

RENAISSANCE 1995



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RENAISSANCE

the writers' and artists' magazine

of

Wayne Community College

Goldsboro, North Carolina

Volume 11, May 1995

RENAISSANCE

is dedicated to the memory of

Patrick Keyes Humphries

1967 - 1994

1994 *Renaissance* Short Story and Poetry Award Winner

AWARDS*

Cover Design ~ Michael Fortson
Debbie Biegun
Betty Jo Godbey
Hasan McBride
Kevin Jenkins
Deb Martorelli
Carl Thomason
Cheryl Call

Art ~ Michael Fortson
Poetry ~ Thomas Doyle
Short Story ~ Leland Walters
Essay ~ Michael Russell

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*Recipients of Cash Awards from SGA

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Acknowledgments

Liberal Arts Faculty
The Foundation of Wayne Community College
Student Government Association
Goldsboro Writers' Group
Patricia Turlington's Basic Drawing Students
Lynell King

Media Department
Grace Lutz,
Ruth Bailey, Marjorie Murphy
Henry Boney, Howard Searles

and
to

All Artists and Writers Published Herein

About the Cover: Self-portraits were done by the following students under the instruction of Pat Turlington. Starting in the upper left hand corner of the front cover and moving clockwise: Michael Fortson, Debbie Biegun, Betty Jo Godbey, Hasan McBride. Starting in the upper left hand corner of the back cover and moving clockwise: Kevin Jenkins, Deb Martorelli, Carl Thomason, Cheryl Call.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

For Patrick	1	Marian Westbrook
Diva	2	Michael Russell
Maybe Next Tuesday	3	Thomas Doyle
Old Man, Come Down Off That Mountain	4	Brenda Crouch-Piner
Not Thought Onion	4	Suelinda Obermeit
Tunnels	5	Michael Fortson
Countriflying Pollyanna	6	Thomas Steves
Walks	7	Kitty Sauls
Morning Glory	7	Victoria Turton
A Fat Girl's Fantasy	8	Carol Lautier-Woodley
Sleeping In	8	Debra Martorelli
I Feel Like A Brown Bag	9	Charlotte Freeman
Staring out the Window While It Snowed	10	Scott Ervin
Snow Scene	10	Brenda Crouch-Piner
Boy in Snow	11	Michael Jackson
My Daughter's Ballet Shoe	12	Betty Jo Godbey
Of Memory and the Muses	12	Carrie Ditzler
Good Night	13	Mike McIntyre
Reflections	14	Scott Hardy
Infinity	14	Michael Fortson
Sunset	15	Thomas Doyle
The Magic of You	16	Brenda Crouch-Piner
The Message	16	Sandi Watson
That Which Defines, Confines	17	Carol Lautier-Woodley
Untitled	17	Caroline Martinez
Dr. Seuss	18-19	Thomas Doyle
Sweet Sensation	19	Consuelo Bryant
Kiss	20	Michael Fortson
Part of Me	20	Karen L. Hinson
My First Piano	21	Kaye S. Holmes
Diamonds	22	Debra Martorelli
The Dark Side of Town	23	Carrie Ditzler
Handle with Care	24	Amy McCall
Sleeping Baby	25	Kyra Baker
When My Mother First Saw My Father	26	Rosalyn Lomax
Chocolate Peanuts	26	Rosalyn Lomax
Pillow	27	Michael Fortson
Mischief in the Eyes	27	Daniel Moody
102 Lonely Street	28	Wendy Perkins-Blais
Flight	29	Hiram A. Grady
Soils of Life	29	Michael Russell
It Rains	29	Melody Williams
Sunflower Seeds	30	Grace Lutz
Sunflower	30	Betty Jo Godbey
The Case of the Paranoid Priest	31-34	Leland Walters
Poor Man's Pocket	34	Mike McIntyre
The Vacation from Hell	35-36	Tom Luten
Chair	36	Michael Fortson
A Response to the AIDS Seminar	37	Missi Stevens
The Thinking Bucket	38	Erin Burrige
Escape	38	Deborah Biegun

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Perception	39	Jai Kosko
Timelessness	40	Catherine Nassef
Krystal Nacht	40	Justin York
Nobody's Kid	41	Jai Kosko
Dueling Blake	41	Michael Russell
Deck Shoe	41	Mike McIntyre
Hiding Places	42	Deborah Biegun
Life in Perspective	42	Tony Joyce
Why? Why? 1995	42	Charlene Davis
Math and Agribusiness	43	Kemp Teague
Oak Leaves and Acorns	44	Cathy Snovel
Dyer's Greenwood	44	Cathy Snovel
The Stranger	45	Myshel Anderson
Phantom of the Opera	45	Debra Martorelli
Midnight Murder	46	Amy Norris
Color Blind	47	Eric Wooten
Research Refugee	48	Michael Russell
A Bad Memory	49	Forrest Mewborn
Sunflower	49	Michael Fortson
Wedding Day	50	Darin Heitman
Epitaph	51	Tony Joyce
Going in Circles	52	Melanie Payne
Fire!	52	Heather Edgerton
Joey	53-54	Tina Triplett
Out West	54	Debra Martorelli
Windmills of My Mind	55	Deborah Biegun
What Goes Around	56	James Summerlin
Leaves	57	Betty Jo Godbey

FOR PATRICK

That morning, before I heard the news,
I felt something pulling me out into the open.
The air was crisp and cool, the day bright with promise.

A voice inside me said,
Go out there, take in all this beauty,
Suck the nectar from the flower of this day,
Lap up the delicious pleasures it offers.
And I yielded to the hypnotic power of the voice.

As I returned from my walk
I passed a field covered in weeds and wild flowers.
Black birds swooped down.
I thought of your poem "The Field" that I like so much.
I felt a lightness in my spirit, a joy I could not name.
I was buoyed up by something or someone that day.

Was it your spirit
"Inviting me to unburden myself,
To abandon all projects and concerns
And seek some peace of mind
Amidst the thistle and Timothy grass"?

I like to think it was.
If so, Patrick, thank you for that gift.

Marian Westbrook
English Instructor

Editor's Note: *This poem was written for and read at Patrick Humphries' memorial service. The lines quoted are from Humphries' poem "The Field," which was published in the 1994 Renaissance.*

DIVA

Michael Russell, College Transfer

Recently I visited my Aunt Lillian Leigh. She was lying incontinent in a cold, antiseptic hospital room, suffering from numerous smoking-related illnesses. The sound of her labored breathing and my guilt filled the room. It had been a long time since I had last seen her. So in essence I paid a farewell visit to a once lovely and vivacious aunt. On the long return trip, I recalled the strong impression she made on a small child many years earlier.

She had an alcoholic-slim body and reached five feet and nine inches in heels. Her hair was BIG. She was a chemically-induced blonde and over the years a victim of a self-inflicted perm. However, she usually had a standing Saturday morning appointment where the harlots of hair down at the blue gingham Kountry Kurl did their tricks' tresses. In order to keep every faux-blonde medusa curl in place, she abused hairspray. She loved hairspray. Aunt Lillian used so much that her hair was as hard as an Etruscan helmet. The fallout from the gaseous choking clouds was probably directly responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer. Anyway, her follicles were a monument to "Miss Breck"—an encrusted page-boy of high perfection. Once she mocked, "The higher the hair, the closer to God." As she aged, she was a platinum beacon in a sea of blue hairs.

In contrast to such an ostentatious hair "style," my aunt's manner of dress was more subdued. I thought she was a model right from the pages of a woman's magazine. I remember a family New Year's Eve party where she wore a "little black dress" cut from velvet with built in "push 'em up, head 'em out" cleavage cups, white kid gloves, black pumps, alligator bag to match and a single strand of inherited pearls. The only other accessory was her cigarette.

Aunt Lillian enjoyed smoking; she had her own

patented method. First, she opened her small, sterling-silver, monogrammed cigarette case and delicately selected a cigarette—one that she had cut and rolled herself. Then she snapped the case closed and gently tapped the end of the cigarette on the case. Next, she placed the packed cigarette into a black ivory holder and lifted it to her painted, waiting lips. She ignited the carcinogenic stick with a few quick puffs. Then, she locked the cigarette holder into place with her teeth and quickly sucked the smoke, popped the butt from her mouth, and tilted her head to the side while discreetly expelling the smoke from the corner of her mouth. When my aunt was not actually smoking, she used the cigarette as a conversation prop à la Bette Davis. She twirled, rolled, and flicked the cigarette while gossiping over an "All My Children" episode or discussing the finer points of irony. And she loved to tell funny stories.

Her stories were funny, too. Aunt Lillian was a gregarious Southern woman. She had a resonant laugh that sounded as if she were gargling with gravel—no doubt from all that smoking. And her wit was like a scalpel—fast, clean, and intensely civilized. She was a woman of breeding. (She never put dark meat in her chicken salad.) However, she was not stuffy. She followed the conventions of her ancestry as long as they didn't conflict with her contemporary notions. According to family lore, my aunt was at a very formal dinner party where a young guest mistakenly drank the contents of his finger bowl. Without hesitation, my aunt drank the water in her own finger bowl. She was always concerned for the welfare of others. She had a genuine mother-love for me and all her nieces and nephews.

As I turned into my driveway, I felt sad for just a moment, but then I realized that Aunt Lillian breathed every breath of life until she could breathe no more.

MAYBE NEXT TUESDAY

If I stop thinking
will it be sublime?
But I can't think about it
I've stopped mid-line
Keep thinking thinking these thoughts
a thousand thoughts per hour
Can't stop now
I don't have the time
not now or...

Maybe next Tuesday
I'll have some time
to sit back
and dissect my life line by line
but now I ponder
the reason of this sign
"There will be no parking...
anytime"

What was it that I would have liked to say?
If the whole world collapsed around me,
would I be better off dead?
But now I hide away these thoughts
of mass affliction
and connect the dots
for I would hate for you to suffer
my congenial addiction.

You look at me sheepishly
and I wonder why.
Have you seen me before,
or would you like to feed me a line?
you get smaller in my mind
day by day
until the time I walk away

Everything comes around in due time
What's last is last
and what's mine is mine
I would have thought you were
much smarter than that,
but all you seem to do
is suck away the fat

You know, I think it's my perception
of the things at hand
Which taints the objects
in my grandiose lens
And when it comes to something of report
What makes me the better man
to point out the lesser sort

You see, I'm thinking a thousand thoughts per hour
Perhaps I need
a rather cold shower
and why was it,
that you were looking at me that way
and what was it
I wanted to say

My lapel
is on my collar
If I had ten dimes
would it be a dollar?
or just ten dimes
Well I'm afraid
I think these thoughts
all the time

Istanbul
or is Stan a sheep?
If Stan was
would he be really meek?
I think it has something to do
with being a Taurus or an Aries
In compromising situations
Solutions vary

Damn I wish
I could stop these thoughts
they don't make much sense,
but they're all I got
Reminds me
of what Cleopatra said to Jones
"It's a game of chance,
you just roll the bones."

Thomas Doyle
College Transfer

OLD MAN, COME DOWN OFF THAT MOUNTAIN

Old man, come down off that mountain,
Your days of moonshinin' are gone,
No more the keen wolf's howl
Or the far-off hoot of the night owl;
Come down off that mountain.

Come down to the city,
Down to civilization,
Living like a sardine in a can,
No more fish frying fresh in the pan;
Old man, come down off that mountain.

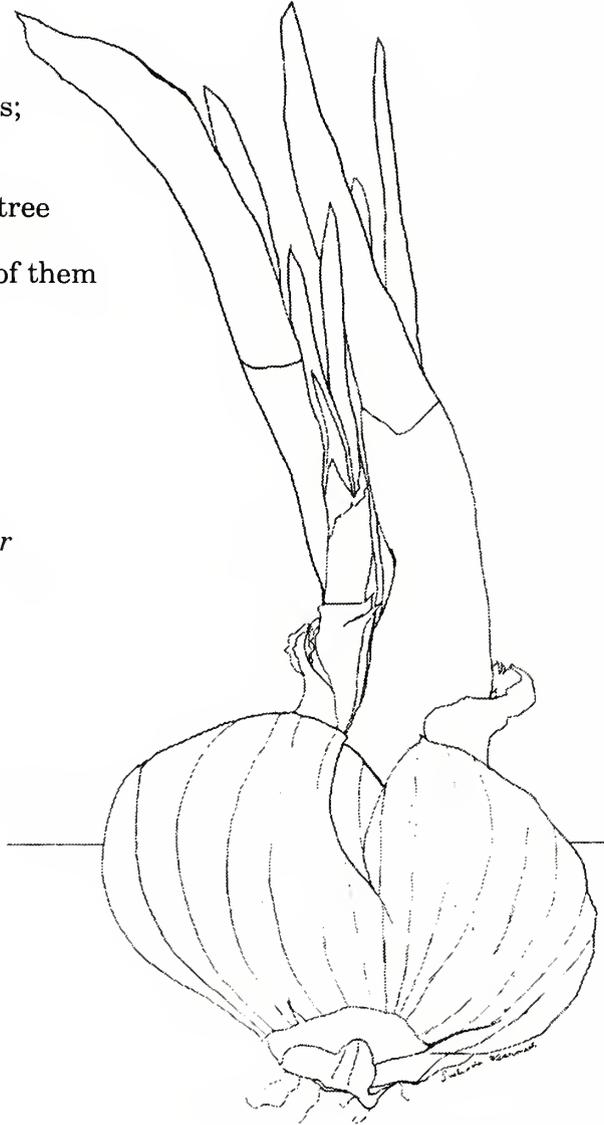
You're old and grey,
Your locks are long and tangled,
Your wife dead many a year
And your children gone to richer pastures;
Old man, come down off that mountain.

I've seen you hunt the squirrel from the tree
And the deer from the forest
And you can pull a trout the best of any of them

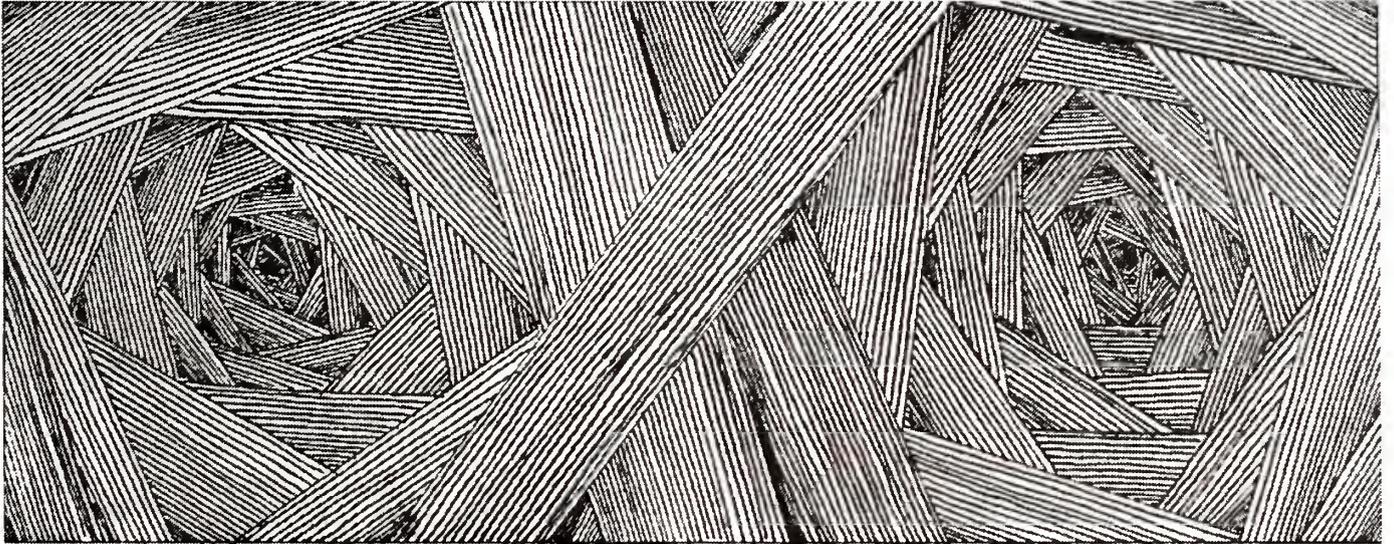
But your time has passed;
Come down off that mountain.

"Not I, my son,
Not I."

Brenda Crouch-Piner
College Transfer



Not Thought Onion
Suelinda Obermeit
College Transfer



Tunnels, *Michael Fortson*, College Transfer

COUNTRIFYING POLLYANNA

Thomas Steves, Forest Management Technology

Pollyanna spent most of her life on the lake front of White Lake. She was more accustomed to sand and surf than to the farm surroundings in which she and I presently live. I sometimes wonder if she longs for her former life, but I think not. Is it possible not to love the beauty that surrounds us on a farm in the springtime?

Pollyanna could not possibly be lonely since we have many winged neighbors like bees, butterflies, and birds. The bees also seem pleased to have our company. Each time I go outdoors, squadrons of curious yellow-saddled, antennae, flying bodyguards escort me. They put on shows of mock aerial combat for my enjoyment. They hover within arms' reach, motionless, save for the blur of impossibly small black wings and the steady droning hum they produce. They seem as interested in me as I am in them. They follow me in comical stop-and-go flight paths, not intimidated in the least by my shooing, which only increases their interest in me as I wander about on the "lawn," a country euphemism for a diverse collection of flowering weeds.

The dandelions, which were loathed in Pollyanna's urban life, are in their glory here. Unaware of their infamous reputation, they proudly form luxuriant blankets of translucent cotton balls when viewed from afar. Close up, each seed pod becomes a large-scale atom, a dimpled nucleus surrounded by a perfect sphere of hundreds of feathery electrons. When I am feeling mischievous, I wade into them like a playful animal, kicking their electrons out of orbit, sending them flying into space, and leaving a corridor of cosmic destruction in my wake.

The real wonders of nature become apparent when I observe, on hands and knees, the delicate miniatures that otherwise might be overlooked. Nestled among shiny green blades, I find tiny, intricate, rich purple cone-shaped flowers not much bigger than a pin head at which I marvel. Also

within sight, great clumps of feathery fern-like yarrow leaves protrude conspicuously, just beginning to form their dense rosettes of small pure-white flowers. Higher up, on the six-foot perch of an ancient fence post, a clematis stretches wide its eight double-layered variegated petals to form its half-foot diameter, multi-colored flower. To be even more inviting, it scents the air with sweet perfume. When my mind is numbed with sensory overload, I rest beneath the trellised grape vines where encircling wisteria on nearby pines have obligingly dropped their petals to form a great purple mattress on the soft earth.

Nearby sits the old barn. Overlooking this entire scene for nearly half a century, it is a testament to the skill of its builder. Weathered and paintless, it has gone over a decade since its builder died with a thought of maintenance. Still, it resists the ravages of time, weather, and insects. It shows its age, however, much like the widow whose garden tools are stored within. Evident are the sagging lines of its once straight skeleton, the occasional missing piece of siding, the crumbling masonry, and the wrinkling of the tin roof.

Living in the country has given us a fresh perspective of beauty. We have relearned that there is much more to appreciate about anything than merely how it looks. I think Pollyanna is happy with her new surroundings. When I come home to her after school, enter her front door, and relax within her comfortable interior, I think, if she could talk, she would tell me, "I love this country life as much as you do."

