

TOWERS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 1964

VOLUME XXI

TOWERS



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DE KALB, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1964

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Towers is published twice yearly by Xi Delta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honorary. Its purpose is to stimulate creative writing and to promote an appreciation of writing and literature in general within the college community.

The prose and poetry in the following pages reflect the choice of the Staff members only, who carefully read, discussed, then voted according to what they felt to be the best of the submitted material. Anonymity was observed in selecting material.

Prize winners were chosen by three faculty members of the English Department from the twenty-three selections made by the staff. The awards appear on page 48. They reflect the choice of the judges only and were chosen anonymously. Our thanks to the judges for their careful consideration of the entries.

Printer: Johnson Printing Corporation, DeKalb, Illinois.

Circulation: 6000.

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$$KE = \frac{1}{2} MV^2$$

Mind is a great slush of noun
and verb
of tongue and soul
of ideas and *schwankende Gestalten*,
is broil before birth
inflicting chaos
upon the enigma of man.
Mind is the dendron, axon,
synapse of raw energy,
alpha, omega, embryo-sage,
autobiography of history.
Between ends, gods, machines
and worlds;
in the midst of wars,
grunting to live,
naked $KE = \frac{1}{2} MV^2$,
the mind
is.

— JULIE SANDS

Having pushed its gentleness
through rain-greyed strata
of discarded wooden shingles,
a honey locust lifted greenness
to new heights, new lights,
transforming graveyard to courtyard.
Strangers to this alley,
my dreams breathed homage in their court.

Tonight I sought my dream-room; but
found only that earth-moving tractor
among sparse tumbled bricks,
silent after day's work,
nuzzling the stairway to the roof,
slumbering toward tomorrow.

— ROBERTA HANSON

I COME

Seeking a world untouched by grief
that bears not pain nor malice
Nor white cliffs of shale
Nor mermaids weeping after dawn
Nor phantom kiss on dewy lips
Nor blossoming of sunflowers
Bear the heat away
I seek the shade

— SARA JOELSON

Have you ever thought about the Universe? Really? Not merely that solar system and Milky Way and light-year kind of thing, but the *whole* thing? Do you think it has an end? I don't. I can feel it. If you keep going and keep going out there — where are you going to get *to*? You know what I mean? You can't get to the end because there is none. If there is, there has to be another beginning after that. Things don't end without there being something behind them. Like infinity. It doesn't end. Ever. It scares me, because somehow you know there's got to be an end, and yet you know there can't be because there would be something else behind.

I've tried to imagine it like a giant sphere. That's fine, as long as you confine yourself to the sphere. But I know there's got to be something outside of a sphere. And even if there's nothing, nothing is *something*. Nothing takes up space, doesn't it?

Or take two mirrors facing each other. When you step between them you see yourself reflected in a whole chain of images that get smaller and smaller. But when you can't see them anymore, where do they go? Do they just stop? I think they go on. That's what scares me. They go on. Like the Universe. How can they stop? When you stop there's eventually going to be a beginning again.

Maybe you don't know what I mean. I don't think I do, either. But I feel it. It scares me. I feel like shriveling up. Because when I think of things like that I get the feeling I shouldn't *be* here. You know?

Or take an old lady walking down the street with a shopping bag. She's dressed poorly. She's got an old dirty scarf on her head, and her coat's ragged. Her wrinkles are deep, but soft. Her hair is white. You like her eyes — they've got a dull, sad look, like a clear marble when you breathe on it. You want to smile at her. I do, anyway. I don't know why. Just to let her know somebody cares, I suppose. So you smile and see the dull film melt and there's a glimmer she gives back to you which makes your stomach feel warm. Then some young slut comes along and bumps into her because she was in her way — or she just didn't feel like moving. I can't stand that. And the look on the old woman's face. She doesn't care. She keeps going. She doesn't *resent* it.

It makes me want to go hide somewhere.

Maybe that's why I'm doing this. I don't know, to tell you the truth.

But I have to tell you all this first. Otherwise they'll think I'm an ass — the police and newspapers, that is. They always make things like this sound stupid.

Don't misunderstand. I want you to believe in me because I believe in you. I want you to try to understand. I'm not doing this because I hate the world. I like it. I like it very much. I probably like it more than anybody I know. Maybe that's why. I don't know. It doesn't make sense.

But I do know that I feel strange inside, as if there were some drug drifting through me that dulls everything — as if I were seasick and couldn't see straight, because my temples are drumming and my stomach is flapping on its hinges. Once in a while it swells inside, and it quivers, and I want to jump and shout.

It's miserable. Much as I feel it, I don't know where it's coming from.

I hope you won't think I'm an ass.

I don't know why I am the way I am.

Ask anybody. They'll tell you Karl Meyer's a pretty nice guy. I suppose I should be satisfied, knowing I'm well liked and everything. A lot of people look up to me.

I once gave a lecture in an English course when I was in college. It must have been good. Everybody said so.

Jim Hawks: "Nice job, Karl."

Me: "Aw, no." I get embarrassed when people compliment me. I like to be complimented. Everybody does, I suppose. But still, I get embarrassed and don't know what to say.

Karen Cummings: "That was really good!"

Everybody was impressed. I'd meet them on campus and they didn't say hello. Because they were scared. You know how it is when you're walking toward somebody and his eyes are on you and yours are on him and at that minute he looks away and then you look again to find that he'd been looking at you again, but now he's flashing his eyes away again. Then you go by without saying anything. And you feel you wanted to turn around and say "hello" after them, but you think it would be strange and you let it go. I think the other guy feels that, too. A lot of people really want some contact, but sensitive, quivering little things like that happen and you spend the rest of your life passing people by.

Don't ever get looked up to. People are insincere with somebody they have to raise their eyes to. It's lonely.

I like people. If I were the President of the U. S. or somebody with really a lot of prestige, I'd still like people. I'd want them to like me. Not look up to me. But even. Straight into my eyes. That's the best kind of a situation between people, when his eyes are exactly on the same level as yours and no one has to look up or down at anyone.

I don't like some people as much as others, but I at least try to be nice to them.

You probably do, too. You meet a girl that's cross-eyed, not badly, but just enough so you can tell she's self-conscious about it. You don't see her cross-eyes. You look into her eyes when you talk to her, but you don't make like you see them. You don't twist your lips or anything. You don't even have to make an expression; she can tell by looking at your eyes whether you're looking at her cross-eyes or looking her straight in the eye.

I once had a cold sore on my lips. It was very big and almost covered my whole mouth. And you know how ugly cold sores are. I was ashamed as hell about it, because, for one thing, it felt about twice as bad as it looked. When I talked to people I could tell whether they were repulsed by it or whether their eyes shone out with a look that tried to say, "Don't worry. I'm not looking at it."

Or even if they said out loud in a joke, "Cut yourself shaving?"

That's what I mean. We all of us have got *something* we don't want people to see in a certain way. If they either ignore it completely or joke about it, that's fine. But none of this business of the hidden look where you can tell they're thinking about it inside. That makes you feel like squirming.

That's how I feel about this cross-eyed girl. You feel sorry and you want to help. So you're nice to her. Not real nice. That's bad, too. Sincerely nice. Regular — the way you'd be with anybody. Just treat people regular and you'll be all right.

The only thing wrong is you get to be bothered by these people. They overdo it when they see you're being regular to them. They cling. Then it begins to hurt even more inside you because you get to hate what you're doing — you start to feel that maybe you weren't too sincere about doing it in the first place. I don't know why, but you do. Even though you still feel sorry.

I suppose that's one of the reasons people like me. I don't think I ever made more than one or two enemies. I didn't think of them as enemies, but that's how the situation was looked at.

People are nice deep down inside. I only wish you could get in there and let them get into you. It's a shame.

That seasick feeling I told you about — it's getting worse. I wonder if they have a word for worldsick. *Worldsick*. That's the word itself. Then I diagnose myself as worldsick. The new disease. *Worldsickness*. *Sickworldness*? *Sicknessworld*? *Worldill*.

After all, people who like the sea get seasick, too.

I hope to hell I've got the guts to take the shot for it.

I'm in my living room. The shades are open and I'm just right now looking out the window. It's been snowing. It's still snowing a little bit. I'm on the fourth floor. It looks nice, the way all the roofs are smooth white. And the trees look like they've been dipped in flaky white paint. Roofs and trees should always look like that. But its stops snowing and someone comes along and tramples it and starts to shovel it. Then everybody in the whole damn world does the same. Their cars make it dirty and leave black ruts. It's not too long before it gets to be a really ugly world. I don't mean it was ugly before, but with the snow it gets to looking almost perfect, so that once it's disturbed, it's like tearing the petals off a rose that's just opened up. I hate people who tear the petals off flowers.

