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THE LANTERN
MAY 1968

Contents

The Man Without a System................. Thomas Miller 1
A Medal for Malcolm...................... The Ghost of Malcolm Kremser 4
On Hearing That Tonya Will Be Married The Ghost of Malcolm Kremser 4
The Black Sea................................. Lance Diskan 5
Odyssey '67..................................... "" "" 5
Second Poem to Chris..................... "" "" 6
Singularity..................................... "" "" 7
Period 5-a began ......................... "" "" 7
long and aching ride...................... Gregory Epler 8
Souvenirs....................................... Gerald Miller 11
My Eschatological Epitaph................ Timothy C. Coyne 14
Discotheque..................................... "" "" 15
Some Borrowed Words...................... "" "" 15
False Breakthrough......................... "" "" 16
Shore Morning................................. "" "" 16
The Beholder.................................... "" "" 17
Thursday Childless......................... "" "" 17
A Most Prominent Role..................... David Burkhardt 18
It Ran Out ...................................... Vicki Van Horn 18
shades of the living...................... "" "" 19
The Dark Night of the Mind II............. "" "" 19
One Step Beyond the Doors................. Gentle Soul 19
(or The Big Fool Finally Looks Around) Gerald Miller 22
b. Jefferson e. 26
A note of thanks to my parents and teachers L. Barry Erb 26
To a dead hippie............................... Linda Richtmyre 28
A Scrap.......................................... "" "" 28
Haiku I The sweet memories................ Sharyn L. Negus 29
II We share the same sun................... "" "" 29
III By the lamp nightly..................... "" "" 29
IV With purple ribbons...................... "" "" 29
V Alone on the sand......................... "" "" 29
Love........................................... Linda DiMauro 29
Haiku No. 30.................................... Mandrake '69 29
Rachel.......................................... W. Eggleston 30
There Is No Present.......................... "" "" 30
Winter Woods................................... W. Johanna Lysinger 30
One Hundred Per Cent Genuine............ Howard Solomon 31
Heaven.......................................... W. Johanna Lysinger 34
Silence Is Like God.......................... Yolanda Roth 34
I soaked up silence ...................... Margaret S. Wright 34
Opened Letter from Whistler Homer, Insaned Assailant

Sol Clutch Rides Tonight
I have seen destruction from far-off
upon that night
That's Weird
Alone
Kathy’s Tune
On Walking Home
The Wheel
Some Excuse, at least
freedom to flap
Awareness
Okay, you guys . . .
you say you dream
Bacci Mia

The Varieties of Religious Experience
---
a photographic essay
drawings
cover design

George Eastburn
“ “
36
36

Gerald Miller
“ “
37
37

Aard
Linda DiMauro
38
38

Howard Solomon
William Norcross
38
39

Mandrake ’69
Linda DiMauro
Lee March
40
41

Barbara Bald
“ “
41
42

Lance Diskan
Robert MacFarland
Linda Richtmyre
42

Foreword

smalch being the unlimited aim of socially interpersonal duplex relationships, aboveboard and on target in the middle of a sandbar on waves of bourbon, we as editors of The Lantern feel and perspire amidst elfin intangibles, giraffes, and tool boxes.

thus, rather than rectifying holy-hanna discombobulated nonsense into chaotic crapchuckle, we as editors of The Lantern permit anything to appear or disappear before your very eyes in the split of a second.

piety and all kidding aside, without aftereffects, side effects, and all effects, we hereby decree that G. M. and B. B., our eminent successors, carry on our nonexistent policies, despite socio-politico calamities and snurds.

furthermore, we wish the best to malice and circumstance as it presently cohabits U. C.; would that the future will bring more chicanery to this, the humble abode of the everlasting "no.” Arouse bananas; you have nothing to lose but your skins.

Thomas Miller
L. Barry Erb
(prophets, seers, and
rebelators to the entire
human race, with the pos-
sible exception of the
Mormons)
The Man Without a System

That I should sit with a blank sheet of paper before me seems to be the story of my life as a student. Such is the case now when I think of what I have learned. Were I a mystic, I might take this as a sign that education possesses some sort of ineffable quality. But I suppose "ineffable" is merely a word used to describe states of dire intellectual bewilderment. It is perhaps tantamount to saying "I give up." When succinct analysis becomes a chore, I am, of course, tempted to plunge into murky realms; I am tempted to take on the language of the mystic, the obscurantist, or the romantic poet. The escapist in me urges me on, but the empiricist in me calls me back. That this struggle between my desire for escape and my desire for learning should at times result in intellectual stagnation does not surprise me. And I have become accustomed to staring at blank pages. Education is a sort of dead end. One thinks, and thinks, and thinks, only to find that thinking is its own worst enemy, that there is a counter to every argument, an answer to every answer, a proposition to negate every proposition. One thinks only to arrive at doubt.

If I should maintain that truth is what I sense, I am left wondering what it is I sense. If I should maintain that truth is what I feel, I am left wondering whether or not my feelings are more reliable than the feelings of others. And if I should maintain that there is no truth at all, I am left wondering why I think, write, wonder, exist. The existentialist will laugh at me, noting my despair. Here I am, a fact-oriented person who despises facts, a philosopher who despairs of philosophy, a more or less systematic writer who disavows all system. Here I am, surrounded by a contemporary, non-mystical "cloud of unknowing." What to do, or even what to say, becomes a problem. So much I can change, and the rest is chance. So much I can love, and the rest is indifference. So much I can care, and the rest is doubt.

In an arbitrary system one could reach conclusions with ease. One might even achieve a sense of accomplishment, a pride in his work. But in devising a system of mathematics or logic, one accepts something as certain to begin with in order to arrive at certainty in the end. Develop all the mathematical and logical systems you like, you are still left with life. You have a world that begs to be understood. You have other people, some of whom accept your system, some of whom reject it. Pity the man so involved with numbers and rules that he forgets what it is to doubt. Certainty, though often pleasing, is cold. A computer can be certain. It takes a man to doubt.

Perhaps the most praiseworthy aspect of contemporary philosophy is its denial of system. The philosopher has awakened from a long and peaceful sleep, the nineteenth century. He is restless and very much alive. Finally he sees that there is a world apart from the self about which he can only hypothesize. Finally he sees that there is a world within the self which must remain a mystery. We are now concerned with empirical fact, libidinal drives, and linguistic nuances at one and the same time. And as the Skinnerian, the Freudian, and the linguistic
analyst make their succinct and highly specialized truth claims, we are left in abeyance, thinking in one way, then the next, but doing very little. "Let's see, shall I be a scientist, a socialist, or a psychoanalyst today?". The confusion has forced some to the irrationalist position of Camus et al. But irrationalism, like nihilism or mysticism, is a dead-end philosophy. While it distrusts reason, it also distrusts life. I question Camus' sobriety, his grandiose indifference, his negativistic view of passion. There is a beauty in passion; it is not always self-destructive.

The world is about due for a new hedonism, an honest, rational hedonism, perhaps a resurgence of the glory that was utilitarianism. Whereas philosophical inquiry ultimately leads to uncertainty, the only thing left is to enjoy life as much as possible, and to do so without seriously injuring the enjoyment of others. One must seek pleasure in the company of others. We have all sorts of deceptive words which seem to work for us. We call loneliness "freedom." We call foolish pride "self-respect." We call the man alone by himself an "individualist." Idle words which perpetuate idle philosophies! I suggest we stop turning to concepts which have been gathering dust in the corners of men's minds for ages. I suggest we turn to one another instead. Such is the essence of the new hedonism I affirm. The man without a system is the skeptical, but rational hedonist. He is a man who needs others much more than he needs a creed. He is a man who seeks pleasure because he has despaired of seeking the truth.

