



Genesis
Spring 89

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I N S E C U R I T Y

Insecurity

Cindy Mohr

Ironweed and Primrose

Anne Laker

I

Now is the time that I am fruitful and fertile: my creative cornucopia is trumpeting, images are recurring, colors are sloshing in my mind. I rejoice in the midst of football season, the turning of the ditchweed, and holidays only a page away. But not so long ago, I died a mental death, when my mind rotted away like a deer carcass, haunted by blackbirds in the form of specters, the specters of mental illness.

II

I envision myself in my white linen nightgown with the embroidered edges, a basket of laundry on my hip, the stony sun pulsing. I am stringing the sheets on the clothes line. The tufted dry grass stings the soles of my feet. That, in my mind, is the despondent summer of 87. There were intermittent spells of connection—a night out with the girls, a heart-to-heart with Bruce, and a trip to Iowa with my best friend Carrie. But the days seethed on, hot and colorless. I wrote, “These strange days: I live them according to a list of jobs, and I do it so blindly that I don’t realize until after dinner what a terrible day it’s been.” I made feeble attempts to psychoanalyze myself, but bitter psychology tricked and teased me. My mood was so stale, knowing Dean had gone to France. I missed his sensuality and the breath of his art. Wishes, old wishes tugged at my consciousness. And tears came almost daily. Ever since he left me, I was cursed with hysteria and depression, the “silent, ingrained” kind.

And so they sent me to the doctor. I would walk out of the office, my face red and my eyes leaking. He told me I had a facade and that I hid behind my intellect. Analysis, he said, will kill. All I knew was that I was completely sad. Once he accused me of seduction. The day I wore black and red to my appointment he told me I had a subconscious desire to be revered like Marilyn Monroe.

It was then that I began to fear myself. I cried until my eyelids were puffy and my wastebasket overflowed with damp kleenexes. Maybe it was an Oedipal complex. I’d cry when mom and dad hugged. I begged Daddy to pity me for losing Dean. I guess that’s all I really wanted from anyone. But my father always hated Deanie. Dean, Dean. I found myself, over and over again, reading the songs and poems he

gave me for my birthday long ago. I read them, trying to glean some clue of what he needed a woman to do: save him. I thought if I looked at him objectively, instead of with my "lovetorn little heart," I would discover that secret. And to reinforce my pain, I would be at the grocery store, trying to stay away from the cosmetic aisle, but ending up there anyway, smelling Dean's cologne. That would do it. The night would surrender to the tide of salty tears. The background for tragedy was set.

I remember we rented a movie, "Black Widow." It was about a woman who lured men, married them, and murdered them. That kind of power looked tempting; the horror of it fascinated me. That summer, I also read novels by Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath (the suicidal women writers). And somehow being a woman tried to defeat me, to punish me.

My mental weather was cyclone and hurricane—illness had settled in. In late August, I grasped for nothingness. I wanted to "live on emotion alone." I wanted art to propel me to a galaxy of omnipotence. No food, no water. I wrote, deep into a night, searching for freedom, or maybe, slavery.

"So then I returned to me
and found her wandering in fields
cutting purple and yellow wildflowers
and knowing their names: ironweed and primrose.
The day showed me a photograph—
the periwinkle paint of the barn
its shaded white rim
a white cloud with a soul of gray
then the blue sky it invaded.
It gnawed, it gnawed
then fused into me.
My mind scraped away at everything.
It was knives.
Put on my intellectual brakes.
Speed is suicide.

Maybe I shall sit
as noble as I can
in the dust of old me-ness.
I shall plan to return to my childlike faith.
Potpourri is preservation
Resurrection?

There was a true flash—
I wanted to hold the hottest star.
My breath would cool it
and it would be mine to caress.
I gave him black triangles pointing up.
How did I even know?

I was in a mexican hurry.
He told me I drowned in him—
that I couldn't be distinguished.
So hot, I melt. Blurred.
I must have been bland
for 'I could never marry you'
and he returned my silver ring.

I promise you a couple nights
will drown themselves, 'so swung in tears'
This year's tear-tab has been so high.

My art is a blood
(not a liquor)
that sustains me.
Art is a quiet beast we can cage
or let it roam, untamed.
So I experiment:
'Crowded red barns
They pepper the heartland
I bowed my head to cry
And one day I wanted blue
A cooling blue
 and virgin white
To match that godly sky.
The sun played like a child on blueness . . .'
I missed the energy-of-art exchange.
There were years,
but you spent them loving someone else.
And maybe you were wise.

a puzzle I must solve
a potion I must distill
a velocity I must slow
a dust I must inhale
a drum I must dance to.
Just be gentle and gradual for a while;
take your time and taste me.
Oh, you loved your own passion
more than you could ever love me.

The poor must be rich in something
even if only mud.
The dead time:
of brown and rubbermaid gold.
Ripe for life may equal
rough weeds and wood and concrete.
In love with contrast, dissonance
and the faint and fleeting
blush of circumstance.

I missed the cold transition
from black to cobalt but
I watched the first rays
go splashing over the fields.
Is there a world where purple = yellow?
And antithesis combs the tangles?
There are many, many unions to be made.
Oh, I ain't no queen
and weeds are my only laces."

They found me the next day, my battered soul bleeding, trying to survive in surreal surroundings. My father took away all of Dean's songs and music that I had been coveting. They were "stunting my growth and draining my life." This episode was a psychotic prelude.

I was patched back up and sent to college in Chicago. I could still feel something out of whack, a subterranean force boiling silently. But things settled for those few suspended weeks in a pseudo-harmonic song. I met some nice, endearing people: Gina with big lips and oriental taste; Beth the enthusiastic one, Wendy who was lithe and quiet; and my roommate Stacy who was worlds away from me in love and independence. My favorite friend Gina and I soon found a hideaway called the Heartland Cafe, a cozy corner with spicy rice and rich cornbread, as well as a store of perfumed soaps and herbal teas. We spent afternoons combing the lakeshore and gathering our skirts, pretending we were doing tampon commercials. But I wasn't happy yet. I had to resolve him in my mind. I asked Stacy's advice: should I go for it? "Tess," she said, "be dangerous." I whipped out my markers and wrote a long, convoluted love letter to Dean. I remember how my chest was heaving (as if I was grasping for the air of freedom) and how I sweated and how my body reacted to that stress—lurching and trying to limit the crazy brain speed. All the brutality and bitterness I suffered emotionally was coming to a boil. I questioned Stacy about love, "the quiet, gentle, unconscious conquest that we feel but never truly understand." I wanted to plug Dean and I in, to see if we fit.

In the morning, my mood was silent and sinister. Wendy and Gina noticed that I was acting strangely. All that day I tried to rearrange, in a figurative and literal sense, my room and my belongings (for I was never totally happy in an environment that wasn't mine). It was quite symbolic—I wanted to straighten the disarray of my emotions, or to escape the divine phantom of a man who taunted me. In particular, there was a vase of roses my parents sent me for my birthday. It fell from the sill and the water splattered all over my father's photograph. I took it as an omen that something dreadful was about to happen. I was right.

In early October, Gina, Beth, and I planned to see an Italian film, "Otello" at the 400 Theatre. Homecoming festivities were in progress on the lawn. I remember the wind whipping through my hair and down my back onto my plaid lumberjack coat. At that moment, I had a sublime sensation that I was a witch, who could mesmerize and make the wind blow with a haughty laugh. It was an exalted feeling that drove on like weather or an artist's imagination.

Then, sitting in the theatre, a wave of supreme sadness swept over me. Some kind of emotional hangover lulled me into tears. Gina saw and touched her hand to my wet cheek. I want to go, I said. She let me go.

So I ambled through the streets, weaving in and out of people, and looking at their eyes. Some were white holes aiming at me. Others slanted elsewhere. I was a zombie. I made it to the lakeshore, where people strolled with lonely abandon. I peered into the black water and for a fraction of a second, I wanted it for my grave. Wouldn't it be a monument to women like Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath who were slaves to the pressure of art and the horror of sentiment?

A man with droopy eyes and scant hair interrupted my misgivings. His name was Richard, he said. No strings attached. We walked, and he handed out his wisdom. He was 38, an astronomer, looking for the real religion. I was 18 and just as desperate. I told him of Dean who had unknowingly crucified me. "But," he said, "you're a gorgeous woman. Do you know that?" I was unpleasantly jolted—a sour mirth. I wandered elsewhere.

Next thing I knew, I was walking through corridors, lost in corners. A counselor tried to take away the pills I had been taking for depression—they thought I'd overdosed. Ambulances. Tubes down my throat. Paramedics. I told them my boyfriend raped me. I must have felt that way.