I haven't slept all night.
I'm going to tell you why.

Last night I went to my fiancee's house. Naomi and I are supposed to get married in May. I go over there every Friday night and we spend a quiet evening. It's not far from my place and I don't take my car.

Naomi's a very good cook, and I was supposed to get there about supper time.

"Hi!" she said and took my coat.

"Mmm. Your lips taste better without lipstick."

"Stop it now, Karl. I'm busy!"

"What's wrong? Got another boy friend in the kitchen?" I kissed her again.

"Hmm . . . Silly! I haven't had time to fix up yet." She began to fuss with her hair.

I took her toward me in a quick motion like they do in the old-time silent movies. "Come here, you big voluptuous sexpot!"

She's not at all. It's a joke we have. She's small and thin, with a tiny nose. Petite, she always says. But she likes it when I call her a sexpot. I don't know why. Can you figure out women? All you can do is love them.

"Karl," she said, putting extra emphasis on the -r.

"Yes, dearest?"

"Oh, stop it. Now, come on!" She straightened her apron. "Have Dad make you a drink. He's at the bar."

"Sounds great."

"Supper will be a few minutes."

"OK."

"Karl?"

"What?"

"I ruined the potatoes. Simply ruined them. I hope you won't reconsider."

"Reconsider?"

"Our marriage."

"Why?"

"Because I ruin potatoes."

"Oh."

"Some girls smoke. I ruin potatoes." She had a strtight face.

I smiled. "Well, I just might!" And I gave her a whack on the fanny. Her eyes brightened in a reaction and she lifted her chin slightly, and turned toward the kitchen.

"Don't ruin the meat, too!"

I went to the bar and found George drinking.

"Well, Karl!" he said, and gave me his hand. His hands are like hams.

"George." I shook it firmly. I like people who shake hands firmly.

George doesn't, despite his huge paws. I suppose that's one of the reasons we don't get along. At least he isn't one of those who doesn't offer his hand at all.

"What'll it be?"

"What are you having?"

"Highball." He downed his glass.

"Fine with me."

He made two more. Both doubles. I don't like them too strong, but he drinks them like water. I could tell he'd already had a few. The whisky bottle was half empty and it was a new bottle because the torn seal from the cap lay next to it.

He lifted his glass. "How you been, Karl boy? How's the little office at Weber and Co.?"

He always calls me boy. I'm twenty-three and no boy. "Fine. You?" He never says "company." It's always "Co."

He ran his fingers around the inside of his collar. "Ah, so-so. You know."

No, I didn't.

He started gesturing toward his chest. "Getting sluggish in here. Sometimes I think my system's getting muddy." He ran his hand through his bushy hair — that's the only way he ever combs it — and then scratched his pot right where the belt buckle is.

"Maybe you ought to take it easier, George."

"No." He gulped the last of his highball. "I think it's just getting close to that time."

"That time" is death, I suppose. He always mentions it.

He stood up. "Another one?"

"No. Thanks." I was afraid he'd get drunk. Naomi doesn't like to hear it, but I call her father a drunk.

He poured some whisky. He didn't add the ginger ale.

"Prost!" he said, and gulped.

"Prost," I said.

"You know that good old German word, eh, Karl? My favorite



German word. *Prost!*" He drank again.

Of course I know the word. He knows I know, too.

I lifted my glass toward him, then drank the rest of mine. I was hoping Naomi would come in. I could hear the dishes rattling in the kitchen, and the parakeet jabbering.

George got up sluggishly and poured himself more, hitting the bottle against the rim of the glass so hard I thought he'd break it. He turned to me and lifted his glass, curling his lips into a weak smile. His face had the tint of red wax fruit.

I nodded and smiled back.

His lips straightened then, and he went toward the piano, carrying his huge bulk with caution. He stood looking at a small picture, the only thing on the piano. The piano had been his wife's. Now that she's dead there's only her picture on it. Naomi doesn't play.

George lifted his glass toward the picture.

"Dorothy!" he roared. "*Prost*, Dorothy." He gulped down half the glass, looking constantly at the picture. "Inconsiderate woman." He drank the rest and raised his glass again. "Are you watching over me, Dorothy?" I figured he was going to throw it.

"Dad!"

It was Naomi.

I got up.

George gave a start. But his shoulders relaxed then, and he turned facing Naomi and me, coming toward us slowly. He put his glass down on the bar and took me by the arm.

"Don't you think it's inconsiderate, Karl?" His voice sounded like he had a mouth full of cotton. "Don't you — don't you think it was inconsiderate of her to die like that? Eh, Karl?" He had his big ham around my arm.

"Dad." Naomi took him gently by the arm. "Come on. Dinner's ready." Go on in, Karl. Take a seat. Come on, Dad."

She closed her eyes as I held the kitchen door. When they opened, she was alive again. The moistened brown of her eyes telegraphed her feelings, and I knew she wanted me to tolerate what was happening.

She's a good girl, Naomi.

The table was set in the dining nook. The kitchen has that gleaming cleanness about it that I always enjoy because I know a woman is in charge of it. That's one of the reasons I looked forward to marrying Naomi. I would get up in the morning and eat breakfast in a kitchen with crisp white curtains and a flowerpot in the window and homemade potholders on the wall.

George sat down quietly. I held Naomi's chair, then sat down opposite her.

The food steamed on the table. George filled his plate with a glum look on his face.

Something whirred past me through the air and settled on my shoulder. "Chico," Naomi said. "Don't bother Karl."

The parakeet wandered down my arm and hopped onto the table. "Chico!" Naomi held her finger out. "Come on, Chico!" She made a pucker sound with her lips. The bird hopped on her finger, gave a peep and said, "Chico. Chico. Cheeee—co." She kissed it, and it rubbed its beak against her lips. Then it peeped again.

George looked up. "Couldn't you lock that damn bird up?"

The bird turned its head toward George.

"I couldn't get him in the cage," Naomi said.

"He won't hurt anything," I said.

Naomi loved Chico, because he was fun. He was green, with yellow and white tufts next to his beak, and a white tuft under it that he sometimes puffed up. When he did, he looked like a wise old man. He had a habit of exploring the table and trying out everyone's food. He looked funny, hopping from plate to plate, setting his little feet down flat one before the other. And all the time giving a peep and saying, "Chico. Chico. Chi—co."

I liked that bird.

George hated it, especially when it wandered around the table.

Chico was nibbling at my potatoes.

"Hey," I said, holding him a little piece. "You really like Naomi's potatoes, don't you?"

He nibbled on them and his eyes were on me. Every once in a while they blinked and I could see the tiny eyelashes on them.

George's eyes were on the bird.

"Come on now, Chico. That's enough." Naomi held her finger out. "Besides," she smiled at me, "I ruined them."

"I'll divorce you."

"We're not married yet."

"Well, get busy with some potatoes."

"I'll do no — come on, Chico!"

The bird didn't hop on her finger. Instead he traipsed toward George's plate. He started eating the potatoes from the edge.

"Chico," Naomi emphasized the Chi. She got up to get him.

At her approach the bird hopped up on George's plate and traipsed through the food.

"Chico!" Naomi screamed.

George's eyes dulled.

"Damn bird." He grabbed it and enclosed it in his fist. The bird shrieked.

"No, Dad! You'll hurt him." Naomi began to tremble. "Let me take him."

George stared at her stupidly. He got up. Only Chico's head stuck out from his fist, biting frantically at George's fat thumb, turning its

head from side to side.

George held the bird up to Naomi's face. His face now had the color of a ripe red apple, slightly glistening with alcoholic moisture.

"I'll take him," Naomi said. "Come on, Chi--"

"Damn bird," George mumbled. He started tightening his fist.

"Dad?--No!"

George clenched it harder. The bird's head struggled back and forth and the beak was open. Its eyes were two perfect circles, glassy and quivering. George's ham of a hand reddened.

I jumped up. "Now, George —"

"Dad, please!"

"For God sakes, George!"

"Damn bird," George said, and grunted.

"George!" I hate fights, but I doubled my fist and struck at his chin.

He kept his grip on the bird, eyeing it with fascination.

Then I hit him on the arm, below the shoulder where it really hurts.

He grunted, opened his fist and the bird fell to the floor.

"Chico!" Naomi knelt down. I knelt down beside her. I felt like belting George again. I just gave him a dirty look. I don't think I ever looked with that much hate at anybody in my whole lifetime.

George looked around suddenly, frantically, then left.

Naomi took the bird in her hand. Its eyes were half-closed, and the beak was open. Blood came out and reddened the feathers around the beak. There was a curious mingle of white, red and yellow. The eyes could have been a crying child's. The tiny chest looked caved in and one wing hung limp.