Anyone who has been exposed to the marathon euphemistically termed "a liberal education" will recognize the feeling. One's intellectual endeavors have a tendency to become less and less an integral part of life. Keynes' theories are fine, but what really matters is that coffee went from 5c a cup to 10c a cup this year. Freud is fun to toy around with, but you had better not mention infantile sexuality to your mother-in-law. Igneous and sedimentary rocks have their differences, but in the middle of a race riot one can go through a window as easily as the next. There is the idea, and a justifiable idea it is, that theories are theories and facts are facts. I am reminded of Brian Higgins' poem "A Scholar's Obituary":

Where some lived it up, he lived it down
With a serious wink and a serious frown.
His brain was a litter of broken stands
But the ultimate issues were out of his hands.
His coffin was narrow, his views were wide,
He didn't live much — but he certainly died.

Scholars have considered it their task to provide answers, to draw up hypotheses, to devise systems, in other words, to build an attractive facade for their uncertainties. But the man without a system, while seeking clarity rather than certainty, is forced to conclude in very clear terms that life is a confusing business. On the one hand, there is the practical need for systematization, for order, while, on the other hand, there is the realization the systems limit and inhibit. Systematization entails the identification of causes and effects. But how does one
distinguish cause from coincidence? How does one distinguish effect from happenstance? Perhaps we are living in the throes of chance, all of us, and we pretend that it is order.

There is a vast difference between analysis and theorization. When one says that the verb "to be" is irregular in most European languages, he is analyzing. But when one says that a certain white rat turns left in a T-maze because of positive reinforcement, he is theorizing. When the religionist asserts the "inspiration" of scripture, remind him of logic. When the chemist refers to atomic theory, remind him of empiricism. In any case, beware of the crusader, the propagandist, the missionary, the evangelist; he is the enemy of life. In order to dispel doubt, he ignores it. In order to disavow skepticism, he attacks the skeptic *ad hominem*. In order to avoid hedonism, he invents false moralities, rituals, and rites. Beware of the crusader whether he be a scientist or theologian.

In the past I set out in many different directions trying to formulate a theory that would hold together, something clear, orderly, something with a sort of logic to it. In fact, the thought occurred to me that I might even hit upon something unassailable. Wishful thinking is what it was, for I have found no such theory. My attempts at systematization have failed. Today I am left with a position which is no real position at all. It is an unpredictable, ever-changing, in part, inexplicable position. I am left to questioning everyone, everything, but most of all myself. I am left with dozens of problems, presumably insoluble. Having been pointed in so many directions by so many people, having been exposed to so many different systems of thought, I have only to conclude that there is no one direction in which to go. There is no one truth, no one certainty, no one happiness, no one way of living. So it is I keep looking, studying, satirizing, plodding along across the vast expanse of mildly pleasing chaos we call life. I am a man without a system. I have no creed, no final truth, no ultimate, no absolute, no God.

It seems as though I have rambled on only to arrive at where I started. I said that to end with certainty one must start with certainty, mathematical or logical axioms, for instance. Perhaps I should add that to end with confusion one need only begin with confusion. I am aware, as are my critics, that much of what I have said is oversimplification. I am aware that words like "thinking," "living," "doubting," "system," and "order" mean many things to many men. I am also aware that what I say today I may reject tomorrow. Thoughts come and go. Doubts come and go as well. If you should accept this, my autobiographical rendering of philosophy, all well and good. But if you should reject it, I would not be surprised. "So what does it matter," you ask. "Today he despairs of truth and values doubt. Tomorrow he despairs of doubt and values truth. That's the way these young radicals are." Yes, that is the way we are. We think too much and do not live enough.

THOMAS MILLER
A Medal for Malcolm

Rocks can never be enough to stone the fools. Silence them in the midst of their dissent. Stop, Stop, Stop every pinko commie Judas unfaithful to our wars. They fortunately have no right to mind. Unite for freedom: The rallying cry rises slowly from above the people.

What will Malcolm Kremser do at this point? Once he was alive as a free and equal authentic U. S. citizen, 3½ years after the Great Election he languishes as slave to the Fatherland. Around his head fly posters of Uncle Sam, Dr. Spock, Little Orphan Annie. Recruiting Sergeants sneer and chuckle under their breath as he walks by in a cloud. Five hundred hands of the super Air Force flying floating Naval Enlist reach out and attempt to hide his life away in metal encasements for four years or more. He ends up in a secondary school to serve his country. Malcolm Kremser sincerely, determinedly, patriotically teaches in a cracking, breaking, bursting metropolitan High School that be-speaks its distinctly American environment. The long Arm of the Draft blows upon the scene. "Ha! We've got you now, INGRATE!!!!" roar the beaming Recruiting Sergeants, the super but mildly unhappy Air Force flying floating Naval Enlist, and a friend from the local draft board. Malcolm Kremser thinks and continuously envisions, "Canada. Canada. Canada. Can that be the Land of the Free?", and breaks the long Arm of the Draft. The military gasps. "How could this be? Running from our holy grasp. Mobilize the American Legion, he shall not overcome." Malcolm Kremser swings wide toward Canada. The way is crowded with the National Guard and Reserve units fighting to stay at home. The telegraph wires burst, "Find the lowly dissenter and bring him to Justice with all due speed!" Signed, Your Lord and Master of the S.S. Malcolm Kremser crashes to the underground, grows his hair long, runs upon the path stretching from Thoreau to Ginsberg. The V.F.W. (with that comfortable emphasis on distant Foreign Wars of glory) bombs the path intensely, Malcolm moves out to Harlem, is immediately betrayed by his skin, and escapes only thru diversionary tactics performed by the embittered inhabitants.

At the very end of his sanity, betrayed by his rulers, condemned for his mind, hated for himself, he gives in, is converted to the Military Camp, is immediately shipped to the Southeast of Asia, takes an impersonal arsenal, murders each and anyone on sight who looks like a foreigner, and is widely celebrated and decorated for his good heart. At each day's end, he repeats to himself that he has all of this tremendous American tradition behind him and imagines that the strange-looking foreigners are only Comanche Indians. "In the sight of God perhaps it does appear to be murder and senseless destruction, but I think San Juan Hill, Gettysburg, the Argonne, Yorktown, and Iwo Jima have something to say about that." And Lyndon saw that it was good, and on the seventh day he rested.

THE GHOST OF MALCOLM KREMSER
On Hearing That Tonya Will Be Married

Shocking, searing happiness-in-pain
That grabs my heart, and twists a frightened smile
Out of my incredulous mind.
— She will be married! Tomorrow!

That wide-eyed waif who dazzled me
One summer in the sun, one winter in the fog;
And suffered the wounds of my thoughtlessness.

That child-woman who once upon a time,
In the never-never land of Youth,
Shot into my life the adrenalin of Love.

That sad, mad, vital girl
I wished with all my soul
Would love me as I did worship her.

That trembling spirit of the wind
I tried to catch and hold and tame —
Instead of sailing with her.

That wild-flower of the earth
Who's lived more than her share of pain,
And deserves guiltless, peaceful pollination.

Remember — late at night, or with the dawn —
His love is what I wished for you.

LANCE DISKAN

The Black Sea

Dunes:
Like nipple-barren breasts
Rise from the body of the supple beach,
As it reclines against the Sea.

