



The Windy Hill review. 1993

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The Windy

Hill Review

1993



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The fifteenth edition of Windy Hill Review is dedicated to the readers, writers and editors whose time, talent and effort made the production of this magazine possible.

The Windy Hill Review 1993

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Elizabeth Gustavson



STARS

Emblazoned on a glittery sky,
The heavens open up their eyes
In brilliant diamonds
Showing us eternity.

Lee Olsen-White

OH WORLD!

Oh world, oh world, when first I came,
Destiny, yours and mine
Beckoned with a brilliant flame
The sun could not outshine.

And who could tell, who felt the flow
How soon the flame would die;
Where did it go? I only know
Destiny passed me by.

'Twas not the first time nor the last
That winter bore no spring.
My future faded into past,
But still to hope I cling.

Oh world, Oh world, you're a strange old world;
There is so much about you not clear.
Let me stay for a while, then depart with a smile;
And I hope you'll be glad I was here.

Bob Gordon

MARY

*Face set
in a scowl
Mary
would stomp down
to the storeroom
and the comfort
of her drums*

*Sandwiched
between shelves
piled
high
with vegetables,
spices,
and soups*

*She would rid
herself
of her fury
with the beating
of the drums'
smooth surface*

*Legs tucked,
I would sit
in the hallway
listening
to her beat
as it became smoother,
calmer, softer*

*And I would be reassured
that Mary
had been able
to compose
herself*

once again

Kathy Grieger

THE NEW LOOK

I sometimes wonder why the world is such a gloomy place
And why there's such a dirty look on everybody's face.
It seems as though the murky dawn has never been so gray,
And even April sunshine fails to brighten up the day.
The trees appear a sickly green, the sky a jaded blue;
The landscape has a tired mien, and all within my view
Seems drab; as if to prove that life has lost its meaning.
It's then that I discover that my window panes need cleaning.

Bob Gordon

MAN

LIKE ALL THAT HE CREATES
IS IMPERFECT

A COMPUTER
THAT WILL SOMEDAY BREAK DOWN
A BUILDING
THAT WILL EVENTUALLY TUMBLE AND FALL

A ROAD
THAT WILL ONE DAY CRACK AND CRUMBLE
A CAR
THAT WILL SOON BE RECALLED

A JOB
THAT WILL SOMEDAY BE ELIMINATED
A GOVERNMENT
THAT WILL EVENTUALLY BE OVERTHROWN

A RELATIONSHIP
THAT WILL ONE DAY BE ENDED
A THOUGHT
THAT WILL SOON BE FORGOTTEN

JAMES COBB

Clean Windows Suck

To get your attention

I splatter myself

A huge bug against your windshield

My insides ooze at you unprotected

With a shake of your head

And a sigh of annoyance

Your words

Like Windex

Wash away what's left

Beth Blachowiak

STRADDLING

head down

eyes closed

drool dances in the corner

of his open mouth

the click of chalk

an expensive lullaby

the scraping of chairs

his alarm clock

between a well rounded

education and a

fucking waste of time

there's a wobbly fence.

Beth Blachowiak

**i twist your arm
you twist my leg**

**i make you cry
you make me beg**

**i dry your tears
you wipe my nose**

**and that's the way
the lovin' goes**

anonymous

INSIGNIFICANT

Beyond the sun,
Under the sparkling stars,
Inside the penetrating darkness,
Through empty miles,
Within the moon's grasp,
A world circulated in gaping air.

Beyond the blackness,
Through the wispy clouds,
Out of the white,
Into the sun's bright smile.
Inside a sky's blue ocean
An eagle's cry is heard.

Beneath the wing's flight,
Through the trembling leaves,
Above the ground,
Away from mother's arms,
On the misty grass....

A crawling child crushed a fly.

Tom Creasey

Stirrings

The leaves rustle beneath my feet
as I gaze upward toward the myriad of
stars and planets
this dark fall eve.

**The air--crisp, clean, cold--feels like
ice against my skin.**

**I breathe a full breath of it and
let it all out again with one big sigh.**

**It would feel nice to cry a bit,
but a sign will suffice
for now.**

Brittany McCaffery

SONG OF THE CLOSED ROAD

Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man;
To ease his journey as he travels along and do whatever I can
To help the ones with problems that trouble those who wander;
To share with them my evening meal and press the shirts they launder.

