



**FALL  
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## Invitation to Artists and Authors

Artwork is invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Any type of artwork may be submitted. All artwork will be reproduced in black-and-white. Artists are asked to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue; artwork should not exceed 26 inches by 32 inches. Please identify each piece on the back with its title and your name. Enclose a cover sheet with your name, address, phone number, title(s) of your artwork *and* a 25-50 word bio. Submissions not accompanied by a bio will not be considered. Artists will be notified as to acceptance prior to publication; they will also be instructed as to how artwork will be returned. Submit work to GENESIS, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202 or to the Herron Student Senate office in the JA Building, Herron School of Art, 1605 North Talbott Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

Manuscripts are invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission. Manuscripts of essays, fiction, non-fiction or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Activities Office, University Library, 815 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202. All manuscripts are considered by a student editorial board. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted.

*Manuscripts must be typed and submitted in duplicate;* prose pieces should be double-spaced on a sixty-space line. Please classify prose pieces as either fiction or non-fiction. Poets are asked to submit no more than ten pieces for a given issue. All submissions must be accompanied by a separate title sheet containing the author's name, address, telephone number and a 25-50 word bio; submissions not accompanied by a bio will not be considered.

Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified prior to publication. Authors who wish to be notified of rejection prior to publication date—and all authors who wish their manuscripts to be returned—must include a self-addressed stamped envelope with their submissions. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue. Honorary prizes are awarded at the discretion of the editors for the outstanding entry in each of the categories of art, essay, fiction and poetry. Members of the Editorial Board are ineligible to receive prizes.

# Memory's Mirrors

—Joyce K. Jensen

Joyce K. Jensen—  
Having recently  
merged my  
consciousness with  
that of a computer, I  
now wield that  
electronic exacto  
knife in bloodless  
word carnage, bound  
in the rapture of  
flashing cursors. I/  
we am/are an  
aging/hot-off-the-  
assembly-line  
apprentice  
wordsmith, a.k.a. ex-  
houseslave  
metamorphosed into  
a junior majoring in  
creative writing.

"It's not too late to back down, Mr. Bradley," the technician said. "Sometimes the process dredges up old memories that are too painful to bear, things you haven't thought about in a long time." The tech chewed his lip and rolled the tiny metal disk of an electrode back and forth between his thumb and forefinger; it disturbed him to become the instrument of further pain for someone who had already suffered so much.

"It doesn't hurt, does it?"

"Not physically, no. It's just that the remembering can be . . . a more vivid reminder of what you lost than you expect it to be. We have to get as much as we can, see. Otherwise it might not work."

Bradley looked down at his hands and frowned, the creases between his eyes deepening as his bushy eyebrows drew together. His fingers were short and thick, his hands broad and covered with coarse hair. The technician recognized the shadows underneath his eyes—they all came in with those shadows. Moments such as these were the hardest for the tech, and he had to distance himself from their hurting. After all, he had children, too.

"He can't die, can he?" Bradley said suddenly, looking up again and squinting as he said it.

"No, he's monitored all the time. He'll live as long as medical science allows. The state makes sure of that."

Bradley nodded. "Then I want to do it. It's not just Missy. It's all those other little girls, too." He looked down again and shook his head, blinking back tears. "All those other little girls," he repeated. When he had control again he looked the tech in the eye with the rock-steady gaze of a man who worked hard and went to church and paid his taxes and loved his family. "Can you tell me . . . the others . . . have the others decided like I did?"

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"Yes. Except Mrs. Young. She opted out on the advice of her psychiatrist. But the others have. Yes."

"Good," Bradley said, "good. Can we start now?"

Like most of the people they knew, Vern and Lisa Bradley had opted for one child in this overcrowded world. They were ordinary people, middle class, both of them lucky enough to have regular jobs. They planned Lisa's pregnancy scientifically, arranging for a daughter, a little girl with blue eyes and red hair like Vern's mother Melissa, rest her soul. They had the fetus carefully monitored. Lisa watched her diet, Vern went along to the gym and worked through the exercises with her. He held her hand in the birthing room, and later, when they clinked champagne glasses across the crib of their beautiful baby girl, all eight pounds, nine ounces of her, she made a soft sound in her sleep as if to acknowledge she was now one of them. Vern ran his fingers gently over her halo of red hair. "I love you, Missy," he said.

Diapers, the terrible twos, toilet training, he remembered every detail with startling clarity, the times he was ready to tear his hair and the times he hid his laughter behind a stern face. He felt her arms around his neck, he relived her first wet baby kiss.

It was Vern-and -Missy-and-Lisa, connected by hands and love. Everyone in the day care center was Missy's friend. He remembered how she had played with the kittens as if they were made out of glass, touching their soft coats as he himself had stroked her own red hair that first day.

On weekends they walked around the Broadstreet Mall; once Missy bought them snow cones with money from her six-year-old's collection of carefully hoarded quarters. When it snowed they pulled on boots and scrunched through the drifts in the parking lot, rolling in the snow banks behind the cars and trading snowballs with the few other souls brave enough to venture out. At nine Missy took up the violin. She was the first one on either side of the family to do so and therefore a great novelty. They went to the recitals bearing pride and video cameras.

Her grades were pretty good; she spent hours at the shopping center with her friends. At twelve she fell madly in love with a fifteen-year-old bully and scared Vern silly; at thirteen she adored her algebra teacher. When Vern and Lisa wouldn't let her go out on dates "like everyone else," she sulked for days and scribbled in her diary. At fourteen she was beautiful, and if not the sort sought out by Hollywood agents, she was at least the joy of her mom and dad.

So what if life wasn't perfect? They had each other. Jobs were demanding, the rent went up, Tabbycat ran away; Grandma Litsky fell ill and it was a very long fall for all of them as she died. But Missy grew taller, her good nature shining through as she worked at finding her way toward adulthood; they started talking about colleges.

One night when Vern got home at six, his usual hour, there was a note on the refrigerator: "Daddy—went to Jenny's. Home by seven." As always the words were followed by extravagant rows of x's and o's, kisses and hugs. At seven-thirty he called Jenny's, no answer; the girls were inseparable, they must be on their way over together. He set out another plate.

At eight he tried Jenny's again. "I'm sorry, Mr. Bradley, Missy left about six-thirty. I can't imagine where she is."

He called all of her friends, every one of them, and he got the numbers of other kids and called them, too, just in case. He called Lisa and got her out of a meeting.

He called the police.

The next five months passed in a grey fog. Vern couldn't eat; sometimes he drank too much. He and Lisa found themselves alternately screaming at each other and trying to be strong, each for the other's sake, until in desperation they sought a counselor and sat night after night in her office, afraid they would lose each other, too, in the heat of this endless horrible crisis.

The call came one night as Vern was fixing dinner. A farmer had found the remains. They were checking dental records. Could Mr. and Mrs. Bradley come down to the station and identify the personal effects?

Lendl chuckled. He saw the technician wasn't taking any chances—he had administered the sedative to Lendl and waited a few minutes for it to start working before he dismissed the guards. Lendl chuckled again as his mind began to grow pleasantly sluggish, then realized they still hadn't removed the shackles.

"Hey!" he yelled, holding his hands up as high as they would go so the guards could see; his wrists were shackled to a chain around his waist. The bigger guard shook his head and they went out.

Lendl allowed the rage to show on his face, but he was secretly pleased because they were all still afraid of him. Fear was power, and though he wasn't a tall man or a particularly powerful one, he knew what made people afraid.

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The technician was attaching the electrodes to his scalp. Lendl jerked his head out of the man's hands and looked back and up. "This isn't going to hurt, is it? My lawyer promised me there wouldn't be any pain."

The tech frowned and Lendl took pleasure in his disapproval. "No pain," the tech said.

The sedative made Lendl mellow, loquacious. "I'm looking forward to this, you know, man? I've had a good life, I've had everything I wanted, and now I got memories to see me through the rest of it."

The tech continued to work, careful to keep his eyes averted, but his frown deepened as his hands continued working. Lendl smiled. "Yeah, I've had every pleasure a man could want—women, drugs, cars, the best of all of them."

The tech continued to ignore him. Lendl sneered. "Yeah, I'll bet you wish you had half the fun I've had. No fun for a loser like you, is there, pal."

The tech tugged at Lendl's hair as he attached another electrode, being rougher than was necessary.

"Yeah, man, what does a loser like you know about fun?" Lendl closed his eyes, letting the effects of the sedative carry him into his memories. He had memories enough to last a lifetime, memories that had sustained him through all those months in the solitary cell, memories of all the things he had wanted and simply taken because most people were fools who weren't strong enough or smart enough to stop him. He opened his eyes again. "Hey, man," he said, hearing his speech beginning to slur, "who's it gonna be?"

"What?" the tech said.

"Who do I get to dream about the first time?"

"Missy Bradley." The tech bit off the words and turned away, refusing any more talk.

Lendl closed his eyes again. Missy Bradley. Red hair. He remembered her picture from the newspapers, the trial; he remembered her face. Now there was a sweet little piece, long skinny legs, he could feel her virgin breast under his palm, perfect, so perfect, and he was the first one to squeeze it. Missy with the big blues eyes—oh, how she had screamed and screamed. He felt himself becoming aroused, and smiled at the flush of pleasure it brought.

He could hardly wait to experience Missy Bradley again.

"Ready," the tech said.

Lendl heard the click of a switch flicking. The room dimmed. Memories of Missy Bradley.

Lendl yelled and yelled, but the technician didn't come back. He tried to raise his hands to pull out the electrodes,

but his hands were shackled to his waist and he couldn't reach his scalp. He thrashed weakly with his legs, too drugged to climb over the cocoon sides of the couch.

"These aren't my memories, these aren't right," he yelled, remembering the feel of the soft down of a baby's red hair beneath his palm. "Stop it, stop it," as the tears ran down his temples and into his ears, and Missy Bradley took his hand and looked at him with love in her eyes and whispered, "Oh, Daddy, thank you for the kitten. Can I keep her forever?"