I awoke in a sterile room, with needles in my arm and foreign doctors in my face. The clocks seemed to tick backwards and I could never tell if it was day or night. I focused my eyes and my parents and grandmother (or mannequins painted to look like them?) appeared. But I was no paranoid schizophrenic, no, not me. I felt my sluggish pulse and the feeling of impending death. Then some young man rolled me down ramps in a wheelchair. Breezy. When we got to wherever we were going, I looked into his face, and it was a thinly disguised Dean trying to kiss me. I thought it was him. Finally, I thought, he found out how much I wanted him back. Everything went black.

III

September 1986: the beginnings of my senior year in high school. I was fresh off a Mexican summer. New

language, new connections. Dean had written me a letter, filled with lusty promises of 20-minute hugs and songs dedicated to me. I wrote in my journal: "My strength and my essence, at long last, have captured a soul, changed a mind, and exposed what purports to be a sincere heart." It was, in effect, all I ever wanted. And so, he confessed, he loved my long legs and my honey hair and I loved his biceps and his music. We communicated on a level of art and video images. "You are my colors and the black in my hair." I had private literary celebrations: "Luscious, hallucinating, natural, easy, delirious. My first real kisses by the foggy lake and pine trees" (September 23, 1986). And always for treasuring, the note he wrote me:

"Tessa,
Your mind is so wide
Your body is so wicked
I can't sleep waiting for your deep eyes
The morning is your birthday, happy one . . .
You are my rose.
Love,
His Greekness"

But the most enchanting evening of my life will always be October 3, 1986.

"Friday evening saw the creation of a glorious rainy memory. I laughed at everything and nothing and he looked like John Travolta from the 50's. We kissed shyly in the art room stairwell. Then in the Night, it rained deliciously hard, so I took off my sandals and ran into Derby's to see Deanie. He called me 'baby.' More hard rain. He wasn't off work yet so we went to Carrie's. 'Carrie,' I said, 'I must play outside in it.' I traipsed out in my T-shirt and jeans and my lima bean raincoat. I found Dean coming up the walkway. 'I've been thinkin' about chu,' he moaned. He grabbed me. We walked hand in hand through the splashy yard and kissed. Very slippery. He tugged at my wet hair and squeezed me up and down my jeans. All the while, darkness and rain. My hands on his wet chest. Carrie caught us. I was genuinely happy with him then. I ran fingers through his hair. Flash flood!"

And equally enchanting—the night of the Homecoming dance, October 10, 1986.

"A fairytale black velvet, leather, panther evening. My first glimpse of him took my breath away: his white shirt, black leather bow tie, black suspenders, and gray flecked jacket. He was carrying the oar for the boat and coming up the patio path. It was like a Gunne Sax prom

ad! I appeared in my vision of black drama. I hugged him on the patio bricks and got a spicy Greek whiff of him. I called, 'I'm melting.' then we strolled, arm in arm, to the lake. His hands were on my knees and there was a gentle kiss the moment the sun went down. The air was nippy, pure. We went to the kitchen and admired Black Kitty who had a pink bow tied around his rebellious neck. I made chocolate milk and poured it into dusty champagne glasses. He lit the pink candle and laid out the croissant sandwiches and eight strawberries. We eyed each other strongly from across the pink linen folds and silly food. Later I took him up to my room and showed him the moon black night from my window. He grabbed me around the waist while we sat on my bed. He played his tape while I put on lipstick. He smelled all of my potpourris. I loved watching him in my room.

At the dance, helium balloons kissed the ceiling. I danced with my hair. I traced my fingers under his suspenders, feeling the sweat coming, pulling his hair, tying streamers from him to me. I used his sweat for perfume. We found ourselves in a parking lot. He turned off the car and it pattered to silence. Then he moved the seat back. He took off his bow tie and I unbuttoned his shirt. Then the Woodshire security guard pulled up. He waved us away. We giggled. The ride home was intoxicating. I held onto his arm and my hand was on his leg. Warm and comfortable, he said. I was drowsy with lust. I kept looking up at him. I loved his curly eyelashes. He looked capable and dignified and he had a serious look on his face. At home, we rolled up by the carbon lake and he turned off the motor again. Wide-open, press-hard kisses . . ."

And so with sensuality came the creativity of a lifetime: poetry and drawings produced in the midst of Dean and me. Days in meadows and parks and football games. He rocked me in a dream.

But gradually, the moon waned. I sensed he wanted Carrie, so I sacrificed him as a martyr would do. I rolled on, "past the tease of many midnights in November." We flirted off and on, but it ended for good in December. I'll never forget the day he showed me Laura's (the new one's) picture. She was wide-eyed and fleshy; perfect for him, I suppose. And thus began the wheels of pain I was to feel for year upon melancholy year.

IV

The lounge on the hospital psychiatric ward smelled of smoke and sour milk. There were tiny cigarette burns on the vinyl couches and carpet. Slow people with ratted hair, or hyper people with flashing eyes paraded by. My reaction was retreat and analysis; I hid in my room, evaluating, decoding, theorizing. I thought if I figured out how the place worked they would set me free. It seems like I did a lifetime's work (writing, drawing, visualizing abstractions) in a few days. I had to wear an orange jumpsuit because I was on "Close Observation." The other patients enthralled me—I tried to imagine what backgrounds, circumstances or tragedy had brought them here. I made a list to immortalize them:

Tammy—She was my roommate, probably a schizophrenic, about 23 years old. Shortly after we were introduced, she took off her shirt, snickered, and said, "Oh, I'm not a lesbian." She whined at great speeds when she spoke of her boyfriends in Florida.

Earl—A very old, bright German man. He would promise to buy me mansions with his millions. I guessed he was a soul who lost it all in the Depression, trapped in history. He looked like a successful hobo, with his stocking cap and eyes bright as a fox's.

Jamal Jackson—He was another poet I met in passing—the very antithesis of me—a rangy black man who had a wife and a daughter named Jasmine or Jonquil. He was just a bit too interested in all women. He wrote me a poem:

"When Snowflakes Melt"

With eyes so soft
and pastel blue
golden hair
and quiet smile
trapped between
the calm and the beauty
of an older woman
or a younger child
she seems . . .
she beams . . .
she gleams . . .
she glows . . .
When snowflakes melt
there's no more snow
as seeds from trees
begin to grow
The wise of spring
is new and old.

Louise Didomenico—a gawky woman with oily hair and a green polyester pant suit. Since her first name was British and her last name Italian, I assumed she was a victim of the hurricanes of ethnicity, some ironic clash of her parents.

Joe Ragucci—A husky, beefy, and congenial man. He was the mystery I couldn't solve: why did such a cordial man belong in a mental hospital? He called me "Tessabella" because that meant "pretty Tessa" in Italian.

Wanda—very fat. She had borne many children, many of whom wouldn't speak to her because "I was loony and I tried to love them too much." I understood.

Neil—the most quintessential and inexplicable person I met in the hospital. He bore a horrifying resemblance to Dean. He was a twisted version of Dean, of valiance gone bad. He seemed to have caved in or collapsed. His chin was drawn to his chest in a fetal position. I never forgot his vexed face.

And I, of course, was not without confusion and the pain of paranoia. I thought the staff was watching me through the TV screen, and that they had video cameras rigged in the showers. I thought the medicine they gave me was a placebo to make me think I was sick. My connections were loose, and such symbolism scared me. And although my senses were sharpened, my psyche went numb and sensations filtered through me like water through a sieve, no silt for tracing.

Eventually, I improved enough to be transferred over to the adolescent ward where a whole new plethora of individuals awaited me. These kids, I reasoned, were simply cornered by torrential adolescence, the floundering cranny between childhood and adulthood. The routine was much more structured, the rules more rigid. The imposition of discipline was central to the philosophy of adolescent psychology. Showers were 15 minutes long, participation in therapy was mandatory, and free time had to be earned. Between the schedule, I found time to soak up the environment and the people.

Rochelle—This time my roommate was a lanky black girl. She told me stories about her boyfriend Detrick and their torrid love affair. Her depression was covert and stewing; she was released shortly.

Jan—My new renegade roommate. She seemed to be thoroughly versed in the world's cruelties at 16. She taught me to be a bad girl; we would jump on our beds after bedtime, play Uno on the floor, and sneak Oreos in our pillowcases from snack time. She wasn't as endearing as Rochelle, but she knew what I needed.

Jeff—12 years old, claimed to be “suicidal,” but really was only ultra-sensitive. He’d watched his mother love many other men besides his father and he couldn’t reconcile it.

Bonita—She was only in the hospital for a few days. She kept saying, “I’m in hell! I’m in hell!” Her brother had just died. Once, from across the room, I made a funny face at her and she smiled.

Dylan Lindener—An American Indian who was continually cartooning.

Danny—He had many a nicotine fit and acted macho his first few days but he straightened up after that.

Paul I wrote a poem for him (“Chocolate Pudding”). He always gave me the tomatoes from his salad.

There were many other people just passing through, all torn by something, some tranquil, some violent, all troubled. If someone got extremely violent, s/he would be put in “The Quiet Room,” where s/he would be put in restraints. I was in The Quiet Room.

