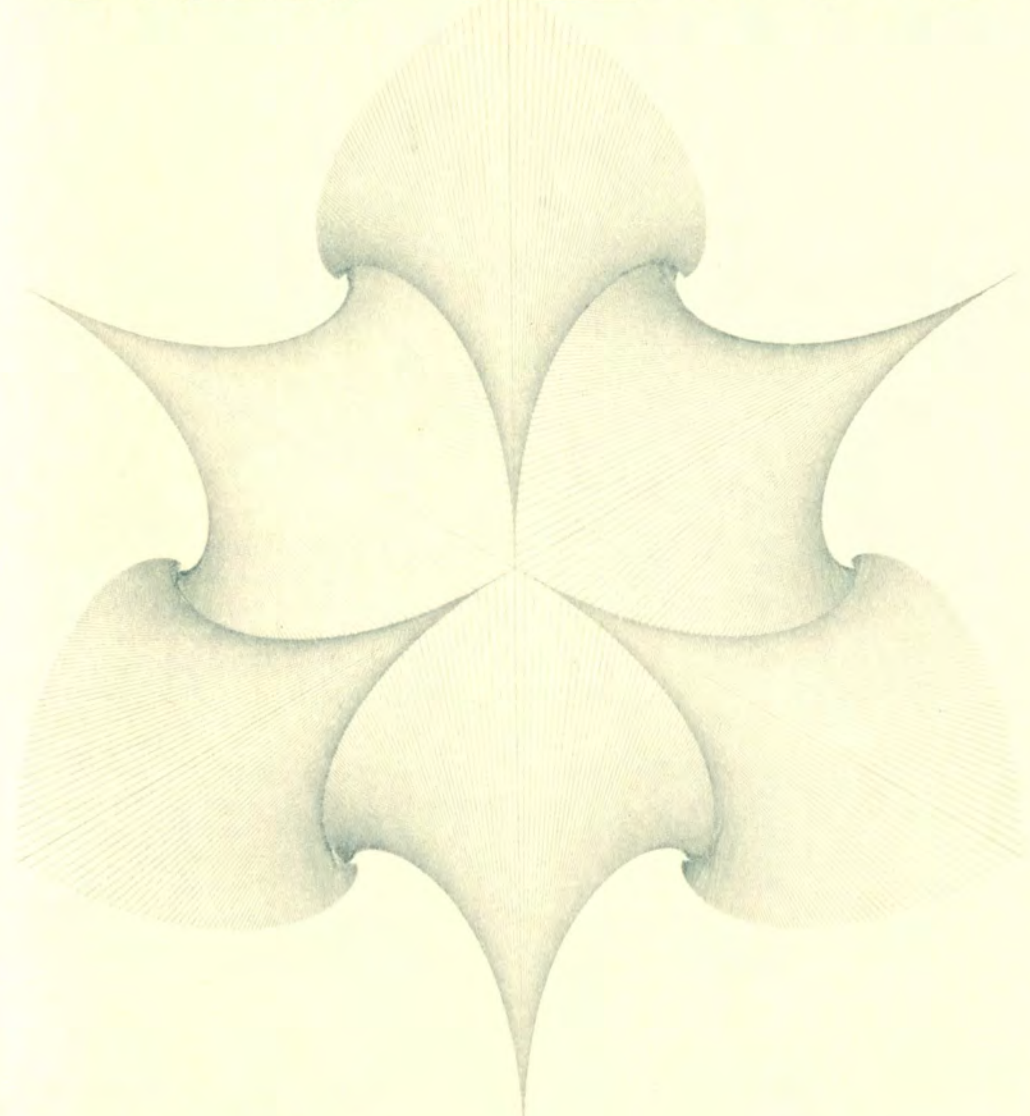


# GENESIS



FALL 87

## Table of Contents

### POETRY

- 30 **expectations** by Amy-Jeanne Ade  
57 **Autumn Child** by Donna Baker-Stouder  
17 **Cincinnati Street** by Donna Baker-Stouder  
45 **Glass for the Bride to Sing to** by Keith Banner  
15 **Arrows and Lines** by George A. Dunn  
32 **Sunday Morning Newspaper** by M. Todd Fuller  
44 **Dawn** by Linda D. Lewis  
49 **Eden** by Linda D. Lewis  
49 **You Bring Out the Beast in Me** by Linda D. Lewis  
26 **Granddaughter** by Pat Logan-Browne  
50 **Eldine** by Troy L. Riser  
44 **April** by Lance Robinson  
1 **Discarding the Corpse** by Cecil L. Sayre  
26 **Age** by Jackie Schmidt  
42 **An Illusion** by Jackie Schmidt  
35 **From Interviews at the Nursing Home** by Jackie Schmidt  
46 **Hobo Convention at Britt, Iowa** by Jackie Schmidt  
24 **Marital Contract** by Jackie Schmidt  
23 **Room 127** by Jackie Schmidt  
33 **Your First Visit to Venice** by Jackie Schmidt

### PROSE

- 6 **Separate Lives** by David Beck  
51 **A View from the Other Side** by David Beck  
36 **A Fashion Statement** by Jay Hartleroad  
18 **A Fact of Life** by James W. Kirk  
47 **On the Mountains of Mars** by Troy L. Riser  
28 **Women's Room Debate** by Jackie Schmidt

### ART

- 16 **Frances with Striped Stockings** by Ashley Coutts  
25 **Mamrie** by Carol Lough  
5 **Terraces** by Carol Lough  
27 **Alone** by Susan Mellady  
34 **Escape** by Susan Mellady  
43 **Watch Your Step** by Susan Mellady  
iv **Yesterday Revisited** by Susan Mellady  
58 **Fallen Caryatid** by Trina Renee Nicklas  
31 **untitled** by Brian Ruppel  
00 **Crest** by Michael Xue, Cover Art  
00 **Windows** by Michael Xue, Back

**Volume 15**  
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**Fall**  
**1987**

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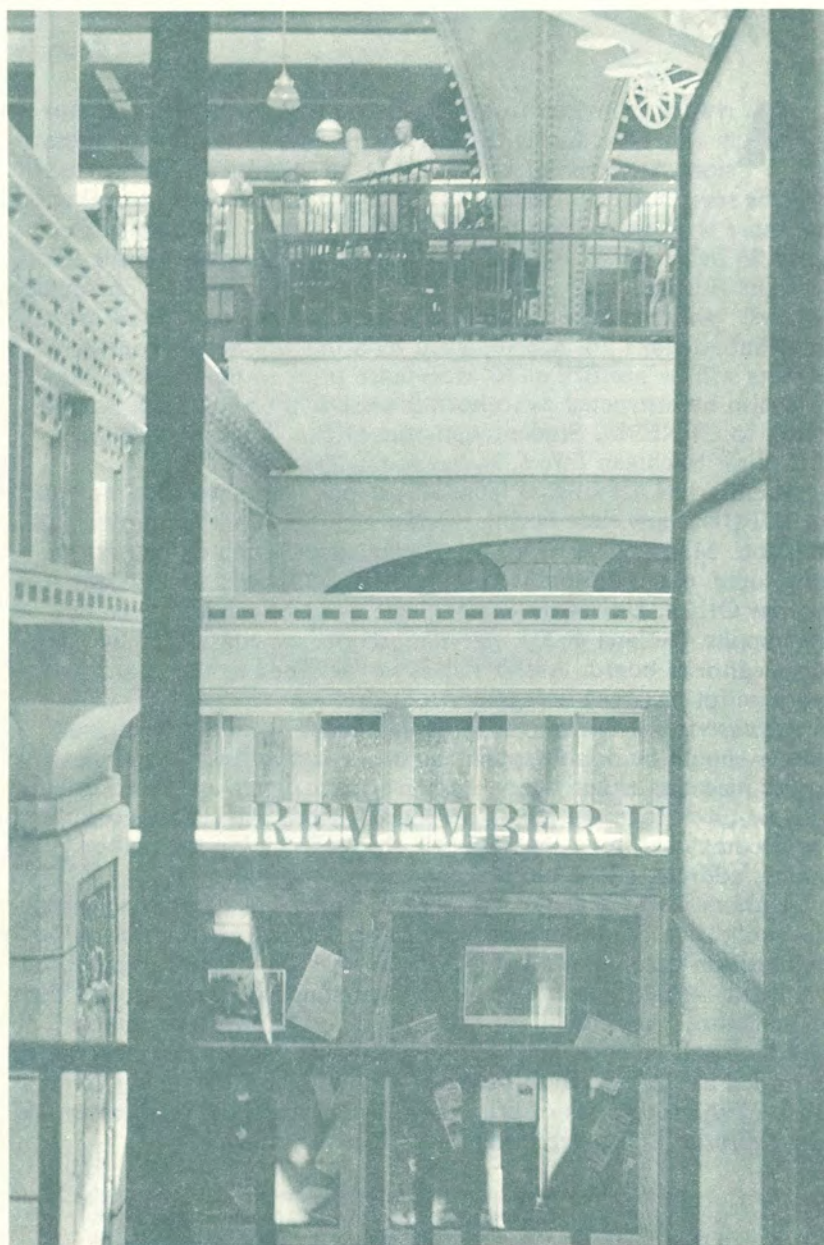
## Invitation to Artists and Authors

**A**rtwork is invited from all persons who have been students 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.

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.

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.



**Yesterday Revisited**

**Susan Mellady**

# Discarding the Corpse

Cecil L. Sayre

1

clean the bones

2

he is heavy  
heavier in death  
almost can't carry him  
this time  
to his toilet  
he droops  
like a proud vulture  
across my broken shoulders

3

unbutton the clothes  
fast  
not knowing  
when to stop  
unbutton the ribcage

4

the still heart

5

a black lump of coal

6

he coughs  
and spits  
upon  
my back



7

a baby  
unwanted  
gets ripped  
from  
his womb  
an old man—  
pushed  
into his grave

8

he misses  
the pot  
and dirties  
the floor  
i am too old  
for this  
older than him  
i had my last  
child  
thirty-one  
years ago

9

his good eye  
admits  
vacantly  
that he is not  
even here  
he stares  
directly past me  
and i feel  
i am a dust storm

10

dust to dust  
ashes to ashes

11  
clean the bones

12  
his skin  
is too soft  
softer  
than the work  
he did  
i remember  
hands like leather  
slapping  
my bare bottom

13  
remove  
accessories:  
chalk-white teeth  
left eye  
both ears  
second heart

14  
this  
is only  
the framework  
there was once  
more  
much more  
the pieces  
that matter  
die early  
and all that's left  
is what  
cannot die  
the roots  
buried too deeply  
in the earth's core  
to be extracted



15

he is a broken  
musicbox  
playing  
all his tunes  
out of sync  
snatches  
of this melody  
pieces of that  
memory

16

i always wanted  
to marry  
a man  
like father

17

a gentle smile  
a sweet rain  
a pleasant ceremony

18

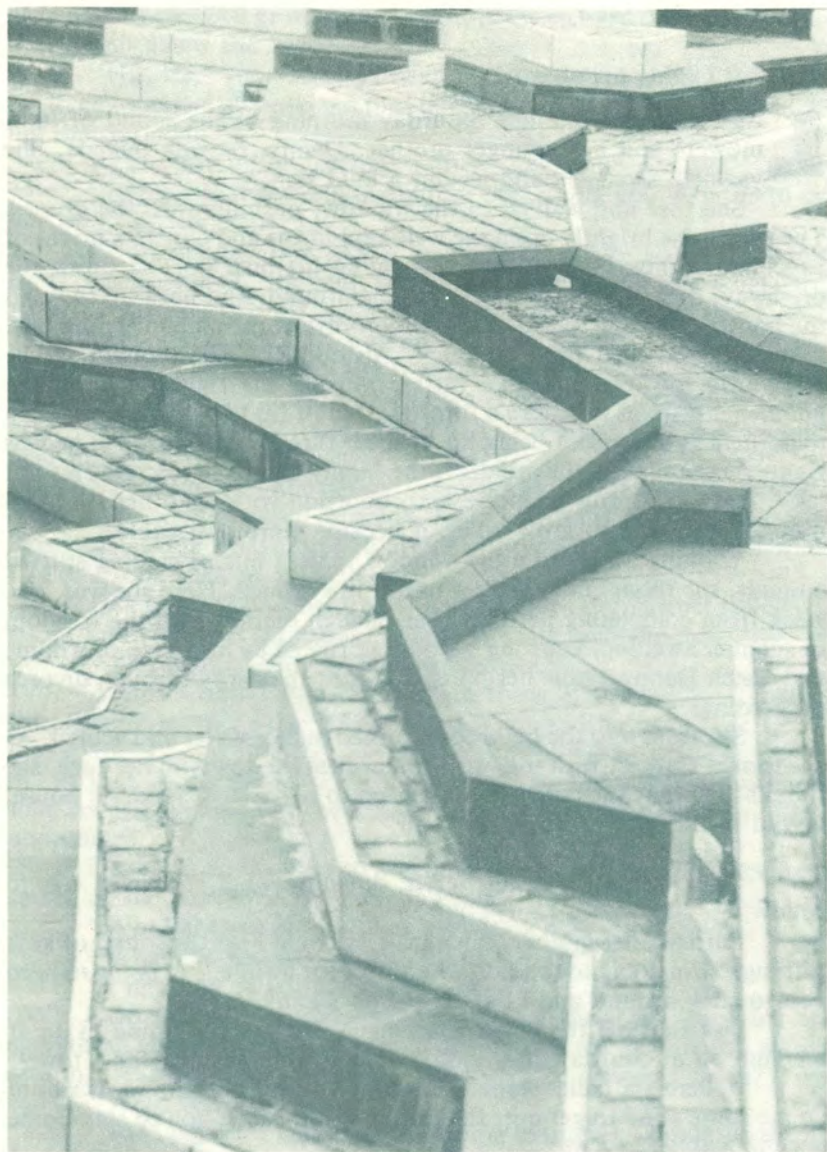
clean the bones  
clean the bones

19

i must

20

clean the bones



**Terraces**

**Carol Lough**

# Separate Lives

David Beck

**L**isa Jennings woke late Saturday morning to the sound of lawn mowers and her younger brother, Danny, playing outside. She yawned, stretched and let out a loud sigh.