I built my house by the side of the road and I was a friend to man.
I welcomed everyone who came in camper, truck and van.
The hungry, tired, and thirsty one--no one was turned away;
And if they needed sheltering, I gladly let them stay.

My guiding light was the golden rule, and the teaching: Love Thy Neighbor.

To one and all who were in need, I freely gave my labor.
Sometimes their hearty appetites severely strained my budget;
But since I loved my fellow man, how could I begrudge it?

As time went by, the house I built showed signs of wear and tear.
The marked-up walls revealed that spoiled children had been there.
They left my recreation room looking like a stable,
And smokers with their cigarettes burned holes in every table.

The bedrooms were a shambles, the kitchen sink a mess;
Never in my lifetime have I seen such sloppiness.
My lovely furniture and carpets really took a beating;
And looking at the dining room, you knew pigs had been eating.

The end has come; I've had enough of folks who were so greedy
They took advantage of sincere attempts to help the needy.
I've closed my door to litterbugs and thieves who steal my clothing;
For them and others like them, I have the utmost loathing.

No unwashed hordes are welcome now to occupy my guest rooms;
Their dirty dishes I'll not wash, nor will I clean their rest rooms.
Though long and loud they knock upon my door, I will not give in;
The house I built by the side of the road is once more mine to live in.

Bob Gordon

OUTSIDE MY WINDOW AND
ACROSS THE STREET
ABOVE THE LIGHTS AND
BEYOND THE CITY'S HEARTBEAT

IN THE NORTH
THROUGHOUT THE FOREST
DURING THE NIGHT

FROM HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY,
IN MY MIND, I HEAR THE TIMBER WOLF CRY

JAMES COBB

THE WORD

The word is not just the word,
it can be the tie that binds
or a double-edged sword that tears asunder.

The word can hear
like the medicine man's pouch,
or kill with a flick of its tongue.

The word can remain silent
like dew in the morning,
or roar like thunder through the soul,

Above all, the word can be
clay in a sculptor's hands,
or decay and die like a dream.

David Keller

DIVA

He sat there for the third night
that week,
amidst the perverts,
in the haze, smoke
coughing,
staring up at that silver screen,
at Her,
with her whip-cracking smile,
bulging leather boustier,
thigh-high boots,
staring through the smoke,
over their heads,
at him.

And he smiled back.

But where was, he wanted to know,
in that city of filth,
with its scores of whores,
stalking the streets,
in leather and lace,
or the uptown girls,
with their devilish grins (at him?),
or even the housewives,
whose philandering men are away,
his leather figure of pain, pleasure---
his diva in black?

Andrew Peterson

Friend

**I watched you
when you first began to crawl
learning your way around
giggling with delight.**

**I saw you
when you began to walk
stumbling on your wobbly legs.**

**I held you
secure in my branches
when you began to climb.**

**I hid you
in my leaves
whenever you were in trouble.**

**I smiled at you
when you rode your bike
trying so often
until you got it right.**

**My leaves began to droop
when you got your first car
because I knew
that you would not
be playing with me anymore.**

**All too soon
you forgot about me.
Left me for something else.
You no longer wanted
to hide in my leaves.**

**Now, some time later
you stand before me
a small smile on your face
a twinkle in your eye
I feel you climb my trunk.
Then I hold you safely
in my arms.**

Jenny Kumm

Stopping by Bank on a Sunday Evening

Who guards this bank I think I know.
He's in his house and sleeping, though;
He cannot see me breaking in
To fill my bags with money, O!

My little car, it runs, I hear,
Parked at a curbside very near,
Around the corner, out of sight
A hop, skip, and jump from here.

Inside I give the vault a shake
And it opens with a mighty quake.
The only other sound is in my head
Debating, deciding how much to take.

Someone's coming, I hear his feet,
But I have my rewards to reap,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Andrew Peterson

EDGAR ALLAN POETRY

**Edgar Allan wrote a poem
'bout this raven black as night.**

**Edgar Allan wrote this poem
so to give us all a fright.**

**Wrote he 'bout this flappin' raven,
rappin' maven of despair.**

**Machiavellian, this raven,
rappin' windows, much aware.**

Much aware she caused discomfort.