Water:
Groans in ecstasy at the warmth of his dawn;
Caressing the body of the sand
He thrusts his power onto her cliffs, shores
Into her coves.

LANCE DISKAN
Odyssey '67

I hear you, America
As I race across your breast,
Above the whine of the tires and the roar of the wind
I hear a thousand voices telling a million stories —
Each voice a dab of the liquid landscape of America.

I hear you singing:
Singing Dixieland at The Red Garter in Chicago,
Singing “Ode to Billy Joe” at a diner in Idaho,
Singing the national anthem at Franklin Field in Philly,
Singing.

I hear you crying:
Crying for your mother when you’re lost at Disneyland,
Crying for a 17 year old son, missing at Khe Sahn,
Crying for Coltrane — who will never cry again.
Crying.

I hear you bitching:
Bitching about Reagan and his Right Wing friends,
Bitching about the 90c hamburger at Old Faithful Inn,
Bitching about the war.
Bitching.

I hear you laughing:
Laughing at a television show from a darkened motel room,
Laughing at a dirty joke in a Des Moines bar,
Laughing at the drunk lying on the post office lawn.
Laughing.

I hear you shouting:
Shouting “Keep to the left” as you tell me where to park,
Shouting “Timber” as one more Redwood is gone forever,
Shouting “Peace on Earth” from the curb in Haight-Ashbury.
Shouting.

I hear you praying:
Praying with Billy Graham in a stadium in Kansas City,
Praying in a gymnasium at a Unitarian service in Denver,
Praying at the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City.
Praying.

I hear you, America.
At night, at noon, on the radio, on the street,
In Omaha and Terre Haute and Wheeling and Flagstaff;
You’re telling a story, and I’m listening . . .
Second Poem to Chris

When the blue chill of fear
Creeps through the marrow of my soul;
When I lay on the floor
Shattered by loneliness;
When music turns to noise
And words turn to ashes;
When the world encloses me
In its absurd, imploding womb:
Then I think of Chris
Chasing the mist before her on Big Sur,
Her Spanish face longing to be touched,
Her universal soul waiting to be loved.
I think of Chris,
And cry with joy because she sleeps in my heart,
Cry with pain that I’m only a boy.
She gives me Peace.
I give her only thanks,
Such is the great sadness of my life.

LANCE DISKAN

Singularity

Bolted doors,
Hall lights,
The radio for company.

Past Majority fear should be gone
—Or at least hidden—
But like motherless children I cower,
Afraid!

It’s not the darkness — I love the night.
It’s not the quiet — I prefer silence to sound.
It’s singularity,
That birth-born fear of freedom.
Freedom to walk and fear of falling
Freedom to think and fear of knowing
Freedom to try and fear of failing
Freedom to love and fear of . . . singularity.

So back into a quilt-warm womb I crawl,
Lying fetally —
Screaming for someone to love me.

LANCE DISKAN
Period 5-a began in the left wing of Euteck High School with a chorus of faint hums as three tardy students guided their transpors hurriedly into their respective stalls. Each student’s screen had already begun its self-testing procedure. These, the newest entry in the recent series of teaching machines, needed no one to turn it on, and no one to attend to it other than to make responses to its lectures and questions. However, the machines were already showing their wear. The fresh coat of paint around the selector dials was scratched in neat, concentric circles, and the desk, just before the control panel, was beginning to show metal-against-metal marks. This particular model had been used for just over six months, and everyone was just about accustomed to its operation.

HISTORY P/5-A; 301 QWERTYUIOPASDFGHJKLZXCVBNM....+

The computer was finishing its “waking-up” exercise and was ready to begin. The screen snapped dark and the audio-only lecture began.


"William (Billy) James (no accompanying number, of course) was a boy of seven, physiologically and mentally normal for his age and occupied with the usual seventh-year interests. He first attended school about this time and to his delight, he enjoyed this experience immensely. In fact, he would expend such a large amount of time on homework (term used to describe problems done at one’s abode during his own time) and outside reading that he began to surpass his fellow students with great enthusiasm.

"Reaching fourth grade (arbitrary division of intellectual advancement, esp. one solar year in duration), Billy was found working on problems which were being assigned to the seventh grade level. As one would expect, Billy became quite bored in this archaic system of teaching.

"The school officials were finally convinced of Billy’s wasted energies, primarily through the pleas of his teachers and parents, and they finally took action. Billy, from then on, was permitted to pursue any subject he might choose, but only under the approval and guidance of his superiors.

"He was soon at the college level and only thirteen years old. However, a change in his behavior appeared. Passing almost unnoticed for a considerable time was Billy’s increased lack of activity and physical growth. Students whom he had previously surpassed in mental stamina were now passing him in physical development. Not only was Billy’s motivation affected, but also his physiological ability to take part in any activity was becoming increasingly poorer. His body was almost identical to that when he was seven years old. Doctors examined Billy and diagnosed his problem as a hormone deficiency. This was followed by inoculations of the newest in tested and proven chemicals, but with no apparent change in body makeup. Indeed, the only observable difference in Billy was his behavior during the periods of inoculations. After each shot, Billy would exhibit a greatly enhanced mental activity demonstrated by increased reading speed, extremely high comprehension and almost incredible retention.

"Almost just as startling was that this effect was accumulative. The more shots of hormones, the greater was his permanent retention. (This
was based on studies in which Billy was presented with very boring and nearly meaningless readings, and, without prior knowledge of his task, was asked one month later to repeat them word for word, which he did successfully). In short, Billy was craving knowledge.

"It was decided that these shots be discontinued and Billy's physical immaturity be taken in stride without undue worry.

"Billy's next five years were much the same. He absorbed every bit of knowledge and fact he could during his waking hours and still he was unsatisfied at the close of each day.

"Billy's mother soon came to realize for the first time that Billy was beginning to change again. This time, she chose to ignore the first ominous signs, but in a short time was unable to continue to successfully keep the obvious fact from Billy's father and their neighbors. Billy was shrinking. Little by little, his limbs and torso were growing smaller as if they were being eaten away from the inside. Billy's father, against the wishes of his wife, who feared what she might discover, took Billy to the doctors again and they observed one amazing fact—Billy, although he was shrinking, was doing so in overall body stature, but not in weight. His weight throughout three months of observation remained constant and yet his body, by all appearances, was actually growing smaller. Finally, one doctor, while discussing the situation with Billy's nervous parents, discovered the truth of the matter. By outward characteristics, the fact was almost imperceivable, but the organ which Billy, by luck or destiny (as yet being debated between philosophers and geneticists) came to use the most, was growing larger. His brain. This fact was confirmed by subsequent measurements taken of his skull in various directions.

"A theory was set forth: although Billy's diet grew less with his body size, the decreasing amount of caloric intake was not proportional to this gradual decline. This would mean that Billy's brain was not only thriving on food, but also—and here is the fact which was unacceptable to most everyone—on information. Pure information. Again, this was confirmed on the basis that as his brain grew, he had to assimilate more and more knowledge.