She rose and walked to the window, pushing open the drapes. The sun shone brightly upon the well-kept lawns and concrete drives of Lincoln Heights. Her brother was riding his bike up and down the driveway, then out to the street, turning around, and back up towards the house, imitating the sound of a motorcycle, through vibrating lips.

She watched for a moment. An odd kid, she thought, as he awkwardly peddled his bike faster, moving his right hand on the handlebar grip, as if it were a throttle. One of his legs was shorter than the other, as a result of being hit by a car three years ago when he was eight. At the time of the accident, the family had been told that his left leg would never grow properly, in proportion with his other leg. And now, as he began to grow taller, it became more noticeable.

Walking away from her window, past a line of smiling stuffed animals, she thought about how unfair life seemed. Here she was, one week from completing her first year of high school, with the freedom of summer awaiting, knowing it would be ruined by having to stay home and watch Danny, while her parents argued their way through divorce proceedings.

She went into the bathroom, turned on hot water and waited. As she took a shower, with the warm water beating down on her face, she thought of what she could do today: go to her friend Sondra's house, lie out in the sun, or go to the mall.

"Lisa?"

"Yes, Mom," she answered, dreading what she knew was to follow.

Patricia, her mother, came in. Lisa could hear the sound of keys rattling. "I'm going to the club with Carol for awhile. I'm going to need you to stick around and keep an eye on Danny."

Lisa shut off the water angrily. "What are you going to do at the club on a Saturday afternoon?" she asked, reaching for a towel.

"There's a ladies' luncheon today. And, God knows, it would do me some good to get out. Besides, it doesn't hurt you to stay home once in awhile."

Drying off, she mumbled, "All you guys do is eat and drink."

"That's not fair, Lisa," her mother curtly replied. "They are my friends, and you know how hard it's been with . . . well, with your father and—"



"I know, I know," she answered, wrapping the towel around her, as she went into her bedroom. "It hasn't been easy on us either," she said, barely audible.

Patricia's face softened. She was a pretty woman, petite, middle-aged and always well groomed. "I know it's been hard on you, too. But if you only knew the hassles—"

"Hassles," she said sarcastically. "How do you think I feel, having to go to school all week and then having to spend my weekends watching that little creep?"

"You have all tomorrow to do whatever you want."

"I spend half my day in church. Something you want us to do but won't do yourself."

"Do you know how hard it would be for me to face those people now?" she answered. "Besides, Danny told me he hasn't seen you lately. After I drop you two off, he said that you leave with Sondra."

"What's he know? I was up in the balcony."

"Mrs. Courtney said she saw you walking with Sondra toward her house around ten-thirty. Church doesn't let out until eleven-fifteen."

"Who told you?" Lisa answered, as she put on a pair of blue jean shorts.

"Very funny." She paused, glancing at herself in the mirror. "I don't know what's gotten into you," she said, as if talking to herself. "Anyway, I don't have time to argue with you now. You heard what I said. I'll be back in a few hours."

Lisa brushed past her on her way outside. Her mother followed. "You know how to get a hold of me, if something should—"

"Yes, Mom," she answered impatiently.

A grey Continental pulled up in front of the house. "There's Carol," her mother said. "You two stay around here."

Lisa sat on the lawn, letting the sun dry her hair. Summer was soon coming, and the smell of freshly-cut grass permeated the early, afternoon air.

Danny rode his bike to where Lisa was sitting. Her eyes were closed as she basked in the noonday sun.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"What the hell does it look like?"

"I'm going to tell Mom you cussed."

"Go ahead," she said, as she lay back in the grass. "You tell her everything else." Then, as if just remembering, she sat up and glared at him. "Why did you tell Mom that I've been leaving church?"

"Well, you have been."

"So? I don't tell her about those dirty magazines your little pervert friend, Mark, brings over."

"He doesn't bring 'em over," Danny answered defensively.

"Someone's brought 'em over, because there's some underneath your bed." She turned over and lay on her stomach. "God only knows what you probably do after you read those things," she laughed, facing the opposite direction of him.

"I don't do nothing!" he yelled.



“Sure, you don’t,” she said smiling.

“So? You and Sondra smoke. Cigarettes and pot.”

She quickly sat up. “You better shut your mouth, you little fart. What’ve you been doing sneaking around in my room?”

“Nothin’. But I saw a pack of cigarettes underneath your dresser.”

“So?”

“Sondra’s brother, Kevin, said he found a bag of pot in her room the other day.”

“That doesn’t mean anything to me.”

“Well,” he answered with new found confidence, “I figure that’s what you two are doing when you’re supposed to be in church.”

“Well, we’re not, so shove it,” she said, lying back down.

“I could tell Mom,” he said, hoping to provoke her again.

“Good luck catching her.”

Lowering his head, Danny’s tone changed. “Do you think Mom and Dad will get back together?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“How do I know? They won’t even explain anything to me. All they say is ‘We think it’s best.’ They treat me like I’m some little kid. She paused. “I heard her tell her lawyer on the phone that they were incompatible.

“What’s that mean?”

“That they hate each other,” she said impatiently. “Go on and get out of here, and don’t bug me.”

“I’m going over to Mark’s,” he said, turning and riding away.

“You better be back here before Mom gets home,” she yelled to him, as he rode off. She watched him, wobbling back and forth, as he peddled his bike down the street. He leaned to his left to make up the difference in the smaller leg. For a moment she pitied him, as she watched him ride out of sight.

Danny laid his bike down on the front lawn of Mark’s home. As he began walking toward the door, Mark stepped outside. He was barefooted and without a shirt.

“How’s it going, Danny?” he said, his voice somewhat raspy.

“Oh, all right, I guess.”

They both sat on the front porch, staring down at their feet. “What do you want to do today?” Mark asked.

“I dunno. Nothin’ much to do.”

Mark stood. “Let me get my shoes and shirt so we can get out of here. If I don’t, they’ll have me working around here.”

Mark went into the house. Danny sauntered across the lawn and sat down, leaning his head back, gazing into the aqua-blue sky. He was thinking about his parents, wondering if what Lisa had said was true. He couldn’t picture them hating each other; nor could he picture them in love. They were just there: two separate people, living together, always moving in different directions, yet always returning home every night. Never had he given much thought to the disruption of this routine; nor

had he ever considered whether he actually liked the life they used to live. At least not until Dad moved out. But now he wanted to return to that time more than anything else.

"Hey, Danny," Mark said, coming out the door. "Let's go to Adam's Drug Store. They got some new magazines in."

"I dunno, Mark. Lisa found those ones under my bed. Besides, we almost got caught the last time."

"We? I'm the only one who's had the guts to do it. You just come along for the ride," he laughed. "C'mon, let's go. There's nothing else to do. We don't have to take none, if you don't want."

"All right," Danny said, as he rose and began walking toward his bike.

"Don't take your bike, man."

"You said we weren't stealing any," Danny shouted irritably.

"Will you keep it down," Mark answered in a hushed voice. "Just in case I see something I like, I don't want to have my bike with me. It's quicker to go through the woods in back of the store."

"I know it is. But you said—"

"I said just in case."

Lisa and Sondra strolled barefoot along the side of the road, walking on the grass when the pavement became too hot.

"When are you supposed to be home?" Sondra asked.

"In a few hours. I'm supposed to be watching my brother."

"Where is he?"

"Who knows? But he better be back before Mom gets home."

"What a drag," Sondra said, brushing her hair out of her face with the back of her hand. "Your mom has been gone a lot lately, hasn't she?"

"The more the better."

"Hey, I have a little smoke left, if you want to go to my house and get high."

Before she could answer, a blue sports car pulled up beside them.

"Oh, crap!" Lisa whispered.

"Hello girls!"

"Hi, Dad," Lisa said apathetically.

"Where's your mother?" he asked. He was wearing sunglasses. She hated it when he wore sunglasses.

"The club, of course."

"Sondra," he said with a smile. "Can I steal my daughter from your company for a few moments?"

"It's up to her," she said, somewhat embarrassed.

"Well? What do you say?"

"Knock it off, Dad," she said, rolling her eyes. "Sondra and me got stuff to do."

Sondra, looking uneasy, said, "Go on, Lisa. It's no big deal."

Lisa's dad, Paul, became serious. "I really would like to talk to you."

"All right," Lisa sighed, walking to the passenger side. "I'll call you later, Sondra."

"Bye."



“Bye, Sondra,” Paul said as he drove away.

Arriving at a small park on the edge of town, Paul pulled into a shaded lot. Both remained in the car. Lisa leaned back, resting her head on the side of the door, gazing into the tree branches overhead.

“Sorry I haven’t been around much lately. Trying to get moved in and all has kept me pretty busy.”

Silence.

“How’s Danny?” he continued.

“Same as always,” she answered. “So you’re all moved in, huh?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s good.”

“Look, Lisa, I know this isn’t easy on you. But it hasn’t been a piece of cake for me either.” He sighed. “Is there anything I can say or do—”

“Yeah,” she answered quickly. “You can start by telling me ‘why.’ You can tell me whose fault it was—or is, and you can tell me why neither one of you thinks I’m important enough to make an attempt to explain—” Her voice was getting louder and tears began streaming down her face.

Paul gently placed his hand on her lips. “Shhh.” He took a handkerchief from his pants’ pocket and began dabbing it under her eyes. She turned from him.

He sat silently for a moment, staring at the back of her head. Her light brown hair fell in waves to her shoulders. She was becoming more beautiful each day. He placed his hand on her back.

“Lisa, Lisa,” he sighed. “How I wish none of this would have happened. And I wish I could tell you why, but I don’t—”

She turned quickly, her soft, brown eyes now glaring at him. “You do know! You know more than what you say! Why can’t you tell me?”

“I promised your mother that—”

“Did you meet someone else?” she cried.

“No.”

“Did Mom?”

“Lisa, I told you I just can’t say. I promised your mother that I wouldn’t say anything until she thought the time was right.”

“Take me home,” she said.

“Lisa, I can assure you that we will all talk this out—”

“I said take me home!”

Paul started the car and slowly drove away. Driving through Lincoln Heights, Paul glanced over at Lisa, sitting silently beside him. He noticed how her hands trembled as she nervously pulled the white threads, hanging from her frayed blue-jean shorts.

As he pulled in front of the house, he said, “Lisa . . . I don’t know what to say.” He was hoping she wouldn’t bolt out of the car. “We’ve made—God knows—how many mistakes. One of them is not being more open.”

She sat quietly, looking down at her lap. He continued, “I’ll talk to your mother and perhaps—” He changed the subject. “I don’t know. But here, I want you to take this.” He handed her a ten dollar bill. “It’s not what you think. I’m not trying to pacify you. I just want you to

go out and have some fun. Go to a movie or something. Just get out for awhile."

She took the bill and rolled it around in her hand. "Okay?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said quietly.

"You got a hug for your old man?"

She half smiled and put her arms around his neck. He pulled her to him and gently patted her back. She let go and turned toward the door.

"I love you, Lisa."

"I love you, too," she said quietly, not looking him in the face.

As he drove away, he realized, for the first time, there would be no reconciliation. This talk with Lisa would be only one of many strained conversations to come.

Danny and Mark pretended to look at the rows of candy in Adam's Drug Store; when, instead, they were gazing towards the adult magazines, displayed on a rack behind the cash register.

"Look," whispered Mark. "It'll be no sweat. As soon as the guy at the counter walks away, I'll grab one and you grab one."

"I dunno."

"What's there not to know? I've done it thousands of times; you know that. Besides, it'll fit right under your shirt. Just tuck the bottom of the magazine in your pants."

Danny looked up at the man behind the counter. When their eyes met, Danny smiled sheepishly and quickly looked down.

"I dunno. He's been watchin' us."

"Yeah, he's watchin' us. You keep staring at him."

Just then the middle-aged man behind the counter walked away and began straightening some aerosol cans sitting on a shelf a few aisles from the counter. He looked tall and strong to Danny, who kept watching him with cautious eyes.

"Now!" Mark whispered loudly into Danny's ears just before ducking low and bolting to the side of the counter. Danny followed.

Kneeling beside one another, each grabbed a magazine, pushed it under his shirt, turned and began to run. Suddenly, the man who has been behind the counter, dropped an aerosol can and began running after them.

"Wait!" he screamed. "You guys get back here!"

Mark was already out the door and down the street. Danny, running awkwardly out the door, was no match for the man. Only a few steps outside the store, the man grabbed Danny roughly by the collar, causing him to fall backwards upon the sidewalk. The magazine, in the confusion, had fallen and was lying, pages opened, next to Danny.

"So, you guys are the ones who's been stealing my magazines?" the man said, gloating over his fallen victim. "Well, get up! We're giving your mother a call—and maybe the police."

Driving home, with Danny slouched in the seat beside her, Patricia Jennings glared at the road before her. "You're just lucky—real lucky—



that that man was kind enough to get ahold of me instead of the police, or you would be sitting in juvenile hall right now.”

Her lips were drawn tight when not active in chastising Danny. He thought she looked ugly when she was angry. He hated her now, as he stared at the rows of houses passing him by, while winding through the familiar roads of Lincoln Heights.

“How do you think I felt getting a call at the club, saying my son has been caught stealing porno magazines of all things?”

“Would it have mattered if you wouldn’t have been at the club?”

“Don’t you start that with me!” she said, raising her voice. “You used to not talk that way. You’re getting that from your sister, and it better stop.”