Naomi cried. She held a finger to its beak. The bird gave a weak nibble.

I grabbed the bird and turned the faucet on to fill the sink.

"Karl? . . . Karl, what are you doing? — Karl, no!" She ran out of the room.

As I held the bird under water I heard a door slam.

Only a few bubbles came up.

I haven't slept all night.

I could have killed George. You know what I mean? All I did was go into the washroom and dry my hands.

Then I went to Naomi's room. She wouldn't open the door. She kept mumbling something. I could understand, "Go away."

As I passed through the living room to leave, George was sitting at the bar. He was downing more whisky. I didn't look at him.

"Karl?" he mumbled. "Don't you think it was inconsiderate of Dorothy? Don't you —"

I slammed the door.

I didn't go straight home. All I thought of was that little bird's head twisting in George's fist. It wasn't so bad looking at it when it was dead. It was kind of ugly. But while it struggled. . . .

And Naomi's tears.

I kept seeing it over and over. I had this feeling in my throat like when you want to sob but you can't. My God, you're not supposed to cry when you're twenty-three!

I couldn't help it.

I walked to Weber and Company. I told Pete, the night watchman, I'd forgotten my briefcase. I hadn't, but it was on my desk and I could make it look like I had. He's a nice guy, Pete, and he let me in. He didn't go with me to my office. That's how I was able to go into Mr. Weber's office.

That's how I got the gun out of the cabinet by the safe.

I put it in my briefcase, and Pete wished me good night.

I hope you don't mind me telling you all this. You *are* listening, aren't you? You've got to try to understand.

I don't know why I got the gun.

What happened at Naomi's house, that wasn't it. But afterward, everything merged. I began to think of other things. You know? Like about the universe. And the mirrors. And the old lady. And people passing you by. Cross-eyes.

I couldn't help that either.

You must think I'm crazy or something.

Please don't think I'm crazy.

It's afternoon, and snowing softer now.

I'm out of coffee but I still have cigarettes.

Did you ever see a gun closely? I never had until now. It's a lot heavier than you imagine. It's a simple thing, really, lying on the table here.

I don't even know what kind of gun it is.

There's a beauty about it, though.

It gives you an eerie feeling to think that a simple piece of steel like this can put an end to your brain.

I hope to hell I've got the guts to pull the trigger.

I've got to keep writing. Try to understand. . . . So much to tell. So much — I want to get rid of it. There's nobody.

I want to really get empty.

I didn't let things get me when I was little. That is, I'm not abnormal or anything because of what happened then. But it was different.

I don't mind. I'm not sorry it was.

I was born in Hamburg, Germany. My mother wasn't married. It was about the time when the war was boiling up red hot and the people were like corks on a wave. Of course, I wasn't there. But people have told me how it was while I was born.

I don't blame my mother or anything. She took care of me. I've seen a picture of her only once. She had brown hair and brown eyes. I guess that's what color they were. I couldn't tell from the picture. I have brown eyes and brown hair. I don't remember because I was only six when she got killed. But I remember her face. There was always love in it.

She was killed in a raid toward the end of the war. We were in a bunker. She had both arms around me all the time.

"Keine Angst," she kept whispering. Don't be scared.

I was, though. I remember that.

There were many raids and there was nothing especially different about this one. When it was over we picked up our things and went home, as always. Some of the people never found their homes.

It was night, but it looked like shimmering twilight with the fires and the smoke. Everybody was running, coughing. We had to go down Bahnhofstrasse to get home. The railway station had been wrecked in the first raids. This time there was only one building burning.

The ashes drifting down looked like dirty snow.

Somebody yelled "Vorsicht!" and a quick hand yanked me away. All I saw was a big sheet of flame and debris crash down like an avalanche. People screamed.

They found my mother. After four days. They knew her by her teeth. She was black and shriveled to the size of a baby.

After the war my uncle came over and took me back to America. His name was Karl Meyer, too. My mother named me Karl, but I took on the name Meyer when he adopted me. He died last year of cancer.

I never knew who my father was. My mother never told me. It isn't that she didn't know. She wasn't *that* kind of woman. She probably didn't want me to know. I suppose whoever he was got killed in the war, like all the fathers.

It's snowing less now.

Did you ever read *The Catcher in the Rye*? It has a character named Holden Caulfield who's really confused and bitter about life. He only likes children because adults are all phonies. He wants to catch all the children from falling into the abyss of the adult world.

I suppose he didn't feel that way about parakeets, too.

I studied it in college. I was a business major but I took extra English courses because I like literature. Sometimes those great authors really hit close to what you feel. You know what I mean?

At first I thought I liked Holden Caulfield. A lot of his ideas were

really good. But then I got to hate him. I think he was crazy. Anyone that felt the way he did would have killed himself.

And Goethe. There's a lot of corn in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. But if you listen to him, just listen, you begin to understand him.

It's snowing just a little now.

Did you ever try writing? Stories and things? I did.

You can't *talk* to people. You know? They want to talk, too. So nobody listens.

I tried to write because I wanted to share. Do you understand me?

You see a little tree next to a brook and there are wild daisies under it. The sky is a deep blue and right above the tree when you see it from a distance floats a fluffy white cloud that you want to get your hands on because you think it would feel nice.

You sense that nobody in the whole world has the same feeling you do. So you write it down. Or try. Most of the time you can't do it.

I feel that way about a lot of things I see.

I stopped this writing thing when I met Naomi. I didn't feel like it anymore. But I didn't tell her the things I would have wanted to write down. It's useless anyway. I don't think anyone cares whether you say it or write it down.

It's stopped snowing now.

It looks nice with the sun coming through the window and hitting everything with a sparkle. Did you ever notice how the sun lets you see all the millions of tiny little dust particles in the air? I can see them on the barrel of the gun, too.

Do you read newspapers like I do?

I like to read the little things.

ROCKWELL, N. H. (AP) — If you had been Mrs. Agnes Wiley, what would you have done?

One daughter was lost beneath the waters of a pond. Another had just been pulled from the pond and was lying motionless on the ground.

Would you go after the lost child? Or would you try artificial respiration on the child beside you?

Mrs. Wiley had this nightmarish decision to make yesterday.

She gave artificial respiration to daughter Nancy, 3. Soon the child responded with gasping breaths.

Police recovered the body of daughter Margaret, 5.

I don't think I'd have tried saving either one. When only one is

gone, there's always something missing. When they're both dead, everything is gone. I don't know why I feel that way.

DUBUQUE, Iowa (UPI) — A visitor scratched at the police headquarters door Wednesday as the mercury hovered at 13 below zero.

When the door was opened, the caller scampered in, huddled behind a warm radiator and refused to budge.

It was a shivering cottontail rabbit.

I like the police in Dubuque.

————— In a single month at County Hospital recently, children were born to three 13-year-old girls; to five 14-year-olds; to twenty only 15 years old; and to fifty girls aged 16. None of the girls was married.

One mother had her seventh illegitimate child Wednesday. The following Saturday her daughter, 14, had her first.

About fifteen illegitimate children are born in this single hospital every day of the year.

Don't you feel kind of sorry for the bastards?

I don't mind that I'm illegitimate. I remember from a book I read once that in ancient Greece the kings all had dozens of illegitimate children. They grew up like everybody else. It was no sin.

There's just one thing I hate being called: bastard. Even in fun. Most guys in college, you know, they call each other names in fun. I never let it show. I always laughed in fun when somebody called me that. But when there's that extra sting of truth it hurts.

Have you ever thought about dust on furniture?

If you don't see it, it doesn't bother you. But the minute you go looking for some you're going to find it. Always. Then you have to wipe it away. Pretty soon you're wiping all the time and you start worrying about just one speck of dust. You know what I mean?

I always look for specks. I worry about them.

Other people wipe the dust away in their lives without thinking much about it.

I worry about one speck.

It's terrible. There are too many specks in the world to worry about.

I once spent a half hour chasing a fly out of an open window because I didn't want to kill it.

I never told anyone.

Except you.

Why do Margarets die?
Rabbits shiver?
Why do birds get strangled?
Why are people cross-eyed?
Can you tell me?
Why doesn't the Universe have an end?
Please don't think I'm crazy.

It hasn't been snowing for a while now.

Naomi is supposed to come at five to make dinner. We're supposed to go out. I don't think she'll come. When I was trying to get to sleep I kept having these dreams. Nothing was moving in them. Nothing.