"A short time later, Billy could no longer walk; his body became an extension of his head rather than vice-versa. His extremities were virtually unrecognizable. Billy was given a private room in the hospital where he was continually tested for some kind of a clue to this odd occurrence. Here, he was given a relatively crude learning machine developed by a private corporation which projected on a screen all types of scholarly journals and current writings in all fields of knowledge. Because Billy consumed a relatively greater amount of knowledge than food, this machine became jokingly known to many of the hospital staff as the 'reader feeder.' The entire case was a big joke to most people, but only for a little while. The morning of June 30, 1969 began at the hospital with the arrival of a telegram from a city only 200 miles distant. It read:

HOSPITAL
DEAR DR.
TWO CASES IDENTICAL TO WILLIAM JAMES REPORTED HERE. JUST RECEIVED WORD OF SIMILAR CASES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. PLEASE FORWARD ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION.

The computer screen flashed alive again.
The former silence of the room, kept so by the students plugging directly into the computer, was broken with the clicks and metallic scrapes as the students' mechanical hands removed the jacks and prepared to leave. The bubble-top transpors hummed with eagerness waiting for the automatic doors to open. It is hard to imagine that human beings actually existed with arms and legs, even though the computers often remind everyone, pictorially, exactly how the human body once looked. It is hard to imagine, being basically brain tissue in a transpor; but this form is so much better than the old—or at least that is what the computer says.

The 100-second warning special sounded for the start of the next class, the humming transpors reached their destinations, and again the school was silent.
long and aching ride
in car hitting hot
tar expansion ridges
black road twisting
through green
perversions of forest
denying the limited extensions
of self and windshield
that catches glare
from another sun
unknown until now

turnpikes and streets
state boundaries
passed by cars
in false sideward motion
unreal except accidents
reality immediately to death
in supermarket and
broken arm in
white car
telephone poles broken
broken heads
broken smiles and waves
from seven year old kids
on sidewalk
who have smiled
at all cars
only to be ignored
and finally forgotten

wave from car
behind dirty window
they run along sidewalk
to watch
one who responded

silence again as
kids stop
not knowing
they saw a sign
for help from
prison of self existence

then sky darkens as reach
point B from point A
and ready to proceed
with cautious acceleration
toward destination
point C
while making side remarks
about shoe laces and death

saying the end will come soon

Dark, cold slumber of ages
Passing the tomb in night
As the far dogs howl,
And the moon beams cast their
shivering light.

The black poplars are bent;
The casket of funerary asphodel
enshrouds
And the last muffled gasp is terror-
sucked
As Death, holding firm, silently
collects.

over
under
and
into
city
across nervous cobblestones
and paved trolley tracks
that are graced by imagination
that sees them
vital and lustful
for shouts in the street
and stop light changing colors
seeing laughing people
on unstartable motorcycles
telling directions
and watching
soccer in the square
as ball flies over
old ladies heads and
bounces to be tackled
by sidewalk center half

unknown people
old
sitting on favorite benches
thinking about children
or wildly gesticulating
round nonlogical arguments
on air pollution and war

young mixing with old
expressionless faces assumed
walls thought impenetratable
that conceal cringing
terror struck animals
that cannot empty guts
and feebly walk through
the shadows toward bright speck
called self

grays dirty whites
of tenements and neon
stroll boredom into empty
years of lost dog searching
sitting at window
over petunias
sucking cigarettes and
turning inside
to see what was
built in hollow waste

move on again
through same streets
purple convertibles
turning right to left
disappearing swallowed by
blank stares and
open mouthed yawnings
of leaning buildings
to support each other
in some zenith in sky

stopped now passing people
eyes sunken
red and yellow with
green shaded stubble beard
one lying on sidewalk
grotesque body
with hand stretched out
legs curled up
security among the broken bottles
and stained paper

man looks up from doorway
asking pardons from those
who have stumbled
over his legs
and are ready to kick him

turn away
past the filth
sitting and watching
yellow sky
city trucks come
with nameless men
who shout curses
at slipped cable

slouch with their
people to pick up
compressor truck
they wave to the
gathered watching kids
feeling like gods

THE NAMELESS HAVE COME
TO DO THEIR WORK

Way haul away
We'll hang and haul together
Way haul away
We'll haul away joe.

Once I had a Spanish girl;
She nearly drove me crazy.
Way haul away
We'll haul away joe.*

work finished
and with flourish
the men jump from truck
into cab
clashing of gears
and truck disappears
at next corner

motion again
nausea of bodily perceptions
stepping over broken bottles
spinning awkward gyrations
affecting the dodging of cars

yellow sky turns
to black night
match to cigarette
one point in the dark

cross the street
dancing lights flash
red and gold
that becomes the separation

black faces on brown background
eyes moving in bodies
groups standing under lamp
using the curb
while old women
sit in white and green
lawn chairs
aluminum legs catching the light as their silence accents the shouts

bar with beer signs buzzing of fluorescence the inevitable Joe's Bar gray granite alleys piled with brown chairs flies forming clouds over garbage and broken windows

flat and brown flaked paint on horizontal boards

people dangling inside legs scattered over stools arms waving and fingers circling under noses black index fingers pink fingernails crusted dirt humanity smelling sudden laughs

All you that with good ale doth hold
Draw near, I say, both young and old,
and listen to my tale;
And you shall hear how in what wether
A sort of Soldiers met together for to devour good ale.**

women drinking breathing in their drinks smeared lipstick over mouths pulling red pants into place and lighting cigarettes

quarter in machine then beating of drum and bass pounding action to brain and body movement in wild gyrations

the orgasm of sound creates after images people laugh room rings with music

music stops then everything dark and swirling in slow exit into dark people turning backs going home walking down deserted streets of silver lights and trash cans

silence in the street unheard echoes of past feet gray dust in morning

park walked through green trees grass green brown path ascending around trees and vines railings black painted hanging on ascending long paths steps few in number faint street lights and holy churches granite based landing lookout point salient overwhelming

looking over city nothing sudden urge and done it is finished

*Old sea chanty:
"Way Haul Away"

** Old English ballad:
"All you that with good ale doth hold"
Souvenirs

Long forgotten times
are easily recalled
and pleasure starts
souvenirs of another day
with maybe a picture or a word
to uncan the laughter
and the memories flood my mind
i want to remember the good old days
because the happiness machine busted up
because a dream is easier to face
than reality
and my eyes water thinking
to when i wasn’t thought of
when my old lady was what
i whistle at now
and my old man was me
here’s where i come in
because i’m young
with lots more like me
and we have fun because the blast
won’t last and when it’s over
it’s back to the rat-race
but even if you win a rat race
you’re still a rat
like others before us
and others to come
things don’t change
because we’re trapped
and whoever the hunter is
he’s gonna get us
and we'll be food for something
maybe thought
because 2000 years of smarts
gotta be some good somehow
for somebody
and our god is dead or incognito
and we are lost
like sheep with no shepherd
i don’t want an introduction
when i meet my maker
my soul don’t like strangers
now there is no future
only a sweep hand
knocking off the seconds
and a bell to tell
me it’s tomorrow
but my machine tells me it’s yesterday
and i stare through the walls
at a face, a voice, a touch
and i wish i was there

TIMOTHY C. COYNE
My Eschatological Epitaph

Last night, the world blew up,
And I stood patiently by
waiting to snag pieces of my brain
that sailed majestically past
my mighty fortress
of love.

Last night, theory became obsolete,
but there is no triumph for empiricists
who are now mere dust in the cosmic heap.
Social Science shall reign supreme
with the discovery that you
are the catalyst
of life.

Last night, we two stole a large quantity
of love
from Kama's World Bank.

With all due haste
his terrible swift sword
clove Gaea from North to South
resulting in the ultimate destruction
of our love life.

This morning, when my sneeze
cleared the smoke away,
my imagination spotted you
somewhat to the left
of Polaris.
Moth that I am
I mistook you for a flame,
And, setting out, died en route.

