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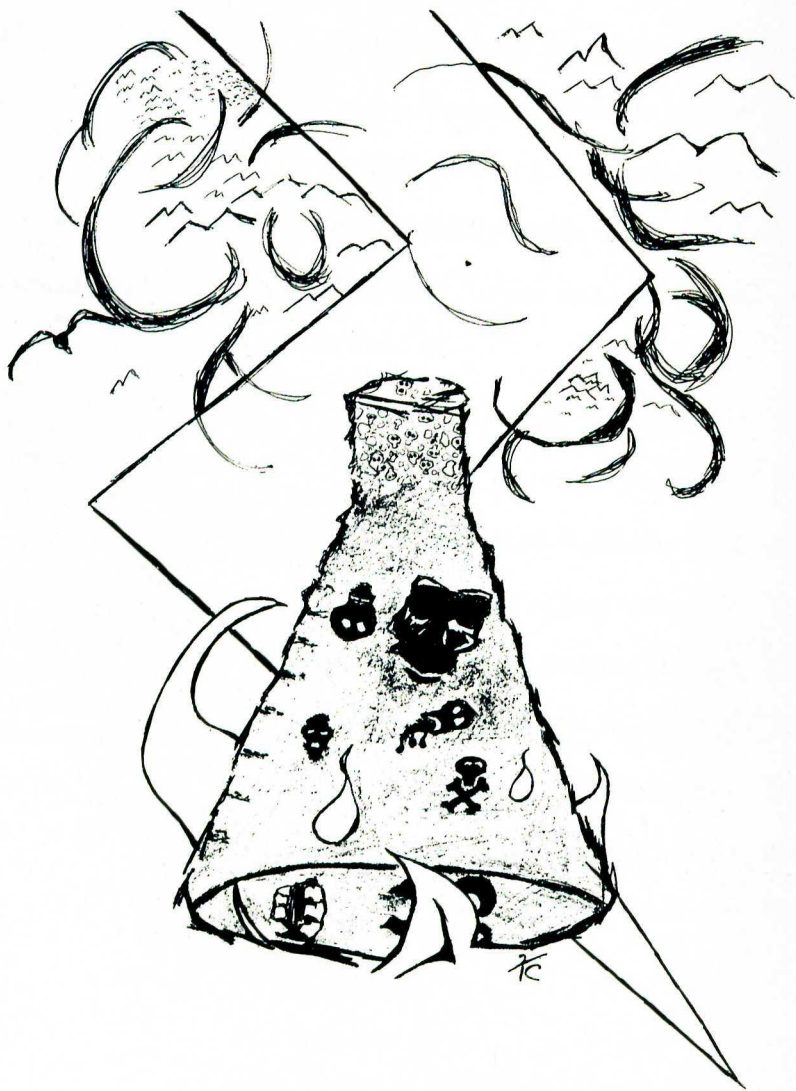
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* Indicates Freshman Writing



METAPHOR FLUSHER

Kevin Cook

When a man dies in another life, and he was a very evil man, he gets reincarnated as a writer. That is the way the fates have of getting back at us. There is a fine red line between seeing the obvious that the rest never see ("You *see*, Watson, but you do not observe.") and seeing what probably isn't even there. Writer as interpreter between common man and mad man. It may be that the worst torture in the world is sitting at a typewriter with empty fingers. Sitting there with the thing buzzing in your face, rows of secretive letters daring you to string out the ones that make a good story, or a great novel. The odds against hitting the right combination for a great novel are about the same as the odds against hitting the trifecta in a race with twenty-six horses. A hundred thousand times in a row. Torture will make you mad, given world enough and time.

They do it anyway, though, dozens and thousands of them, with the smell of the whole day in their shirts, snapping at the letters, knowing down deep in their fingers every time they go off the trail of the magic combination, staying there in front of the slot machine, pouring in their round silver souls and dehydrating just a little bit more when what comes back out is nothing.

I knew the man you've been wondering about, the one they say almost won the Nobel Prize for Literature. They were going to give it to him until they found out what he had done, and then they went back and fixed everything so it looked like he had never even been considered. Or so the story goes. But he *was* considered. I could prove it, given time enough and freedom.

Nobel invented dynamite, did you know that? That's the reason he set up the Nobel Prizes, to make up for his invention's killing thousands of people, blowing the dust and pebbles up around and through their bodies, leaving little clods of dirt hanging in the air in front of their wide-opened eyes. He wanted to salve his conscience, so he could die (of natural causes; he was not blown up) without feeling guilty. Does that make up for making dynamite?

But should he have to make up for it? Somebody would have invented it anyway, and he never actually personally hurt anybody, as far as I know. He never blew anybody's legs off six feet away from their stumps. Maybe he's responsible, and maybe he's not. Maybe God's responsible. He made Nobel. Maybe He's responsible for all the bloody burned disasters that ever happened—for Auschwitz and Dachau, for Hiroshima and the Crucifixion. And he never even bothered to set up a prize fund.

Anyway—in any case—be that as it may—I knew the man who knew how to hit the trifecta on the typewriter. He's in a home now. Well, a hospital. It isn't anybody's home. The man is not myself. True or false?

Oh Jesus they are coming again. They're coming to take me away. Ha ha. I can hide beside the radiator. But no, they can smell me out, my arm is burning against the steaming metal. Two big all-white men with no faces. They don't really want to short out my mind, they would just as soon sit and read magazines or go play with the young girls in their ward who can't move to get away, but they are told it's time for electroshock therapy so they come for me and put me on the hard bed with the metal and rough-brown-cloth skullcap that goes around my head and the tight snares that go around my wrists and feet so that I can't move anything except the muscles in my stomach which twitch and try to run away because they know what is coming.

No. No no please Jesus Christ don't TURN IT ON
 JESUS CHRIST LOOK AT HIM DANCE
 COME ON HEMINGWAY FRY FRY AGAIN
 GOD DAMN THAT STINKS
 HOW MUCH LONGER WE GOT

When I am away because it hurts so much, because there is a dentist's drill spinning in my eyes and in my genitals and there is boiling mercury being poured into my head and they have sawed open my skull and are holding my brain against a red-hot stove, all of those things at once but much worse (I am not a genius, at least not any more, but even if I were I could not tell you how the pain is when they send electricity into your brain and roast what you are thinking, and you die but stay alive and never know how different you are afterward. But try to imagine

whatever it was in your life that made you *pray* to die, and then try to imagine that every cell in your body wants to die, all of them in symphony that way, and I suppose that will have to do), when I am away because my head is too full of screaming for anything else to be in there, sometimes I see colors humming out in space like long beautiful fishes miles deep in the sea. Sometimes while they are destroying my brain and I can't reach my typewriter, I think up stories and things that have happened in my life and sort of intertwine them, like I'm doing right now. I hope the screaming doesn't stop, because I am here creating and when it stops I will have to go back and hurt and my body will try to heal, like a little fetus that just keeps on breathing and feeding while the blade is on its way in.

There are books in the Library of Congress that have never been touched since some gray-suited, skinny, bespectacled librarian first put them on the shelves. There are ancient newspapers on microfilm, obscure magazine articles, people's letters to each other, wills, memoranda from people who thought they were writing to themselves or to confidants. Nothing will ever be completely forgotten from this century on, nothing lost.

I was a good researcher, and I spent years in the Library (never once saw a congressman), smelling first the crackling yellow musty smell of old paper and later the buzzing white ozone smell of soft fluorescent lights. A lot of times I would follow long threads that offered themselves, threads that didn't have anything to do with a story or a book. I found out things that no one else knows. Maybe about you. You're in the Library of Congress, there under the weight of tons of shiny microfilm, the weight of all the little transparent bodies of everybody else. Everything is there, all in black and white, unprotected by the glossy mythicism of history. Check into your illusions, your ideals; check out your great men. They were all hated for one reason and another, and they were pretty good reasons. One of Jefferson's slaves died one morning in 1772, beaten to death by the massah. Lincoln got a man off in a rape case to pay back a political favor. Mary Baker Eddy had a stash of aspirin hidden away in that big white bonnet of hers. True or false? The Pope isn't Catholic. Malcom X loved watermelon and Amos 'n Andy, and Martin Luther King cheated on his wife and was shot to death by a man under orders from J. Edgar Hoover, who had tried to have Castro poisoned for John Kennedy, who was being treated for a social disease when he was killed and whose brother swam away from a girl drowning in a river. True or false? When I was a little boy I poured ammonia into my

little black dog's eyes and then he was blind. That's in the Library somewhere.

Some of that is true. Or, I should say, all of it is true, probably, but I haven't proved it all yet.

Do you think that if they sent raw telephone cables all through the Library of Congress and let them dance around burning things and shearing the words away from their places and going down the shelves incinerating all the ideas, that when the Librarian of Congress came back he could ever find anything left that made sense?

