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The Lantern Vol. 46, No. 1, December 1979

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Ursinus College

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December 1979

A collection of Poetry, Prose and Photography composed for the Fall Term, 1979, by the students of Ursinus College.

The Lantern, the literary magazine of Ursinus College, symbolizes the light shed by creative work. It is named after the top structure on Pfahler Hall, which has the architectural design not of a tower or spire, but of a lantern.
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Patrons

Dr. Gayle Byerly
Mr. J. Douglas Davis
Dr. Joyce Henry
Jack Rosenfeld
Dr. George Storey
Dr. John Wickersham
Visions in Chains

Why do these words slip away from me?
Why can’t I grasp them and make them sing?
You can’t bind to paper thoughts which run free;
Meter and rhythm sound a steely ring
for they’re chains.

The songs of the angels couldn’t have feet
Nor steel-clad scansion nor rigid rhyme;
Those songs from the love of God must flow sweet,
In patternless paeans of joy out of time
Where Eternity reigns

But I live in time; my time has an end.
My words must warm ears of cold, stiff clay;
Yet with scansion and rhyme, those ears I’ll bend
That’s glory enough, until the day
When I drop my chains
Where Eternity reigns.

Chris Kile

The Bean

Beneath the freshly tilled soil,
Raked smooth by human sweat and expectation,
Rests the bean seed: a pale white,
Lifeless object that needs nothing less than magic,
In order to climb through the earth
A distance ten times its own size.

Day after day I visit the barren spot,
Knowing that my role is done
(At least for now)
And the force that has given me life
Will be the same needed for that lowly bean seed.
And then it happens!
The earth has cracked while my eyes were closed,
And now a stem, green and limber, has protruded,
Carrying upon its shoulders a pair of hands.
The hands, however, are not clenched proudly
In victory over its success to life,
But clasped humbly,
As if in prayer.
Perhaps the bean knows the real source of its life —
I search for mine.

Charles W. Brynan III

Who can we watch tonite?
If we all sit back slyly enough
Or even through open windows
If we all glance over styrofoam cups
I'm sure we can see it all

Better yet,
We can have something
To talk about
For days to come
For brunch conversation
Are you still watching?

From here we can
Formulate
In our minds
Drowned with beer
Who will be with whom
Why, where, and how many times

Through two hundred times the
Manipulation
We realize this is a great party
What could possibly be
More entertaining
Than a show where all the
Actors
Prove themselves to be
Mere amateurs?

Xenia Constantine Polites
Night Glider

Each night I unfurl my wings
and travel onward throughout time and destiny.
I am everything then.
I am, I create,
I become my own creations,
until the shrill song of the daylight awakens me.
For a moment the memory remains
I smile happily.
But the mask must be taken out and repainted.
The daylight world will never know
that I am a night glider.

Barbara Foley
you are sleeping.
you feed me and
i eat– i consume your rhythmic breathing
i watch you– your hands, your mouth,
your sense of timing;
of nearness– you stir– i am frightened–
you turn– we talk– i lie–
i ache– you are warm.
we are alone– my knees are lifted–
i am caressed– i yearn–
i am you are you will
you will take me–
we are talking you consume me–
you move you are motion
we are moving we touch
we are gears churning thrashing
we are a machine– driving and speeding
spreading unleashing venomous
steel hips smashing rhythmically
shattering plateglass visions splintering spitting
interwoven limbs grasping clawing
bleeding steaming pounding iron flesh your eyes
your mouth open teeth gnashing and slashing
gnawing emotion screaming seething
pain in colors wrenching ripping
you heave–
the sky– it is now
broken glass– it slashes
my skin through the window–
you are panting
you are turning– slower
away– slower still
gears halt
you are still.
you are
turning into gold.
silence.
(i am crying– i hurt
if you had only
taken my life.
i am sobbing.
i am earth.
i am a whore.
i am a liar.
and you– )
you are sleeping.
crisp new paper—
fresh blue lines mapped rhythmically
across snow white pages—
the essence of minimalism;
the potential of a hurricane.

what thoughts will caress the parallel blues?
multicolored pens inking calculated formulas?
or scribbled pencil notes of a poetic madman—
deep alone in a lost Tibetan cave
where mushrooms are wildflowers
and aging candles, like fading dreams,
afford the only sunlight?

the coloring of images—
blue or yellow, truth or lie;
there is no control in pages.
leaves and flowers and words grow old;
fingers grow calloused
beneath the weight of the passing of ages
and a quickly dying pen.

the persistent doubts of a dreamer—
— the complacent ennui of strangers,
— the narcotic silence of mirrors,
— the inevitable passing of pages;
yet there is hopeful promise
in crisp new paper.
in the aftermath of a snowstorm,
a group of children make their way across a frozen field. 
their footprints leave blue shadows in the whiteness.