It was December 1987 and I had been in the hospital for 3 months. They’d tried multitudes of medicine, but one in particular, an anti-psychotic drug named Haldol, seemed to keep my symptoms under control. However, its side effects were undesirable—dry mouth, drowsiness. Ironically, all along my hospital stay had been voluntary. My parents and I had decided that I should stay until it ceased to be good for me. Dr. Irving said maybe the home environment would be more beneficial. That chapter in my life had ended.

But my illness, per se, had not. I begged my mother to let me sleep all day. My bed was a fortress of safety. I heard “voices” (auditory hallucinations) telling me that I was going to die, that I’d never get well. The cold of the new winter stung me fiercely. Sometimes I could barely muster enough strength to take a shower. Even in April I had a visual hallucination that there were 3 midgets in the closet. Psychotherapy helped, and I enrolled in a day treatment program at a mental health center. We had lessons in assertiveness, social skills, and stress management. The snappy spring air roused me, but I hadn’t written a poem in months and I carried a dull ache in the pit of my stomach.

By June, I was ready to try school again. I took a poetry course at the local college in the midst of a baking-hot rainless summer. My medicine had been decreased but my incandescence had not returned.

But with autumn comes that marble-cloudy sky, cornfields, and caramel apples. I'm taking some classes now (creative writing—poems galore!) and I've made some new friends (Veronica and Jack—we blab about wacky childhood). I sing; I bake orange-crunch muffins; I wander in fields. The transition was gradual, but I'm back to me: pensive, imaginative, even irreverent. I still dream about Dean often. Sometimes, in dreams, he tempts me, then rejects me, or he can be tender, exactly as I want him. He is an issue I may never resolve.

“Now is the time that I am fruitful and fertile: my creative cornucopia is trumpeting, images are recurring, colors are sloshing in my mind. I rejoice in the midst of football season, and the turning of the ditchweed . . .”

If Daddy Wins At Poker

Anne Laker

Roused on Saturday morning
 To the honeyed hope
 Of doughnuts iced chocolatey
 Gritty with sugar grains
 Sticking to waxy bakery bags
 All dependent
 On the divine ace of spades



Cartoon and Comas

Bill Ross

A Fragment From The Fog

George A. Dunn

She has speed and grace
and magical powers,
 this tiny girl,
 this heroine of my dream,
and she,
 with her time-travel leap,
and I,
 with my 57 electric guitars,
are locked in an adventure.

She knows the secret name of our enemy,
she has lifted his black curtain mask,
photo-copied his drivers license.

There's danger, that's all that I know.

But though I cannot fathom
the things she cannot explain,
 I trust her
as she runs hard at the time-slit,
pursuing the enemy
 where I cannot go,
 where 57 electric guitars
dissolve into silt . . .

and I fear this may be my last chance
to tell her the secret of this dream:

 it's a love story,
 tiny girl,
 it's a love story.

Sam Jones Goes North

John Pierce

I was sitting in my office, drinking the beer that I'd started the day before, when this dame walked in. She was no ordinary babe, I tell you. In all my fifty-six years I'd never seen such a knockout.

"Are you Sam Jones?" she asked.

What was I going to say? I have a rule: When a blue-eyed blonde honey with great legs and huge hooters asks me who I am, I become who she wants me to be.

"Yeah Doll, I'm Sam Jones. My friends call me Sammy. You can call me anything you like."

"You do detective work?"

I gave her my card. Actually, it was the only card I had. The printer sent it to me as a sample in '71, and I'd used it since. I had it laminated.

"Well, Mr. Jones, I have a problem."

"We all have problems, Honey."

"I'm not your 'Honey.'"

She was feisty. I like that in a babe.

"Okay Toots, what is it?"

"It's my husband."

I dropped my beer. Damn, I thought, she's hitched. Probably a real geek with lots of dough.

"He's been murdered. The police said it was suicide—stuck himself in the throat with a fork—but I know he was murdered."

"By who?"

"Whom."

"What?"

"Whom. You should use the word 'whom' instead of 'who.' Like if you're answering the phone, you should say 'To whom am I speaking?'"

"Okay, okay. Whom did it?"

"Who."

"I get the point. What person was responsible for his death?"

"I'm not sure, but I know they are Canadian."

"Well, that narrows it down to a nation. How do you know?"

"Kyle'd be gone for several days in a row—and when he'd get home he'd say things like 'How's it going, eh?' and 'It's cold outside, I'd better put on my teuc.'"

"Pretty thin case, Doll."

"I'm not your 'Doll' . . . and there's more."

There was a moment of awkward silence. She looked

down at the floor for a moment—and looked back up just in time to see me staring at her chest.

“What are you doing?”

“I thought I saw some lint, and I . . .”

“Listen, there are other detectives in Lansing . . . I only chose you because of your ad in the Yellow Pages.”

Actually, the ad had been a typo. The Phone Company was supposed to print “Professional, Fast, Inexpensive”—but they got the copy mixed up with a service station’s. It read “Professional, Fast, Approved Clean Restrooms.” That ad brought me more business in six-months than I’d had in the previous eighteen years.

“I’m sorry, it’ll never happen again.”

I made a mental note that the next time I looked at her golden bozos, I’d be more careful.

“Do you have any cigarettes?” she asked.

I gave her a Lucky. She tore the filter off and lit it.

“As I was saying, there is another reason that I think Kyle was in Canada . . . Do you have an ashtray?”

I gave her the ashtray I keep in my desk. It was out of a Chevy Impala. They don’t make ashtrays like that anymore.

“At night, towards the end, he would hum ‘Oh Canada’ in his sleep.”

“Is that all?”

“Well, that and the theme from “Rawhide”—but he’d always hummed that.”

“Listen lady, I don’t think I want to take this case. It’s too sketchy. Besides, you know how cold Canada is this time of year.”

“Would ten-thousand dollars help? It’d buy a nice parka.”

“But, on the other hand, Canada is such a pretty place. The trees, the animals, the snow . . .”

“Good. Here’s my telephone number. My name’s Trudy Thompson. Call me when you find out something.”

She handed me a piece of paper and shook my hand before leaving. She kept my business card.

I didn’t know where to start—I hadn’t been to Canada since I’d been a kid. I decided to go see my friend Louie.

Louie was a gardener—a French Canadian gardener. He owned his own landscape operation. I don’t know what it was called, though, since it was in French. Something about snails and Arbor Day.

I’d met Louie years before, when I was still a lawyer. I helped him get off of a charge of growing shrubs for immoral purposes. He turned out to be a great, and expensive, source of information.

I knew I could find him at Schmidt’s Deli on 27th Street. That’s where he always ate dinner. He was sitting in a booth when I came in.

"Voilà! Mon ami! Est-ce que tu est bon?"

"I don't know what in the hell you're saying, Louis. Speak English, why don't you?"

"What brings you in here? You are hungry?"

"No. I need some information about Canada."

"I don't know Sam, it's been a while since I was up there. My memory is not so good."

I gave him a ten-dollar bill.

"Seems a guy named Kyle Thompson was murdered up there—or at least his wife thinks so."

"You might start in Moose Bay, Ontario. That's where the Upper Peninsula joins Canada. I wish I could remember the place where all the tourists hang out . . ."

I gave him ten more dollars.

"The Sidedoor. You might ask the bartender if he's seen him. Now what's that bartender's name?"

I felt around in my pockets.

"Stan? Jimmy? Alex?"

"Sorry Louie, I don't have any more money. Will you take a check?"

"I like your tie."

"C'mon Lou, I just got it. How about Visa?"

"Andy? William?"

"Okay, take it. But you'd better be right."

"Carlos Hapstein."

"What?"

"Carlos Hapstein. His parents wanted to name him something that didn't sound Jewish."

I gave Louis my tie and thanked him. I then cashed a check at the bank, and went to the store and bought a new tie and some golf balls. I don't golf myself, but they were on sale. I can never pass up a bargain.

I decided to go home and go to bed since I had a long trip ahead of me. Then I realized that I didn't even know what this Thompson guy looked like, so I stopped at a pay phone to call Trudy.

I let the phone ring several times—268 to be exact—before anyone answered.

"What in the hell are you doing?"

"May I speak to Trudy please?"

"She ain't home. Why in the hell did you let it ring so many times?"

"Oh, did I wake you?"

"Me and half the goddam building! We had to break the door down to answer it."

"Sorry."

"Well, you'd better be."

Then he hung up. I decided to try again the next morning.

I went home, brushed my teeth, and went to bed. When

I stretched out underneath the covers, they were warm. I felt around a little and touched a strange leg. Come to think of it, all legs are strange when you find one you don't expect.

"Sam, is that you?"

My body jerked so severely that I rammed my head into the wall. It must've knocked me out, because I woke up in my kitchenette with Trudy Thompson standing over me.

"Are you all right, Sam? God, I didn't mean to scare you."

