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SPRING
1968

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Bowling Green University
THE LEAVETAKING

Even if I didn't know it was the Month of the Three Suns, I would have known the time for Leavetaking had arrived when I woke one morning and found most of the village children gone. There was no need for me to ask where they were; I knew they had gone to the Mountain of Clouds to meditate and converse with Those Who Went Before, preparing themselves for Leavetaking. The elders were busy also. The women knitted new clothing, the farmers harvested their grain, and the hunters sought the golden-fleeced chukkun, whose single horns were carved and molded into the ceremonial altar. I was the only person with nothing to do, but that was how it should be. I was the High Priest; I would perform the Sacrifice of Wenzg and the Rite of Leavetaking, but I could do nothing else. So I had to wait and watch until the Night of Five Moons came and I could begin my duties.

When the night arrived, I donned the ceremonial robes of cave-spider web and journeyed up the Mountain of Clouds where the Children Who Will awaited me. Below me the valley resounded with the noise from the Feast of Leavetaking. This was not important to the children, but it allowed the villagers to forget for a few hours their disappointment at not being able to leavetake. But I could not join them, and there was no opiate to help me forget mine.

The children made way for me when I arrived. I had been late getting to them and the children were impatient, so I forsook idle conversation and immediately began the Sacrifice of Wenzg. In front of me stood the golden altar and the Fire of Life, whose ever-burning flames lit the scene before me. Chained by one leg to the altar stood a Rynnun bird; its capture had caused the death of two hunters. Beside it rested the Sacred Bow of Sith with which I would perform the sacrifice. I grasped it and raised it to the skies, beseeching the aid of Those Who Went Before. Turning, I dipped an arrow into the sacred flame while the Rynnun bird was released. It flew fast and far into the night, but its efforts were useless; I did not even look as I let fly the arrow, knowing it would be guided to its target. A moment later the bird screamed and fell dying into the valley. I then turned and left the mountain and the children to the protection of the sky.

The following morning the Children Who Will were in the Meadows when the elders and I arrived. We encircled the children and
waited silently for the time to begin. When the rising suns formed a triangular crown for the Mountain of Clouds, I joined the children to deliver the Rite of Leavetaking. "Hear me, my forefathers," I addressed the sky. "The time of Leavetaking is upon us. You have watched our children-who-aren't since the Sun of Many Seasons. You have conversed with them upon the Mountain of Clouds. You have made your selections and the children are ready. Here they stand before you. We, their elders, give our children to you. Take them from us." I reentered the circle and waited.

Brenn was the first to go. This was no surprise since he had been High Priest at the last Leavetaking. A light surrounded him; he became a shimmering transparency; then he vanished, leaving only a crystallised melody to mark his passing. The others followed quickly until the Meadows were alive with the Song of Life as the Children Who Will joined their parents in the skies above.

Finally they all had left; crushed flowers and the heavy hearts of their elders were the only evidence that they had ever existed. We remained for a long time, wondering when we would be young enough for our Leavetaking. Then we returned to the village, where the eldest would soon be born.

--Patrick Welch
Sophomore

Grey dust runs down damp spider webs
touching teared eyes,
silver memorial to a second's lucidity,
lost through an open screen door
and the summer smell of August.

--Kathian Poulton
Sophomore

SYNG MATER

The sea foam, green and silent,
swelled over the parking meters
that stood at attention, saluting
with red violation signs
the passing array of
billboard ads and
pornographic mags,
thecological dissertations on the origin of . . .
bobbing fish, bellies up, in the scum,
good poems, bad poets
all headed for city hall
while one red-faced breath-holder
saves his suspended lifetime
for a five-cent stamp;
the applause of sucking windows continues;
from the fiftieth floor
"the day is come" echoes toward the bottom
but not unperturbed
by a localized, olive-wreathed stoic
on his canvas or line or posterity recorder,
waiting for him to splash down
in the heaving, breathing green,
In the path, straddling the yellow line
and the white dashes,
stands an outstretched arm
to cleave the sea in twain;
he cannot be killed,
only dashed to chalk marks along the wall;
and a swinging pair of binoculars
and a civil defense helmet
pile the sandbags at
the corner of Fourth and Main,
debating whether to pile them
parallel to . . .
or at right angles to . . .
A chaise lounge floats in lemonade
quivering to the tune of transistor
and the wall of lean sirens;
two ice cubes are really quite enough.

--Thomas Tressler
Sophomore
WHEN I INTURN MY EYES

when I inturn my eyes
I see
(sand, surf, storm, sea)
mind dragons competing for a prize--
and me

where they battle until each other dies--
I stand
(surf, storm, sea, sand)
with your eyes yes--
you and
then

when I inturn my eyes
I feel you
(sky, stars--all that is real and true)
I touch you
(each convolution of ideas I used as my crutch when new)

now
I sigh
and can only see
your eyes in the sky
with me

--Dallas Bell
Freshman

THE PORTRAIT

Henry Bartlett stared into the cold darkness above him with frozen eyes--muscles--breath. His fingers clenched the wet sheets. Without thinking he lay in the noiseless black pit and knew: it was the same dream.

Even in the low-rolling deeps of unconsciousness, when the first pale wall appeared before him, he had known inevitably what would follow: the distorted porcelain clock-face swam slowly upward on the wall a somber voice, droning in a metallic monotone, spoke tick-tock to the moving sablades, inching toward midnight to the rushing colors whirlpooling with faces scenes from childhood marriage people long dead bubbling up to scold laugh chide cry kiss slap and circling with increasing velocity in a wild cacophony of words impossible to catch but somehow digging into him all driven by the whip-crack of the ticking chariot--clock, urging him on to midnight, to the explosion of chimes and gongs, ringing him out of his torment. Sleep a mind-splitting white moment and a scream.

Then silence and sweat in the cold darkness. He shivered and coughed hard from the chest. Goddamn dream.

Six o'clock. Same time he'd got up for forty years. But now there was no factory to go to--nobody to shave for. Only habit made his get out of bed. Anyway, he couldn't go back to sleep after the dream.

There wasn't even the smell of breakfast to get up for. He had time on his hands. Time.

Waking-up alone, morning after pale morning, he would without thinking run his hands along the empty bed, smoothing the sheets over the depression she had made for forty-five years. The room seemed strange somehow without her. He stood up slowly, the blood running to his legs. There was a slight paunch, but the legs were long and thin, although the hands were weaker than before. Sixty-five. You wake up each morning and with the first movements know how old and tired your body is; soft as an over-ripe plum. And sick. Never had a sick day in his life until now. Checkups every week. That heart-attack last year. He ran his fingers through his hair. Even that was falling out.
The bathroom mirror flickered with white sterility. It was too depressing to face the mirror, so he sat on the toilet to rest a minute. The seat was cold. He folded his hands between his knees. Good, muscled hands, with thick veins, still calloused from the searing heat of the butt-welder. How many pallets of axles had they welded, he wondered?

Thoughts drifted across his mind like chips of wood on a river. Years of work, finished. Waxed shut with a gold watch and a stack of retirement checks. Years of marriage, signed sealed and delivered. What a woman she had been! The nights he thought she would never stop! But that was long ago and he could hardly remember how it felt to have soft, lovely flesh and hair pressing against him, soft, but firm and strong, warm, always warm as nothing else in the world could be. What the boys must have thought when they heard the old bed creaking! No matter. It never hurt them. He looked down at the wrinkled flesh, which so many times had made a weld firmer than the best arc-weld. All long ago. He usufted in surprise that he could even remember it hard and warming.

He looked at his watch. It was the only timepiece left in the house after he, at different times, had purged each room of its ticking monster. He could not stand to be near a clock anymore. Being in the room with one was like sitting in a chamber where all the paintings have real eyes and watch you at every moment. One morning he actually smashed his bedside alarm when it rang at the same time the chimps in his dream rang out. The watch was worn face-down on his wrist and he never took it off for fear of throwing it away. It was six-thirty. There was time to burn.

Henry tugged toilet paper. The damned portrait would be finished today. He had made an appointment to pick it up from the studio at nine o'clock. Jack Rosenberg was a bitch on punctuality. Once he had refused to paint when Henry showed up a half-hour late after being held up by a slow freight on the Erie crossing. Nobody had time any more. His twenty-jewel company watch would get him there on time--that was guaranteed for life!

The blasted thing better be worth all the cash he was paying for it. His sister kept saying how foolish it was to spend so much money for something so unnecessary. Somehow he knew that Emma would have said the same thing. It was too late to reconsider his decision, however, having already sat the long hours in his new blue suit with the red tie, so rarely daring to breathe while the quick fingers worked behind the easel and the sharp voice told him where to put his hand and how to hold his head. And he hadn't even seen the damned thing! Just as long as it was him-rugged and proud--he would forget the cost. Still, he was a bit ashamed of the extravagance, not knowing why he wanted the portrait or why he should be ashamed to want it. But it was finished now. He couldn't help feeling excited.