Forever.



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—Lois Gilbert

**Point\***

At Odiorne,  
 I drank rum mulled in wine  
 and watched the fog  
 creep from bunker to bunker  
 like a gas  
 lapping defenseless hollows  
 in the forever sea.

At Odiorne,  
 I tried to touch the fear  
 that had subsided  
 leaving ramparts  
 like castles  
 crumbling so romantically  
 in the Atlantic night.

At Odiorne,  
 I dropped a stone down a conduit  
 and sent rats chasing echoes  
 through the concrete tunnels  
 like boots  
 stumbling to position  
 in the black-out past.

\*During the Second World War, coastal authorities were concerned about the vulnerability of Boston Harbor, and ordered a system of underground bunkers and gun mounts to be built at Odiorne Point, New Hampshire, as an alternate site. Though manned, the harbor was never used, and the fortifications remain today stripped of armament, with most entrances blocked.

—Robert M. Aull

Robert M. Aull—25,  
 English major,  
 senior. "I write  
 fiction as well as  
 poetry, and I don't do  
 enough of either. If I  
 had more time, and  
 got more sleep, I  
 would be better  
 rested but less  
 amused."

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**If I Rode The Shuttle**

I would take up Icarus again,  
scattering him among the unnamed stars  
of a new heaven,  
where his wings could borrow the fire  
of a thousand suns  
and his name-star become a light  
that is always rising;  
would write a poem  
to lift the lid of your eye,  
pouring these new heavens  
in the blur of an old tear.

—Robert M. Aull

**Wednesday**

An ashen thumb to anoint us,  
an immense morning church  
statue-covered,  
derelict,  
with widow-lit candles  
unforgetting,  
and all of winter storming  
a benediction outside.

We crept forward quietly;  
the few words sung  
upon each bowed head  
were leaden,  
never rising above a sound of ice  
gently melting  
the vaulted stone.

Crossing the yard,  
we chased one another  
out of line,  
over the snow mounds  
leaching out of sight  
and past crosses  
stooping in a frozen age;  
our ashes blurred  
and at a lull in class  
tasted like dirt.

—Robert M. Aull

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### six a.m.

Ten feet from taxi  
to red, peeling gate  
she one-handed shoes and barefoot  
toed wet pavement  
sloping to an ocean  
something tamed  
in a cold, fogged bay  
It was six am  
the sun had come  
and whitewash gave it back  
as she took her stairs  
in twos and threes  
dress shifted  
key restless in a warm hand  
good morning san francisco

—Robert M. Aull

# First Thaw

—Joyce K. Jensen

There was nothing left to say.

The words, like the people, were worn out with the repetition, tired from hearing themselves spoken over and over again, they were used up and gone. "It was a stroke . . . no warning . . . only sixty-one . . . it was fast, that's a blessing. At times like this you appreciate your friends." The pauses hung on the telephone lines like sodden laundry. "We're grateful he didn't suffer."

Norm yawned and stretched, feeling let down at the sudden surcease of activity; he looked over at his uncle dozing in the recliner. Like Norm and Marti, he'd been here since Tuesday afternoon, had watched the house fill up and spill over, like a noisy popcorn popper, with bodies and luggage and casseroles, voices rising with the excitement of the unexpected coming-together.

The grief hadn't been real then, had been wrapped in a swaddling of phone calls, kitchen clatter, the uneven cacophony of the television playing nonstop to occupy the children, the old fashioned brzzzt-clang of the doorbell, and over it all the talk, talk, endless talk. Norm's youngest, Barry, had clung to his leg as to a pylon of stability in this sea of excitement, imploring over and over again, "Where's Grandpa?"

The men and women passed through one another and separated in some manner that Norm couldn't fathom; naturally, it seemed, like the fat and the gravy separating, drawn by unspoken agreement into traditional forms where everybody understood duty, even Marti-who-hated-to-cook joining the women in the kitchen, each individual soul grateful to be making coffee or driving to the airport or picking out the flowers, relieved to know how they fit in.

Coffins, colors, visitation hours, in the long run what difference did any of it make? At night Norm's brothers went home to their houses, to drift back in the early morning with hands shoved in pockets and uneasy smiles. Keep busy, that

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was the ticket. Nobody was sure how to act, nobody was sure what to do for their mother, the take-charge lady; they kept waiting for her to step forward and suggest something, give them advice, tell them what to do next; but she only sat at the kitchen table with her coffee cup and her pain, shocked and bereaved to a degree her sons couldn't fathom.

The phone rings; repeat the story like a litany. Relatives arrive, apportion them among the houses—we have sleeping bags. No, you came so far—we'll take the rollaway and you take the guest room. Are these your suitcases? Here's a key to the back door.

Have a sandwich.

It gave them something to say.

Divide up the hours, divide up the kids, divide up the chores, don't forget Carla has the baby to think about.

Handshaking, hugging, kissing, talking talking talking.

There was nothing left to say.

Norm pushed himself out of the wicker chair, its creaking loud in the quiet empty house. His uncle snored softly.

He went into the spotless kitchen that had been scrubbed clean by restless daughters-in-law, that had been shined and polished and swept in energetic acts of love. The refrigerator brimmed with food. He dug around in the back and found a beer, opened it and looked out at the yard, the familiar yard of childhood incongruously grown smaller. It was muddy with the first thaw and childish footprints. It looked empty, dead, used up.

Turning away, he sat down. For three nights running he and his brothers had sat here drinking beer with their uncle. They had watched him think words he couldn't share while he glanced at their father's chair and repeated, "He was a good man." By some tacit agreement the chair remained empty, as if their father had gotten up to use the bathroom or check on a grandchild or fetch more beer from the garage.

Like his own brother, their uncle was a good man, but the cigarettes and arthritis had gotten to him and his body was years older than his face or voice, older than his mind. He was a lawyer, he advised them about the will; and when the beer loosed his tongue he told story after story in his educated tenor until they laughed so hard they cried, and Carla poked her head in frowning and told them to keep it down.

But when he talked about his brother he could only say, "He was a good man." And they agreed, and before the silence could take over, he told them another story, until

there was nothing left to say and, yawning, they found their separate ways to bed.

Norm sat now in the pale winter sunshine and sipped his beer. His brothers were back at work. He envied them the activity, wishing at once that he and Marti could stay on a while and that they could fly home and find that everything was the same.

He looked around the kitchen and out the window and back again at the empty chair, and he thought, How could you leave us? I have so much left to tell you.



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## The Year in Review

Polyps bloomed in the gipper's gut,  
And Nancy fell into the golden light;  
And like it.  
Someone wonderful died.  
Someone else found a gun.  
He used it.

—Rick Callahan

**Rick Callahan**—is a junior majoring in Journalism. He is a former member of the *genesis* board, and despises these latest poems.

## At The Flea Market

She spends their Sundays  
 plundering rubble  
 sifting others' discards  
 searching  
 for bits of her own abandoned childhood  
 confident she'll reassemble  
 all the scattered fragile pieces  
 all her half-remembered dreams.

He sighs, shifts his feet.  
 The ball game is on, and  
*still* she rummages.  
 "Pack rat," he mutters.  
 "You're nothing  
 but a damn pack rat."

"Don't knock it," she says.  
 "Some of this stuff was here  
 before you were born and  
 it'll still be around after  
 you're gone."

She caresses chipped china  
 fondles dusty lace  
 cradles a moth-bitten toy--  
 but when she turns  
 to show him  
 her newest battered treasure  
 she looks around to find him  
 and he is

gone.

—Barbara Koons

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### Tarantula Food

To protect your words from falling rainstars,  
flamingo comets, & crippled comics:  
store them beneath the quiet Indiana soil;  
camouflage them with leaves of grass;  
surround them with sunflowers in wide texas fields;  
weight them with solemn iron & throw them in religious  
waters;  
tie them to the foot of an american sparrow;  
hide them in the pretentious Webster crowd;  
light them & send them across Nevada as Commanche  
smoke;  
fry them in a greasy skillet over open Rocky Mountain fire;  
pitch 'em in a beggar's cup;  
pitch 'em in a poet's cup;  
or if you've got enough,  
load them on a truck & drive to California;  
sleep with them in all-night moviehouses in Chicago;  
roll them in 1.5 JOB papers & put them in a Marlboro pack;  
make brownies from them,  
(always save the seeds though);  
pretend they are poetry & submit them to a contest,  
(no one will ever see them again);  
check them into a motel just outside Memphis on a rainy  
night,  
(have your way with them just once);  
leave them outside overnight in a dark silent suburban yard,  
(perhaps that Memphis Motel Rain will come to town  
tonight);  
or maybe just let them melt on the back of your tongue,  
(not in your mind);

store them in grass sacks & float them on mark twain rafts  
     down the Mississippi;  
 put them in saddlebags & carry them on horses  
     through the Gret Plains;  
 take to midwestern farming & hide them  
     under Chicken Mothers;  
 breed them with rabbits & let them multiply unhindered  
     by human censors;  
 let them live with bears in wild Canadian forests;  
 feed them to a Tarantula in the Arizona desert;  
 make them animals,  
 make them free;  
  
 trade them for an autographed picture of Jean Rousseau;  
 mail them to Rick's, Casablanca;  
 keep them under satin covers in a far east bedroom at  
     Graceland;  
 disguise them as graffiti in the Washington Monument;  
 fingerpaint them on harlem walls;  
 stick them on the bottom of a seat at Yankee Stadium;  
 soak them in a bottle of 15 year old Chivas Regal;  
 store them with Mother's best China in Father's cluttered  
     attic;  
 leave them in your will to Howard Hughes;  
 or simply  
     conceal them as part of this elastic poem,  
     as I have.

—J.B. Straw

**J.B. Straw**—(Because  
 Inquiring Minds  
 want to know—) i  
 imagine me:  
 with one moon on my  
 face & one moon  
 behind me, quoting  
 Rimbaud at the  
 evening pool, between  
 Budweiser cans,  
 waiting for the next  
 Voyage.  
 how do you imagine me?  
 (I want to know.)