"Oh, that's all right, Doll. I like having strange women in my bed. How about you and me going back and . . ."

"Hold it right there, Buddy. We are not going to do anything."

"What do you mean? You were in my bed—usually that has something to do with sex."

"Not with me it doesn't."

I was beginning to see why her husband would've wanted to go to Canada.

"Listen, I just came over here to give you a picture of my husband. When you didn't come home for so long, I decided to take a nap. That's why I was in your bed."

"How'd you get in?"

"I picked the lock."

I made a mental note to talk to the landlord about getting a new lock.

"Lady, I'm not sure I want to get any more involved. Why don't you just take your money and . . ."

"How about if I give you twenty-thousand?"

". . . go home because I'm going to have to get some sleep if I'm going to get an early start. Canada's a long drive, you know."

Trudy left and I went to bed—after I stacked a couple of chairs against my door. I set my clock radio for six. It was 1:27 when I shut my eyes.

I woke up at ten. My radio had been going off since six, I guess, but I had it turned too low. "McArthur's Park" was playing, and in my sleep I had been dreaming of Betty Crocker spanking me for leaving a cake in the rain. It may have been the song—even though I have that dream a lot.

I got up, showered, grabbed the suitcase I always keep packed, and I was in Moose Bay, Ontario, five-hours later.

My first stop was Customs.

"Where are you from?"

"United States."

"Are you here for business or pleasure?"

"Business."

"What type?"

"I'm investigating a murder."

"May I see your ashtray?"

"Why do you want to see my ashtray?"

“Because.”

“Well, no. You cannot see my ashtray then.”

I spent the next four-hours watching the Customs Officials take my car apart and put it back together again. I made a mental note to never question a Customs Official.

When I finally got into Canada, I went straight to the Sidedoor. Louie was right, Carlos Hapstein was the bartender.

“Mr. Hapstein, my friend Louie sent me to . . .”

“Ah, Louie! He is doing fine, eh?”

“Yeah, he is.”

“Good, good. He is such a good lanscape artist. And as an informant, there’s nobody better, eh? Here, have a Canadian, on the house.”

I took the beer he gave me.

“Uh, Carlos, Louie said you might be able to give me some information on this guy.” I showed him the picture.

“I remember him, he’s the guy who forked himself. It’s too bad. I really liked him. And he owed me some smokes. I won them from him in a card game.”

I thanked Carlos and went to find a motel. I stayed in this twenty-seven dollar a night motor lodge. After I got settled into my room, I went over to the doughnut shop across the street. It was there that I met Viola.

I was sitting in the doughnut place, eating a cruller, when in walked this babe with long, black hair. She looked great. Since all the booths were taken, I invited her to sit with me.

“How’s it going?” she said.

“Just fine. Where should a guy go to have some fun here? You see, I’m American, and . . .”

“I’m American too.”

“Really? What state?”

“Ontario.”

“I thought you said that you are American.”

“I am. Canada’s a part of American, eh.”

“Sorry about that.”

“Me too—I’m just tired of tourists calling the United States ‘America’ like they own the word. Mexicans must feel the same way.”

We smiled at each other, and we walked across the street to this bar next to my motel. We sat in there for three-hours, and we both had several beers. She went back to my room with me, and right before I passed out, I made a mental note that Canadian Beer is stronger than beer in the States.

When I woke up the next morning, there was a note pinned to my shirt: “Call me sometime when you’re sober—Viola.”

My tie was gone.

I got up and got into the shower. While I showered, I thought about my case. I wondered why a guy would leave a dame like Trudy for a nation like Canada. Trudy had more curves than the French Grand Prix, and she seemed pretty devoted to this guy. After all, she wouldn't even sleep with me. Canada, on the other hand, was cold. And just try to find a taco place.

As I was washing, I sang my favorite song, "King of the Road." I was up to "Ain't got no cigarettes" when the shower curtain flew open. It was Trudy.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Am I here at a bad time?"

I stepped out of the shower, grabbed a towel and the beer I'd left on the back of the toilet.

"Anyway, I hate to bother you, but we've got to talk."

"Couldn't it wait? I'd just gotten the water right."

"No. It's too important."

We went in and sat on my bed.

"So, what's up, Darlin'?"

"I'm not your 'Darlin'."

"Sorry, Toots. What are you doing up here?"

"I'm being chased."

"By who?"

"Whom."

"What? Oh yeah, whom."

"I think it's the guy who killed my husband."

"What makes you think that?"

"Well, I was getting ready to go out to dinner last night when this guy knocked on my door. He asked me who I was and then started asking questions about Kyle. All sorts of questions—where he was born, his mother's maiden name, if he owned a Hammond organ . . ."

"Maybe he was with the Census."

"That's what I thought, so I asked for some identification. When he wouldn't show me any I tried to shut the door, but he'd stuck his foot in. I screamed, and he pulled out a gun. Luckily, I just happened to have my mace sitting by the door. I sprayed him and forced him outside."

"Did you call the police?"

"No, I was running late for dinner already. Besides, he had a friend in the car who grabbed him and drove off."

"So why did you come here?"

"The car had Ontario plates."

"How'd you find me?"

"I went to this guy I know, Louie. He knows where everybody is. And he's such a sharp dresser. He had this tie on . . ."

"Listen, Honey, I've got things to do. What did he look like?"

"Well, he's about your height, a little overweight, and like I said, he's a great dresser."

"No, not Louie. The guy that tried to kill you."

"Oh, him. He was a little taller than you, really muscular, dark hair, a mustache, a rough voice, and he spoke in a heavy French accent. Or at least it sounded French—it could have been Belgian."

"Listen, while you're here, and I'm naked, why don't we . . ."

"Forget it." she said as she left.

I decided to go to the Sidedoor for a beer. When I got there, the place was empty except for Carlos Hapstein. I bought him a drink and he sat down with me.

"So, you haven't learned anything about Kyle yet, eh?"

"No leads. This guy seemed to have dropped off the face of the earth."

"And it's such a shame too. He could play the organ like nobody else."

"The organ? What? Did he play in here?"

"No, for the Moose Bay hockey team, the Snowflakes. I don't even like hockey, but I bought a season ticket just to hear him play."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"It didn't seem important. You got a cigarette? I can't stand smoking these Canadian things."

I gave him a Lucky. I don't actually smoke very often, but I like carrying around a fresh pack of Luckys.

"So where can I see this team?"

"They're playing the Fitzgerald Sweepers tonight at the arena. Should be a good game—I might've even gone if I didn't have to work. I tell you what, you can use my seats tonight. If you're still here next week, maybe you can take me to the Ice Capades."

I thanked him and went back to my room to call Viola. I figured that even if I couldn't get anything at the game, I might still get lucky afterward. I had to let the phone ring several times before she answered.

"Hello."

"Yeah, is this Viola?"

"Yeah."

"Well, this is Sam Jones—we met last night. You have my tie."

"I was wondering when you'd call. What's up?"

"Well, I've got these two tickets for the hockey game tonight, and I thought . . ."

"Thought you might get lucky, eh?"

"Well, I uh . . . I just thought . . . since you took my tie and all . . ."

"Sure. I'll be over as soon as I can. And don't pass out on me this time, eh?"

While I was on the phone, I noticed a matchbook from the Aardvark Hotel on the floor. I figured that one of the

maids had dropped it, and since it was free, I put it in my pocket.

Viola arrived about six, and after exploring each other's tonsils for about five minutes, we left for the game.

They were announcing the teams when we got there. We had good seats down by the plexiglass. At least I think they were good seats. I don't know much about hockey—to me it just looks like a bunch of overweight guys with bad teeth slamming each other around. Sort-of like a bar fight in Georgia. Except for here I was surrounded by Canadians in stocking caps.

The game went really well, with only two players hurt badly. Viola tried to explain it to me until the third period, when she began fighting with the guy next to her for throwing beer on her new dress. I stayed out of it.

I was looking through the pictures in the program when I noticed Lance LaBeck, owner of the Snowflakes. He was nick-named "The Raspy Belgian." He also fit Trudy's description. I was about to question Viola about him when a beautiful left hook she'd intended for the guy she was fighting with landed squarely on my jaw. I woke up twenty-minutes later in Viola's bed.

"Sorry about that, eh, but that guy had me really teed-off."

"Where'd you learn to fight like that?"

"My father was a member of government. Sometimes the only way to get laws passed up here is to use your fists."

I looked at myself in the mirror. I had a bruise the size of Vermont on my jaw. Viola gave me some ice.

"Before you decked me, I noticed this guy named LaBeck. Who is he?"

"Ah, "The Raspy Belgian." Everybody knows him. He's the guy who brought hockey to Moose Bay. He was born in Brussels and his parents brought him over here when he was three."

"How'd he end up owning a hockey team?"

"His parents wanted to move to Iowa, but they got lost and ended up here. They started the largest medical supply business in Ontario. He inherited it. He was so rich after a while that he couldn't afford the taxes. He started the team as a write-off."