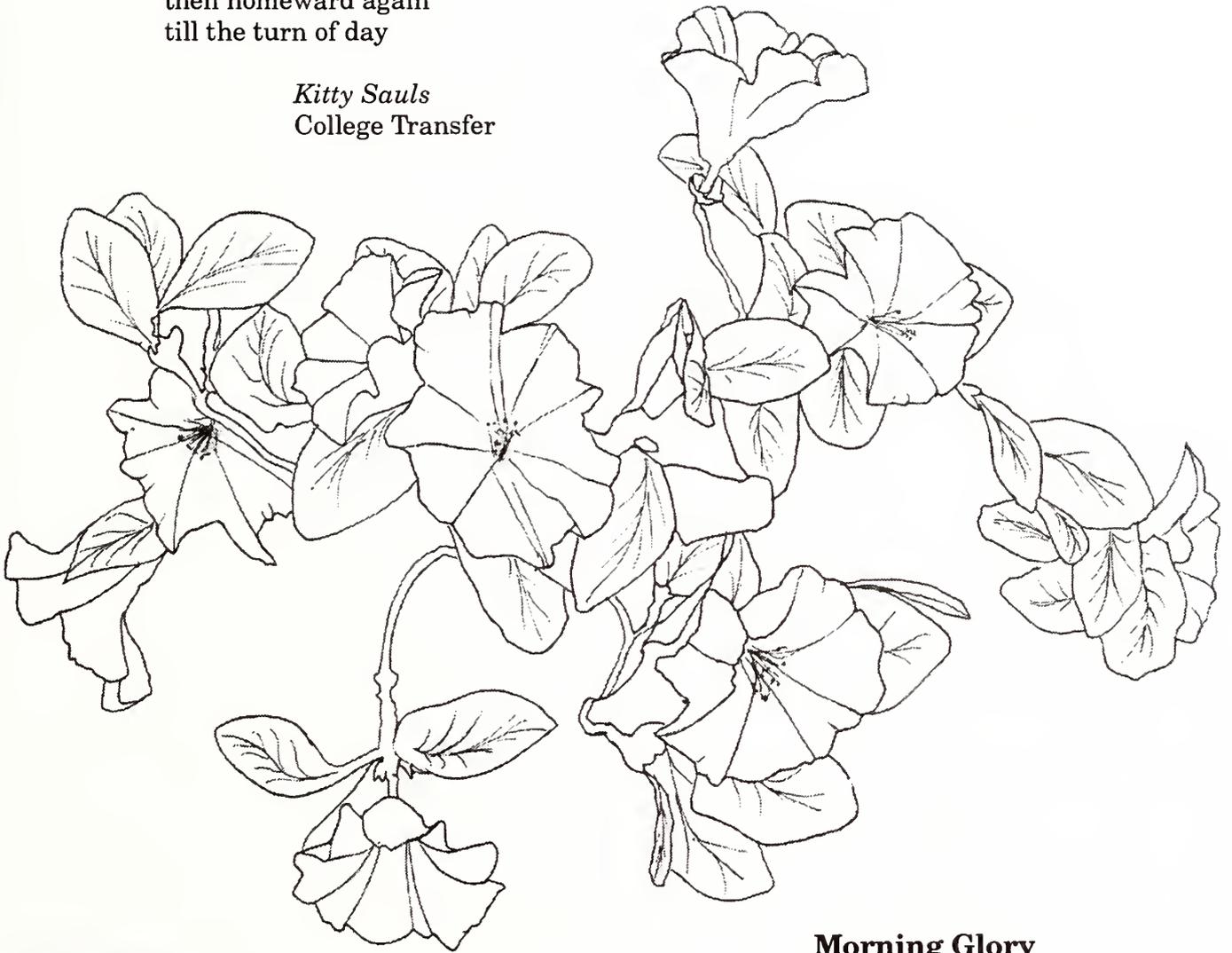
Author's personal note:

In keeping with my penchant for naming significant objects in my life, I named an orphaned camper that I found at Camp Clearwater on White Lake Pollyanna to symbolize my eternal optimism as I begin a new life.

WALKS

Walks...
long sultry walks
through trees with slants of light
on roads of dirt and rocks
across bridges over sleepy creeks
where an occasional turtle bobs
by fields dotted by butterflies
under flights of bluebirds' songs
up hills steep and wide
around curves
past plants that trumpet flowers
by homes and heritages
till a pause to refresh
then homeward again
till the turn of day

Kitty Sauls
College Transfer



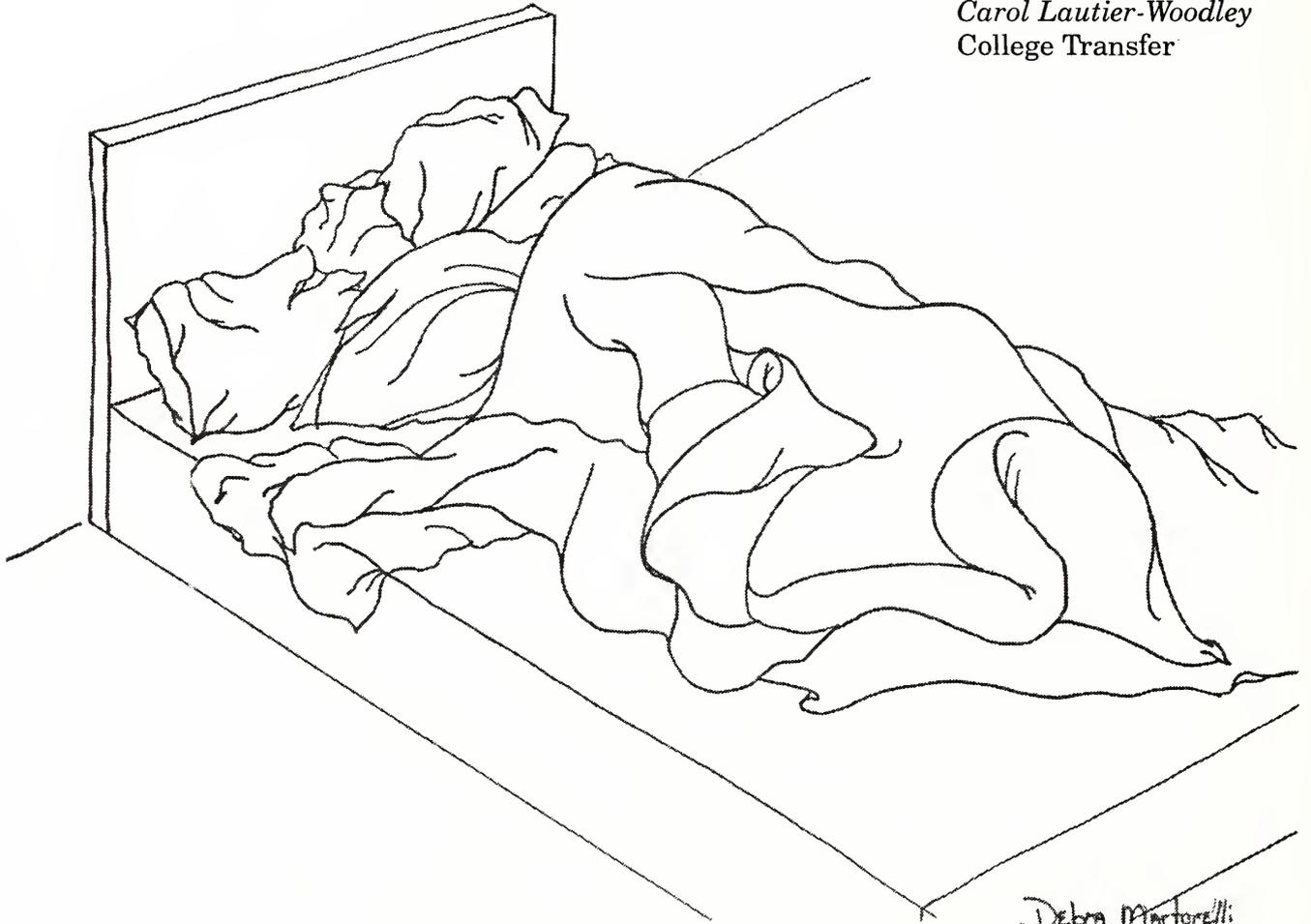
Victoria S. Turton

Morning Glory
Victoria Turton
Medical Office Technology

A FAT GIRL'S FANTASY

Had I been
20 lbs. and 10 shades
LIGHTER
You would have
fallen to your fickle knees
to ask that I SHARE
(AT LEAST) your bed
(If Not) your life,
And a candlelight dinner or two.
You would have
come to me quickly
When I entered a room
So that no one else could take my side.
You would have smiled to our friends
And yourself.
As I left, you would sigh
"I'm so glad she's mine..."

Carol Lautier-Woodley
College Transfer



Debra Martorelli

Sleeping In, *Debra Martorelli*, College Transfer

I FEEL LIKE A BROWN BAG

A Reaction to Zora Neale Hurston's "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"

I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped against a wall
sometimes, happy, just trying to be all I can, trying to be me

I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped against a wall
Against a wall in company with other bags
White, red, and yellow and small
Plastic bags, recycled bags, plain bags, even elegant bags
hmm...that think they have it all

I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped against a wall
If you were to pour out the contents
There you'd discover in
The plastic bag, usually nothing for real, fake stuff
everything covered you'll see...
In the recycled bag, a length of string, a rusty
knife-blade, wasted old shoes saved
for a road that never was and never will be...
In the plain bag, there is a jumble of small
Things priceless and worthless, some books and papers
A dried flower or two still a little fragrant waiting
for some love and encouragement, sounds like me...
Then there's the elegant bag; its contents are
a fresh-water diamond, mostly empty spools, bits
of broken glass, some things of class
which the other bags can't match, indeed...

I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped against a wall
sometimes, happy, just trying to be all I can, trying to be me

There are just all types of bags, every bag has its
wrinkles and jumbles
Whether recycled or elegant a bag, it has its
bumps and tumbles
You can put in a little of this or take out a little of that
But if that's how the Great Stuffer of Bags wants it to be
it just wouldn't matter...

I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped against a wall
sometimes, happy, just trying to be all I can, trying to be me

Being a plain bag myself, I accept all types of bags
I don't allow the contents of the other bags to bother me...
They're allowed to contain what they will, be what they want,
Just be free,
I just try to worry about what's in my bag and
Stay nice and strong...
So I can carry whatever load, no matter how heavy,
on, and on, and on...
Really though,
I feel like a brown bag of miscellany, propped up against a wall
sometimes, happy, just trying to be all I can, trying to be me...

Charlotte S. Freeman
College Transfer

STARING OUT THE WINDOW WHILE IT SNOWED

(Mrs. Lomax got glassy, and I thought it was wonderful)

Wide-eyed like
A child in a candy store
Overwhelmed in anticipation
The most beautiful sight
Neither flake nor flight
But the joy in her eyes.

Scott Ervin
College Transfer



Snow Scene, Brenda Crouch-Piner, College Transfer



Boy in Snow, *Michael Jackson*, Microcomputer Systems Technology

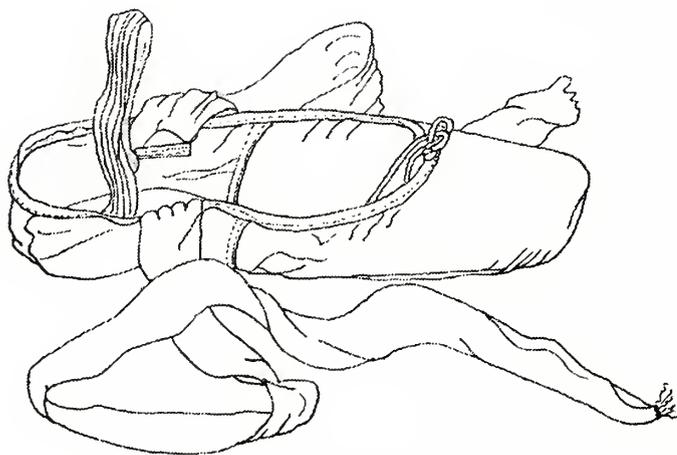
OF MEMORY AND THE MUSES

Carrie Ditzler, College Transfer

Nine mystic dancers glide across the moonlit sea. Their weather-worn clothing illuminates in the pale, translucent mirroring of liquid shadows. They crawl out of their wombs to recapture the embryo of life. In the mist of the fog, their eyes glaze, and their bellies tickle with the freedom of the Soul's bright beauty. Like two clouds ready to expel a liquid passion, they float across the horizon to meet the deadly stare of the imagination. Arranged in a pile of chaotic memories, their minds ache as they try to recollect what amnesia has stolen from them. Like a thief of sentimentality, this loss of memory covers the Spirit in a warm blanket of thorns. The injection of madness and the strike of delirium within these thorns alleviate an unknown daemon into forgotten musings. The expanded mirror flashes a message of purifying glory. The darkness is killed, and like an assassin in search of naivete, the Sun attempts to find a path to cross.

O'er the hills and far away are lost woodlands of the mind. Cluttered are these mental forests. This is where Terpsichore laughs in Hades' bright fire, where Calliope climbs the wings of crying doves. This is where Euterpe leaps from the reflection of Diana's silver shrouds, where Thalia whispers silence to a heart that beats a lion's roar, and where Erato seduces the sleeping eyes of innocence. This is where Polyhymnia awakens the dead with an enchantress' breath. This is when I light the candle for Clio, Urania, and Melpomene. This is why I have danced with Apollo and the Muses, but I do not dance to the marriage vows Of Peleus and Thetis.

These dreams are the echo of life and the laughter that awaits with the very last breath. Time climbs through the vines of unknown Gods, empty and lost in these scattered, dust-plate woodlands. This is the closet of the mind...and all that remain are the shadows of what was once known as Time.



My Daughter's Ballet Shoe

Betty Jo Godbey, College Transfer

Betty Jo Godbey



Mike McIntyre

Good Night, *Mike McIntyre*, College Transfer

REFLECTIONS

Scott Hardy, Criminal Justice

After twenty-plus hours working on a paper about *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, I explored not only Dorian's soul but also mine.

Behind my house is a small wood that doubled as a natural habitat and as my playground. With a glass of apple cider, I stepped outside to enjoy the glorious fall weather. As I sat on the back porch, I noticed the changing colors of the woods and took wonder in the splendor of God's most beautiful month. Before I realized what I was doing, I was halfway across the field that spans nearly thirty yards to the woods. I was led by some unseen force or siren to those woods. I had not been there in several years, but when I was a child, my cousin, my dog Blackie, and I spent every waking hour in the woods building forts, clearing paths, fighting wars, exploring rocks, and catching crawdads. I spent so much time there that I felt as if I knew every tree by name.

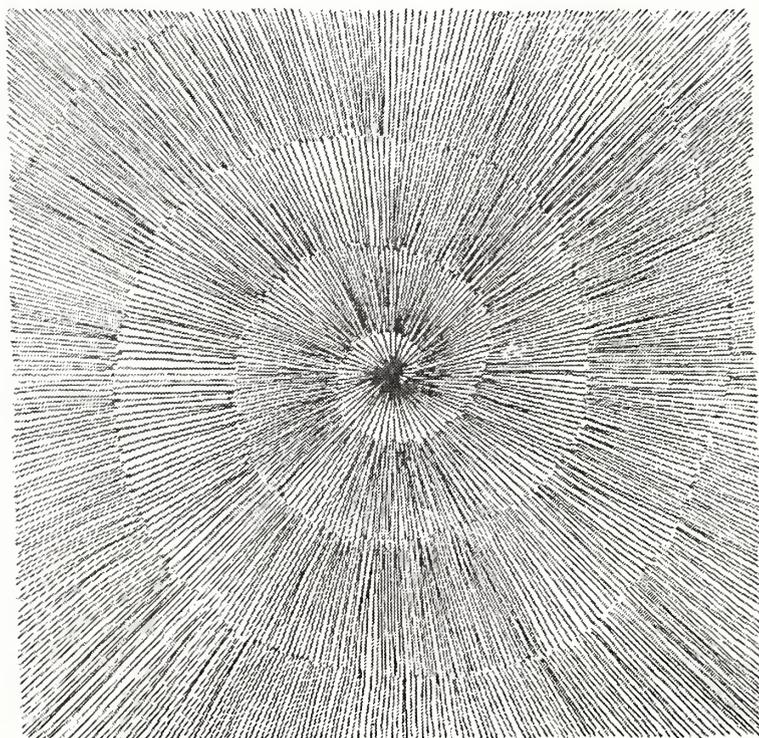
When I got to the woods, I still knew every tree, for they had all changed very little. However, the undergrowth of the woods was too thick to even walk through since it did not have our constant pruning. The sparkling stream that once coursed through the woods was now nothing but stagnated water where debris had fallen across and hindered the flow of its water. I stared into the same stream

I had stared at so many times before and looked at the reflection of a man I did not know. The last time I had looked at the water, a boy had looked back. I walked around the outer edges of the woods and found the tree which bore my cousin's, Blackie's, and my initials, but I could not bear to look and see if they were still there. So I didn't. I decided it would be better if I always thought they were still in the bark of that beech tree, still gleaming yellow and easy to read—just as the day I carved them. Soon I found myself on my knees in those woods, near tears, wondering where all of the time had gone. It was then that I knew what Dorian was thinking. It is horrid to grow old...to lose imagination...to lose Santa Claus. I will never be able to get back my childhood or to have things return to the way they were.

There in those woods I was filled with the care-free and innocent days of my youth. Blackie is dead, my cousin has moved, and I am a man going to the police academy. Yesterday is gone. Then I remembered one of the pieces of meteorite I had hidden in the woods. I found it—still in the same spot where I had left it—still looking the same as the day I had hidden it. Some things do remain. I ran back home, chasing the doves out of the fields.

Infinity

Michael Fortson, College Transfer



M. Fortson

SUNSET

Thomas Doyle, College Transfer

I'm not wearing a black turtleneck, just jeans, a tee, and a barn jacket, taking care not to be noticed as I sip my hot chocolate reading through the *Triangle Review*. I come here because I like the smell of coffee but, unfortunately, not the taste. The atmosphere is relaxed, philosophical, and intellectual; however, I keep my philosophies to myself and have no desire to express my intellect. I am content watching the azure sky and sipping my chocolate. The autumn sun is parting behind me though I can't see. I can tell, though, by the way the brickwork all over the campus is setting fire. I fold the paper and set it aside, having gleaned only a couple of dates to announce over the air tonight. I watch the splendor transcending. My thoughts drift, and I remember that I am alone with no one to share this with. I ponder why.

I think about the ones who came into my life but became shades—only alluded to as back-burner relationships. I have yet to feel the same longing for someone as I did for her. When I think of her, it sickens me to think how weak I was, playing games for the sake of her attentions, afraid of admitting my feelings, recalling how she always smiled when she called me annoying; she always smiled. We talked of things of both import and triviality; we were always interested, yet I could never bring

myself to do it—just ask her. It was as if she belonged in another world where rain only comes to make one new and whole again. The years flew past, and we grew away, my longing replaced by the form of another, my longing replaced in that last year by my loss of identity as I learned that I was not my mother's child. My longing was replaced by the first of many doomed relationships.

The last year ended with rain as we walked the last walk and moved on. There is not another like her as there is not another like any other person in this world; and that is why she was and is so special to me. People are so different, endless sea of variation and turmoil, so much chaos and yet when one belongs so much orderly chaos. For a time, I felt as though I belonged; now I master my forgery of interpretations as I play out my life with others' music and find some hollow gratification which is a mere caricature of my being. To think that the drama without substance might continue this night within my box of lights and sounds where I am heard, but not listened to! But for now, I am sitting here sipping my chocolate with my perceptions of the past as the sun moves on, and the forecaster on television predicts rain.

Perhaps I shall have company this night after all.

THE MAGIC OF YOU

Hand in hand upon the sand
we walked along the beach;
the ocean was green as glass;
the foaming breakers were white and high.
I kissed your smooth cheek
and tasted your soft lips.
Your eyes were blue and dark;
I saw the world within,
and you offered it to me.