Bruce Dalziel
Compassion

he dragged
her here;
she wore a
simple black dress
hoping no one
would recognize her.

on the dark open dance floor
Diomedes soars like a
falcon before the kill:
circling weightlessly, his eyes
keen and dangerous, his
proud feathers flying.

Criseyde shifts nervously in her chair
Diomedes is drunk and
reeling, a girl in his arms is
overwhelmed; Criseyde rolls
her wedding ring nervously
around her finger –
this has happened before.

the dull pounding trance of
love songs one after another –
we sit uncomfortably;
i want to speak to her
but the room is too loud.

and reflecting on my own secret pain,
i respect the silence of submission.
we all destroy the things most precious
and pretend not to notice.

Bruce Dalziel
Loneliness

Like a rhino through a bay window,
A ringing shatters the silence.
The gloom of my tranquility vanishes.
The waiting is over.

Excited,
I grab the receiver.

Dejected,
I write:
Gallon of milk
Loaf of bread
Jar of crunchy peanut butter.
"Yes, Dear."

5:00 arrives –
I flip the sign on the door.
MAYTAG CLOSED.

301

Big waisted elephant
Should not attempt to swim;
Foolish intelligence
To make gold out of tin.

Big waisted elephant,
The feet begin to sink;
The loss of high values,
Decadence to the brink.

Big waisted elephant,
Senseless wasted body;
Foolish intelligence
To ignore history.

The Alien

Scott Fleagle
Ode To Man

And the Earth was lonely,
But for the plankton in the sea,
From which new creatures would arise,
And eventually take to the skies.

Not all, however, could avoid
The pull of gravity on this spheroid,
And so they learned to walk and run,
And even climb the trees for fun.

Though this life was to be adored,
The effects of progress could not be ignored.
Advanced beings on Earth did form,
Varying from the accepted norm.

They learned to conquer and to feign,
And finally the entire planet did reign,
But, as if each to the other was a bother,
They began to fight amongst one another,

For freedom and democracy was the song,
To try and set right the others’ wrong,
But as to who and what was right
Could never be discovered in the others’ light,

And so more powerful weapons were created,
To use against the relations hated,
Until a bomb, considered a ploy,
Whose sole purpose was to destroy,

Was activated by one mindless hand
To achieve its mission and annihilate
the land.
From thence, half a millennium did pass
Before the slightest sign of grass,

And the Earth was lonely,
But for the plankton in the sea...
unsteady hands —
— recklessly swaggering —
the unravelling of a
fading evening and tie
as the
one last
seven and seven
swirls
around the warming ice
in a smokey glass.
real smoke —
the smoke of a somewhat
intoxicating silence and
car doors slam metal as
keys fall into awaiting doorlocks and
escorting symbolism threatens
to knock the glass from
my hands —
spilling the contents wetly
over a deep blood red carpet,
sinking slowly through the pile
and that whisper of fright
that always seems to accompany
that often unfamiliar scent of
an evening such as this.
unsteady hands —
hands that always manage to betray
my Frank Sinatra advances.
hands that would rather sleep alone
than take a chance on trusting.
my hands.

Pieta
The Beachcomber

Along the beach he roams;
Searching, trying to discover
His true reality, his reason to be.
The clouds absorb his gentle footprint,
Which is indented in the sand.
The ocean, like sweet water,
Mellows his soul, a good soul,
Matured by age, hardened by loneliness.
A warm breeze retains the odor of empty shells
And many other fruits of the sea.
He tastes the spray in the air,
Fresh and sticky, dreaming of days gone by.
Of all the men of wit, not one is he.
In his resting place, far from the knowing world,
He writes without rhyme or reason,
He searches for the overwhelming force to be happy,
Without fear and without reproach.
The key to the mystery is just beyond
The horizon.
As he walks, the cold earth beneath his feet,
He is tranquil, without difficulty, fearless;
A spark in the calm air of the night.
Under the stars, one by one, the swallows
Fell to his side, seeing the gentle glances,
He reached for them with cold hands, warm heart.

Jack Rosenfeld
The Pounce
(for John Berryman)

Mad midnight Henry,
Calico cry;
Unsteady Henry like
     Pounce, cat swing low.
Pantherlike Henry
Jumps jungle bold;
Black brush romance whiskers
     Fly Henry, fly!
Hot pulsing scarlet
Halt Henry high;
Bloody-mouthed Henry
     Retreats kitten blue.
Two A.M. Henry
Home cringing cold;
Comfort climbs calico then
     Pounce! cat is gone.