—David Frisby

# Learnin' Liberation at My Grandmother's Knee

—Mary Sullivan

Mary Sullivan—is a student at IUPUI.

I learned about liberation at my grandmother's knee. Sometimes she would sit with a far away look in her eyes, and I would ask her what she was thinking about. Little by little she taught me about liberation, about freedom, and about following one's own heart.

Liberation, freedom, and following one's heart take courage. My first lessons in courage came from the stories my grandmother told me about her past. She told me how she had gotten married at the age of thirteen. In those days, early marriages were the norm where my grandmother came from in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Her mother had died leaving no one to care for her. She was the youngest child and all of her brothers and sisters had married and moved away. Marriage was one of the few options available to her.

At a young age, and with a young son to care for, my grandmother found herself alone again—well, almost alone. The man she married was quite handsome and somewhat of a lothario, who needed regular doses of drinking, partying, and women. To satisfy his needs, he would go off and leave my grandmother alone to care for their small son. On many such occasions, my grandmother would huddle with her son in their cabin down in the valley and watch KKK crosses burn on the hill above them. She told me how she would put out the lamps and pray that her son would not cry. "If things changed," she would say, "I was always prepared to use the rifle if I had to." I sat wide-eyed and marvelled at the courage of this quiet, somewhat shy woman.

After enduring the rigors of caring for two toddlers, her son and her husband, she did something that was totally unheard of. She left them both. Whether what she did was right or wrong and what the exact circumstances were pale in importance in view of the tremendous courage that it took to defy conventions of the early 1900s. Her leaving occurred at a time that was untouched by the suffragettes of the North, the land of freedom to which my grandmother fled.

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Detroit was the city where my grandmother drew her first free breath. The minor details of her life there were sketchy to me. The most significant thing I remember is the story I heard about her close friend. She would talk about him and how he allowed her to be herself. He was supportive of her in a way that only a few men are now trying to become. As a young romantic girl, this was my favorite story because not only were my grandmother and her friend extremely close, they were equals. Despite the idyllic condition of their relationship, it did not have a fairytale ending. My grandmother's friend developed cancer, a disease that was surrounded by mystery and fear, much as it is today. She nursed him as well as she could. At the hospital, she kept a constant vigil until the end. I remember how she described the last time she saw him. "He was lying there in the hospital bed and his mouth was all covered with sores. He tried to smile as he motioned me over and said, 'Honey, give me a kiss.' I kissed him and told him I'd see him later. That was the last time I saw him."

My grandmother would tell this story every time she heard the song "Ain't It Funny How Time Slips Away." I knew the tremendous grief she continued to experience years later, grief that was brought on by having lost someone and something very special. I feared the grief in her eyes, but she told me never to be afraid of pain. "You'll never get anywhere if you're going to be afraid all of the time," she used to say. So I sat, listened, and tried to soak up courage like a sponge.

After the death of her friend, my grandmother left Detroit and came to Indianapolis. She found a job as a cook in a downtown restaurant. Her living quarters consisted of rooms she rented from a stingy, cranky old man. Warmth and friendliness came from her next door neighbors—an elderly woman named Louise, and her granddaughter, Vickie. My grandmother grew increasingly close to them; in fact, she became one of the family. When Vickie became pregnant, my grandmother helped to deliver the baby girl when the doctor could not get there on time. A year and two months later, she performed the same task when a second daughter was born to Vickie. She became a godmother to the two baby girls. When Vickie's grandmother died, my grandmother moved in and became the maternal figure in the household. She took care of young Vickie and her daughters. As the daughters grew, they thought of her as their grandmother. My sister and I were Vickie's two girls and Sally Jones was the only grandmother we ever knew.

Growing up in a house full of women taught me a lot. It taught me about self-sufficiency, independence, loyalty, and sisterhood. Because there was no male around, there were times when various people thought that they could take advantage of what they perceived to be our "vulnerability." The last thing that they expected to find was all of these strong-willed women who supported each other emotionally, psychologically, and physically. Additionally, despite the fact that I came from a family whose history contained weak or absent men, I learned to have healthy relationships with males, relationships based on mutual respect. Most of all, I learned about courage, about freedom and about following my own heart. My grandmother planted these seeds in me long ago, and I only wish she could have lived to see how they have blossomed.



GENESIS

**(take me from myself)**

take me from myself  
sweet babbling brook of balm  
tend this troubled soul

apart and yet one  
for the same moon shines on two  
breeze caresses both

grandfather's coffee  
was sipped cool from the saucer  
where he had poured it

mosquitoes stinging  
the tomato pickers' limbs  
as they moved at dusk

cocoon holds within  
the mystery of beauty  
emerging softly

his cat stares at her  
wondering at the changes  
occurring daily

the gust lifts and sifts  
white powdery confection  
nature's perfection

cold in the corner  
of the corn picker's wagon  
huddled the children

the little boy's tears  
flooded her soul as she cried  
the puppy is no longer

they speak solemnly  
of lessons learned and call it  
holistic healing

clouds forming various  
objects of art and fancy  
imagination

baby cries to sleep  
what fear can innocent know  
to disturb slumber

the blood-red ball  
slowly slipped into the sea  
cooling it for dawn

—Linda D. Lewis

Linda D. Lewis—I was born in Frankfort, Indiana, on October 30, 1948. I've been writing poetry for many years for my own enjoyment, but have recently felt the desire to share some of my pieces. "The Wall Builder" was included in *genesis* Spring publication '85. I've recently been notified that another work will be published in *Modern Haiku* poetry magazine, Madison, Wisconsin, in February of '86. I'm presently employed by Brownsburg School Corporation as a reading tutor. I am married and have three lovely children . . . Ryan—15, Jill—10, and Gary—12.

## GENESIS

### A Coloring Book

At midlife he's found a new love:  
Color him radiant.

Just BLAZE him over  
all the  
page

And never mind the lines.

Color her scarlet, of course.

Color the future black-bordered and murky and

Color me grey:

My lips ash

My eyes dull

My heart,

Bittergreen.

—Barbara Koons

**Barbara Koons**—I am a non-degree graduate student, an ex-housewife-turned-writer who discovered that a typewriter was more fun to use than a vacuum cleaner.

## An Evening in June

There were just the two of you  
In the world behind her closed lids.  
She worked her magic and conjured up  
Your voice, your face . . . willed you near.  
At dusk, the sky became a magnificent  
Multi-shaded canvas of blue . . .  
“Like your eyes,” she knew you’d say;  
And she smiled.  
Later, the moon and stars shone brilliantly  
And she ached for you.  
The emptiness of your absence was so real  
That she held it in her cupped hands  
And buried her face in it.  
You were making music; lovely melodies,  
As her tears fell soundlessly to the earth.  
A lone soul in a two-man hammock  
Admitting to herself unashamedly  
That she was not where she wanted to be.

—Linda D. Lewis

## Cop Killer

—Tom Lee

**Tom Lee**—Tom Lee is in his fourth year at IUPUI working on a Liberal Arts degree in English. He is a 1982 graduate of the Indiana Law Enforcement academy and a jail officer for the Hendricks County Sheriff's Department.

"So I figger on breakin' the lock on the side door and goin' in that way. He's prob'ly got samples of every kind of drug they is in there. And I know they ain't no alarm, I been in there, I looked." Jake was leaning on his forearms holding a beer between his hands and staring wide-eyed across the dingy, chipped tabletop. His eyelids jumped with emphasis as he spoke. He leaned back and put a cigarette between his lips. "So you in, or what?"

"I dunno, Jake. I caint afford to get caught. Last time I . . ."

"Listen Dickie, we ain't gonna get caught, I got it all figgered. We'll get enough dope to last us a year."

"I dunno, Jake. My parole officer told me if I so much as came near you, she'd send me back ta the farm quicker'n I could spit."

"Oh hell, Dickie, I done told you we ain't gettin' caught." Jake snapped the cigarette from his lips and picked up the beer can.

"Jake?" Jake's girlfriend entered the kitchen wearing only a tattered pair of red bikini panties the waistband of which had ruptured revealing a small portion of her ample posterior. Her breasts sagged, her stomach sagged, her buttocks sagged. Her skin was pale, her hair flat, black and greasy. Dirt showed under her fingernails. She walked around the table and opened the refrigerator door as she spoke. "Ain't you goin' ta work today?"

"Woman, I go to work when I feel like goin' to work. Me and Dickie's talkin' business. Don't bug me." Deloris turned, and struggled to pry the tab from the can.

"Business, Ha? You prob'ly gonna beat up some ol' lady for her welfare check." Jake moved fast. With one motion he jumped up from the table and smacked Deloris across the face. The beer can slid across the dirty floor and rebounded off the base of the stove.

“Watch your mouth when you talk ta me, bitch, or you and that bastard kid o’ yers’ll be sleepin’ in the street.” Deloris exited the room in haste and exhibited an upturned middle finger in defiance as she disappeared around the corner and down the hall. Jake removed a dirty, yellow cap and ran his fingers through long greasy hair. He held his hair out of his face with his left hand, slapped the cap against his leg and placed it back on his head. “She’s got no gratitude,” he said in disgust, then looking at Dickie, “So you goin’ with me or what?”

“Jake, I cain’t. Judge Bolen told me if he ever saw me in his court again he would personally see to it I went to prison for life.”

“Well get the hell out then,” Jake shouted. “And gimme back my beer.” He snatched the can from his friend’s hand. Dickie got up and started rapidly for the door. “And you ain’t gettin’ any of the dope I score either pal.” Dickie slammed the door of the trailer and was gone.

Jake threw the beer can in the corner and looked around the kitchen. The sink was full of dishes, food lay crusted on the counter, cabinet doors stood open and flies buzzed around a bag of trash leaning against the refrigerator. “Deloris,” he yelled, “get yer butt in here and clean up this garbage dump.”