It would hang on the mantle, above the fireplace, so the eyes could scan the room where his family had lived and grown up. And when his eldest boy inherited the house, the eyes would still be there, surveying the new family in its struggles through the routines of growing old. They'll probably hang it in the attic, he grumbled, if my sister doesn't do it first out of spite. "Save your money!" she kept saying, as if there was anything he needed it for.

Emma was always one for saving, though, that was certain. Women--mindless, habitual savers! Forty years of pinching pennies and where are the benefits? When they were just married, before the boys came, he would get his heart set on a fishing rod or a new fancy automobile, but by the time Emma had done wheeling and budgeting, the extra money was in the bank instead. The dream was to put the boys through college, buy their own little house, and have a comfortable retirement. It had been achieved, down to the letter, except that retirement was tasteless when chewed on alone. Years of work at top pay and what did you have left? Retirement checks, long walks by yourself, a pipe after dinner and an empty house shared with your sister. A package of old, yellowed photographs of times he could scarcely remember, a bowling trophy, the gold watch and a bundle of old letters. Two some living a thousand miles away and an empty bed. That was the sum total of Henry Bartlett.

He felt like drifting off to sleep. But that wouldn't do--the dream would hound him out of sleep. Sleep was a chore, sometimes even a torture. A waste of time at my age anyway, he thought.

The house was wallpapered with silence, deeper than velvet. He could see dust floating down the light-streaked windows in the living room as he settled into his easy chair and lit up his pipe. His sister never kept house like Emma. That desk-top by the window would have been polished to a mirror finish, and every time the boys put fingerprints on it, she would dust them off again--often ten times a day!

He tried to remember her face young again. It was hard to remember her face at all! It was unclear, like a reflection in an old mirror--and she was only two years gone! What do people mean to each other, he thought? We leave the dead behind, carrying bits of clothing and relics to remember them, and the young folks walk over our graves and wonder who is buried in them, or perhaps don't even wonder at all! Emma is beyond me now. And my damned old ticker!

He wouldn't think anymore. He thought too much lately. He would draw the five-hundred out of the bank, get the painting, and feel at peace. On the mantle, beside it, he would put the gold watch, to justify the portrait's existence. "For forty years of service" it said on the backside in fine letters. When his children lived here, they would see it and remember him.
And when, one night, the dream came to its last explosion of chimes and the swirling clock-face tick-locked him out of life in the ponderous thunder of bells, there would be something left.

A remnant of Henry Bartlett would stretch itself, suspended on a strong wire, above the mantle. Safe. Open to men's eyes. Immortal.

--H. P. Wyndham
Senior

SEPTEMBER TEACHING: OBSERVATION

too easily will I find favorites, young boys with soft brown hair, eyes that smile through dark-rimmed glasses.

too easily might I touch a smooth young cheek, tenderly, and stop my voice with tears.

--Kamila Plesniak
Senior

UNTITLED  Thomas Hilty, Grad  Pencil Drawing
CHESS GAMES
for Bob Ziegler

"Were it only a game we would not have to learn it well"

I
You sit there pondering
your first move.
The object
is to win. And you know
the rules, have the skills.
Yet there is more:
e.g. poetry;
pen paper and skill alone
never created a Grecian Urn.

II
A surgeon (in effort
to find this basic) dissects
the human body, throwing
extracted organs over his shoulder.
Running his skilled hand
through the hollow body cavity
he finds nothing.

III
And so what the surgeon
could not find is our answer—
not one we want but have
to have. The chess board
is set. I'll write
my poetry. You
make your first move.

--Tom Gadwell
Junior

I SLIP INTO SECURITY WITH THE HELP OF SOFT,
off-key guitar music and
enough cigarettes to get me through
the night
but I get hung up on things like trust.

--Marta Turk
Senior
THE LAST TIME WAS IN WINTER

It has been so very long;
the last time, I believe
was beneath winter's pale smile
when all the land was姿态 still
and crisp, so deeply cold
as some barren, deaf planet
beyond its stars blue wealth;
when close breaths brought
springtime flowers to your cheeks,
and distant breaths
fell as snow on your gown.
The mind is so alive
when hair is rigid frost,
a crown upon your thoughts.
The last time was so cold
we slept on quivering laps;
and yet to me it seemed somehow
sweeter, fixer then than now.

--Thomas Tressler
Sophomore

WHILE WATCHING A LATE-LATE SHOW,
COMING IN FROM A DISTANT CHANNEL

The picture flipped over like a nervous heart
in a rage of thin white rite;
and constant static with its black and white blizzards
vague all the faces to look like ours...

A tall, thin man in a woollen cap'nsacar
(disappearing/reappearing over and over)
paced the streets in a morning fog
and searched through pawn shops for traces of her.
While on the rug beside me--
a bowl of pretzels
twisted their way through a salty world
to the hollow-sounding rhythm of a leaky pipe.
And the clock on the wall
coughed up a bird
that coughed up a note and
vanished.

And the tall thin man searched on;
and I wondered then
if your woollen cap'nsacar
was still surviving morning walks.

--Gwendolyn Goodridge
Junior
JUST LIKE NOAH

Twenty dollars is not very much money but it will double in seventeen years even if acid indigestion can't burn a hole in my handkerchief - which incidentally is in my other pants - along with my twenty dollars.

*********

I am a complete unadulterated college kid who somehow managed to survive all the way to Spring Vacation which is nothing less than an orgy if you are in Florida but with typical luck, I am not going close to Florida. How I got to where I am is a fairly discernible story at best.

I am (as both an introduction and a personality trait) stoned. I am glad of it, too. But I don't know where I have been. This year: last year and the Girl - she is still here but apart - love is fading with nowhere to go. She can't fade, love can't go when there is nothing and no-one to take its place - her place. I still love the Girl but I love last year's Girl. For what she has become - now there is no more desire than for a five-day-old piece of Hit-0-Money (which is terrible) even though we were once engaged to be married, which would have been more than enough.

So now I am bordering on the unstable and have been ever since Tonto lost his eye to a passing prairie queen with a silver bullet dangling suggestively from her navel - sans sage brush.

And I ended up in the closing stages of my first and for-the-most-part year in college with a lot of busted dreams, a terrible fear of getting lost in a pulsating corn field while the farmer only has time to look for his Balaclava and the taste of Balaclava in my mouth.

Colt 45 comes in cans and is found at parties - as is manc, beer tools, and once the telltale Girl without the slightest idea, who has been called quite often in the last few months but doesn't answer due to a loss of faith - there is no love lost on this side tonight, as I run out of smoke and must sleep until tomorrow.

*********
I am barely alive in Greenwich Village, which is a Berkeley with rouge. I am in search of an answer to a very important question and I am also on the make. Yesterday my main ambition was to make it to the Village and this morning it is to star in a revival of "Saba The Elephant Boy" with Sophia Loren doubling as the elephant and an irate chimpanzee. I arrived in the cab of a Produce truck (which is a type rather than a request) and now the banana is rising in popularity and will soon rival the subway in usage. It is very legal and almost sanitary. A cult is fast forming made up of true banana worshippers, a few symphonicians who will try anything, and scattered curiosity seekers whose guards were down.

All of which brought me to Washington Square on a bright Sunday afternoon, however I arrived two days late due to an unheared but warmly received show of faith on the part of the Very Blonde from the last reel. Finally I managed to allow the following to escape into the relatively open air:

TO CHIGHTA AND HER FRIEND
A love or so lays on an unmade bed
No-one is moving, No-one is dead
Sexless symbols clash with the forsaken muse
While fire-breathing glows scream for abuse
Time trips over the petrified musician
Who owes his rhythm to a method mathematician
Day-old lines mingle in the sad week before
Going under the bed to look for some more
She walks and breathes
Does and Doesn’t
Asking and Getting
Then swearing she Wasn’t
Flying through clouds of pre-sweetened smoke
Don’t pull in too harshly, there’s no-one to choke-
But yourself.

* * * * *

Hiding from those who have never been there
And hiding from those who don’t seem to care
She will remain Bent Chiquita,
yellow and dry
Not helping or changing but well worth the try.

It was witnessed by the last King of Jamaica, with connections for the Bronx, and a horde of little known debutantes who made their way down through the Village for an off-color joke only to be spotted by the fire department and sent back to their own high rise beds in decile Co-op apartments. One in particular showed definite breathing tendencies. Her name was Mimi and so was her thought pattern and we danced until I fell asleep on the side of an angry German Shepherd who swore he was innocent and later remarried.

A passing minstrel interrupted with his persistent swallowing of razor blades and wine. We were splitting the take when forced to leave at the insistence of an irate policeman, cunningly disguised as an elephant. And to say that the elephant showed a startling resemblance to Sophia Loren would be pressuring but pressing can produce the desired results if properly applied. It seems the officer didn’t mind the minstrel’s show but he rejected my request of cold dust from the crowd of horrified calakers who gathered to watch the old man cut his throat.