Bruce Dalziel
Graveyard Shift

Graveyard shift, the gall loons low,
tired men come,
tired men go.

An orange moon watches with hardly a fright
this strange midnight ritual
in sodium light.

Sweat stained and soiled, expressionless faces
take to their stations
with dead ladened paces.

Belt bearings creak over laboring heads,
while yellow sparks fly — —!
and burn a deep red.

Melting and smelting til Hates burns foul,
they pugently fill
their industrial bowels.

And I, you may say, am a sweeper of sorts,
I scrub and I polish these
black souls of soot.

Yet still they drone on amid screech-hissing steam,
casting and cranking
with never a dream.

They live by the hour, they die by the clock,
tomorrow lies waning
in this house by the dock.

John P.
The Houston Refineries,
8:00 P.M., 7-15-74

I saw the Cities of a Thousand Lights;
I stopped, stood, stared, listened...
The Cities: many towers, tall, one nearby, others far away,
Their lights, reflected in the waters of the channel
Shone green and gold; an occasional torch glowed orange and blue.
Ships passed by, lit yellow and white.
The horns of those ships, the lapping of water against the docks:
Sounds of the endless, ancient ocean surround this work of modern man.

By day, gray concatenations of concrete and steel
Cracking Civilization's food for digestion—
The wastes of this process have spread 'cross the land.
The channel is dead, the air is foul;
The thoughtless have seen, screamed, "Stop! We must end it!
We cannot permit this pollution to reach us!"
And, as far as it goes, this may be true...

But a voice came whispering on the evening breeze,
A voice from the Cities, with this to say:

"A mountain is born in the depths of slime.
A flower must feed on rot to blossom
All babes wallow in self-made filth
Before they walk the wide world, free."

And it seemed that this was also true.

Chris Kile
The eagle. So proud;
He soars high above us all,
Mocking our freedom.

K.B.

The End of the Game

The end of the game
Bodies react;
The mind is black,
But the soul's aflame.

A pat on the back
Leaves startled eyes
With snarled cries
That seem to retract.

Happy are the ties
Since departed,
But still the dread
Of short, sad goodbyes.

Let it not be said
That all is lost
If pride's cool frost
Slows the tide's fierce ebb.

A shot hits the post
The dunk undone,
The last play's run
The effort, a ghost.

The clock strikes two, one...
The buzzer sounds
Of a thousand frowns
In unison.

Jack Rosenfeld
A Rose

A rose,
So easily discarded.
Forfeiting its existence for a single of your glances
Or one brush against your skin,
Or to momentarily fill your room with its odorous
    last cries.
For the possibility of your attention,
Paying with its life.
Not so much sad, as bitterly expensive.

But life is a gift of luxury.
Unappreciated, it is superfluous.
Yet, on those rare and rich occasions,
    Where towers stand high below you,
    And stars dance lightly upon your shoulders;
Life, in its fullest, is priceless.
Such an extravagant celebration.

Terry Silva
He drove past the train station,  
Speeding through Pixley with reckless abandon.  
The big city was life incarnate  
For his television remained behind.

And as he sped from Hooterville  
Peasants yelled, "Stop Pig, Stop Pig!"  
But Arnold spat at the Druckers  
And laughed at the Haneys.  
He'd no need for humanoids.

The bilingual beast added salt to their wounds  
Yelling "No manos, ninos! No manos, ninos!"  
He now left Mr. Smoot in the dirt,  
The Cannonball appeared motionless.  
A.Z. could not be stopped!

But then an agrarian Kimball jeeps onto the scene,  
Exclaiming "Op-Stay Ow-Nay Ig-Pay!"  
The shocked driver lost control  
As his skidding tires sent him into a pole.  
I'm sorry, Fred, No more Green Acres.
To Carson McCullers
(and "The Ballad of the Sad Cafe")

The Quagmire, like thick, cold oatmeal
is rising as I sink.
It turtlenecks me with fingers of slime.
My gaping mouth is gasping to aid
the slowly filling lungs.
My mind tears across the facade of
my life.
There was a time — —
An instance — —
When I could have saved myself.

My adaptations resembled
a chameleon's.
I was secure in my surroundings,
Immobile when necessary,
Free to crawl always.
My colors changed for me alone.

Now, before my eyes are covered in murk
I see you before me.
You are also in the mire, my friend.
Young and beautiful --
You will be buoyant
Like a floating log.
or rather
An ascending God.
I have learned to be still
and die slowly.
I will suffer the pain for you, beloved.