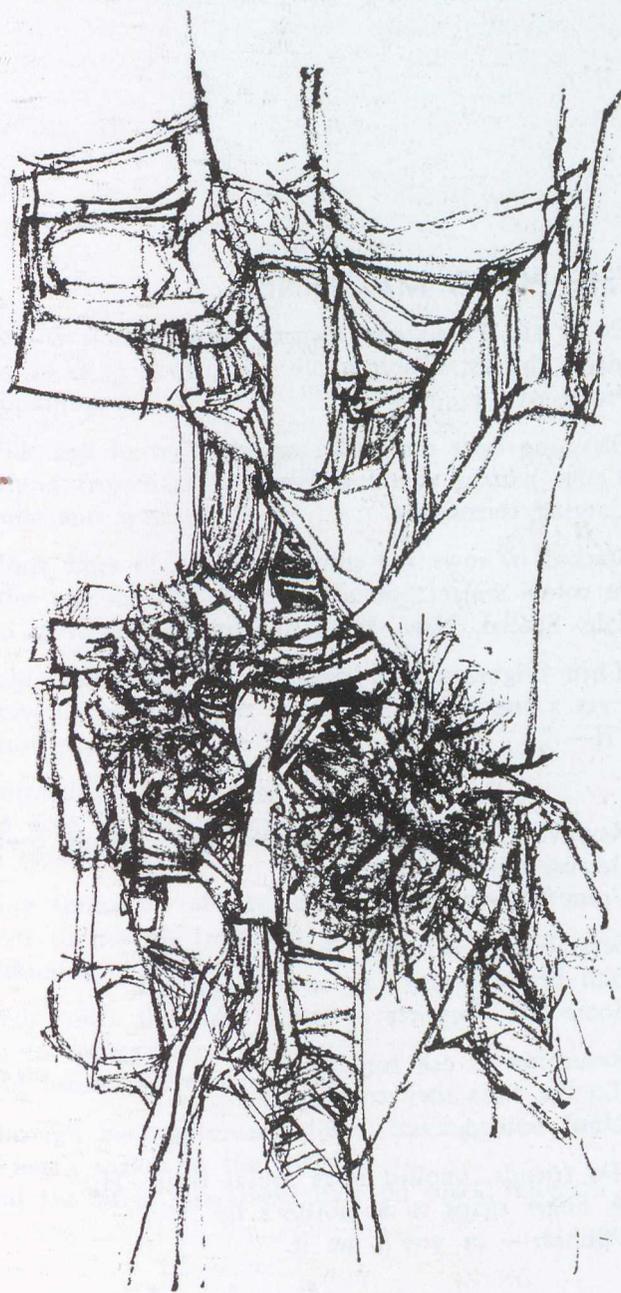
Nothing.

There was just the parakeet lying in a pool of blood, the blood hadn't even run, for God sakes, and I don't know why I dreamed it. I killed the bird in the water, didn't I? And there wasn't much blood, Naomi was in the dream too, her tears were stopped dead in the middle of her cheek.

Someone's out shoveling snow didn't i tell you already the cars are moving and people are trampling it with their dirty shoes spitting on it for God sakes and breathing on it it's pretty close to five i feel empty now the gun doesn't feel so heavy anymore the trigger squeezes easy i wonder where i should aim it i don't know to tell you the truth where do people aim guns when they want to shoot themselves do they all feel this way they all see the specks of dust and feel funny because the snow's being trampled on and you don't want to kill flies chico

i hope you don't think i'm an ass someone's coming at the door i hope it's not Naomi knocking

i hope



THE FOOD MACHINE

Floors all slicked and corners clean,
Inside this establishment
Freshened air.

Gleaming carts on rubber wheels
Traffic narrow corridors
Gorging themselves.

Stacked in rows the shining cans
In colors scream:
Sale, Special, New, Fresh, Tasty!

Then bright-painted arrows catch and show
Eyes a free offer,
"If—."

* * *

Revolving, like gears, chattering gates get no count
Because still they're dizzy
From fast-swinging urchins.

Several boys run and chase each other,
Ball bearings play tag or hide-and-seak,
Some fall, then cry.

Returning to ask for candy
To the carts they come quiet
Until refused.

To friends, uncoiled boys squeal their "Hi!"
A finger snaps to a mother's lip
"Shhhh— or you'll get it."

* * *

Endless stacks of cellophaned meats
On racks in coolers stand
Appealing.

Milk and butter and eggs
Behind frosted doors of glass
Smile and wait.

White lines of refrigerators
Offer one-step, time-saving dinners
To stove from freezer.

Cold, half-cooked bisquits and rolls
Done in four minutes to three-fifty ovens
"Just pop in."

Through small packages, spices send
An aisle or two the exotic aromas
So tantalizing.

Tiny fumes of cabbage, carrots, onions and corn
Drift to nostrils from net bags
Beckoning.

Fresh fruits and citric odors to scales
Go for prices
And become stapled in sacks.

Through busy automatic doors, leaving boys yell,
"There's snakes in the celery!"
And the silver carts regurgitate on black conveyor belts.

— EARL TETEAKE

SUNDAY

— LEE FEE

It's Sunday. You know it's Sunday because you had ice cream at dinner. You only have ice cream on Sundays. You know it's Sunday, too, because everyone is dressed up. Sister Catherine helped you dress up. She helped the others, too. And now you all stand waiting for her, waiting to have her check you over one last time. You feel funny. Your dress crinkles when you move and the new blue ribbons on your braids crinkle too. And when you move your head, the skin on your neck pulls. Sister Catherine made your braids extra tight today. She always does on Sunday.

You look at the others, and they look at you. Becky makes a face, but nobody laughs. You never laugh on Sunday. Sister Catherine comes in and checks everyone and then tells you to go out and play in the yard. You follow the others, but you don't play. No one ever plays on Sunday. You just pretend to play. You didn't know this when you first came here. You went into the yard and you played and the crinkly dress got dirty and one of the ribbons got lost. Sister Catherine was angry and she had Wanda tell you about Sundays. So now you go out in the yard and you pretend to play.

You walk over to the swings. You'd like to swing, but that would make Sister Catherine angry. So you just pull the swing back and forth, and try hard not to stare at the parlour windows.

When Wanda told you about Sundays, she told you about the windows, too. They were the peoples' windows and the people only came on Sundays. They came to look at you, Wanda said, and if they like you Sister Catherine would come and get you and take you into the parlour, and the people would talk to you, and if the people *really* liked you they would take you 'home' with them. That was why you had to pretend to play on Sundays. You couldn't be all mussed up when the people saw you.

You had to be extra nice on Sundays, too, Wanda said, or the people wouldn't like you and they wouldn't take you 'home'. And if the people didn't take you 'home' before you started to grow up, then they never would. Wanda was almost grown up and she didn't have to go out in the yard.

You pull the swing back and forth and concentrate on counting backwards from one hundred, and squint your eyes shut so that you won't see Sister Catherine coming across the yard to get you.

Sister Catherine takes your hand and tells you something as you walk toward the parlour, but you don't listen to her because you can see the people in the windows now and their faces look all wobbly behind the glass. She takes you into the parlour and she tells the people your name and she tells you theirs, and the people stare at you and you stare at the people, and then Sister Catherine leaves.

The people tell you to sit down and you sit down on the edge of the chair the way Wanda showed you, and the people sit down on the edge of their chairs too. They smile at you and the lady asks you questions and sometimes the man does, too, but mostly it's the lady. You try to be extra nice, like Wanda said, but your dress crinkles and the skin on your neck pulls. The people keep smiling at you, and in between smiles the man coughs. They wait for you to say something, but you don't know what to say and besides your face feels funny. The man coughs and the lady tells him something and he goes out into the hall and comes back with a doll. He hands the doll to you and his arm is stiff and straight, and your arm, when you take the doll, is stiff and straight. You hold the doll on the edge of your knees and say thank you, the way Wanda taught you, and you and the people stare at the doll until Sister Catherine comes back.

You say good-bye to the people and the people say good-bye to you, and you lay the doll down on the edge of the chair and go out to the swings and wait for Sunday to be over.

The sky is spread with darkling shapes,
What wind has calmed into an empty touch,
The earth relaxes and curls into drowning depths:

Peace erupts into tranquility.

One being sits alone tonight
In whom worlds that do not exist collide
And form tragic dust:

Torment dissolves into futility.

— THOMAS E. LOWDERBAUGH

SAID THE MACHINE MOTHER TO HER TEST TUBE BABY

God took a piece of love
And from it He made life,
But it only lasted so long,
And He labeled it a 'trial run.'
With the help of Society, though—
Wonder drugs, rest homes, and intra-venous feeding—
Life, or dull existence, vegetation, humdrum,
 however the terminology runs,
 might be stretched unimaginably.