He started to say something—something he knew would hurt—but stopped and continued staring out the window.

When they arrived home, Danny quickly got out of the car, opened the garage door and went into the house.

“What’s Mom doing home so soon?” Lisa asked, getting up from the couch where she had been lying while watching television.

Danny did not answer, walking silently toward his bedroom. Patricia came in, slamming the door behind her. “Hold on, young man! Where do you think you’re going?”

“My room,” he answered through clenched teeth.

“Why don’t you tell your sister what you’ve been doing all day?”

At that time, he felt he hated her more than anyone could ever hate anyone. And what had started as a tightening in his stomach had begun to rise to his throat, restraining any words he might have attempted to say. Yet, he wanted to speak; he wanted to hurt her; but he couldn’t get the words to come, even though they had been running through his mind for the past week.

They stared at each other in silence. Lisa watched, somewhat glad she wasn’t on the receiving end this time.

Patricia broke the silence. “Go on! Go to your room.” She paused, dropping her purse on the chair, then said, “And don’t come out until I tell you.”

After dinner that evening, Danny was ordered to return to his room, while Patricia and Lisa washed the dishes in silence. Lisa wanted to defend her brother—blaming his actions on Mark—but knew this wasn’t the time. Besides, she had been thinking of her conversation with her father and had wanted to talk about it. She knew the mention of Danny right then would abruptly end the discussion, so she carefully avoided the topic.

After finishing the dishes, Lisa sat down at the table, while her mother wiped off the kitchen counter.

“I talked to Dad today,” she said suddenly.

Her mother stopped where she was and sighed. “And?”

“I dunno. He just came by when—” She realized she couldn’t mention being with Sondra, since she was supposed to have been watching Danny. So far her mother had said nothing of Lisa’s indirect involve-

ment, and she didn't want to remind her. "Well, he just came by this afternoon."

Her mother didn't face her; instead she stood and looked down at the sink, clutching a dish cloth. Lisa took a deep breath and continued. "He said that sometime you were going to tell me what's going on." She tried to keep her voice from breaking or quivering. "He said you'd tell me, and I just think it's fair that I should know since I'm the oldest and—"

"Lisa," her mother said softly, as she turned to face her daughter, shaking her head slowly. "Why do you want to put me through this? Isn't it enough to say we don't get along anymore?"

"You seemed to get along all right to me," Lisa said, her eyes filling with tears. She looked away, holding her hand by her face, as she tapped her foot rapidly against the linoleum floor.

Patricia's face softened, as she sat down beside her. "I can't explain it, Lisa. If someone had told me that our marriage would end this way, I never would have believed it. But . . . I don't know. I changed, your father changed. Whatever we had just isn't there anymore. Do you understand?"

Lisa wiped her eyes and shook her head. "No. I don't." She wanted to stop crying; she wanted the words to come out right; but each time she spoke, she reminded herself of a little girl. "Is there another man or woman or what?"

Her mother looked down at the cloth that was still in her hand. She had been twisting it since she sat down. "No, Lisa, there's not. And if I understood what was going on, I would tell you."

"Honest?"

"Honest."

Lisa leaned over and hugged her mom, but as she did, she realized something had changed. She felt she was holding a stranger, someone she only knew vaguely. And Patricia tried to hug her daughter as she had so often done, but she couldn't. She felt far away, as if she didn't belong. As the two tense bodies moved apart, they both smiled uneasily.

"I need to go by Sondra's real quick. Do you mind?"

Her mother, not wanting to see her daughter's smile fade, nodded. "Go ahead. But hurry back. It's already getting dark."

By the time Lisa left Sondra's house, the dark, stillness of the night had fallen. She took a short way home, cutting through neighboring yards until reaching a small wooded area. Walking along a small path, lined with tall trees whose overhanging branches were like a curtain between the earth and the light of the moon, she thought of her conversation with her mom.

She thought it was good that there wasn't another man or woman. Perhaps, they could still get back together; she knew, however, the possibilities for reconciliation were not good.

It was going to be a strange summer, she thought. And, somehow, though she tried, she couldn't get too excited over its arrival. The thoughts of her parent's divorce and all the changes that were to follow acted as a blanket that fell upon her short-lived enthusiasm, extinguishing all the hope and joy of the days to come.



She came to the end of the wooded area, which gave way to a small grassy hill, overlooking the trees below. Through the leaves, she could see the lights from the houses that lined the street on which she lived.

She stopped and took a pack of cigarettes out of her back pocket. She was barefooted, and the dew from the grass covered her feet. As she lit her cigarette, she noticed a movement at the edge of the hill. Her heart began beating faster as she stood quietly and watched.

It was the figure of someone, but she couldn't make out the face. Then, she could see the figure walking, slightly hobbling towards the left. It was Danny. She stood silently and watched him.

He sat at the edge of the hill, his knees drawn to his chest, staring at the trees and the neighborhood below. She waited and watched curiously. Finally, she put out her cigarette on the tree on which she was leaning and quietly walked toward him.

"What are you doin' out here?" she asked, sitting next to him on the damp grass.

He slightly jumped, started by her appearance. Then turned his head the opposite direction, hiding his face from her.

"Thinkin'," he answered quietly. "That's all."

"About what?"

"Everything."

"Aren't you grounded?"

"I dunno. She didn't say nothin'. I just came out for a few minutes."

"You didn't tell her?"

"Naw. She was on the phone."

Lisa took a deep breath of the night air and tilted her head back, gazing at the myriad stars above. The moon shone brightly upon them, and, in the darkness of the wooded area, lights from fireflies blinked on and off.

She looked down and began pulling the pieces of wet grass off her feet.

"I saw Dad today."

Danny turned toward her. "Oh, really? I sure wish he'd come around more often."

"He will when the divorce is over."

"Did you get any money?"

"Yeah." She pulled a wadded ten dollar bill from her pocket. "I also talked to Mom tonight. She said that there wasn't any other—"

"I don't care," Danny interrupted.

"Don't you want to know—"

"Mark saw Mom with another man." Lisa quickly turned to him, as he continued, "Twice. Once in town and once at the club."

Lisa became defensive. "What was Mark doing at the club?"

"Caddying for his Dad. He said he saw them comin' from the bar." Pause. "They were laughin'."

Lisa turned away from him, her lips tightened. She took a deep breath. She wouldn't cry this time. She bit her quivering lip and closed her eyes, resting her head upon her knees, which were drawn close to her.

In their silence, they both heard the sounds of crickets chirping and the song of a nightingale somewhere in the distance. A warm breeze blew across the hill where they sat. She took the ten dollar bill that was in her hand, wadded it in a ball, and threw it in Danny's lap.

"What's this?" he asked, surprised.

"Just take it," she said abruptly. "I don't want it."

He stuffed the bill in his pocket and sat quietly.

The tears that had begun to form in her eyes were now gone. She was learning well, she thought.

Upon the hill, they could see the light from their home below. They sat in silence, surrounded by the quiet sounds of a summer night. Suddenly, the porch light of the house went out, then the living room light, and last, the bedroom light. From where they sat, their home was no longer visible, swallowed in the darkness of the night.

## Arrows and Lines

George A. Dunn

Her poetry is better than mine,  
as wet and thick as the difficult air we breathe,  
and mine  
just arrows and lines  
pointing to where she lives.





FRANCES WITH  
STRIPED STOCKINGS

**Frances with Striped Stockings**

**Ashley Coutts**

# Cincinnati Street

**Donna Baker-Stouder**

Big narrow house, not ten feet from the street  
with a wrought iron fence, built to last.  
Great rooms with sliding doors, a bannister and splinters.  
Basement with chambers and damp clothes hanging  
from a network of clotheslines rigged by my father.  
A kitchen built on the back, almost an afterthought,  
with concrete tile that hurt my mother's legs.

Walt's variety store had warm cookies for two cents.  
Stole my first coloring book there, but forgot the crayons.  
And Jim stole our mother's watch,  
took it to the garage and beat it to death with a hammer,  
murder with a vengeance, motive undetermined.  
Now nests of crabgrass grow through the cracks,  
the scene of the crime, a concrete greasy spot.

On Cincinnati Street, we all had measles, mumps, and chicken pox,  
survived and walked to school together,  
tried new ways through vacant lots.  
I played hookey with Roberta  
and had a picnic under an apple tree.  
Ate bologna on white bread, drank cream soda and  
got away scot free.

We'd drag boxes from the furniture store like ants carrying crumbs  
and cut doors and windows with kitchen knives.  
Our yard, a creative complex of corrugated houses  
with paper floors and smells, and privacy.  
We'd tire of that and sit on the iron fence  
and try our little girl charms on little boys who'd stop,  
straddle their bicycles and enchant us.

Highway men cut paths through the city  
leaving no room for old narrow houses.  
No picnic tree and no paper palace.  
A strip of treasure buried under concrete  
where little boys have grown  
and little girls return to memories  
that were built to last.



# A Fact of Life

James W. Kirk

It was dark in the attic, and crowded with possessions no longer wanted or needed: an old broken baby bed, boxes of clothing grown mildewed and rotten; large plywood sections and long two-by-fours were strung about, relics from a remodeling plan long forsaken. The man's name was Sam. He watched from the attic window as his daughter and her friends played basketball. The only light came through the dirty window in front of him; it highlighted the stains on his t-shirt and caused the dusty air to flash. In his left hand a cigarette smoked. Hiding in one corner of the attic, at the point where wall meets ceiling, an old spider began a new web. It was hot.

Every Saturday Sam's daughter, Sara, and her friends played basketball in the driveway; Sam had put up the goal himself. Every Saturday Sam spent time in his attic watching the girls play. Most of them he had watched grow up; they had liked him when they were little girls. Sam especially liked Suzi Goodwin. Sara and Suzi were the best of friends. They had known each other since they were five years old; they shared the same birthday, the same dreams, the same fears. Sara was an only child, but Suzi was like her sister.

Sam's eyes blurred, and then refocused on Suzi; goddam, he thought, its hard to believe that Suzi's only fifteen. Look at those tits; just look at them. My Sara has nothing to be jealous of though, that's for sure. He congratulated himself on Sara's development into a beautiful young woman.

Sam finished his Pabst Blue Ribbon, belched, and dropped his cigarette through the can's slot; it sizzled and died. He pulled his shirt up and scratched his hairy belly, causing his own considerable breasts to sway. His eyes never moved from the game being played below him. High pitched shrieks and girlish laughter filled the lazy summer air, sounding as natural as the chattering birds in the old oak tree standing wearily in the front yard. Sara missed her shot and Suzi bent over in a determined effort to recover the ball for her team, showing Sam the expanse of white buttock and innocent crotch he had been waiting for. His hand went to the front of his tan trousers and pulled the zipper down; he withdrew his stiff, angry penis and squeezed it. He watched the girls play, and stroked himself slowly, as if he had all the time in the world. Sweat formed over his lips; he licked it off, and enjoyed the salty taste. He speeded up with his tugging, sensing the end of the ball game: I'm going to fuck you, all of you, he thought. His hand moved furiously.

The attic door slammed open. "Sam, you had better hurry up.



You'll be late for work. What are you doing up here, anyway? I can barely see you, for all this junk!"

"I think we have spiders up here, honey."

"Spiders?" Linda Spencer said, and retreated to the bottom of the stairs.

Sam appeared at the top, then started down. "I'll get some poison tomorrow and handle the bastards," he said. He passed his wife and hurried down the second flight of stairs, leaving her to ponder the consequences of having spiders in the attic. At the bottom of the stairs he made a right turn and entered the kitchen. He muttered "goddam pain in the ass woman" as he swept past the brand new range and refrigerator. In the corner by the back door stood a hat tree; on it hung his shirt and gun holster. Sam buttoned his shirt and tucked it in, then carefully belted the holster on. The hand cuffs clinked. He wrapped his right hand around the handle of his pistol and moved it around until it fit just right. Then he strode through the back door and turned the corner that led to the driveway.

"Hi, Daddy," Sara said, standing up. Her friends remained seated in the shade provided by the oak tree.

"Hi, baby," Sam said. His voice cracked. He bent over and kissed his daughter on the lips. He looked at Suzi and asked, "Isn't that your mother's car?"

"Yes, sir," Suzi said.

"Well, I know you aren't old enough to have a license to drive. Don't let me catch you on the road, or I'll have to give you a ticket and have the car impounded."

"Don't worry, I won't let you," Suzi said. She and the other girls started to giggle, but thought better of it when they saw the expression on Sam's face. He turned around and marched to his patrol car; he got in and started it, backed out of the drive, and drove away with a short scream of his tires. He informed the police dispatcher that he was now on duty; his voice cracked again: I need some more beer.

Sam drove his patrol car slowly along Miller road, enjoying the way it curved and wound its way with the river beside it. Trees with thick vines hanging from them allowed only occasional peeks of the river's muddy water. Birds and rabbits gorged on the mulberries and blackberries that thrived there. A squirrel darted across the road; Sam swerved his car to crush it; it made a crunching, screaming sound. Sam took pride in his reflexes; he smiled and scratched at his crotch. He saw another squirrel start tentatively across the road, in the opposite lane; he swerved to hit it and almost slammed into a car backing out of the trees on that side of the road. Sam braked his car—hard—and reversed back to the other car, raising a cloud of black smoke. He noticed a flurry of activity in the car, but the driver made no move to escape. Sam stepped out of his car and then reached back in and grasped his riot club. It wasn't standard issue, but its weight comforted him.