At that point Viola crawled into bed with me and demonstrated some moves she'd learned in high school gymnastics. She even had some uneven bars above the bed. I gave her a 9^{1/2}.

After the workout, Viola and I went out for doughnuts. While we were eating I noticed that the doughnut place was right beside the Aardvark Hotel. As I munched on a jelly filled I saw Trudy Thompson get out of a taxi and enter the hotel with a man.

I jumped out of my seat and ran towards the Aardvark. Trudy was nowhere in the lobby. I asked for her at the desk.

"Would you tell me where I can find Trudy Thompson, please?"

"I don't know sir. We have a lot of guests this time of year, what with the skiing and all." said the girl behind the desk as she held out her hand.

I gave her a twenty.

"Thompson . . . Thompson . . . yeah, she's here."

I gave her another twenty.

"Up on the fifth floor. Now, what room is she in?"

I only had five bucks left, but Viola came into the lobby with a take-home order of doughnut holes. I gave them to the desk girl.

"Room 506, sir."

I ran up the stairs to the fifth floor. Viola was waiting for me when I got there. She had taken the elevator. I sat down on the floor to catch my breath.

Five minutes later I knocked on Trudy's door.

"Who is it?"

"Room service." Viola answered.

"We didn't order room service."

"It's on the house. It's part of the government's 'Get Acquainted with Canada' program."

The door opened. In the room with Trudy was Louie.

"Louie? What the hell are you doing here?"

"Ah, *mon ami* Sam. *Tu est bête.*"

"What?"

"I said 'It's good to see you.'"

"But what are you doing here?"

Trudy began to speak.

"You know Louie? How?"

"Nevermind. What's he doing here?"

"He's with me, Sam. After my husband began to leave for long periods of time, I got lonely. Louie here took me in, gave me love, and re-did my yard. Plus, he dresses so well."

"What's he doing here?"

"He came with me to protect me. Plus, the cross-country skiing is great."

"*Oui, mon ami*, apart from Trudy and the theater, skiing is my life."

I didn't even know that Louie liked the theater.

I showed Trudy the picture of LaBeck while Viola described her fight to Louie. I was just about to suggest looking for LaBeck when Viola got to the part about the left hook. She missed me but knocked Trudy out cold.

After making sure that Trudy was still alive, Louie and I went to talk to LaBeck. We went to the arena and found him in his office.

"Ah, Mister Jones, I've been waiting for you. And I see

you've brought a friend. Sit down, sit down."

He had a really raspy voice. Hence the nickname.

"What's up, LaBeck?"

"Not much, really. Would you like a drink?"

"No thanks—and you know what I mean. Why did you bother Trudy Thompson?"

"It's very simple, Mr. Jones, I have to kill her. Things would've been fine had she not started poking into her husband's death."

"And now you are going to kill us as well."

"You are very smart, Mr. Jones."

"Before you do, tell me why you killed Kyle Thompson."

"It's simple, he was a lousy organist. All he could play was the Canadian national anthem and the theme from "Rawhide." He had to be stopped, Mr. Jones."

"Why didn't you just fire him?"

LaBeck's face went white, and he leaned near me and whispered "He was union."

Then LaBeck got up, walked over to a cabinet and took out a gun.

"Gentlemen, I'd love to continue speaking with you all night, but I'm afraid that I must get some sleep. The Ice Capades are tomorrow, and I want to be fresh. I do love those Smurfs."

He pointed the gun at me and was just about to shoot when he realized that he'd forgotten to load it. He walked back to the cabinet and began searching through one of the drawers. After about five minutes, he asked if either Louie or I knew how to make a noose. Neither of us did.

Then the door burst open and four policemen and two guys in suits entered the office. One of the suits spoke.

"Mr. LaBeck, I'm with the International Brotherhood of Musicians. We received a call yesterday regarding the death of one of our members. Our investigation turned up that you not only played a possible role in his murder, but that you also denied him the vacation time he deserved. I suggest that you go with these policemen."

LaBeck knew that he'd been nailed. I called the union right after I'd called Viola, hoping for some leads. Those union boys don't mess around.

After that, Louie and I gave our statements to the police and returned to the Aardvark Hotel, where I talked to Trudy. It seems that the insurance company had refused to pay on Kyle's policy since he had committed suicide. In order to collect, she had to prove that he'd been murdered. That's where I came in.

Trudy told me that she had a big hunch that Kyle didn't kill himself. "He was so careful when it came to eating utensils."

The last I heard, Trudy and Louie had married and were

doing lawns together in Lansing. I miss Louie sometimes, but I bet he's enjoying himself.

Viola and I took the money from the case and opened a self-defense school here in Moose Bay. I'm out of the detective business now, and I devote most of my time to handling the school's money matters. Viola does all the teaching.

One more thing. Viola has added an unbelievable floor routine to her act. Life is good.

The Picnic

Anne Laker

6:00

the morning gravid for a picnic—
Carol and I, in our matching pastel nightgowns,
search the cabinets spattered with batter
for appropriate cuisine:
peanut butter cups,
bruised bananas,
and brittle Pringles—exquisite
with tap water in a tupperware pitcher.
we sit indian-style
on the curb, on the chalky sidewalk,
waving to the paper boys
giggling over neighborhood girls we hold in contempt
and talking of running away
tomorrow.



No Swimming

Ginny Taylor

On the Shores of Halifax

George A. Dunn

for George Parkin Grant, 1918-1988

If one tethers one's heart severely and
imprisons it, one can give one's spirit
many liberties—

Fred "the hammer" Nietzsche

Questioning is the piety of thought—

Martin Heidegger

What sustains a man
in a famished time—is the word of God
enough? On the rocky shores
of Halifax,
the sea begets the tide
just as it ever did,
there are still ciphers in the foam:
but, Lord, what of the crimes that sailed
across these waves:
are they too the crest and fall
of eternity?

On the rocky shores
of Halifax,
a man can look east or west:
from the cradle of Mozart
and Christ
to the graveyard of Iroquois gods,
the soot-belching crematoria
of Fortune 500:
and, Lord, who can sever
this thorn
from the bloom?

What sustains a man
when the word of God is but a whisper
across the din of time? On the rocky shores
of Halifax,
a man wonders,
a man laments:
binding his heart to family and hearth,
he chances a question:

is the holy just a small thing
 after all,
 small enough for a man's embrace?

It is not given a man to love you as history,
oh Lord:
 could your name be Hestia?

Georgia Engelhard (1921)

Jim Braunum

Fourteen sun-bleached years

Countless suns
 moons
 snail-like constellations
Motions repeating
Illusions of purpose
 arrive nowhere, here
Mere preparation leading to

Ritual-filled waltzes
Dance steps untrackable, infinite
Pointless as here
Succeeded by

Memories
Deformed by mildew
Finally drained black
Obliterated, nothing

Release your grip on

Fourteen sun-bleached years

Pause here,
Steal a breath
 then cross

(Based on a photograph by Alfred Stieglitz.)



Poem

Bill Ross

young dance

George A. Dunn

You make my feet hurt
watching you

dance

Legs
strong
as a frog's

Rodeo graceful leap

It's like your body
can read

your mind

52 Pick-Up

Anne Laker

That day the wind rinsed the dusty air,
The leaves like fluttering green confetti,
Rearranging the ashy shade.
In the cool blue of the house's eastern side,
We lounged on a chilled white quilt
Sewn with patches of red seersucker
That Carol found in the attic.
All day—
Rummy 500, Old Maid,
Slap Jack, Go-Fish,
Kings-on-the-Corners, Uno.
We lay to rest.
I perked and said, How about 52 Pick-Up?
Carol, so innocent, said, Yes, ok.
It rained
Red diamonds,
Black spades.
She frowned, I snickered.
The wind teased the sinless cards
With impish whirls.

As Junior Bailey Picked the Banjo

Paul Debono

The Feds moved in on the moonshiners in Flatrock.
So Old Man Bailey threw his twenty barrels
Down a sink hole and covered it with grass.

Feds served a warrant on Bailey;
Said they smelled the still
and that's probable cause
Bailey said,
"Compost, that's just compost."

Looking around Bailey's farm, the feds bothered
Corns and blankets and goats and chickens.
The people with black socks and guns went home
to Nashville, or Knoxville, or D.C., where they came from.

Old Man Bailey got mad,
The way a wild pig gets mad.
When he uncovered the pit,
Fumes of moonshine alcohol came rising up.

Barrels of cured corn whiskey broke and
Spilled into the ground water.
The citizens of Flatrock got a splash in their drinking water.

Later on that night a man came
running, jumping, flying, over the hills
singing a song.
The man and the Baileys sat and sang along.
And Old Man Bailey cried knowing he'd wasted a crop.
As Junior Bailey picked the banjo.



Nursing Home Series #3

Ginny Taylor

Sign Language as a Foreign Language?