The American Dreamer has tried everything but is still left with insomnia and it is very nearly Sunday again so there isn’t much time.

Central Park on the other hand, and on the other side of town, is densely populated with those who know where it should be found. The Be-In is all around, as is Pot and Flowers and the ever present odor of the Banana. Alice, of the sad face and convincing body, is asking for what is always around and she gets it almost continuously for hours amid painful screams of “Love” and “Peace,” the whir of policemen pretending to be television cameras, and the sweat which is always a by-product of such intimacies.

Sight seems to have been lost of the fairly discernable story that could go with it. It seems the story has become shy and unassuming and refuses to be told. It is a sad story and wouldn’t even interest Lenny Bruce after hours spent swallowing pills and hypodermic needles with increasing intensity while hiding the damp tissue paper from his mother and a few conservatively perturbed Federal agents with nothing better to do. It is about an erratic human who has been looking for a way to become more erratically human but seems to become further alienated. Seeking only what is not here, the story climaxed singularly when I lost the One thing - and how unobscure to even the carefulllest of lovers, it never lets go.

The Sunday in question led to Monday which greeted me with the reality that is still too hard to face unaided. The Very Blonde is gone, too - and she wasn’t even very. Nothing happened before and no-one important came.

Nothing and No-One - especially on Monday - which once was A
Very Nice Day. Now it too is no better than all the yesterdays - and tomorrow can only be the same....Forever never comes. Everything must where off - In Time.

Milked out memories now play with fantasy's child and although twenty dollars is not very much money, seventeen years isn't too long to wait.

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'Vorticians of the world unite; throw away your hip flasks and your modeling clay
And start in on the living.'

********

--Richard Taussbaum
Sophomore

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POEM TO A WOODSMAN, MY LOVE

What swords can say
by their glint,
you do.
on sunny mornings
a goldfinch/or
bluebird is equally
conspicuous
to your coonskin-eyes.
To a fisherman-born
bass/the knowledge thereof
is instinct.
So tell me bass,
my love;
and picture me trout
alive
alive-o
and show me which trees to climb.
as a woodsman
wields
His axe,
tell me so of laughter.

--Betsi Brandifass
Sophomore
CAPITOLA D'AMORE
For Maxine

The mirage of evening sunset,
as the lake overflows onto the sand,
flickers slowly and takes form:
an apparition kneeling at my feet.
You, cloud-white on the pale brown sand.
A semi-perfect evening.

—William Storck
Senior

CONON WRITING

All the human poses in the common acts,
taking out the garbage,
picking roses from a hedge.
Conon at the threshold of existence
like a diamond-cutter with a sledge
plotting rose by rose the unseen cracks
that supply through writing all that man in living lacks.

And what was life to him?
A hunger artist but always broke.
A hermit in a hut who rarely spoke.
He stranded himself upon this globe
like a tortoise on the beach
who having laid the egg crawled stroke by stroke
to lay exhausted, the ocean out of reach.

—Dennis Willmont
Senior
LEGACY OF A DEAD ARTIST

Two heads
roughly formed
in stone.

The back lot
of the art school
strewn with
unclaimed,
unfinished
hands, torsos,
legs, ideas.

Two heads
roughly formed
in stone
are forgotten.

---Susan Kannel
Sophomore
THE CHINESE KITE

O prowler of the air, I see you,
Pulling your skirts in to slow
Up a movement in air.
A papery drum comes rattling down,
Hear it, Frenzy, a green-eyed net
Falls on my ears; abide.

Tall is the dragon
Its stars higher than mountains.
Under the teseting strings I gallop;
Run, puppet,
Your speed carries me.

Where there is fog heaven is
Near enough to lick at;
A long path teases the cliff,
The place of our going.

I have climbed down from the encircling bridge
And have angled my walk like a sail in the wind.
The evening touches and moves on like a cloud —
Look! slack in the string
I know the call — Catch hold, for I grow

Heavy.

--Joel Rudinger
Graduate

WHY I DON'T LIKE OLIVES

Sour voice, sour face—the room was furry, and creamed star-bursts centered on the lightbulbs. I strained to breathe without moving my chest.

"I am scum," I said.

The room cleared, fuzzed, cleared again.

Elmer was chewing his cheeseburger with great concentration.
"That didn't seem very loud to me," he said slowly. He opened the bun to inspect a tomato slice. "I don't hear too much enthusiasm in a mumble like that."

I blinked and blinked again. He stood two, three feet from me—a big nose, a chewing mouth, comb tracks ribbed into his head with hair oil. It seemed like there were a lot of people in the room; and yet it seemed like we were alone.

"A good pledge has a strong voice. A loud voice." His chewing as methodical, as if he counted each of the thirty-two clumps needed for good digestion. "A loud voice shows enthusiasm for a fraternity." He smiled. "Tell me what you are."

"I am scum," I said, no louder than before.

"Again," Elmer said, without emotion, his full attention fastened on his cheeseburger.

"I am scum."

"Louder." He finished eating and licked at his fingers.

"I AM SCUM," I shouted.

"Again."

"I--AM--SCUM."

Elmer nodded solemnly and took a step to the right, to Jeff McPhelps. Animal Carter turned his head to grin at
grinned back and eased my stomach out a little.

"Who are you?"

I glanced at the smoke circling the bare light bulbs, and relaxed a little more. It was maybe eleven or twelve. The brothers were wandering into the house from their dates. Elmer was eyeing Jeff McPhelps up and down.

"Who are you?"

"I am scum," Jeff lisped, his speech slow and labored.

"Now, I didn’t ask you what you are," Elmer said. "I asked who you are." He leaned up over Jeff, his face forward and his hawk profile half turned from me. "There’s a difference, you know. An important difference." He leaned back a little, angling his spider legs, slapping his palms on his hips, his thumbs hooked in his pockets. "Tell me again, pledge. Who are you, pledge?"

"I am pledge Jeffrey McPhelps. I am the scum of the earth. I am lower than whale dung. More worthless than sewer water. Less intelligent than a retarded orangutan. I am an audacious seducer of—unsuspecting siblings."

Elmer swung back to me. "Pull that stomach in, pledge." He brought his face almost touching mine. " Erect posture is the mark of a good pledge. Are you a good pledge? Are you?"

I doubled my chin into my neck. He stepped back.

"Who are you, pledge?" Soft now, low voice.

"I am pledge Stanley Murphy," I said tonelessly. "I am the scum of the earth. I am lower than whale dung. More worthless than sewer water. Less intelligent than a retarded orangutan. I am a bouncing blubberbag boundless bungling baby bopper."

"Are you now?" He stepped back and looked over, his big eyelids half over his big eyeballs. "You tired of standing at attention, pledge Murphy?"

"No, sir. I like this, sir."

"Maybe you’re tired of hell week. How about it, Murphy?"

"Oh, no, sir. I like hell week, sir."

"Because I’ve got an idea you’re not going to make it. I’ve got an idea you’ve got a jelly gut. How about that, Murphy?"

"That’s right, sir. I’ve got no guts, sir."

"Then why don’t you quit?" Elmer had his hands in his pockets, rocking on his heels. "Go on. Go home—why don’t you?"

I looked straight ahead at Animal Carter’s thick neck. Elmer moved to one side, blocking my vision, and I had to look directly at his face. There was a catsup spot on his cheek. I stared at the catsup spot.

"I’m going to make you quit," he said softly. "You got that? Huh?"

He stepped into the next row and started the same routine with Animal Carter. Animal grinned and did what he was told to do, except that he kept tripping up when he recited speeches, needing to go back and start again, doing that so often that Elmer finally gave up and moved away.

Some one behind me held a cigarette over my shoulder. I took a drag. "How’s it going?"

I nodded.

"Just keep remembering this is the last night. You just keep remembering that and you’ll be okay." I nodded again.

He blew smoke in my ear and dropped some hot ash down my back, for the sake of appearances, then he was gone. I eased my weight onto one leg and let my stomach relax some.

"Straighten up," somebody behind me said. I stiffened.

In front of me Animal had his arms folded. I glanced over at Jeff and saw his lips clamped shut so tightly that they puckered, his glasses slid half down his nose. I could see ten other guys around me, without turning my head to look. We were all dirty. Everyone was wearing a dirty sweatshirt. Our faces, our arms were all dirty.

Animal turned to say something to me, but one of the actives spotted him and made him do pig imitations.

"Okay, you guys." It was the pledge master from the front of the room, fat hands on fat hips. "Hey, knock it off, everybody, okay? Listen, you pledges are going to go downstairs for some games. You hear? Hey. I want you to line up and start pacing time, run some of that slug out of you. Let’s hustle now, and no talking."
We filed out of the meeting room and down the cellar steps to the party room. It took us long to line up—guys kept trying to get a place in the back row. Some actives charged down, shouting for us to start running in line.