Once when I was a writer I would sit for hours at the keyboard. I had a blue electric portable, a "Sterling Automatic 12." I would start working, describing all the things that were going on in some parallel plane that I was helping to make, and look up at the digital clock on my desk ten minutes later. Only the clock would say it was three hours later, and the rest of the world went along with the clock. That was time travel. If you're a writer you can travel in time. I have always thought that if I were a better one maybe I could start late one night and when I would look up at the clock it would be the end of time. I would get up. The muscles in my calves would be stiff, and moths would have eaten away at my clothes until the moths had all finally died. I would go over to my window and there would be only the darkness of the deepest space, because I had been working when God had taken everything back and He had missed me. Then I would go back to my typewriter, but I would have a mental block. I would type a long series of periods, tiny pictures of the empty universe, until the bones in my hands wore down and then I would have to type the periods with my nose until it wore down, and then I guess I would just have to lie there with my face down among the keys, smelling that inky humming smell forever and ever amen.

I was a very serious writer, seriously grim, and I would become frustrated and histrionic when the words I wrote couldn't describe the pictures in my mind. I got something of a reputation for the way I disposed of the bad stuff. Didn't throw it in the wastebasket like you're supposed to; I threw it in the toilet, saying that it was shit and that was where it belonged. The Roto-Rooter bills were high, but the reporters and reviewers (especially one that came out from the *Times Review of Books*) thought it added to my image as the tough-minded, elemental realist (the one from the *Times* kept calling me a "naturalist." I felt like I should have been out in a safari suit looking through my binoculars at elephants). I was going to win the Dynamite Prize for Literature. True or false?

True.

When I was twenty and the girl I loved suddenly noticed that I wasn't at all what she was in the market for, I went into my room and wrote stories that leaked out the black acids inside of me.

When I was twenty-two and the girl I loved suddenly married the architect she had been engaged to all along, I went into my room and wrote poetry. Try something else this time. When all the bad poems were flushed out of my veins and arteries, I came back out.

When I was forty and the girl I loved suddenly died in a completely ridiculous traffic accident, I went into my den and tore apart my typewriter until there was blood and ink all over my hands because the writing never helped, and then I wrote a novel in longhand, and then I went back to my wife, whose face was too serene.

I was about to be a Laureate. I was a very good researcher, and got my hands on some things no one should have let me see, but I was, after all, a medium-sized celebrity. In a short story that was only published because my editor was certain that everything in it was just clever speculation, I told a tale about some people who used a thick blue liquid to kill some other people, and there was a man in the story who knew all about how you went about making the blue liquid, and the knowledge was too much for him to seal up inside, so he told it all, down to the last detail, to a sympathetic character. He told it down to the last molecule. The last atom. Now you remember it. A very effective story. They didn't come for me until seven hundred and eighteen people in Jerusalem were sprayed with the thick blue liquid and spat up blood and bile and acid and then parts of the linings of their stomachs, and some hours later they spat up much of their insides and the skin on their faces dripped down and stuck to their teeth and I did a long and very effective description of the process in the story so I won't repeat it here and as you can see I was a good researcher.

Did you know any of those people? Surely they weren't relatives, or friends. I'm sorry. And they say there were a few more scattered incidents before they got their hands on the raw materials. I'm so sorry. I would cry and never stop if it would do any good. I am crying now and may never stop and it won't do any good. I am here now, and that won't do any good. I am here because they say (they are the men and women with no faces who work here. On me.) that I lost my mind. They are trying very hard to find it.

Metaphor flusher
Going to the fair
Little key crusher
Truth is your affair
Try to write a prayer
Empty empty air

It was the truth. It seemed a whimsy to put it in there, to see if anybody was paying attention, to see if the secret agents would come to rough me up and find out how I knew. I thought maybe it wasn't even correct.

No. That's false. They tried to hide it, to shuffle tons of sheets of paper over their Auschwitz, because the land of the free and the home of the brave could not be diseased enough to consider such things. But she had considered them. She had painted her fingernails blue with the stuff and then scratched at the faces of her laboratory animals, some of whom were whimpering prayers at the time. Some of whom had their upper lips melt into their open mouths. I had followed a thread, a peripheral strand that led way, way down into the truth. Nothing is hidden from a good enough researcher with time enough and freedom.

The truth. Shall make you free. Could have thrown it in the toilet. No, false. It would have burst the pipes, seeped up out of the ground, spun in the air until it congealed into a glowing green glass eye that watched me in the dark. Shall make you mad. If I left money for a prize, would they forgive me? False. It was the truth. I was insane. I sat and wrestled with my hands for two months, and somehow the truth slipped out of them like a firefly you think is held tightly in the darkness, and I pretended it was whimsy. The truth the truth the truth I ran it down but it was too big for me and then it killed me and escaped. True?

If God is truth, eternal truth, then God is a blue liquid shot through with tiny green specks that look out at you like little glowing glassy eyes, that will turn a person into a running plasticky sore that has to swallow itself in gulps as it gasps for its last breath.

Don't pull me back. All the bloody colors in the sea whirl down into the drain at the bottom of the Marianas Trench.

No. At least not SO FAST
STILL HOPPIN HE'S STILL HOPPIN
EYES ARE BLEEDIN YELLOW LOOK
OKAY IT'S OFF NOW
PICK HIM UP
CAREFUL HE'S HOT

Oh can't you let me be what am I now
Hours. Later. True or false?

When they take the live wire and electrocute my brain it goes in there and takes those waves, those peaks and valleys that show whether I am thinking or not, and shakes and bakes them, turns them upside down and inside out so that they can never find again the pattern they came from. I know they do it all the time, in mental prisons all over the land-of-the-free-and-the-home-of-the-brave, but rape with a live wire a thousand times is still rape.

But there is something wayway down there underneath all the rest, hiding, that is me. The truth of me. Something just barely apart from the shockwaves. They have cut it, bled it, raped it. Not killed it yet. But it smells the lightning bolts as they shriek down into all the most private corners, feeling for it. It is a wet and matted tiny frightened fox, and soon it will be flushed out of the dark warm woods to run away, the fateful lightning's naked prey.

THE ROMANTIC

Cindy Rust

When Charles woke in the morning, he never considered it to be "just another day." To him, the brash clanging of the alarm clock could mark the beginning of a potential novel. At breakfast, he might be inspired by his soggy scrambled eggs to write an English sonnet. On the way to class, he might observe an exciting objective correlative to use in his next short story.

Charles wanted to be a writer. All he had ever wanted to do was write. He thought in terms of introductory paragraphs, character sketches and hidden themes. Yet he was not so involved in his aspirations that he was detached from his observations. No, far from detached. Charles felt a part of everything. His emotions ruled him freely. Mental passions and extravagant fantasies of life filled his head and kept him searching—but for what, he wasn't sure.

In the fall of his first year of college, Charles was walking aimlessly around the leaf-covered campus, contemplating the vastness of the universe. Then, recalling that he was still in the middle of the American mid-west and not in some mystical foreign land, he blinked and looked forward again.

And there she was.

It hit him so quickly that he was at a loss for words, which for him was a true rarity, and he stood frozen—in the middle of a step—with his mouth gaping. His muscles tensed instantly and a tingle shot through his entire body right to his soul!

She, walking toward him, noticed that he seemed somewhat dumb-struck—but by what, she didn't know. She leaned close to him, looked into his glazed eyes and inquired:

"Excuse me, but are ya all right? I mean . . . is there sumptin' I could do ta help ya?"

Charles was totally, thoroughly and absolutely overcome. He had never seen a more illustrious picture of feminine beauty! And not only did she *exist* but she had actually *spoken* to him! It was beyond comprehension. He feared that if he were to blink, she would disappear and his dread that it was a dream would become a reality—and there he

would be, alone, standing in the leaves, empty. But he blinked and she didn't disappear.

"Look buddy, are ya okay? Want me ta call a campus cop er sumptin'?" she questioned.

Realizing that he had better answer or she might leave before he could learn her name, he blurted:

"I'm fine, er, I mean, I'm just fine, thank you . . . and yourself?"

She nodded with a look of confused apprehension.

He was so flustered, nothing seemed to come out the way he wanted it to.

"I wonder . . . that is, could you tell, er . . . what is your name, may I ask?" Charles stuttered.

Just standing near her he could smell the flowery aroma of her perfume. Her blue eyes gleamed and the shafts of golden hair glowed in the autumn sun. He felt faint. She smiled slightly and said:

"Deb, it's Deb De Lurve."

He managed a smile and realized that he was staring.

"Look, I gotta go to 2 o'clock class—I'll see ya," she said, still rather puzzled, and she walked away.

Charles stood right where he was. He wanted to memorize everything that had just happened. Blizz! Ecstasy! This was truly love at first sight! Eventually, he floated back to his room at the dorm, oblivious to the world around him.

The next few days were a total blur for Charles. He missed classes, ran into walls, and sometimes even forgot to eat. His room mate, Jeff, noticing that his friend seemed a bit preoccupied, inquired:

"What the hell is wrong with you, boy? You're acting like a total space cadet!"

"It's her—all I can think about is her. I see her in my dreams! I can think of nothing but her! She is the beauty and meaning of life! She emulates love!" Charles gasped.

"Oh God, Chuck, be real. No chicks *that* great go to this school!" Jeff chuckled.

"You may jest, but I have found a radiant flower in the midst of a barren and meaningless desert! She is my treasure and without the knowledge of her existence, my life would have little meaning," Charles resounded.

"So what's this chick's name, Chuck, my man?"

"Deborah—Deborah De Lurve!"