Much aware she caused much pain.

Rappin' paused some. Pause was cut short.

Rapped she more, and then again.

Who this awful, mawful raven?

Who this spirit of the night?

Who indeed was Edgar cravin'?

Who would offer night's delight?

**'Twas his lady cloaked in blackness
come to visit; sweet Lenore.**

**'Twas his lady, rappin' tactless
Asked he. Quote she, "Never more!"**

James Kaczmarek

Indian Summer

A dry, warm, late-October wind
Blows crackling leaves across the sidewalk;
They scurry here and there like little creatures,
Mice perhaps, seeking shelter from the coming cold.
They gave up, let go early, before their gold was
Gone.

A few, dull-brown, cling desperately and with their doom
Foretold, despite this false summer wind,
To the half-nude maple beside the walk,
Covering something of its frail limbs
As tattered rags might cover the wrinkled skin of a
Crone.

And I, in my own autumn, feel the dry creaking
Of joints no longer youthful and do not wish
To submit to this, this age with its crackling
Of old leaves and the ache of yearning
For supple days of a summer fled to memory, and to a
Son.

Charles E. Albrecht

**El Verano Indio
22 Octubre 1991**

Un viento seco, cálido para los días finales de octubre
Sopla hojas crujiendo sobre la acera;
Se escabullen aquí y allí como criaturas pequeñas,
Tal vez como ratones buscando un refugio del frío que vendrá.
Se han rendido temprano, antes de que su oro
Se haya ido.

Pocas, apagadas, castañas, se agarran desesperadamente
y con su destino predicho,
A pesar de este viento falso del verano,
Al arce casi desnudo cerca de la acera,
Cubriendo algo de sus ramas frágiles,
Como trapos que a veces cubren la piel de un viejo
Arrugado.

Y yo, en mi propio otoño, siento el rechinamiento
De las coyunturas ya no juveniles y no deseo
Someterme a esto, esta edad con su crujido
De hojas viejas y el dolor de anhelo
De los días lisonjeros de un verano huido de mi memoria y a un
Hijo.

Charles E. Albrecht

WE SLEEP TOGETHER

We sleep together, Gin and me;
More than forty years.

Sometimes we spoon; my knee fronts,
her knee backs. You get idea.

Sometimes me side, her belly. My one
leg back her thighs. My arm, her back.

Sometimes me back, she side face me.
Her neck, my arm. Her arm, my chest.
Her leg my thigh fronts.

Sometimes we face; me side she side.
Her neck, my arm. My neck, her arm.
Her arm, my waist. My arm hers.
Belly to belly, all warm touching.
Her legs all twisty with mine.

Sometimes she mad. We no touch.
Better I like we know touch.

We sleep together, Gin and me.

James Kaczmarek

Fragile: Handle With Care

You gave him the best seven months of your life, which may sound cliche-ish but you don't care. It was five anyway, after the suppression, regression, and projection defense mechanisms let your memory go. Logically you cannot understand what guided his thoughts, or what thoughts guided his actions. You realize a slight lack of objectivity may exist, but having taken Philosophy of Logic and almost four psychology courses you feel qualified to comment that he was an idiot. You didn't crowd him, take him for granted, disregard any feeling, look at any other guy, and yet he dumped you. Your psychiatrist feels that this perceived apparent inconsistency and its effect on your ego are largely to blame for your five-day break with reality, when you wound up cleaning rooms at the Motel 7 on Highway G and answered to the name Maria. You don't remember that and frankly don't believe it--you know you would never answer to Maria.

The package arrived five months, one week, and three days after the break-up. You get the phone call from the UPS man in the lobby of your dorm, and it feels like your ex is involved somehow although you don't know how. You walk downstairs, sign for the package, and read the return address. It's him.

You wake up three days later in your psychiatrist's office. He's behind his desk and in the middle of describing the positive experience he received from doing Lamaze with his wife for their first child six years before.

"Mike, what are you talking about?" you ask.

Mike looks puzzled and picks up his pencil from his desk top. You look around and realize suddenly that you are in your favorite chair at Dr. Mike's office.

"You asked me about my first child's birth," Mike says.

You nod your head tentatively and Mike says, "because you said you were going to have a baby."

