



W. S. P. L. N.



5039115



PIPER

Spring 1988

Guilford College • Greensboro, North Carolina

Nursing Words

Where do you love your language?
In the mouth, or in the hand?

I love my language in the street,
Where it smacks the cement like change,
choking and ringing. And in movie theaters,
behind the seats, where spit catches in the whispers.

And when do you love your language?
At noon, or late at night?

I love my language in the morning,
when it's just woken up and mumbling,
cross and shy, peeling off the roof of the mouth
and bubbling through parched lips.

And how do you love your language?
Do you kiss it?

I stroke my language with my hand,
making its shape uniquely mine. I put my lips to it,
and nudge it with a little breath.

And why do you love your language?
Is it beautiful?

Yes. I can't see it through its shimmering complexion,
but I can feel its soft mouth under my ear.
I love my language because
although it can never love me back,
it forever draws me to itself.

Wendy Kramer



Jeff Grubbs

Expectancy

When winter's sterile grip is loosed,
And long, cold nights begin to wane,
Through bleak, inconstant skies of gray
March winds drive clouds surcharged with rain;
Then purple bruise of lilac bud
Begins to swell upon its twig,
Mute testimony at long last
That Spring's prolific womb is big
And quickening with vernal life,
Until the miracle of birth
Fulfills the age old promises
Of genesis and fruitful earth.

Ruth Weybright Cole

Waiting for sleep; Salvation; escape

My mind spins
the atomic bomb
acid rain
the all-american family
 abusive fathers
 alcoholic mothers
the constitution and evolution
black lies
white lies
visions stir me from the fall
the explosion
the erosion
 trees fall
 fish die
 so, will I?
skeletons locked in closets
graveyards within homes
 words scar the soul
 fists scar the life
memorize and analyze
the lie tumbled forth
All this to be conquered in one night?
in one day?
in one life?
I step from the edge
clouds roll in
images soften
fade

Katharine Statham

Evening's Discord

When evening at its loom
Sits weaving eternal mystery
I run by the mystic tailor
Howling my psalms of fruitful impiety
I harmonize with blasphemy, I
Crooning the high notes of heresy
And nihilism accompanies us
 On murderous lyre.

John W. L. Toivonen



Christopher Kelley

Trucks

i went to school
trucks were driving through the halls
i left school

KJA

Anguish, My Sister

clenches top and bottom teeth
without a motion, but a twitch
hidden by a windy shadow
from the outside. staring eyes
follow the divorceful soul-mate's car, pulling away
leaving her to sit by the front window, peering out.

clearing space beneath her feet, she
traces patterns in the dust,
thinking that she really must
begin to clean the house a bit,
and not only for an occasional guest. stepping
toes collect powder like a dry sponge or mushroom. she

squeaks the floorboards underfoot
and moves into an unlit room,
occupied by piles of boxes,
disused chairs and mason jars.
A spot of reflecting green, nearly hidden by the
dark, touches and pulls her forth to kneel and contemplate. she

pulls a rag across the gritty
surface of a mirror which,
sometime in my sister's past,
had seemed to be a larger thing
than its tarnished old frame would allow, ornamented
with rococo gilt but scarcely an arm's length across.

like a rake, her dustcloth slides
across the hidden surface glass,
peeling off the cobweb strands
and years of gathered, snowy dust,
the most of which remains a constant field of no color,
choking a libertine nature of light reflection.

Jonathan Lawson



Jonathan Strohl



Jonathan Strohl

To Mother Whom I Still Haven't Completed a Poem for

Salmon, slate and rose those are the colors
of mother.

I am her charcoalsmudged purple, bluegrey
bruising awkward.

See how gentlerocking grace-she-glow
Quiet worries slysleeping from gossamer smiles

Remember her shatterheart surfacestrong
for childcrackling brainbruises.

Does she know I saw?
I saw gossamer tear opening
I saw her dreams turn tears rotcracklings

Does she know I knew
Sever must before binding
and destroy before building?

Now, is the binding of Motherlove,

I, tonight again refrain
my sobclinging voice from proclaiming,
"Hear now! Know my Daughterlove, Mom!"

She sleeps sound
does not understand,
my loveranting tears.

Amy Hurka



Maria Lara

Charlottesville

A white-coated doctor walks down the misty street
stethoscope in pocket, smoking a cigarette.
A bald man moves stiffly in a leather blazer.
A white-capped sailor, looking apologetic,
bows his head into the spray.
Huddled in a cracked leather jacket,
Charlotte sits in the delicatessen window,
knots her long hair into loose braids
chews on a thumbnail
takes sensuous drags on a Marlboro.
She gazes out the window as if
staring at the sea.
I did not fall in love with her
until I saw her red boots.
Her coffee long finished,
she wandered out into the wet
her backpack slung over one shoulder
a pocket open to catch the rain.