"Oh Jesus, Chuck—De Lurve?! You mean that bleached-blondie that got a nose job last spring? Her a radiant flower? Have you been hittin' the bottle er sumptin', boy?" Jeff howled.

"I see that you have minimal appreciation of true beauty," Charles said defensively.

Jeff, not wanting to shatter Charles' illusion, clutched his half-flat six-pack of lukewarm beer and Chemistry book and sat on the bed.

"So Chuck, are ya gonna ask her out?"

"Oh no! I wouldn't dream of it! She is too perfect, so I must be content to watch her and wait," Charles said while silently composing poems and sonnets for her in his mind.

"I will worship her from afar and send her my poems to express my affections—I dare not dream of aught else."

And so Charles worshipped and waited. He sent her anonymous poems every day and flowers and boxes of candy and other delicacies on the weekends. He continued these "expressions of his undying love and devotion" for about one month.

Finally Jeff convinced Charles that Ms. De Lurve might want to meet her anonymous admirer and that Charles should invite her out to dinner. Charles, who was growing tired of worshipping her from afar and was rapidly running out of funds for flowers and candy, agreed to the idea.

The next afternoon, the sun was shining brightly when Charles headed for the girl's dormitory. He felt giddy and light-headed. Everything he wanted to say to her was perfectly scripted in his mind. He just hoped that she would say the lines he wanted to hear.

He walked through the heavy oak doors of the dorm and into the lobby. A girl wearing a bandana and pair of faded Levi's looked up from her books.

"Can I help you?" she said for the millionth time to another frightened young man coming to call.

"Yes, could you please ring Ms. Deborah De Lurve?" Charles requested, trying to maintain his composure.

"Sure, no problem," the receptionist managed to say in between the

bubbles she was blowing with her chewing gum.

Not many minutes later, Charles heard a door close behind him. He whipped around and there was Deb.

"Oh, hi! I didn't have any idea who would be comin' ta see me. Wow, long time, no see!" she exclaimed.

"Hi, yes, I guess it has been a while. Deb, I won't keep you long but there is something I'd like to ask you."

"Sure, try me."

Charles was momentarily stunned. *That* wasn't in the script.

"Well, I was wondering if you might like to join me for dinner this Friday evening—that is, of course, if you don't already have plans."

"That sounds real nice—sure I will."

"Great. I'll pick you up about 7 o'clock. See you then."

They exchanged smiles then Charles started for the door. When he stepped outside, the sun was so bright he had to squint to see where he was going. Something wasn't right. He should feel elated and he just felt sort of . . . well, the same. He had dreamt of this girl for weeks and now he had a date with her and he wasn't even excited. It was so easy. She just said yes. He didn't have to beg or plead. It wasn't even a challenge. As a matter of fact, it was rather anti-climactic.

Charles started down the steps toward the sidewalk, staring at the ground, contemplating the mysteries of the heart. Then facing the fact that it was not to be understood, he blinked and looked forward again.

And there she was.

It hit him so quickly he was a loss for words—and he stood frozen. He had never seen such striking red hair, skin so fair—and yes . . . freckles! As she passed him, the autumn breeze caught a whiff of her girlish perfume and blew it across his face. He was totally, thoroughly and absolutely overcome. He had never seen such a perfect beauty before! This must be a dream because she couldn't be real! This was truly love at first sight!

He watched her walk by and tried to memorize everything about her. When she was no longer in view, Charles turned away and floated back to his dorm room, oblivious to the world around him.

A LOVER'S LAMENT

Karen Kovacik

Shakespeare, ye most noble bard,
    Who spoke of love between two minds;
Although correct, sir, please admit
    That there are loves of other kinds.

And Marvell, ye of "chariot wing'd,"
    Who pinched young maidens' cheeks so pink,
Unhappily, your passion proud
    Did not afford you time to think.

Must mind and body live apart?
    Must flesh be always torn from heart?
Must passion quit when judgment start?
    And lust begin when reason part?

Alas!—it's true—for I've yet to find another
Who can quench the one and stimulate the other!

A CHARACTER SKETCH

Libby Kelley

Tommy lumbered up on the high kitchen chair, dropping his books with a thud on the gleaming counter. His mother glared at him from behind the telephone receiver. He grinned myopically and fumbled in his pocket for the carefully-folded square of paper. He had looked at it four times on the school bus; it had a big red "A" in one corner and a shiny cornucopia sticker on the other. He was proud of the shiny cornucopia because in the fall his teacher put cornucopia stickers on the good spelling papers. She put pumpkins on the bad ones.

He shoved the paper at his mother, pointing to the bright sticker. She nodded, raising her voice absent-mindedly as if to shut him and his spelling paper out of her thoughts. He wadded up his prize into a crumpled ball and shoved it back in his pocket.

"Sunday night? . . . Sure! I'll have to get a babysitter," she said, pausing to smile at Tommy with her perfectly-lipsticked mouth. He guessed she was talking to the fat man from church or maybe one of the PTA ladies. She was always on the phone, anyway. He scrambled down from the chair in an awkward jumble of limbs, jammed his hands in his back pockets, and shuffled around the kitchen, whistling. He could whistle a lot better last summer when he didn't have any front teeth. His mother tapped her small, polished nails on the coffee table. She wanted him to be quiet; she usually pointed, or waved, or snapped her fingers, but she never stopped talking. His whistle died and he pretended to cough.

Tommy opened the refrigerator door and stared at a shining bowl of pudding. Reaching forward, he wiggled two fingers in the smooth, yellow surface, watching with fascination as it quivered.

"I'm gonna tell Dad," his brother George said in a scary, sing-song voice. He'd walked quietly into the kitchen and was looming over the refrigerator door.

Tommy stared at the big blue "N" on George's high school jacket and pulled his fingers out of the bowl. He licked them slowly. George hit his hand lightly, but Tommy's fingernail scratched his lip and it hurt.

"I'm gonna tell," his brother said again, firmly closing the refrigerator door. Tommy barely had time to scoot under George's arm and out of the path of the moving door. He started to wander away.

"Hey, come back here." His brother tugged at his arm. "Why don't you eat something, Lumpo?"

Lumpo? He didn't know why his brother called him Lumpo. Once he'd cried and his mother made George stop it. At least she *thought* she'd made him stop. George used to sit at the dinner table leering at Tommy and chanting "Lumpo" under his breath. His parents never heard. They always sat together at the end and talked about his daddy's business in quiet, serious tones.

Tommy stuck out his chest now, teetering precariously off-balance. George grinned.

"I'm gonna eat. I'm gonna get real big and then I can play football."

"It'd take an act of Congress to make you bigger, Lumpo. They don't let bony cadaver types play football."

"Cataf . . . huh?" Tommy sputtered, staring up at his brother. George was laughing at his own joke. It must be very funny.

"Say it, don't spray it," his brother said, wiping imaginary spit from his jacket with a look of disgust. He leaned over, very low, and breathed "De-e-e-a-d bodies!"

Tommy jumped and ran into the living room. He sneaked a quick look over his shoulder to see if George would chase him, but George had already opened the refrigerator and was staring at the pudding with a stupid expression.

Tommy wandered back to his bedroom, absently knocking against each closet door as he walked down the hallway. He looked out his window across the street where some boys were playing football. Tommy hid behind the curtain, certain that the boys could see him and were laughing at his big glasses. He closed his eyes, fighting back tears. On the fuzzy blackness of his eyelids he could see the boys, taunting him like they had before.

"He's on your side."

"No way. We had to take him last week. He's on your side."

Tommy had stood there, alone in the middle of the wide driveway. He seemed to be getting smaller and smaller.

"I'm the first to choose and I choose not to have him!" one of the boys yelled.

Tommy stood there awkwardly, not knowing what to do. The voices seemed far away. He wished he might shrink away and disappear. Finally he ran home, the flecked pavement jumbling together in a blur of tears.

Tommy closed the curtains and sat down on his bed. He picked up the tiny metal cage and peered at the small animal in the semi-darkness.

It was eating and ignored him. Tommy poked his thumb through the bars, wagging it. The mouse turned from his food tray and scampered across the cage. Tommy bounced on his bed, throwing the cage up and down, up and down. He couldn't see the mouse anymore in the white flurry of shredded paper. The cage fell to the floor with a thump, and Tommy watched it suspiciously for a moment. The paper moved. Tommy bent over and jerked open the cage, pulling out the tiny animal. He held it in both his hands, feeling big and protective.

"You'll talk to me, Spottie, won't you? You'll talk to Tommy."

His hand felt wet, and Tommy saw that the scared mouse had left a dropping in his palm. He ignored the dropping and squeezed the mouse, tighter and tighter and tighter. The mouse squealed a little. Tommy closed his eyes and squeezed even more, gritting his teeth. His fingernails dug into the flesh of his palm. He felt strong.

A TIME FOR DREAMS

David Darrell

At 7:05 Mr. Bertrand Huttin's double-bell alarm clock went off as it had for the past ten years and probably always would. It interrupted and totally obliterated a dream he felt he had had before, and he promptly buried his head in the pillow in an effort to recall it. He gave up after a couple minutes, however, as his wife shook him urgently awake. He stumbled into the washroom, while his wife went to wake up their two children with the imperious cry, "Come on. You're going to be late."