You said,
Let me live with you
and be your love
and you shall be as the wild bird
and come to my feeder
to fill and refresh yourself;
or maybe you said,
let me be your dove
and bring you my love
and we'll live on olive branches and wine.

But whatever it was,
it was swallowed up in the moment,
and it lasted all day.
For we were together all day
and the words flew by
creating a magical sphere
that contained only us two
and one small child
dancing among the waves.

I wanted to put your words in a treasure box
like I captured your picture in a camera
but somehow both missed the essence of you
and only an echo remained;
but within my heart
I can see you, feel you and hold you
and I do
often.

My memory
recreates the magic of you anew,
so my wondering heart can embrace you again,
and my eyes can rest themselves in yours
and my ears can hear the melody of your words.

The day was green and gold and blue,
and all day long
the sea and the sand and the sky
framed the picture of you
and captured the spirit of the Great Love you bore me.

Brenda Crouch-Piner
College Transfer

THE MESSAGE

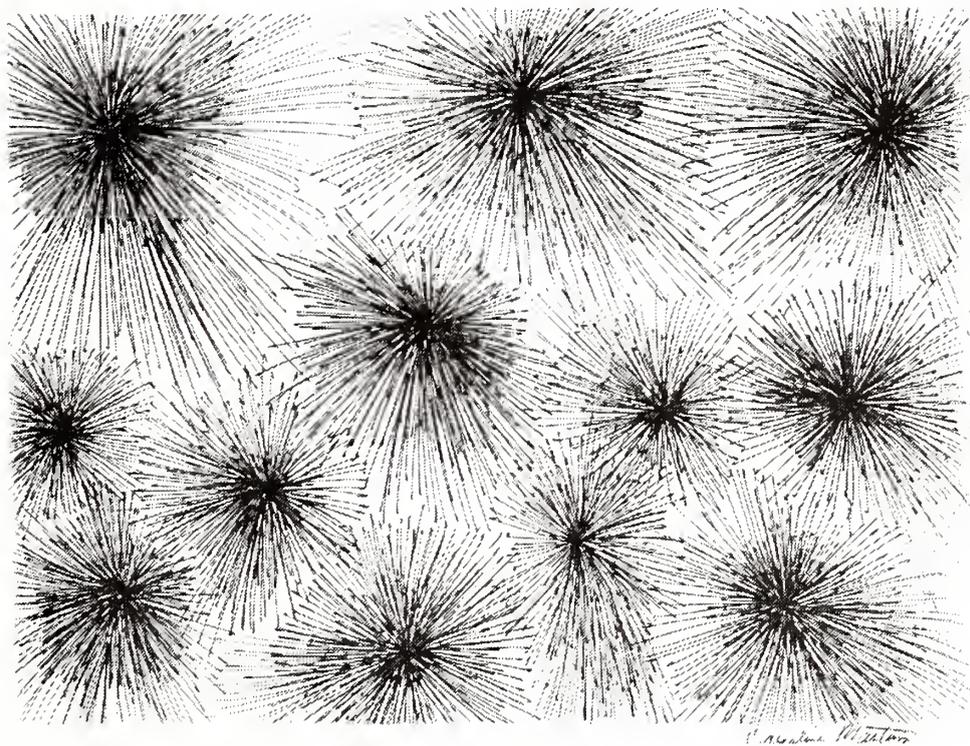
As I stand on the mountaintop
On a warm spring morning
I see the wind blowing and making
low whispers
I slowly ask myself
is someone speaking
Why yes, the sun shines bright
And the wind blows slowly
I watch the trees in their deep
green color
And see the daffodils dancing
I sense a message that I cannot
Hear through words
Only whispers by the wind
As I stand on the mountaintop

Sandi Watson
Dental Hygiene

THAT WHICH DEFINES, CONFINES

If Saturn could open up her big, bright arms
And stretch out her big-woman's thighs,
I think she'd firmly plant her feet
In the deep plush darkness
And flick stars toward heaven with her toes.
With burnt orange fingers,
She'd giggle and tickle the
Full belly beneath her rings,
Tightly wrap her long digits around
Those colorful mysteries,
Then lift herself up,
Push herself over
And leap
From the confines of her definition
With bursts of laughter blazing
Like comets across the midnight sky.

Carol Lautier-Woodley
College Transfer



Untitled, *Caroline Martinez*, College Transfer

DR. SEUSS

You know...

Once perhaps when I was five

Okay maybe ten

I formed my own philosophy

On how life begins and ends

or shall we say is

or was

or is, if the following applies

in some thermodynamic, Metaphysical, Quantumized,

Algorized, Analyzed assumption for a theory.

Perhaps I should explain the circumstances concerning my enlightenment first

Somehow, don't ask me how

I Thomas Charles Doyle had a blackout

I used to have them all the time,

probably from exhaustion due to playing in the

extreme heat and humidity of the Philippines

where we were stationed during Dad's tour of PACAF

But, I had this blackout

which we have established occurred frequently

and coming out of a blackout

I had the same experience;

over, and over, and over, and well, we get the picture;

in fact or truth whichever you take more seriously

what one may call as seeing stars

was actually more like staring too close to

the Sony Trinitron tube and seeing the little

green, red, and blue picture elements

floating around in open space

In fact looking up from my Amdek AM/815 monitor

which is capable of better than SVGA resolution

I can see those little buggers now floating

like little Pucks

over a pyre

of some

unfortunate

lost soul

singing

we will guide you

to where you've been

for what you've seen

is a sin

of corporate flesh

and its resolve

to capitalize

on one and all this is the life

that you have led

But then that's merely my imagination
and not a philosophy is it

So when I would see these little suckers
floating about

I would think to myself
and exclaim with a shout

because Dr. Seuss was the greatest literary mind of my
generation at the time

when I was nine

or was it ten

I was flim-flammed boozled

so I'll start again

A boy not buoy

we know so much about

had a great revelation

so gave a great shout

I've done it

Oh yes I have!

I've done it

and for that I am glad

I have discovered a bit-blown excised peace of me

Along with my ability to divide by three

So come and gather come close surround

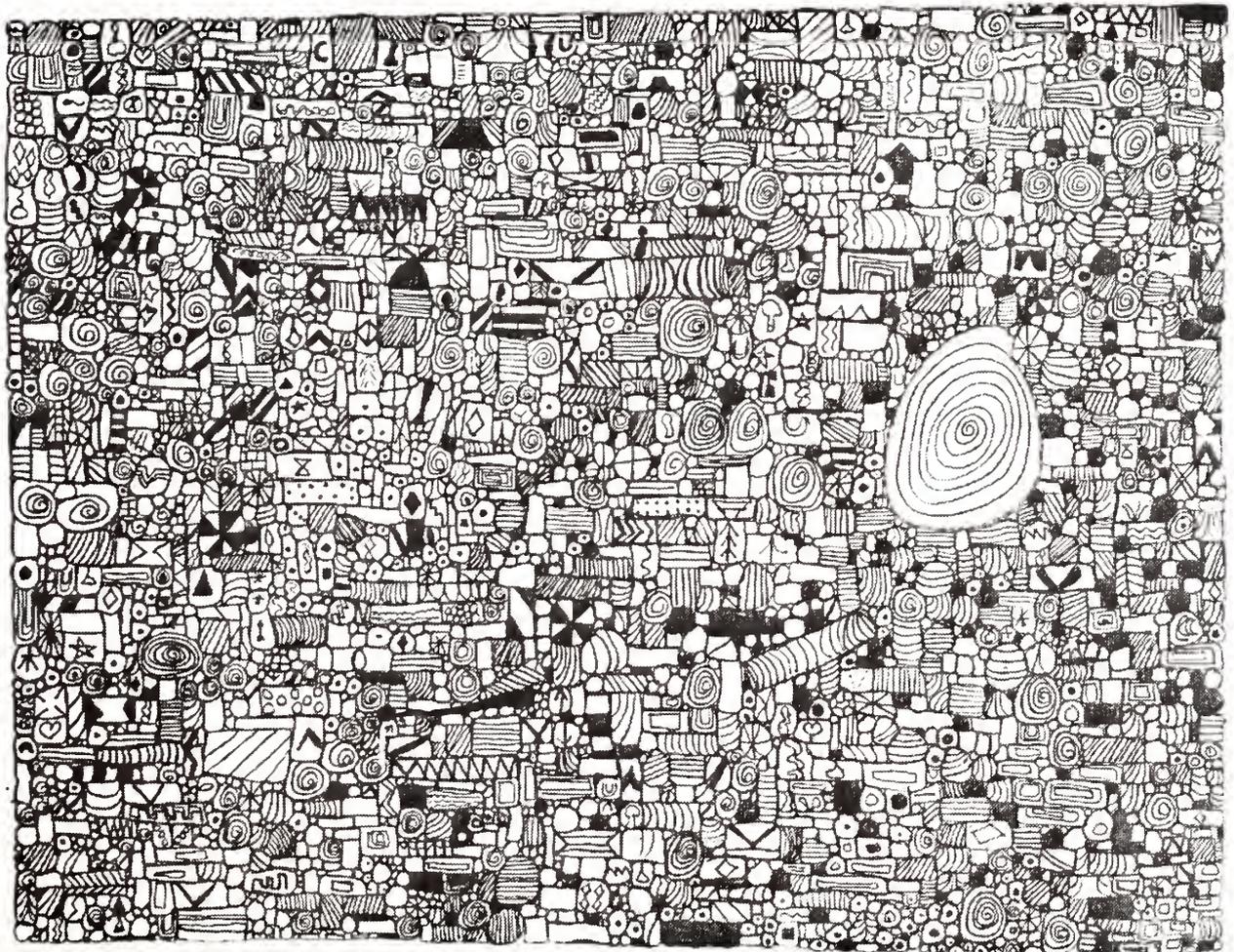
and listen to theory quite firm and sound

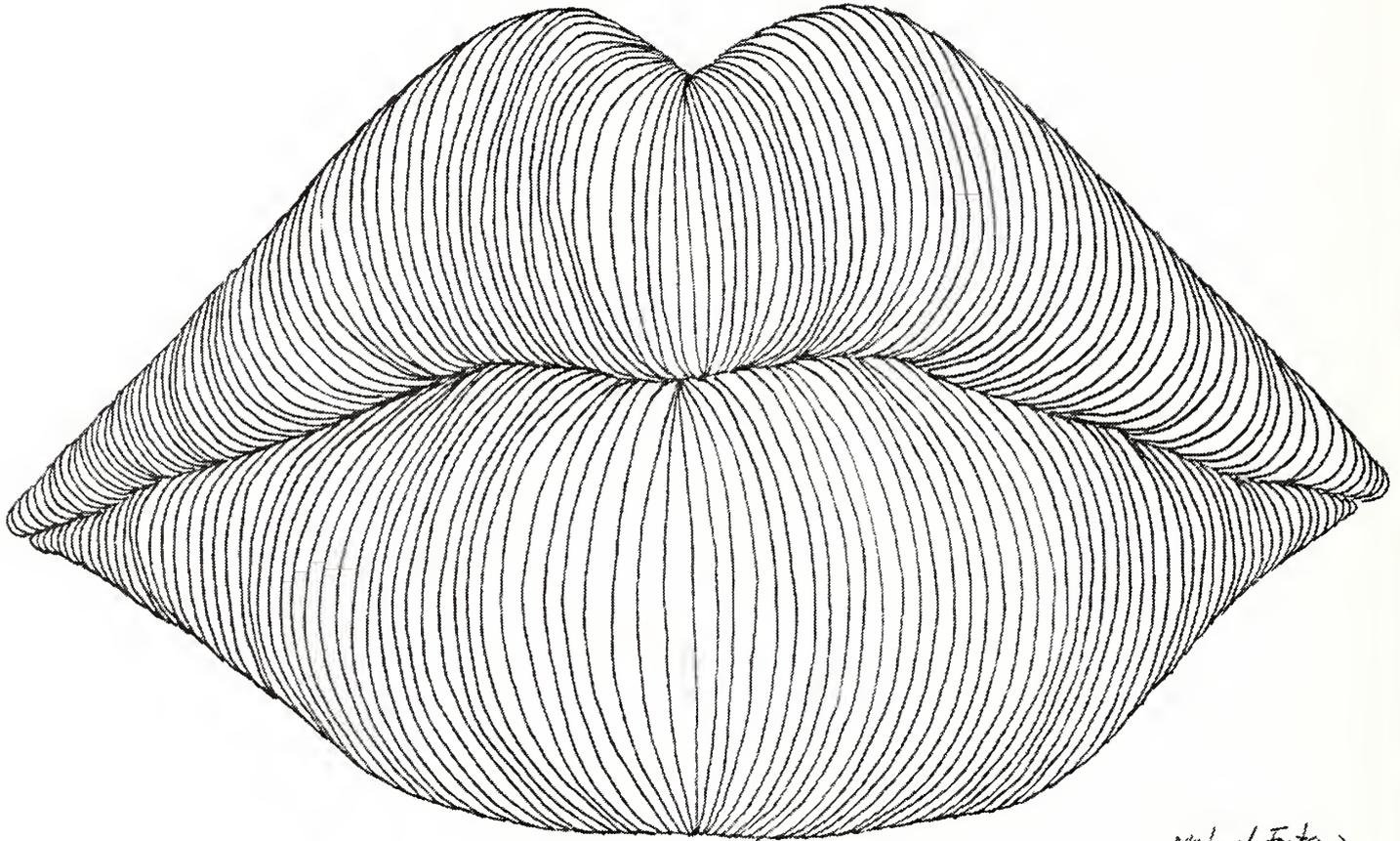
I have discovered you see the essence of life
or rather how the universe is constructed so bring your wife
to listen to my tale a mere boy of ten
learn of how, why, where, and when
The universe is a multiverse infinite in scope
imagine small and large and everything between
and you'll have a picture of what I mean
not everyone has just one medium size in mind
everyone has a picture of what is should be
but no picture imaginable describes everything to see
for one fits into another on and on infinitely
and this I say is how things are to be
nothing akin nothing alike
but all aligning within one another so nice so trite
endless circle until small eats large in endless day and night
where everything I mean everything is just right

Unfortunately my views no longer hold sway
Over popular opinions mastered over today
but it was nice while it lasted being so right
and sleeping all too comfortably late at night
with Dr. Seuss by my bedside.

Thomas Doyle
College Transfer

Sweet Sensation, *Consuelo Bryant*, College Transfer/Human Services





Michael Fortson

PART OF ME

I often like to say aloud
Lines and poems I've memoroud.
I write them down and often glance
At words and thoughts now
 memoranced.
Wells of joy and comfort too.
I need them in my memoroo.
So I write them down and every
 day
I recite these words from memoray.

'Tis silly now, I do suppose,
To carry lines I've memorosed.
But they've become a part of me,
These things I've put to memory.

Karen L. Hinson
College Transfer

MY FIRST PIANO

Kaye S. Holmes, Administrative Office Technology

When I was a little girl, I had this big dream of having a piano of my very own. I was only nine years old, but I knew in my heart that my dream would come true someday. On a Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1954, my dream became a reality.

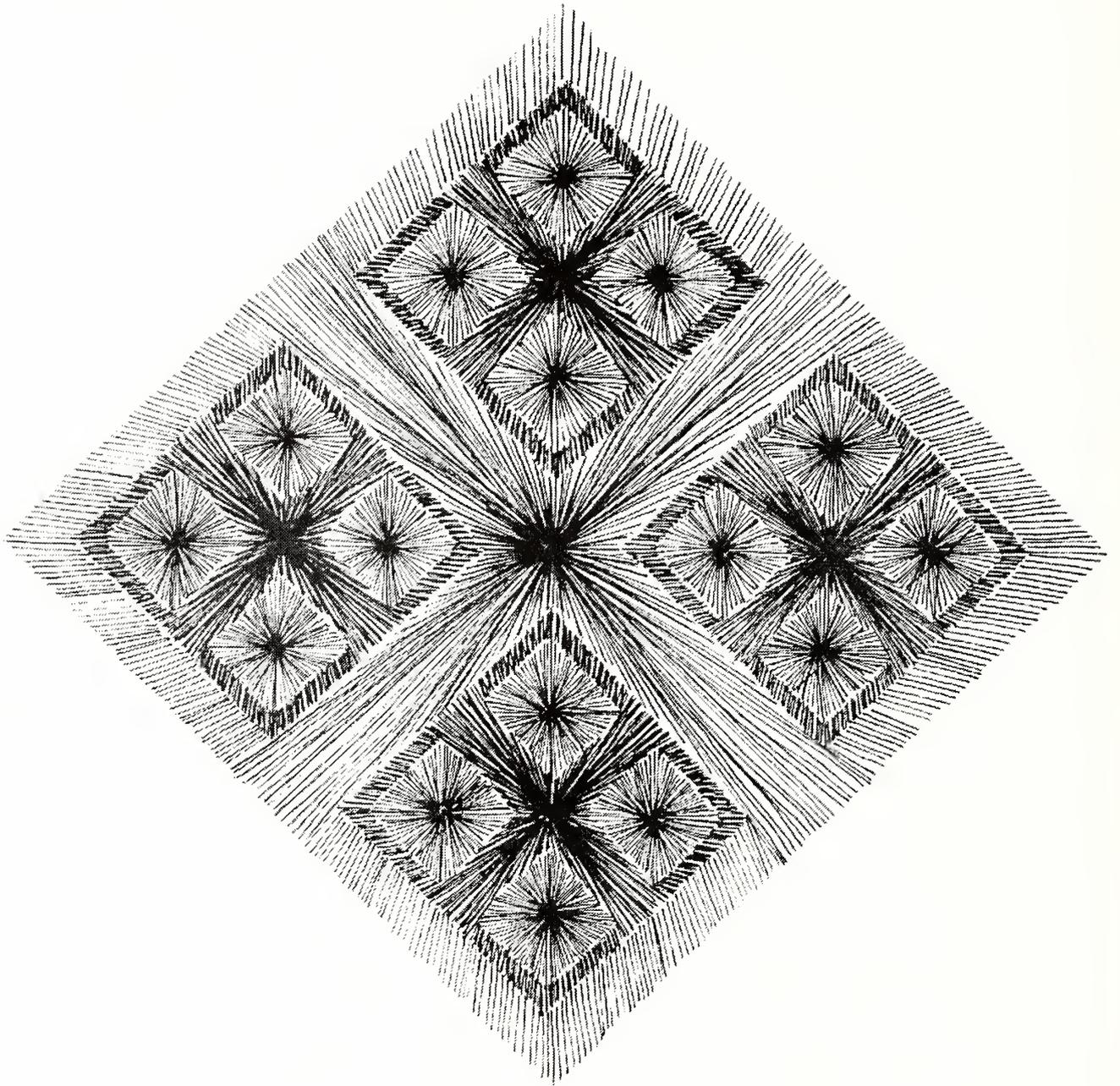
I searched our local newspaper ads regularly, hoping to find an ad for the sale of a piano. However, it needed to be for sale at the right price. Several weeks passed, and I was beginning to experience a feeling of disappointment. Finally, an ad appeared in the classified section of our paper. Mrs. Inez Ginn had a piano for sale in Calypso about five miles from my home. Although the ad did not state the price of the piano, I knew I had to see it. Maybe she would accept the fifty dollars I had saved during the summer by working in tobacco on my uncle's farm.