Dave Thomas

Tracers

Jet-black beach night.
no moon, no sand,
no light from man
pierces the pitch.
Bodies vanish in the void.
Stellar show of shooting stars
in the perfect dome
that is the night sky.
Drawn-out majestic tracers,
and some so short
that they are sensed, not seen.
Hours pass as the heavenly flashes
go by as often
as cars on a midnight highway.
Again under the same dome
now daylit in squinting bright blue
I realize that I made
not one wish.

Dave Thomas

Hungry and Broke.

A true story

Tonight the poet (i.e. me)
sits beneath the Tum-Tum tree,
and contemplates . . . the meaning of life?
Zen Buddhism?
Existentialism? No,

pizza. And laundry,
Piles of dirty laundry
which haven't seen sunlight since October.

Moonlight wafting down towards earth,
reminding me of days gone by, cliches gone by,
and waffles.

Big yellow wafting waffles.
Free big yellow wafting waffles.

Free. Buy one get one free.
Free Nelson Mandela.
Free while they last.
One per customer.

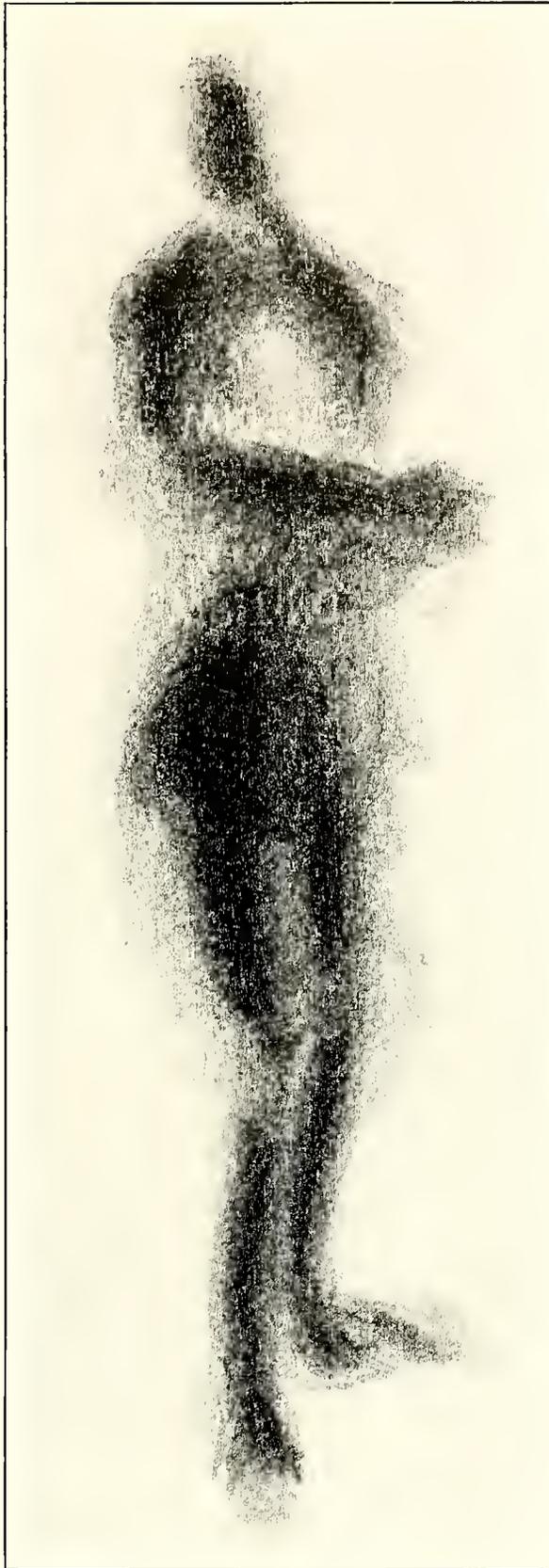
Free the pushcarts.