TIMOTHY C. COYNE

Discotheque

The sound pours,
Rocks, Thunders, and Carries
an ecstasy of noise,
a tidal wave of torment
with no release
for the straining souls
a cylinder of humanity
with simultaneous stroke
the piston of power
the living dream
the exotic surge
the unity of immersion
is a therapy.

TIMOTHY C. COYNE
Some Borrowed Words

If I should love too deeply  
devoid of the temper  
and patience of age  
Is mine a selfish heart?  
When all the loud and crowded  
hours are still  
and we share  
the solitude of darkness  
each telling our eloquent tale in braille,  
Do I say too much  
with my touch  
Your time plays tricks upon my mind,  
Because love has your face and body now,  
and your mouth is sweet  
as it tilts to let my kisses in,  
And God has made  
no other eyes like yours,  
bright like a rash of stars.  

Ever do I hear your laughter  
like long bright ribbons  
But are they bright  
in another light?  
Better for me to prize the sunrise  
rather than become the sun.  

TIMOTHY C. COYNE

False Breakthrough

What shall I do  
with your mental zoo  
the animals that are your moods  
of caged inhibition  
far older than you?  
An escape  
so grand  
for your Id  
I planned  

But then,  
I somewhat belatedly discovered  
there is but one Clyde Beatty  
and consequently  
my psyche now suffers from numerous scratches  
which,  
when healed,  
will leave scars for all to see  
and that whip  
of which I bragged,  
was nevertheless  
ineffectual  
against the mighty forces of the unknown continent  
where love lay hiding  

TIMOTHY C. COYNE
Shore Morning

Ever approaching subway roar
Crawling fingers, bitter brine.
At my back, the early sun,
And behind, long-weathered boards
Gray like sand.
The morning fresh with mist, Mingled with
the child laughter—
The questionable feelings of warmth and cold.
Peripherally abounds the Rib Gift,
Myriad shades of delicious brown.
And I, on my gritty towel,
Am as restless as the sea.

TIMOTHY C. COYNE

The Beholder

Images of shapes in a night-blacked window;
of people and things in continual workings.
Dynamic existence against the void below
and above in constancy, and murmurings of
the reflected and dissipated involvements of life.

Motion and thoughts, dreams and desires, extinguished
from purpose and sense by a viewpoint;
dissolved in the porous, engulfing denial
provided by the eternal, unending voids transfigured
by the mass of the ominous void.

To one eye reality; to the other a lie,
a mockery, a cynical, sardonic display of
disoriented, meaningless forms, presenting
an unjust and pitiful portrait of man
so deviously construed by the remarkable void.

So certain the intent, so cruel the judgment,
that the eye needs to wince to deliver itself
from the blasphemy of life so accidentally discovered.
Return to reality, to the truth of existence.
Negate the plurality of interpretation suggested

By the void, by the void.

DAVID BURKHARDT
Thursday Childless

I am constantly walking down a corridor which is a corridor of life or of girls dormitory, two mutually exclusive and exclusively trite terms terms being either death and taxes or maybe two semesters.

Like rats amazed the rooms crawl off the corridor boob cubes meaning one who is not particularly bright or maybe breast.

With no man but the janitor (and no man is a janitor) silver tones are pewter; from cuter lapse to neuter deceptive fragility shed; women are the more earthbound, you can tell by the way their hips are broader than their shoulders.

Primarily primary primates. food, sex, sleep, ecclesiastical vanity.
Feminine harmony jostled only by conflicts over men, tv, popcorn, earrings, ice cream, clothes, curtains, lights (on or off)
doors

doors rift:
be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors
Doors; light my fire but hide it
under the bed because no candles
allowed in the dorms or also because
no men are allowed in the reception room after ten thirty. Oh, hell — doors (open or shut) shades (up or down).

Mostly half dressed, seldom all dressed, never completely undressed — hard to shower wrapped in a towel — have to read Gray’s Anatomy to find out what it looks like.

Hospital hospitality in the reception room.
Make it under the last supper of a dean’s nose.
Equally curious and oblivious fish inside and out of the porous inquiriam.

Throw the sparklers into the strawberry jelly and write this across the sky.

VICKI VAN HORN
A Most Prominent Role

would that I could my love
be a skin flick goddess
a buddhist broad
    have breasts like the earth
    bellbottomed to ring in the knew
a blonde if you like
a Nordic Nike of
fleshy ferocity
    fair initiate of a
    sandal less
    scandalous
    scandanavian
    sorority
or as deep as the Nile
bod receptacle or
flesh pot if you like
an Egyptian coffer
with hope at the source
would that I could, skinny god,
play all Parnassus to your embrace
    Remember when you kiss me.

VICKI VAN HORN

It Ran Out...

Get the message
Though
Your tape recorder ear
Is unplugged.
There is no more
Love
Among
The crooked
Hunch-backed
Stone-hearts.
Someone left
The spigot open
And it ran out.

GENTLE SOUL
igious Experience
shades of the living
incense from the present candle
burning in heavenly clouds
light
sun
images
orange glow of after day
fades into violet night
day sounds falling into night sounds
silence
haunting
distant
sounds sealing over the western
and fallen sun

night the time of ancient evil
in modern garb of stainless steel
the secrets of the age
hidden by the engulfed blackness
horror of the unknown
from years before earth creation
to age of dull red explosions
of never seen death

I

lights of sky towers
city lights
blinking out individually
into collective darkness
giant buildings stainless and granite
built by super human engines
gone out of existence
darkness being the end of sight

lights of homes going out
hotel lights flashing in neon throes
streets dim then nothing

everywhere light and sound dead
not even wind to howl through
open doors or blow empty garbage cans
sending them crashing against
empty buildings
buildings cast no outline in sky
the stars are dark
visually silent
their mute screams are not heard
by deaf ears

ears
only
those of
statue
blank eyes and bronzed ears
no echoes from gaunt towers
sterile silence
piercing
driving
hot
dissociated
insanity

running through dead streets
darkness and madness
unheard screams by own mouth
wringing pain
rolling white eyes
horror of darkness
crash into unseen buildings
spinning arm caught wildly
teeth hurt from vibrations of now unsilent city
sonic waves attacking eardrums
compelling torment
electric shocks arc through streets
blue sparks waving by windows
reflected over
and over
into
eternity

back and forth seeking escape
desperate falling arms supplicating
wishing relief
body wracked thrown about
slammed into posts
blood from crushed nose
flailing blasting out lungs
blood frothing at mouth
slashing pain
tearing human nerve endings

unconscious regaining of feet
coughing blood in blind panic
running down middle of street
giant electric bolts
screaming blue agony
attacking savagely
driving
beating
onward

lashed by sonic shatter
dark street eaten by running feet
passing things
driven onward
agonizing
running falling
electricity bouncing from buildings
splashed burning sparks
running
street moving under feet until
the end
falling
into
hollow
waste
darkness
thick & choking
blackness

II

mountains in distance
gray hills treeless slopes
granite flecked whiteness
in dusk
travel to the mountains
across dry wastes
water gone
leaving sink holes
and black burned branches
twisted on the sand floor
hot sun beating through the day
dusk and cold comes
rocks crack in stillness
footsteps crunching over gravelled sand
yellow day seeping away
behind the broken hills
sky slowly bleeding
fading into blue light
and finally gurgling death chant
mind expands over all
universal sight from the stars
cold without emotion
world dying
deserts creeping beyond boundary mountains
flowing into the valleys
stopping rivers
brown water fouling smell
mud
sun baked
into blowing dust
hushed whispers of approaching sand
grains whistling through thick air
animated mass of sand
overwhelming cities
felling streets with crying death wind
omega
death dance
sucked under
omega