God took a piece of joy
And from it He made childhood,
But it was only for the pure,
And He labeled it 'for as long as you can'.
With the aid of Society, though—
Peer-groups, Dr. Spocks, and well-trained parents—
Childhood, or adolescence, pre-school age, teens,
 however the terminology runs,
 might be grow up quick for nothing.

God took a piece of space
And from it He made nature,
But it dealt out no segregation,
And He called it 'earth and its inhabitants'.
With the benefits of Society, though—
Slums, machines, H-bombs—
Nature, or property rights, waste - land, Red vs. Uncle Sam,
 however the terminology runs,
 might be completely eliminated.

God took a piece of Himself
And from it He made man,
But He made each man unique,
And He called them 'His children'.
With the achievements of Society, though
Systemitizing, conformity, brainwashing—
Man, or statistics, ethnocentric groups, masses,
 however the terminology runs,
 might be reduced to like numbers.

Never forget these things, my child,
And each night before you sleep
Say a prayer to Society.
You are a perfect child, my dear,
unquestioning, ignorant, uncaring,
You don't bother searching
And beauty, truth or love mean nothing.
That's right, say a prayer to Society,
Don't forget, child, without Society where would we be?

— RENEE HUGI

TALENT

When confronted with something to write,
I nearly drop dead just from fright.
An essay's not bad
But a poem, I must add,
Always ends up sounding trite.

Writing is oft called art.
But how does art get a start?
This limerick form may be tired and worn
But the worn when reborn oft has heart.

My childhood was not called precocious,
My writing called "purely atrocious."
Attempts to prepare
What my talent would dare
Were met with reactions ferocious.

Could it be that poets are gregarious?
My position is rather precarious,
And writings that wail
Seldom prevail
Without sex or something nefarious.

When I compare what I have to say
With Edna St. Vincent Millay,
I may as well quit, for I match not a whit
With poets that *are* here to stay.

— BETTY HANSON



"MET-HIM-PIKE-HOSES"

— STEPHEN READ

Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.¹

... on my way to Ithaca — the answer to a question and the poser of new questions. Fear and the rationalizations of the indolent mind prevent happiness. These are the reasons, too often, that the American people lay aside a book like *Ulysses* rather than meeting its challenge, thereby forfeiting their chance for understanding. Higher education opens its arms to us and we rush toward the embrace, but the ground is rocky; the sand is soft; and the river is deep. Who am I? Where am I going? We ask these questions, and we really want to know the answers, but we don't know how to look for them. If our minds were oriented, we should, perhaps, recognize portions of truth when we are exposed to the opportunity for learning. We think we are educated, for instance, when we say we have read and perhaps can quote a beautiful passage from Thomas Wolfe: "Life is like a river, and as fixed, unutterable in unceasing movement and in changeless change as the great river is, and time itself."² Few of us, however, bother to ask how time is like the river in changeless change. And if we did pose the question, our final answer would probably be to ask someone else, or just wait — experience will teach us — we'll learn the answers by osmosis. But there is another solution.

Ulysses is not an easy book to read, primarily because of the almost incomprehensible genius of its creator, James Joyce. The first impulse we have is to cast aside the book with suitable remarks. ("Is Liffey worth Lufing?"³) Chances are that leaving it alone might be our salvation — or it might be, according to Pater, "to sleep before evening"⁴ ("There are two sights for ever a picture"⁵). For many of us, the only "aesthetic" experiences ever absorbed were the kinetic ones inspired by a well-shaped knee, the shock of the bat hitting the ball squarely, or the feeling of a powerful motor beneath the hood. With such an artistic background, it

¹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Viking Press, New York, 1957.

² Hans Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955, p. 16.

³ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*.

⁴ Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses*, Vintage, New York, 1962, p. 87.

⁵ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*.

is difficult to understand why Joyce writes *Ulysses*, a story that takes place in one day, in 768 pages, using hundreds of styles, all apparently uncoordinated, and with no particular plot at all. We wonder about this, and we read; and then, having partaken of the lotus, we suddenly discover that the mind has become the Liffey, and our own Odyssey has begun.

The quotation from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which introduces this essay also introduces *Ulysses*. Stephen Dedalus, in order to understand what the heart is and what it feels, must slosh out of the bowl and experience life in its reality — as man has since his creation — before he can ascend to the ideal. It is a portrayal of the metempsychosis of Stephen's soul and, therefore, must be told through a metamorphosis of style. In the 768 pages we find sometimes a million experiences exploding out of one passage, so that when our receivers are well tuned, we experience an epiphany. Here the artist has matured; therefore, we move from the realism and impressionism of the *Portrait* to Joyce's use of Seurat's pointillistic technique.

In *Finnegans Wake* we find further maturation of the artist and, necessarily, a telescoping of thoughts which lends even more poignancy. For instance, Joyce, like Wolfe, is aware of the affinity of the river and life and time. However, he puts it like this:

Riverrun past Eve and Adam's. Beside the rivering waters
of, hithering and thithering waters of.

Back away from that and take a good look. Why does he say it like that? Part of the answer may be found in the fact that Joyce is stiving for more than meaning; he is conveying significance. Significance is an association of subjective relativity combining the past, the present, and the future; and these memories, experiences, and expectations "... are not serially, progressively and uniformly ordered but are always inextricably and dynamically associated and mixed up with each other." When we ask ourselves, therefore, "who am I?" the answer must include cognizance of these relationships: "What am I, makes sense only in terms of what I have become, that is, in terms of the objective historical facts together with the pattern of significant associations constituting the biography or the identity of self."⁶

All of us experience life in one sense or another, but our reaction to what we see, hear, and smell depends upon the awareness of all the senses, and the awareness of all of the senses depends upon the development of the mind. When we hear "the barrel organ," we respond according to what we have been mentally aware of at some time in our lives — the sights, smells, and emotions of a remembered moment flood into the present, and the memory of that moment may be distorted or transformed

⁶ Some of the ideas and all of the quotations in this paragraph were taken from Hans Meyerhoff's *Time in Literature*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955, pp. 23-28.

by the emotions of the present. How much more vividly we would live our lives if every passage we read should evoke images of past aesthetic stases, if every new thinker epiphanized the philosophers and authors of the past, changing the parallax of our experience. Every atom in nature and every event in history is linked omphalically with all things and events: an awareness of the omphalos is the beginning of metempsychosis.

Such experiences as we have been describing will not occur for those who have not some degree of maturity (though few of us will ever achieve the maturity of Joyce). Maturity of the type which will illuminate the pages of Joyce is obtained by reading, understanding, and remembering; therefore, it is necessary to immerse ourselves in books and ideas to prepare a background of experiences. For those of us who have discovered that pretty knees are, after all, rather alike, or that hitting a ball or vicarious power is not enough, Joyce made a massive contribution. At about the time that we feel life may not really be worth living, Joyce can be just what the over-leisured people of America need. Such a contribution, I think, is all the justification we need for Joyce's style, although sending the world on an *Odyssey* may not have been what he had in mind.

If we were to develop, as Stephen did, without a touch of humor, we probably would not be able to see because of the brilliance of the light. Thank heaven for Joyce's sense of humor! How could one portray a Leopold Bloom in a serious sense when it is only comedy that can capture the reality of his tragedy? We can be absorbed in the daily life of this henpecked man, completely synchronizing our stream of consciousness with his so that our minds are filled with figures, quiet hopes, latent desire, the shock of death, suddenly stimulated memories, and then relaxed when Poldy reads:

What is home without
Plumtree's Potted Meat?⁷

That's refreshing, of course, for an instant, until we find our stream of consciousness shifting away from Bloom's: "What does he mean by that? Plum theme. Meat theme. Pot theme. Watch for it; maybe it'll come up later." And we link with Bloom again. We go along with him on the surface of life, dipping now and then into the depths of his imagination, then emerging into the sunlight or darkness of reality. Pictures are emerging rapidly in our minds, overlapping, empathizing until there is quite a strain, which Joyce relieves by having Bloom think subconsciously, "Love thy neighbor," then consciously: "Something going on: some sodality. Pity so empty. Nice discreet place to be next some girl. Who is my neighbor?"⁸

⁷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 73.

⁸ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 79.

There is a more subtle humor which runs through the Nausicaa and Penelope episodes. Gerty and Molly both are the epitome of the paradox called woman. Stringberg says that woman is "in combat with the male," but she is "the best guide a man could find through life, the best intercessor in any world."⁹ In *To Damascus* she is the Stranger's temptress and his savior. She is heavenly like Gerty and heavenly like Molly — all at once — what a strain! There is a humorous pleasantness in this paradox and in Gerty's girlish, immature "no, no, no" as contrasted with Molly's real and ideal "yes, yes, yes."