Heath D. Hart

With All the Dignity of Baron Ochs

A poem is a parade. I think continually today of that poet who, live, scampered around the campus looking lean, melancholy, horny, stuck forever in his thick dumb indiscriminate adolescent grope. A poem is a parade sometimes of one only, twinkling thighs and wiggle, and death stops mattering more than any other memory: he loved Rilke--symptomatic--and late Viennese music, but surely secretly the oompah Strausses too, bump-thumping in the Biergarten, their big paunches draped with yard-wide gleaming serviettes. A poem is a parade, marching like circus animals and acts, get me from the train on time to the ring and I'll juggle with the best will in the world, big grin so friendly when I drop the dumb-bell you won't give me the gong, after all is said and done, a poem is a parade, specters dancing through a Scandinavian landscape, head poet leading the pack, Big John M. or Master Will, and there they all go, Edgar Guest, Auden, Yeats, Whitman, Felicia Hemans, Robert W. Service, I love a good bad poem as much as any good rich dirty joke, Jarrell, Plath, Sexton, talk about suicides, Berryman. A poem is a parade that starts with drumbeats, then the beauty queens, then horses strutting, then the clowns with pushbrooms. Poem is a parade down no Wall, no Main Street into the wilderness, poet no pillar of smoke or flame. After all. The poem is the parade.

Shirley Anders

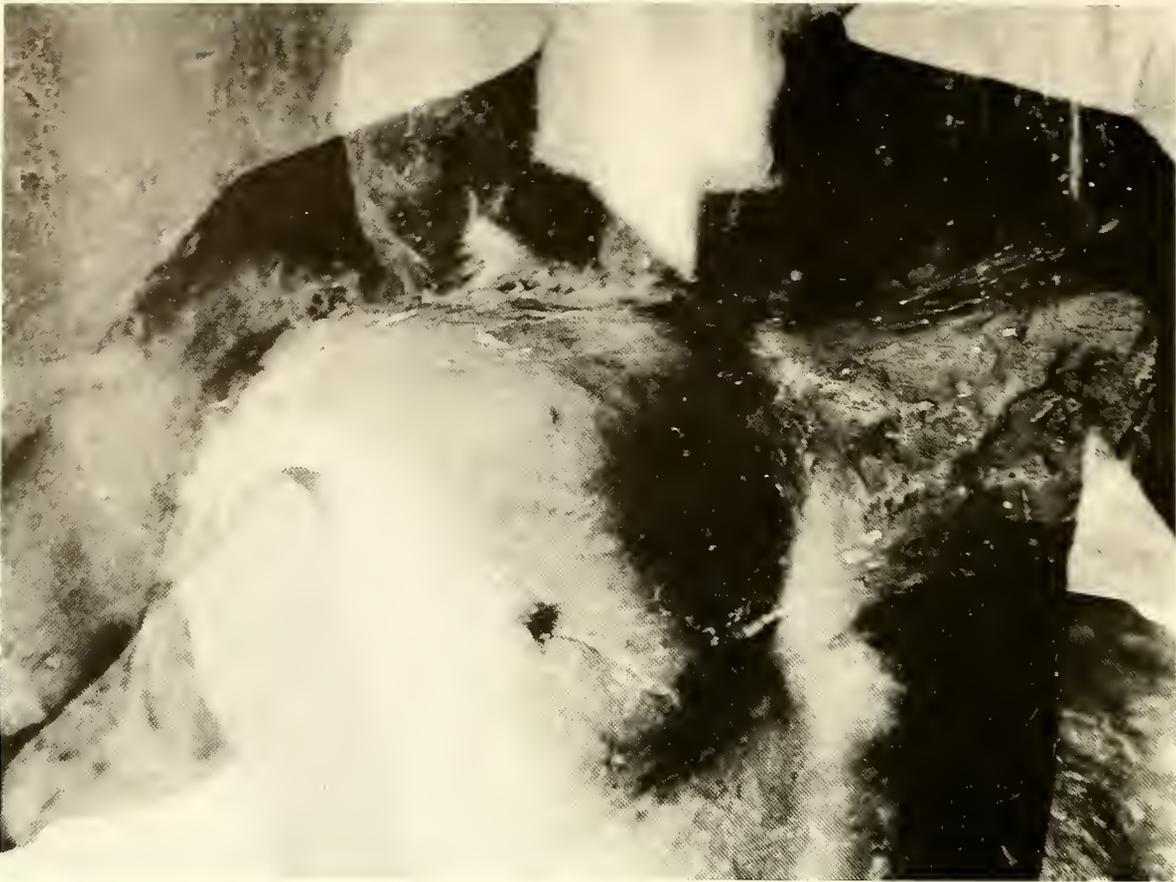


Rachel Paar



Colette McShea





Steven Charles Reichert

A Quick Thought

I wonder if there is any joy
in feeling the splitting of flesh
the splinter of bone
the splatter of warm blood
which slowly runs down the
face

 and is caught
 in the many wrinkles
 of such a face
 as that which would
 do such a deed
and still be able to smile
creating the small canyons
in which the red river of life is caught

I wonder if smashing a head
is more fun with a wooden handled ax
or a rubber handled ax
 it seems the wooden
 could not be less
 for the vibrations should
 run throughout
 and create
an almost sexual sensation
at which one would like to smash again.