We hit the pace: fast, then slow, then fast again, then medium fast, while one active beat time for us on a bucket. We were running in place, motion without motion, beats like the beats of seconds. It was easy at first and drove off the tension of standing so long at attention. Then it was not so easy, and the brothers started wandering down into the cellar.

Elmer came in smoking a cigarette and stood for a while, talking to a little guy with baby fat and scholar glasses. I noticed that he was watching me. I looked away, then looked back, and he was still watching me.

"You. Come front here."

I moved out of line, still running in big heavy steps. It was hard now to run well. I came close to Elmer, and he blew smoke very gently, slowly into my face.

"Give me ten."

I dropped to the floor and did ten push-ups, trying hard to keep my back straight, doing them slowly while I drank huge gulps of air. I finished and stood up to attention.

"Thank you, sir. May I do anymore, sir?"

Black eyes half closed. He considered, seemed to hesitate, debated with himself. "Ten more."

These eyes more slowly, and the sweat began to crop over my eyebrows. I finished, half stood, saw his expression.

"Thank you, sir. May I do anymore, sir?"

"Ready to quit?" Soft voice. Gentle.

"Thank you, sir. May I do anymore, sir?"


I lowered myself slowly, my shoulders and underarms heavy and stinging. I did four, and then five, and I almost did six.

"I'll finish them," Animal Carter shouted from the line.

Violation of routine. They refused him.

"Please, sir," Jeff McPherson called out. "May I help my pledge brother, sir?"

Correct procedure. Petition accepted. Jeff came forward and took off his glasses. I stood again and watched while he finished the push-ups for me. Across the room one of the other pledges was led out by the arm.

"Thank you, sir. May I do anymore, sir?"

"Ten more," Elmer said.

Jeff did the ten, his thin arms shaking and his backside swaying on the last ones. When he finished, Elmer took his arm and pulled him from the room.

I leaned back against the wall, rubbing the pain rings at each side of my chest.

"Do some sit-ups. You're nobody special."

Voices in base, echo sounds. I eased onto the floor. They were taking out another pledge—upstairs, downstairs, exercise and smoke in your face; it was all the same to me. I did the sit-ups. On the sixth one, a brother walked up beside me, standing so close that I almost hit his knee each time I raised my head. I pushed myself up onto one arm, looking up at him.

"Thank you, sir. May—"

He caught my elbow, half yanking me to my feet, leading me out to the stairs. "What's coming now is serious." He pushed me ahead of him on the steps. "This isn't just another game, I want you to take this serious. What happens now will decide whether or not you get into this fraternity. Okay?"

We were upstairs then. We stopped outside the door to the meeting room. Inside I could hear some low talking, and the door opened and I walked into the dim light and saw a long covered table, lit by three candles, with several actives standing in long blue robes, looking all solemn and mean.

Across from me the president of the fraternity, not smiling.

"Pledge Murphy."

I saw Elmer in one corner, not wearing a robe, just leaning against the wall with a small wooden paddle in his hand. Across from me the president of the fraternity, eyes swimming with contact
lenses, not smiling, face held brick flat, hands curled like—

"Pledge Murphy."

"Sir. Yes, sir."

"This is the final night of your term as a neophyte. The conclusion of your pledge to this brotherhood. Here and now we must test your worthiness to join us as a brother." Solemn voice. Solemn occasion. He opened a large notebook. "We note that you have failed on many occasions."

I realized then that I was on trial. The room was quiet. I moved into attention.

"Two times you were late for pledge meetings. Six times you forgot to wear your pledge pin. You have twelve black marks for sloppy house duties." The president looked at me sternly and closed his notebook. "That's twenty offenses. These have to be cleansed before you can become a brother."

I felt a kind of relief. A cleansing was not bad—we were all used to it—it only meant being hurt or tired or laughed at.

"How do you plead: guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty." I watched his face, trying to judge if it was the right answer. "Guilty, sir."

He nodded. "The penalty is twenty dollars or twenty swats of the paddle. Which would you prefer?"

I looked at the three candles dim and spluttering and at the dark folds of the robes the brothers wore. "I don't have twenty dollars," I said.

Elmer stepped forward, as if on cue. "I think he'll cry," he said, waving the paddle in jerky swings. "The pretty boys always cry. Ain't that right, pretty boy?"

"Assume the position."

I turned and bent over, catching my groin with one hand and my knee with the other. Two robed actives held my shoulders.

"I always use the small paddle," Elmer explained to them, behind me. "The big paddles look impressive, but they don't sting as much. It's the sting that counts."

I felt the motion, heard the crack. My head grew very large, and I closed my eyes. The sting came afterwards and spread burning a second, two seconds after the hit. There was just that moment of one or two seconds when there was nothing; the pain was a declining feeling, noticed only when it spreading away.

"That's one, now. Only nineteen to go."

I lowered my head, he hit. I felt my face go red and the sweating started at my forehead and arms.

"It's all the swing," Elmer said to the brothers. "That fast twist of the arm before you hit, that's what gives the sting."

He swung then, just as I wasn't expecting it, and my hand slipped at my knee and I stumbled forward, the two brothers at my shoulders jerking to hold me from falling or hitting the wall. I pulled free and spun around, my face hot and sweating and red, eyes all clouded, my fist folded and my arm back.

Elmer just smiled at me, his fingers slowly stroking the length of the paddle. "Ready to quit?"

I turned back around, to the wall, I gasped for air, my throat bunched in uneven gulps.

"Give him a break now," the president said, his voice bored. "Get him out of here."

They caught my arms and pulled me into the television room—a small room at the end of the house, dark now and very quiet, with just one small lamp burning, a few other pledges standing, awkward, like men at a funeral.

I blotted my face with my sweatshirt and moved beside Jeff. He was standing next to the Coke machine and he had his face to the wall. I stood beside him and I tried to catch my breath.

"I'll remember," I said. I hit my fist into the Coke machine, not hard. "I'll remember this." I leaned my forehead against the machine, trying to catch my breath.

Then I turned my face and saw that Jeff was crying. He had his face toward the wall and he was trying to hide it, but his shoulders and chest were jerking, quick and hard, and his chin shook. I was ashamed for him, and embarrassed, as if I had come into the room and caught him abusing himself, and it was a terrible thing to see the way he was crying and yet trying to hide that he was crying.

"I was never a bad pledge," he said, his voice soft, slow. I turned my face away. "I always did what they told me to do and I
never gave anybody any trouble if I could help it. The only thing I ever wanted was to get in this fraternity.

I could hear the sound of the paddle again, back in the meeting room. "Just take it easy," I said. There was another crack of the paddle. "It's just a game."

"They were great guys at the rush party," Jeff said. "All they talked about was being brothers and having good parties and snooking lots of girls. I thought they liked me." He caught for his breath, then disguised it with coughing. "I thought they wanted me for a brother," he said—so softly I could hardly hear him.

It was bad to hear his voice and I would have said something to him, except there was nothing to say, and so I waited, and when he didn’t say anything else, only breathed heavily, his shoulders jerking, I edged away and took a place beside the wall. My head was aching and my eyes were burning and I put my face against the wall.

It seemed a long time that I stood there, and the pain eased off only slightly, only slowly. Occasionally there was the noise of the paddle, followed by a door opening, followed by the stumbling footsteps of another pledge entering the television room. Once somebody called in, asking us if we were ready for the rest of our swats. Nobody answered. I turned from the others and looked at the pattern of the wallpaper. The room was dark, quiet, for the first time I felt separate from the others.


We sort of laughed. I held my face against the wall and closed my eyes.

The lights came on. I could see the yellow of the lights through my closed eyelids. The pledge master was shouting for us to go back downstairs. I turned and blinked toward the light, and all of us were standing there looking at the pledge master. He was still wearing his blue trial robe, but it was half unbuttoned, showing a dirty sweatshirt underneath.

"I want you guys to go downstairs and get undressed, then get under the showers."

All of us were standing there looking at the pledge master.

"We got some more games and I want you to hustle now. Come on, now. Move it!"

We moved slowly, as though we had all been sleeping and were just now waking. No one hurried us. I tripped on the stairs and somebody ought my shoulder and neck to keep me from falling. I didn’t turn, my lips moved—thank-you.

Downstairs the water roared from all the faucets in the shower enclosure. The showers were walled off from the rest of the furnace room by cement block walls almost taller than I was. I looked into the enclosure and saw the water roaring from all the faucets.