Words. What a master painter Joyce is! To the uninitiated, struggling for the plot, the words appear to mean what they say. We plod along puzzlingly until we become sensationally aware of the fact that a particular color, for instance, is constantly repeated. Aha! Shrewdly we begin to note the repetition to divine a pattern — no pattern. Such discoveries lead to our metamorphosis, for as soon as we have discovered there is no pattern, we read on and discover there is one after all, because words, like man, have a multiplicity of meanings; and Joyce means them all. The word *white* means, as nearly as I've been able to determine, white, milk, cream, the church, birth, death, etc.; and each one of these words has a multiple meaning. Confusing, yes, but once we realize this concept, we begin, through our blindness, to see. In addition to the one mental image which is our own, we see, hear, feel, smell, and taste those of, among others, Milton, Shakespeare, Blake, Aquinas, and Leopold Bloom — aesthetic parts of the Joycean whole. This wholeness, and therefore the radiance of his art, could not be achieved in any other manner. We should not, consequently, constrict the genius in a man to the narrow limits of our personal immaturity.

"Met-him-pike-hoses," metempsychosis, transmigration of the soul. A funny thing happened to me . . .

⁹ Barry Ulanov, *Makers of the Modern Theater*, McGraw-Hill, N.Y., 1961, p. 52.

when i dreamt of darkness and cement floor where
hanging forms caved inward there was no
one but me with floating webbings
stretched towards me

i welcomed your embrace of despair
you swept up all dusts of grief and graveness
from before time began i'm ready
once more for dusts to settle

graceful was vacuum cleaner
yet octopus danced on eighttoes
wrapped itself around inside its
cold toes

my toes too were cold
many admired me but none came ever
to brush off the snow and ice
from my body i was coldallover

they cast me in bronze now bruises covered
my shine
i'm even resting branch for sparrows and citypigeons
my webby dreams unwept

— EVA WEI

DECEMBER DAY

The sun warms itself rosy red
At the edge of dawn,
And contemplates its course to run.
While city spires silhouette from
Phantom ships on seas of grey,
The city yawns to a December day.

The sun seeks its rest in blankets
Warm with pink and blue,
And rejoices that its day is through.
While sky-shapes that passed for
Buildings in the light of day,
Board phantom ships and sail away.

— JAMES MEREDITH LOWER

Coal Black Hair
Blood Red Lips
Snow White Skin
Ice Cold Heart.

Deep dark earth
Cold cruel loam
Dead damned me
In soft silk coffin
Rot rot rotting
In harsh hot fire.

Once I lived
Once I loved
Once love died
I ceased to live.

Peacock, fish, and lyre,
Meaningless signs to me.
I do not believe in an eternal fire
Therefore I need no god
To act as a crutch in life.
I am what I am
And when I die all shall cease.

I need no god
When I die cover me with sod
And say, "Here lies a man
Who had no god
Save only he."

— MICHAEL J. MORTENSEN

SEPTEMBER 15, 1963

Our three little girls wore white gloves to Sunday School today
And got them dirty.
Let the little children come unto me. We don't live
In Birmingham.

— RACHAEL C. BURCHARD

- I. Fog lies covering the land;
The nail cuts through the edge of my life,
 To the guts, again and again
Till each part is laid open.
And I reach out towards the sun, a gasping,
 Broken creature of shame.
But there is no sun — only the fog.
And I cry, "Oh, God, help! Help me!"
But there is nothing — only the fog.
And I say to myself, "Rise, you are healed."
But I lie there — with only the fog.
- II. The grasping clawing fog sweeps over me.
And I, crawling with fear, crouch beneath an owl,
Licking the wounds and hoping for rain — but not
 From the owl.
Sickness clutches me, and I retch to the
 Beat of the tom-tom.
And raising my eyes to the skies I read nothing;
And the fog rolls on.
- III. A phoenix drops diving towards me; he wears the
 Mask of strength,
But, afraid, I hide again.
Yet he takes me in his fierce grip
And together we sail loftily above fog
 Into the sunlight.
We head towards it
And swiftly still we rise
Until we plunge gloriously into it.

— PETER LEANDER HIRSCH

NO STRAW HAT FOR ME

— MARY PENSON

I waved my farewell to the people in the day room as I went by. Only straw-hat Mary (the nurses named her that because she insisted on wearing the hat even to bed) returned the salute. Of the eighteen other old ladies, a few looked into my face but made no sign, while the rest stared blankly into space. Near the front of the room two old men were too involved in a telecast to see my signal. I'd been visiting this particular nursing home for four years; and while the faces changed over the years, the ratio remained static — about ten women to every man. Where were all the old men? The answer obviously was that they were either still competent enough to maintain themselves in society or they were dead. And these were the women who had once been capable housewives and mothers — functioning, necessary members of a society. Why had this mental degeneration happened mainly to women?

The answer lies, I think, in the difference in the pattern of their lives. Men at forty or forty-five are generally at a high point in their careers and can look forward to another twenty to twenty-five years of useful service — service to themselves and to society. At forty, or forty-five, the average woman has seen the last of her children enter the school system on an all-day basis and she faces the fact that her job is no longer a full time one. She is at some sort of a crossroad, and the path she chooses will shape the rest of her life. There are two ways open to her. She may either revise her pattern of living to fit one of semi-retirement and leisure-time activities, or she may take advantage of the free time at her disposal to do something constructive.

The first road is the easier of the two to follow. With her new-found freedom, the liberated mother may go on a psychological spree. She may launch a new beauty-care program, a treasure hunt through the stores, a foray into current literature, a routine of visits to old friends, or an orgy of televising. From this first experimentation may develop a pattern for the remainder of her life. Perhaps she is satisfied to straighten her house, wash the breakfast dishes, and then devote the rest of the day to the daytime serials or to knitting or rug making. These are all pleasant ways to spend a day, but remember the ladies in the day room of the nursing home — the ladies who stare blankly into space or hold desperately to a cherished possession for security. This mental state did not occur overnight but was the result of a long, slow, and insidious degeneration. For the mind, as truly as any other tissue in the body, will atrophy with lack of use.

After the first glowing enthusiasm, the beauty-care program may seem a rather unproductive waste of time, and the woman will go back to her routine grooming. If her inclination was to catch up on her reading, she may join the local book review group of her mothers' club and read several new books a month; or she may find to her dismay that there are very few people to discuss the new books with because there are relatively few housewives who have the time or inclination to read a great deal. If shopping is her hobby, then she may spend hours blissfully pawing the sale racks or just admiring things she has no intention of purchasing. She may develop many needs and spend long hours looking for just the right article for a specific purpose. After she has visited all the people she hasn't seen in years and written letters she has been meaning to write for a long time, she may discover that few of her friends have time to visit with her or to undertake a voluminous correspondence. If she finds pleasure in hand-work she may knit or sew. By now her children have developed definite tastes and she probably will have trouble pleasing them with the fruits of her labor. But the very nature of all of these leisure-time activities puts no pressure on the individual; and, as a consequence, a woman makes fewer and fewer demands upon herself until she finds that she is suddenly out of the swing of things and cannot think of facing large responsibilities any more. She doesn't even realize that she cannot face them; she just feels that she would rather not, little realizing that the mental chaos she is experiencing is the result of a lack of plain, old-fashioned thinking.

But there is another fork in the road. The other way has an arrow labelled "back to the grind." It is the harder road to take, but it is the more rewarding. If a family has more than two or three children, then it is difficult for one man to support them adequately in our present society. The woman decides to work. If she has never worked before, she will find herself woefully inadequate for even the most meager job, or she may find that industry is hesitant to hire her at all because of her age. If she has worked before or at any time during her marriage, she has a much better opportunity of getting a job that will be personally and materially rewarding. If she has been in one of the service professions before, then a little refresher work will put her back to work in a good job in nursing, teaching, or social work — a job where she can find personal fulfillment and be of service to society as well.