Sam walked over to the car and peered inside. He smiled at the four teenage boys inside. "Ok, out of the car," he ordered. He lined them up on one side of the car, with their hands palm down on it and legs spread wide, and began to search the car. One of the boys began

to speak and Sam told him to shut up. After only a few seconds of searching in the back seat he triumphantly withdrew eighteen cans of Budweiser. He carried them to his patrol car and sat them on the front seat and turned back to his captives. He walked over and stood behind the driver. "You boys are lucky I'm in such a good mood today," he said. He lifted his stick and began to rub it around between the driver's legs in a circular motion; occasionally, and very lightly, he tapped the boys testicles with it. Abruptly, he withdrew it. "Get your fucking asses in the car. If I see them again, you're going to regret it. Move!" Sam watched the boys get into the car.

A boy in the back seat turned and stared at him as they pulled away, his youthful handsome face resurrecting unconscious memories within Sam—buried, and until now, dead. In Sam's conscious mind, he realized he was probably being called every kind of bastard and for a moment he was angry.

Sam watched them drive away, then backed his patrol car into the space vacated by the teenagers. He turned the engine off, left the radio on, and cracked open a beer. He emptied it in one long guzzle and then opened another. He knew it didn't matter, nothing ever happened in Millersburg, Indiana; on the back roads and dirt roads surrounding the small town, especially. He finished his beer and opened another. Blood red sunshine filtered through the trees, causing him to squint his already small eyes nearly shut. His face was red, and round and ugly. He reached up and pulled down the blind.

He threw his empty can out the window and opened another beer: fucking punks; kids like that reaffirm my belief in abortion. Who do they think they are, coming here from Goshen and thinking they can get away with anything they want just because it's a small town. Let 'em go to Topeka and get drunk. Maybe they'll do the world a favor and wipe out some Amish with that piece of shit car they were driving. Goddam Amish. Sam finished his beer and opened another: I cannot believe that goddam Cindy got v.d. At least she had the sense to tell me; if she had given it to me . . . who the hell am I going to screw now? My wife? She hasn't let me touch her in . . . how long? A year? It seems to me like she's going to give it up, whether she likes it or not. I'm a man and I have needs. He finished his beer and opened another: It's good of my brother to assign me the back road patrol. I can do anything I want. Well, almost anything; right now I want to fuck—maybe I can catch me a rabbit and give *it* the business. Sam thought this was hilarious. His laughter filled the car and spilled out into the night. He drank another beer. He poked his head out the window and spit at the moon; his spittle fell back to earth and landed on his face. He wiped it on his sleeve and opened his last beer. He finished it.

Sam got out of his car and urinated. The croaks of bullfrogs and the whine of insects created an orgy of sound in the cool, dark air. He picked up his empty cans and carried them over to the river, filling each one half full and throwing it out to the middle. He slapped at mosquitoes while he watched them sink. On the other side of the river a snake slid into the water. Sam walked back to the car and climbed in, intending to sleep for a while; but, just then, for the first time in three hours, a



car went by. It was Suzi Goodwin, and Sam knew it. In no time he had his car started and lights flashing. Suzi had no choice but to stop.

Sam turned his lights off and approached her car. "Get out of the car, Suzi," Sam said. His voice slurred, and so did his mind. Suzi got out. She was still wearing the same shorts and t-shirt; she smelled of earned perspiration. Sam took her by the arm and turned her around, placing her hands palm down on the hood of her car and used his feet to spread her legs wide. Suzi was crying, asking Sam not to arrest her. She knew this man, and he frightened her. Sam took a step back and looked at her, not hearing her words but enjoying her fear; he was feeding on it. When he was full, he raped her.

Sam stood up and fastened his pants. The realization of his action smashed down at Suzi. It burned the alcohol from his mind. He looked down at Suzy. She made no sound except for steady, rhythmic breathing. A small pool of blood had formed beneath her head, the result of being slammed to the ground. Sam's mind spun around and around, searching for an answer to his problem. He saw himself being arrested, felt the public humiliation and realized he would die in prison, losing everything in life he had worked so hard for. With a sigh, he hunkered down and picked up Suzi's pink panties and laid them across her throat; he choked the life from her through them. He was stone cold sober when he murdered her.

Sam stood up, nostrils flared, and surveyed his surroundings. He was alone. He walked back to his patrol car and got in, picked up the radio's microphone, and called in. His brother answered.

"This is patrol officer Sam Spencer. I have a 10-0, one mile east of Haste Bridge, on Miller's road. Over." There was just the barest hint of static.

"Ten-four. I'm on my way. Cordon the area off. If there's any traffic, turn it back. Make a note of who it was before doing so." The radio went dead.

Sam opened the trunk of his car and grabbed a blanket to cover Suzi's body with, then busied himself lighting flares to illuminate the crime scene. He stood unmoving in the middle of the light. The sound of crickets filled his ears. Soon enough the lights of Millersburg's only ambulance, and the second of the town's three police cars, appeared in the distance. Sam walked over and turned his on while the others climbed out of their vehicles. The coroner sat down next to the body, pulled the blanket back, and pronounced the girl dead.

"It's Suzi Goodwin," Sam said. "I was driving west when I saw the car on the side of the road. I pulled over and called in as soon as I discovered the body." His voice quivered. "My god, she was Sara's best friend. She was at my house when I left for work." He bent his head so that his chin touched his chest, and covered his eyes with his hand. "How am I ever going to explain this to Sara? The two of them were like sisters."

Sam's brother put both hands on Sam's shoulders and massaged them. "Go on home, Sam. Sara needs to hear about this from you. If I need anything, I'll call. Otherwise, we'll get your report in the morning."



"Thanks, brother. I really appreciate this," Sam said. He walked to his car and got in. He turned his lights off and watched as Suzi's body was put in the back of the ambulance. He started his car and began to pull away when his brother excitedly approached his car.

"Sam! Howard just radioed. He's arrested three blacks in front of Smith's liquor store, two males and a female. They're teenagers from Fort Wayne; said they were on their way to Gary to visit some friends. We can check into their story easy enough, but I think we've found our killers! They were driving an '87 Mercedes, its got to be stolen."

Sam's face lit up. "Fantastic," he said. "I'll come in and have a look at them as soon as I talk to Sara. This is just great! Now we won't have a bunch of State assholes poking around in our business. Give me an hour and then I'll come in to the station, ok?"

Sam's brother turned away and let out a war hoop, fist in the air. Sam pulled away and started home: Man-o-man-o-man, I cannot fucking believe my luck. I've gotten away with it! Even if the charges don't stick against the niggers, and I know they won't because I've seen that car pass through here before, they'll never point the finger at me! Sam giggled (I bet those niggers stick to the interstate for now on) then sobered: but fuck! I can never ever in a million fucking years do something like that again. What made me ever do that in the first place? Fuck it, I don't know, but it'll never happen again. That's for goddam sure!

The only lights on in Sam's home were in his bedroom. He got out of his car and walked to the front door and went in. He paused for a moment and sniffed the air. He felt that this was his final test. He climbed the stairs to his bedroom and told his wife of how he had found Suzi's body and everything that followed. In about a half an hour Sam and his wife went to their daughter's room, quietly opened her door, and as gently as possible awakened her. Sam sat down on the side of Sara's bed and turned on the small table lamp beside it. The lamp shade was green with white sheep jumping over a brown fence.

"What is it, Daddy?" Sara asked. She sensed something was terribly wrong. Her auburn hair was tangled around her neck; her brown eyes were only half open, still heavy with sleep.

Sam reached out and put his hands to his daughter's throat and gently untangled her hair, "Suzi is dead, honey. She was found not too long ago." Sam took his daughter into his arms.

"Oh, Daddy! It isn't fair." She was crying, her hot breath working its way through Sam's shirt. He held her even tighter and rocked her back and forth in long, soothing motions. His wife was crying too, attempting to do so as quietly as possible, covering her mouth with her hands to trap the sound inside; she was failing.

Sara pulled back a little from her father. "Did you catch who did it?"

"We arrested some Blacks, honey. I don't think they're the ones who done it though. It's a long story, but we may never catch who is responsible. You shouldn't be thinking about that anyway. It isn't good for you."

Sara buried her face in Sam's chest again. "It isn't fair," she repeated, and it wasn't.

"I know it isn't fair, baby," Sam said, holding his daughter tightly against his chest and rocking her back and forth. "It's an unfair world, and terrible things happen every day. It's a fact of life."

## Room 127

Jackie Schmidt

No one warned me  
about the closed door.  
So I brought magazines  
for small talk  
for her smile  
for her old stories about nightstand photos.

No one warned me  
about the stillness  
or the empty stare  
or the stench  
or the pooling of blood under grey skin.

No one warned me  
about helpless  
or final  
or forever  
or the clock's ticking, ticking, ticking.

No one warned me.

# Marital Contract

Jackie Schmidt

Wheeler-dealer  
entrepreneur  
corporate guru,  
you make me another deal.  
A transaction  
scheduled efficiently between  
your alarm  
and first appointment,  
not pounded out  
on a conference table,  
but on sheets.  
A deal—  
just like the important ones,  
with negotiations  
risks  
profits  
losses  
liabilities  
equities  
acquisitions  
trusts  
proformas  
mergers  
and other minor details  
that come together  
before the contract is sealed  
firmly  
by both parties.  
A neat little investment  
that fits  
right into your portfolio  
before you leave  
again  
for a week of meetings  
someplace  
unaware of  
the bottom line.





**Mamarie**

**Carol Lough**

# Granddaughter

**Pat Logan-Browne**

We spent our autumn eves  
Out on the swing  
Near the apple tree  
And we spoke with eyes  
And hands: pointing; reaching  
Before you knew of words.

Your mother taught you "no"  
But it was not a part of us.

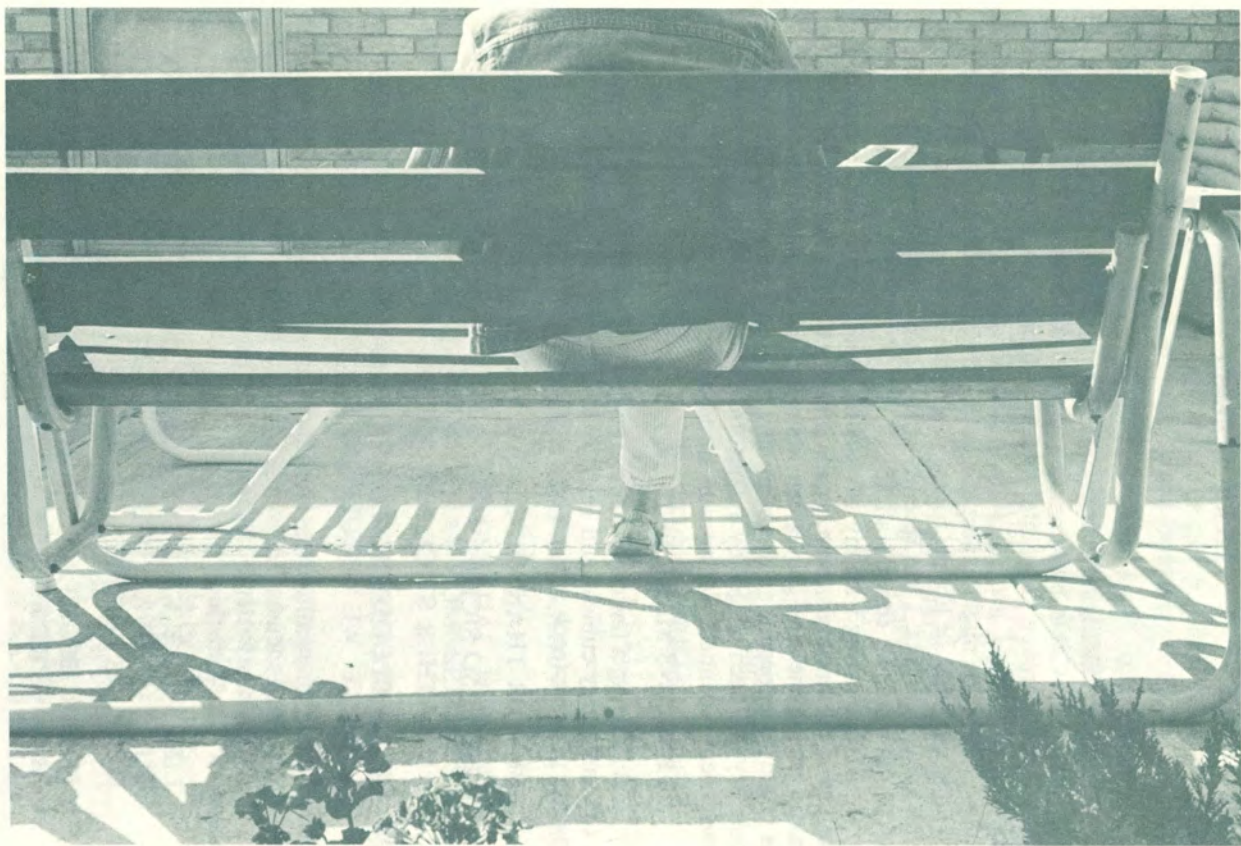
We touched the apples  
And the cat  
We tasted fox tails  
And drying grass  
We felt the cooling sun surround us  
And you and I  
Were of one mind  
One bent.

Your mother taught you "no"  
But it was not a part of us.

# Age

**Jackie Schmidt**

Come easy to me.  
Like a mother  
cup my head  
and mark your lines with gentle tools.  
Wrap me with soft grays.  
Stroke my fragile skin.  
Kiss pleasant memories to my brow.  
And hold me  
so I know that I belong.



**Alone**

**Susan Mellady**



# Women's Room Debate

Jackie Schmidt

**T**he other buildings on campus are bright and modern in contrast to the Mary Cable building. It's not so much that the crumbling plaster, broken floor tile, and torn blinds are distractions; the physical structure's general state of static simply is not as mind-stimulating as one might expect at a large, urban university. While there are no study areas or library rooms where the student is encouraged to think great thoughts, I was recently stirred to a debate mentality in the first floor women's room/stall #5.