Even though I was very young, if I worked smart, I could hand bundles of tobacco to the looper. Each week I saved all of my earnings, with that dream of owning a piano in my mind. On many occasions I had asked my parents for a piano, and they would explain to me once again that we could not afford one. Nevertheless, my dream did not fade. I had fifty dollars and the ad for the sale of a piano. How would I get to Calypso to see the piano? If I could afford to buy it, how would I get it home? Where would I put it in our small house? I had to have a talk with Mom and Dad. My dad could not understand why I kept talking about a piano. Anyway, I had a bike and roller skates! Enthusiastically, I told my parents about my savings and the ad. I pleaded for permission to buy the piano, and finally, I was granted permission.

Papa, being my grandfather, would gladly listen to my dreams. He shared my love of music, and I was sure he would understand my yearning for this piano. He often played his fiddle late in the evening as the sun set, and I would dance to the lively tunes. Music was like magic. Music made me feel happy. These times we shared instilled in me the desire to play a musical instrument, and the piano was my choice. Papa owned a truck, and I saw this as the answer to my transportation problem. I walked to my grandparents' home, clutching the newspaper ad in my hand. I told Papa about my dream and how I knew in my heart this piano was meant to be mine. My excitement was conta-

gious, and Papa immediately called Mrs. Ginn for directions to her house. Off we went, just Papa and I in his old pickup truck. We soon arrived at Mrs. Ginn's house, my heart racing with anticipation. She invited us in to see the piano. Actually, it was not very pretty. It was an older, self-player model that someone had painted an ugly shade of brown. In the front, sliding panels opened, and I could watch the hammers and strings work together when the keys were played. I loved it! Incidentally, I still did not know how much money Mrs. Ginn wanted for the piano. I told her about my dream to own one, my summer job, and my savings of fifty dollars. She said fifty dollars would be a fair price. I had purchased a piano!

Mr. Ginn helped Papa put the piano in the back of the truck, and we started for home. I kept my eyes glued to that old piano, fearing it might fall off the truck before we reached home, but we arrived with the piano unharmed, and I was extremely happy. However, we had another problem to solve. Where would we put such a large piano? After much discussion, the decision was unanimous. Dad, Papa, and my brother carefully unloaded the piano and placed it in my bedroom. I sat down at the piano. My fingers lovingly glided over the keyboard. One by one, I played each of the eighty-eight keys to make sure they all worked. Having satisfied myself with that, I began to play hymns from a hymnal that belonged to my cousin Judy. She had a piano and had taken lessons. However, I had spent a great deal of time at her piano with her beginner music books. Consequently, I had taught myself to play the piano. My parents had not fully believed me when I had told them I could play the piano, so they looked at each other in disbelief as I played hymn after hymn. Everybody wanted to hear a favorite hymn. The house was soon filled with music and singing. My father was so proud of my accomplishment that he offered me the opportunity to take music lessons. On that nice summer Saturday afternoon, my dream of having my own piano was no longer a dream, but a dream come true. I could see it. I could touch it. I could play it! It did not matter that it was not pretty or new. It did not matter that it was slightly out of tune. I loved it just the same. I will never forget the day I purchased my first piano with my very own fifty dollars.



Diamonds, *Debra Martorelli*, College Transfer

THE DARK SIDE OF TOWN

Stuck in a one-room apartment
Upon the outskirts of prosperity
The signs upon the postered wall
Declare that the world is ending

In that one-room apartment
With no furniture left but a bed
With such glorious arrangements
And positions of great imagination
The red velvet flashbacks
Of a white hot night in New Jersey
Reveal the painted ladies
In the image of a mirrored ceiling
In the dark reclusive alley
The howl of a wildcat clamors
The growl of a madman whispers
While the winds create their own rhythm
As the streets turn blue to red
As the flash of a trenchcoat murmurs
As a siren incessantly rambles
As a burglar repeatedly scrambles
Upon the outskirts of the dark side of town

In the one-way street games
In the Juniper smell of success
Lies a dead corpse against a shattered window
By the old county reference desk
And the only way out of this mess
And the only way into this world
Is to leave off the traces of nothing
And to stop your existence from escaping
As the fingers fly at the twist of the knife
The fragrance of death emerges as a savior
To the stench on the outskirts of town

Carrie Ditzler
College Transfer

HANDLE WITH CARE

Amy McCall, College Transfer

Staring at the handless limb of the stranger next to me, I wondered what it must be like to live without the ten digits many people take for granted—myself included. Looking at my own stubby hands, I considered the many things they have done for me.

As a toddler, unable to speak, I communicated with my hands. When I raised them to my parents, they understood I wished to be held. Pointing to the cupboard that revealed my favorite snack, I made them understand I desired a dill pickle. During the preparation of evening feasts, I would bang my hands on the tray of my high chair in order to express my impatience to eat.

As I became older, I used my hands for many other purposes, including expressing my feelings for my family and friends. Every morning, I would wave one hand to my mother as I walked down our driveway on my way to school. My other hand grasped my younger brother's as I led him protectively to his kindergarten class. At school, one of my friends, nearly in tears, would come to me for understanding. Unsure of what to say, I would pat her back in order to express my concern for her feelings.

In high school, I learned to use my hands in new ways. I communicated anger and frustration as I pushed someone out of my way or raised my middle finger in response to someone's comment. I also learned the language of the deaf. My father

and I used this as a secret code since most people could not read our signs. This lack of understanding was demonstrated at school as my fellow pupils would walk away from me in exasperation, unable to understand this foreign language. Needless to say, this was not the best way I had discovered to use my hands.

Later in life, I found myself married. In an effort to communicate love to my husband, I would squeeze his hand as we walked, fingers intertwined. Often, I could be found running my fingers through his hair as he rested his head on my lap, exhausted from a difficult day's work. He once told me I held his heart in my hands, and if I ever left him, I would surely break it. I have always been cautious to handle his heart with care. Now, I hold my infant's tiny hand in my own in an effort to soothe him. Surely one day my child will lift up his hands to me that I might hold him. Perhaps, in the all too near future, I may reach out my hand to him, that he might, in love, guide me when my own eyes no longer can. I realize the hands are perhaps the greatest means of communication; therefore, they must be used with care. They can convey, or even betray, one's thoughts effectively without a single word.

Suddenly, I have a new appreciation for my own ten digits, however stubby they may be.



Sleeping Baby

Kyra Baker, College Transfer

WHEN MY MOTHER FIRST SAW MY FATHER

There he was stretched out
Atop a wagonload of white cotton
Which, like his own white cotton pants and shirt,
Contrasted sharply with the sight he made:
Black hair dark and shiny as coal,
Black eyes the same,
And skin already dark but tanned to darker.

It was love at first appearance.

Almost sixty years ago that was
And she changed her opinion not a whit.
His hair silvered, then whitened,
But her romance remained
With that same dark barefoot
Boy (as she still called him)
Atop that load of cotton.

I'm glad his wagon passed her house.

Rosalyn Fleming Lomax
English Instructor

CHOCOLATE PEANUTS

Every Friday
My daddy would stop at Ingall's Store
On his way home from Edenton
And buy me a small brown paper bag of
Chocolate covered peanuts.

Even after I was married
And Daddy had retired (no more Friday trips to Edenton)
And Ingall's Store had probably closed down,
He still managed to find some chocolate peanuts
Whenever he and Mama came to visit,

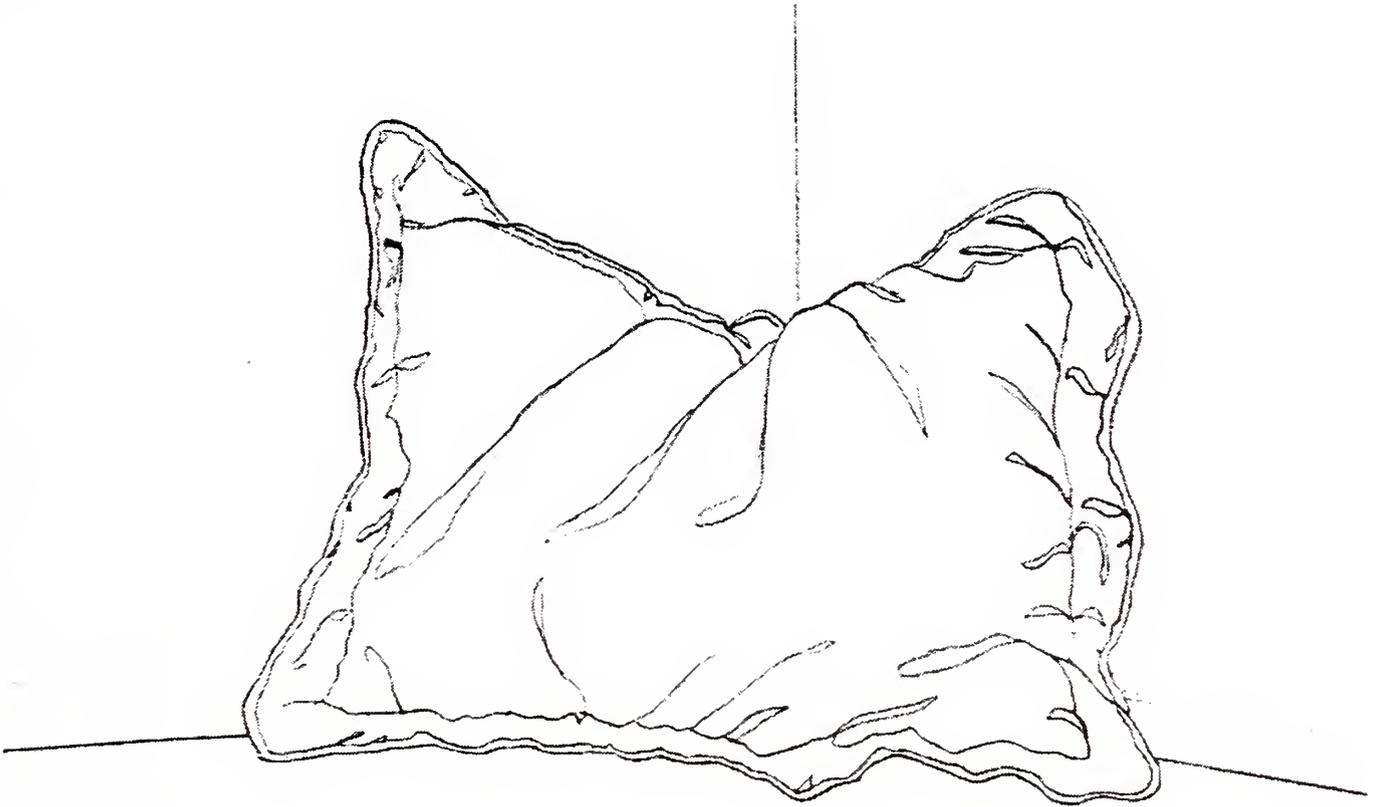
And for Christmas
He always arranged the cut glass fruit bowl
And filled Mama's cut glass dishes—
One with chocolate drops, one with orange slices,
And one (for me) with chocolate peanuts.

Our first wedding anniversary after Daddy died,
My husband tucked in with my gift
A bag of chocolate peanuts.

Today at the grocery store
Amidst the bounty of holiday items
I noticed chocolate peanuts.

Here I stand in my kitchen
Savoring my chocolate peanuts
Flavored with memories.

Rosalyn Fleming Lomax
English Instructor



Pillow, *Michael Fortson*, College Transfer

MISCHIEF IN THE EYES

Daniel Moody, Electrical Engineering Technology

When I close my eyes, you appear before me so real that I reach out to touch the wrinkled hand that tenderly caressed mine a thousand times. How strange it is! As hard as I try, our hands will not meet. My eyes meet yours, and in their sea of blue, I spot that twinkle from which mischief was born. Your mouth doesn't move, yet I plainly hear your voice easily identified by that distinct accent. This space we share is filled with sound which rises from your words, wise words, words that stimulate my memory, taking me back in time, allowing me to relive shared experiences which only add to the value of those private moments only we shared. How could I have overlooked so many things? How fortunate I am to have shared in the wealth of wisdom you harbored! Yet another sense is awakened. I doubt its existence, but my stomach recognizes the aroma...chicken frying, collard greens, pecan pies, I find myself reaching for another helping, but.... If only I could sit at your kitchen table one more time.

102 LONELY STREET

Wendy Perkins Blais, College Transfer

Ever since my husband left me, it has been difficult to find comfort within the walls of my residence. I previously considered it a place of refuge when I came home at the end of a hectic day. Now it feels like a box full of broken dreams that imprisons me in its empty rooms of intolerable loneliness.

The long winding driveway is uninviting. Like me, it shows signs of being left behind. It, too, has cried a million tears. They have carved deep gullies of sorrow into its ashen complexion. It's blemished by defiant weeds that, after being left alone, willfully do as they please. The faded cedar fence posts lean aimlessly toward the forlorn driveway. They are in search of the strong direction that my husband took with him.

The wild yard we tamed together cries out for botanical attention. The grass has numerous patches of sand spreading like cancerous sores across the lawn. The flower boxes remain barren with no hopes of springtime rejuvenation. The boxes act as the final resting place for the withered souls of oak leaves that never survived the heartless winter. The unattended shrubs that surround the entire house are grossly deformed with frostbitten outgrowth. They have grown into frightening gargoyles. The shrubs entrap the courage of any prospective romance that tries to enter the estranged house. Even the quaint workshop my husband built for himself sends out its own kind of warning. It serves as a tomb for silenced power tools, covered with a veil of ghostly sawdust and left hastily behind.

That one heart could make it through the foreboding yard and into the house is a miracle. The lock on the back door is always very reluctant to

let anyone into this house of disenchantment. Inside, the kitchen awaits the hustle and bustle of mealtime preparation. The stove misses making elaborate dinners and filling the house with enticing aromas. With my husband gone, I see no sense in cooking big meals for three girls with three little appetites.

Other rooms in this lonely house are affected by my husband's absence. The family room speaks nothing of the truth. The only traces of a family in the room are boxes piled high in a corner filled with belongings. The stone fireplace that warmed all of our chilly toes and ignited a warm spark in our hearts stands cold in the ashes of yesterday. The bedroom is engulfed in emptiness. One dresser stands by itself where there were two. The bed deprives me of rest as it covers my heart with sheets of solitude. When I look into my closet from my bed, I am overcome with astonishment. It is now as expansive as the Grand Canyon. This new infinity appeared when my husband took his piles of frowning shoes, restless heaps of wrinkled clothes that barely hung on their hangers, and stacks of shapeless baseball caps. I used to think of our chaotic closet as the Little Shoppe of Horrors that was ransacked on All Hallows Eve. The rooms of this house once spoke in many tongues simultaneously. In one breath, I would hear the babbling television, the singing stereo, and the shrieking telephone wanting my husband's attention. The house now rests in a haunting silence.

If home is where the heart is, then I am truly one of the growing numbers of the homeless, endlessly wandering the streets of loneliness in search of the shelter of a warm and tender heart.

FLIGHT

I know how it feels to be a bird in a cage,
my body bruised, my mind clouded with rage.

I often have dreamt I'm a bird in the air,
my path controlled by fluttered wings there.

I often have wondered how far I could go,
If I left this my prison, and now I shall know.

Yes, now I shall leave with the light of the dawn,
while they mourn at my body, my spirit has flown.

Hiram A. Grady
Nursing

IT RAINS

the sun so radiant on the day of my rise
in secret it rains from her eyes
down her cheeks to her feet
but my soul
it soars like thunder
crashes against the walls of dismay
ooh i wonder . . .
the rhythm of your tongue so fine
the glare in your stare so unkind
you see
don't let the beat i keep sway you
i don't surrender because i choose to
for i've tasted what moves you
the fire of your expression
remiss of compassion
and though tonight i yield
brazen as the stars
the rain it consoles me
heals my scars
it rains
it rains

Melody Williams
College Transfer

SOILS OF LIFE

Oh, Lord, I can feel
The earth falling over my head
As I crawl into an empty bed.
It is the dream I cannot shake:
I can see you standing at the cemetery gate.
If only I could sleep
And dream of sheep
That the fleeting fleece of fortitude
Prevent descent to solitude.

Michael Russell
College Transfer

Sunflower Seeds

Plant these seeds and watch them grow
Water much and before you know
They will stand tall, shining through
Big and bright just for you.

Plant yourself right from the start.
Commit yourself with all your heart.
Shining through, standing tall
Because you know you gave your all.

As God sends sun and rain
To grow this little seed, it's plain
He'll guide us through with what we need
To grow tall like sunflower seed.

"With God's love shining through"
Follow this motto, in all you do,
And like a sunflower that stands
so tall,
We will grow when we give
our all.

Grace Lutz
Media Department



Betty Godbey

THE CASE OF THE PARANOID PRIEST

Leland Walters, College Transfer

I'm Mike Abberline, and I hadn't had a case in so long it was pitiful. The dust was about an inch thick on my desk, a small ring of wadded papers was forming around my trash can, Kathy was in the shower, and Burt was snoring his butt off on the couch.

"Coffee, Mike?"

Karen couldn't keep an office real clean, but then again, that was Kathy's job. Karen made one hell of a cup of coffee. Kathy and Karen wanted to be secretaries, and they had all the requirements—great bodies that would make your back arch. The strange thing is, I hired them only three weeks ago. Being a private detective isn't easy. It takes a special breed to be in our line of work. The hours are long, the pay sucks, and you can't trust anyone as far as you could throw them. It ain't a pretty job, but someone has to do it.

It was a slow day. The hours seemed to drag by like a baseball double-header. I decided to take a walk while everyone else had something to do. I'd be damned if I'd sit in that chair and vegetate. It was cloudy and ugly outside. After a while, I came face-to-face with a woman who looked like she'd stepped out of a Playboy magazine.

"Are you Mike Abberline?" she asked.

"Yes," I said "Why have you come to see me? There are hundreds of P.I.'s in town with cleaner offices than mine."

"My husband has been murdered, Mr. Abberline. You're cheap. I'm Tanya O'Hara. Will you take the case?"

I had to think for a min—"SURE!" Hell, it was my first case in so long there was no way I would pass it up. My mind took off like a greyhound after a rabbit at Raceway Park. She was attractive and young. Judging by the way she was dressed, she was obviously tapping some major bucks. How would a girl like that get her hands on that kind of money? I got it!

She marries an old geezer and has him bumped off. She inherits the money and then hires two second-rate detectives to find the killer, who she doublecrosses, and ends up scott free.

"So, how old was your husband, Mrs. O'Hara?"

"Twenty-three."

Rats.

"So, what did he do for a living?"

"He was a priest."

"Hold on, doll. I thought priests weren't allowed to be married."

"He was a Greek Orthodox, Mr. Abberline."

"Call me Mike, please. What makes you think he was murdered?"

"He drove off Old Rocky Road. That's 40 miles away. He had no reason to be there. Besides, he was an excellent driver."

Her lips began to tremble. I took her hands in mine.

"Go home, kid. I've got work to do. I'll call you when I've got something to go on."

I went back to the office to let Burt and the girls know what happened. Burt and I went to the city morgue. It was gonna be a few days before the funeral, so the body would still be in the same condition it was after the accident. The entire story sounded to me like just a car accident. But her sincerity was no act. She really believed that her husband was murdered. She didn't know how or why, but then again, that's my job.

It was 11:00 a.m.

Walking up the steps to the morgue, we ran into my old rival, Lieutenant John Washington. Every time he crossed my path, it was bad luck.

"Abberline, Arnold! What are you two losers doing here? Looking for a client? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, Lieutenant," I said. "He's the one your blue boys shot in the back for jaywalking."

"Watch it, Abberline. I still have your investigation license."

"Oh, yeah!" said Burt. "Well, at least we know it's safe for a while."

"Watch it, Arnold. Don't push me!"

"I wouldn't dream of it, Lieutenant, unless it's off a cliff. Have a nice day."