III

sealed locked air tight
nothing let in metal box
brass tin core of metallic hardness
unfeeling blankness of steel
dark unforgiving stifling box

body sealed inside
names echoing from sides
helpless perceiver of chaos
swirling syllables book of life
damnation sealed cold doom

body in metal box
becomes imprisonment of all
eternal airtight box of ages
inescapable cycle of spark and
suffocating over continuum
gyrating briefly return
system closed
nothing escapes

no force outside
tumbling box through void
tight system echoing names forgotten
in continuing endless plunging
metal box ever crumbling
expanding

endless plunging
circling through
black realms
inside names lost
word energy absorbed by infinity
metal box
now silent
now lost

shadows of the living
morning incense from glowing sun
dreams recede
lost prophecy of the night

world awake

yet nightmares stand at
edge of darkness

GERALD MILLER
The Dark Night of the Mind II

He looks into his mind and finds all distinctions arbitrary. He looks into his heart and his soul is not worth saving. He seeks understanding and truth to guide his life. He finds the great yawning abyss screaming its relative nothingness into his disbelieving ears. The sadness from his heart pervades his body. His purpose has been thwarted. His rational faculties have parted company with his emotions. He is schizophrenic about his non-belief. He recognizes the existence of the perception gap. He can attest to the existence of the metaphysical-physical gap: he has difficulty proving that he exists. He's seen the incredible sundering of objective validity and subjective truth. His mind is nowhere. Cogs and flywheels are flying, turning nervously, hesitatingly—without direction. Round and round—we're on a carousel grasping for the golden ring that makes philosophers kings—but not over their own hearts.

What is all this insanity of wars and duty and patriotism? More arbitrary distinctions. What is a flag but a child sitting naked on the steps of a slum tenement? And what are bullets but the lack of ballast in men's desires, the greed and lust of leaden souls?

And what is this absurdity: this scene we fanatically idealize: the way of all flesh into degradation, the American means of death to all disbelievers, the sixteenth century Catholic Church reincarnate. The only way to Heaven, obviously.

His heart is sad. He perceives no light shining out of the darkness: He needs a new Messiah. Lamentations of despair. The foundation rocks are splitting—only in his head?

L. BARRY ERB

One Step Beyond the Doors
(or The Big Fool Finally Looks Around)

The death of your eyes provides darkness,
lost on igneous salt flats
with your soul writhing behind.
Splintered ankle bones twisted and broken
on spearhead diamond stones crumble under you.
Sinking canyons are chin deep in young lion's blood
killing the creatures stuck underneath
in the wheezing civilization's mud.
Your ears can still hear.
Ionized electric streaks shriek
past your brain screaming in pain

The end has now come. God won't it come?
But the end will not come,
and even chemical white acid fire
will never dissolve your existence.
We exist forever, beyond electronic clocks and lunar calendars, timeless
and it is said by desert tribe prophets
that some never die, but live eternally in Hell.

B. JEFFERSON E.
"Ma fella 'merikuns . . ."
A note of thanks to my parents and teachers

The words of the poet don’t mean much to me,
As words their significance flees.
But sympathetic muscular reactions and galvanic skin response!
(GSR to those of you with graph-paper eyeballs and gyroscope hearts)
These are the fire-breathing butterflies and silver-scaled fish
Inhabiting my nights and haunting my days.
I quake, standing fully clothed,
Complete with Swiss Army knife with nineteen blades,
Before the unknowable.
My Cub Scout compass mind and my Camp Fire Girl sexuality
 are all that I need to
Be Prepared.

LINDA RICHTMYRE

To a dead hippie

Some you win . . .
Some you lose . . .
But this life will be rained out.

Cling! The cymbals on your finger wish me better
luck in the next incarnation.
Thank you, god of my tomorrows who never worries
about my todays.

LINDA RICHTMYRE

A Scrap

The wasteland lies frozen,
Locked between city and suburb.
Gulls wheel overhead
Searching for fossilized garbage
In ice encrusted trash heaps.

LINDA RICHTMYRE
Haiku I
The sweet memories
Of a love too young to fade
Bloom on my pillow

II
We share the same sun
His stars are the ones I see.
He lives: there is hope

III
By the lamp nightly
The sound of my solitude
Is marred by moth wings

IV
With purple ribbons
Our souls woven together:
Love in harmony

V
Alone on the sand
I watch while snow crests of sea
Topple my castles

SHARYN L. NEGUS

Love
Love is a fairy-tale
Told by a fool
Full of passion and feeling
Rendering ultimate desolation.

LINDA DIMAURO

Haiku No. 30
Dare I gaze
at the ticket stub
alone . . .
Rock and roll woman

MANDRAKE '69
Rachel

Twilight leaps the broken fence
And gives the stars a place to be,
Provides dawn’s only recompense,
And Rachel Dark will wait for me.
The world crawls off and tries to sleep,
The tears of night slide slick and free
On sunlit eyes afraid to weep,
And Rachel Black will wait for me.
Halloween fingers brown and red,
Thread the eyeless needle tree
With strands of sightless fear and dread,
And Rachel Night will wait for me.
Black velvet wisdom frayed by dawn’s
Thin grey silt, come late not early.
Gold life now the horizon yawns,
And I will wait for Rachel’s plea.

W. EGGLESTON

There Is No Present

There is no present.
Only a hair-line between its father and its
destruction upon which it climbs and stays
not at all until it tumbles to the quick dust.
The word should be completely omitted for it
has no meaning—
It borrows its shifting home from the reaches
of its supposed fellows, and pretends to exist.

W. EGGLESTON

Winter Woods

Crunching snow, cracking twig
Tiny limbs that surprise
An owl’s awakened
And off it flies.

W. JOHANNA LYSINGER
One Hundred Per Cent Genuine

Kids. They think the whole world belongs to them. The punks.

Foster Sellers, that's me. Bum by nature, poet by luck. A real, live, natural poet, that's me.

I've seen everything that they're afraid of. Jails, flophouses, bars where the bums'll crawl on the table for another shot. I read my poetry to these kids and they lap it up; just like they lap up their crummy java. I asked a kid once why he drank so much of the stuff. You know what he told me? He told me he hated the stuff, said that most of the kids hated it, but it's the right thing to do, 'the proper way' as the kid said. I mean, like they really want to be grownup in a bad way.

Rough, long brown hair, blue jeans; the guys really went after that type a few years ago. But now all you see are cute, long brown-haired girls, so I guess the guys got tired of the others.

The clock tells me I have another half hour to kill.

I hate reading this poetry. As a matter of fact, it's not even my own poetry. There was a shaggy faced junkie in the same cell as me, so I stole a few of his poems. It wasn't such a terrible thing because he killed himself a few days later. Got hold of a blanket and strangled himself in the night. I remember I was really scared then, looking at his face, I mean. It's been a while since he died, so the only thing I remember now about his face was the waxiness of it. Crazy. But he sure could write poetry—my poetry now. I'm practically famous.

"Run with me children, through society,
Run from the hills to the shore to the sea,
And sail your boat, but don't look back
Or you won't ever stay with me."

The jukebox continues to play, the metallic music machine. They listen to me and the music, probably because we're so much alike. I listen to the words, not the sound. It's not so bad then.