Meanwhile, he began his morning ritual. Actually he took great pride in its organization for it was worked out through experience to do as much as possible in the smallest amount of time. First, it was into the shower to wake himself up as well as to freshen him for the day. Then, he lathered his face and, while the lather was softening up the whiskers, he proceeded to brush his teeth. Then off with the facial hair, on with the Aqua Velva, and into the bedroom to begin dressing. Here, too, he had everything worked out. Underwear went on first (any order), then the shirt, so he could pull his pants on over it without tucking it in, then he fastened his belt and tied his tie at the same time he slipped into his shoes. He then filled his pockets with assorted necessities—comb, handkerchief, wallet, etc.—grabbed his coat, went down the stairs, threw the coat over a chair, and glanced up at the kitchen clock. It read 7:23.

"Best yet," Mr. Huttin muttered to himself. He glanced at the table and saw his bacon and eggs breakfast all set up. He smiled in satisfaction and gave his wife a kiss, for no other reason but that he had done the same thing for ten years past, as she rushed upstairs to rejuvenate the children's attempts to cope with their morning exertions.

7:26—Mrs. Huttin was back, with the children this time. Casting anxious glances at the clock, she sat the kids down to breakfast and asked: "Who goes early today?"

"I do," 10 year-old Marty answered, thinking of orchestra practice.

"Okay, let's see," Mrs. Huttin figured mentally for a moment, "Today is Friday so Mrs. Russell drives. She always comes early so you hurry up."

By now Mr. Huttin was finished and collecting his coat, briefcase, hat, and anything else he might conceivably need. "Hurry up," he called to his wife, "The new train schedule is in effect. We have to be there by 7:35."

"Coming," she replied. "Kathy, you make your own lunch. I should be back in time to take you to school."

"Bye, kids," Mr. Huttin said over his shoulder as he went out the door.

"Bye, Daddy," returned Kathy like she always did.

"Bye, Dad," came Marty a second later, and that tradition was complete.

Outside, they got into the car, and Mr. Huttin urgently glanced at his watch and then matched it with the car clock. He swore; partly because the time pieces were two minutes apart and he didn't know which to trust, and partly because the car was resisting his wife's efforts to start it more than was usual.

However, start it finally did and Mr. Huttin was relieved to note that they still had, at worst, six minutes to make a five minute trip. He now turned to his wife and went through everything he wanted to be sure she had done by the time he got home. "Okay, Kate, you go first to the post office and make sure they stop our mail. Then make sure the car is gassed up. You can wait to pack until the kids get home; they can help you. Don't forget I'll be on the 4:40 train tonight. Let's see. Oh, did you remember to leave a note for the milkman?"

"Yeah, I put it out."

"Good. That's it then," he finished softly. "You know it's going to be great. There'll be no rushin' around. Nothing that has to be done every minute."

Mrs. Huttin glanced at him doubtfully, and he could see her thoughts mirrored his own. But before he could say anything, they had pulled into the station and at a glance he could see the train was already there. "Damn," he muttered, "New schedule and the thing is a minute early." Turning, he kissed his wife good-bye and was out of the car at a run.

Mr. Huttin's outstretched hand just caught the closing doors and swung himself into the train. He had no trouble finding a seat, since his station was almost at the end of the line, but that bit of good fortune was compensated by the fact that he had a 40 minute trip ahead of him. What was worse, he had made this trip five days a week for sixteen years and knew every single house and tree along the route so that it was actually depressing to look out the window. However, today he stared out the window, though he was not earnestly scanning the scenery as any casual onlooker might suppose, because he was so deeply immersed in thought that he wasn't seeing anything.

An accountant making \$18,000 a year could afford a reasonable home, a car, and even a couple of kids but not much else. Above all else Mr. Huttin had always wanted a place to get away to, but not just on a vacation. It had to be a place he could call home. And it was in this, his sixteenth year at Belson's Accountants, that he had finally bought that place, out of the city, which he could truly call a second home. How he had managed to buy it was only one-half the miracle, finding the place was the other. Some company had developed another one of those choice lots of homesites. Of course, Mr. Huttin had never intended to buy. Merely, he had gone to look and feed his lifelong yearning. When the salesman had begun to drag him around from one site to another, Mr. Huttin had deftly fed him all the perfect points he had ever dreamed of. And while the salesman continued his surely hopeless task, Mr. Huttin had enjoyed the near heavenly scenery, taken deep breaths of the fresh air in the hopes of preserving at least the memory when he returned to the city; and he had basked in the total carelessness that was the country. Finally, he had looked at his watch and seen that it was time to go and had raised his head to tell the salesman, and then every last wisp of air had been driven from his lungs.

There it was! He had stood staring, oblivious to everything, for a ridiculously long time, for it is not every man that confronts his dream in reality. The lot was a gently sloping field set amidst woods on all sides that would forever guard his privacy. At the bottom of the hill was a great arm of the even greater lake, which was out of sight and with it the hubbub of humanity. Across the arm of water was a more steeply rising wooded hill, a bulwark against everything not meant to be seen in such a setting as this. And in the distance, rising against the forever ocean blue sky was a larger hill wearing a beautifully rounded grass knoll as a crown. At this point in the evening, the sun formed a great red jewel as it

sat in place above the crown.

He had bought it right then and there, not giving even a passing thought as to how he could afford it. It was just one of those rare moments when a man knows exactly what he wants and nothing else matters.

A hiss of brakes, a glance at his watch, and Mr. Huttin was up walking down the aisle. He walked briskly through the crowded station, indifferently squeezing through the crowds with the minimum amount of contact that comes with long practice. Then, he was on a bus and had arrived at his destination five blocks and five minutes later. Passing through the tall crystal doors, he said good morning to the doorman and stopped a moment wondering at the sudden silence. The din of the city's traffic never seemed loud when one was in it, for the mind tends to tune down such obtrusive noises. However, once out of it, the difference can be heard, though even this was relative since Mr. Huttin's ears were accustomed to the level of clattering produced by a battery of typewriters.

He reached his desk, finally, and checking his watch noted that the new train schedule got him into his office five minutes early. He leaned back easily in his chair and allowed his mind to wander, and it floated to the inevitable.

Tonight they would leave. It would be the first time they had actually stayed in their new second home. Building it, or rather finding the money for building it, had been another of those impossible feats that determined men can always arrange. The house was still small according to the plans, although Mr. Huttin had insisted on waiting till it was finished before seeing it. And that would be tonight.

"Come on, Huttin," a voice, soon identified as that of one of the vice-presidents, intoned, "8:30; time to get to work."

Every morning the exact same words, Mr. Huttin thought. "But my house doesn't have any clocks," he said aloud. For this he had insisted. The only clocks he would follow when in his second home would be the rise of the sun in the morning, and it taking its place on the crown of the hill at night.

And now he began to hate the clocks.

All his life, it seemed, he had done everything "on schedule." Always a glance at a wall clock, a check of the wristwatch, but tonight he would know what it is to be free of that man-made abstraction of time.

He got to work sluggishly, for all time now had slowed to a near halt just to taunt him. He checked his watch every five minutes only to see that a mere four minutes had passed. Remembering that time is, after all, only in the mind, he purposely drove it from his thoughts so as to allow it to pass normally again. When he finally checked, he virtually hissed at his desk clock. He checked it, shook it; it *had* to be running slow. He prayed for interruptions to take his mind off the time. He paced. He went for a drink. He went to the washroom. He went for another drink. And at last time surrendered.

He was on the train home! He kept thinking of that. His wife and kids would be at the station, the car packed, and they'd be on their way. However, now it was the train's turn, and it moved magnificently slowly. The people getting off at each station seemed to pause purposely just to add another minute to the trip. But the train, too, lost in the end as it pulled into the station with a mournful squeal of brakes.

Mr. Huttin ran to his car to beat the rush. He got in, absentmindedly kissed everyone hello, and urged: "Go. Go."

The trip up was a heart-racing dream. He scarcely paid any attention to what went on. He stared out the window half the time and sat with eyes closed the rest and never noticed the difference. He kept picturing the noisy, smog-filled city, running forever on its repeating timetable, receding into the distance behind him. He had hardly ever left that world of masonry and people before and just to be out was like fresh air to a suffocating man. He caught himself looking at the car clock and vowed that while they were in the country, he'd never check it again. And his watch? Well, that could be locked in a dresser drawer and never seen again. In the mornings he would sleep 'till it pleased him to get up. They would eat when they were hungry, go to bed when they were tired, do everything on their own time.

Now, he noticed, it was getting hilly. Ohhh, I hope we get there before dark, he thought. It became a passion now. His heart beat in his ears. Hurry, he thought, hurry; before it's dark. A familiar landmark. Another. The next hill must be . . .

They were there.

His racing heart held a moment. His heavy breathing suspended itself in mid-breath. He had arrived in time. The crown of the hill wore its

jewel in a display which turned a ruby to sand. The sun was a deep red fireball casting pieces of itself in all directions, those shining beams reflecting from every cloud and particle of dust. Nothing could compare. . .

Mr. Huttin's heart froze. There was a sound far off. "Could it be?" he muttered. It grew louder and he lashed at it with every atom of his brain. "No—No—," he cried in animal desperation, for the half-heard tolling was very clear now, and it was all the more terrible for its casual familiarity. It was the insistent ringing of his double-bell alarm clock.