Richard W. Rominger

Many colleges and universities require their liberal arts degree-seeking students to study a language other than English. IUPUI is no exception and offers many different languages from which to choose. For the purpose of this paper, a "language" shall be defined as follows: "A language is a system of relatively arbitrary symbols and grammatical signals that change across time and that members of a community share and use for several purposes: to interact with each other, to communicate their ideas, emotions, and intentions, and to transmit their culture from generation to generation" (Perry 98). Languages offered for college credit at IUPUI include Spanish, French, German, and Russian, to name a few. Another language which is offered for credit, but does not satisfy the language requirement, is Sign language.

It is important to make clear that the language to which I refer is the language of the American deaf community, *American Sign Language*. Many of the people with whom I have spoken tend to confuse ASL with another form of signed language known as MCE or manually coded English. One author, illustrating the difference between ASL and MCE, wrote, "Quiet apart from the use of ASL in the United States is the use of a modified form, signed English [MCE]" (Wilbur 2). Dr. Wilbur goes on to say that signed English takes signs from ASL and the word order of English and combines them for the purpose of teaching deaf children English syntax (2). ASL is the language that members of the American deaf community use to communicate among themselves and is not MCE; indeed it is in no way related to English. For the purposes of this paper the term "sign language" will refer only to ASL.

Sign language relies on five different *parameters* to convey different meanings: hand-shape, location, movement, palm orientation, and non-manual behaviors. By using combinations of these parameters one can convey virtually any idea that can be conveyed in spoken languages. Sign language, like spoken language, is a way for people to communicate their ideas. Should ASL, therefore, be accepted as a foreign language at IUPUI? Two schools of thought exist regarding this question.

Some people maintain sign language should not be accepted as a foreign language at IUPUI. First of all, they

believe sign language is not so much a *foreign* language as it is an *alternate* language. They contend that "the learning of sign language is viewed as a novel, fun, or popular thing to do—rather than as the learning of the language of a distinct cultural group" (Gallaudet 24). The primary reason for learning a foreign language at the university level is to have greater access to recorded knowledge of one's discipline; communication is a secondary consideration (Hamilton-Wieler). The knowledge of a language other than English increases one's understanding not only of the second language, but of English as well (Hamilton-Wieler). This is especially true of Standard American English (SAE) because it uses many words that have been "borrowed" from other languages.

Another reason why Sign language should not be accepted as a foreign language is its simplistic style and lack of syntax (Cerniglia). Ideas are not expressed in complete sentences, but rather in short and choppy phrases. It doesn't follow the rules of grammar and is extremely limited because signs can be used only to convey rudimentary ideas. They say it is a form of communication, somewhat similar to the way babies and young children convey their desires (Cerniglia). A young child might say "Want water" or "Gimme cookie," instead of saying "I want some water" or "Give me a cookie." While the ideas the child is attempting to convey are clear in both cases, they are expressed in very simple and fragmented phrases and some believe that sign language works in much the same way.

The goal of our educational system, especially in the liberal arts, is to provide our students with a well-rounded education (Hennard). This requires students to study a wide variety of subjects which will ideally give them a wider body of knowledge upon which to draw in later life. Those who oppose the acceptance of sign language as a foreign language say that it is used by a comparatively small group of people and as a result is not in a great deal of demand. This is especially true at the university level because it has no written form. One of the primary reasons for learning a language other than English is to gain understanding of other cultures' beliefs, values, and customs, many of which differ from ours. One of the best ways to promote understanding of other cultural groups is through their written histories and literature. Understanding of other cultural groups—their histories, beliefs, values, and customs—can be a first step toward eliminating much of the prejudice and hatred that is so prevalent in our world. The ability to read the literature of, and speak, another language also can be a big help in the international business community and in graduate-level studies.

An additional problem with sign language is the fact

that it is not universal. Sign languages in different parts of the world evolved separately. They are not dialects of the same language, thus, a user of ASL would not be able to communicate effectively with a user of BSL (British sign language) or FSL (French sign language).

Another group contends sign language should be accepted as a foreign language at IUPUI. First, and foremost, it is a language in and of itself and is not a variation of English. I understand that sign language does involve some finger spelling of English words, but the borrowing of words from and between two languages is very common when one language group coexists within another one. One author explains, "ASL (like other sign languages) is not derived from any spoken language, although its coexistence with English in a bilingual environment allows it to be influenced in a number of ways" (Wilbur 1).

Additionally, with a signing population of nearly 500,000 people, sign language is the third most commonly used non-English language in the United States, after Spanish, and Italian (Neissor 3).

Sign language is a necessary form of communication. Many of the people who rely on ASL to communicate are biologically unable to learn spoken language. They are still Americans, however, which gives them the right to an education according to our law. Says Ms. Neissor, "What the deaf want is information. All their efforts, and all their demands on the hearing world reflect their desire for direct access to information . . . for the past twenty-five years the deaf community has consistently requested, lobbied, and worked for three things: a telephone they can use; captioned television; and a wider use of interpreters" (157). The demand for qualified interpreters and teachers of ASL will increase in years to come. According to the *Gallaudet Encyclopedia*, most learners of ASL are hearing persons who wish to communicate with deaf Americans, yet "there still are relatively few opportunities for a person to acquire sign language teaching skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis" (24). The *1987 Statistical Abstracts of the United States* lists the total number of people with hearing impairments at 20,698,000 (104). Not all of those people are totally deaf, but it is nevertheless a staggering number. It is safe to assume that as these hearing-impaired people age, some of them will experience a profound hearing loss and therefore need to learn sign language. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) figures indicate that the prevalence of deafness of 160 persons per 100,000 population (in 1974) "is more than three times larger than the 1930 rate. That it reflects an actual growth in the relative prevalence of deafness, therefore, remains highly likely" (Schein 4). A point I would like to stress is the fact that a

very small percentage of hearing impaired persons use ASL, only about 500,000 of the 20 million plus stated above. The reason for this is that it is the language of a culture, or sub-culture, all of the members of which are deaf and choose to identify with this "deaf" culture. Many hearing impaired persons prefer to do everything they can to "fit in" and succeed in the hearing community.

Another advantage to learning sign language mentioned by one source is that "it appears that learners [of ASL] who have internalized healthy, positive, accepting attitudes toward deaf people will be more likely to project such attitudes to most people they communicate with, despite human differences" (Gallaudet 26).

I understand that some people believe ASL is just a visual-gestural way of "speaking" English instead of the usual audio-vocal way. This is not the case. In her book *The Other Side of Silence*, Arden Neissor illustrated the difference between sign language and spoken language."

Spoken language is received by the ear in a stream of sound signals, one after the other, in sequence, over time. The ear is specialized for receiving this kind of information, the eye is not. The eye is adapted for picking up information in the environment, not only sequentially over time but also simultaneously. The eye picks up large chunks of information: sees many things in the visual field, simultaneously occurring as well as ongoing events. Manual languages of the deaf evolved to take advantage of the visual mode, and are based on a positive use of vision rather than on a negative functioning of the ear (164).

It is true that although several different people have tried to invent a way of writing sign language, none has managed to create one that really is practical. This is a drawback in terms of studying the history of the deaf community and severely limits the availability of deaf literature; however, according to the *Gallaudet Encyclopedia* "the rapid advances in technology for storing and retrieving visual information on videotape, video disk, and in digitalized computers could make the search for a satisfactory form of written sign language merely academic" (120). "Attempts at writing sign language may seem unsuccessful but before the invention of alphabetic and ideographic scripts, the possibility of writing spoken language probably also appeared unlikely" (Gallaudet 118).

I agree that having access to recorded knowledge of another culture through its literature is an excellent way of learning more about that culture, but it is not the only way to do so. Story telling, theater productions, and conversations with elders of the culture are also good ways to broaden

one's understanding of that culture. For centuries, histories have been passed from generation to generation by direct communication and storytelling.

I understand very well that sign language appears to have a very simplistic style and to lack an accepted basic structure or syntax, but in fact it does indeed have a very definite structure. When using a spoken language such as English one uses a combination of facial expression, voice inflection, and voice intensity to convey different meanings. Sign language works in much the same way, but (for obvious reasons) voice inflection cannot be used.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this paper, sign language relies on five basic "parameters" to convey certain subtleties and meanings that are expressed with voice inflection in spoken languages. In order to promote understanding of sign language I must explain these parameters and how they work to convey different meanings. Hand shape refers to exactly what the name implies and really needs no further explanation. Location, movement, and palm orientation are a little more involved. Two or more different signs may use the same hand-shape but have totally different meanings, because they are signed at a different location relative to the body, with the palm of the hand facing up, down, or sideways, or with the hand moving in different directions. The signs for "good" and "bad" differ in palm orientation; "good" is signed with the palm facing up, and "bad" is signed with the palm facing down. Movement is used to show action "directionally" in verbs. If I were to make the sign for "help" and move it from my body toward someone else it would mean that I want to help him. Likewise if I make the same sign and move it in the other direction it might mean that I need help from him.