Deputy Frederic C. Nelson worked the three-to-midnight shift. He stood looking in the full-length mirror on his bedroom door. He adjusted his gun belt, and checked his name plate, badge, collar brass, pins and buttons. He thought it important not to be seen in public in a state of slovenly disarray; he was particular. In the academy he was told that putting on the police uniform heightens blood pressure, heart rate, awareness and stress. After two and a half years he still believed it. He felt responsible. He was responsible. He shut the bedroom door, picked up his hat, felt his shirt pocket for the pen that was always there and left his house. He walked around the squad car, inspecting. He got inside, picked up the radio microphone and marked “in service.” While Nelson was arranging himself for duty, Jake was drinking his eighth beer of the day. While Nelson was patrolling the streets of Felder County, Jake was seducing the ten-year-old daughter of his live-in girlfriend.

Fourteen minutes before he was scheduled to go off duty, Nelson received a radio call dispatching him to the office of Doctor Ralph G. Neddlestien. The office was equipped with microphones monitored by a private security company; it was they who heard the noises of burglary and called the

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Sheriff's department. Nelson shut off the squad car headlights as he pulled into the back lot of the Doctor's office. He shut off the engine, removed the flashlight from its holder under the driver's seat and quietly exited the vehicle. Usually, he thought, these silent alarm runs turn out to be nothing. Most of the time it's the owner himself who has forgotten to shut off the alarm before going in. Some of the time it is a mechanical malfunction. Once in a while it is an animal, a bird or cat. Only one time in a hundred is it an actual burglary. Nelson crept slowly along the side of the building toward the back door. He did not turn on the flashlight; the street lamps provided enough light. He did not want his flashlight beam to alert anyone who might be inside.

He moved toward the door. It was a clear night, the stars highly visible, the night warm. He heard only insects. Thousands of them, screeching, all calling at once. He heard another sound, very slight. He looked left, then right, with quick movements. He looked behind, then forward. He stopped eighteen feet from the door. Again he heard the sound, a footstep, something sliding slowly against the ground; the door was being opened. He stopped. He stood, feet wide apart, bent slightly forward, his right hand back, gripping his revolver. Someone was coming out. Nelson saw his foot, his shoulder, arm, chest, head. Something was in his hand, something white. A sack? Half shadows, half light, it was difficult to make out. The man stepped out of the doorway, looking ahead, away from Nelson. He wore a dirty teeshirt, blue jeans. A dirty yellow cap held back dark hair. Nelson unsnapped the strap holding his revolver in its holster, his hand gripped the gun.

The man turned toward him, something was in his other hand, something black. The man dropped the sack from his left hand as he raised his right arm toward Nelson. Nelson was trained. He pulled his weapon, bent slightly at the knees, pushed his arms out in front of him. Both hands gripped the weapon aimed at the center of the dirty tee shirt. Nelson heard his firearms instructor: "On the seven yard line, two shot bursts, instinctive shooting, no aiming . . . ready." He heard the start whistle. He fired his weapon.

The first bullet entered the man's chest, shattering his sternum. The .357 caliber magnum hollow point bullet is designed to flatten and fragment on impact. Upon making contact with and shattering the sternum, this bullet did in fact flatten and fragment throughout the chest cavity, tearing muscle tissue and organs. The biggest portion of the

bullet travelled onward and lodged behind the shoulder blade. The second bullet, hitting to the right and slightly lower than the first, entered the lower left portion of the heart, instantly causing failure and massive hemorrhage. This bullet also flattened, traveled through the heart, between the fourth and fifth back ribs and exited the man's body leaving massive muscle and tissue damage.

The man fell, face forward, his back instantly darkened with blood. Nelson was shocked. Forty-six hours of classroom training in firearms, several hundred rounds of ammo fired on the practice range, lectures, readings from the manual and not once did he see, hear, or read that a man would fall face forward when shot. He had expected what he had seen in the movies a hundred times; a man shot in the chest flies backwards fifteen to twenty feet, and lands on his back instantly immobile with a red spot on his chest the size of a silver dollar. As a result of gunshots this man fell face forward, covered with blood, his body in extreme convulsions. His legs moved as if to run, his arms as if to fly, his head twisted and bounced repeatedly off the ground. The body continued to convulse as Nelson approached, his gun still pointed at the target. Slowly, by degrees, the convulsions slowed to a mere twitching of the hands and feet, then even that ceased. Nelson watched. Still clutched in the man's right hand was a blue steel revolver.

Nelson holstered his weapon. He looked around. The insects were still screeching at each other, the stars still visible, the night still warm. The realization came to him; he had killed a man. He had a light, dizzy feeling in his head and a heavy, nauseating feeling in his stomach. He stepped back a few paces and sat on the ground, knees up to his chest, arms around his legs. He stared at the body, watching the widening pool of blood. He did not hear the dispatcher's attempt to contact him. He did not hear the other cars on duty radio that they were en route to his location. He had executed his duties in excellent fashion. He had stopped a burglary in progress.

He had spent fourteen weeks in the Police Academy and he knew how to write tickets. He knew how to do the paperwork on a multi-car accident. He knew how to settle a domestic disturbance. He could subdue a drunk, administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and negotiate his car through twisting country roads at high speeds. He was well trained and knew what to do. But no one had taught him how to get rid of the feeling he now had in his chest. No one had taught him what to do when he killed a man and wanted to throw up.



GENESIS



—Rick Callahan



—Rick Callahan

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**The Sea is All Men Need**

Strange,  
That this ship sails  
Those dark waters  
At all times of life.  
Even the cold glare of the moon and dusting  
Sky will not stop it.  
Here it comes again  
From under the crisp shadow  
Of a cloud, guided by men.

Beneath the gray waters  
The women  
Cling to the hull with one hand  
And claw at barnacles with the other.

They must scour the ship  
So it will go swiftly through the water.

No need to find land.  
The sea is all men need.  
There are two thoughts:  
"I hope the women are not swept away.  
They are beneficial."

One of the women strains to see  
Something along the horizon.  
She cannot make it out.  
A wave hits her face.

**—Rick Callahan**

**Until 5:**

sara sat with tiny pies  
between her tiny thighs

she was a tidy waitress

serving all the children of  
sara  
with small cups of flavored  
tease

her apron is so white

and the afternoon so easy  
when passed her way

plenty of time for sleep

they sit with blue skies on  
their tongues

snow mice are forgotten in  
favor of springing birds

language of the cheetah can  
be heard

among the trees as these  
conversations  
develop between screens

and sticks fall from houses

balls unravel with the time  
less hours passed their way

plenty of time for sleep

before

but

now

i'm coming home

—J.B. Straw

## Swimmer

—Tom Lee

He turned west from the highway onto the dirt road that wound through the trees toward the lake. On both sides the branches of the trees spread across the road forming a tunnel through which he drove. Only a small amount of sunlight squeezed through the narrow space where the branches did not meet above the center of the road. The tires of the van raised a cloud of dust from the road filling the tunnel and closing it off behind him. As he drove, he remembered what Johnson had said to him the day before. “I realize you have been with the company for eight years,” his boss had said, “but it is out of my hands. The company is closing the plant. It’s the economy. You understand, don’t you?”

He did not understand. He had been a press operator for all this time. The ML911-B offset had been his machine, and he alone had operated and maintained it all these years. It was only a machine, but he had grown attached to it. The machine, to him, was like a friend; he had spent many hours working with it. But the machine, to them, was only worth the small amount they would receive from the scrap yard, and he was not even worth that much; they were just throwing him away.

He had not been educated past three years of high school and the training he received in the Navy. He had joined the Navy at seventeen because he was frustrated with life in the small town he grew up in. He would have found no relief for his frustration had the navy not done the one thing for him that changed his life; they taught him to swim. He had known how and loved to swim since childhood, but the navy opened up a whole new world for him when they taught him to swim with the aid of a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus—scuba.

In the navy he had been UDAT-VICTOR (Underwater Defense and Assault Team-V). When he was in the water

moving in silence among the plants and fish, he felt something he felt nowhere else. Swimming, to him, was the best thing in life. When he swam, he was alone; people cannot speak underwater. Nothing bothered him when he swam. As soon as he was under the surface, he was at peace and all his worries were forgotten. He thought he would never love anything like he did this.

But while in the Navy he met Kathy. She seemed to be all the things he needed. After he left the Navy and they married, he went to work at J & J Printing Company and swimming was forgotten. He was content with this life until she left him three weeks ago. There had been no fight, no argument; he came home one day and she was gone. The short note on the kitchen table and her lawyer's papers in the mail three days later were the only communication he had had with her. He had his job to go to then; now he had lost even that.

All this he thought as he drove. Was this his whole life? He thought there must be more to it. Through all the years with her he had not even the slightest desire to swim; then after she left, swimming began coming back into his mind. Since the day before, since leaving his boss's office, he had thought of nothing else.

The sun was almost directly overhead now shining through into the tunnel. The golden sunlight reflecting off of the swirling, light brown cloud, was a distinct contrast to the bright green leaves on the trees. With these thoughts in his head and these colors in his eyes, he drove.

Two dozen curves and half a dozen miles south of the highway this tree-lined road curved east. At this point, on the west side of the road was a wood frame, two story farmhouse which had not been lived in for many years; half of the roof and the whole north wall were gone, and a tree, half as tall as the house, grew through what was left of the front porch. This house had been for sale five years before when the owner had died. He had come to look at it with a realtor. The house had been uninhabitable, but he had never forgotten what he had seen behind the house in the woods. He stopped the van.

In front of the house was a three-strand barbed-wire fence which had received no more attention over the past few years than the house. He stepped down from the van and walked up to one of the rotted, gray fence posts. He placed his hands on top of the fence post and rocked it back and forth until it broke off at the ground, then he laid it on its side. The wire, still held on the rotted post by rusted U-

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shaped nails hammered into the wood many years before, curved from the post still standing on the right to the ground at his feet and back up to the post on his left. He climbed back into the van and drove over the broken post and sagging wire.