It was kind of tragic for that bearded prophet to go kill himself. There aren't too many poets around, and you just can't let too many get away from you.

No, it really isn't so bad if you can get away from the sound of the music, if you can concentrate on the words. Sometimes when there is something on your mind, you listen to the words, and everything starts to look real clear; so clear in fact, that you wonder why it was on your mind for so long. Like now, I was just thinking, like, I couldn't understand why the kids dig me so much. And it crossed my mind that the reason why these kids turn up night after night to see me was because they really believe in what I got to say to them, they believe that I wouldn't do them wrong, that I wouldn't cheat them, that I wouldn't rob them of something that belonged to them.

"But I tell you I didn't steal the old lady's purse. Honest."

"Look. We're going to let you back in the streets, you germ, but if we get you on another rap, you're going to spend a hell of a lot of
time in the grey splendor of the jail. Now get the hell out of here."

Don't get me wrong, I'm not stupid. I was pretty good in school. Like I could always eat up the aptitude tests that they gave us. It was too bad I didn't give a damn about teachers though. They knew I was smart, but I knew it just as well as they did. I could have gotten into college, but I didn't want to. I'd seen the guys who couldn't get a decent job even with the degree. So I went for the big city lights. Tourists. That was my profession. The eternal fleecer of the tourists. I must have gotten at least fifty of them before I got bagged. That's where I met the guy in the cell.

Quarter to nine. Plenty of time still.

"And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window pane;
There will be time, there will be time,
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet."

"Give me another Coke, will you, Harold?"
"Yes. Sure. Anything."
He drew up the coke, letting the foam drip sloppily on the drain.
"Thanks," I said.
"Going on soon?"
"Yes, got to give it to them."

Harry turned away from me, but I think he understood. The owner hurried over to me. A small guy, about thirty-five or so, still probably shaved two or three times a week. Drawn in cheeks, all he needed was a tail to pass for Mickey Mouse's kid brother.

"You ready Foster?"
"Yes, put me on, Al."

I didn't hear Al introduce me. After a while you know what he's saying. Al's okay. Maybe because he's like me; he really hates these kids, but he can always give you the big Ipana smile when you need it.

"... and here he is, our uncrowned poet laureate, Foster Sellers."

Most of them clapped. Some stared. But the clapping helped erase the severity of the frozen stares. The rest of the group looked at the "rebels" and forced them out of their staring. Very quiet, but very effective. Almost as if they could see through my madras curtain.

"The poem that I am going to read to you is a poem called 'Society.' It represents our struggle against the Johns and Janes of society. We'll win, I can tell you that, but it's still a long dusty road that has to be travelled.

"The high heeled shoes
Clipclopclipclop
through the street
where everyone nods,
and smiles
and gasps
as tinkerbell slithers
amidst the alleys,
Pushing her magic dust."
The kids loved it. The one that told me he hated java just sat there. I read others, and the kids practically tore down the house. They wanted more, they started a chant for more, but I just bowed to them, humble-like, so they wouldn't think I was a phony or anything.

Afterwards, an unshaven kid came up to me. Blond haired, bleached, the type of hair that you see in surfboard commercials. The kid was trying to grow a beard, and he was in the middle of growing it. I hate to see a kid in the middle of growing a beard. Looks lousy. The kid was a little nervous, like he had some confession to make or something. I broke the ice.

"I got a razor blade in the back," I said.

The kid blushed a little and said, "That's Okay. I'm going to let it grow. You know, a goatee, like what you have."

The kid was really shaking now. I guess it's not every kid that gets to talk with a famous poet.

I really admire your poetry," he said.

"Really good, Huh?"

"Yes, really good poetry."

"Glad you like it."

"I just wanted to tell you I'm glad I saw you tonight. I drove forty miles to hear you read your poetry."

"Well," I said, "I really appreciate that."

"No, let me continue," he persisted. "The only reason I drove the forty miles was to hear the real thing. I honestly believe you'll become a legend when people really find out about you."

I said to him, "Well, the thing is that I understand you kids so well. I realize what's on your mind and I write so we can communicate. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes, I understand what you mean perfectly. I mean, you're like a God to us because you're real. I mean, Mr. Sellers, we aren't ignorant people. We come here in the name of the arts. Like you hear people talk about the kids of today. It's because we want to be like the Hemingways or the Picassos, only after you try to be like them, you find out that you're not a Hemingway, and without the arts we are lost. So we come up here to see one of us who made it, and we are envious, but we're glad you're there, because, like you said, you understand us, and you can talk to us."

I told the kid how much I appreciated talking to him but I had to go somewhere tonight. So we shook hands and he left. The kid looked as if he had just seen God. Like he said, I was a god or something. But he was right, though. I'll be a legend when people find out; I'll be a legend when that kid doesn't need bleach to keep his hair white; I'll be a legend when those kids who practically prayed to me find out about the real uncrowned poet laureate; and I'll —

"That was what I call a great performance, Foster. You're a real pro."

"Thank you, Al."

HOWARD SOLOMON
Heaven

I, a woman, love.
I love a memory of a trip into heaven, a brief interval of wonderfulness, a visit to another land, a discovery of... of I, a woman.

Heaven was beautiful with towering, welcoming, challenging mountains. Everything was inviting. There was no time for loneliness, only togetherness. Love in the air, in the hills, in the rushing rivers, in the quiet pastures. This loveliness is free—free love for all.

Beauty was a day breaking, a lifting or settling fog, a rainbow in a waterfall, a tiny flower, a smiling face, an inner glow.

Energy was inexhaustible—the majestic hills, the roaring river, the pouring rain, the beating wind, the streaming sunshine, all filled the inhabitants of this heaven with a love for life, a drive to do all, to store it up, and to keep going and never once look back.

Like a dream that you don’t want to end, so was life in heaven. The dream would end, but before its end, I wanted to get and experience all. There were fits of wakefulness when the reality of the necessity of leaving would push up near the surface. But somehow, Heaven lasted—just a little longer.

I, a woman, loved a man. We answered the call of the wild. We knew beauty and energy and love. We shared. A man made a woman as the woman made the man. Sharing is Heaven. Enjoying, knowing, experiencing, learning, singing, sleeping, understanding, doing, changing. The key to heaven’s appreciation was togetherness—loss of individuality—a marriage of two—a total sharing—a loss of oneself.

I awoke. Heaven evaporated. It is gone.

Heaven existed, it was real. I’ve a torn jet flight ticket, two huge posters, some perfume, and six pictures—that’s all that remains of heaven.

W. JOHANNA LYSINGER

Silence Is Like God

Silence is like God. It offers both solace and fear, both comfort and anguish, both peace and torment. To those with peace of mind it contains fullness and satisfaction; to those with mental turbulence and guilt it renders emptiness and continual persecution. If silence were to reign in the universe, most of mankind would go mad, the remainder would waver between insanity and bliss, and only God would flourish in everlasting ecstasy.

YOLANDA ROTH

I soaked up silence like a sound,
It was so real to me,
So right, so rich, so newly found,
As 'twere eternity.