After meeting with my advisor the week before classes began, I stopped in the women's room. I gave in to the usual urges, one of which was to peruse the steel grey-green walls for bits of bathroom wisdom. As could be expected at the beginning of a new semester, last year's creativity had been purged by a paintbrush at the hands of maintenance. One recently-penned, declaration stood alone:

LESBIANS MAKE BETTER LOVERS.

By chance, a few days later on the first day of class, I found myself in the same grey cubical and read with interest four responses to the original premise (each written in a different hand):

BETTER THAN WHAT—A CUCUMBER?

SHE IS SO SICK!!

I'D RATHER STICK NEEDLES IN MY EYES!

IT'S A BLOODY SHAME WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR SOCIETY. WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING.

Before an evening class the following night, I made my routine stop and studied the new additions. Most, as indicated by the penmanship, were by new writers. The first was a reaction to the previous suggestion to "do something":

LIKE WHAT, KILL EVERYBODY THAT DOESN'T THINK THE SAME WAY "WE" DO? TOLERANCE, NOT PERSECUTION, IS THE ANSWER. DON'T LIKE IT? DON'T DO IT!!

THAT'S RIGHT. WE [LESBIANS] ARE EVERYWHERE, AND WE'RE PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU.

BULLSHIT! DON'T EVEN COMPARE YOURSELF TO ME.  
WE'RE ALL PROBABLY STUDYING WITH SOMEONE  
GAY AND DON'T KNOW IT.

Wednesday—by now I was stoppin in even when it wasn't  
“necessary”—two more arguments had been recorded:

TOLERANCE IS *NOT* THE ANSWER. WHAT WOULD  
HAVE HAPPENED IF WE'D TOLERATED SLAVERY DUR-  
ING THE 1800S?

SLAVERY AND HOMOSEXUALITY ARE NOT COMPAR-  
ABLE. SLAVERY VICTIMIZES PEOPLE. THERE *IS* HOMO-  
SEXUAL RAPE WHICH VICTIMIZES PEOPLE—BUT  
HETEROSEXUAL RAPE IS *MORE* COMMON. HOMOSEX-  
UALITY IN ITSELF DOES NOT VICTIMIZE PEOPLE. IN A  
NUTSHELL, YOUR LOGIC IS WRONG.

By the following Monday, several new thinkers had joined the  
discussion:

I'M PRAYING FOR YOU. (A phrase you can count on in  
any bathroom debate!)

THESE ARE ALL JUST EMOTIONAL REACTIONS!!!

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS?!? HOMOSEXUALITY IS AN  
UNNATURAL REACTION.

WHATEVER THEY ARE, STOP SPREADING THEM ON  
WALLS WE ALL HAVE TO LOOK AT.

ASSUMING YOU ARE HETEROSEXUAL, HOW DO YOU  
THINK YOU CAN KNOW WHAT HOMOSEXUALS  
THINK?

WHY NOT? FREUD DID IT AND DISCOVERED “PENIS  
ENVY.”

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT AN EMOTIONAL REACTION  
IS UNNATURAL, IT'S JUST THAT EMOTIONS CLOUD  
REASON. WITH EMOTIONS COME VARIABILITY. WE  
MAY ALL SEE THE SKY'S BLUE AND THAT  $1 + 1 =$   
 $2$ , BUT NOT ALL OF US BELIEVE IN GOD OR GET  
ANGRY WHEN SOMEONE FORGETS OUR NAME.  
MAN'S HISTORY IS FULL OF INSTANCES WHEN  
PEOPLE WITH A COMMON BELIEF SYSTEM TRIED  
TO ESTABLISH THE SYSTEM FOR *EVERYONE*. WELL,  
*EVERYONE* OBJECTS AND THEN THERE'S WAR OR  
SOME OTHER FORM OF CONFLICT, SO THE SIDE  
WITH THE BIGGER FORCE WINS. THIS IS “MIGHT =  
RIGHT”. BULL! WHY DO WE WANT *ALL* PEOPLE TO  
BE LIKE *US*?



Fearing the wall had again become obvious enough to warrant the dreaded paintbrush, I spent a good portion of yesterday in “my” little stall playing the role of scribe as I recorded this debate among women at IUPUI. It shows the mind can function in the most unlikely environments—for example, the women’s room at Mary Cable. I suppose I should admit that I buckled under temptation and added a final comment of my own:

WHO IN THE HELL GAVE HISTORY TO *MAN*?

There now, I’ve made my contribution to public debate and the preservation of knowledge—after all, isn’t that what a university is all about?

## expectations

Amy-Jeanne Ade

you would have me knit—

- your wounds with mothering;
- your self-image with desire.

you would have me knit—

- your broken dreams with belief;
- your weakness with strength.

and in my spare time,

you would have me knit.



**Untitled**

**Brian Ruppel**



# Sunday Morning Newspaper

M. Todd Fuller

Jenny was a girl that sat closely beside potential.  
On a Sunday morning she would put on a dress  
and a hat,  
grab a blanket, and walk to the open field of  
green grass and wait for Charlie to bring a bottle  
of brandy  
that they loved to share.

Jenny was a lover, a woman with too  
much beauty;  
her mom was the 4-H queen;  
and she was at home with the night and  
the come-ons that all the men sang.

She wrote down their bullshit and published  
a book.  
It rose on the bestseller list,  
and her Aunt Bertha told her she should leave.  
So she packed all her dresses, and put a rubber  
band around all of her pens, and didn't even  
say good-bye to Charlie.

Well, Charlie tried to forget her, but  
she kept herself in the local newspaper  
because the book went to number one.  
And most of the lines that made the book  
famous were the ones that Charlie told her  
on Sunday afternoon after he took the last  
drink of brandy,  
and after she took the hat from her head  
and let her long brown hair dance with  
the wind.

Oh, Jenny was a lover, and a woman with  
too much beauty;  
her mom was the 4-H queen;  
and she was at home with the night and  
the come-ons that all the men sang.

And I guess that Charlie left today.  
I heard he sold his house and rode away  
in his old pick-up truck,  
cuz he felt that telling her the truth  
to her face  
was better than putting his tears in a  
letter.

## Your First Visit to Venice

**Jackie Schmidt**

you must arrive at night  
so the dream will settle upon you  
piecemeal  
and slow as distant violins,  
as still as gondolas  
that pass through fog  
with lanterns hooked to prows.  
Streets, slate and narrow,  
will have their way with you,  
and mooring poles will rise from the Lagoon  
to pierce your heart.





**Escape**

**Susan Mellady**

# From Interviews at the Nursing Home

Jackie Schmidt

The real tragedy in life is not death  
but what dies inside a man as he lives.  
Albert Schweitzer

JOHN

I don't give a damn if it is  
Cruise Day at Carmel Care.  
I don't like bands  
and I don't like seafood.  
If you want to make me happy  
just stop in the next port  
and let me get the hell off this ship.

NETTIE

We'd had that old mare for years  
good worker, easy rider.  
Once a young hand used her all day  
and put her up without workin' her down.  
Killed her.  
Ezra fired the boy.  
Told him he ought  
to get a job in town.  
A good hand knows ya can't ride 'em hard  
and put 'em up wet like that.

KATE

When the babies was small  
I use to wonder if I'd see 'em grown.  
Now look at me.  
Outlived 'em all  
and everybody else far as that goes.  
Don't I win the prize?  
Nobody left to hang on to  
'cept me.



# A Fashion Statement

Jay Hartleroad

**W**hen Oliver Benner's mother passed away, the old woman had only one request of her son: she wanted him to date, frequently. "You are a nice boy, Oliver. You should go out and meet someone," were the last words of her will.

"Well," said the attorney, placing his bifocals in his suitcoat pocket. "I think with your inheritance you could meet about any woman you wanted."

Benner managed to smile at the attorney's remark. He sat at the table, trying to be more at ease; but his old black suit felt too snug along the shoulders and his large belly dropped over his belt like an enormous lower lip. Now that the will had been read, Benner felt even more uncomfortable. It brought back memories of him and his mother and Sunday visits. She would always be expecting Benner to bring someone special with him whenever he came through the front door. But he never did. His mother could not understand why her son always did this to her. A third chair stood at the dinner table, and Benner's mother would spend half the time asking her son why was it the chair had to be empty. Benner said he did not know. His mother then spent the rest of the time trying to convince Benner why he should date. Benner would politely nod at each reason and consume extra helpings of chicken and mashed potatoes, including that portion his mother had prepared for the repeatedly absent third party. Benner felt guilty his mother never got to see her third chair put to use.

He knew his mother was right; he needed to start seeing other people. He loved women, but the thought of dating and trying to impress them made his feet sweat. He wanted to find the right person and spend hours with her in conversation and romance, but he was too shy. Even when he was one car behind an attractive woman at a drive-thru window, Benner felt freakish and inadequate.

The attorney was putting his papers back into his briefcase and was about to close it when he took out a small square and white card from one of the compartments.

"By the way," he said. "Your mother wanted you to have this card. It's apparently the name of some exclusive tailor shop. I can't say that I've heard of it before. Your mother thought you should have some new clothes made."

Benner took the card. It read:

**KELFMAN'S TAILORING AND FOOD EUPORIUM**

We Deliver

Benner did need a new suit. The only one he owned was the

cramped outfit he was wearing now. He did not like to buy clothes. He rarely found anything that fit him because of his weight problem. Benner read and reread the card, trying to decide what he should do. After having a large helping of lasagna and putting on a fresh pair of socks, Benner decided he would be honoring the memory of his mother if he went ahead and paid the tailor a visit.

The next day he arrived at the address printed on the card, an old brick building in a shabby part of town. A lighted sign of brittle plastic with a soft drink logo and the name of the establishment hung by a steel pole from the building's facade. The sidewalk in front was neglected and zigzagged with sizable cracks. Benner wondered how his mother could have ever known a place like this existed. He glanced inside through the window. It looked like a diner to Benner. Swivel chairs, napkin holders, formica tabletops—but not a wardrobe mirror in sight. He walked inside, jostling an unseen bell that marked his presence to the rest of the patrons. Several of them turned around and looked at him. Their silent, staring faces seemed to press Benner against the wall.

He cleared his throat. "Is there a man named Kelfman here?" Benner asked. "I'm here to see him about a suit." He was sure he was making a huge mistake; but the waitress behind the counter turned around and called to someone in the kitchen.

A short man in a dirty apron with visible perspiration stains underneath his shirt sleeves came out from behind the kitchen door. He was thin and wrinkly. The short clumps of hair along his temples and beneath his nose seemed hard and stiff, like the bristles of a hairbrush; and his deliberately unsociable manner was obvious by the way he stepped out of the kitchen and stood staunchly in place like he were being challenged. The man gave a callous look at his patrons, and they turned their attention back to the food on their plates. The man looked at Benner.

"Are you Kelfman?" Benner asked.

"I hope so. I own the place." Kelfman said.

"I've come to have a suit made," Benner said.

Kelfman's eyebrows were roused to a higher point on his forehead, and he approached Benner with a look of recognition, as if he knew more about Benner with each step he took.

"You are Hazel Benner's boy, right?"

"You mean my mother actually ate here—I mean, you knew her?"

"Hazel Benner? I knew her a long time. She loved tea. I'm beginning to weep whenever I see a teabag," the old man said.

He seemed to observe something pleasant outside the window and faraway; but when Benner was about to turn and see what was distracting the old man, Kelfman's dark, fastidious eyes resumed staring at Benner.

"So you want a new suit, do you?" Kelfman said.

"Yes," Benner said. "My mother—"

Kelfman interrupted him. "Into the kitchen. I'm too busy now to hear family stories."



Kelfman directed Benner into the kitchen. It was small and hot, smelling of grease and smoke from the grill.

“Stand against the wall,” Kelfman instructed.

Benner stepped backward against the wall beside the sink where a long wooden measuring stick had been glued into place. “Stand up straight! Don’t slouch! I can’t do a good job if you slouch,” Kelfman said. When Benner was standing properly against the wall, feeling thoroughly silly, the old man marked the top of Benner’s head with a spatula and then peered at the measurement.

“All right. You can go now,” Kelfman said, stepping back to his grill.

Benner looked puzzled. “Aren’t you going to take any other measurements?”

“Why? Did you grow an inch just now?”

“What about my neck, my arms?”

“See a doctor. I only make food and clothes. Right now I am making food.”

“You mean that’s all you’re going to do?” Benner said. “Aren’t you going to make a suit for me? Don’t I even get to choose the color?”

“Okay,” Kelfman said. “What color suit do you want?”

“Black, I guess.”

“Come back in a week then. Your black suit will be waiting for you. If you don’t like it, you don’t have to pay for it.”

Benner left the kitchen and went home, feeling sure he was the victim of a practical joke.

One week and one day later Benner heard a knock on his door. It was Kelfman. He was holding the suit which was draped over with dark plastic.

“You didn’t come by yesterday, so I thought I’d bring it by myself,” Kelfman said. “Like it says on the card, ‘We Deliver.’ However, deliveries are extra.” He held the suit out to Benner. “Go ahead. Try it on.”

Benner took the suit and went into his bedroom. Again he felt silly, but the only way to satisfy the old man was to try on the suit and see how it fit. He placed the suit on the bed and removed the plastic covering.

To Benner’s surprise, the suit was stylishly made and appeared to have been sewn together with a good deal of professional expertise. He examined the cloth, running his fingers over the lapel and across the innerlining. The fabric felt soft. He removed the rest of the suit from the hanger, but when he was about to try on the pants he noticed they had been made several sizes too small.

He went back into the living room. Kelfman was sitting comfortably in an easy chair.

“You made the suit too small,” Benner said.

“Too small? How do you know it’s too small?” Kelfman said. “Have you tried it on yet?”

“No,” Benner said, holding up the pants. “But how can I fit in something as small as this?”

"If you don't try them on you'll never know, will you?" Kelfman said. "Just go ahead and try them on."