Unlike spoken languages, which need many words to convey time and space relationships, sign language relies on different movements and in different directions. When I sign I have an imaginary surface in front of me. If I sign the name John on my right, the name Roger on my left, and then move the sign for help from right to left, it means that John helped Roger (Tense depends to some degree on context but can also be signed with past being a movement to the rear and future being a movement forward).

The single most difficult things to master in the use of sign language, both in using it and in understanding it, are the "non-manual behaviors". Simply put, non-manual behaviors include body stance, specific facial expressions—which can change a statement to a question, and intensifying the movement of a sign—faster or more abrupt movements can convey urgency or extremes. The signed statement "sit next to me" can become the question "will you sit next to me?" just by raising my eyebrows to indicate the

interrogative. A nod indicates affirmation and a side to side shaking of the head indicates negation. If I make the sign for "understand" the meaning depends on the non-manual behavior involved; a simple and, unless one knows to watch for it, possibly unnoticeable change in my facial expression or the movement of my head can completely and fundamentally alter the meaning of the sign.

Although the two groups disagree on the issue of whether sign language should be accepted as a foreign language at IUPUI, they do agree on certain key points. One important point on which they agree is that it is desirable to learn some language other than English. The whole point of getting a liberal arts education is to increase one's knowledge of a wide variety of subjects, which gives him/her an immense body of information upon which to draw throughout his/her life.

They agree that ASL is a language in its own right and that it is a legitimate means of communication.

They further agree that knowledge of another language increases their understanding of that culture which can promote understanding of other peoples in general. This will in turn promote tolerance of those cultures with values, customs, and beliefs that differ from their own.

A key point of agreement between the two sides is the common feeling that knowledge of a second language can enhance one's ability to excel in his/her chosen discipline. One possible solution to the question of whether ASL should be accepted as a foreign language at IUPUI is for students, together with their advisors, to sit down and discuss the matter of which language to take according to their likely future needs. Examples of this type of approach might include: a student planning to become involved in the international electronics community studying Japanese, a student planning to become involved with petroleum-related interests learning about the languages and cultures of the Middle East, or a student planning to teach learning the language of the group he/she would be most interested in teaching.

The solution mentioned above is but one of several solutions that might become evident should such a dialogue take place. One further advantage it would have is to cause students to take a language they might actually use someday. During the course of my research for this paper I was amazed at the number of people, students and teachers alike, who said they either had never used, or did not anticipate ever actually using the foreign language they had had to learn.

Any solution to this question is going to depend heavily on education. Each side of the issue must do whatever it can to show the opposing side the merits of its viewpoint. Only

through an open sharing of ideas will this issue be satisfactorily put to rest.

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At 42nd & College

M. Todd Fuller

A friend of mine
who paints
observed, as she
stood inside
the condemned
church, that
the cycle seemed
complete:

Rafters and pillars
look as though
they are kneeling
like prayers
before a service:

God has fallen
in pieces,
leaving dust
on the men
huddling
around the
heat of
each other's
breath;

the most telling
picture in this
scene is
hung outside
where the snow
creeps through
the air
falling on the
hand made
marquee

proclaiming
in red letters—FOR SALE—
right below
the rock beaten
sign that reads

“CHURCH OF CHRIST
ALL WELCOME.”



Nursing Home Series #2

Ginny Taylor

Fixing Up Grave Sites

S. G. Robinson

Front page photography
In a small town paper
Of what people do
On Memorial Day.

Two aged persons
Unsteady
Frail
Clean remnants
From winter.

In the foreground
A shrunken frame
In woolen coat
And covered head,

Places a feeble hand
On a cold tombstone
For Support
Comfort.

Closer,
A bent body
Arranges blooming begonias
In the fertile earth.

Our world does not belong
To them.

Theirs
Is camel back chests
And sugar starch doilies.

All are gone.

The day will come
When these guests will stay.
And I, the surviving
Will take their place.

The Drive Home

Bill Ross

Through town, my fingers,
Cold and numb, grip the steering wheel.
Each lit sign electrocutes its message.
The buildings hold hands with strands of lights.

Outside of town, the highway
Divides a sea of turned soil, black frozen pudding.
The heater blows cold.
I flip on the headlights.

The sunset's sky
Is full of blood and whispers of blackness.
Thick with Christmas.
Thick with carbon monoxide.

Old barns and bare trees
Become their own shadows,
Before such a quiet explosion.
The on coming traffic approaches like angels.

Blood on the Snow

Amy-Jeanne Ade

The snow glitters like a blade
and the other shoe has dropped.
I can't breathe.

The lamps on passing automobiles
backlight the glittering needles
of ice-encased trees—
if I throw myself,
impale myself,
thrust myself upon their stilettos,
will I bleed?

Mother, may I
Mother, may I

Chameleon

James W. Kirk

I am
an actor
in a play
about nothing.
A black cat
in the dark
under attack
by a rat
that sulks
and talks
only to me
of misery.
I flicker
like an old movie.

Help
give me substance.
I want to be
like you.
Hard.

But
I blend in
a chameleon.
Paint me
and
I have no
beginning.
A clock not
about to stop
ticking.

Like a Woman

James W. Kirk

Suicide sits
close to me
now
seducing me
like a woman
whispering:
I am
the only one
for you.



Lucy

Ginny Taylor

Seemed more like a baby than a man

Cindy Mohr

skin still soft and warm last time I touched him
but then he died
and someone put square pieces of tape
from his jaws to his cheeks
and someone taped his eyes
shut
and the tube into his lung
taped there across his ribs
just dangled
(someone took the machine away)

nobody bothered
to smooth and straighten
his beautiful long fingers

Old Woman

Anne Laker

Her dingy braided bun,
Hinting a rinse of blue,
Bulges at the nape of her crooked neck.
Veins cross her bony hand
(Once polished smooth as soapstone)
Like silent violet rivers.
Her ragged eyes too sad to cry—
They are only two cold opaque moons,
Striking suspicion and waking the bitter dust
Of ancient regrets
And venom quietly fermenting.

Her Secret Admirer: A Love Story In 15 Rounds

George A. Dunn

1.

Easily the worst lay of my entire life—the first time at least. Drunk, almost completely passive her only words were, “If you make me pregnant, G., I’ll kill you.” She later explained she had sex only when she was drunk.

2.

Here we have a photograph of the two of us, Alison and me, standing on the steps of the library.

Me Alison

That’s me on her right, grinning into her face, my arm wrapped tightly around her shoulder. She has a smile too, but hers is impatient, restless—the kind of smile you offer people with you in the grocery checkout line—

I just noticed something—

Her gaze is cast somewhere off frame to her left, as if she’s on the lookout for someone. And now I see, yes, now I know—it’s really a portrait of *the three of us*:

Me Alison and

—entering stage left—

3.

I called him Oedipus. He was 17 years old, a drug-addict and a racist. Alison told me that he used to spit on the hamburgers he served to Black people at the restaurant where he worked. He and Alison thought this was pretty funny. She wanted to sleep with him. She would buy him liquor.

4.

Alison used to invite me over in the morning for sex. Then I would give her a ride wherever she need to go—

sex for rides,

she joked—*joked??*

5.

One day I saw Alison and Oedipus together drunk and I knew exactly what to think and what to do. But to my dismay my retaliatory infidelity didn't phase her.

6.

Alison spoke to me frequently of the men and boys she wanted to sleep with:

teenagers,
boys just out of their teens,
rock musicians,
tattooed work-release outlaws,
punkers,
head-bangers.

She liked the dark & doomed type. She said she would sleep with anyone who looked like Jim Morrison.

7.

During sex one morning Alison wouldn't remove her shirt. I pressed the issue. Lifting her shirt up over her breasts, she revealed perhaps a dozen hickeys left there by Oedipus. She had been drunk at the time, oblivious to the bruises Oedipus was leaving as he nibbled across her chest—

*like a dog pissing out
his territory,*

I thought. In my anger I realized then that I had come to love her.

8.

She reports: When they "got friendly"—this is her euphemism—Oedipus referred to Alison fondly as Alleycat.

9.

Incontinent or just insincere? Alison approaches our mutual friend—"I love G. and I'm giving up Oedipus." But within the week she recants. So long and thanks for all the rides.

10.

"I owe you an apology—and a thank you—about Oedipus." This was a couple months later. Oedipus had found a new lover—a child 15 years old.

*Oh, the heartbreak of being left
for a younger woman!*

Hadn't I told her that Oedipus didn't really care? that I truly did? Hadn't I sounded like a song on the jukebox?—

*oh baby, he can't love you
like I do-oo!*

"Thanks for warning me," she said. "Sorry."

11.

The plot sickens. Alison has me introduce her to J., a dark & doomed rock musician—19 years old. Soon my rides are again no longer needed.

12.