MARGARET S. WRIGHT
At U. C. we teach nothing but the good life.
Opened Letter from Whistler Homer,  
Insaned Assailant  
(Something from someone who lost his mind and body in a draft)

During our stay of execution,  
we filtered thru targets of oriental looking glass,  
longingly scowled at pictures of dodging frogs,  
and spoke to the Harbor Light Insurance Firm about bullets.  
It was to be presumed that everyone was mad.  
And no one was.  
It was that all of us had previously partaken of  
the deadly Hollow weed on birthday eighteen  
and were transformed into card-carrying infantry candidates.  
The Hollow weed had caused us to be thought of as  
warlike men.  
A candy man handed down decrees and quotas  
which all of the local trees and branches clung to.  
And then they had picked us out of our places.  
The highly far away Hollow weed god in White  
smiled and sent a million or so of us  
off to a greenish fairyland paradise south and southwest  
of Chinatown or someplace like China.  
A political science professor smelt the weed  
and complained of its being quite hollow.  
He was later beheaded by 7 golden silver judges,  
who had earlier condemned quite a number of  
heathenishly conformed World War II Germans.  
There was no comparison between the cases, of course,  
but it still stopped me to think  
as I marched into Chinatown or wherever it was.  

GEORGE EASTBURN

Sol Clutch Rides Tonight

With his buffalo-hide daughter at his side.  
And his trusted blue hound dog on the other.  
Into the next world carrying muskets into China  
where Ho  
plots the capture of San Francisco  
with Mao.  
Sol Clutch rides tonight. His daughter leaves his side  
to marry Gus Hall in San Francisco.  
His hound dog is lost  
attacking Viet Cong battleships.  
Sol Clutch rides alone through China.  
Rides. Rides. Rides.  
With his muskets.  
And accidentally attacks India before opening his eyes.  

GEORGE EASTBURN
I have seen destruction from far-off
written about death from afar
have sat on rocks breathing black air
    have seen Christ's vision of temptation
and been told to jump off

known drunken poets
    walking the night streets
singing their songs
    and have felt infinity

have talked past the dawn
and heard the universe strut outside
    the window
calling attention to itself

have known images of afterlife
    realized in sober hours
gone to sleep dreaming beauty in city dumps
    ignoring the red sky at twilight
have come upon truth
    a broken bottle in many town's gutters

talked with serious old men
    looking for ideals
and intimations of universal truth
    sacred and profane

have seen change and
    wondered at eternity
nightly by myself

GERALD MILLER

upon that night
    when the sun burned behind
    the hills
smoking the sky
    the forest was dark
    green timeless peaks
arched above the twisted forest floor
the sallow moon rises
    touching the universe
yellow fog flows from the moon
seeking the hollows
    sacred night
the fog waits
    sliding under
    and caressing the gnarled stumps

GERALD MILLER
That's Weird

Mellow yellow and bright purple green grapes bouncing
Loud orange, screaming red, cold blue, white daggers
Jabbing neon green and brilliant pink spheres glowing
Blinking black and glistening glowing whirling squares
Twirling with lemon-colored limes and violet vines mashed
With indigo intertwined with red-orange webs show
An apocalyptic carousel of combining clashing colors
Of piercing, slashing, progressing, jumbled needles
As if in a kaleidoscopic smog . . . . . LSD or LOVE?

AARD.

Alone

Love was my raison d'être —
the sunrise
the sunset
the stars . . .

You were my love
Who filled my waking hours.
Now, alone, my heart beats
sans raison . . .

LINDA DIMAURO

Kathy's Tune

She fled.
Fearing the challenge,
The,
White-tailed doe,
Sped to her leafy green sanctuary,
Ashamed to match,
Her tawny skin,
Against
Your velvet-soft face

HOWARD SOLOMON
On Walking Home

The thin black hand of a branch—long dead
Beckoned upward from its snowy tomb
The twigs curled in the agony of cold
Pointed to the suppliant orb above
Wreathed fragilely in cotton clouds
Sprinkled with a celestial host of stars
Tempting me for a moment to look beyond
all I saw—
Then the wind blew
and I moved on
And the branch now free
rolled across my path
Toward its silent rendezvous
with another traveler

WILLIAM NORCROSS

The Wheel

The Wheel spins,
softly throughout,
the universe,
Changing pace for no one.
The spokes silently revolve,
stars,
flickering,
between them.
One star is ours,
And of that star—
one cinder,
And our eons are only,
one,
flicker,
between,
the spokes
Of the Wheel of Time,
Which changes,
for no one.

WILLIAM NORCROSS
Some Excuse, at Least

A siren chases the big red wagon
and everyone hurries to his own fire,
and my House is ablaze and
my house is safe and warm.

Somewhere my life has burned
but it hasn’t started,
and the map I’ll use to guide
my breath has all roads meeting in an ocean . . . .
And my trip is planned and
it is a flipping coin.

He cried when he traced the thin
red line of a routed road
for he was already at his destination,
on further, not even begun, and . . .

His house is ablaze and
no sirens ring; a mind
jumps into the searing air in hopes
of rising into the streaming Gulf
of endless nights and
windblown dreams.

freedom to flap

wet garments on a clothes-line
red, white, and blue
waving in the wind
flapping like the flag
singing the star-spangled-banner
long and loud . . .

until their owner
took them off the line
carried them inside and
threw them in the laundry-room.

"most unconstitutional"
they muttered as they
were folded and pressed
the next day . . .

LINDA DIMAURO
Awareness

The dim melancholy of half-remembered dreams
All but dispells in this bursting, bright sun
And the cool, blue beach breeze.
The soul-depth would follow the gull’s path
Seaward and be free, but love’s grip is
Deeper than I wanted it to be and
Blue jeans, carefree memories become now
Sad, as I look up and know that I am shielding
Inner thoughts from summer wind’s crushing.

LEE MARCH

Okay, you guys—let’s pretend!
We’re gonna set-up a battlefield right here
wit da PX to da left,
And we’ll call dis da demineralized zone—
which means you guys can’t sell lemonade over dere.
Dis here’ll be where Santa Claus will bring da presents—
but only for a day cause else Sam won’t have nobody
to make silver bullets for.
You’re tired of dis game?
Well, s’pose we make dis Suzy’s Canal, and you stand at
dis end wit dat air gun,
and I’ll set-up a tinkertoy blockhead down here.
Tom’s just s’pose to sit in da middle and absurd da sidelines
wit dis here scope.
It ain’t very excitin’?
—Den we’ll play politickin’.
I’m da great white elephant and
you’re da smart jack ass.
Tom’ll draw hate signs for me and bully signs for you,
Den we’ll champagne to see who
can be ‘sassinated tomorrow.
What do you mean you don’t like champagnin’?
You guys is always complainin’.
I’m s’pose to be da leader and you play how I want!
—Here comes da Good Humor Man!
Tink we should boycott him?

BARBARA BALD

you say you dream
of pink polka-dots
and soft blue lace?
pray, brother
this is the day of brass tyger-stripes
and black leather paws!

BARBARA BALD
Bacci Mia

Delicate hues of pink, blue and maze
Mingle with blaring shades of red, green and gold—
Forming patterns of rare splendor
As multifold and varied as tinted glass chips
of a kaleidoscope.
With hollering trumpets and brass cymbals
crying "Rise up world,"
Flutes depict graceful forms of frolicking fauns
While violins muster candlelit images
of small Italian love-nooks.
The cold, hollow feeling of a roller coaster's descent
Stands adjoint a crackling fire's warm sensation
of security.
Excitement and anxiety of bounding down an immense,
blue-green wave
Neighbor the peace and tranquility of the moon's rays,
shimmering atop a now gentle ocean,
Lapping crystalline-white banks.
—All this hidden in one "I love you."
—All this unmasked by one tender kiss.

BARBARA BALD

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