Benner went back into the bedroom and locked the door behind him. He was sure this was a prank of some sort. But there was no other way to get the old man out of the apartment until he tried on the pants. Anyway, Benner didn't have to pay for the outfit if he didn't want to. Benner closed his eyes and put his legs down into the pants and raised them up.

They fit.

Benner opened his eyes and fastened the pants in astonishment. They actually fit. They weren't too tight around the legs, and his stomach was not straining against the zipper. He did not even feel his stomach. He went over to the mirror and stared at his reflection in amazement. His stomach was no longer a pudgy mass, but firm and flat; and his thighs he once accused of being harp cases, were thinner now, like an athlete's. He put the rest of the suit on in a rush.

"Kelfman," Benner said, running back into the living room. "You're brilliant!" But Kelfman was not in the apartment. Benner searched but could not find him anywhere. All Benner found was a bill for the suit and two pairs of socks. The total price was a mere two hundred dollars. Benner was astounded at the inexpensive price of such a marvelous outfit.

He stared in front of the mirror and continued gazing at his reflection. For the first time he could remember he looked slender and handsome. I should be in a cologne ad., he thought. Then he suddenly got an idea.

The following week an ad. appeared in the Personals:

SWM, 32, seeks attractive, trusting woman, 28-32, who enjoys well-dressed men. Must like fine restaurants, theatres, symphony, and other well-dressed places. The one thing I respect most in a relationship is honesty. Please reply.

The response was tremendous. In the three months that followed, Benner had more dates than he had had in his entire life. He could not remember having such a good time. He was worried at first that the new Benner still might behave as awkwardly as the old Benner and that he would not have anything interesting to say on his dates. But he amazed himself with how easily he could carry a dinner conversation. He had become more confident, and his feet no longer perspired.

The women he dated were wonderful, too. These were not the same reluctant women he had gone out with in the past, who seemed to have dated Benner out of some religious obligation. The splendid women he dated now actually enjoyed Benner's company. They listened to his opinions and laughed at his humorous remarks. Benner found this attention flattering, not terrifying as he would have before he began wearing the suit.

It disappointed him that he could only date a certain woman no more than twice. Any longer than that and they might get suspicious why their date wore the same suit all the time. He was also aware that there was no way he could make love to a woman and still stay slender.



To avoid embarrassment, he told his dates that he was a former priest and was still adjusting to secular life. But Benner was not interested in becoming involved just yet, not so soon after he started to enjoy dating.

He rarely went out in public without his suit. Some evenings he would spend hours in his bedroom watching the suit dangle from its hanger. He had emptied his closet so the suit could hang there alone, like a relic in a shrine. He would stare at it, imagining what each coming weekend would be like.

After awhile Benner had received so many pictures from his advertisement that he found he had to choose between women. And while there were many beautiful women to select from, no single face seemed any more special than the others. He was looking for something more but was unable to find it. He decided that a new suit might bring him better luck, so he went back to the diner to see Kelfman.

Kelfman, however, sternly refused Benner's request.

"Why can't you make me another suit?" Benner asked.

"Because I only make one per customer," Kelfman said.

"You can't be serious!"

"Yes, I am," Kelfman said. "How dare you say I'm not serious."

"Couldn't you just make me one more suit. I'm getting kind of tired of wearing black all the time. I have twenty-seven ties at home and only one suit."

"Then go somewhere else and buy another suit."

"But I want the ones you make!"

"Sure, sure," Kelfman said. "One more magic suit. And then a magic sport coat. And then a magic bathrobe!"

Benner could not believe Kelfman's stubbornness, but he did not give up. He argued and pleaded with Kelfman to make him another suit, but the tailor turned Benner down everytime. Benner would leave, miserable and frustrated, but then return the next day. Finally, after six days, Benner was literally shouting at Kelfman for a second outfit.

"Make me another suit! Make me another suit!" Benner shouted from the counter.

"That's it!" Kelfman said, throwing his spatula on the floor. "Get out of my restaurant!" He stormed out from the kitchen and was ready to throw Benner out by his collar when Benner jumped from his seat and snatched a hamburger from the plate next to him.

"Look at this," he said, holding the hamburger in front of Kelfman's face. "What if you were to make your hamburgers like your clothing? How could you stay in business and support yourself if you only made one hamburger and not one more? I can't understand you!"

"Everybody needs food," Kelfman said. "If I don't make food then my customers might starve. No one starves if I don't make them a magic suit. What does anyone really need with a magic suit anyway? You might catch cold, but you won't starve. Now get out!"

Kelfman grabbed Benner by the wrist in a remarkably strong grip and dragged him outside the restaurant. "Now get out!" Kelfman said. "And another thing, give me back that hamburger!"

Benner drove back to his apartment, angry that he would not have

his own way. But he decided the unfortunate incident with Kelfman would not discourage him from going out. If he could only have one magic suit then he would wear it and use it and enjoy it as much as possible.

That night he went to a popular, cosmopolitan nightclub. It was swarming with people. Loud, stimulating music seemed to overwhelm him from all directions. Neon tubing decorated the walls and electric lights flickered and revolved above the small, crowded dance floor. He noticed women staring at him as he sat at the bar. Benner felt at ease in this lavish environment. He sipped his drink, confident he would enjoy himself despite the trouble with Kelfman. He looked over the mob of faces, but when one of the faces turned towards him, Benner was so shocked he nearly spilled his glass of scotch in his lap.

Across the crowd was a woman. Benner instantly felt as if he knew her, even though he could not recall ever having met anyone like her before. Benner realized she was the one he had been hoping to find, the one different from all the rest. He continued to stare, and soon everything else in the room became unimportant except for her. He could not help but adore her natural looks, her long brown hair and light blue eyes. She had a certain pleasantness and a harmlessness that seemed to improve Benner's life with every heartbeat.

Benner walked towards her. He wanted to introduce himself and ask her to dance; but then he stopped. He realized that he would not be able to get to know her. She seemed so wonderful, so special, Benner knew he would never be satisfied with only two dates. He wanted to spend time with this woman, daytime and nighttime, but he would always have to be wearing a black suit to do that.

She saw him. When she smiled Benner felt tempted to take another step forward. After all, she might end up finding him interesting. But Benner knew she would never know who he really was as long as he was dressed in his suit. For the first time in months he felt clumsy and apprehensive in front of a woman. He panicked and hurried back to his seat. And it was not humility that troubled Benner for the rest of the night, only a vague sensation of incompleteness he had found within himself.

The following evening, Benner paid another visit to Kelfman. This time he brought the suit and the two pairs of socks back to the tailor. Although Kelfman did not refund Benner his money, Benner would not have taken it back anyway.

"Are you sure you don't want to keep the suit around as insurance?" Kelfman said.

"No," Benner replied. "Magic might be nice, but it's awful hard to base a lasting relationship on it."

"Some people find that out," Kelfman said. "Other people are still hoping for their magic bathrobes."

Benner looked at Kelfman for a moment. His last few words did not carry the same gruff tone, but sounded strangely reassuring. In fact, Kelfman seemed proud, even glad, to have his garment returned. He wanted to ask Kelfman how much his mother had told him, but then



decided not to. He had a sudden notion that whatever the nature of their collaboration was, all three of them had been successful.

Benner shook Kelfman's hand and said goodbye. Tomorrow he would begin a diet and pay a visit to a tailor, one he knew only made clothes and not sandwiches.

In the meantime, Benner stood outside the restaurant in the warm summer night, wondering if he would ever meet the woman of his dreams again. He believed there was a chance he might. He spent the rest of the night taking a relaxing drive around town. Wherever he went, the round moon stayed with him, like a lovely balloon held by a string, as it travelled across the night courting the shining stars.

## An Illusion

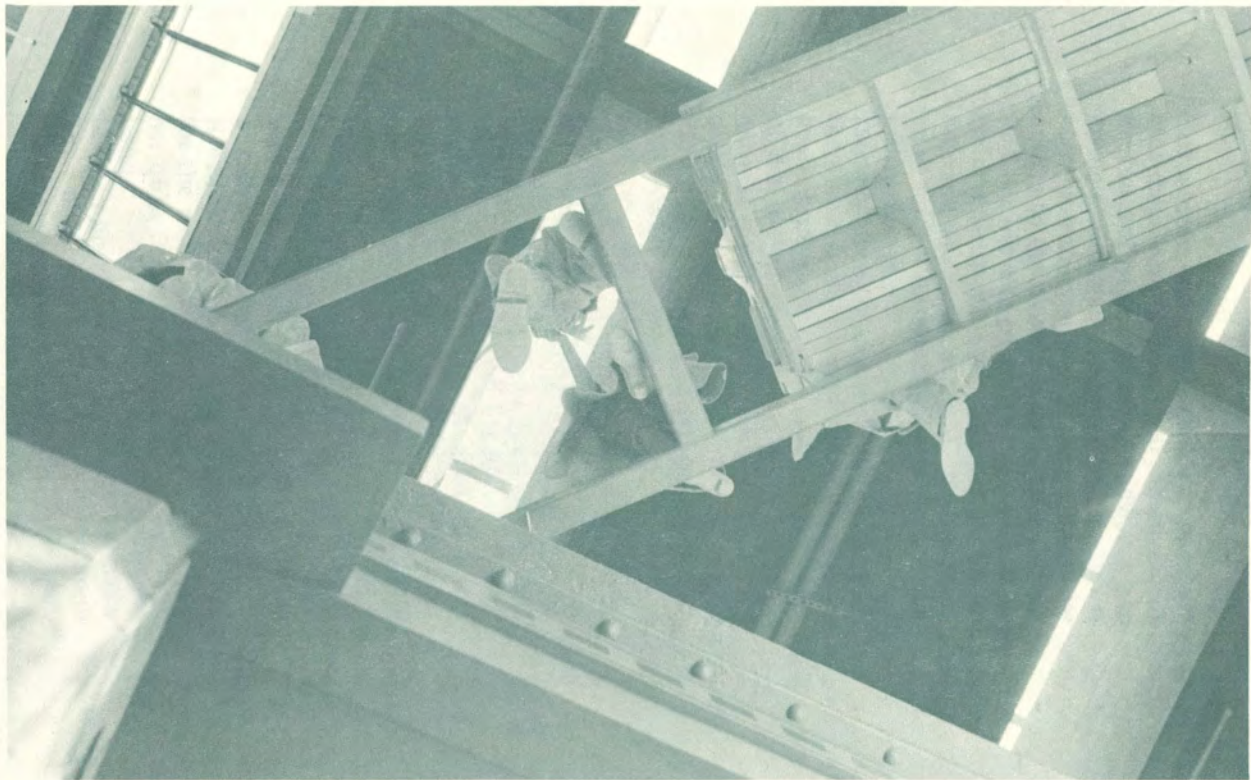
Jackie Schmidt

Polishing her nails  
mother rocks out-of-rhythm  
with the mantle clock.  
I stare  
at fish bowl bubbles,  
blind eyeballs tangling and spinning  
through the seaweed and around the angelfish,  
mingling with my eyes looking back at me  
distorted.

I stick out my tongue and laugh.

Curtains wrap around the sand castle  
and mother's ghost drags  
its white skirt across the coral  
and her nails, drenched in sunlight,  
glitter with the sand.  
The angelfish swims through my head  
trailing its dreams.

The gurgle of the pump, the smell of seaweed,  
the sting of Revlon, the rocker, the clock,  
I look away.



**Watch Your Step**

**Susan Mellady**

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# Dawn

Linda D. Lewis

We awaken thirsty  
for daybreak, dewy earth,  
and bluewhite birdsongs,  
Awaiting first light,  
we greedily gulp  
the last sweet dreamdrops  
of a night forevergone,  
as the pitcher tips  
and pours us  
into a pink lemonade morning.

# April

Lance Robinson

A sudden squall of April  
moaned loudly in the night  
wet and dark and while  
she was lightning in disguise  
Raindrops. tugged my shirt  
raked my back, my thighs,  
moist air hot inside my ear  
and a thunderstorm. Sighs.  
a sudden flash of lightning  
revealed the blanket there  
upon a hillside's darkness  
caressing passion bare.  
April came upon me,  
a furied maiden's share, while  
I wrapped in maiden sweetness  
of springtime's fertile air  
conceived that night a memory  
when darkness wrestled light  
upon a dampened lovers hillside  
deep within a lovers night.

# Glass for the Bride to Sing to

Keith Banner

The woman said quietly  
that these were her friends,  
broken and beautiful,  
giving testimony in a glass church;  
and the woman said  
quietly to the air  
that her life was good, that her  
children were gone, that her  
husband was dead, and she  
cried softly into her fingers  
tasting her skin  
listening to the whispers from beneath  
the dinner-table (to grace, to airplanes)  
hearing the masculine jungle cries  
of her sons coming in from  
autumn joyrides, or the tender  
songs from their lips  
during the winter when they were sick.  
The woman said quietly  
that these were her friends—  
the clarity and worship,  
the warm, clean dresses  
her nudity allowed her; she was free  
and she was gone, then back again  
like a white, fevered phantom  
and the rooms in her home  
accepted her; she in turn  
held seances with them: praying to perfume bottles  
to ice-cubes,  
to door-knobs.

God had removed her anger  
with a kiss from the window  
a cool, wet kiss (birds from the water).  
It was time, in her house,  
for the woman to recognize  
her quiet friendships, the invisible  
bond  
between birth and death.  
The woman said quietly  
that these were her friends.



# Hobo Convention at Britt, Iowa

Jackie Schmidt

Seems that E's been gone from EVER forever.  
Only "VERGREEN CEMETERY" in rusty letters remains  
on the wrought iron arch.  
The oldtimers gather here again,  
near the graves of Mountain Dew and Hardrock,  
two old friends that caught the "Westbound,"  
laid to rest here  
near the track by townsfolk.