Four hundred yards south of the farmhouse, away from the road and down a long sloping hill, the trees opened into a clearing. Taking up nearly all of the space in the clearing was a lake. There was no moss on the lake. There was no trash, there were no people. There was only a boat dock, it roughly in the same condition as the house.

The lake was not large; standing at the edge of the woods a strong man could throw a rock to its center. The water was the color of a cloudless sky. It was cool to the touch and strangely tasteless. The fish in the lake streaked up from under the surface, twisted and bent their bodies quickly in the sun, then splashed back into the water. The younger, smaller fish chased each other through the shallow water near the shore. Turtles surfaced occasionally for breaths of air, and frogs sat happily on the bank.

Between the lake and the trees that surround it was a ring of hard-packed earth twenty steps wide devoid of vegetation (except for the north and west shores where smaller trees grew at the water's edge). At the south edge of the lake a stream formed a run-off for excess water. The stream was not so wide that it could not be stepped over. But it was apparent by the absence of any large, and thereby old, plant life on both sides of the stream that at other times the stream was many times its present width. It was here he stopped the van.

He turned off the engine, left the key in the ignition, and stepped out. He took his wallet out of the back pocket of his cut-off blue jeans and tossed it on the driver's seat. He slid open the side door of the van and removed his equipment. He put his arms through the straps of the buoyancy compensator/air tank and hooked the weight belt around his waist. He put his fins under his left arm and picked up his mask. The rough, thick weeds did not hurt his bare feet as he walked to the south shore. He sat down on the bank and looked out over the lake. He sat for a long time, thinking.

Still carrying his mask and fins he got up and walked east along the shore toward the old, half-rotted boat dock. Once there he sat on the edge of the dock, put his feet in the fins and tightened the straps. He stood on the dock and put his regulator in his mouth to test it. It worked; he had filled

the air tank that morning. He put on his mask, turned around and fell backwards into the water.

Underwater he thought to himself how sweet the air tasted. He could not remember ever tasting air like this. He felt a calmness go through his body. But with this relaxation came strength. He forgot all his worries. All the pain was gone.

He pushed himself forward with his fins. The water was dark; he could not see. He held his feet still and glided through the water. He extended his right arm all the way out in front and then slowly brought his hand closer to his face. Halfway to his face his hand became dimly visible. With visibility being this poor he knew he would have to move carefully.

Bending at the waist he kicked his feet slightly. He held his left hand jammed out in front of him. He floated down slowly until his hand touched sand on the bottom. Sand? This lake should not have a sandy floor, he thought. Like all lakes in this area, it's floor should be thick with vegetation growing out of mud, not sand. He was very curious about this. He reached down and picked up a handful of sand. It filtered through his fingers and settled back to the bottom. Keeping his mask close to the floor of the lake he kicked his fins gently and moved in a small circle. He could see no plant life at all.

He turned toward the middle of the lake and kicked as the bottom dropped off, out of sight. As he swam he rolled over and over in the water. He swam up and over backwards, playing. He felt free, alive. This swim was effortless; he seemed to glide through the water with great ease. The water felt better than it ever had before, better than any water ever had. He wondered if some mysterious chemical had mixed with the air in the tank, causing him to feel this way.

He relaxed his legs and allowed them to sink in an attempt to find the bottom again. They sank until he was vertical in the water, but he did not feel the bottom. He held his right wrist close to his face to look at his depth gauge and saw indicated a depth of forty-seven feet. This was puzzling; he felt no pressure. He held his arms out in front of him and kicked his legs to descend. After a few seconds he relaxed his legs, suspending his body in the water. He checked his gauge; it indicated a depth of sixty-two feet and still he felt no pressure. This was not like anything he had ever experienced. He wondered what it was like deeper. He kicked his feet again to move himself down and noticed the



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water getting cooler. The coolness of the water was stimulating. He swam deeper. Suddenly the bottom was there.

It was like moving into the sun from a darkened building; the light, at first, was blinding. But after a few seconds he could see: rocks, sand, and plants of all varieties. He looked at depth gauge; it read "0". The water was clear; he could see through it for a great distance. The floor of the lake was clean and bright. He wondered where the light came from.

He moved gently forward through the water without having to use his fins. He looked above and could see the dark water a body length above. He reached up into it and his hand disappeared. He pulled his hand back. Then he noticed that something was missing; he did not hear his exhaled breath rising in the water. He had not been breathing. He looked at the gauge for his air tank; it was still full. He had not taken even one breath since he had been in the water. He pulled the mask from his face. And he could still see. He took the regulator from his mouth and twisted out of his tank and compensator harness. As he released them, the tank and harness floated up, not down, and disappeared into the dark water above. He unstrapped his weight belt and fins, released them and watched as they, along with his other gear, floated up into the dark water. Smiling, he turned to his right and without moving his feet willed his body into motion. He swam.

At the county morgue Sergeant Gray asked, "Well, Steve, what's the verdict on this one?"

"After we cleaned the weeds and mud off him, it was easy to determine the cause of death," the coroner began.

"Is this what killed him?" interrupted the sergeant, pointing to a jagged hole in the back of the dead man's skull.

"Yes," answered the coroner. "When he fell backwards off the dock, he hit his head on that sunken rowboat just under the surface. He was killed instantly. All the equipment was still on the body and the air tank was full."

"So he never knew what hit him," finished the sergeant.

"He was a young guy, too. What a shame," said the coroner.

"Yeah, what a shame," said the sergeant.

## Engine Summer

Night comes more often  
On these plains  
Of brown and white.

Quails linger and huddle  
Among the wheat-stubs,  
Warming themselves in camouflage,

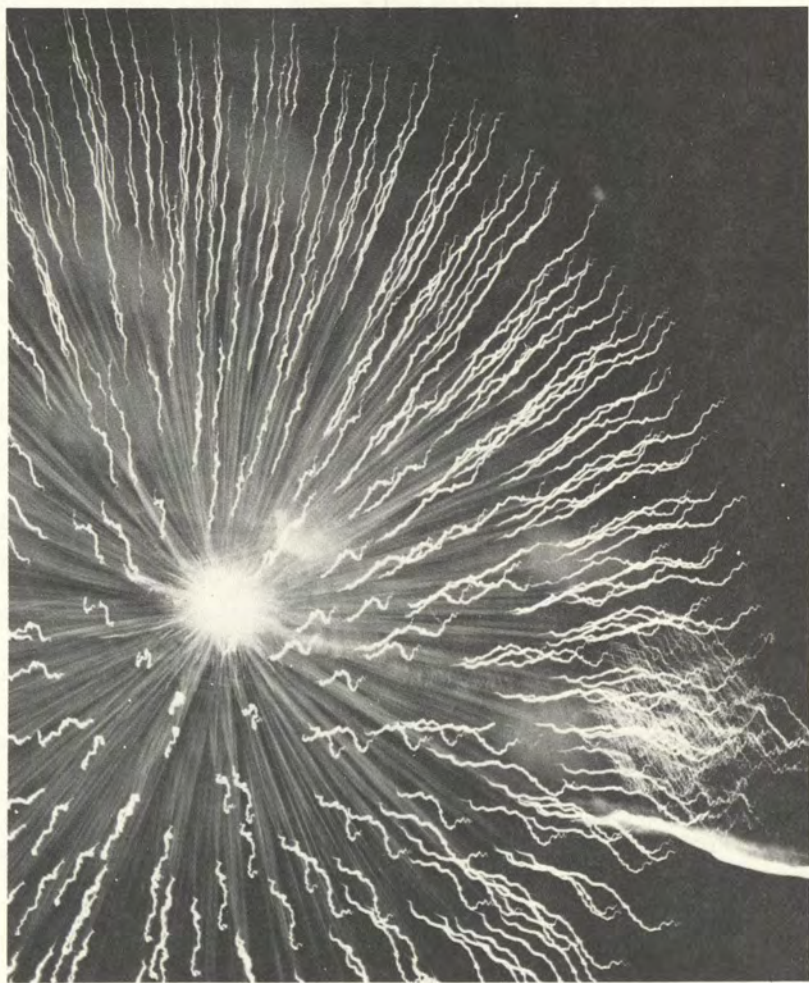
While the snow comes and comes,  
Piling itself in careful drifts  
Along harvested north-south furrows.

It is strange to hear the voice  
of a tiring jet moving  
Overhead through the snow clouds,

Searching for a tropical home.  
Its engines scorch the air  
And it is summer.

—Rick Callahan

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—anonymous

## The Virginal

With a furious thrust  
 and it is over . . . for now . . .  
 This is why I spent  
 the evening making-up, perfuming,  
 softening, romanticizing? . . .  
 So can I go home now?

—Susan Mattox

## Revelations

So was it good for you?  
 go ahead, be honest.  
 I'm a little embarrassed . . .  
 did I do something wrong?  
 I'm sorry I came in your hand.

—Susan Mattox

**Susan Mattox**—I am  
 an english and  
 political science  
 major. Being an  
 eternal cynic, I have  
 faith in very little.  
 Yet I believe in God,  
 love, and J., because  
 he believed in me  
 when I didn't have  
 the good sense or the  
 strength to believe  
 in myself.

## Getting Even

—R.F. Russell

R.F. Russell—I don't know what can be said about me that hasn't been said before—except perhaps I won't be eligible to submit much longer. My student career is ending, at least I hope it is. You won't have to put up with my haphazard use of commas.

Scaring Wo Thompson is Heather's idea. She's wearing a terrific witch costume she sewed for the school play. With makeup and wig, Heather looks evil, ugly, exactly like a witch, nothing like the pretty girl she is. And Heather's been practicing a witch's cackle. When she cackles with the ugly teeth and bent nose, she scares me, and I know it's just Heather in a costume. She'll scare Wo out of his mind, what little mind he has.

"Come on," Heather says. "Let's get Wo."