The Lieutenant was still saying his goodbyes as we walked up the steps to the morgue. I spotted an old friend, Willie Lancaster. He's worked there ever since I was a snotty-nosed kid.

"Michael Wayne Abberline!" Willie said. "What brings you down here?"

"Hey, Willie. We need to see a body."

"Who doesn't, eh, Mike? Name?"

"Father O'Hara."

"Oh, yeah. Tough break, nice fella."

"You knew him?" cried Burt.

"Not really, Burt. I attended his church, St. Peter's. I spoke with him a few times after services."

I could tell Willie liked the guy the way he pulled out the drawer with the stiff. O'Hara looked like he'd had the crap beat out of him by the

Maulers of the Midway. I wasn't surprised. What was a guy supposed to look like when his car goes through a guard rail fence and flies over the side of a mountain? If his body hadn't been thrown out while the car was rolling, it would have been burned up when the car exploded.

"When's the autopsy scheduled, Willie?" I asked.

Willie sounded surprised.

"Mike," he said, "the man died in a disastrous car accident! It's as simple as that."

"If things were that simple," Burt said, "we wouldn't have a job, Willie."

Looking down at O'Hara, I noticed some yellowish-brown coloration on his chest.

"Hey, Willie," I said. "Do you have any explanation for this?" I pointed out the pigment in question.

"Oh, it could be almost anything—transmission or brake fluid. Any kind of liquid from a car that would make a stain like that."

"Do you have any of his clothes?" I asked.

"Oh, sure, Mike. Right here."

Willie handed me a bag with O'Hara's torn, shredded, and blood-stained clothes. I fumbled through the clothes looking for anything suggesting murder. Right now, it just looked like an unfortunate car accident. His shirt was about the only item that was still recognizable although it was badly ripped and bloodstained. The same coloration that was on his chest was in the exact same spot on his shirt. I showed it to Burt. I had seen stains like these before. But where? Maybe something would come to me later.

The pockets were empty except for stones and dirt from the fall. There was a curious little stone in the vest pocket. It was kind of colorful on one side, almost as though it were painted.

The phone rang. As Willie went to answer it, I put the colorful stone in my pocket. I really don't know why. Maybe I just liked stones. Willie hung up the phone and asked us if we needed anything else before he put the body away.

"A clue, a motive, and a murderer," said Burt.

"Goodnight, Willie," I said.

"Mike...", said Burt.

"Yeah?" I said.

"It's noon."

On the way to O'Hara's church, Burt said he wanted to stop at the store and get some Scotch.

"See ya at the office, Mike."

"Arrividerci," I said.

I walked up the steps to the church. At the doorway, I was greeted by an elderly man wearing a robe.

"Are you the Father here?" I asked.

"Yes," said the priest, "but I have no children."

"What?"

"Sorry, that's a small religious joke. Yes, I'm Father Robert Anderson. How can I help you?"

"I'm Mike Abberline, P.I." I held up my wallet.

"Nice wallet, Jr. P.I."

"I'd like to ask you a few questions about Father O'Hara."

"Certainly, Mr. P.I. Why don't you come inside?"

I entered the church and followed Anderson to the kitchen. I sat down at the table as the Father poured us a cup of coffee.

"What would you like to know, Mr. P.I.?"

"Call me Mike. Was O'Hara a good driver?"

"Oh, yes. He was a driving instructor at Edison High in the summer."

"Do you have any idea why he was on Old Rocky Road last Friday night?"

"Yes, he was going to visit Doris Bailey, one of our parishoners. She's a recluse who has been ailing of late."

"Why was he going there?"

"Doris is a big contributor to the church. Father O'Hara called on her every Friday night to help in any way she could."

"Does anyone else know of his visits?"

"It was Doris' wish that no one else know of his visits."

"Do you know if he had any enemies, Father?"

"What are you getting at, Mike?"

"Just the facts, Father."

"Father O'Hara was loved by everyone who knew him, especially the female parishoners."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just that he was a good-looking man, and women were naturally attracted to him."

Of course!

"How old is Doris Bailey?"

"Ninety-three."

"Rats."

Father Anderson shifted restlessly in his chair.

"Mike, I meant nothing carnal by my statement. However, on more than one occasion, Father O'Hara had to put a woman's feelings in perspective."

"So you don't think he ever gave in to temptation?"

"Oh, no. His only weakness was coffee. I rarely saw him without a cup of it in his hand."

"Yeah. Well, I think we all depend on a cup of java every now and then. Thanks for the information. And, no offense, but this coffee is lousy."

"Yes, I admit my coffee needs a lot of work. The

young lady that normally makes our coffee left us recently. She made excellent coffee. She's going to be hard to replace. I'm doing her jobs now, sometimes more often than my own."

"I see. Well, nice meeting you."

It was just a few blocks back to the office. Burt and the girls were waiting for me. I told them what Anderson had told me.

"No calls yet, Mike," Kathy said.

"How 'bout a cup of coffee, Mike?" said Karen.

I sat down at my desk and stared at the phone. I thought I'd better call Tanya and let her know about my progress. Maybe she could give me something else to go on.

"Yo, Karen! Do we have Tanya's phone number?"

"333-9636, Mike."

The girl may not be a good office cleaner, but she sure has a hell of a memory. But why didn't I remember such an easy number?

"Hello, Tanya...Mike Abberline."

"Mr. Abberline, what did you find out?"

"Not much, really. Look, I stopped by your husband's church today and found out a few interesting things."

"Oh, really. Who did you talk with?"

"A Father Anderson. Do you know him?"

"Of course, Bob was my husband's assistant."

"Kind of old to be an assistant, isn't he?"

"Oh, he never really was thought of as an assistant. He was just as much a hard worker as my husband. In fact, he's been with the church all his life."

Karen was setting the cup of coffee down on my desk.

"Well, anyway, Tanya, he mentioned that your husband may have had some woman trouble at the church and..."

C R A S H !

"Damn it! That's hot!"

Karen had dropped the cup of coffee in my lap. It was hot enough to burn through lead. Burt was helping Karen clean up.

"Mike...hello...Mike, are you okay?" asked Tanya.

"Look, Tanya, I'll call you back. We've got a bit of a mess right now."

I hung up.

"Mike, I'm so sorry!" said Karen. "I don't know what I was thinking about!"

"It's okay, Karen. You and Kathy run downstairs and get a mop and bucket. Burt and I will pick up the pieces of the mug."

I was soaked. I went to the sink to clean up. I took off my vest.

"Hey, Mike," said Burt, "look at your shirt. Isn't that the same stain we saw on O'Hara's body?"

"Damn! You're right, Burt!"

"But why would a man like O'Hara wear a coffee-stained shirt?"

I pulled out that little stone I found in O'Hara's shirt.

"Mike," Burt said, "that looks like a piece of painted ceramic. O'Hara must have been drinking coffee..."

"Which in turn caused the accident."

"How the hell can we solve a case when our only clue is a cup of java?"

"I don't know. I'd better call Tanya back and apologize for the interruption."

"Where did you put the number?"

"Wait a minute! Tanya never gave me her phone number."

"So how did Karen know?"

"Maybe she was one of the girls infatuated with Father O'Hara that Father Anderson mentioned. Think, Abberline, think."

"Wait!" yelled Burt. "Karen spilled the coffee when you mentioned to Tanya about O'Hara's woman trouble at the church."

"Right!" I said, "Karen makes a great cup of coffee and so did the girl who recently left the church. The same girl I hired only three weeks ago. A girl who was infatuated with a man she couldn't have."

"So what does she do? She spills coffee on his lap and drives him over a cliff."

"That doesn't sound right, Burt."

Karen and Kathy had returned with a maintenance man with a mop and bucket.

Burt then confronted Karen.

"We know you murdered Father O'Hara, Karen!"

"What do you mean, Burt?" she asked.

"You loved him, he didn't love you, you couldn't have him so you snuffed him."

Karen fell to her knees crying. "Yes, I loved him. He didn't love me. I couldn't have him, so I..."

"So you what?" I asked.

"So I left."

"You left?" Burt asked.

"Yes. The thought of working there at the church so close to him and not being able to have him was too much to bear. So I left. But I didn't kill him."

Tears were streaming down her face like a leaky water faucet.

"But the coffee stains, the painted piece of ceramic coffee cup?" Burt asked as I held it out to her quivering hands.

"I talked with him at the church a few nights before his death. He liked my coffee."

I had to agree with O'Hara.

"He always drank from his favorite mug." She took the ceramic piece from my hand. "This is a piece of it, but I don't know how it got broken."

We just ran out of suspects.

"Damn!" yelled Burt.

"Karen, did you have any other duties at the church?" I asked.

"Yes, I sorted his mail, filled his prescriptions, cleaned his robes..."

"Wait a minute!" Burt cried, "Filled his prescriptions!"

"Yes," she said, "Father O'Hara was an insomniac. The coffee kept him awake. He needed very potent sleeping pills to fall asleep at night."

A look of relief came over her face.

"I remember his bragging about how strong they were. One could knock out a bull elephant. It took two to put him to sleep and that took an hour."

I grabbed my hat and coat.

"Where are you going, Mike?" Kathy asked.

"To pick up a murderer. Burt, let's go."

It was pouring rain when Burt and I got outside. No matter, we were only going a couple of blocks. The steps outside the church looked cold and very depressing. Not what you'd expect in front of a church.

When we found Father Anderson, he was kneeling in front of the altar in prayer.

"Asking for forgiveness, Father?" asked Burt.

His head turned slowly. There were wet streaks on his face from his eyes to his cheeks. He looked as if he'd been crying for a long time.

"I'm not worthy of being a Father," he sobbed.

"And you don't have the equipment to be a mother," I said.

"What?" asked Anderson.

"Sorry, man," Burt said, "that's a small religious joke."

By the time the paperwork was finished, it was 8:00 p.m. Chief Williams was his usual charming self as Anderson was being booked.

"Excellent job, Abberline," said the chief.

"Thanks, Wayne," I answered.

A few seconds later, Lieutenant Washington burst into the chief's office. He had a look on his face that could stop a clock. Then...

"Good job, Mike," he said.

Burt looked like he was in shock.

"Thanks, John," I said "Coming from you, that's a hell of a compliment."

It had been a long day, so Burt and I decided to head back to the office.

Karen was pretty shaken up when we left. As we were walking back, I noticed it had stopped raining. When we walked in, Tanya O'Hara was sitting on my couch. Slowly she stood, crying. She hugged us both so hard, I thought she would crush us. She gave me an envelope and quietly walked out of my life.

"She called after you left," Kathy said "I told her you were going to get the killer. She rushed right over."

I didn't say anything.

"Mike, how did you know that Father Anderson killed Father O'Hara?" Karen asked.

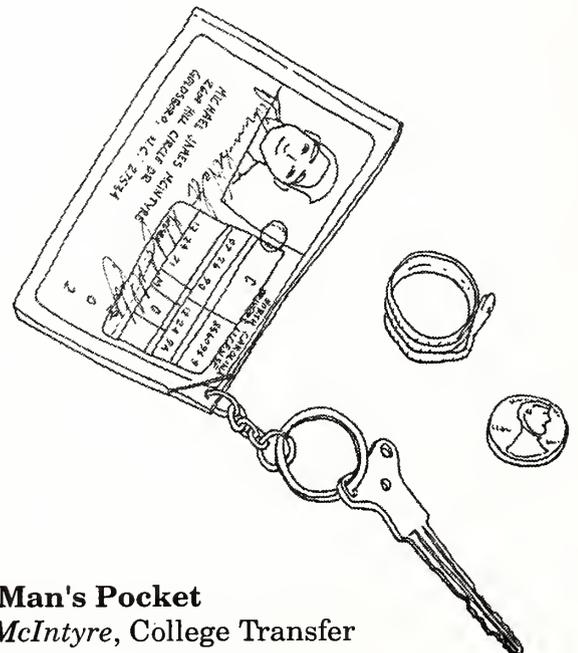
"O'Hara had to have gone directly from the church to call on Doris Bailey that night because he was still drinking from his coffee mug when the crash occurred. Father Anderson fixed that cup of coffee. Anderson had filled O'Hara's sleeping pill prescription and popped a couple in his coffee, knowing it would take an hour to get to Old Rocky Road 40 miles away. Like clockwork, O'Hara fell asleep at the wheel and went over the side of the mountain. The motive was obvious."

"Which was?" Kathy asked.

"The old power struggle routine," Burt answered. "Ol' man gets passed by young man. Young man gets power, notoriety, women, money. Old man gets older and bitter. Finally, the old man gets rid of the only thing in his way...the young man. With O'Hara dead, Anderson becomes pastor."

"You guys are amazing," Karen said. I flopped on the couch.

"I know, baby," I said as she kissed me and turned out the light.



Poor Man's Pocket
Mike McIntyre, College Transfer

THE VACATION FROM HELL

Tom Luten, Vice President for Student Development

In July 1987, my wife Nedra and I were flying to Barbados for a week's stay in a time-share exchange. We left our home in Raleigh on Friday and flew to New Jersey to leave our son with his grandparents. At departure the pilot came on and said, "Well, I've got good news and bad news. First the good news: we are leaving tonight. Now the bad news: the longer runway needed for our plane is closed, so we are pumping some fuel. Instead of flying directly to Miami, we'll stop in Charlotte, re-fuel, and be off for Miami in twenty to thirty minutes."

When I asked the flight attendant if we could make our connecting flight to Barbados, she assured me, "No problem! You'll have at least two hours before your flight will leave Miami once we get there!" she said.

(Of course, this was on the now-defunct Eastern Airlines.)

Well, our refueling took one hour and forty minutes. Passengers were even allowed off the plane. As expected, we missed our connecting flight to Barbados by fifteen minutes. (The last flight on Saturday was at 5:00 p.m.; we had left New Jersey at 11:15 a.m.) So Eastern had to put us up overnight in Miami. After two hours of waiting for our luggage, we took a van to a motel at the Miami Airport—at the end of the runway. With \$15 each in meal money, my wife and I ate dinner and went to bed at 11:00. However, every time a plane took off, the whole room shook. This lasted most of the night or at least until we fell asleep.

A thunderstorm—or so we thought—woke us up early the next morning. At breakfast we found out it was not a storm but a tornado, which had damaged part of the airport. We also learned that the only Sunday flight to Barbados would not leave until 5:30 p.m., twenty-hours after our Miami arrival. That's when I discovered I had lost a bag with my cashier's checks and credit cards. (Later I found out that more than \$2500 had been charged on three cards; I'm still in dispute with the card companies). Since I did have my traveler's checks, my wallet, and another card, we decided to proceed. We finally left Miami at 6:45 p.m. As we approached Barbados, we flew into a tropical storm. Twice, our plane fell twenty to thirty feet. My wife was convinced we were going to die. When we finally landed, we found no airplane shelter because of the tropical climate, so we got soaked walking from the airplane to the terminal. After clearing customs,

we found a taxi driver who knew where our condo was located. After forty-five minutes of driving in pitch-black wilderness, we came to our destination: a run-down converted hotel. It was now 1:30 a.m. Monday. We paid the taxi driver \$35.00 and knocked on the door of the manager's room. He took us to our "condo"—one room with no tv, no air conditioning or glass windows (just a ceiling fan and screens), a dirty refrigerator, and a musty old double bed. This is when my wife started crying. We decided to go to sleep and decide what to do in the morning. As we slept—or as she slept—I listened to the howling storm outside; the tropical storm had returned. I later learned winds sixty to seventy mph had blown down some buildings on the island.

Next morning we decided to find a hotel. The rental car company I called wanted cash up front: \$172. Even though we wanted the car for just one day, I paid, and we left for the other side of the island.

Driving on the left side of the road was a new experience. I barely missed two ladies walking on the road. Barbados roads have no shoulders, and no one observes speed limits. After an hour of torture, I finally stopped at the first hotel, the Hilton of Barbados. I ran inside and literally begged the manager for a room. One was available at \$117 per night. The car rental people returned \$110 when they picked up the car, so I had used the car three and a half hours for \$62. When we got to the hotel room, it was very musty. We found out why when we went to bed exhausted that night: the air conditioner was broken. Once the maintenance man worked on it, we finally got to sleep at 1:00 a.m. Tuesday with a noisy air conditioner.

Six hours later, we were awakened by a very loud noise. The front desk clerk informed me that the hotel was being renovated but agreed to move us to the other side of the hotel if a vacancy occurred. (None ever did; an air hammer or drill awoke us daily at 7:00 a.m.) We went out to the beach after breakfast and returned to find that the air conditioner had literally blown up. Black grease, oil, and water were everywhere. Fortunately, it did not leak into the closet where our clothes were.

We were moved to another room.

That night we ate at a "Bajan Festival" at \$45 a person. As we moved through the food line, birds were perched on the tables picking at the food. The cooks were cleaning and washing the food—guts

and all—in the middle of the tables, feeding the parts to birds who came down.

That same day we found out the tv cable had been disconnected. The local station came on only from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., showing Sesame Street, Brady Bunch re-runs, and Caribbean videos.

On Wednesday, we went on an island tour; the bus almost turned over. We had to get out as it went down a sixty-degree hill.

On Thursday as we ate \$4.50 hamburgers, a twelve-inch chameleon crawled up the table and took a scrap of bread. My wife, of course, screamed. We found out that day also that the hotel was located next to an Amoco Oil refinery which left an oily, smelly mist. It was also very slick on the rock-layered path to the hotel. I fell twice that day, bruising my knee. That night the air conditioner went out, and we moved to our third room.

On Friday, going for an early evening walk, we found a small resort hotel two blocks from the Hilton. It was a five-star hotel with thirty cable channels, central air, and free drinks at 5:00 p.m. every day. The cost: \$75 per day!

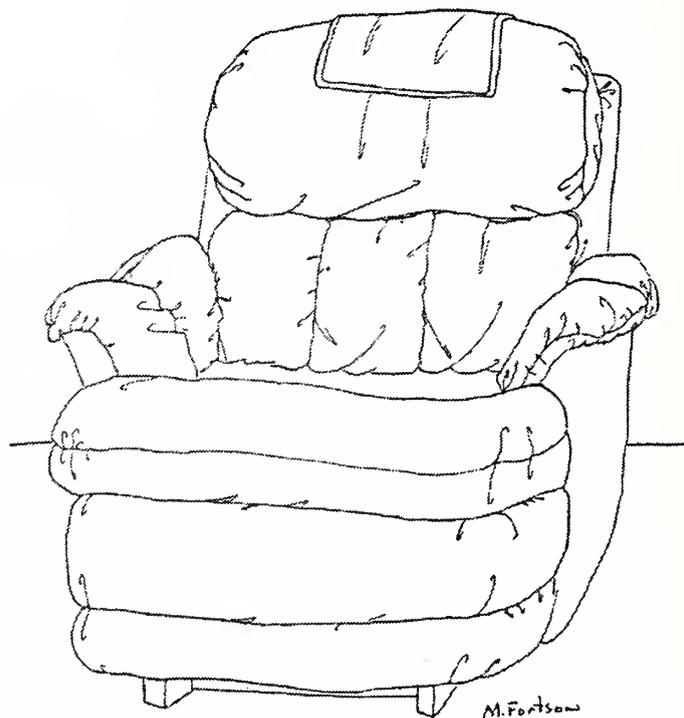
Leaving the new hotel, we walked to a local restaurant known for its great food. While eating a \$110 meal, we heard noises like people running on the roof. When we asked about the noise, our waitress said, "Rats! They climb the coconut and palm trees to the roof." After we ate, we ran back to the hotel!