The ritual begins;  
burlap strips drape shoulders,  
walking sticks raised,  
graves circled,  
red bandanas unfurled over markers.  
Tumbleweed blows an ole steam whistle  
from a mouth harp  
while Frisco dribbles whiskey on the sod.

The harmonica hums the clan down the track  
to the jungle fire.  
Steamtrain, the East Coast King,  
starts the stories  
about boxcars, rattlers, jackrollers, and red cards.  
The greenhorns straggle off toward town.  
Railroad dicks, mulligan stew, flophouses.  
Brewed coffee hangs heavy at mid-summer dusk.  
Fishbones beats spoons to Reefer's banjo.  
The jug makes another round.

The Drifter watches for Fry Pan.  
"Sure should be in from Granger by now.  
Ain't never been late before  
in forty-three years."

# On The Mountains of Mars

Troy L. Riser

“Have you ever wondered about life on other planets?” asked Larry, cradling his beer. His name was embroidered in looping cursive above the right breast pocket of his permapressed blue workshirt, and his fingernails were black half-moons, impacted with grease and dirt. He smelled of sweat and gasoline.

“Mmmfff,” said Marsha, her mouth stuffed with heavybreaded onion rings.

“I mean, there could be alien civilizations watching us right now, waiting for just the right moment to make contact.”

Marsha gulped diet soda and cleared her throat. “Let ’em watch,” she said. “Let ’em wait.” She swiveled the stool, taking in the bar. A few regulars lounged at the tables and the bar, talking high school basketball and weather and crops, tapping worn workboots and nodding heads in time to the music of the jukebox. Lynyrd Skynyrd was doing “Freebird”—yet another rock and roll band that should’ve taken a bus. Marsha closed her eyes and thought Paris, or rather, PARIS, in neon Eiffel Tower letters: sidewalk cafe’s, waiters speaking Hollywood French, bearing secret messages from the Underground. Candlelight. Chilled wine in long-stemmed glasses and lovemaking with passionate abandon on the banks of the Seine.

“Who knows,” said Larry, wiping his mouth with his sleeve, “maybe they’ve already made contact and the government’s keeping it a secret so people won’t sell their houses and quit going to work and tell their big, fat bosses to stick it where the sun don’t shine.” He picked up his mug, watching the bubbles rise. “What if all those stores you read about, about people kidnapped by UFOs and having alien babies—what if all those stories are true?”

“Onion ring?” asked Marsha, sliding the plate down the bar.

“Atoms are atoms, right?” asked Larry. “And atoms form chemicals, chemicals form molecules, molecules form cells, and cells form us.” He straightened on the stool, in the grip of a thought, his eyes narrowed with slow-wheels-turning intensity. “What if we’re like atoms in something even bigger?”

The Caribbean, thought Marsha, maybe Barbados or Grenada. White sand, coconut trees, warm blue water that goes on forever. Dark, muscular men who speak in a rapid-fire Queen’s English that sounds like a burst of Jamaican firecrackers. Singapore Slings with little umbrellas. Reggae.

Larry broke wind furtively, scanning the length of the bar with studied nonchalance to see if anyone had pinpointed the source. “I mean,



just the thought of it makes everything we do seem like so much bullshit.” He raised his empty glass to catch the attention of the bartender. “What do you think?”

“I think you should buy me a drink,” she said. “Something strong. Something with a little umbrella.” She brought her thumb and forefinger close together to show how little the umbrella was.

He handed her a beer in a frosted mug, the foamy head slopping over the sides. “Fresh out of umbrellas,” he said.

“Turkey,” said Marsha. “Istanbul.”

“I just bought you a beer,” said Larry.

“They call the faithful to prayer in the morning over loudspeakers,” she said. Istanbul. The women are unbearably beautiful under the veils, and the men fight to the death with curved daggers over a look or a harsh word. Blood falls like rain in the marketplace from quartered lamb strung like a clothesline from window to window above. Men chasing the dragon are stacked like cordwood in the alleys behind opium dens.

She drank beer, grimacing at the taste. She contemplated the pyramid of bottles behind the bar. She glanced at her reflection and saw crowsfeet already, the beginnings of a double chin.

“I read where they say there might be life on Mars,” Larry said, “some kind of algae on the mountains.”

“Katmandu,” she said.

“Imagine that: algae on the mountains.”

“Prayer wheels spinning like tops. Colorful parades.”

“I wonder what it’d be like to be algae on Mars.”

“Priests in flowing, bright red robes herding llamas. High mountain temples with gates of polished brass and jade.”

“Have you ever wondered about life on other planets?” asked Larry, cradling his beer.

# You Bring Out the Beast in Me or Your Snoring is Driving Me Wild

Linda D. Lewis

I lie awake next to you,  
wide-eyed and waiting.  
My jaws ache from the grinding  
and biting down.

Your nose whistles polkas  
and every breath bounces  
in my head and reverberates  
like tribal tom-toms.

My teeth clench relentlessly now.  
Each day I work harder  
to relax the muscle  
that refuses to rest.

In fitful dreams, I stalk my prey  
Lately, I have been hearing  
jungle sounds when I brush . . .  
I am worried about you.

## Eden

Linda D. Lewis

a curly-haired girl child,  
clad only in printed rosebud panties,  
is aware of nothing  
but the joy of sun and spray  
on her unaffected baby flesh

her garden playground—  
a yellow plastic wading pool,  
where she works contentedly  
for long magical hours  
making rainbows out of mist

an older child passes on a bicycle,  
laughs and comments on her nakedness—  
instantly, her tiny pink chest dots  
become unlike her brother's

she crouches low in the pool,  
uncoils the green garden hose  
and covers herself



# Eldine

Troy L. Riser

Above your grave with a flower  
Picked from my grandfather's garden,  
Standing there  
Alone,  
Contemplating the stone and the soil and the manicured grass,  
Feeling the hum of the nearby highway,  
Wishing for silence and shade.

The woman since:  
The beauty queens,  
heartbreakers,  
The serious ones,  
The Just Friends, okay?  
Blur into flickering motel neon  
And backseat explorations  
On darktunnel gravel roads;  
The love noises  
Of no meaning  
Or significance—  
The empty morningafters of vague desolation.

Your laughter,  
The toss of your head,  
Your thrusting innocence,  
The ginger smell of you  
Frozen,  
Perfectly frozen in time.

Death makes you beautiful, Eldine,  
And I damn the immaculate ghost  
That leaves me searching,  
Unsatisfied.

# A View from the Other Side

David Beck

**T**he cold wind blew against the thin, motel room walls. Paul Lucas rose from the bed and walked across the darkened room. The cold air seeped through the window and door, like water into a sinking ship. There was nothing he could do to stop it.

Standing by the window, he looked out into the night. All was quiet. Little could be seen, only the orange neon light which read "Vacany." Occasionally a truck would roll down the highway, alone, followed by no one.

Drunken laughter came from the room next door. A man and a girl. She screamed, and Paul shuddered, tensing every muscle. Then she giggled, and he relaxed his posture, walking slowly to the bed.

He would order coffee if this were the type of motel that had room service. Instead, he reached for his cigarettes, lit one, and lay in his bed, half sitting up, with his back against the headboard. Across from him was a mirror, and, with each draw from his cigarette, his face was illuminated with an orange glow.

Life went on as normal for Paul, except when the night came, and he found himself alone in some strange run-down motel room. They were all the same. Though forced to travel because of his job, he could not get used to the nights. Thoughts encompassed him like the surrounding darkness. And he would wait for the light, but it would linger. Paul no longer fought those sleepless nights, finding it easier to succumb to the fact that lying awake was far better than what awaited him in those passing visions of the night.

An ashtray sat on top of a Gideon's bible on the night stand next to him. He flicked his cigarette in the direction of the tray. The ashes missed, landing in a gray heap on the black Bible. He tried to think of work, sales, and all the events which made up his life. Yet, it was all mundane, and those thoughts only depressed him more.

He thought of Julie, his ex-wife. Memories of times which, in reflection, seemed happier than they were. Time, he thought, creates that illusion; if only it could work in reverse.

He knew it was happening; he could sense her slipping away. But what could be done? What had changed in him, or her, to cause such distance? Did she ever read the note? he wondered. Women were supposed to respond to that sort of thing. But when he awoke, she was gone, and the note lay on the table where he had placed it the night before. What did it matter? Why be so concerned as to whether she read it or not?

His stomach began to knot. He put the cigarette out and fluffed the pillow on which he was resting. Closing his eyes, he searched for tranquility, finding it on an old country road. He walked alone down a winding dirt covered path. It was a spring morning, and the evergreens



lined the narrow road, giving off their fresh pine scent, as mocking birds sang their soft imitations. A farmhouse sat on an eastern hill, where the sun was just beginning to rise over its triangular roof. Dew glistened on the grass in the front yard. Even from the road, he could smell fresh bacon cooking.

His mental wandering brought him to a lake, quickly waking him from his slumber. His heart began beating, like a bass drum, against his chest. He reached for his cigarettes; then, lighting one, he got up and walked to the window.

The couple in the next room was silent. He placed his hand on his lower back and gently massaged it. Getting old, he thought, can't do everything I used to do. He was disappointed when realizing, once again, that there was no pain. On nights like this, he wished he could find some pain—some excuse. But, anyway, he smoked too much, he thought, back pain or no pain.

The wind rattled the window in front of him and the cool breeze made him shudder. Julie, he thought: Where was she, and what made her so cold? He ran his fingers through his hair and sat down on the edge of the bed. Once the sun rose, when the first sign of light shone from the winter sky, he would sleep. He knew he would. It was always that way, waking just before check-out time.

Then Angie appeared. Perhaps he had rushed the whole relationship with her, but that could be expected, rebounding from a bad marriage. She was pretty and much younger than himself. Her light brown hair was thick, styled to look uncombed. It had been her eyes that had attracted him initially. They were light green in color and always had a sleepy, hazy look.

Even that day on Herron Lake she looked beautiful, in spite of the anger that raged underneath those passionate eyes. But with whom was she angry? he thought. She was young and growing restless, that was all. And, perhaps, if the circumstances had been different—if fate had not dealt such a hand of despair—they could have worked out everything. Often, on these long nights, he wondered if they could have lasted.

But there would have been so many changes to make: when she drank, she became as angry as she was beautiful. Just as with a storm, her anger was preceded by silence. And that silence was present as they drove to Lake Herron. He knew the storm would erupt, and he hadn't expected a rainbow to follow. All was over.

He sat down, put out his cigarette and lit another. He recalled how often he replayed the scenes, remembering each one, hoping for some change—some answer. Yet it was always the same.

On the way to the lake, they drove down lonely, winding roads, lined with evergreens, while listening to jazz on the radio. She was silent and was drinking more than usual. One after another, he thought, as she tossed an empty can into the back seat, then reached for the cooler.

"You're really putting them away," he said, somewhat strained in an attempt to sound light-hearted.

"Yeah," she said, leaning her head out the window, letting the wind blow through her tangled hair.

“Are you sure nothing’s the matter?”

“No, no. Nothing’s wrong,” she said irritably. Changing the subject, she said, “Sure you don’t want another beer?”

“No. I’ll wait ’till we get there.”

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Paul shivered, then rose and walked to the window. His memory only served to torment him on nights like this. Looking out he saw the near-empty parking lot of the motel. The wind rattled the window again, and his mind returned to Lake Herron.

The small cottage overlooking the blue-green waters, surrounded by trees and the fragrance of summer, could have been a haven at any other time. Yet, he found himself pouring two drinks, wondering when the clouds would gather and the storm would begin.

He handed her a glass of cognac, as she stood on the porch overlooking the lake. “It’s beautiful,” she said dreamily. “Your friend must be loaded to own a place like this.”

“Yes, I guess so,” he said, thinking he sounded older, as if he were her father. “Look, Angie, are you sure nothing’s wrong?”

She turned her head. As she did, he thought he saw her roll her eyes. “Why don’t we just go swimming? We can talk later.” She finished her drink quickly, handing him the empty glass. “Why don’t you fix us another, and I’ll get changed?”

“And go swimming?”

“Why not?”

“Because we’ve both been drinking since we got up this morning.”

She paused, tilting her head, with a slight smile.

“Okay, okay,” he said, “I’ll get the towels and the drinks.” As he poured the drinks, he wondered if he would have been so hesitant when he was her age. Maybe it was just a matter of being—or acting—younger.

As he waited for her to change, he remembered the time when he and some college friends had gone swimming in an old gravel pit. They had all been drinking heavily, but none cared—just as Angie didn’t. Besides, he and two others were on the swimming team, and that gravel pit in Southern Indiana wasn’t too wide.

He could still remember the exhilarating feeling as his arms reached out, with each stroke, pulling him through the water; the muscles in his back flexing, feeling stronger with each motion. Then, suddenly, his lower leg muscle tightened, causing him to stop and grab his calf. Looking towards the shore he realized he was further than he thought. His body tensed. He kept thinking, don’t panic, don’t panic. Every safety movie, every life saving course reiterated those words. But now his body tightened and would not obey. He extended his other leg downward, hoping to touch bottom; but there was nothing, just an endless depth. He tried to yell, but as he did, he went under, swallowing a mouthful of water. He rose to the surface, gasping in a voice not his own. He went under again, taking in more water, hearing those words: Don’t panic. Don’t panic. He beat the water with his hands and arms, but he went under again. Then he felt a hand grab his. Reaching up, Paul latched on the shoulder of one of his friends. Immediately, they both went under. A strange thought had suddenly occurred to him: Let go. He remembered



hearing of how a drowning man can drown the one attempting to save him. So he let go. As if in slow motion, he sank. Immediately his tense body relaxed. Above the water, he could see a bright light—the sun glistening on the water’s surface. Another strange thought: In all the times he had been in the water, never had he seen the sun from the other side. Why was he thinking like this? The thoughts of a dying man. Again, a hand grabbed his.