My choice came three years ago. I watched my children get on the school bus one September morning, first-grader included, and realized that for the first time in twenty years I had the day to myself. For two whole days I was delighted with my new-found leisure, and then I became bored. I felt vaguely dissatisfied, and the prospect of endless days of little productivity frightened me. Four children and an energetic husband had trained me to make use of time and to enjoy the satisfaction of a job accomplished. I wrote for my transcript of credits and entered Northern Illinois University

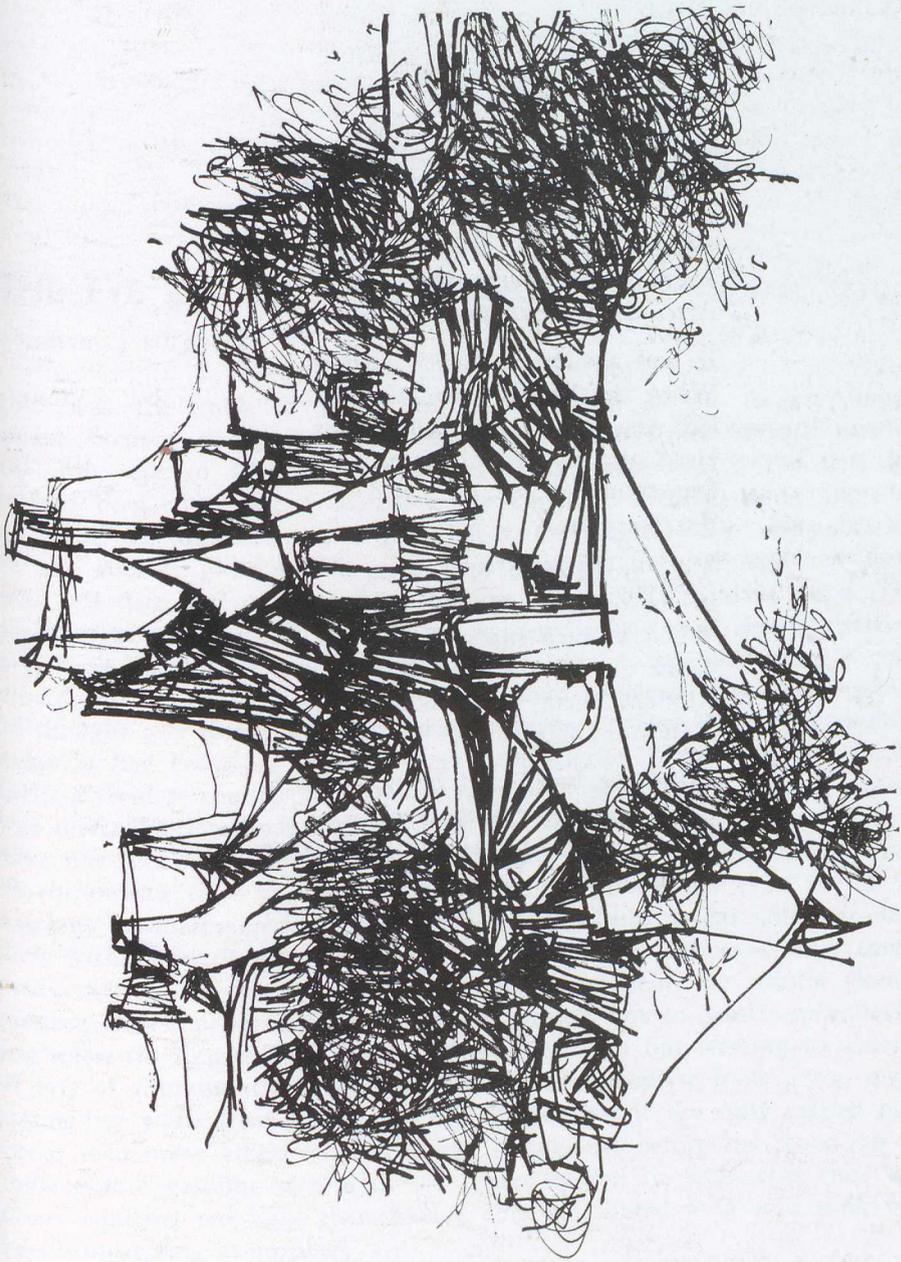
as a sophomore. This was my opportunity to fulfill a long-standing ambition. I would prepare myself to teach.

The first two or three weeks of my college career were the most revealing of my entire life. I discovered two things immediately: First, that I was middle-aged, a fact I had been too busy to notice up to that point; and second, that I had done very little thinking in my career as a housewife. The first discovery was inevitable, but the second one was shocking. I had taken my turn as a Sunday school teacher, Brownie leader, and 4-H leader, and had at one time or other been active in small cultural groups. I had helped to make the necessary major decisions about my home and children, and I had been under the impression that I had been thinking. But it hadn't really been an analytical or creative thought process at all. It came nearer being the method of flight procedure used by pilots in World War I known as "seat of the pants." I had relied on my intuition or my experience for the necessary answers or a set of lesson plans and training programs designed to equip me for my little jobs. Opinions I had expressed in serious discussions had been based on a set of moral values brought with me from childhood rather than on a critical thought process. I wanted suddenly to walk up to each housewife I met and shout, "You're not using your mind, you only think you are." They would probably have decided I had taxed mine far beyond its capacity.

I floundered, I flayed the water in a desperate effort to stay afloat in the seas of knowledge, and then I got my second wind. Facts that I had once known and carefully hidden from view came to my rescue. A love of literature returned to carry me on, and an experiential background, rich from a varied and full life, gave me insights into questions that my fellow classmates did not have. I not only succeeded, but I found my new role of student stimulating and rewarding.

There have been problems, it is true, but they have been solved as they arose. Home economics classes and 4-H programs had equipped my daughters to bake a tolerably good loaf of banana bread. Now, one night a week they must perform the far more difficult task of coordinating the preparation of meat, potatoes, and a vegetable into an edible dinner. Small problems, such as forgotten gym clothes and left-behind textbooks, have mysteriously vanished. A little careful planning has made household management a three-way cooperative venture on Saturdays. Amazingly, the need to pitch in and help has strengthened the family bonds.

Perhaps the greatest gain of all is in my mental outlook. I feel my association with something very vital and meaningful. Next year, I will assume my role as teacher, and I look forward to the new challenge with confidence and pleasure. I am again a part of the main stream, a productive, contributing member of society. My husband tells me I look ten years younger and twenty years more alive. What greater reward can there be?



Many years ago at Christmas time
Three little children were frightened
By a strange dark man
Who fluttered up and down the
Staircase and went away
After thirty-four years or so.

It was a time of barren feeling
When the kneeling disciple
Felt the water poured upon his
Head and opened his mouth
But found it full of blood
To his dismay.

Two small days in April
Began to chase each other
When a third black day
Came out of the year and
Klonked them both on the head
And hung himself on a nail.

Bring me bread and bring me wine
Show me the golden cross
Take out the bones and rattle them nice
Tonight we'll have a ball.

— PETER LEANDER HIRSCH

THE EVE OF ALL SAINTS' DAY

— EARL TETEK

abraham j stieberg

cold was the knob to my hand as i twisted it felt to my fingers coarse because of the chipped paint that covered its surface turning the door opened silently i passed from the blackness of the hall for it had been my practice to move the corridor without using light in an effort to improve my night vision and kindle my imagination to the sombre glow of the gray dusk outside even though the hour was not late but rather usual for my leave of the days supportive activities in which i had attained the expected adjustment thereby placing myself in the feared inevitable rut of commercial occupation but i convinced myself of the separate existence i had achieved with my freedom of thought and this imagination which became for me more than just an escape it had become a second life perhaps parallel to the first but none-the-less vivid as counterpoint to the drabity of situations in which control was directed no ordered and followed by too many people like me that have not found diverting interests and maybe have no need of such but on the outside their weather is pink lacking any intensity even the air is stagnant motionless and personages must pass within it and not it around them with any excitement as is surely dormant in all this particular evening struck within me these same images fact being that the mystic clouds hanging close maybe called hovering are serving not to reflect with harsh brightness the lingered last rays of an obscured sun but seeming to absorb all bits of illumination from this suburb and redisperse it as a too used commodity washed out and faded a dinginess that it not only carried but forced into every edifice and occupant it touched before me stood on a single pole a gasoline sign with red letters spelled in fluorescent tube no sooner emitting red light then having this distributed as a cold pink by the disintegrating atmosphere

chorus

with determined step walks a man before us but not hastily under the traditional gray raincoat trite yet distinguished by his undisciplined hair blowing or should it be swaying more from the movement of the walk than from any determinable draft of wind for tonight could be termed mild as maybe so befits the man now reached the first avenue crossing in his journey a gasoline sign transforms the venturer to a pink rather unreal individual on a boulevard quite unusual in the fact that no people can be seen anywhere not even the familiar voices or automobile engines can be heard to evidence the existence of humanity other than the lonely figure before us catching the fancy of our interest with a forceful gait carrying him in a flow across the sidewalk