I wonder if to love is as dangerous as to kill.

Kara Ikenberry

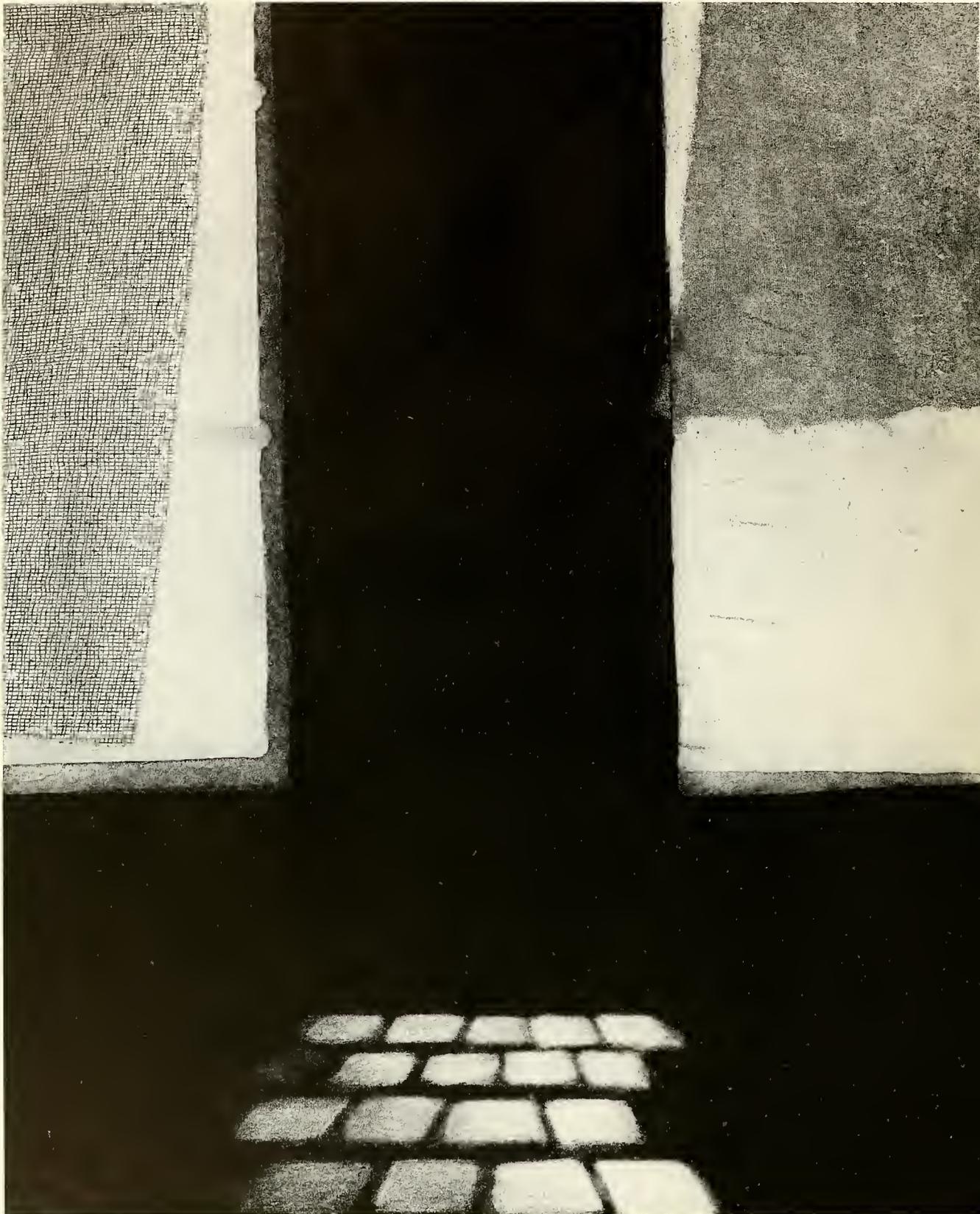
When we drove
through the black iron gate
guarded by stone lions
to Grandfather Hall's plot,
the lambs and cherubs
and Jesus on the cross greeted us.