As my shoulder becomes your
Stepping stone to freedom,
I submerge.
The dark clouds will cover me
Forever.
My mind is a flurry of sentences,
Images,
Yet I know it wasn't always this way
You know —
Love.

Mari K. Brown
In the May Month
(Ode to Rhonda)

In the May month, green replaces white,
Orange breasted birds bounce across new awakening turf,
Tulips uncup,
Flags unfurl,
And slowly, slowly, love's captured spell's undone.
Yes, spring has come!

In the May month, ears lean to hear the barking of the geese,
While eyes search to smell the odor of all newness.
And yet what give we in return for such gifts from the Light?
What hold we in our hearts that match this intrinsic beauty?
Oh God, if we did not have to give of ourselves to life's churning cycle;
If we could only receive and receive and yet receive again!

Hide, O hide from the May month,
For in our hearts there is a jewel more precious than all the glistening dew drops that cling to upper boughs,
More resilient than the morning's first ray,
More everlasting than time itself!

Hide, hide from the May month our beauteous flower,
Whose slender stem so supple and new, holds proud her golden spray,
Whose prophetic eyes and open heart are wise beyond her years.

Be still ye Dragon, Bear and Hound,
And all creatures from the artist's hand.
From mind to hand, from hand to canvas,
From canvas to eye, from eye to heart, and there will her colors dwell forever.
In the May month, green replaces white,
Newborn wings test warmer air,
And our precious jewel we did exchange.

We cry unfair! Unfair exchange!
And yet no answer can give us peace,
No sweet melody can ease our thoughts,
No truth can let us rest.
Except that when the May month comes and comes and comes again,
To warm us with the sun,
We'll know that life and death are one.

Charles Bynan
ghostly chanting:
the wicked ones.
unable to
disobey we
come from the
underbrush
and stumble
to the shoreline.

louder
and louder:
the goatskin
drums, the cry
of a woman;
candles flicker,
the moon
quivers yellow;

the sky pulses
lightening and
scarlet;
the wicked ones
skitter and flip
across the
water burning
behind them.

terrified i
reach for my
father's hand but
they have
taken him,
screaming,
roaring on
downstream.

it is over.
silently,
the survivors
crawl back
to the underbrush.
the whispered order:
"we will hide here
until next time."

Bruce Dalziel
Travel Excerpts

3.
They blow their bubbles in the air to see the little windows there. They rise and fall, and dance and sway, and some are simply blown away. But they only last awhile just awhile

6.
Sometimes I find the habit fine of using drink to dull the mind. I've heard it said it is a crutch. Perhaps at times we think too much.

Ed Daly
Face in the crowd

It's not so much that you're just a
Face in the crowd, but
It's just you don't belong there
With the rest of them. I read
Your poem and was jealous
Because I hadn't written it sooner.
I wish I could talk to you about
This disease we seem to have — Understanding.
Maybe we have met without knowing
What was there. It's a shame
That people here are afraid to
Break down and show a little
Emotion. I've been afraid to have dreams. They're
Nice and all, but they get bashed
and battered with time
Until you can't recognize them anymore.
This place can crush you if you
let down your guard
And get washed away by the crowd. You never come back.
No my friend, there is Life here.
You've proven to me that one just
has to look for it
I'll be the one with the

Searching eyes.

Anonymous
Waiting In An Airport

Sleepless nights on a Sunday afternoon, knowing I'm not needed watching the smoke filled room

And when I think of you kid I don't get as nauseous as I once did Seventy-three and thirty-four Seventy-two I count no more

And when that blimp comes down I will climb aboard for space is endless and emptier than your mind. Vegetables will make you sick especially if they're mixed so if you feel happy tell your neighbor where he can go.

Words may have meaning, and numbers may have value but you have neither

And if you see scott fleagle, tell him to have a nice day.

Mark Malkames
A Taste of Winter's Embrace

Latent summer's warm aging days
    fall to cool mature nights.
Nature's geometric hues abound
    in aqueous airs of clear blue.
Geese high above life's changing spectrum
    playing alphabetical flight patterns in the sky.
Clouds darkened by their dank burden
    lightly cry drops of relief.
Woodland nomads scurry down the hill
    to the valley's call of the whippoorwill.
Willow trees bow to the northern winds persuasive blow
    and curtsy to the fall of the angelic snow.
Sleeping daffodil fields are dusted crescent white.
A frozen pond reveals two looking glass worlds.
All of these things which warn of winter's coming
    in sights and sounds of harmony.

R.P.M.
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