Finally, Saturday came for us to depart. On take-off, we heard a grinding noise, and my wife said, "This plane's not going to make it!" Suddenly, the pilot put the plane in reverse and stopped the takeoff at the end of the runway. The pilot came on and said, "We have aborted the takeoff because we've lost our second engine. As soon as we determine the repairs, I will let you know." We sat on the runway for two and a half hours with no air conditioning. Finally, after three planes had landed and departed, we de-planed and were told that a flight taking us to Puerto Rico would be picking us up. We finally left for Puerto Rico at 4:00 p.m., five hours late. We arrived in another tropical storm and had to circle for an hour and a half before landing and finding out we had missed our connection to Miami. Therefore, we had to fly to New York instead of New Jersey where my wife's parents were to pick us up. After the tropical storm passed, we finally left for New York around 9:30 p.m. During the five-hour flight, we got a cup of Coke and a package of crackers, and the flight attendants turned off the lights.

Halfway through the flight, an attendant woke us announcing, "Is there a doctor who can help a sick passenger?" Four attendants worked on a man four rows ahead of us for ten minutes, then put a pillow under his head, covered him with a blanket, returned to their seats, and turned off the lights again.

Leaving the plane in no hurry to move at 2:30 a.m., we saw the guy they had worked on still tilted to his side. My wife shouted, "That man's dead!!" and we hurried off the plane.

Thus concluded our eight-day nightmare. I think it is important to explain that my wife had wanted to go to Jamaica, but I had said, "Let's go to something more tropical, more exotic!" I chose Barbados because we like rum. The Mt. Gay Rum distillery is there, and it gives tours and free tastings. However, once we arrived, I found that the plant is closed one week a year for cleaning and repairs—the week we were there. To this day, my wife does not allow me to plan our vacation trips.



Chair
Michael Fortson
College Transfer

AIDS

A Response to the AIDS Seminar
Missi Stevens, Administrative Office Technology

I have to admit that my main reason for attending this seminar was to earn the extra credit points for Dr. Hogan's psychology class. That was my original intent, but that was not how I felt by the time I left. After listening to the speakers, my awareness was heightened, my emotions were deeply touched, and I have attained a great amount of respect for the people that live with, and eventually die with, this disease. I now understand and agree with Dr. Hogan: AIDS was sent to teach us the true meaning of unconditional love.

The facts are scary, the numbers are staggering, but still people continue to let this disease literally take over their lives. In 1992, AIDS was the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S., and 30,000,000 people will die from this totally uncaring, unprejudiced disease in the next 30 years. While it is frightening to see on papers and graphs, it is heartbreaking when the statistics are turned into people, especially people that we know and love.

The four seminar speakers included Dr. Atkins. I listened while he gave all his numbers and facts and predictions, but I felt it when he said that in the next 10-15 years, someone from everyone's family will die from AIDS. Two of the other speakers are related to each other, a mother and a son. The mother is HIV+ and lost her husband this year to

AIDS. Seeing them and listening to them made it all real. It is no longer newspaper or magazine articles, but actual people and lives that are being lost. The last person to speak was Frank. He is in the last stages of the AIDS virus and will probably not live much longer. He had just gotten out of the hospital but felt it was important to be on the panel to tell anyone who would listen what it really means to be "a stupid kid."

There are millions of people out there who have made mistakes, who have become the victims of a ruthless killer. Most of them feel very afraid and alone. It is not up to us to judge them or to mistreat them, but to hold out our hands and let them know that someone truly cares. When God sent Jesus to forgive us and love us, no matter what our sins, He did not single anyone out. His love is unconditional. Maybe now is the time for us to follow this direction and give everyone around us unconditional love—no boundaries, no questions, no exceptions.

Editor's Note: *Each year Wayne Community College sponsors three AIDS seminars facilitated by Dr. Edmond P. Hogan, Human Services Department Chairman.*

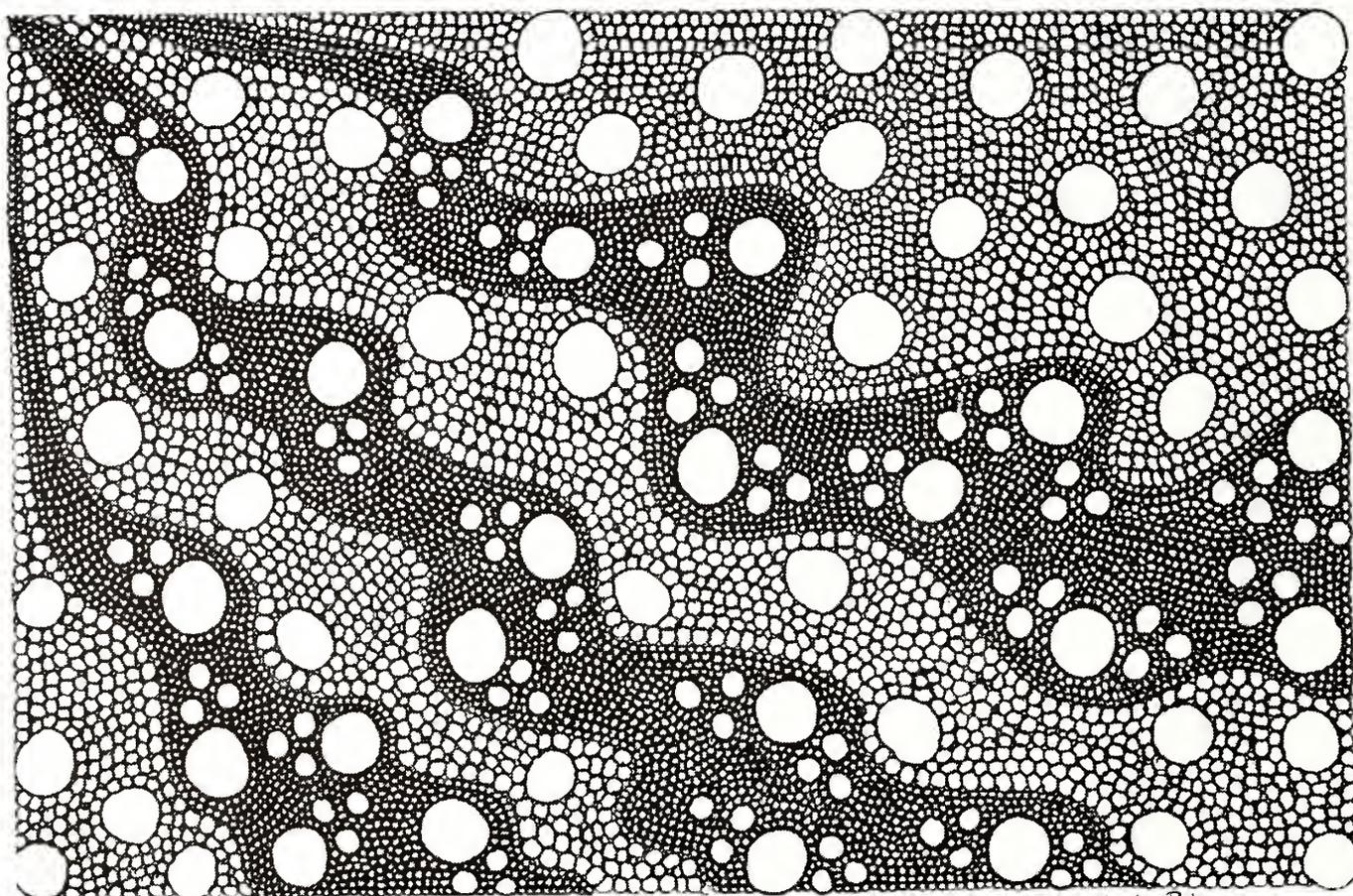
THE THINKING BUCKET
Erin Burrige, College Transfer

An intricate geometrical design describes the fountain between the LC and HS buildings at Wayne Community College. The first warm spring day in 1993 began my relationship with the Thinking Bucket. Surrounded by a low brick wall, a wading pool holds this geometrical wonder.

Beautiful days draw me to its wall. At a glance, the coins at the bottom of the pool glimmer. Lost in thoughts edged with stress, I hear the splash of water. Shifting my gaze upwards, I see the Thinking Bucket floating between me and heaven.

Realistically the Thinking Bucket resembles the original Stone Age wheel constructed of modern materials. A three-dimensional-plus sign, standing ten to twenty feet high, sits patiently below a cement wheel and axle capped by an inverted triangle.

By allowing my mind to wander, I can bring the fountain to life. As I donate unwanted and unnecessary thought patterns to mix with the fountain's water, the combination dumps from the Thinking Bucket. The Thinking Bucket collects the waste in my mind making room for more pleasant and stable thought to prevail.



Deborah L. Biegun

Escape, Deborah L. Biegun, College Transfer



Perception
Janice Kosko

Janice Kosko
"Perception"
February 7, 1995
WCC
RENAISSANCE
MAGAZINE

TIMELESSNESS

Meditation!
What a far-away experience.
In suspension
From the weight of this worldliness
Not feeling
Any struggles at all
Rising, rising
Till I reach my level.
Gently, tenderly
I come to a rest
Away from the ravaging voices of time.
I open my eye to encounter
A most brilliant splendid light.
Facing it boldly I begin to say,
"Look through me, look all the way.
Let the energy from your light
Pierce every dark place
That holds me back
From my inestimable destiny."

Such peace there is
At this moment of timelessness
As I behold the ancient of days.
Then without warning
It reveals itself.
An ominous face of anguish it is,
Too fierce for my heart to face
Since it brings me much pain,
But my eye cannot look away.
 Eye am not afraid.
In this moment I am broken
And weeping with such distress.
There it is before me:
My eye can vividly see
An old wound which has haunted me
Some twenty years it seems.
In a moment
In a twinkling
 Of an eye,
It is gone, yes really gone
Never to carry its weighty penalty
Never to haunt me again.

Now comes an everlasting peace.
 I enter his rest.

Catherine T. Nassef
College Transfer

KRYSTAL NACHT

On Krystal Nacht the glass shattered souls.

The children lay in bed with
tears of fear running down their faces.

Night time howls of haunted
agony from the hunted

Rocks crashing through windows
and hateful soldiers firing
loaded guns in the air

Marching, thundering soldiers
stomping

At that moment their lives
were changed.

Oh, for sweet morning with
hope that it was all a dream.

Who knows the answer?

What light arises in the
morning sky?

How does a river bend and
twist from the land?

Who knows the answer?

Not a man!

Why does no man alive
know the truths of our great world?

Even the answer to
that question

Is known by God alone.

Justin York
College Transfer

NOBODY'S KID

A fighter
A runaway.
Nine years old.
An outcast.
Unwanted at home.
NOBODY'S KID
She can make it
on her own.

Took her in.
Problem child.
Can't fit in to the family life.
Sent her back.
Unwanted in your home.
NOBODY'S KID
She can make it
on her own.

In the world.
Kicked at.
Laughed at.
Burned.
Tougher.
NOBODY'S KID
She can make it
on her own.

Grown up.
Car accident.
Paralyzed.
NOBODY'S KID
Maybe she can't make it
on her own.

JESUS

SOMEBODY'S KID

Things are going to change

Grown up.
New family.
Old habits dying hard.
Hard to change.
She's trying.
Fitting in is tough.

Fitting in
Sounds nice
SOMEBODY'S KID

DUELING BLAKE

Little boy lost
Where is your home?
Can you find it
Among the strangers
Or are you destined
to roam the world
dead and alone?

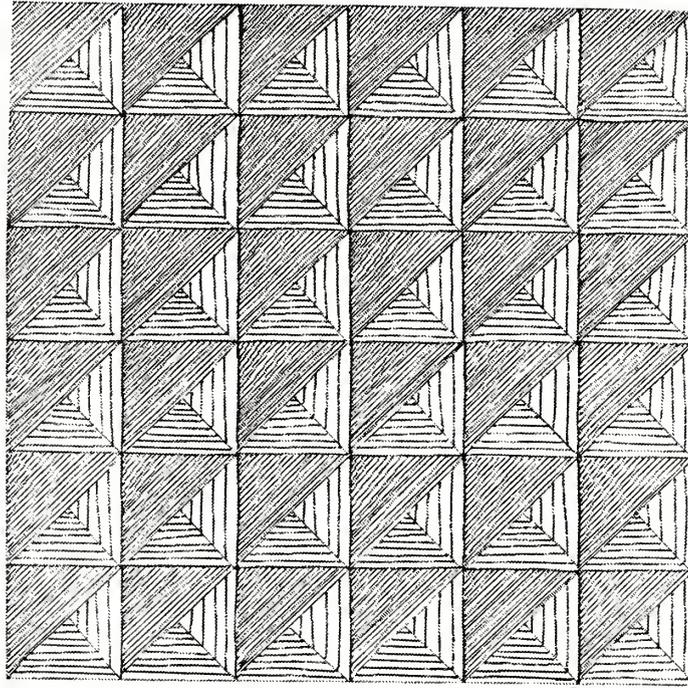
Little boy found
Now you have a home.
The strangers became
friends and God anchored
You to the world
of life and let
You begin again.

Michael Russell
College Transfer



Deck Shoe

Mike McIntyre, College Transfer



Deborah L. Biegun

LIFE IN PERSPECTIVE

The bustling of the wind,
The chirping of the birds,
The laughter of children,
A baby's first word,
A sun that shines above,
A moon that sets the way,
Beacons that remind me
Tomorrow's another day.

The lightning in the sky,
The thunder in the air,
The burning of bridges,
All the unanswered prayer,
All the destitution,
Along with the crime and hate,
Causes me to wonder
If tomorrow's late.

The grievances of death,
All the victims of rape,
Government so corrupt,
Prisoners who escape,
Drugs that conquer the streets,
People living like bums,
A life without meaning
Because tomorrow never comes.

Tony Joyce
College Transfer

WHY? WHY? 1995

The sharks are out again.
The Tar man is being charged!
They want him to pay for others' stupidity.

NO! The brainless should pay.
Who are the brainless?
They are the masses who put the tobacco
bullets to their lips and lungs.
They want the Tar man to pay.
Where is the responsibility?

A Heisman Trophy winner-- a
Champion to the less fortunate-- is
up for murder.
A great round ball player's father
is dead.
The innocent are entrapped
in fire and water.

And who tells us all?
The man or woman who looks out through
A box in our living rooms.

Why? Why? What's wrong with
this picture-- does anyone know?

Charlene Davis
College Transfer

MATH AND AGRIBUSINESS

Kemp Teague, College Transfer

Math is something that people do on an individual level. Some are better than others, yet it is a very important concept that most everyone should, at some level, be able to do. In the agricultural world, math is as important as N, P, and K. For plants to grow, there have to be the right amounts of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. The same applies for the agricultural businesses with math as one of the key elements. The days of simple farming are long gone; agriculture is big business. To compete, as with any other competitive business, the farmer also has to be a businessman. Math enables the farmer to make calculated business decisions based on the numerical information provided. Also, math is a tool used day in and day out just as a tractor is used.

Math in agriculture is not put aside when the farmer leaves the office; it is used just as much on a day-to-day basis out in the field. As planting season approaches, the farmer begins the long task of preparing the soil for planting. This involves discing the ground and either breaking the ground with a bottom plow or chiseling it with a chiseling plow. Now the farmer is ready to add the herbicides needed to insure a crop low in weeds. Different herbicides call for different application rates. Too much of the herbicide means that the crop will not come up. Not enough of the chemical means that the weeds will be more abundant than the crop. Again this involves math. Speed, pressure, and distance will give the right application rate. Danny Pierce, a farming consultant, said, "Many farmers do not get the right application of chemicals and in the long run it affects their profit. To get the right application is very simple," Mr. Pierce said with a smile.

"First, measure off a distance out in the field one hundred feet. Take the tractor, at whatever RPM that feels comfortable, and time how long it takes the tractor to go that distance. At this point, the individual can calculate the average time it took to go that distance. Once this has been calculated, set the tractor at that ideal RPM, turn on the sprayer, and measure the total amount of liquid coming out of one nozzle for the allotted amount of time. After the time is up, multiply the amount of liquid caught and the number of nozzles on the sprayer to give the total amount of liquid applied for that time period. There are 43,560 square feet in one acre. The farmer knows the amount of liquid caught for a hundred feet; therefore, the farmer can calculate how much is being applied per acre at the present pressure. If the application is too high or too low, the pressure valve can be adjusted to the recommended amount suggested on the product's packaging. It sounds difficult," Mr. Pierce said, "but the end result is the right application which saves money when it is time to calculate the crop profit margin."

Farming is all based on numbers. For the agribusiness man to make a profitable living, the numbers must add up. Math is just as important to the average farmer as it is to a multimillionaire. With the math concept, the agribusiness man can make a profitable living and use it as a tool for the day-to-day operation. Without math, farmers would be a dying breed leaving an ageless heritage in the wind.

Editor's Note: *This is part of a final exam for Shirley Boyd's MAT 152 class; it illustrates how writing can be effectively used across the curriculum.*



My Interpretation of daVinci's Oak Leaves and Acorns and Dyer's Greenwood
Cathy Snovel, Forest Management Technology

THE STRANGER

As she walked down the congested hall
Her eyes scanned the crowd.
A familiar face was nowhere in sight.
The strange voices seemed unreasonably loud.

She'd heard about this place from a friend.
They'd said it was the place to be.
Her slim hands trembled slightly
As she reluctantly paid the admission fee.

She was more anxious now than ever
But continued to approach the door
And when she entered the room
Her eyes focused on the large dance floor.

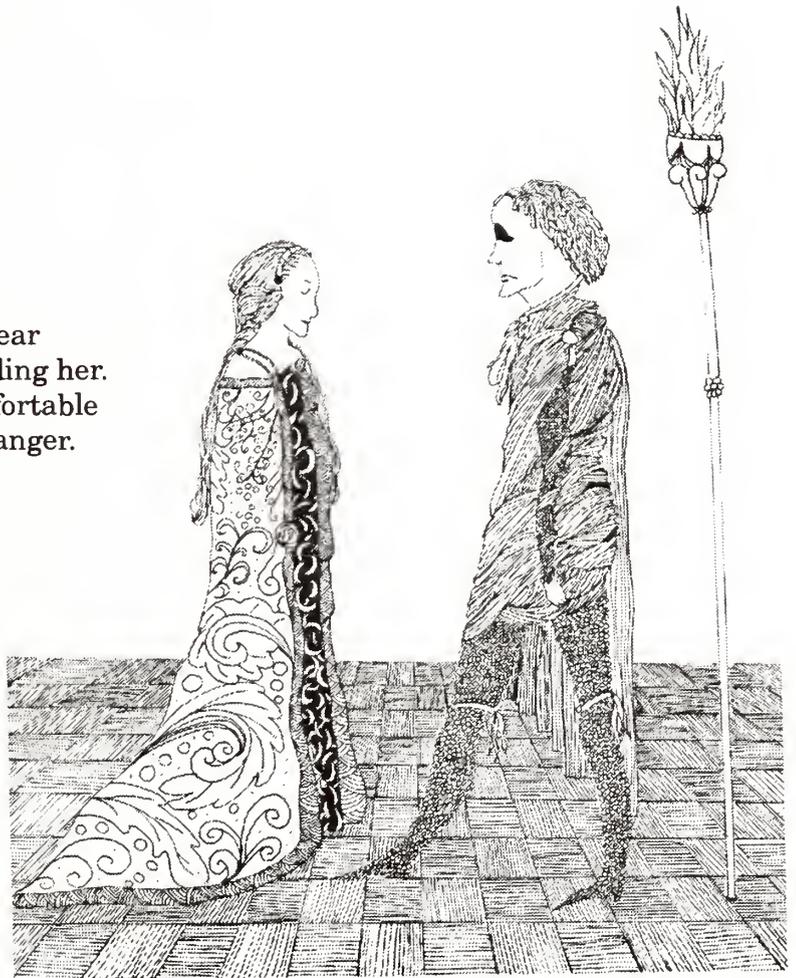
As she inconspicuously searched for her friends
The anxiety she was feeling became stronger
Until she was overwhelmed with relief
From a warm, familiar hand on her shoulder.