Angie walked into the room, interrupting his thoughts. She wore a white bikini, showing off her tan. “Aren’t you ready?” she asked, happily, as if she had changed her mood along with her clothes.

“No,” he said, shaking his head. He smiled, as if dazed, “No, I forgot.”

“Maybe you’re the one who has had too much to drink,” she said teasingly, taking the drink from his hand.

She looked beautiful, he thought, as he watched her walk out onto the porch. Her soft, brown skin seemed to glow as the sunlight embraced her body. Suddenly, he felt an urge to make love to her; to kiss and to hold her and her youth in his arms.

Her back faced him as he approached her, placing his hands on the curve of her small waist. She flinched, turning quickly to him, “You startled me,” she said, taking a step back. He cupped her face in his hands and kissed her lips.

Her kiss was cold and abrupt. “Go on. Get ready,” she said, straining to sound natural.

Yet, he still held her face. Her neck tightened. It was still there, he thought, feeling a pain in his stomach. Beneath those placid, green eyes, the storm was approaching. At bay for the moment, but it was still there. His hands dropped to his sides.

“I’ll be back,” he said quietly, turning and walking away.

To this day—even five hundred miles away—in a broken down motel room, Paul knew he was wrong to approach her. Fueled by alcohol and passion, he thought. He had shown her his desperation. Young girls don’t want desperate men.

But what did it matter? He was as out of shape then as he was now. And desperate or not, he couldn’t change anything. He definitely was not in shape, that much was certain. If he had been physically fit, he now could sleep nights and perhaps still love Angie.

Even as he changed his clothes that summer afternoon, he remembered thinking of how he could always find someone else. But when he looked in the mirror, clad in gray swim trunks, he had thought how bad he looked. All the weight in his shoulders had dropped to his waist. He felt embarrassed as he walked out onto the porch, wrapping a towel around his white flesh.

A warm summer wind blew across the lake and on Paul’s face, as they walked upon the sandy beach. She had finished her drink while he was dressing and was now drinking a can of beer. He held a cooler in one hand, a radio in the other.

They walked quietly to the water, setting their items on the sand. The small beach was deserted. “This is great!” she said, smiling. She

lifted her foot to remove one of her sandals. She lost her balance, grabbing Paul's shoulder to steady herself, dropping her can of beer.

"Crap!" she said.

"You don't need it anyway!" he said, holding her arm.

"Like hell I don't." Then it came. Those peaceful, lazy eyes were now glaring at him. "I'm a big girl, Paul. Don't treat me like I'm your daughter!"

"I'm not treating you like my daughter. But you don't need any more—"

"Don't tell me what I need, I said—"

"What are you angry about? Why is it that you can't tell me what's wrong?"

"Nothing is wrong," she said quietly, almost whispering. "Now give me a beer."

The storm subsided momentarily. So he sat down on his towel and reached for the cooler, taking out a beer. Her back was now facing him, as she looked over the lake. "Here," he said, tossing the can to her.

She opened it and again turned to the water and said, as if nothing had happened, "We don't even have to wear anything."

"What?" he said, opening a beer for himself.

"You heard me," she smiled.

"Angie, you're nuts. There are people living around here."

"I don't see any."

"Don't you see those boats? This may come as a surprise, but there are people on them."

"Oh, really?" she said sarcastically, removing her top. She then removed the bottom of her bikini and tossed it in Paul's lap.

"Angie, you're drunk. And if you think I'm going to—"

"Nobody asked you to do anything—Dad!" She turned and ran across the beach to a wooden dock, which extended about ten feet across the water.

He stood and, for a moment, admired the beautiful figure, diving gracefully from the dock into the water. He threw her bikini down and laid a towel over it. Grabbing the cooler, he walked angrily to the cottage.

Watching from the window, he saw her moving smoothly through the blue-green waters, only about ten or fifteen feet from the dock. He sighed, feeling older, as the sun shone through the window upon his tired face.

Angie held onto the dock, getting her breath, and dived under again. She never even looked to the beach to see if he was still there, just as Julie probably never looked at the note he had placed on the table for her.

Buoys tied together with a long rope separated the beach area from the boating area. Paul watched as she, like a dolphin, would emerge for air, then dive under again. He would lose sight of her for a moment, looking over the still waters. Suddenly, she would appear, and then would go under again. What endurance, Paul thought, as he took a drink of his beer. He walked outside, feeling his anger dissolve.



Standing on the porch, he looked across the water for Angie. He waited, then looked to see if she were on the beach. But all that was there were her towel and radio.

Quickly, he sat the beer can down and ran across the beach. Reaching the edge of the dock, he heard her.

"Paul," a gasping voice yelled. He saw her head rise above the water's surface. She was past the beach markers. Paul's heart raced. He took a deep breath and started to jump.

Suddenly, he stopped. The note. Had Julie ever read the note? Why think of it now? Paul was scared, even puzzled, over such a thought. And he hesitated.

"Paul! Help!" her voice barely audible.

Her eyes. Those passive green eyes could change so quickly. And they would change again; they would change tonight. He knew they would. The storm would rage and he would be alone again.

He heard a scream and could see only her arms outstretched, reaching toward the blue summer sky. Then, as if in slow motion, her arms sank. And he saw her no more.

From his room in Oklahoma City, with the January wind beating against the motel walls, he could still hear the stillness of that summer day. Standing on the dock's edge, there was silence, only a few birds singing and the sound of water, barely audible, splashing against a small blue fishing boat tied to the dock.

When evening came they had found her body. People had gathered around the beach, families huddled together in morbid curiosity, as the reflection of the flashing red lights shone off the water's surface and against the trees, lining the lake. Everything was so unnatural with the lights, the police radio, the groups of people watching.

He had told the officer there was nothing he could do. He repeated it again and again to whomever would listen; yet, no eyes accused him, only looks of sympathy or indifference were cast upon him. One officer had said that he would make sure the family was notified and that, if Paul wanted, the officer would hold her belongings at the station until a family member claimed them.

After all had left, Paul placed his suitcase, cooler and radio in the car. He walked alone to the edge of the dock and looked at the moon's reflection on the water's tranquil surface. He felt numb. Thoughts of his experience at the gravel pit made him wonder if she had felt the same way: the terror; then the sublime view of the sun, seen from the other side; then the peace that came from letting go. Could eyes blinded by anger see something so beautiful?

"There was nothing I could do," he said aloud, before turning and walking to his car.

At times while in these lonely motel rooms, Paul agreed with himself to see a priest. During the long nights when he began to fall asleep and would see those hands reaching from the water, the words came easily to his lips: "Bless me Father, for I have sinned." In these moments he believed that this simple confession could bring life back into his world.

Yet, as the sun began to rise his thoughts would not bother him. All that existed lay before him. Everything he could see, touch, hear, taste and smell were all that mattered. No need for confession; for when the day came, no hands would be reaching from the water. And thoughts of what could have been will be gone.

He flicked his cigarette. The ashes missed the tray, landing in a gray heap on the black Gideon's Bible, as he waited for the dawn.

## Autumn Child

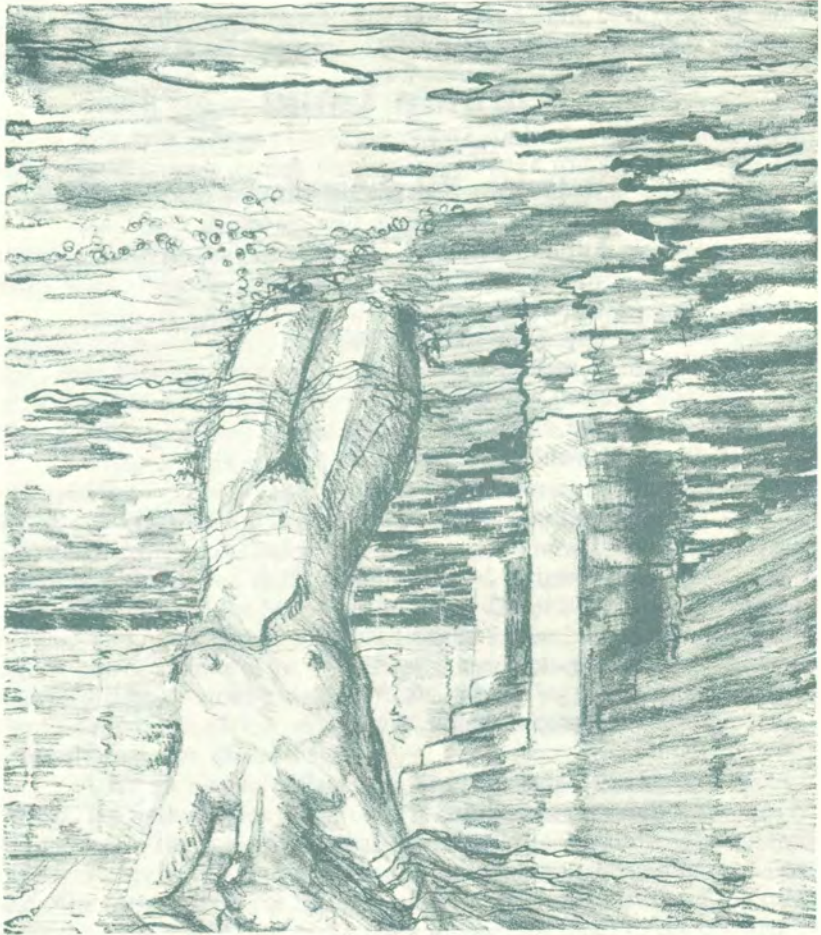
Donna Baker-Stouder

Autumn Child  
woke up the spring  
in our mother's soul  
You came to us,  
to me,  
clean and new  
The only child  
I would ever have

And you grew  
Tomboy  
Friend to hound dog  
And loved that pony  
Girl with matted hair  
Knock knees tripping  
out of youth  
Not long ago

Chestnut hair, blown back  
Godiva like  
Driven by the Velvet mare  
And I said, Look!  
She's riding fast.  
And no one looked.  
And I said, Look!  
She's riding fast!





**Fallen Caryatid**

**Trina Renee Nicklas**

# Biographies

**Amy-Jeanne Ade:** I am uncomfortable attempting to define myself in twenty-five to fifty words. Suffice it to say that I am a writer, when I grow up I will be a better writer, and that I have a life outside of writing.

**Donna Baker-Stouder:** Bio will be provided later. I'm too tired now.

**Keith Banner:**

I like loud people who do weird things.

I grew up in Anderson, Indiana.

I am twenty-two-years-old.

I like to paint, write, think, and read.

One time, when I was in sixth grade, I broke my arm, and then, the day I got my cast off, I broke it again.

I'm quiet, but think loudly.

**David Beck** is an English major and a member of the **genesis** board. His stories have appeared previously in **genesis**.

**George A. Dunn:** Molly Ringwald, **what** have you **done**?

**M. Todd Fuller:**

Christ and T.S. Eliot sit on my couch drinking coffee;

God and Dylan catch the next train to my door.

I try to put to meaning my sense world  
as the blender mixes music, words, love and faith  
into a hodge-podge Christian  
that waits to go Home.

**Jay Hartleroad:** I am a senior at IUPUI majoring in Creative Writing and Literature, and I want to be a writer. Writing is certainly not for those who want to achieve immediate yuppiedom after graduation. Writing is more like a profession suited for exiles, hermits, or prisoners serving consecutive life sentences. But I tend to enjoy it.

**James W. Kirk** is a second year Liberal Arts major. He is 28 and hopes to make his career writing fiction and/or publishing fiction.

**Linda D. Lewis:** 39, mother of three, wife of one. A self-professed word-aholic; she can't get through a day without books and paper. She enjoys nature, especially bird watching, hiking, sunbathing, dozing, musing, and drinking Bud with her buddies. She doesn't wanna make money, folks, she just LOVES to write poetry.

**Pat Logan-Browne:** I am at an undisclosed chronological age. I am a grandmother. I feel 25; react like 14; move like 75; revert to total childhood regularly. So what?

**Tony L. Riser:** I am an English major at IUPUI. I live with my family on a farm in southern Shelby County, where men and women laugh with derision.



**Lance Robinson:** I started writing poetry two years ago, spontaneously, and have turned it into a method of catharsis, questioning and expression. I write when moved (usually when perturbed by some question, emotional event, or heartache), elated, bored, angry, aroused, etc. Sometimes the intrinsic rhythm or rhyme in a well turned phrase will spawn a poem, regardless of whether the phrase was motivating by its content.

**Cecil L. Sayre:** Cecil L. Sayre.

**Jackie Schmidt:** All I ask of life is to let me—on the day of judgement—watch life flash before me with a ten gallon bucket of white-out at my side.

**Susan Mellady:** She is presently a senior at Herron School of Art pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts. Her interests include painting, drawing and photography.

**Trina Renee Nicklas:** She is currently a senior at Herron School of Art in Painting. She plans on applying to an east coast graduate school. Her main priority in life is to paint. Through her painting she hopes to communicate and connect with the viewer on an emotional level.

**Brian Ruppel:** Brian is a student at the Herron School of Art. His painting studio is on the mezzanine of the old Museum building. His background is in etching and lithography.

**Ashley Coutts** is a senior, painting/art education major with a minor in journalism, former Sagamore staff writer. Artwork has appeared in **genesis** and **Inprint**. Literary work has appeared in **genesis** and **Indiannual**.

**Michael Xue.** "I don't know when I started making these pictures. I do remember I was very eager to see what a computer could do for me at one particular stage of programming. When the pictures came out, I noticed how odd, yet beautiful they looked. I was dreaming, like a kid would, that someday they appear on the covers of **Genesis**, which turned out to be true."

**Carol Lough:** dedicated dilettante and dabbler in the arts