I want to tell Heather I don't think Wo deserves to be scared, but no one else says anything, not Linda or Dawn or Spring. I don't say anything either. This is my first invitation to Heather's house, my first night with the prettiest, most popular group in the class. I don't want to return to a less popular group after only one night, and I don't owe Wo anything. Some people think I do because of what happened in third grade, but I don't owe him. What happened on the playground was just one of those things. Some people are lucky, and some are like—Wo.

Wo lives half a block from Heather. We sneak out the back door and creep through the back yards, trying to stifle our giggles. Most of the houses are dark. Not Mr. Rawley's. We see him in his study, sitting in his red leather chair, reading a book. Mr. Rawley stays up late. Billy Smith, the paperboy, says he finds Mr. Rawley in that chair at dawn, sometimes asleep, sometimes not, but always with a book. None of us understand why Mr. Rawley reads so much. His son Jamie doesn't read. Jamie watches TV like the rest of us.

Heather suggests trying to scare Mr. Rawley, but Dawn says that maybe Mr. Rawley can't be scared. "Else why would he sit up alone all night?" Dawn asks. No one has an answer. We're all afraid of being alone, even me.

Wo's house is the last before the woods, and Wo's

bedroom faces the trees. From time to time Wo makes some weird sounds, some moaning sounds his parents don't want the neighbors to hear. We circle through the woods. When I was young, my mother didn't like me playing in the woods. People around the neighborhood told stories how Mr. Thompson set traps in the woods for small game, nasty traps he had learned to build in Viet Nam. No one ever found a trap, but we were always careful in the woods.

Everyone hides in the trees except Heather. She creeps to Wo's window, scrapes her fingernails across Wo's screen. We shiver.

"Wo?!" Heather calls. "Wo?!"

I hope Wo isn't in his room, but I know better. Wo has practically lived in his room since the accident.

Some people blame me for the accident, say I was showing off at the playground, say I shouldn't have been on top of the slide, say I got my jeans caught on purpose, say I could have freed myself and didn't need Wo's help. That's what people say, but they weren't stuck on top of the high slide, scared and whiny. Wo climbed to me and unhooked my jeans, but things went wrong. I know I didn't shake the slide on purpose. Wo just lost his balance. His head hit the concrete, and he didn't wake up for a month. When he did, his brains had turned to syrup, slow and sticky. He had to quit regular school, go to the special school with the special playground. Not that school helped Wo much. His brain had been beaten to oatmeal. He stayed in his room.

"Wo!" Heather calls louder.

We wait in the woods. Heather scratches the screen.

"Wo!"

We hear movement in the room. Wo flips on the light. Heather cackles. Wo screams.

Wo runs screaming from his room. Heather hurries into the woods and plops down beside me. We giggle together and hear Wo wake up his parents. Lights go on in a second bedroom. Wo's father, in blue boxer shorts and gray haired chest, shuffles into Wo's room. Wo follows, jabbering and pointing toward the window. Wo's scared. He's my age and big, looks strong enough to play football, but Wo's scared to death. It's in his face, the real fear only a child feels. Wo's close to tears, and although Heather barely stifles her laugh, I don't see anything funny in Wo's face.

Mr. Thompson looks out the screen, but he can't see us. We're too well hidden, and he doesn't believe in witches. Mr. Thompson was in Viet Nam, and everyone thought he would go crazy after Wo's accident. He didn't. He even told me it

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wasn't my fault, so I know I don't owe Wo anything.

Mr. Thompson pulls a shivering Wo to the window and makes Wo look out. Even though Wo doesn't see anything, he isn't convinced. Mr. Thompson tells Wo the witch was a dream, a nightmare. There aren't any witches. Mr. Thompson turns off the light and puts Wo to bed. Mr. Thompson talks in low tones, reassuring Wo, promising Wo nothing can hurt him.

Slowly, carefully, we retreat further into the woods, deeper where we can circle around again. We giggle in hushed voices and hurry through the back yards, past the Rawleys where Mr. Rawley turns a page in his book as we pass. Heather talks incessantly, laughing and telling how big Wo's eyes grew and how open his mouth. Heather's proud of herself, proud to have frightened a mental third-grader. Sneaking down to Wo's, scaring Wo is an adventure to her, fun. The others think so too, only not so much. Wo Thompson isn't fair game.

"And we're gonna go back tomorrow night," Heather announces.

Nobody says anything, but I can tell the rest of us have had enough.

"All of us," Heather adds. "Just like tonight."

I want to say I can't, but I know that if I speak, I won't be invited back. Heather will cross me off her list forever. I think of Wo, of third grade. I don't owe him. And he can't help me now, not in high school. I know I should tell Heather I won't scare Wo again, but I can't. I nod. I'll come back tomorrow.

Heather scares Wo the next night. Linda, Dawn, Spring, and I wait in the woods. Wo screams and runs. Mr. Thompson, in white shorts, brings Wo back into the room. Mr. Thompson tries to explain nightmares to Wo, as if Wo could understand. We hear the exasperation in Mr. Thompson's voice; he can't make Wo understand. Wo cries. Wo's afraid of the witch who knows his name. Wo doesn't make a lot of sense, but he's afraid, terribly afraid.

In her basement, Heather gloats. She's so proud of herself, so sure. The rest of us are sad.

"Tomorrow," Heather says.

"So soon?" I say. "Don't you think Mr. Thompson might get suspicious?"

Heather grins. "You're right. He might start to believe Wo." She thinks a moment. "Next week."

We sigh with relief. By next week, Heather will play a different game. Maybe she'll tie a bell to the Rawley's cat,

like she did to Mrs. Calloway's dog. Or maybe she'll put dead birds in Mr. Tinsback's mailbox. Heather's full of tricks. We're sure she'll have a new one before she remembers it's time to scare Wo again.

We're wrong.

The next week, Heather takes us back to Wo's window. She's added fluorescent makeup around her eyes, and she looks ghoulish. Wo screams like a very small boy. I try not to listen to Wo or Mr. Thompson. Wo sounds pathetic. I don't owe him. I never will owe him. Wo won't go back into his room. Mr. Thompson has to drag Wo to the window and make him look out. Wo sounds like a wounded animal.

"Two days," Heather announces in her basement. "We go back in two days."

Dawn glances at me, and I see the reluctance in her face. Dawn wants me to say something, to oppose Heather, but I can't. I won't.

Two nights later, we're waiting in the woods as Heather scrapes and cackles at Wo's window. We don't want to be here, but we're not strong enough. The light goes on, but Wo doesn't scream. Heather screams and falls back away from the window. Inside the room, Wo holds a shotgun at his waist. He yells and fires. The blast reverberates through the woods. Heather runs into the woods and falls down beside me. Wo yells again. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson burst into Wo's room. Mr. Thompson wears shorts; she's in a pink nightgown. She's a pretty Vietnamese woman, small with dark eyes, another reason to scare Wo. We hear them clearly as Wo dances around the room with the shotgun in his hands.

"Bill!" Mrs. Thompson yells. "Take that gun away from him."

"It's not loaded," Mr. Thompson answers.

"The hell you say! It just went off."

"A blank," Mr. Thompson explains. "You don't think I'd give him a loaded gun, do you?"

Wo's face glows. He's very happy. He points the shotgun at the window and laughs. Beside me, Heather shudders as she tries to control her sobbing.

"Why did you give him a gun in the first place?!" Mrs. Thompson demands.

"It makes him feel safer. I didn't think he'd use it."

"Well, now you've awakened half the neighborhood."

Mr. Thompson shrugs. "I thought it would keep him from having nightmares."

"Take it away from him," Mrs. Thompson insists.



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Wo doesn't want to turn loose of the shotgun. Mr. Thompson takes the gun. Wo slinks to the corner.

Heather has recovered and stopped crying by the time we reach her basement. Cold fury twists her features. She frightens me more now than when she wears her witch makeup. Heather hates to lose or look foolish. Evelyn Houlihan put a frog in Heather's locker once. The next week, Evelyn found her books glued shut. Two weeks later, Evelyn found a rat, a live rat in her locker. Heather hates to look foolish.

"We're going back," Heather says harshly. "We're going to scare the pants off him."

The other girls look at me, but I don't owe Wo anything.

"Tomorrow," Heather says. "And every night until he won't sleep in that room ever again."

Spring wants to say something, but she can't bring herself to say it. None of us can. Heather's so much stronger.

We scare Wo three nights in a row. Every night he sounds more afraid. Every night, Mr. Thompson speaks more harshly, practically yelling at Wo, almost hating Wo. Every night, we feel worse—all of us except Heather. She's happy and revels in Wo's fear and shame. Heather glows as Mr. Thompson yells. Wo sounds so pitiful. Wo can't understand. His arrested mind can't comprehend. He knows only the fear.

I'm the only one to show up the fourth night. Dawn, Linda, and Spring offer excuses. Heather smiles at me as she carefully applies her makeup.

"We'll get them too," Heather assures me. "We'll think of some way to really get them."

I nod. I think they are our friends, but Heather has no friends, just followers and enemies.

"You and me," Heather says. "Let those cowards stew over what we'll do to them."

Mr. Rawley reads a book as we pass. We slip into the woods, and I'm more afraid than usual. Being alone with Heather scares me. I'd like to ditch Heather, to run back to my house, but I wouldn't want to find a rat in my locker or a razor blade in my apple. I follow Heather through the dark woods. Weak thunder follows lightning in the distance. A big storm is coming, a dangerous storm. Heather stops in the woods.

"We'll wait for the storm," Heather whispers and smiles.

The storm will add terror to Heather's performance, will really scare poor Wo. The storm moves quickly. Lightning lights up the sky. Heather grins evilly; lightning distorts her

ugliness. She creeps toward Wo's window. One moment, she's bright with lightning; the next she's swallowed by darkness. I see Heather reach for the window.

Heather's scream is swallowed by the thunder pounding over us. Lightning flashes. Heather has disappeared. I hear Heather yell just before the thunder drowns everything. I don't know what to do. Frightened, I creep out of the woods toward the house. Lightning flashes, revealing a dark hole in the ground below Wo's window. Heather's sounds come from the hole. I'm halfway to the hole when Wo's light comes on; I dive to the grass away from the light.