Mr. Huttin opened his eyes and was hit by the blinding flash of the sun coming through his window. He quickly turned off the alarm and buried his face in his pillow in an attempt to recall his dream; a strange dream he felt he had had before but could never remember. A moment later, however, he gave up as his wife shook him awake cautioning him not to be late. He then wearily stumbled into the washroom and began a ritual, which he was really very proud of for it did the most possible activities in the least amount of time. . .

ME 'N ANNA KARENINA
.....LIVIN' IN THE FAST LANE .....

Radley Gomez Metzger

I was just nineteen and sort of dumb
when Anna came along
wearing white polyester shorts and a quiana top
made for slipping off

Cheri had split town, for sights unknown'
and leaving this place with a bad rep
and an aroma of cheap perfume
from K-Mart

So Anna and I we get it on
behind the desk and up the creek
Sometimes we left in the afternoon
to explore the broom closets

Anna's got a husband in Cuhayoga County
and a kid in Reform school
but I don't care
I've got rhythm

So Anna makes hay
and I sow oats
And we get our daily quota of fiber
Real good for our systems

I was twenty when Anna went back
to her cross-eyed lover
on the other side of the tracks
I cried her a river

ON THE RUN

Cynthia DeMarcus

She was tired. Weeks had passed with no change. She had realized it would take time to make new friends, adjust to a new area, but she had retained her vision of a charged academic atmosphere, vibrant with discussion, new ideas, and controversy.

Last week, overcoming her fear of talking in class, she had raised her hand.

"I think Dreiser is portraying the conscience of a criminal in Paul. Paul seems to have the amorality and inability to perceive a situation from others' viewpoints that—"

"Criminal! One theft does not justify the label of a thief! I feel you are missing the point entirely. He's a victim of chance. Let's look at another point in the story."

"I honestly feel . . .," surfaced in her mind but never exploded as the teacher continued his lecture. She felt as if a bird of anger lay within her, wanting to fly out and beat its wings against that professor's brick-walled mind. Worse, was the thought that this was only one more example of the one-sidedness, the "cram-down-their-throats-your-opinion-as-fact" syndrome of all her classes.

Two days ago, Dr. Browne had handed back their geography exams. She questioned the D given her for a small red check on the fifth-page margin. The class snickered. He rewrote the essay on the board differently than on the test day, as ambiguously worded as ever. Why hadn't she listened to Mary's advice and dropped the class?

"Browne? Let me tell you, it's not how you do on his tests. You have to talk to him, sit up front, wear a dress occasionally."

"Brown nosing, that's brown nosing. I won't do that!"

"But you have to. No one does well on the tests. He doesn't read them. Ask Linda, anyone who's had him—I pursued him, acted sort of innocently seductive, said I had to get a B. I made C's in the class but he gave me a B. If you don't want to do that forget it."

But she had not really believed this possible. Other students would contest Dr. Browne's arbitrary grades. He would be forced to play fair. Only her classmates seemed to regard her agitation as funny and pointless. Ron in the next seat whispered,

"Forget it. The whole geography department stinks. I don't care

anymore."

Now she sat in Modern Civilization chewing her Bic pen, twisting occasionally, looking up with a start when Dr. Schwartz brought up the evils of technology,

"Just look at technology. What has it accomplished? They've sent men to the moon, they've walked on the moon and found an environment hostile to human life. So they had to keep the men in a life-supporting womb, tied to their spacecraft by an umbilical cord. When people are born they are enclosed in just such a womb and tied to their mother by just such an umbilical cord. Now how far has technology brought us? No farther than the day we were born."

What in the hell did he expect of them? To swallow this, the most illogical garbage she had ever heard?

She didn't feel sick though, until she looked over the intent wave of faces. Where were the radical students she had hoped to admire and emulate? Kids who would challenge. Kids who were skeptical. She had hoped to identify with a group of kids who thought for themselves, were ready to change the evils about society that confounded her. At least a protest or two? She sighed.

Then she stood up and walked out. Breathing with difficulty, she descended the hallowed steps of the academic institution she was growing to hate. Hunched over on a flaking bench, her all-too-familiar daydream brought escape for a minute:

She takes off her pink sweater and gray pants and slips into jeans, an army jacket and t-shirt.

Twenty minutes later she closes the front door, suitcase in hand. She catches the city bus to Carlisle's Greyhound station, where the first in the long line of buses she knows are necessary to take her to San Francisco awaits her.

She'll find peace, Flower Children, freaks, long hair and blue shades, people who hate the way things are as much as she does. . .

It won't work. She smiles sadly. How ironic that she wasn't born ten years earlier when at least she could have joined people who tried, and people who still cared.

1994

Mark Murray

It happened about ten years ago. I'll never forget it. I was about three years old. Even though it has been a long time and I was very young, I'll never forget that one night. It seems like yesterday.

You see, this one clear, blue, night there was no moon. It was gone. The moon had disappeared! Nobody could figure it out. On TV that night Walter Cronkite, Jr., opened his national newscast by saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the moon is gone." That's the way it was. I mean, this *really* messed everybody up. It's pretty bad when we can't find the goddamn moon!

The effect of the moon's absence on the rest of America was not unlike the effect it had on my family. My father, a thoughtful kind of guy, was particularly upset about the situation. He was preparing to take some Kodak 35 millimeter color slides of the moon on the following night. *Now* he didn't know what the hell to do with the film. He said he would try to get his money back. That was important, money. The pictures were to have been for my history scrapbook.

My mother cried.

My brother was very upset about the missing moon. He was seventeen at the time; a high school student who was "concerned" about the world and would do whatever he could to solve the "situation." He never explained what the situation was, at least not to me or Mom and Dad. At the time I can remember wondering if the "situation" didn't have more to do with *him* rather than the externalities that he alluded to.

My brother's girlfriend was not affected at all. She was not a close follower of contemporary events. She was not a close follower of anything, except my brother. The girl was a real space cadet. She signed up for the cadets in high school. It was a special space cadet program called R-O-S-C: a reserve team, designed to allow high school students to pretend that they were important to our nation's defenses. The program provided the students with uniforms, prestige, shiny medals, and neat

things to say like, "March, two, three, four."

Then there was my white nanny. It was very fashionable at that time for a mother to employ a white nanny. Mine was named Fanny, Fanny Nanny, and I loved her. She was wonderful to me. She was very upset about the moon. She loved the moon. She also loved black and white TV, sales tax, and the smell of kitty litter.

Right after Walter Jr.'s, broadcast on TV, the neighbors came running over from next door to see if we had heard the news. This was especially amazing to me because our neighbors had never "run over" for anything before. They had lived there for fifteen years and never even borrowed the proverbial cup of sugar. All they could do was keep repeating, "What are we going to do without the moon? What *are* we going to do?"

"I don't know, but you always take something for granted until it's gone," my father said. He was always great with profound statements. I remember at the end of the third world war he said, "Boy, am I glad that's over."

This was a very special time in our country's history. People said that they would always remember the day the moon was gone. They would always remember where they were and how they first heard the news. After all, this is great material for grandma and grandpa stories. That is, of course, if anyone cared to listen to Grandma and Grandpa.

For about a week after the moon had gone, the radio and TV was just awful: nothing but moon stories, 24 hours. I got real sick of it. I couldn't even watch my favorite cartoons. At that time I thought the moon business was really screwing up my life. My parents sat there in front of the TV in a brainwashed glare for about fourteen days. It kind of bothered me to see them in such a trance. Everytime I suggested we do something else, my father would say, "Shut up and sit down and watch this. Can't you see this is important, son?"

One night the President came on the tube to apologize about not taking credit for the missing moon like all of the rest of the countries. The United States was the only nation in the whole world that hadn't said that they had kidnapped the moon and were responsible for the entire event.

The President came on the television and appeared very nervous.

Sweat was running down his face just like in the pictures of Nixon when he came on TV to lie. This guy probably had a right to be nervous, since he had only been President for four days. The other President, whatshisname, had been assassinated by Patsy somebody. This guy had been the next in line for the Presidency. He looked squarely into the TV camera and said, "Hey man, I'm sorry. We screwed up, ya know? I mean, how was we ta know that everybody would be takin' credit for da moon. Hell, I didn't even know the damn thing was gone 'till I read about it in the paper. So just get off my back! O-K? For sure."

My parents discussed the missing moon at supper for weeks. One night in particular my mother said, "How could something that we, as a *world*, looked up to every night be suddenly taken from us?"

"It's shocking and unexpected isn't it, dear?" my father said. "After all of these years it just disappears like that. A person could always have faith in the moon. It was just always there every night. What's left to believe in?"

Of course all of the good 'ol American songs with the word "moon" in them had to be re-written. "Moon" was substituted with geographically the next closest thing, "earth." So now we sang, "In the Misty Earthlight," "When the Earth Comes Over the Mountain," "Earth River," "Earth Over Miami," and in nursery school I was taught that the "Cow jumped over the Earth." It was a little awkward at first; but we all got used to it. You see, we weren't allowed to say any name for something that didn't exist. The "moon" was gone, so we had to strike the word "moon" from our vocabularies. It was the law: accepted, unquestioned, done. We were never allowed to say things like, "God." Heavens, no!