It was cold in the furnace room. I stripped, my pants brushing painfully across the paddle stings. I saw the red and purple marks across the flanks of the other pledges. We all sort of turned from each other and pushed into the showers, nobody looking at anybody else, and I kept looking at the water and the faucets and thinking that it wasn’t water at all, it was hot or acid or some gas, it was something dangerous—cold water sprayed all around us. We had to stand under the water. The brothers left us there for maybe ten minutes and the water was very cold and I started shaking with the cold and my left leg was gone to sleep and I rubbed at my knee and calf and my leg tingled.

"Let’s have some volunteers out here." Voice like you hear under ether. "Okay, you guys, one at a time, come on you guys."

I moved toward the rear of the shower enclosure. The shaking was out of my control then and came in sudden, violent spasms all down my body.

"It’s a type of shock," one of the other pledges told me, and I looked at him and saw that he was shaking, too. "The cold water and all the noise puts us into a sort of shock reaction."

I kept looking at him.

"It’s psychological," he said. "It’s all just psychological."

I moved into a corner, almost out of the force of the water. I leaned my face against the cement tile. My head was always leaning against things, walls Coke machines cement tile. My head would stick, my head would grow to part of a wall. It was upstairs and downstairs, exercise and smoke in your face. Cold water. I felt things only in my skin and muscles. I was shaking, hurt, was cold, inside it was all numb. My leg had gone to sleep, and I rubbed my leg.

"Murphy."

Water sounds, the voices water makes.

"Hey, Murphy! Get out here!"
I slugged out of the showers. I was blinded by the hard lights as I came out of the showers. It was warmer out of the showers. In the party room my eyes focused on a large block of ice near the back wall.

Beside me, his hand clamped on my elbow, Elmer was smirking and holding a large black olive up for my inspection.

"This is an olive."

I nodded, still looking at the ice block and blinking desperately to clear my eyes. The actives were ringed along the walls, the pledges were crammed into one corner.

"In this game you carry the olive across the room in your cheeks and drop it into the bucket. Understand?"

I blinked at him, but nothing was very clear. For a moment he waited, then he started across the room and positioned the olive on the ice. I looked at him and at the olive. I understood.

It took me a few seconds to convince myself that I had no choice, that I had to go ahead with it. Finally I braced myself enough to walk across the room. The ice block was nearly three feet high and damp all over with the melting. I edged backwards onto it, almost crying out as my paddle bruises first touched the burning cold, making myself look up at the ceiling so that I would not need to see any of the faces around me. It hurt awfully, and the pain cleared my head some.

"No hands," they shouted as I reached to adjust my position.

On the third try I caught a firm grip on the olive. Withdrawing from the ice, I stood half doubled with my knees together, then began taking small, delicate steps toward the bucket. Around me the brothers were laughing, and for the first time I felt shame for men to see me naked.

"Don't drop it," Elmer said. "If you drop it, you have to eat it."

Things were shaking around me, and I couldn't look at anything clearly for more than a second or two. The bucket kept getting closer—the wading was almost like falling, and I had to fight to be able to make every step—and then I was there, and turned, and I let the olive fall. And I heard it hit the bottom.

"Perfect."

Elmer leaned over the bucket, his back to me, and I put my arm against the wall and braced myself onto my arm.

"You know, there might be some hope for you yet." He brought an olive out of the bucket and held it up daintily with his fingertips, arcing his arm to display it to the others. "Okay, Murphy--now you tell me. Do you want in this fraternity?"

I stared at him and he brought the olive close to my face.

"Murphy, I want you to eat this olive."

I kept staring at his big nose, his black eyes, kept staring at him but hardly seeing him, or anything--and when he pushed the olive closer to my mouth, I held back from him.

"Come on. Eat this olive."

I was shakin' my head. He said something I couldn't hear and the olive came hard against my cheek, making me jerk back as if I had been hit.

The only thing I knew was I couldn't go through with it. I just wheeled around and left the room, thinking I was going very slowly, but running and not stopping until I was upstairs in the television room.

It took a minute there, leaning over a sofa and panting for air, before I came clear to knowing that I had run out on pledging. The room was almost dark, all the lights were out, there was only the glow from the television set. The voice was turned down. There was just the series of silver flickering lights across the floor, while on the screen I saw parts of a new program--short clips of war and important people, photographs of crowds fighting and carrying signs, then the statue face of a newscaster, his mouth moving but no sound coming out.

I watched the set as if I were hypnotized. From downstairs I could hear voices, loud but indistinguishable, and then I sat on the arm of the sofa and worked to keep myself from crying, the feelings hottest in me now because I was alone and because I didn't know anything else to do. There were the weeks and days behind me, and all the hours in those days, all the time of being a pledge, and now I was upstairs naked and almost crying, and my clothes and the others were downstairs—I kept trying to bring it clear, and the more clear it got the more I wanted it all to be something else.

"You shit. You dumb shit."

I turned. It was Elmer Hudson, and he crossed over to the soda machine and dropped in a coin, took out a bottle and opened it slow-
ly, drank at it slowly.

"I always say a guy has what it takes or doesn’t have what it takes. Well, I was right about you, cause, boy, you don’t have anything. Period."

He came on so strong that I knew at once he had come up there just to make it easy for me. I watched him looking at me like I was dirt, and I tried to let it bother me, I really did try, but it was just something that was happening—he was just some body in a dark room drinking pop, and I was just some body there watching him.

"Well, don’t say I didn’t warn you. I always said I could break you. Didn’t I?" He gulped down a swallow of pop. "You dumb shit."

I got up and went back downstairs. In the party room everybody was still standing around, and I figured they were just waiting to get it over with. Nobody spoke to me, and I didn’t say anything, either, except for jerking my head toward the ice when I took an olive out of the jar.

The second time it wasn’t hard to do. I picked up the olive and crossed the room and dropped it into the bucket, as if I had done the whole routine fifty times before, as if I was becoming an expert in olive transportation. I picked up the olive and ate it.

"That’s all."

I walked over to the corner and stood with the other pledges. The pledge master was shouting, and someone was ringing the big iron bell the fraternity used for football games.

"You guys are all finished now," the pledge master kept shouting at us. "Hey. You guys are brothers now. Hey! You hear me?"

We were looking at him. Then the brothers swarmed across the room, laughing and yelling out brother sounds, their hands all out for us, giving us big smiles. I looked around and the other pledges were laughing and reaching for hands, their heads rolling around from side to side. I shook hands with the guys who came up to me, and beside me Animal Carter was slumped back against the wall, laughing and crying both at the same time. I laughed some, too, because it was all over, feeling good about being able to laugh like that. But I didn’t cry; I didn’t feel like doing that.

Elmer came beside me then and he was saying something to me and I nodded, and I was still laughing. It was all over and we were all brothers, and they had done everything they knew to do to make us brothers, and Elmer was beside me, and I was laughing. I looked at him and he was holding out his hand, and so I took his hand and shook with him like a brother. But my heart wasn’t in it.

I was just all over. Just that.

--David Walton
Graduate

SAPPHRO, TOO, WOULD CRY

Warrior-king
please notice

I reach up
for your
raping hand

(are not your
legs
held wide
apart)

and beg
(so frenzied
by your
strength)

for warmth
inside

Orion
(do you
hear)
take off your
belt

--Kamala Plemsid
Senior
TO F. E. ON EARTH

Though in youth you knew county fairs and blackbirds
it was art you grew to fear.
You—poet, prophet, idol of men.
Here, in life, an old man with a shaggy beard.

Not in the dust of memory did you find them,
these crusts of poems,
but in its ovens, baking,
like a spiced ham or fresh bread
not yet ready to be read.

But hidden, out of sight,
nourished by a madman in a closet
sipping coffee late at night.

The way you read those poems,
or rather gasped them out,
barably audible.
A sort of life in death.
A poet on a treadmill and out of breath?

No! Only the heart, bleeding,
pounding. On a table
or in a sentence.
Irony bitten by the present tense.
Art expressed, though distance kept.

These poems falling hair by hair,
dig them up in trade
for an aging poet in a wig,
a beardless monk at evening prayer.

Let these poems like the cake in pipes
soak up your flax in life,
while your fears before they rot, are ripe.

--Dennie Willmont
Senior

THE EYE OF THE FOREST

for t.c.

A hidden generosity, this lake
sparkles
the face of nature.
That lash
of birches on its brim

would say
an old thing
as having been
lost in leaves of
summer
to enhance
perhaps
it is
blooming late,
some beauty
and
days
reserved
perhaps
to wink at
winter.

--Robert Ernan
Senior
57 VARIETIES

57 varieties,
but I only saw one
of assorted pickles and paste.
"Child!"
"Child!"
Santo Domingo cried
"Esta maquina loca,"
although it's only an annual canning.

In your sweat
esta maquina loca,
in my back yard.