abraham j stieperg

even the intricate patterns of the stones in the pavement which have frequently given me pleasure on my walk home was memorized too soon after taking this employment to yield any new physical stimulus I had to search out the minute objects in my path which could afford any diversion were tonight obscured from me by the rapidly enclosing darkness that was born earlier each evening of indian summer and the young winter had already given a brief sample in her snow flurries of monday now melted away did the gasoline light but the sidewalk was clearly visible because of that gray glow of the humid air now much darker but still sufficient in illumination for moderate seeing as i did before me a new glow of yellow orange hue curiously set up from the street in the window of a second story apartment was clear and distinct a vegetable demon with fire behind his features peering out into the world from his lofty vantage point hidden but for his face i could not be more certain but i tried to get a better view by hurrying my steps toward the building whose window had suddenly gone black in front of me and hid this creature in the night seeming strange now proved weird and dreamlike as these scenes familiar for years were at once changed and grabbed my attention pointing to themselves out of context in this questionable night ah but today is the witches sabbath that explains

chorus

this vision encountered was it just a pumpkin or maybe this halloween is for real and the personification of evil seen in the window watching had control of thought and action did in fact hide upon seeing the approach of the man because it is as yet in time too early for the appearance of the congregation that gathers on this macabre sabbath coloring with festivities the night in wait for the emperor of darkness can only watch

until sleep removes the living like the man in the gray raincoat who after stopping had now continued his walk without the confidence previously apparent in motivating his steps along the pavement so worn that the tiny pebbles used in its mixture stuck up out of the cement holding them together was beginning to be washed away from the sidewalks of the old section of the city through which this walker was passing in a route that would take him off the sidewalk to an asphalt road leading into the neighboring farm country

abraham j stieberg

the end of this sidewalk has always fascinated me as if the end of civilization was just a step down off the pavement or perhaps the end of this flat world which especially during the night due to the blackness of the asphalt appeared to make the step higher and one of more consequence the hole into which fell the damned souls for eternity tended by the monsters of evil created by sin or maybe the end of existence itself was only a step away all proved by me as being false several times although today my taken step seems to have been much easier because of the softness onto which my foot passed a sponge rubber surface no more like fire melted tar without any of the usual stickiness but for the first time this night i was conscious of sound far away and rapidly getting nearer was the not singing but frolicking speech and loud screaming in no particular order was ahead of me directly in my path i saw glows bright red orange torches parting the foggy air coming swiftly toward me were angry talkers bitching and boasting but still unclear to me in completeness i must get out of their way before they have ideas about making me target for their revenges because of their torches i am able to see them and they not me so i will step off the road allowing these ruffians to go by a sharp pain in my ankle is folding my foot under me to the ground i was falling and threw my hands out to block or support my head did not hit the ground was cold and damp damn it ive fallen in a hole in the mud my coat must be covered with dirt but theres no pain anywhere my left hand must be in a pool of water not a thin fluid water a thick liquid like syrup or cold blood not mine but my hand is probably covered a dirty red brown i looked up at the noisemakers just to the side of me ugly dwarfs in long capes screaming obscene words dancing with their flaming sticks shining on thick wet lips cursing the police and the reverend copper with glistening eyes set off by their blackened faces while my shoulder began to hurt in the ditch which held my form the wind made cold my wet arms and feet could not move or was i too afraid to scream about these grotesque little figures making path for an even greater blaze of flame was now clearly the burning body of our mayor mr brimwald suspended from a cart being pulled along by several more dwarfs and followed by the fleshless bones of the dead who were chained to a destiny



of parading with the devils assistants were jabbing sticks and throwing rocks at the hanging mayor while sparks dropped from their torches to the ground in front of my eyes seeing the children of satan disguised as queens and princes with the masks of normality yet around their necks dangling were the gold fillings of the now toothless dead rotting i should guess by the foul odor that accompanied this procession of horrors by witches floating on the clouds of smoke produced by their own exhalations these deities of the underworld did set one another afire laughing all the moments with fiendish vibrations kicking their pet cats spitting into the flames to hear the sizzle chant filthy songs in readiness for a large animal personage with slick red skin long fingers and muscular limbs whose face was obscured by the coarse hair hanging down from his head and on his back he carried a set of huge wings grown of skin rather than the traditional feathers which rested on the back of the black chariots smoldering wood in which he rode surely satans envoy himself pulled by sweating horses cloaked with shrouds and dripping saliva walked on by a solitary last figure barefoot pushing a wheelbarrow full of the symbolic ransom extracted by these demons from every home in the area in lieu of the occupants souls

chorus

we here give verification to the masquerade and the parade concluding with the trick or treat treasures of an eventful night in a wheelbarrow all to be dissolved with the morning sunlight found the man at home reached through his own strength pulling himself from the ditch and running the rest of the distance in fear of the evil described to his kin and neighbors who listened but failed to be convinced man could be given such a revelation of the evil which exists in this world and the unknown shadows of death will now live with him and he in fear of them a changed man

20th CENTURY MAN

Neon lights of artificiality . . .
Man-made, chemically re-created
Trying to shed artificial light
On the dimming end.

— TAMARA MCHITARIAN

WORDS

Molecular vibrations

sent through space by Ipana-scented
disintegrating molars.

Projections of intelligence

elevated by air currents to the
heights of knowledge.

A variable depending on the fahrenheit of the cell.

If the audience generates heat

respectively,

the projection rises.

If the cell is chilled, (indifference freezing

projection's channel),

no connective heat.

So sink vibrations to oblivion, unaccepted.

— TAMARA MCHITARIAN

The impassionate, like the deer of the forest,

Search the hills for the fairest of blossoms;

And conscious thought is lost

Above a whisper, beyond the dawn.

— KEN OLSON

Throw off the bonds of human friendship

And say you are a Man;

Not one with others, a molten whole,

Just a Man—

Alone, defiant, proud to be alone.

Till that liveness eats out your heart

And leaves not serenity, but a madness born of solitude.

— MARY ANN STASIOR

THE TWENTIETH TURN

I have witnessed now the twentieth turn,
have heard the seasons' epithalamion
sung by the sun into the longer night.
Through the shades of the four-walled world
I have watched the cyclic roll,
have looked, and seen the eyes of age;
Have listened to the random joys of children
gathering leaves for their pagan offering
of gold unto the god of snow.
And I have changed from the torment of dust
to the determination of fire.
Now the twentieth turn wheels on alone,
forcing the laws of the universe to keep their promise,
sung by the sun into the longer night.

— JULIE SANDS

An aged leaf commutes from branch to earth.
It rolls, rides the wind, stumbles and falls
Embarrassed to be caught in aimlessness.
And still the grass grows.

— KEN OLSON

AWARDS

POETRY

FIRST PRIZE THE TWENTIETH TURN JULIE SANDS

SECOND PRIZE "HAVING PUSHED ITS GENTLENESS..." ROBERTA HANSON

THIRD PRIZE "WHEN I DREAMT OF DARKNESS..." EVA WEI

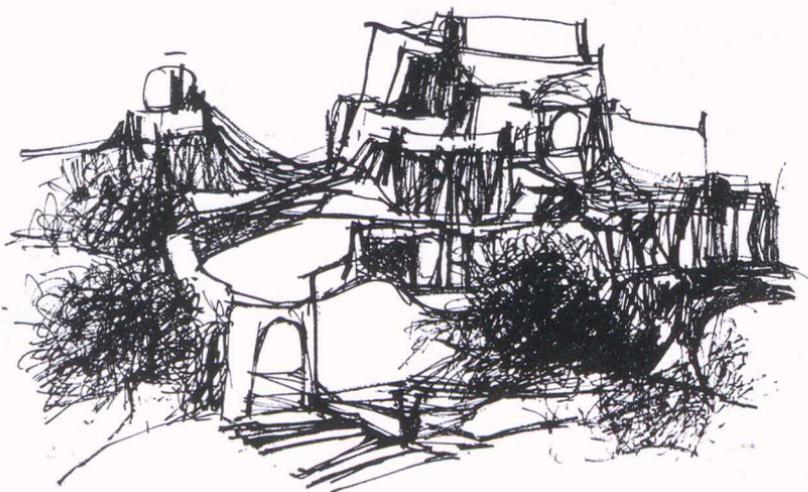
PROSE

FIRST PRIZE DUST AND SNOW ULRICH WICKS

SECOND PRIZE THE EVE OF ALL SAINT'S DAY EARL TETEAK

JUDGES

JACK GRAY DAVID HEDGES LUCIEN STRYK



ABOUT THE ARTIST

A source of pleasure for the Art Department this year has been the promising graphic talent of Ingrid Stein, an exchange student from Germany. To share this pleasure with the student body, Towers selected a portfolio of drawings Ingrid did while living on the Greek island, Hydra, in 1962. These very sensitive renderings offer a glimpse of the artist's graphic ability.

Ingrid's personality, like her talent, is a refreshing experience. Her intensity, dedication, and craftsmanship give validity to the speculation that her work is indeed promising. Her intensely creative and delightfully feminine drawings and etching are presented here for the reader's enjoyment.