You know, I was starting to talk when I was around three years old; around the time that all of this moon business was going on. Sometimes, as with all small children, I had great difficulty in forming my words. My tongue would often get in the way. Unintelligent jibberish would flow freely from my small mouth. I remember that, at the time, my parents were trying to teach me how to talk about the moon, so I would appreciate and respect its absence, even though I was too young to understand it.

They would say the words for me over and over. I would try to repeat

them. It was sort of like training a Myna bird to talk. The bird doesn't have any idea what you are doing but mimmicks everything you say. Well, with me it was the same way. But I would often slur, slobber, and mispronounce the words. I didn't have any idea what my parents were talking about. They would tell me to repeat what they said about the moon. I tried, I really tired.

"See my moon," I would say.

"No, No, Mark," my parents would say. Then they would repeat the words and make me try it again, over and over.

"See my *moon*," I kept saying.

"No, No, Mark," they corrected, "It's *Sun Yung Moon*."

LINES OF SOLITUDE

Nathan Harter

The winds without which batter at my cell
And strive to fill the stagnance of this hell
Know no surrender as mine ears have found,
Long training, straining, for a gentler sound
Than prison's all-consuming solitude.
To these blind eyes dawn's rising would be rude,
But, O, that splendor to my soul is life
Without which mere survival proves a strife
Too dear for engaging. Brethren, we,
Who weep at chains and live for Liberty!

A PROPOSAL MERELY

Tanya Beyer

My country is near the Pole, so that snow is common, as are rocks and ponds, and showery rivers, and a few trees that sprout from under a snow-pack and stretch to be tremendous—spruce and fir, birch, poplar and pine.

Glaciers laid those rivers over rocks which the same glaciers shoved south and split, so that flowing water bumps and stumbles nowadays. Where the ponds and lakes are, the glaciers scooped the country or else died and the vast left-overs stayed on the site. The rocks have hollows or thin scars which the glaciers raked in passing. At home I can think about ice as tall as a town and wide as a boulevard; about rocks shifting and stacking, shining bare, and about later ice made with rain and seasonal cold, clutching those rocks that the juice of volcanoes hardened to build much earlier. I switch to the cracks that happened because of the coldness and the heat, the water and ice and even the wind, and to the sand made by water crumbling sharp rock lips where a break by a gale or a tilt of earth pulled two rocks apart, and I think further to small live cells, spores come out of another country on one of the winds. I know that the spores fell into the cracks of sand and made soil by the pushing of their wee wiry roots and then by the rotting of their green bodies, and I understand that lichens allowed mosses room; mosses allowed herbs, herbs shrubs, and shrubs fir and pine, poplar, birch and spruce. That was the long creation of my country, and it is older than any city, every city, and sometimes when squirming between its boughs or marching over its rock which was born with all the world's first rock, I sing or gabble or bound, only because I am there with the trees and cold and rain-storms.

In my country when a lake has no stream roiling it, filling it or taking from it, the birches and firs, pine, spruce and poplar, with other plants like tamarack, alder, sweetgale or ninebark all cause the lake to wither. Wood and foliage dribble into the lake without rest, and the muck piles closer and closer to the lake's top while lilies, calla and rushes move out to feed themselves out of the muck. The lake is to be soil, yet

low soil where water stays, and small trees like the black spruce and tamarack, shrubs like Labrador tea, bog rosemary and arborvitae arise and grow thin and tipping over. Insects enjoy the sunken place with its wet air, birds hunt the insects, and hawks take birds. Frogs chirp in the pools, and I can come too.

I was told that the swamp is a lively spot, and I bring a book that pictures the plants of my country. I have been lying down. This is the sundew in front of my lips; here are the sweet beads of gum which the insects taste and stick to. With my thorough book I have met the sundew whose neighbors are pitcher plants, drowning insects with leafy pitchers of rain. I am jumping up and grinning. I am focused on the cobalt sky with its broken little yellow clouds; and I am certain that God has his warm palm on me, the sundew and the pitcher plant.

Many times, anywhere, I know nothing. I cry. There are no curving cliffs with gashes whose making I understand, no rubbish tumbling into a lake, about which I can predict: tomorrow—a bog. I forget sundew and pitcher plants hiding by the soil, catching insects while photosynthesis occurs on every side.

I want, above all, a gale, a snow curtain and ranting water, accompanied by a thunder—"You are important!"



SECOND TIME AROUND

JoAnn Gocking

"... cloudy and colder today, high about thirty-five. Snow likely tonight and tomorrow, lows in the mid-twenties, highs in the low thirties..."

Lynne clicked the radio off and jammed a Streisand cassette into the tape deck. It was snowing lightly and traffic on the expressway was crawling. Why hadn't she taken the train? At this rate, it would be noon before she made it to the office. And today, of all days, when they were supposed to meet with the client on that new Texas account. She shifted impatiently into gear, inched the tiny sports car forward a few feet, and then stopped. The road was wet, and cars were bumper to bumper. Jerking the gear shift angrily into neutral, she rammed up the volume on the car stereo. "They'll just have to start the meeting without me," she thought.

#

"I'm sorry our Ms. Garrett isn't here to show you this work herself, Mr. Jackson." Larry Kirk was stumbling all over himself in an attempt to appear apologetic. "But I can show you the sample scripts myself, and I'm sure she'll be here shortly to answer any questions you might have." Breathlessly, Larry tugged a handkerchief from his coat pocket and nervously began to wipe his plump, pink face.

Jackson leaned back in the swivel chair and tossed the sheaf of papers across the narrow table. "I don't think that will be necessary, Mr. Kirk," he drawled. "These look good enough to me. This Garrett woman is one hell of a writer, that's for sure."

Larry smiled and looked relieved. "Yes, Garrett is one of our best." He glanced at his watch. "And she's usually very punctual."

Jackson stood up. "Well now, I can always meet the lady tomorrow." He smiled broadly. "I think we're going to be seeing a lot of each other, Mr. Kirk."

Larry was beaming. "Yes sir, Mr. Jackson, whatever you say." He glanced at his watch again. "I don't know what could be keeping Ms.

Garrett. But I guess we'd better go. I want you to meet Mr. Bernelli."

"Bertelli? And who might that be?"

"Bernelli. Mario Bernelli. He's a producer with Windy City Sound, the studio that's handling all the music and production for this ad campaign. Mr. Bernelli will be working quite closely with Ms. Garrett and myself in this entire operation."

#

Lynne finally made it to the offices of Bradenton and Kirk Advertising around ten-fifteen, missing Larry and Jackson by about ten minutes. As usual, the phone was ringing in her office and Marci, her secretary, was nowhere to be seen.

"Yes? Hello. Lynne Garrett speaking," she sputtered breathlessly into the phone.

"Brian! What are you doing, calling me at work? You're supposed to be in court." She tossed her briefcase on the desk and began struggling to remove her coat with one hand while juggling the phone with the other.

"Honey, there's no way I can meet you for lunch today. I got hung up in traffic and just got in and I missed the meeting with the client from Texas. Besides, I've got tons of work to do, and Larry would have my head if I told him I'm taking a long lunch with my husband. He's probably going to shoot me anyway for missing the meeting." She plopped into the big chair behind the desk.

"I'm sorry too, Babe, but there's no way today. Okay, I'll see you later. Yeah, me too. Bye."

Lynne hung up the phone with a sigh. The receptionist had said Larry and Jackson had just left for the production studio, so they wouldn't be back for awhile. In the meantime, she'd better get some work done. She clicked on the typewriter, and sat leafing through pages of copy while it hummed softly. "All right," she muttered. "I hear you. Trying to tell me to get to work, huh?" Chuckling, she inserted a blank page in the machine and began to peck away.

Lynne had been typing industriously for some time, when the door to her office flew open and Larry stormed in.

"Garrett! Where in the hell were you this morning?!" His normally pinkface was turning even redder. "You were supposed to be here at nine o'clock for the meeting with Jackson. I had to run the whole damned thing by myself!"

Lynne's head jerked up, her fingers poised in mid-air. "Calm down, Larry. I got hung up in traffic and didn't get in until after ten. I'm sorry I couldn't make the presentation." She leaned forward on the typewriter and smiled. "But it sounds like you didn't need me. Marci told me that Jackson bought it."

Larry was beginning to regain his normal color. "Yeah," he smiled, "I guess you didn't need to be here. Your copy sold itself. Jackson gave us the go-ahead, and we're to start as soon as possible."

Lynne clicked off the typewriter. "I'm just about finished with this stuff for Bergner's. If you want, I can start the Jackson campaign this afternoon."

"That would be great," said Larry. "First of all, you're going to have to get together with our producer, so you might as well do that today."

"Yeah, sure. So who are we working with this time?"

"Windy City Sound. A guy by the name of Bernelli's going to be our producer. I told him to expect you over today or tomorrow."

Lynne sank back in her chair, a shocked expression on her face. "Bernelli? Not . . . Mario Bernelli . . . ?"

"Yeah," Larry looked puzzled. "What's the matter? You know the guy? Is he a lousy producer, or what?"

"No, no," said Lynne quickly. "He's a great producer."