--Michael Wills
Senior
RAIN WAKENING

in my round prison
i cannot feel the rain
thick-skinned feet separate
the leaves from me
and my fingers translate
the raindrop poorly

when i investigate
the waterbead
i am preoccupied
with need.

one afternoon i stared
into a pool of water
and became small.
i was charmed by the bubbles
on the leaf's backbone,
excluded from the vestibule
of mud and the ritual
of the night.
at my birth i was excommunicated.

in the swaying topbranches the buds
know the bouncing pulse of wind
and the explosion of the raindrop.
when i sleep,
what is the grass doing?

there is a ritual
between the bumblebee
and the red clover:
a dance, opening
and retreat:
who will explain it?

how shall i become wet again
and float in the stars
like a sealed bud
meditating the tightness
of my own flower?

all i know
i know with the stone's eye.
of limestone and mica
i can tell you
and of the cut faces of sand.
the world is brown
and smells of old leaves.

i have glided
through the massive ocean
from the shallows to the depths
down the rippled sand bottom
and i cannot stop my thrashing tail
from thrashing in silence.
is there no end to this?
when will the sunfish
become bold and the black squid
be tangle and devour me?

in the wheatfield i disappear
among a million shafts,
enter into the grain,
sit in the dry kernel, become the germ.
yet no rain will sprout
my potent eyes ; no shoots
emerge green and healthy
from my skull.

the dandelion demands
my unconditional surrender.
what shall i do?

47
rain,
first mover,
be kind to me.

let me be green
in my wisdom
and silent.

--H. P. Wyndham
Senator

THE LITTLE BOY SIT

solemly
on the red-painted evergreen bench
in the litter-covered park.
he waited
and waited
till no one could be seen
and then called out
just to make sure.
and then, with a cookie-jar-thief-like motion,
he poked one small fist
inside the brown-paper A&ME sack
he gripped so tightly
and pulled out a
small, brown
teddy-bear

"I love you"
he said
and he cried...the long walk home.

--Mary Karunich
Freshman

JOHN CARRINGTON

John Carrington was guarding the fortress. He sat just inside the massive, double doors of the City Hall, positioning himself so he could study the statue outside. She was, he thought, the most beautiful woman in the world, even with her eyes lintfolded and her muscular arm outstretched, holding high the scales of justice. They alone, he and the lady, were holding down the fortress until the Mayor returned from the Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

He sat with his knees widespread, bent down to outstretched feet. This was his typical posture for he needed the wide extension of thigh it afforded to support his flabbing stomach. Every now and then he looked down at its bulk, heaved a disgusted sigh, then averted his eyes upward, quickly so that no one should see him studying its vast expanse. His obesity had once upset him, but having tried dieting too often with too pitifully few results, he had at last surrendered to the fat he now attributed to a malfunction of some malicious gland. He glanced down again, then blushed inwardly as he heard the light, brisk footsteps and cheery greeting of Miss Pratt, the Mayor's secretary.

"Good morning, John," she offered, her clicking heels passing momentarily before him. She was young and slim and attractive, but John preferred the more sturdy, more aesthetic appeal of the statue. He cared little for real women, his marriage having ended in divorce.

"Good morning, Miss Pratt," he saluted, enunciating very precisely so that she might not sense he had been engaged in the study of his paunch. It was an indulgence of vanity to which he seldom succumbed. "The mayor will be back shortly?" This was not a question so much as an affirmation of what he already knew.

"Yes, John. I left just before him."

"His speech went well?"

"Very well. He did a wonderful job. I'm sure he is very grateful for the suggestions you gave him."

"Only too glad to be of service."

"I shall see you later then. Good morning, John."
"Good day, Miss Pratt," John exhaled deeply when she was out of sight; he still unconsciously held in his stomach whenever he was approached. He nearly burst inwardly but allowed himself only a silent smile that twitched the corners of his lips as he remembered her words: I'm sure he's very grateful... Only too glad to be of service.

John Carrington prided himself on his ability of counsel. His childhood ambition had not been of the usual sort: cowboy, fireman, railroad engineer, explorer. Instead he had dreamed of becoming a barrister with a long curled wig and black, flowing robes. It mattered little to him that men of such refined attire practiced only in England; this was his image of whatRainments the position of counselor deserved. But the Depression spoiled his plans and Carrington emerged from his musings a proprietor of a shoe store. But once more John Carrington was defeated, not by a malicious gland in this case, but by a malicious Highway Department who deemed the site of his store fit for the pathway of Interstate 95.

High-pitched whinings pounded at his ears, shattering his thoughts. The portly man of distinction in barrister wig and robe gave way to fat John Carrington of overalls and bulging stomach resting on meaty thighs. His bald forehead, deserted by a receding hairline, furrowed as he watched a parade of children file up the wide stone steps, past his lovely statue and through the heavy glass doors. The procession was led by a thin-lipped, anvil woman in thick-heeled shoes. Her whining was the loudest.

"Now class, be quiet, please." In spite of her pleading, their rumblings continued undiminished. "Children, you promised you would be quiet if we brought you on this field trip. Now hush!" Her lover lip quivering, she stomped her foot on the marble floor. The noise of it, echoing through the high-ceilinged corridors, at last quieted the group.

"Humph!" John Carrington pulled in his stomach. "May I be of any help, ma'am?"

"Oh, Well," she considered. "Possibly..." She inspected the fat man over the tops of her tortoise-rimmed spectacles. "Who are you?"

"John Carrington, ma'am. Custodian."

"Oh. The jan-i-tor. She dragged the word out, allowing each syllable its full measure of abuse.

Carrington flinched. "Yes, ma'am."

He hated this thin-lipped antagonist who reminded him too much of Alice, his former mate; and he hated these skinny, awkward urchins brats whose piercing screeches were shattering the dignity of his stronghold. He uttered a silent prayer that the Mayor would not return until they had gone.

"We're from Milford Junior High School. A field trip," she explained, as if it were an excursion through the Roman Senate. "We phoned. We're expected."

"Yes, ma'am. I'll let them know upstairs." He planted his feet firmly and hurled his huge frame from the folding chair that heaved a sigh of relief as he rose. lumbering heavily toward the phone on the other side of the corridor, he watched the milling adolescents who parted before him, not so much out of respect as in the fear they would be trampled. He lifted the phone.

"Miss Pratt? This is John. There is a group of... school-children here from Milford Junior High. Their...leader says they are expected."

"Oh yes. They are. I'll be right down. Thank you, John." The phone clicked.

Approaching the leader, he offered, "Miss Pratt, the Mayor's secretary, will be right down." He wondered why such a homely group rated such exclusive attention. He heard Miss Pratt's brisk heelsteps approach.

"Good morning, Mrs. Van de Meer. I'm Miss Pratt." She extended her hand.

"Good day. Are you ready to conduct us on our tour?" Mrs. Van de Meer dragged out the vowel, pursing her lips so the word came out "toooor." This bothered Carrington.

"Oh, Mrs. Van de Meer, this is John Carrington, our custodian. A very able man."

"Yes," the woman acknowledged, glancing condescendingly with watery blue eyes over her glasses top.

"Mrs. Van de Meer is the head of the special education class at Milford, John." Miss Pratt added, then turning to the other woman, "Shall we go?"

"Please," Mrs. Van de Meer turned on her heel without a last look at the "jan-i-tor," and followed the retreating secretary. Her class trailed behind.

John eased himself into his creaking throne and watched them pass. Their appearance fit that of their teacher. The children were
either scrawny sticks of gangling adolescent limbs, or heavy-bulked and dull-eyed.

One boy, unusually big and sporting more than the usual peach-fuzz beard of youth, lagged behind, surrounded by a troop of smaller boys. They were all dressed in leather jackets, faded jeans, and either battered tennis shoes or black shiny shoes with pointed toes. All needed haircuts. The leader of this unwholesome gang extracted a torn pack of cigarettes from his jacket pocket. The others looked on greedily, not daring to make the first request.

"Here fellas, have a butt," he said, first taking one himself, then extending the pack to the others.

Carrington looked on with disapproval. Matches were lit and a smoky cloud formed where the sunlight filtered through the doors. Carrington cast a hurried glance outside, now even more fearful of the Mayor's returning to discover these ruffians.

"Brother, John interrupted their forbidden fun. "Aren't you young gentlemen a bit young to be smoking?"

"What's it to ya, Fats," the leader hurled his abuse and the others joined his mocking derision in unison.

"Tea, Fatso."

"OK Pops, so I'm hooked. Whatcha gonna do? Tell the teach?"

"Up yours, Fatty."

Carrington felt the blood rush to his brain; it pushed outward against his skull and he knew his ears burned a dark red.

"Hey Fatso. Ya don't like bad little boys?" A skinny wretch approached him pressed his face close and stuck out an obscenely fleshy tongue. He ran backwards quickly, stumbling, in fear of some retaliation by the elephant-man.

John Carrington just sat, his fleshy jaws quivering as he tightened his jaws to prevent the fit of rage from bursting from within.

"Hey!" yelled the leader, his voice cracking in hysterical laughter. "Hey, Fatso's gettin' all red in the puss."