Turning slowly, she met his eyes
Portraying a peculiar glance.
He took her hand in his
And asked if she cared to dance.

With no hesitation in accepting the offer
She told herself to stay calm.
He led her to the dance floor
And embraced her in his arms.

As his large, warm hands held her body near
She was excited by the thought of his holding her.
Yet she contemplated why she felt so comfortable
At ease, for the first time, with a total stranger.

Myshel Anderson
College Transfer



Phantom of the Opera
Debra Martorelli, College Transfer

MIDNIGHT MURDER

Amy Norris, College Transfer

Driving is a big responsibility. You must pay attention to your surroundings and stay focused on the road. The number of accidents that occur each day that involve only one car is shocking. Lack of attention, one glance away, and you could be facing an accident, maybe even a fatality. Death is difficult to deal with, especially when you have to cope with the harsh reality that it may be your fault.

I hadn't had my license very long, and, of course, I had to drive everywhere. On this particular night, I was taking my best friend Sherri home. We were late for our curfews, as usual, so I was speeding.

"Slow down! I'd rather be late than dead!" Sherri said. She lived down a curvy dirt road and had always been afraid of ending up in the ditch.

"Oh, shut up whining! Don't you trust me?" I replied sarcastically. I dropped Sherri off and the last thing she said was, "Amy, be careful!"

"Okay, Mama. Do you want me to call you when I get home, too?" I teased.

I was flying. My headlight was blown, I wasn't wearing my contacts, and it was foggy; but I was not going to be too late. I reached down to change the radio station, and when I looked up, there he stood. I automatically slammed on brakes, but my slick tires didn't have much traction on the dirt road.

There was a sickening crunch as I slid into his body. He flew through the air as if he were in slow motion and landed in the ditch a few feet away. I got out and ran over to see if he were still alive. He was breathing, and he opened his eyes. I will never forget his eyes. The hurt and confusion they expressed were heart wrenching. I ran back to my car and flew back to Sherri's house.

"Sherri, I killed him!" I sobbed.

"Killed who? What are you talking about? Are you okay?" Sherri asked.

I told her who it was and then explained, "I didn't see him until it was too late, and I couldn't stop. He's in the ditch at the end of the road!"

"I'll get Daddy to go down there. Just try to calm down." Sherri said.

"Calm down?! I'm a murderer, and you want me to be calm! I'm going to jail for a hit and run! I'll never be able to drive again!" I cried.

"Amy, it was a cow, for Christ's sake!" Sherri said, trying not to laugh.

Both of the cow's back legs were broken, and he had to be destroyed. Under the Johnston County Livestock Law, I was responsible for paying for the cow. It didn't matter that the cow had been out of his pen standing in the middle of a public road.

I love cows. I have been collecting them for about four years, making this accident more of a tragedy for me than it would have been for someone else. I have tried to put it all behind me and realize there was nothing I could have done. I can only drive more responsibly, be more alert to my surroundings, and leave the butchering to the professionals.

COLOR BLIND

Eric Wooten, College Transfer

I guess this begins on November 20, 1978. Mary and Lawson Coles were the proud parents of healthy and beautiful twins, Jeremiah Keith Coles and Monique Leesha Coles. Lawson and Mary were ready to enter into a wonderful journey through the trials of life and years of love and happiness with their new family. There was no way, however, that they could prepare themselves for what the future held for them.

As Jeremiah and Monique grew up, they excelled at everything they did. They were both honor students in school. Monique was the captain of the girls' softball team and the class president as well as an accomplished saxophone player. Jeremiah was co-captain of both the football and baseball teams. As early as his sophomore year, he was being scouted to play both sports at major colleges. The twins over the years had built a tremendous love for each other. Throughout high school, they did their own things, but they still made time for each other.

In 1985, when the twins were eight, a white family moved into a house just down the street. It was unusual for a white family to move into this neighborhood. Only two white families lived in the whole neighborhood. The neighborhood on the south side of Los Angeles was notorious for gang activity. Families living here strived to move up, but the system held them back. There was very little economic opportunity for this group of people. The new family was named Daniels. They too had two children. Bobby was four years older than the twins, and Steve was the same age as Jeremiah and Monique. Jeremiah met Steve in the first week that his family was in the neighborhood, and they hit it off well. The two of them would become great friends over the next couple of years. This was fine with both sets of parents. The only person who had a problem with their friendship was Bobby. Bobby was a racist, and he did not want his brother hanging out with Jeremiah.

"Steve, why are you always hanging out with him? I don't care if he is your friend or not. You could get yourself in trouble hanging out with those colored people."

Steve thought a lot about what Bobby had said. Bobby had said things about their being friends before, but this time his comments really hit home.

Steve decided to tell Jeremiah about their conversation.

"Jeremiah, Bobby was talking junk about us today. He said that us hanging out could get me into trouble."

"Steve, don't sweat him; he's just trying to scare us. You know how he is, all talk."

That was the end of that episode. Bobby still harassed them with verbal threats.

The twins and Steve entered their junior year of high school in 1994. They had all decided on their choice of a college to attend. They had all received scholarships to major universities. They were the lucky ones; this was their ticket out. Monique had chosen Texas University, which had given her an academic scholarship. The boys

chose Florida State as their future college. They both received athletic scholarships. They had all worked hard to achieve these honors and were ready for prosperous futures.

By this time, Bobby was a member of a white supremacist group. The gang was notorious for violent hate crimes throughout the city. They terrorized predominately black neighborhoods every chance they could. Jeremiah and Steve had several confrontations with these gang members, but they never escalated into physical battles due to Steve's being Bobby's brother. The boys knew, however, that one day things would go too far.

Late in March, Steve and Jeremiah were walking home from school. As they turned the corner of the street they lived on, they ran into the supremacist gang.

"Hey, spook boy," Bobby said. Everyone laughed in the background.

"Go to Hell, Bobby," Steve said.

One of the gang members said to Bobby, "It don't look too good for your brother to be hanging out with that nigger."

"Why in the Hell are you worried about who he hangs out with?" Jeremiah said.

"Just trying to preserve my own," he said.

"That's the problem. You are too ignorant to realize that I am your kind; I just happen to be black. That just makes us different colors, not different species."

"Shut up, boy, or you'll be leaving here in an ambulance."

As Jeremiah and Steve left, someone from the gang shouted, "You better watch your backs from now on."

They took this threat more seriously. They told their parents, who put in a report to the police. The police could not do anything without an actual crime being committed, and their parents wouldn't stop them from seeing each other. They did stress that the two of them needed to be very careful at all times.

Bobby harassed them worse than ever over the next couple of weeks. He threatened them on several occasions. They knew something was going to happen; they just didn't know what or when.

On April 14, 1995, Steve and Jeremiah were throwing football in front of Jeremiah's house. At 6:30 in the evening, two lowriders carrying the gang members rode by shouting racial obscenities at them. They knew not to say anything back; enough tension was between them as it was. About fifteen minutes later, they heard wheels squeal at the corner. It was the gang again.

Two of the gang members were hanging out of the windows with guns. Steve and Jeremiah took off running for the house to get to safety. They knew that their lives depended on their reaching the door before the cars got that far. As they reached the porch, the cars had reached the front of the house. The two teenagers were struck in the back by several rounds from deadly weapons. They died instantly. DEAD, because they had the love within themselves to look past color and find a friend for life.

RESEARCH REFUGEE
Michael Russell, College Transfer

I stood outside the library and looked at the sarcophagus of knowledge. I entered. The hushed quiet made me a little uneasy so I proceeded with caution to the Public Access Catalog (P.A.C.), knowing it would be the fundamental key to my hunt and quest for information. The P.A.C. led me to the netherworld of the library—the stacks. Deep in the recesses of the musty, dank library I fumbled, fondled and caressed the books in search of ecstasy—info on my topic. However, I was premature. I had to fight back fears of a recurring dream where I was trapped inside a monstrous library while the villains of literature tracked my every move and taunted me with forgotten plot summaries. And worse, would that leather-bound book with gilded-edged pages infested with paper mites and last checked out in 1910 come alive and swallow me whole only to slowly digest my body and mind until it excreted me as a minor character in a pulp fiction novel? I had some anxiety to deal with. I took a deep breath and continued my stealthy hunt. All right, I'll confess. Sometimes anxiety leads to petty theatrics. However, my fears were not realized. I was lucky. I walked into a comfortable and friendly modern library that was well appointed. With the aid of the P.A.C., I quickly found three books on my topic. They all seemed to address my subject matter. I located the books on the shelves and returned to the circulation desk. Next, I proceeded to the SIRS researcher. Shortly after playing with my index words, I found numerous articles. I quickly scanned those articles and narrowed my search to the most promising. Then I printed those articles at the hefty price of fifteen cents a page and added them to my "bag." Then, I proceeded to the Info-trac. It was down. It had been down for a week. The school librarian informed me that I could check with the public library's Info-trac. When I arrived at the public library, the Info-trac was occupied. While I was waiting, I tried the library's P.A.C. and located another useful book. I checked back to the Info-trac. No, it was still being monopolized by a sebaceous over-achieving high school student. I browsed through several women's magazines looking for cheap titillation, but instead my desires were deflated as I learned that there are CONS to breast augmentation. Finally, it was available. I quickly found some promising articles, and I printed the ones of interest for free. Feeling that I had bagged my limit, I returned home to clean and dress my kill and place them into the freezer of procrastination.

A BAD MEMORY

Forrest Mewborn, College Transfer

When I was in the second grade, I had a teacher who was big, fat and mean. She was heartless at times. I remember one day she called me up in front of the class and told me to read a book aloud. Well, I was shy and didn't feel comfortable about it. I got cold feet, and chills ran up and down my spine. This made no difference to her; she wanted to hear me read, so even though my reading was bad, I tried.

After I suffered ten minutes of humiliation and had read only half a page, she was frustrated with me. My punishment for the rest of the day was that she would pinch my ears and call me stupid, then tell me she could not teach a dumb person how to read because she didn't have the time. Then every time I came into class, everyone would laugh at me and call me names. I was so embarrassed that I cried every day. I wanted to stop going to school, but I couldn't; it would have only made things worse for me. I'm glad that my mother made me go to school because of where I came from and where I am today. This makes me proud of myself.



Sunflower, Michael Fortson, College Transfer

WEDDING DAY

Darin Heitman, College Transfer

The first years of my life were spent in the happiness and security that being an only child can grant. My mother and I lived with my grandparents, and a great deal of attention was lavished upon me. I thought that I would always have these three people, especially my mother, all to myself. I found out how blind my four-year-old foresight was on the day of my mother's wedding. I didn't realize that she was leaving me behind until I watched her ride away.

My mother and grandparents had tried to explain to me what was going to happen, how my life was going to change after the wedding, but their words held little importance for me. Things would never change between Mom and me. At the wedding, the foreign words of the ceremony did little to hold my attention. When I had accomplished my small part in the ritual by delivering the wedding bands to the minister, I went to sit with my grandparents. Grandma wore a look of resigned disapproval while Grandpa's smile spanned the width of his leathery face. I hopped up between them and gave the tie at my neck a tug. It had been trying to choke me ever since Grandpa tied it there. I was now free to fend off its attack. My thoughts drifted for the rest of the ceremony, and I waited for life to resume its usual routine. When it was finally over, Mom and her husband rode off in his car while I watched from the bottom of the church steps.

"Where are they goin'?" I asked my grandfather, who was standing beside me.

"They're headin' down to the reception. We'll catch up with 'em in a few minutes," he said in his chuckling voice. Reassured by his words, I thought that a few minutes would be okay.

When we got to the hall, Mom was standing near the entrance. I ran straight to her.

"Pick me up, Mommy," I said, as I gave her big white dress a tug.

"Not now. Stay with Grandma and Grandpa today," she told me, making me feel small.

"But I wanna be with you," I begged. The look that she gave me said the answer was no.

"You come and sit with us now," Grandma said as she took my hand. She led me to the long table near the opposite wall. From there, I watched as my mother gave her attention to this new man. As afternoon turned to evening, my resentment for him gathered like the approaching darkness outside. Fear came, too. I was losing my mother, and I was scared, not outwardly yet, just on the inside near my stomach.

At the end of the reception, everyone gathered outside the door. The sun had just winked out of view, and the gloom matched my mood. At last, my mother had decided to talk to me. My hopes soared for a moment, but her words grounded them quickly.

"Steve and I are going away for a few days. You're gonna stay with your grandparents," she said to me. "But I wanna go with you," I whined, my throat clenching with emotion.

"Why are you leaving?"

"Because Steve and I are going on our honeymoon. We've been telling you about it. You just stay with Grandma and Grandpa, and be a good boy."

She bent to hug me, and I wrapped my arms around her neck. Tears were already leaking from the corners of my eyes. Then she was prying my arms away as Grandpa hoisted me up in his arms.

"I love you. I'll be back before you know it," she finished, and with that she was gone.

"I love you, too, Mommy," I stuttered to her back, in between sobs. I watched as she got in the car with her husband and knew that I wasn't going to see her for too long.

I didn't really hear the words of comfort that were whispered by Grandpa as the tail lights left my view. I just wanted my mother to come back to me.

EPITAPH

I was walking down the road
On a crisp, autumn day.
When I looked down the street
And saw a car coming my way.

It got closer and closer
Swerving on the grass.
Then all of a sudden
The car rammed me on my *butt*.

As I lay on the street
With blood pouring out of me,
A lumberjack with an ax
Hit me with a tree.

The pain I was in
Signaled someone to call 911.
Then came along a hunter
And shot me with his gun.

The bullet entered my leg
And caused great discomfort.
I then thought to myself,
"That really hurt!"

Now I could hear the siren
Of the ambulance coming near.
What happened next
Will cause more than one tear.

The ambulance sped up the road
And ran over my right arm.
Then my voice shrieked as loud
As a ringing fire alarm.

Two paramedics came out
And put me on a bed
It really shocked them
To see I was not dead.

They loaded me into the back
Very carefully and not quick.
This lit a fire in me
Like a match does to a candlestick.

The driver of the ambulance
Sped along the wheels of four.
Then I noticed something,
Someone forgot to shut the door!

Without any warning,
The ambulance hit a bump,
I rolled out with the bed,
Down a hill the size of a
camel's hump.

Then came a fork in the road,
It was time to choose a path,
I chose the left side,
Unfortunately, that led to a cold bath.

See, I saw a car wash
In my immediate future.
I prepared for the worst,
Then a sign popped up saying,
"Do Not Enter!"

Then I closed my eyes,
Hoping not to fall.
I was surprised that I survived,
But then I saw a shopping mall.

Then I thought to myself,
"I think I'm in a terrible spot."
As I traveled through,
The mall's parking lot.

I entered the automatic doors
And headed straight for a guy
throwing knives.
Now I'm wondering just like you,
"How can I have this many lives?!"

The man throwing the knives
Hit me only one time,
But it took an accurate throw
like that
To hit me on my behind.

Then I looked up and said,
"Is that all?!"
And then wouldn't you know it,
I hit a brick wall.

I obtained a concussion
Due to my accident.
I looked into a mirror
And saw my nose was bent.

A man standing next to me
Asked me if I were all right.
I then told him,
"Go fly a kite!"

Some of the people in the mall
Helped me up to my feet.
Now the people could see
I looked like a piece of slaughtered meat.

One guy said he'd call an ambulance
And I hollered, "NO!"
Then a dog walked by
And took a leak on my big toe.

Life couldn't get worse
Or could it?
I was so sore
That I couldn't even spit.

I crawled out of the mall
Into a cool breeze.
Then I began to notice
My body was starting to
freeze.

I had crawled into a truck
That was full of ice,
Then I began to ponder,
"Does life have a price?"

The driver of the truck
Helped me get out.
I began to smell
Like pickled sauerkraut.

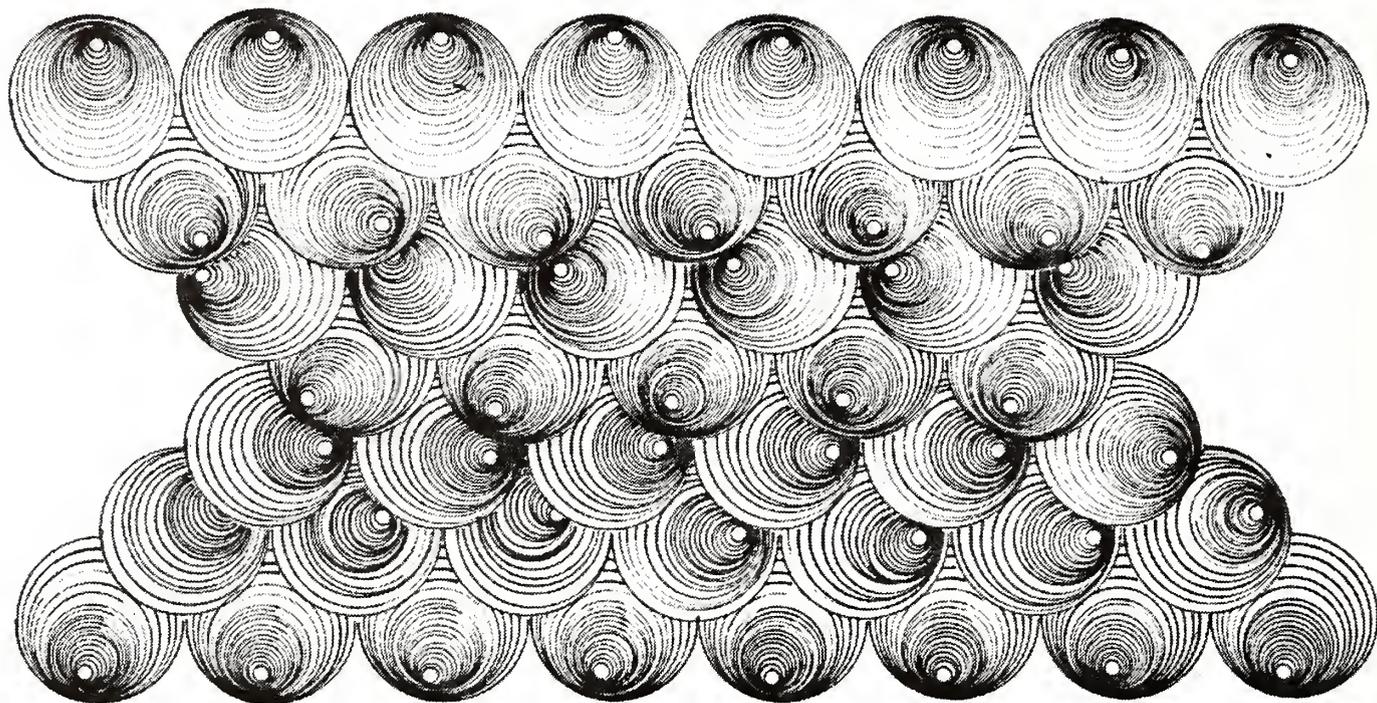
Lying in the sun
My skin began to burn.
I began to feel like the
cream
Inside a butter churn.

As I tried to sit up,
Things started to turn
black.
I then heard a blistering
noise;
It sounded like a nut being
cracked.

Everything around me
Started to turn dark.
I looked up one last time,
And saw a tiny spark.

The final seconds
Caused me to weep.
For I had just suffocated
myself
With a pillow in my sleep.

Tony Joyce
College Transfer



FIRE!

