alone.

Ugly legs waddling through the mud, ugly beak scavenging among the weeds for sustenance, such was the being I saw through the eyes of the other creatures. And over the months, as if to emphasize, to magnify my misfortune, I grew, solidifying at last into a lifeless, ghostly whiteness. The lake was too clear to free me of this, the crows were too unkind to let me forget. How dark, how black was the voice of their malice! Listening as I did, I was covered with despair.

The trees do not whisper their softness to one who is alone.

Then, almost suddenly, the boy found me. "Oh," he cried, "How beautiful are you! And how soft, how white your wings!" I was afraid at first, and hid among the reeds.

But each day the boy came to visit me, and soon each day signaled only his coming. No longer was I alone.

No longer would I skitter away like a pestilence trying to hide, no longer would my neck crane itself like a snake fleeing to its den. Instead I sailed quietly across the lake, hoping that I would not frighten him if I aspired to no sudden movements.

Once, as I swam in this manner, I noticed my image in the reflections on the lake. Could this be me, the one who was so ugly, the snake-neck? I was amazed.

For the first time in my life I knew the power of my wings, felt the grace with which my feet could cleave the surface of the lake. I saw the feathers, so long a source of hidden shame, and no



longer called them strips of gauze. For, to the boy, they were made of purest snow.

The other animals saw this change, this majesty which was mine through love, and no longer ran from me. But my muteness remained with me, and they called me haughty.

So long as he came, however, I did not mind. In the evening the boy would bring me bread, and because it was so stale I knew that he was poor. But I ate what he shared with me so as to please him, and I never left a crumb.

Then one day the boy did not come. I was afraid for him, and I was afraid of the trucks which sped along the road. They did not care, those trucks. And so my hope lessened with each day, and the boy did not come.

Oh, little one! What road did you cross?

The days passed and the boy did not come, and the wind grew chill. When the last leaf fell, I left. But wherever I have gone I have looked for him, and wherever I go, he is not there. My wings, what good are they? For I have lost the boy, and nothing else remains.

Alas! Who are they, who make the trucks? What was the reason for my egg? I am but a swan, and do not know. I am mute, and cannot say.