"Here puss puss puss puss," cried a little one, smacking his lips in the vulgar enjoyment of the word. The leg of the statue caught his eye. He whistled and indicated the statue's muscular form to the others. "Here puss puss. Do I see a big puss puss puss."

An echoing chant rang through the marble halls and the boys' laughter hammered at John's flooding brain. He rose slowly to his feet, glancing quickly from the boys to the statue and back again.

"Stop," he cautioned, but all that came out was a harsh whisper of air.

"Hey Fatso, what's the matter? That fat broad your girlfriend?"

"Fatso's gotta girlfriend!"

The others took up the chant. "Fatso's gotta girlfriend."

"Fats-o and girlfriend sit-in in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G."

"Nah, that's not it," yelled the leader. "Listen guys. Fats-o and girlfriend underneath a tree, F..."

A scream wrenched from the leader's throat as Carrington's hand shot out and whipped him across the cheek. The boy stood stonily, his hand clapped against his face. Glaring red patches shone from under his outspread fingers where the blood had raced to the surface. He smirked into the fat man's rolling eyes.

John Carrington slowly lowered his hand and watched the room blur dismally before him. He reached out for some support, some hand. He began to reel crazily but the boys, struck motionless by the fat man's outburst, just watched as he slumped to the floor. He balanced for an instant on one knee, then plummeted, face-first, to the cold hard surface.

The silence that followed gave way to the sound of voices. The group of children was approaching the circle the boys had formed around the fallen body. The massive doors were swung open by the Mayor and two of his Chamber of Commerce members. They all caught sight of John Carrington at the same instant.

No screams, only silence.

The Mayor broke away from his entourage and walked to the center of the circle, and with a powerful yet gentle effort, turned the body on its back. The huge stomach formed a grotesque mound on the floor.

John Carrington's right hand clutched his lifeless heart. His eyes, frozen open by death, seemed to stare out the doors to where the blimfolded woman, her muscular arm outstretched, held high the scales of justice.

John Carrington was guarding the fortress.

--Benny Yards Junior
THE BONFIRE

from the grey-green
bouquets of bride's breath,
long-since flowered
in a border round the barn,
from those recesses rank
with the mower-crushed mint-smell,
ever to be moldered
in a fossil-stone of lime,
from out and from under
darts a grey-brown wren,
lice-ridden, wretched,
an ordinary song-bird,
frightened into flight
by her fear for her life,
wings high
to watch from
the green-roofed peak
to watch as the gardener
snips away the underbrush,
hauls it to the back lot,
to watch him unwittingly
approach the nest she built there,
crush the life she laid there,
back when the dog-fennel pushed forth a green sprout,
spread a lacy arm out
to greet
the slowly
summering sun.

and in the back lot from out the wilting branches
springs a strange new sun now
to reclaim the bride's breath,
long-since flowered,
mangled with the mini-leaves
mangled by the mower,
strewed across with dog-fennel
shrouding with its daisy buds
the small grey-brown form
that was life
to the song bird
racing toward the sun from the roof of the barn.

DEAREST PENELLOPE

I am sitting like a savage on the
seaside strand
wrote a letter in the sand, pearl white,
with my hand

I was crawling around hunting for an
envelope

A coconut fell down on my raw brain,
Penelope

So I drank its milk for brunch (less hunger)
all is well
Then I poured my letter in its empty
hairy shell

Hope you can read between the grains -- wrote it
one-handed
Tossed it in the sea to sail it your way ---
I'm stranded

Luv,
Ody

PS -- Trying to get back to Ithaca soon!

--Roger Hicks
Senior

---Anne Bingle
Graduate
GOD TO VENOM

Thou bitter cynic critic,
Have it in your eyes
A great clear God-like vision
And thunder in your cries?

Your words fall like a shower
Of some torrential rain,
And when you blast in anger
The poets scream in pain.

Thy tongue is sharp as acid,
Thy voice a well-honed knife,
Throughout the wave of comment
All writers wall in strife.

Now that thy work is finished
And mine is smashed aside,
I'll make a dirty gesture
And curse thy foul old lies!

—Alex Pendleton
—Junior
HE SAID

He
I said
said
crosswords at me
by candlelight the flickering
(his eyes)
the shadows
(his words)
rans backwards on my senses.
Like a moth, so delicate
his track, like a
hawk
so swift to
strike.

The unravellings of his meaning
drift (tangled) in the midnight sky.

---Bettes Brandfass
Sophomore

IN MEMORIAM

Time November 17, 1967
Milestones
"Died. Hulbert Taft Jr., 60...when
leaking bottle gas exploded while
he was on one of his frequent inspections
of the family bomb shelter that he
had constructed on his estate, in
Indian Hill, a Cincinnati suburb."

Hulbert Taft knew what the Russians
were plotting
(bomb, fallout and all)

He had the finest
fallout shelter
in town
bound
w/ Concrete-steel
reinforced his red mushroom
nightmares

And he laughed about how
Old crabby Miss Finch (next door)
would lie
screaming
scratching
at the barred door

And he snickered
at the thought
as
he
descended
the
stairs...

---Lee Larcomb
Junior
THE REBELLION OF MR. JONES

Mad is the flute-man
who blows the gale
of merry half-notes
Raise high the din
of populous uproar
reverberate the echo
multiply - diffuse
And the far-off strains
of wood-song
ply the background
as background
Paper writ symphonies
play in
the Hall on the Hill
While the mad
flute-man
Wanders the burr country
And indignant
the burr country
people are
signing petitions
to stop up the
holes of his
flute-pipe

Kay Geary
Freshman
POLLY, THE DREAMER (I)

Dreams may
(or may not)
father invention and revolution
as they say.
But with pink, yellow,
and smoky lavender
you’re safe.
Red, white, and black
damage tender eyes.
--Susan Kannel
Sophomore

AS I PASS IN THE NIGHT

Scratching and scratching and slapping my face
The wind grips my feet and goes galloping by.
So I quicken my steps while the ice marks the place
Where I stumbled and there left an imprint of lace;
As I pass in the night while the snow fills the sky.

Swirling and snarling and screaming its cry
My thoughts and the current are clutched in embrace,
And I follow not thinking or wondering why.
But I plod on in silence, and see the snow fly
And devour my footsteps and leave not a trace
As I pass in the night while the snow fills the sky.
--Dallas Hull
Freshman

RAKING LEAVES

For Jo Ann

Lying there smooth
as any woman
leaves & so many words
may spin
lightly in the breeze. The children are gypsies
among them, singing rhymes.
& because I like to think
the leaves
say everything; the words
need no translator,

lying there simply
(smooth
as any woman).
Yet raking
the innocence of wind; the skill of children.

--Tom Cadwell
Junior
NECIENCE

A despairing, doleful dirge
he hums
and slowly stumbles
thru his gaolic grave.

The moribund moment
delayed,
the morose music
disguises
the dictum of the mercenary manacles
that damn the man
to the eternal morgue
that this wanton world
becomes.

Debated, destroyed,
deprived of a soul;
diminished
to a peculiar kind of
death.

--Barbara Lydon
Freshman

64
THE SPREADING MAPLE
covered us
like a large green umbrella

with tiny patches
of sky-blue
sneaking through...

and when I spoke softly
drops of rain
trickled
down
your
cheeks,
like tears.

--Lee Larcenb
Junior

BITCH

1.
A beagle bitch
goes offering her box
to mongrel strangers/hoping
runts are born in every litter

2.
A lewd, old woman
shares her sordid tales and tricks
with pinks
who've newly joined 'the trade'

3.
A shrill-voiced wife
assumes her role of righteous indignation/
solely certain
of her husband's sexual frustration

4.
Parading past/the female class,
shapers of a world
that's stitched to death

--Kamila Fiedmid
Senior
This poem is for Mary

THE LOST KITES

don't tangle
in the trees /
melt into rubble
on a pond. You
just think so.

Here's what they do:
they find other kites,
my litigant friend,
splice ropes/circle
the world in tandem,
looking for you
in certain seasons/
wondering where
you went to.

—Sharon Loughheed
Graduate
SMOKE SCREEN

I am cold, cold
wind blows
thru my brain

gutting that bank
of candles
wch I keep.

Something wants
to kill the light /
grows cold
dark, darker
the smoke
covers my eyes.

Light me a light:
one I can see
for thousands of
miles / will burn
the wind / keep
the candles alive.

---Sharon Lougheed
Graduate

CRESCENT, B. C.

I am walking
on the sea, the sand
the bottom of the sea

in the shells
crabs help of the
early morning washout

looking, I think,
for that part of my-
self swept to sea:

the fish, birds, have
swallowed it all.

Boats are trolling
for salmon, for food

birds, too, gut-
full of fish
rise from the tide,

Nothing remains
in the oyster beds /

the mussel-crusted
quays / the mountains

the blue mountains
are moving
seaward and crushing /

a heron, blue,
spreads blue wings
& lifts to the east.