"So . . . what's the trouble?"

"Oh, no trouble," said Lynne. "He's just my ex-husband!"

"Your what?" yelled Larry. "I didn't know you'd been married before!"

"It was a long time ago," said Lynne dryly. "As they say, I was young and foolish."

"Well," said Larry, "you two are going to be working together now, so I hope it was an amicable divorce."

"Actually, no. But I think I can handle it. I'll get over there as soon as I finish this."

"That's great. And if you don't make it back, I'll understand," he grinned.

"If that's supposed to be funny, it's not working."

"Okay, okay. I'll see you later." He ambled out the door.

Lynne leaned back and sighed. Working with Mario! He'd never thought she was good enough to do any real work. Besides, her writing was kid stuff, he said. It was the kind of stuff they printed in those two-bit women's magazines. Wait until he found out she was writing for the second largest advertising agency in Chicago, probably making more money than he was! Wouldn't that be a blow to his precious male ego!

Lynne stood up and flicked a button on the desk intercom. "Marci, I'm going over to Windy City Sound. If I'm not back by four, leave any calls with my answering service and I'll get them at home."

"Yes, Ms. Garrett. Shall I call Mr. Bernelli and let him know you're on your way over?"

"No, Marci, that won't be necessary," said Lynne, with a smile. "I think he should be expecting me."

It was still snowing as Lynne pulled out of the parking garage, and the street was getting slicker. "Damn," she thought, "This place would be on the other side of town." As she eased the car into the street, her mind again drifted back to Mario.

She'd told Larry it had been a long time ago. But it hadn't been that long. She still had not forgotten how stubborn he was, or how foolish she'd been. For five years she had been Mrs. Bernelli or Mario's wife, but never just plain Lynne Bernelli. She had a college degree, but her husband wouldn't allow her to use her skills. People did the craziest things when they thought they were in love. But it had finally reached the point where love was not enough. Friends sometimes asked her if she'd left Mario for another man. "No," she told them, "I left him for a woman—me."

The orange sign in front said "Windy City Sound," but the place didn't look much like a sound studio. Of course, none of the Chicago studios were quite as impressive-looking as the ones in L.A. But it was the quality of the finished product that was most important, and Mario Bernelli was one of the best producers in town.

He is one of the best, Lynne kept reminding herself as she strode through the glass doors and paused to look around. She spied a receptionist behind a glass panel at the end of the room.

"Excuse me. I'm Lynne Garrett from Bradenton and Kirk Advertising. Can you tell me where to find Mr. Bernelli?"

The blonde behind the panel glanced up from her People magazine. "Studio Three. Down that hall there and to your right."

"Thanks." Lynne turned and started down the narrow hallway. On either side were swinging doors with tiny windows. When she reached the one marked Studio Three, she peered through the glass. The studio was bare, except for an old grand piano. Seated at it, with his back to the door, was a man wearing headphones and scribbling on some sheets of music. Lynne slowly pushed open the door.

"Mr. Bernelli?"

The man at the piano took off the headphones and turned around. "Lynne!"

Lynne smiled. "Hello, Mario."

"Larry Kirk told me he'd be sending over the best writer in his house to go over that Jackson campaign." He grinned. "I didn't know he'd be so good-looking, though."

Lynne laughed. "Still the same old sexist, aren't you, Mario?"

"Some things never change." He motioned toward an adjacent stool. "Have a seat. Sorry they're not the most comfortable chairs that we've got, but they're the only ones in here."

Lynne pulled the stool over and perched on the edge. "I knew you'd gone into business for yourself, but I didn't know that this was your outfit."

"Yeah, this is it. It's all mine and the finance company's." Mario leaned back against the piano. "We're no competition for the Record Plant yet, but we're doing all right. Say, from what I hear, you're doing pretty good, too."

"It all depends. What do you hear?"

"Only that you're the best damned writer at one of the biggest agencies in town, and that some of your stuff's even gone national. You've done some very impressive work, lady."

"I didn't think I'd ever hear Mario Bernelli say that."

"Huh?" said Mario. "Say what?"

"That I could write." Lynne stood up and walked over to the sound booth.

Mario twirled around on the piano stool. "Hey, I said some things never change, but then again, some things do." He plunked out a scale on the piano. It echoed in the large empty room. "Sometimes we learn from our mistakes."

Lynne was silent for several minutes, staring intently at Mario's

reflection in the glass window of the sound booth. Then she turned toward Mario and spoke. "Do we . . . really?"

"Yeah, Linnie. We really do." Mario smiled. "Did you hear, I'm getting married next month? She's a really super girl, a model named Gina Phillips."

"I'm happy for you, Mario."

"It took me a long time to get over you, you know." He was not smiling now. "I thought I couldn't live without you. But I made it. And I also realized what a fool I'd been to let you go in the first place. This time I'm going to do it right. Gina's not giving up her career unless she wants to."

"I'm glad to hear you've changed your views on working wives," Lynne smiled wryly.

Mario laughed softly. "Let's just say I've mellowed in my old age." He picked up a pencil and began scratching in the margins of the music before him.

"Mario?"

"Huh?" He looked up at Lynne, standing at the end of the piano.

"I'm really, truly glad things are going well for you now."

"Thanks Linnie." His brown eyes searched her face, questioning. "Things are good with you, too?"

Lynne nodded. "Things are very good with me." She smiled.

"I'm glad." Mario grinned. "Well, now that we've got that out of the way, what do you say we get to work, Ms. Garrett?"

Lynne picked up her briefcase and plopped it on the piano. "Sure thing, Mr. Bernelli. Let's get to work!"

AS I SOJOURN

Nathan Harter

The swelling wake which spreads its foamy wings
    Unto the pale blue cosmos of the sea
    Bears home the many prayers I've prayed for thee.
Late hours, on calm, pacific evenings
    When clouds encompass all mine eyes survey,
    I stand along the railing in the spray
And drop my drowsy head in offerings
To whatever gods will get me home.

I could fling my wealth into the abyss
    Which everywhere resolves to swallow me;
    I could abandon my integrity,
Whate'er the cost to once more know thy kiss.
    Should kissing ever bear the price of blood,
    I know my blood would perish for the good.
And if 'tis death wherein we find our bliss,
Then gladly shall I throw me to the foam.

How cold the wind! How quickly tempests flare!
    Long dashes of lightning spark and die
    Against the dismal canvas of the sky,
And more and more I merely stand and stare
    Through storm or quiet washing of the wave
    In cherished mem'ries I shall always save,
In stupid wonder and in earnest prayer
And fervent hopes that I return to thee.

The tears we shed upon that distant shore
    Now mingle in the movement of the tide;
    And, oh, the spirit of peace has died
To want a resurrection evermore.
    Thus, on the briny wings which sweep away,
    I send my love and all this heart can pray,
And in each swell are tears my eyelids wore
Before they tumbled downward to the sea.

THE LAST GAME

Butch Clark

As a child Kyle liked to play with the other children on the block. The favorite game at the time was Army, a game in which two opposing "teams" would stalk the countryside looking for the other side, and shoot them with their toy rifles and pistols. Kyle like this game especially, because he was usually the one to take the fate of his country in his hands and undertake daring missions against unspeakable odds. He always felt he belonged when he played this. He was a leader, and the rest of the boys and girls would look up to him in a time of despair. This feeling was planted strongly in his mind, and, though he could never actually remember why, he always felt a certain love for war.

By the time he was thirteen, he had read practically every book on the World Wars. He knew the names of particular battles, numbers of casualties, and all the types of weapons used. He didn't outgrow the reading madness and eventually started writing books about true and fictional occurrences.

So let us now join him but three short hours before his death . . .

. . . Kyle Caldeth stopped not ten feet from the open doorway of the Convention Center. The collection of WW I relics had been touring the nation for nearly three months now. Each piece was carefully packed and unpacked by highly paid "servants of history." They knew the invaluable meaning of these old, rugged, often rusted and stained rifles and pistols.

They also carted out rafts of yellowish pictures that were on the verge of crumbling in their laminated plastic encasements. Most of the pictures were a testament to mankind, to end its warfare. They captured obscene scenes of total destruction and turmoil. Men missing arms and legs were common. A favorite picture at the time was a shot of an empty trench on the French front. Kyle examined the photo intensely. He was glad he could get in the room before the official opening. He didn't feel rushed by a line of impatient mothers and their anxious children. He could take all the time he wished. He peered deep into the frame and saw everything as it was so many years ago. The lonely men and their pitiful wounded were captured forever.

He felt a tingling sensation on the back of his neck. He could have really been a leader then. He could have come home a hero, when most

lay in France either dead or dying. The sensation came back again only stronger this time. His vision blurred and finally diminished. He thought he felt himself hit the floor, but he wasn't sure . . .

. . . Kyle shook his head slowly as to restore clear sight. He was lying in mud that covered his field jacket; his rifle was half buried nearby. Whatever hit him had surely . . . Field jacket? Rifle?

He looked around madly, not sure he could handle what he thought he might see. There in front of him was the door to the officer's hole; a small underground room used behind the trenches in the First World War. He cast a glance to the right. There was a body a few hundred yards away. It was in the trench. He looked to the right. There was a small animal scampering away from him. It was in the trench. Finally he looked behind himself. There was a huge open space. Directly in front of him and again about a half a mile beyond was roll upon roll of barbed wire; and on the other side of that was the enemy. HE was in the trench.