Grandmother and Aunt filled tin buckets
with rusty red water from the pump
and Cousin and I jumped
from stone to stone
until Auntie told us to
Get a scrub brush and
remember where you are.

We sprinkled trisodium phosphate
on the weather stained stones and
made rivers, lakes, and foamy waves.
Our hands turned red and still we scrubbed
the white marble at Granny's feet.
We took a break, chewing on the sweet pithy
stems of tall fescue
until Auntie saw us.

At lunch, we ate cold fried chicken
and listened to Grandmother's stories
and what kind of flowers
she would bring tomorrow.
Cousin and I curled up next to Mary Ellen
b. 1786 d. 1789
and dreamed of heaven.

Anonymous



Window Abstraction

David Adam Robinson

A Midnight Challenge

A biting cold as I enter
inside an outdoor refrigerator.
She entices me in and challenges me with
Quick intermittent cold gusts at my face.
Freezing moisture gleams on the grass,
a field of diamonds,
fueled by the light of the setting moon.

Rubber sneaker
entering the diamond field
causes the grass to crackle and creak.
Moaning at the intrusion the cold struggles
but unleashes a final assault of quick thrusts of air.

Opening a door the warm rushes out into the cold.
Struggling a barrier is created as
I slam the door. Unremorsefully having ended the
challenge, I grin and undress as the unfeeling cold waits
for her next chance to cool me.

Jonathan Strohl



Merry Moor Winnett



Maria Lara



The Fool of Hampson Street

This is your corner. We all know it.
Not even the mayor of New Orleans would take it away.
Smiles fall out of the hairnets you've
hidden in matchboxes.

A car once stopped and teenagers honked
and jeered. Your quiet crooked composure
silenced them. They drove away as if
they had just taunted God.

Keeper of string and lost things. I
would not sell a single one of your pencils.
I know a relic when I hold one. I
reckon a saint by his smile.

Alice Owens-Johnson

Steven Charles Reichert



Steven Charles Reichert

Upon Bertha's Clothes

When in her Polyester my Bertha goes,
Oh, oh, I imagine how far and thin grows,
the elasticity of waistband clothes.

Upon catching her bottled in her tights,
quickly, I flee with excruciating fright,
From Medusa or Grendel - - worse than night!

Robert Jones

Scarlet Blossoms

Scarlet blossoms
make a necklet for
farewell
but do not ask
for valentines –
I am a house of
cards myself
and the queen is laughing
at our trivia

Demetra E. Gates



Jeff Grubbs

Leroy the Genetic Artist

My buddy Leroy's an artist
He's never held a steady job
He's a starving artist.

He's not a regular kind of artist
He don't write, don't act, don't paint, don't sing.
He does dance, though
 He does the genetic tango
A biological waltz that's rendered him
 9 soft-fleshed masterpieces.
And each with a different collaborating artist.

My buddy Leroy's proud of his work
When he's not busy at the pool table
 He's out visiting
His 9 galleries.
 This is Leroy's town.
Each gallery's only a bus ride away.

I don't see Leroy much lately
They say he's immersed in his work.
 Churning out another masterpiece.

Leroy's a famous artist
Some artists claim he's the best.
 One even screamed
"He's rev-olu-tion-ary!"
I'll take her word for it.
Leroy and I could never collaborate.

Leroy works real hard
 He gets results
He has a reason for living - - a passion.
 He's an artist.
 And what's best - - - -
His work is government sponsored.

John W. L. Toivonen



Merry Moor Winnett

Editor	Demetra Gates
Copy Editor	Diane Negra
Layout Editor	Kim McCollum
Art Editor	Adam Robinson
Assistant Art Editor	Jonathan Strohl
Typist	Miriam Collins
Advisor	Shirley Anders

Editorial Staff:

Jonathan Lawson, Kara Ikenberry, Vicki Lyall,
Patricia McCarthy, Julie Coffin, Tom Riddle,
Katharine Statham, Jonathan Strohl.

The *Piper*, the Guilford College literary magazine, is published twice yearly, and welcomes poetry, prose, art and photography to be submitted to P.O. Box 17712 or to the Publications Suite in Founders Hall. All rights to works included in the *Piper* revert to the authors and artists upon publication.

The Spring 1988 *Piper* was printed by the Greensboro Printing Company. Peggy Clapper acted as liaison to the editorial board. The typeface chosen for the spring issue is the Zapf family. Titles are in Zapf Book Demi, poetry is in Zapf Book Medium, and bylines are in Zapf Book Medium Italic. The text paper is #70 Patina White. The cover is #65 Tomahawk Cover, Seafoam. Title page image is by Todd Owens.