---Sharon Lougheed
Graduate
TASCH

In 1526, the army of Wilhelm, Baron von Neuheim, defeated the army of Friedrich, Baron von Judenfried, near a tiny village deep in the Bavarian Forest.

Partly to commemorate his victory, partly to pacify those villagers whose fields he had burned, Wilhelm ordered built in the village square a tiny, fieldstone church, and in a niche above the door, he had placed an image of Michael, Patron Saint of Soldiers, the Recording Angel. This done, he packed his loot, mustered his army, and marched north, never to return. To the villagers, the small church became something of a miracle; in it took place the christenings and confirmations, the marriages and funerals; all the rites which add grandeur to humble lives, and so they called the village Engelsdorf, the village of the angel.

For seven generations, the people thought little of arms, or of war. Then, in the first year of this century, the Imperial Staff decreed that a detachment of the new German Army be trained in the forest north of Engelsdorf, and in September the surveyors arrived to map out the camp. By December, wagons and artillery were rumbling through the narrow, cobbled streets. For the first time in nearly four-hundred years, Engelsdorf trembled beneath the tread of steel-shod boots as soldiers were marched to the newly-erected barracks.

Almost upon the soldiers' heels came the gamblers and barmaids, the pimps and whores which follow like vermin wherever any army goes.

The villagers somehow adjusted to this influx. Their lives continued to center about the Rathaus and the church; the soldiers seldom ventured beyond the beerhalls and brothels which bloomed the length of Neue Gasse, the street nearest the camp, and on the basis of this tacit segregation, the various factions managed to tolerate one another.

Tasch was by far the best-known whore in Neue Gasse. We never knew why, in the spring of 1902, she left her accustomed doorway, and appeared, several days later, in a window overlooking the village square; directly opposite the Church of the Recording Angel.

The devil himself could not have aroused more resentment in the
villagers. Frantically they formed committees, held meetings, petitioned the Burgermeister, even appealed to the Bishop, but Tasch would not be budged. Each Sunday, the townpeople lit vigil lamps, and prayed fervently that Tasch might be removed from their presence. And each Sunday they emerged from the church to see her leaving at them from across the square, her red lamp glowing behind her like an obscene halo.

For fourteen years, Tasch and St. Michael faced each other across the square. Privates became sergeants, and sergeants retired from the regiment. Rouge thickened to a paste on Tasch's cheeks. Her customers became fewer. Her prices became lower.

In the first year of the Great War, when Ernst, the big Westphalian, and I joined the regiment, Tasch had become something of an institution. Ernst detested her on sight, and made her the butt of the barracks jokes.

"This beer is wretched!" someone would shout.

"Bad, bad, bad!" Ernst would chant, "but have you tasted Tasch?" and roar of our laughter, amid the crash of beer steins, and the rattle of glassware would waft down to the red-lit window where Tasch waited, like a gluttonous toad, for the inevitable customers to drift in her direction.

Suddenly the regiment was ordered to ready itself for war. Leave were cancelled, passes denied, and we spent an eternity of nights in the unlit barracks waiting for orders which, it often seemed, would never come.

For the first time in many years, Neue Gasse was silent. Shutter closed upon the brothels and beerhalls as, one by one, the parasites packed their belongings and moved away. When our orders finallly arrived, we were allowed one last night of liberty. It was worse, almost, than none at all. Like children in an empty house, soldiers wandered the deserted Neue Gasse.

Of the harlots only Tasch remained. Perhaps to glean what profits her cohorts had forsaken, perhaps out of a perverse tenacity, Tasch had elected to stay in Engelsdorf.

A crowd was milling beneath Tasch's window when Ernst and I found our way to the square. It was rumored that news of troop movements passed through Tasch's ears, before it reached those of the commander's wife, and, indeed, she possessed considerable military information, much of it secret.

"No more sharing your icy bed, Old Bitch!" someone said, "We're moving out tomorrow!"

"If you knew where you were going," said Tasch evenly, "you'd..."

Suddenly Ernst pushed his way to the front of the crowd. His face was grim. There was a long silence.

"You're worse than a whore," he said, "you're a heretic. For this you'll burn in hell!"

Tasch leaned forward until her mannquin face was on a level with Ernst's. "Don't tell me about hell, you stupid, sniveling, son-of-a-bitch, until you've come back from Verdun." Her face recolled to the window sill, and the shutters slammed to.

We looked at each other in bewilderment. "Verdun?" the news meant nothing to us. We had never heard of the place.

In the icy dawn of the next day, we marched behind our guns to the railway yards. Tasch's window was shuttered as we passed through the village, and no light peeped from the cracks. Across the square, St. Michael was hidden in shadow, an unseen witness of the awesome scene below.

For seven months, we held the line at Verdun, then fell back, the defenses broken. I saw much combat.

What had been a division filtered back across the frontier as scarcely a battalion, and that without order.

Guns and wagons were left by the roadside where the horses had been killed and eaten. The wounded who could, marched too, for there was no gasoline for ambulances. Ernst somehow marched with them. Ernst was blind.

The windows were dark when at last we struggled into Engelsdorf, for there was no electricity, no candles, no oil. Hunger lay so thick upon the silent village that it could almost be smelled. Hardly a door did not wear crepe, and the church was decked in black. Even St. Michael seemed somehow thinner. He wore cape of snow on his gaunt wings, and an icicle dripped from his poised quill onto the slate below. It was as if we had interrupted him in the writing of an endless casualty list.

Tasch's face loomed in her now-dark window. Even the pastelike rouge could not hide her wrinkles; her eyes were very tired. For Tasch, too, it had been a long war, and her eyebrows arched in a sort of evil triumph. She smiled horribly at me, and I noticed with some satisfaction, that she was missing several teeth.

The camp had no light, no heat, and almost no food. One day a man was killed for a chocolate bar. Those who thought they might have relatives or friends went to search for them, leaving the home-
less, the friendless, and the wounded. Men ate leaves and scorns, dogs and rats, and even lice. They went mad and died of diseases I cannot name and will not describe, and the living had not the strength to bury the dead.

On the ninth day, Ernst fell ill. On the eleventh day, he disappeared. For two days I searched for him, then gave him up for dead. In the early afternoon of the thirteenth day, I passed through the square, hoping to reach the highroad by nightfall, and there find a ride home.

Tasch looked in her window. "Come in, Soldier," she said seductively, "I have something for you."

"What you're selling, I'm not buying," I said, then quickly turned away.

"What if I'm not selling?" she said, and I realized that she was pleading with me.

Her room was very bare, and smelled of cheap perfume and stale beer. On her bed was a man with bandaged eyes.

"Ernst!" I exclaimed, "What..."

Tasch shoved me into the hall. "He wandered through the square two days ago," she said, "he was half-mad and very hungry. I have fed him. He will be all right, and I have arranged for a friend to take him home to Westphalia."

"A friend?"

"A black-marketeer, but you can't afford to be particular. Will you go with him?"

"Of course," I answered, "but why..."

"I presume God knows," said Tasch, "I certainly don't," and for the first time, her eyes met mine.

Slowly, I helped Ernst to his feet. "Are we truly going home?" he asked.

"Yes."

"It seems impossible. Thank you, Meine Dame, you have been so very kind..." Then I realized that he did not recognize her.

Ernst made his way painfully down the stairs and onto the street.

As he felt his way along the pavement, I glanced backward. Tasch was in her window, but her mocking smile was gone. Tears were making zigzag tracks in the thick rouge on her cheeks, and her lips were trembling. For the first time, probably in many years, she was weeping, but Ernst was blind, and the townpeople had long ceased even to glance at her, so no one knew save Tasch, and I, and the Recording Angel.

---Bruce MacKenzie
Freshman

ROSEMARY

Rosemary, look, at the falling leaves,
and above them, at arches of red-gold trees
spilling the paths that you've rambled these twenty years.

Breathe deeply, rosemary, the quick-cutting breeze
that whips around under storm-laden eaves
bearing the burden of many times twenty tears.

Sad rosemary, follow the falling leaves
and the forsworn droplets that form pale seas
under the barren branches of once-red trees.

---Anne Ringle
Graduate
THE STING

Once we walked on a road &
hot tar
stuck to my feet
(turpentine washed it off)

Today in a field I
clutch
the flower & bee
stings

(O Love where are you
now?)

---Con Cadwell
Junior

LATE FALL

The leaves ones have gone
or fly are going
leaving me with anthem
and the sparrows
getting ready
I am getting ready
I shall be a winter singer
I shall shave in the snow
and circle at the snow
and think of brown leaves roosted
that once were red.
The geese were passing hidden
in a crisp night.
I heard then when the frost
was killing off my roses
one by one.

---Robert Bracy
Senior