Wo appears at the window. Shock widens his face, and I think he'll cry. Instead, he smiles. Lightning and thunder follow one another rapidly. I hear Heather.

"Go get your father," Heather tell Wo. "Go tell him."

Wo grins stupidly and tears away from the window. I wait, not knowing what to do, not knowing what's wrong with Heather. I'm about to move forward when Wo reappears at the window, alone. Wo smiles down at Heather.

"Where's your father?" Heather asks.

"Said let witch die," Wo says slowly, slurring the words.

"No!" Heather gasps. "Wo! It's me, Heather!"

Wo shakes his head. "Said close window." Wo pulls down the window.

"No!!" Heather protests. "NO!!"

Wo shuts the drapes. The light goes off. Lightning flashes, and I move toward the hole, mindful of the window. Thunder barrels over me.

The pit is shallow, maybe three feet deep. Heather lies on her back, looking up at me. Lightning flashes. Heather has a sharp, bloody stake through her side, another through her thigh, maybe more in other places I can't see because of the costume and dark. Her face is a mass of pain and fear. She spots me.

"Hurry!" Heather hisses. "Get help!"

Thunder rolls over us and more lightning. Blood rushes around the stake through Heather's thigh.

"Hurry!" Heather gasps.

I reach down and squeeze Heather's hand. The first large drops of rain plop down as I stand and race out of the yard. I run for my house. Heather bleeds profusely, too much blood. A hard rain and runoff could flood the pit and drown her.

I cross Mr. Rawley's yard. Mr. Rawley reads, oblivious to the storm. I'm almost home before the rain starts in earnest. I dash onto our back porch and shiver as a cool breeze knifes across the yard. I open the back door very quietly, tiptoe

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through the house, past my parents' room. They're asleep as usual. I reach my room and strip in the dark. As I crawl beneath the covers, I tell myself Wo and I are even, dead even. I've balanced my account. Lightning flashes. Thunder rattles the window panes. Rain hammers the roof. Wo and I are even, just the way we started.

**“ ‘Neath the Willer Tray”**

A giant plastic chicken is sprouting  
Up through a cornfield somewhere  
South of Jim Dean's grave.  
You have probably seen it,  
Since you've been through  
That area once or twice.  
Two blocks over from the Post Office and a few  
Footsteps from Ellie Drexel's Family  
Restaurant is the Fairmount City Bank. A sign on  
Its facade says it was  
Built in 1888. It looks like it was.  
The day we were in Fairmount a Catfish  
Fry banner was draped between it and the Post  
Office. There was no shadow below it. The sky  
Was overcast. No wind.  
We ate at Ellie's, but all I had was ice tea,  
And a cucumber someone had picked from their  
Garden, drowned in juices and tried to call a pickle.  
A church sale of some obscure, summer type  
Was being held nearby and you could hear children  
Screaming and fighting. Women haggling.  
We visited the museum. Then we went looking  
For Jim among the cornfields and dust.  
He is hard to find. The graveyard is too large  
For such a small town--there were at least  
3,000 granite tributes stuck there.  
Finally, I had to ask a woman living in a mobile  
Home to show us where they had put him. She pointed  
And said " 'Neath the willer tray." And we found him  
There. A new tombstone had just been installed.  
Birds had roosted on it  
And left their long white tears behind. We ate  
A picnic lunch beside  
Him and plucked a bouquet of dandelions to add to  
His collection.  
On the way home we saw the plastic chicken.

**—Rick Callahan**

GENESIS

**Alternatives (for the romantic soul)**

Should i scribe you a poem of stars, ethereal & moist?

Should you conjure me a sonnet of sunsets, silent & flung?

i could bead you an endless necklace of pearly clichés  
still moist from peruvian aztec waters  
like steamy mists wrapped 'round clouded retina;

you could weave me a cover of sleepy reflections  
webbed of ancient white nights  
humming like shakespearean lyres;

we could age in wine-soaked garments  
flavor of autumn  
strewn 'bout our limbs;

Should i carve you a wooden couplet, bannered & light?

Should you doodle me each turn of day, willowed & poised?

i could be preserved in icy rose  
glasses in drifting glaciers  
floating further into distant 'morrrows;

you could smolder in forest ashes  
browning 'mongst Tigress timbers  
camouflaged in auburn dust;

we could pale in darkened robes  
colour of winter  
twisted 'round our eyes;

or

Should we quite simply quite tenderly quite quietly  
take each hanging hand  
& become part of some Universe?

—J.B. Straw

## Dancer

—R.F. Russell

Not all the men smile. I always notice. As if I bring them no pleasure, some men don't smile. Those are the men I like the best, the ones I like to kiss.

The music throbs from huge speakers anchored to the ceiling. Small spotlights flash on and off through the smoke—red, green, and blue lights. I smile as I move across the stage, trying to generate energy and life in the crowd. A thin, bearded man sitting at one corner of the stage yells. I grin at him, encouraging him. Enthusiasm is infectious. The more yells I generate, the better my take. On slow nights, the owner will act like a customer. He'll yell and tuck dollars just to get things started. I kiss him too.

I lean over and wiggle my behind at three men who grin and laugh. The middle man looks bored, removed from the dancing flesh and colored lights. He needs a shave, but he looks better than most of the men surrounding the stage. He looks more intelligent, richer. He doesn't need me; he's here on a whim. I will make a special effort to kiss him. Such a man deserves my kiss.

I dance to the far corner of the stage, to the old lamppost topped by red lights. The antique lamppost is a prop all the girls use. We hug it, lean on it, wrap our legs around it and pretend to love it. The more acrobatic you are with the lamppost, the more the men howl. I wrap one leg around the pole, and the bearded man across the stage screams. Although early, the room is almost full. I will have a good night, a very good night.

The lamppost falls behind me as I slink across the stage toward three very large, very heavy men. They sit with their huge, hairy arms folded across their protruding bellies and watch without smiles like judges at a beauty contest. They wear plaid shirts and baseball caps displaying corn seed emblems. Maybe they're brothers, farmers. Wedding bands deck fat hands, dirty knuckles. They probably find me too

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skinny; they're used to well-fed stock. I am skinny, but it can't be helped. I find it harder and harder to maintain my strength and energy. What there is of me is well-proportioned and tight. There are still cute dimples in my buttocks. I check in a mirror every day. A man once told me I looked like razor blades and shattered mirrors, all sharp and dangerous. Some men see the danger, the hardness.

The three farmers aren't much help, so I move down the line, trying to get that first man to tuck a dollar and receive a kiss.

A man with curly, dark hair and thick, black-rimmed glasses smiles softly at me, shyly. He looks uncomfortable in his lime green, polyester shirt, like a soldier out of uniform. He reminds me of a priest, a pastor on the town for a round of modest sin before returning to gospel reading and choir practice. I know he'll kiss me. Preachers sin so they can repent. Repentance is the key to eternal life. No sin, no heaven. I lean toward him and jiggle, watching his smile widen, his eyes dance. He'll have a mountain of prayers to say after tonight.

Next to the pastor is a boy, maybe not old enough to even drink; he doesn't need to shave. He gapes at me, and I think it's his first time in a place like this, his first taste of life's seamy offerings. The lights, the music, the near-naked girls, everything overwhelms him. He stares with wide brown eyes, as if I'm really beautiful.

"YEE-HAW!" The bearded man yells and waves a dollar.

I dance over to him, bend down so he can tuck the dollar inside my panties, kiss him. I give him a hard kiss, making sure my tongue slips into his mouth. I always give the first man a good kiss; a long kiss encourages the other customers. The man yells again as I slip away. The music stops, and I run to the dressing room to change.

"Keep 'em going." The security guard encourages as I pass.

I nod. The security guard is a fat woman with deep wrinkles in her face and a huge revolver on her hip. Women make good security guards in palces like this. Drunks are less likely to start a fight with a woman, and a woman keeps her eyes on the crowd, not the dancers. I always feel safer with a female guard.

I strip quickly in the dressing room, all the way down to my red panties. The panties aren't much more than the G-string I wear beneath them, but the owner likes panties. "A touch of innocence," he claims. I rush back on stage as my

second and last song begins. I watch the men's faces light up; without clothes I'm an eyeful.

Some of the girls like the tanned, athletic look. My skin is white. I'm like a vampire, rouged cheeks and dark red lips. I have no scars or birthmarks or deformities, no obvious flaws, no visible conditions. I use a depilatory every week over every inch of my skin except my head which sports raven hair. I have no hair on my skin, nothing animal or rough. I moisturize and massage and exercise and paint. I'm white and smooth and soft and dark red, and men like to touch me, to rub their hands on me. They expect me to do things, to know things because I'm so white, so thin.

I whirl in the center of the stage. Even the farmers stare. The bearded man in the corner yells and waves a dollar. I sidle over to him, let him tuck his dollar, let him feel my tongue in his mouth. After the kiss, I grab his beer mug, stick my right breast in it and swirl the beer into foam. The beer cools my skin. The crowd roars. My breast drips beer.

Across from me, the pastor stands and waves a bill. I dance to him, let him tuck, and tongue him. He likes it too much. He sucks on my tongue. He'll pray for a year. My confessor once asked me why I danced. I told him I didn't know, and I never went back to church again. My sister danced—until some drunk left her bleeding to death in a shallow creek. That won't happen to me, even though they never caught the drunk.

Men from the crowd surge toward the stage, waving bills and grinning. This is a good crowd, a great crowd. I let them tuck their dollars. I kiss them with my tongue. They are eager, hopeful. Some men rub my arms, feeling my skin, my birdlike bones. They would like to rub me all over, but there are rules.

The procession ceases, and I dance to the Lamppost, a man, a drunk, steps forward with a roll of bills.

"Once around the stage!" He yells.

I smile.

The big spender waves the money. "A dollar for every man at the stage!"