Melanie Payne

Heather Edgerton, College Transfer

Thirty yards from my house stood a cream-colored trailer with a family of three and five baby kittens. Early one blustery morning, I stared at my neighbor's trailer being consumed by a monstrous fire.

I was awakened by a woman's screeching that her home was on fire. I leapt out of my warm bed and scrambled outside to find out what all the ruckus was about. As I peered out the door, I saw my neighbor standing outside her burning home in her night gown. I stood on my chilled porch and watched the fiendish flames engulf the crackling trailer. The windows blasted out like balls being blown out of a cannon. Sirens blared for miles as three fire trucks blazed down the lengthy path. When I returned outside from getting my neighbor some warm clothes, firemen were running around everywhere. The firemen raced to get the hoses off the truck and started spraying the ferocious flames. The water smashing onto the burning trailer sounded like bacon sizzling on a frying pan.

Flashing red lights illuminated the murky sky. Fire fighters scampered around trying to extinguish the frightful fire. The fire chief hollered out orders as the other firemen raced about following

them. The water hoses, lying on the ground, looked like snakes slithering around in their pit, intersecting each other as they slid along.

I was waiting for the dreadful fire to be smothered when I detected a repulsive aroma. Kittens had been left in the trailer because they were not old enough to escape; there was no time to save them. The ferocious flames ate them without thinking twice about it. The smell of singed cat hair hovered in the surroundings for hours.

The warmth of the hellish flames felt like summer trying to creep up for another season. The water ricocheted off the burning trailer and soaked my body from head to toe. Bits of glass from the exploding windows shattered all over my face. I felt warm drops of blood trickle down my scratched face. I soaked my wounds with peroxide which made my face tingle all over.

The fire was finally extinguished, and all the hustle and bustle ceased. The trailer continued to smolder as I looked at the remains of what used to be my neighbor's beloved home. They knew there was nothing left for them in their charred home except the love and memories they will carry with them and always cherish.

Last summer I had the exceptional opportunity of rekindling an old friendship and realized what it means to lose a friend to AIDS. This was a very special summer because I became very much aware of how cruel people can be. AIDS patients not only have to endure the physical pain and suffering that come with their illness, but they also must endure difficult emotional situations. People can be very cold and apathetic, even family. Some people just do not deal with "private" situations such as AIDS as others do.

I experienced this opportunity last summer when I received a phone call from an old friend. Pat told me that a high school classmate had been diagnosed as HIV positive nine years earlier. I couldn't believe it. I had just talked to Joey six months earlier, and he looked as healthy as he ever had. But as Pat continued to tell me about Joey's condition, I began to think back to when my father died of cancer. I wondered how I could possibly help Joey when I could not bear the thought of seeing someone suffer so badly again. Pat went on to tell me that her purpose in calling was to ask if I could help. Shortly after Joey began showing symptoms of AIDS, his mother turned her back on him, and he could not cook for himself. Joey's mother was completely unfeeling toward his illness because of the shame she felt at his being gay. Now his own mother would not even help to insure that he had a nutritious meal.

Joey was an exceptional person. When we were in high school, he was always the one that was different from everyone else. Joey was a very handsome man. From the age of thirteen he never cut his hair. Girls envied his beautiful hair as much as the guys hated it. Every girl in our class wanted to go out with Joey, but only a few of us knew the true reason that he did not go on dates. Joey was also a very artistic person with a powerful and convincing imagination, with the same level of intelligence. But for the most part, Joey was a loner. He never went to ball games, parties, or dances, and because the guys in the class threatened to cut off all his hair, he did not go to graduation.

Thinking back on how long it had been since I had talked to Joey, and how much I would enjoy spending some time with him, I agreed to help. This is when Pat told me what it was exactly that the family wanted me to do. When Joey began showing symptoms of AIDS, he lost his sight. There were many things Joey could no longer do for himself. As much as Joey had loved to cook, he could

no longer handle more than a microwave meal on his own. The family wanted me to see that he had a nutritious meal every night. Not so hard, I thought. If that was all, I could handle it. I had this stupid idea that when I knocked on Joey's door he would be the same Joey I had always known. But I could not have been more wrong.

The first day I went to see Joey was the hardest. It was hard to believe this was the same Joey I had known most of my life. When he opened the door and I told him who I was, he threw his arms around me and thanked me for coming. I had not prepared myself for what I saw. Joey had lost all of his hair. He was also very thin and frail. He looked as if the life had been completely drawn out of him. He was so tired and weak and did not even look like himself at all. He started to cry when I had to leave, but I could not bear this any more in one night. When I got in my car to leave, I was in shock. I asked myself, "How could this happen to such a good person?" There is no answer to this question.

On my next visit, I handled my feelings a little better. We discussed a menu plan and Joey's favorite foods. He said the first thing he wanted was some chicken pastry. I have never seen, before or since, anyone enjoy a plate of pastry and yams the way Joey did that night. He savored every bite and took his time eating, as if he might never eat or smell chicken pastry again.

Over the next three weeks we talked about our lives over many home-cooked meals. He told me about his career and his gardens. He had become wealthy grafting orchid bulbs to develop new varieties. Joey's gardens were full of rare plants and bushes situated in odd-shaped designs around his cabin in the woods. Occasionally he would suddenly stop eating, open the window, and yell. Joey told me this was his way of making sure there were no "tree-rats" in his gardens. He hated the squirrels.

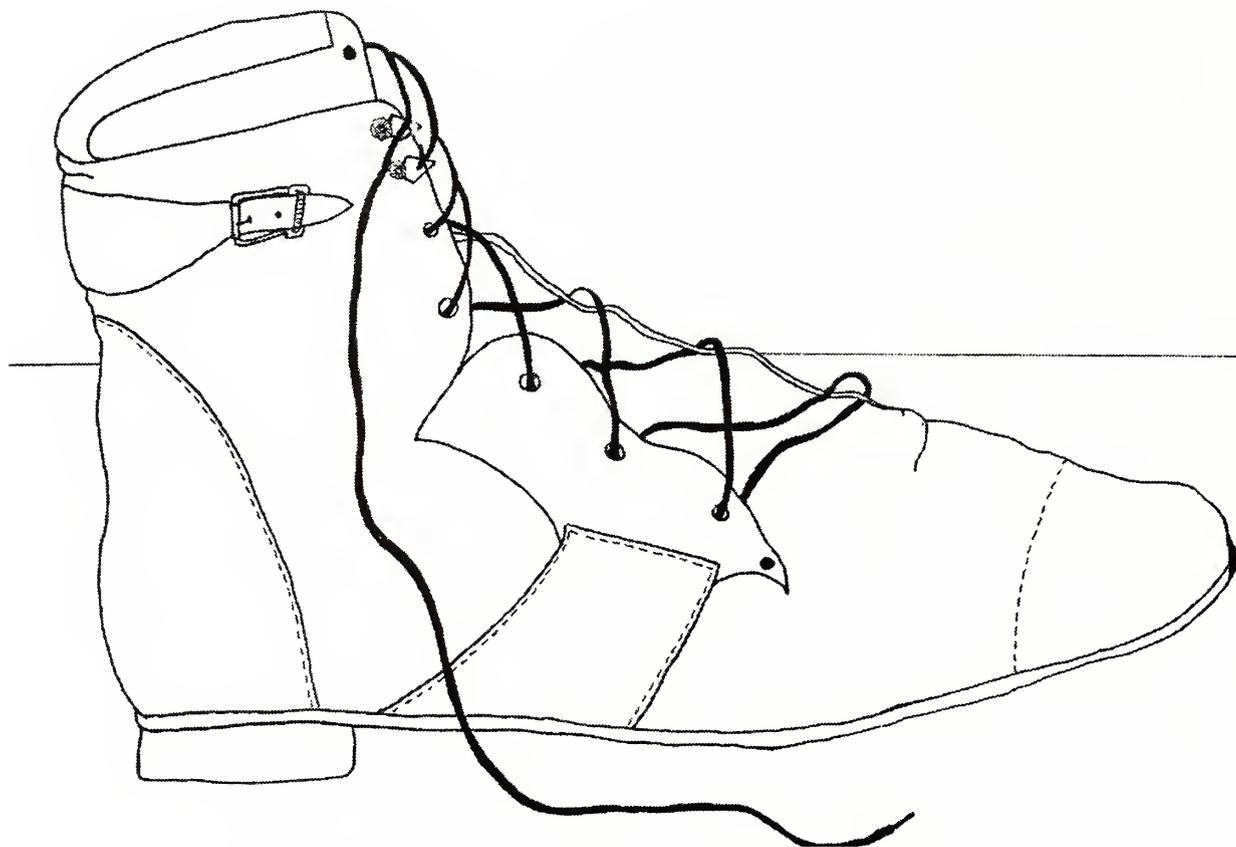
During my third week with Joey, Pat called to say I needn't go to Joey's house that night. Joey had to go to Duke Hospital for another blood transfusion, and the doctors had decided to keep him overnight. Overnight turned into another day, and another day, then a week.

On August 8, 1994, I received a phone call, but not the one I had hoped for. Joey had died during the night. His body just could not take the pain any more. I would not see Joey again, and I did not even get to tell him good-bye, but he knows that

my thoughts are of him often. I visit his gardens from time to time for some peaceful moments to myself. I think about Joey often and about how unique a person he was, and how his illness affected me deeply. I can't help thinking about how many others need to experience something like this to appreciate life and to make the very best of it. I hope one day people can accept his illness as an illness and not something to be shunned because AIDS patients are not bad people; they are just sick people in need of a friend and a warm heart.

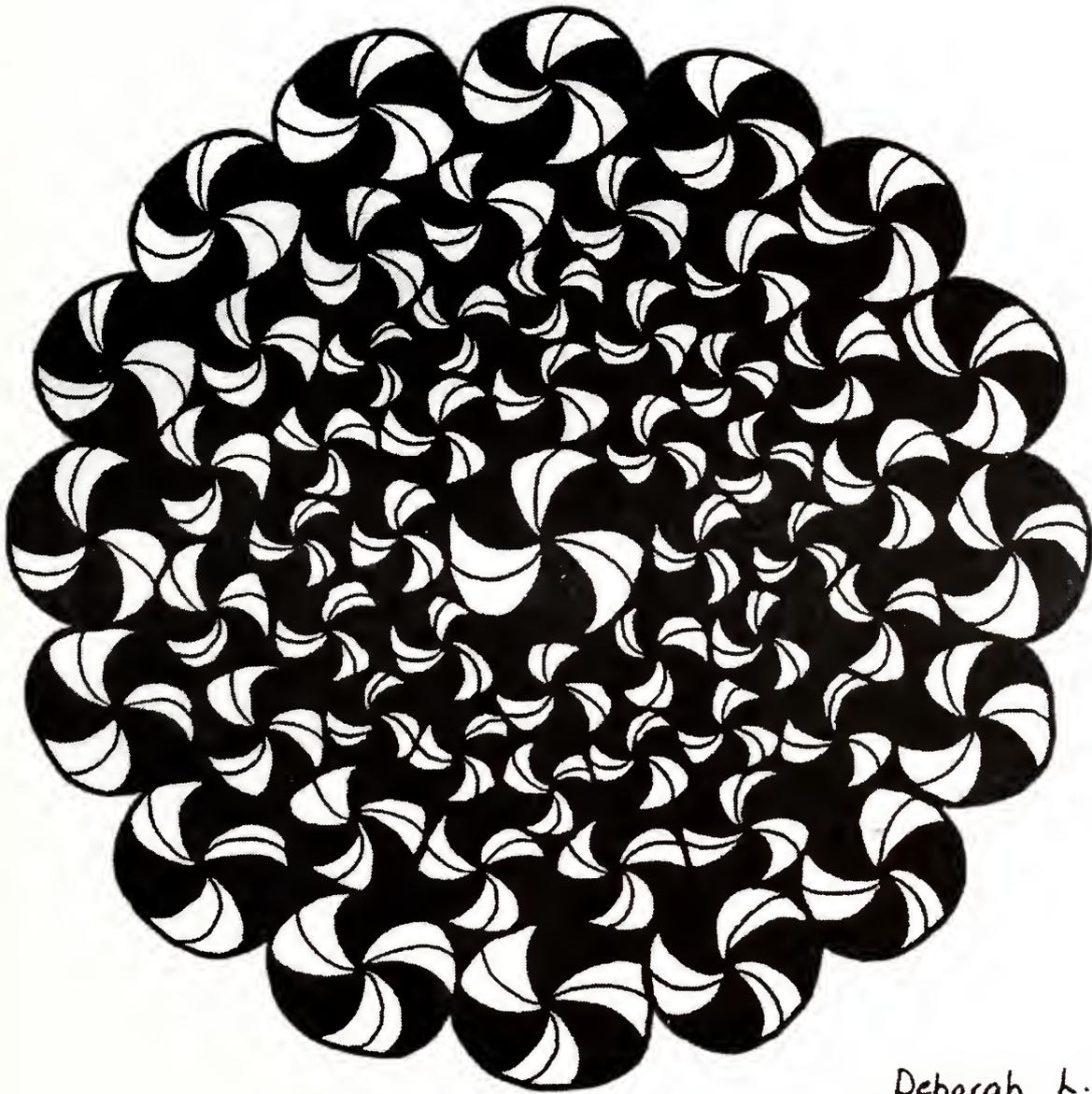
I learned from this experience that I can bear to be there for a friend, no matter how hard it is to see him ill. The most important thing is not how I feel about being there, but how much that friend needs me there. I also learned that now is the time to get out of life what I want because it may disappear like the wind tomorrow.

**name changed to protect privacy*



Debra Martorelli

Out West, Debra Martorelli, College Transfer



Deborah K. Biegun

Windmills of My Mind, Deborah Biegun, College Transfer

WHAT GOES AROUND. . .

James Summerlin, College Transfer Pre-Engineering

I parked at the far corner of the lot at Ted's Bar—right beside a white Toyota Celica. Every Saturday night for the past four weeks, the car had been right here and hadn't left until the next day. I walked on inside the two-story tavern, the first and last time I ever would, and began casually looking around. The room had a bar running down the north wall, and on the opposite wall was a stage for bands and other entertainment. Round tables surrounded a dance floor in the center.

Upstairs were rooms for rent if anyone couldn't or didn't want to drive home. After walking around a bit, I spotted a sour-looking gentleman sitting by himself at the far end of the dance floor. As I approached him, I noticed a half-empty bottle in front of him. It was then that the pain returned.

Opening my eyes, I saw red and blue flashing all around me and found myself secured to a stretcher. My body felt like it was on fire, and both my legs were in splints. I heard shouting and saw a car in the ditch across the road. The car's front was crushed in. Two paramedics were trying to restrain a man who was swinging violently at them with a half-empty bottle in his hand. As the men struggled, another paramedic came to take me to a nearby ambulance. Once he rolled my stretcher around, horror imprisoned me. At another car with its passenger side crushed in, two rescue workers were pulling a woman's body out the window. A thousand fears ran through my soul at once. Oh, God. Sarah!

The thoughts of the scars on my body and the seven years I've missed Sarah crossed my mind one

last time as I walked on over to his table and asked if I could join him. He accepted, so I sat down and ordered some ice water. We didn't talk that much at first, but as time went on, the conversation became much more interesting. I learned that he had just moved to town a few weeks ago after his company finished a contract with the government to help remodel the state prison; after several years with the firm, he had quit to search for work elsewhere. I ordered more water; he ordered another round. He revealed that he had spent some time overseas in the military and had learned about some of the exotic drinks made in other countries. We ordered again. Slowly but surely, pieces of the puzzle came into place.

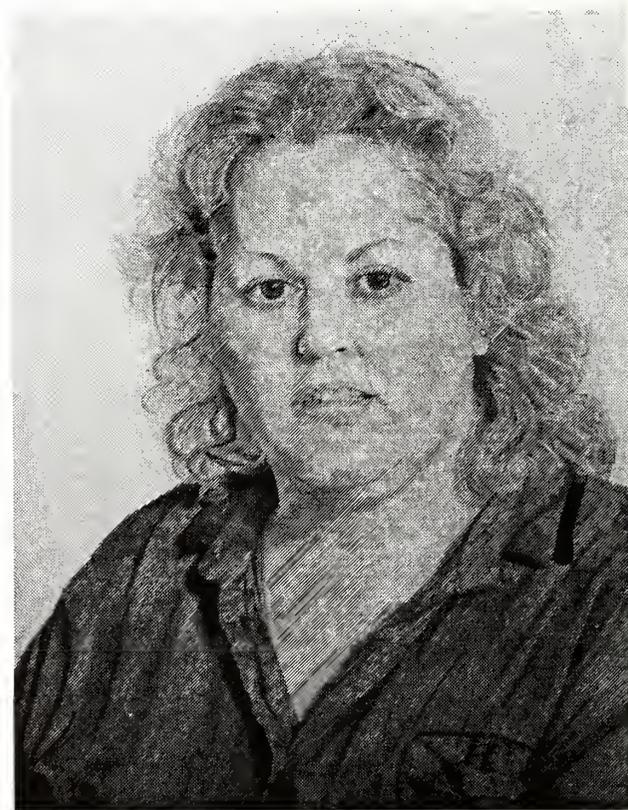
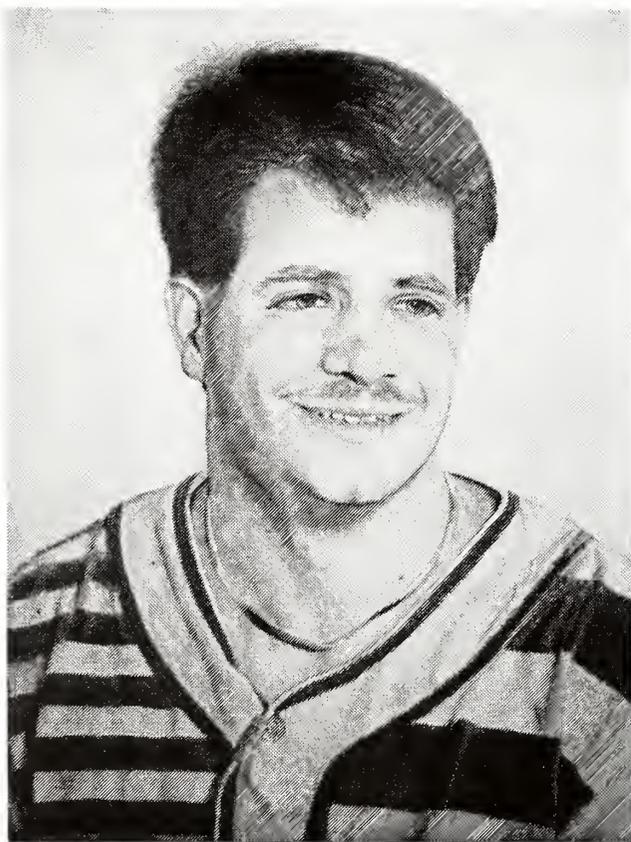
As the conversation came to a close with our final round of drinks, he said he was going upstairs to his room. I looked at the empty bottle and glass in front of him and at my own empty water glass. I asked if I could look at his room since I was thinking about getting one myself. He consented.

Once in his room, I casually looked around a moment and then asked him a question. He was surprised to find that someone else knew of the DWI charge he had received seven years ago. He was even more surprised that I seemed to know so much about that particular time and what he was actually doing for the prison system. Once it became obvious to him who I was, the pain of many years came forth in my soul. The memories of the days Sarah and I had had together before we met him were as crystal clear as ever. My knife found its way out of my pocket. At that moment I didn't have a heart, but at least I could see his along with everything else...



Betty Jo Godbey

Leaves, Betty Jo Godbey, College Transfer



RENAISSANCE 1995