Had she only been using me all along? When we went out, she would order the most expensive drinks, coy embarrassment in her smile as I fished for the money. Recently she confided to our mutual friend that she *was* using me—but not just for sex and rides and other favors. She was using me to help her grow up—

to help her grow up??

13.

After J., Alison agreed to talk to me about the whole affair—but somehow she never found the time. When I see her now she greets me with a wry and disdainful smile. There is mockery in her “Hello.”

—*Ring!*

—Hello, Alison? This is G.

—Who? I’m not talking to you, G. Goodbye.

—*Click.*

This was our last conversation.

14.

Have I almost forgotten Terry, yet another of her d. & d. fledglings? He and Alison would spend their afternoons in a fog of marihuana smoke, breaking their promises to me together.

15.

I am sending Alison a pair of poisoned earrings with an accompanying note from

YOUR SECRET ADMIRER.

The note is replete with misspellings, scrawled in crayon to incite her prurient and puerile interest. The insides of the earrings are hollowed, filled with belladonna—a deadly hallucinogen—and sealed with wax. The heat of her body will melt the seal and she will absorb the poison through her skin. Opening the note she will read,

“Ware these my deere.”

Can she resist? Within minutes her eyes will glaze over and her ears will start to hum. One last dream of heavy-metal boys in dark mascara, their shirts and jeans bursting open,

ripped apart by swelling muscles as flash pots explode into multiple orgasms—and she'll be gone.

15.(a)

This last part is a lie. I'm just gonna shoot the bitch.

Evensong

Amy-Jeanne Ade

My reaction to James Wright's poem
The Horse is penciled in its margin
I dream you
in an older time
frail skin covering fragile bones
taking the worn book from its place
near the bed
where you will lie to read
finding these feelings scrawled
in my younger hand
Remember then another time
that you loved me

The Whorehouse

M. Todd Fuller

It stood
green and
yellow,
blending
the trees and
summer into
prepubescent
camouflage
for neighborhood
friends who
found its
confines
dressed with a
well worn,
passion grey,
cot.

Each summer
I erected
my frontier
tent near
the backyard's
edge,
helping my
lifelong amigos
conquer Jeanne
or Colleen, or some
cheap tease.

And every afternoon
from my bed
room window
I heard one
of them
"Oh,"
ungodly
loud, as I
pressed my
hands against
the screen.

About four
o'clock
I saw

each one
exit
low eyed

incognito,

one going
south, the other
north and I stayed
perched upon
my only
stool:

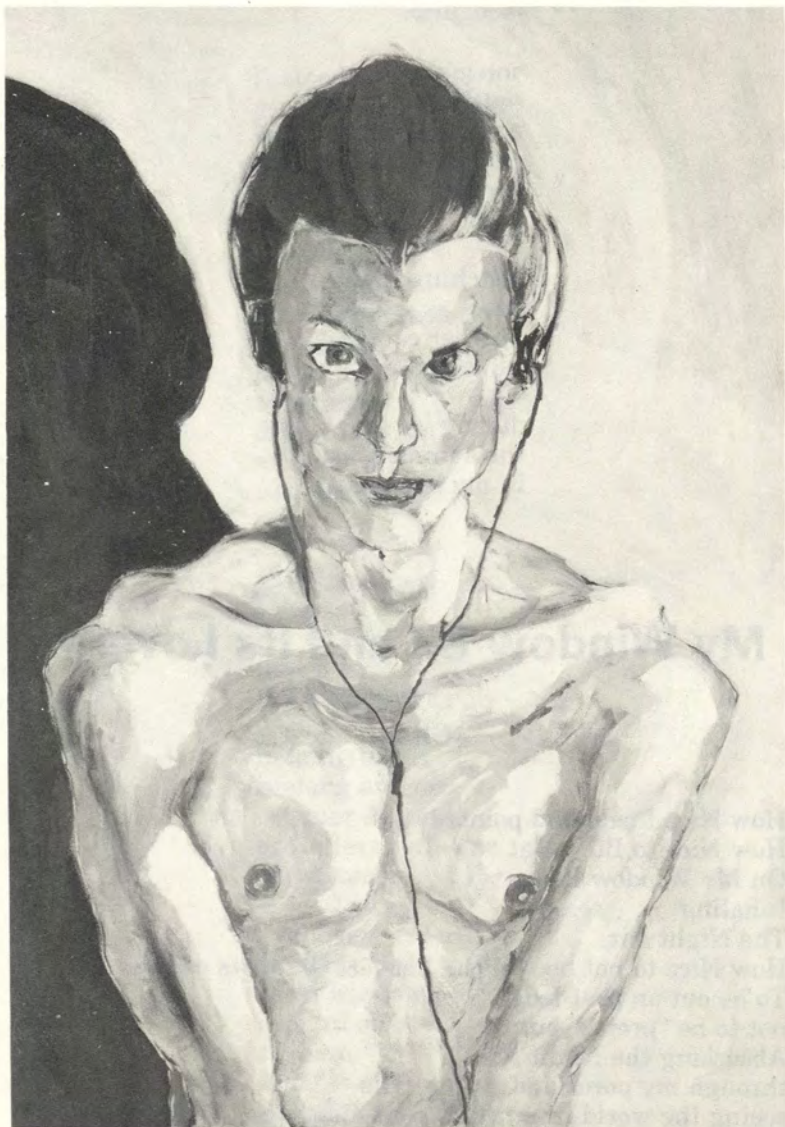
watching them
leave as
another couple
came

during
the summer
in my bedroom.

My Window Sil and Its Lovers

Shar

How Nice I said and pointed
How Nice to Be A Cat
On My Window Ledge
Inhaling
The Night Air.
How Nice to not be a cliché but feel the roots of one.
To be out on that ledge
not to be “pretty” but
Absorbing the Night Air
through my pores and my nostrils
seeing the world from a different distance
and appreciating the brisk (yes, Brisk damnit) wind foofing
my fur
How Nice I said again and stopped pointing
How Nice to Be A Cat
On My Window Ledge
Experiencing This Fresh Night Air
Caspar, scoot over I said
and found a place upon my ledge . . .



Self Portrait

Brian Wyrick

About the Authors and Artists

Amy-Jeanne Ade: The poems are more important than the stories behind them.

Jim Branum: I am a 28 year-old junior in the School of Education, scheduled to graduate in May of 1990.

Paul Debono: I recently graduated and am making the transition from a poor college student to a poor writer.

George A. Dunn: Nietzsche once remarked that an author's worst readers are often his friends. These readers, because they are privy to many intimate facts about the author, can't resist the temptation to seek the meaning of a literary passage in some incident from the author's life, rather than simply attend to the work itself and the imaginative world it opens. Bearing this in mind, I feel obliged to deliver this caveat to my good friends: "Her Secret Admirer" is a work of fiction—repeat—fiction.

M. Todd Fuller: Since reading Lorca and Bukowski I've taken a room in the city.

Tracey A. Harner: "In a Roundabout Fashion" was a landmark realization of texture, shades, and myself. The work was done in the fall of 1987. It was gridded on a 1.5 scale which enabled me to get a vertical distortion. I want to dedicate this piece of art to everyone who has believed in me and stood behind me. One step taken in the everlasting ladder.

James W. Kirk: James turned thirty this year. He's one of Them now.

Anne Laker: When I was 13, I created "Little House on the Prairie Newsletter." Since, I have written football and baseball articles, as well as profuse poetry. I have had one poem, "Quiet," published in Indianapolis Woman magazine. I am in love with Spanish, the Chicago Bears, sewing, and the Eagles.

Cindy Morh: A Herron Art student, this is the second time Cindy's art has appeared in *genesis*.

John Pierce: I am the youngest of five children. Since my siblings are all girls, I am the only boy. They are the only girls who really like me, but they have to. They're related.

Shar : I've lived in various mid-western towns which lends to my creative yet ill-vocabularied mind. I'm moving to San Francisco when I graduate in December. There I'm going to relax and write and absorb some atmosphere.

S. G. Robinson: Sharon's poetry has appeared in a previous issue of *genesis*.

Richard W. Rominger: I'm a Writing major at IUPUI. I hope to earn my B.A. by 1991, and then pursue my Master's. While I want to be a good writer, I look to the day when it is said of me. "He's a good teacher."

Bill Ross: The slam of the screen door leads into the whine of Patsy Cline singing "Sweet Dreams." The source is a portable AM/FM radio on the window ledge in Opal's dark paneled kitchen, a greasy silhouette, the windowpane steamed by Opal's cooking.

"Don't you run off. We're going to have pork chops in a little bit," Opal says.

Ginny Taylor: My work is a personal expression of who I am and where I'm going in relation to where I've been, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. I use it as a release, a type of therapy. If you want to know me, then look at my art and it tells all. Some are surprised.

Brian Wyrick: Brian is a Herron Art student. This is his first appearance in *genesis*.

In a Roundabout Fashion

Tracey A. Harner