I nod and bend down to the boy. He's frozen. The big spender hands me a dollar, and I kiss the boy, tongue him. The boy's surprised. He's very young, too young, but I don't care. He came to taste sin. I oblige him.

One by one, I accept the dollars and kiss the men. Some, I've kissed before, like the pastor and the bearded man. The farmers like my tongue, and I wonder what kind of games



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they play with the livestock. I work around the stage until I reach the smug man, the intelligent man. He regards me with faint amusement, perhaps wondering how much money I make or how often I shave. I smile and kiss him very hard, very long, worming my tongue all through his mouth, wringing pleasure from him despite his boredom. I would like to do more, and if we were alone, I would. I can't, so I can't be sure I've touched him. He's the last man, the last dollar. The big spender tucks a dollar for himself, accepts a long kiss, and wanders back to the bar.

I step back into the middle of the stage. It has already been a good night, and I will have several more two-song stints before the night ends. I may set some kind of record.

The man steps to the stage and waves a bill. I recognize him even though I haven't seen him in six months. He recognizes me. I dance to him. He's a long, long way from home. I wonder why he's come, how he found me. I don't leave tracks. Anger fills his eyes, his face. I bend over as he tucks the dollar.

"Billy's dead," he says softly.

I smile as if he's told me I'm pretty.

"Killed himself," he adds. "Blew his brains out with a twelve gauge. Know why?"

I pull his face forward to kiss him.

"Because you gave him AIDS!" He hisses.

My smile fades. He won't let me kiss him.

"But you won't give it to no one else." He pats his jacket.

I hesitate. Then, I slap him as hard as I can and fall back on the stage. I scream. Someone yells. I scramble away as he pulls a gun out of his jacket. He fires. I lunge across the stage. There are two more shots before I fall into the arms of the bored man. He stares past me, unaware he holds me. I turn. Billy's brother is sprawled across the stage. Red blood forms a pool around his head; the pool changes color when the lights flash. The security guard, her chromed revolver in her hands, stands behind the dead man.

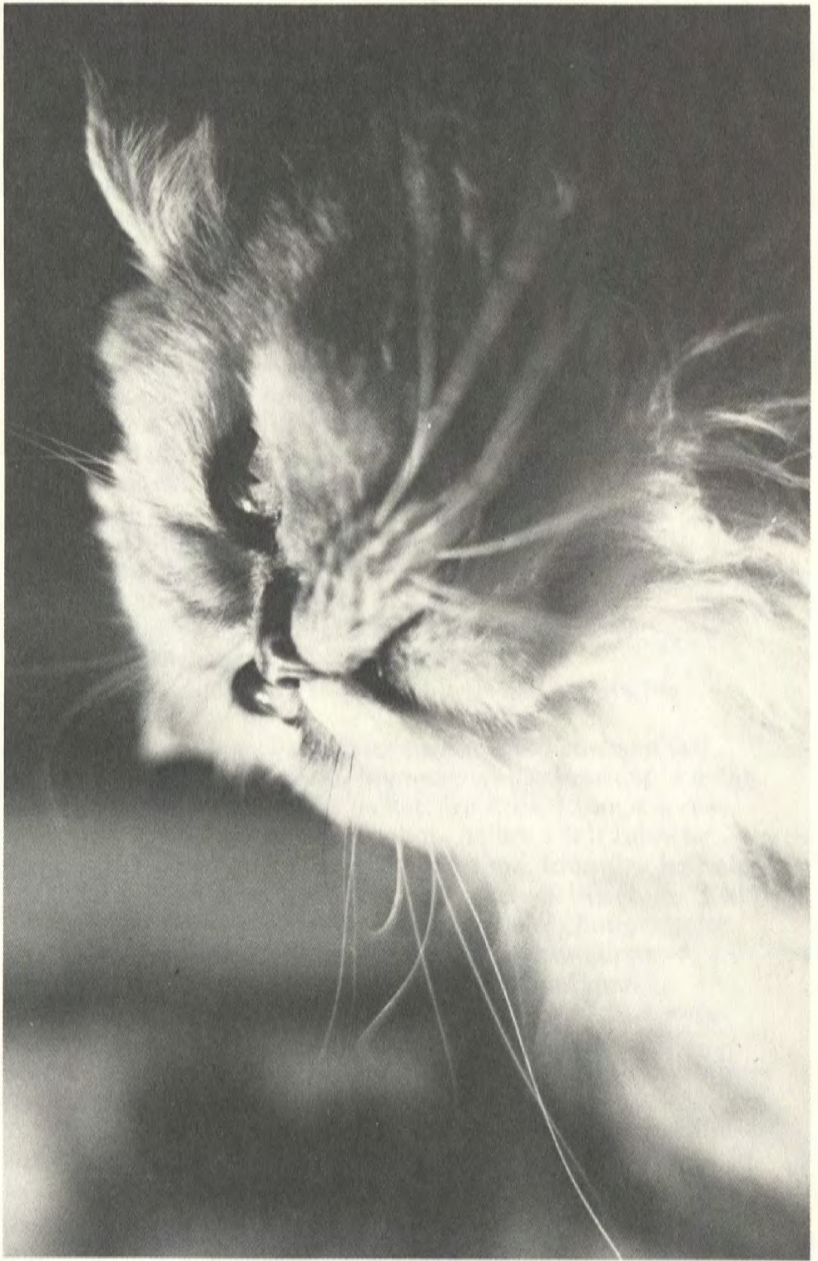
Everyone is running for an exit. The bored man looks down at me and grins, truly excited. He kisses me, accepting, expecting my tongue. Then, he squeezes my breast once and dashes away.

Amidst the confusion, I find my clothes and purse and run to my car in the back parking lot. Grinning, I drive toward my apartment. I will have time to pack before the police come looking, if they come looking. I will drive all night and for several days but not too long. I don't know how

long I can continue to dance, and there are so many men to kiss, so many self-satisfied, bored men who need my kiss, my special kiss. I don't kow how many I infect, how many might get my disease.

I hope they all do.

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—Cora Jane Rosenfeld

## Matter of Taste

(from a child's point of view)

I want blueberry popsicles  
Redpop and cracker jack  
Blowpops and jawbreakers  
Sweet tarts and licorice, (black).

I get yogurt and broccoli  
Apples, potatoes  
Oatmeal with raisins  
Lettuce and tomatoes!

I want pizza and tacos  
Burgers and fries  
Milkshakes and donuts  
Cake, cookies, and pies.

I get chicken and liver  
Peas, corn, and greens  
Brussel sprouts, okra  
And all kinds of beans!

—Linda D. Lewis

## GENESIS

### Evening Celebrations

when america rises up on its hind legs & whinnys  
like budweiser horses set free  
on the gold coast at dawn after an old all-nighter  
where barstools spin with glee  
then time yawns across the shadetree borders  
as clotheslines punctuate the morning hours  
& thru-out the breadstore daylight hours  
angry rainclouds smoke like aztec fires  
until finally tremendous-snap-on-toy salesmen honk their  
way to eternal afternoon saloons  
& wait for fallen model dancers to choose laps  
before the air fills with their blown balloons  
america in evening celebration holding its hands high  
& making little shadowpuppets  
on lighted walls of moviehouses inbetween reels  
while doctors blow on shallow trumpets  
announcing the coming night attractions  
when america rises up on its hind legs  
& is set free

—J.B. Straw

## Different Oceans

Sad strangers tied to piers,  
my ocean is angry:

it swirls on my tongue like a rich port,  
fragrant & sweet,  
but portending acidity;

it conceals stubbornness behind liquid fans,  
like the debutante who becomes the cat  
after the cocktails unruffle;

its eyes are like a sailor's red dawn,  
clouds disguised in shades of aurora borealis,  
but ice beneath the hues.

Locked landlubbers only see a gentle lady  
wrapped in white & tearful blue:

they call her Sea,  
longing to go with her, waving from risen docks,  
safe from her salt;

they name her Eternity,  
writing odes of brotherhood,  
while feeling only breezes from her true winds

they christen her Life,  
seeking her harbors, anchors, & grace,  
closing their eyes to her castaways.

Some even call her Woman,  
thinking it a compliment to both.

Sad strangers tied to piers.  
This ocean never sheds her tiers.

—J.B. Straw

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**They Laughed**

My grandmother pulled a thread  
Down from the sky,  
Tight and invisible, to mend me.  
She threaded it through her voice and  
Whispered pietied sutures into my side.  
Her lips trembled.  
“No need to fear. It will be all right.”  
But it was not all right.  
The morning dulled and blackened,  
And blackbirds called, announcing their  
Version of life:  
“Ca-ca, Ca-ca,”  
They laughed.

—Rick Callahan

**The Art Work:**

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## The Artists

Rick Callahan—"If I can get a piece of "art" published in *genesis*, I think anyone can," says Rick Callahan, a junior in Journalism.

Cora Jane Rosenfeld—Jane hopes to turn her avocation—photography—into a growing enterprise. She describes her animal photography as the most fun and the most trying. Jane crumbles into laughter when a dog or a horse licks the camera lens during a close-up shot. Jane certainly saves money on "blur" filters.

David Frisby—B.A. in philosophy from I.U., B.S. in psychology from P.U., student at IUPUI 1972-1986, editor of *Genesis* 1976-1986, assistant to Professor Laurence Lampert in the production of his soon to be published book *Nietzsche's Teaching* 1980-1986, graduate student and teaching assistant for the Philosophy department today, says: I was taught that the Frisbys of my father's side came here from the Frisian Isles in the 1600's, but that the generations of my mother's side are as old as the hills themselves.

Lois Gilbert—a student of IUPUI from 1977-1984, has completed her M.S. and is today involved with several campus organizations. She may accept a position of employment some time soon in the future but her long range plans call for the Ph.D.

Shortly after this shot was taken, two police officers appeared and forced the winos to move on; it was taken in Washington D.C. during the fall of 1984; that winter, one of the derelicts froze to death, the one who was a Hoosier and a World War II hero—(Star newspaper 12-28-84).