His head spun. He faintly remembered a similar sensation before but he couldn't quite place it.

His next thought was to find somebody. He ran to the right. As he approached the body, he at once realized the smell. A sort of liquid stretch hung ten feet in the air. There was no escaping it. It smelled of rotten eggs, rootten wood, and decaying flesh. His stomach heaved as he neared the sprawled body. The head was missing and tendons hung from the ripped neck. Its uniform was hard from dried blood, and one boot was missing. Kyle staggered past it, stopping to support his weight against an upright beam. They were used to keep the dirt from falling in the trench. He coughed and spat out the material from his mouth. Again, venturing on, he came upon a man sitting up against the wall. Excitedly he sped to the man and tapped the soldier on the shoulder. The man moved minutely. Kyle grabbed the arm and shook. With a flurry of mud and tears, Kyle scrambled back from the figure. He had been touching a dead man; a man totally void of life.

Kyle stumbled back, falling on a pile of rubber suits. They were used for protection against gas warfare.

Pressing onward, he noticed his legs had begun to get irritated. The walking in the mud-caked pants had taken its toll. His underarms, too, felt the effect. The grit on his hands was more of a mental burden than an actual physical one.

At the bend of the trench was another soldier. He was walking. Kyle rushed toward the man. As Kyle got closer, he noticed with horror that

the man was bleeding profusely from his abdomen. As he clutched his stomach, the man saw Kyle and reached out for help. Kyle was only twelve feet away when the soldier fell. Kyle ran blindly from the soldier.

All at once there was a heavy explosion, followed by another, and another. The ground shook. His legs trembled as dirt piled in around him. Another smell filled his lungs, the smell of garlic or horseradish. Once again his memory served him. He must be in the presence of mustard gas. A burning sensation filled his throat. His arms burned also. He had to get back to those rubber suits he had seen a few minutes ago.

Stumbling over canteens and mess kits, he saw the suits only a few hundred yards away. His pace slowed down though when his lungs began to burn. He dropped to his knees, but forced himself to stand. Stumbling forward, he felt his chest grow tight.

There were only fifteen feet left now. He dropped to his knees once more. His bare arms now were blistered from wrist to elbow from the gas. His weight came crashing down on his left forearm and tore the skin from the blister. He crawled to the pile inch by inch, his breath coming harder and harder as the seconds ticked by. Finally he could go no farther. He laid his head on his raw arm. The dirt in his hair made the wound sting and burn.

He ended up only a few feet from the spot he started from. A boy with a camera was shooting a picture as Kyle lay there in all his agony.

The gas had inflamed his lungs so much that he wished he didn't have to breathe. It had also caused huge blisters on his face and arms. This wasn't what Kyle had dreamed about all his life. He had never really thought of the grim, ungodly actions and situations arising from war. He had not thought of the pain and suffering, for when he was shot before, all he had to do was get up and start a new game. Kyle was now at the end of his games. He took his last breath in his last game . . .

. . . The hired mover had never noticed the body in the popular photograph of the trench. He always thought it was an empty trench, but there it was in black and white; the body of a man in a field jacket, with his head on his arm.

Ten minutes later he found the body of a young reporter lying on the floor. The reporter's position looked strangely familiar, but he couldn't quite place it. As he lifted the man's head from his arm, he noticed small blisters on the journalist's arm and face . . .

HELLEN

Teena Welker

As Hellen lay weakly on her bed, she traced the pattern of the big blue quilt. It made her remember her mother with feelings of love. And then she felt the resentment.

"Why do we have to move again?" an eight-year-old Hellen cried. "Why did you leave me here all alone?" she asked her mother, but of course no one heard. Her mother had died two years earlier, and her father's restlessness and fleeting desperation kept Hellen and her older brother on the road from home to home. None of the houses they had lived in were nice, by any one's standards. This time, Hellen's father promised it would be different. They were going to move into Kentucky Territory and start all over. Her father was going to build their house all by himself. "Maybe this is the last time we'll have to move!" she thought as she pushed the blue quilt into a box for her father to load. On the way to Kentucky, they passed many big plantations, and when they drove by one, there were three children playing in the front yard. The kids were happy and clean and had toys brought back from Europe. Hellen saw their mother come out of the huge plantation house and call them in for dinner. She felt a quick twinge of hate as she watched them run up to the marble-white steps and hug their mother. Hellen made a vow to herself that, since she could never get her mother back, she would become as rich as these kids. Then she would be happy just like they were.

Hellen remembered when the house was finished in Kentucky. It was crude, but warm and nicer than any place they had ever lived in. Her father said they would stay there as long as Hellen wanted. The land was much more fertile than back in the East, and there was more food to harvest in the fall. Hellen's father was able to buy two cows with the money from the harvest, and the family began to enjoy meat and milk regularly. Her brother and father seemed to be happy and satisfied, but Hellen still thought of the rich children on the plantation. She had to think of a way to get lots of money, somehow!

On Hellen's sixteenth birthday, her father called her a young lady. She certainly didn't feel like a lady. Ladies lived in big houses back East and went to town for their sixteenth birthdays. Her brother, now married, brought her a dress that his wife had made. "Hellen, I picked out this material all by myself! Marie made it especially for you!" he

exclaimed, watching Hellen for signs of approval. Hellen thanked him while she pretended she lived on a plantation back East and had received a dress from Europe as her birthday present. She put on the dress and twirled around the room. Her brother looked at her with delight, seeing how happy the new dress had made her. Meanwhile, Hellen dreamed of meeting a handsome rich man at a party. Her father announced that it was time to begin looking for a husband for Hellen. She heard the plans and ran out of the room. There was no way to meet a rich man if she were to be married soon.

At seventeen, Hellen found herself walking down the steps of her porch on her father's arm to join her husband-to-be. A tear rolled down her cheek as she kissed her dreams of money goodbye. Her groom turned and saw the tear. He reached for Hellen's hand, and looked at her with adoration. Such a serious girl, even on her wedding day! The young man was the son of a successful farmer in Indiana, and Hellen would be going to live there after the ceremony. Hellen's father was jubilant that he had made such a good match for his daughter. Several neighbors congratulated Hellen on her new husband, and noted her long expression. Hellen knew they would be shocked if they knew the real reason for her sadness.

The children came along quickly, almost before Hellen was ready. Her husband did well on his portion of the farm, and was happy to have two sons to help with the work load. A daughter was born two years later. Hellen took the children into town as often as she could, and marched them past the fancy store windows. She would watch the rich women and their children inside being fitted for the newest style clothing. Then Hellen would go home with bulk material and try to sew a reasonable facsimile. She swore never to let her daughter know how much she envied the rich. Hellen tried to make her daughter a dress whenever she had time. The family was happy, and Hellen almost forgot about her dream.

Now she sighed as she sat up to fold the blue quilt covering the bed she lay in. Hellen knew she would never get out of the bed. She was forty-three, and her husband had died four years earlier. Her sons kept close watch over her, and her daughter sat constantly by her side. As Hellen thought over her life, she came to the sudden realization that she had been rich all along. She was loved and cherished, and that was worth more than all the money in the world. Hellen was ashamed that it had taken her forty-three years to figure that out. With tears in her eyes, she handed the folded quilt to her daughter, and lay back on her pillow as her life passed from her.

A FRIEND

Eric Tupper

Another morning crawled inside the doorway where he huddled. The sun, filtered by the mist and the smoke of the two rusty tugs that worked the nearby bay, was not a blinding yellow glare, but rather a dull pale squint that made him rub his eyes and cough away the dampness. The bay weather was the same as it had been for years. It was damp and chilly at night with just enough breeze to stir the black night into shimmering curtains of fog. The day would be the same as the last, and tomorrow would be the same as today. Time never stood still, but yet things never seemed to change, either.

Last night, he had slept in an old doorway, the night before it had been in an abandoned automobile, and the old broken cot in the Benevolent Home was where he slept before that. Unable to imagine even comfort and warmth, he found reality and escape in a stale beer left on the bar at closing or in a last melted swirl of Scotch left by an unknown benefactor.

His day began with a deep cough and a hacking in his hollowed chest. Surely the bay air was killing him, just as was the mixture of escape and necessity that he consumed each night. He was the kind of man you saw when you and your father went down to meet the ferry.

His figure was not frozen every morning; it was only cowering from the cold damp night that disappeared into morning when the fog was burned away. His coat wasn't wool or tweed, but was a melange of patches of old and new. His shoes matched, almost. They both had holes in the cracked leather soles. His eyes were sullen and red, no blue or green or brown showed in them. They were just red, and in the middle of each was a tint of gray the color of modeling clay. He was small but erect. He might have even been a clerk long ago. He probably wore armbands and a visor and worked in a cage. His sooty mane topped a drawn and shrunken face that reflected not even a smile of hope.

As quietly as his yesterday ended, his today began. But his tomorrow did not come. Tonight on the other end of the dock, he groped through the fog, stumbled on a stack of rope, and escaped reality. His bloated body bobbed amid the wormy pilings. They fished him out two days later with a big dull hook.