Before you can say anything else, Mike is up out of his chair and in the outer office checking the sign-in sheet on his secretary's desk. The line for your appointment is signed Maria.

After two days of tests in Mike's office and the hospital, the results of which are inconclusive or bureaucratically delayed, you return to college. The package is in the corner of your room and you place it on your bed for closer inspection. On all sides it says, "Fragile: Handle With Care." You have no idea what he would be sending you that would require that label let alone be worth anything at all. You start to open it and realize what else you might be opening. You decide not to open it.

A week later, he calls you, after five months, two weeks, and five days of silence.

"Didn't you open it?" he says.

"No," you say. "I've been busy, and it got lost under some junk in my room."

"Why don't you open it?" he says.

You have to come clean. "I don't want anything from you," you say.

"Cathy," he says. "I miss you."

He gives you a worthwhile excuse for why he broke up with you, unsurprisingly inconsistent with the reasons he gave before, but you suppress any questions and buy it. You realize after you hang up that you really have misplaced the package. You turn your room upside down with no luck.

You slip into your old life, and it feels like a dream. You tell Dr. Mike you don't need him anymore. Mike says he understands, but expresses disappointment at losing such an interesting case of split personality.

Joe and you study together, go dancing together, go drinking together, and one night after three tequilas have suppressed your suppression you ask him about Lisa, who happens to be flirting with him at the time one day. For those few moments you remember how she always was around and how he even once spent the night in her dorm room. You blindly begin to blurt your deductions when he takes you aside and breaks up with you again.

You wake up the next morning with a hangover, but you remember everything. Fortunately, the alcohol has somehow slowed the blow. You decide to sign up with Dr. Mike again before emotional upheaval and chaos overtake the arguable record high blood-alcohol level.

A couple of days later you find out you are pregnant. You really don't see how it can be Joe's, but of course it must be Joe's, but shortly thereafter and just short of suicidal tendencies a Mexican man is pounding on all the doors on your floor. His name is Enrique and he is looking for Maria. Dr. Mike cannot write fast enough as you and he deduce that Enrique must have wooed Maria off her feet during your three-day black out after the arrival of the package. Enrique verifies this possibility.

"So what was in the package?" Mike asks.

"I don't know," you say.

You get an abortion, of course, after the courts discredit all of Enrique's custody claims, and while packing to leave school you discover the package behind a suitcase in your storage area in the basement of your dormitory. You pick it up, and promptly throw it at the far wall, listening to the shattering of its insides.

Dan Stalder

FRIENDSHIP'S MEASURE

*What can I say this day
that you will see just me?*

*The friend that I am,
not the sham
of what you would have me be.*

*Must I drink from your cup,
the measure you treasure,*

*Made of rules you define
that aren't mine....*

Adhering I'd cease to be me.

*So, what must I say this day
that you will see just me,*

*The friend that I am
not the sham
of what you would have me be.*

E. Gustavson

NIGHT SHADOWS

The night air blowing through the window felt like cool silk on my skin. Jenny's feet were up on the dashboard, bopping back and forth to the car tunes she'd blasted. The words swirled around the moving car, and the beat rocked--rocked hard.

Ahead the road stretched like a black velvet ribbon. The streetlights were haphazardly placed like spilled pearls. It was a perfect night for cruising, and that's about all we'd done that summer. Cruise.

Jenny turned toward me, and I saw her mouth moving.

"What?" I asked. Her mouth moved some more.

"Huh?"

Her nose crunched, and her eyes looked toward heaven. With her feet still on the dashboard, she reached over and switched off the music. "You have to be the worst lip-reader I've ever met," she said.

I cupped my hand by my ear. "What, I can't hear you?"

She playfully punched my arm. "You're asking for it. It wasn't that loud."

"It might not seem like it now, but years from now we'll need those big horn things old ladies stick in their ear so they can hear. I can see it now," and I put on my sour lemon face, tilted my ear toward her, and put my hand in the shape of a cone by my ear. "Pardon me sonny? I couldn't hear you. No, I still can't hear you. This is what you get for listening to loud rock music, my boy. Listen to your parents."

She laughed. "The day you listen to your parents and give up loud rock music, is the day I join the nunnery."

I couldn't let the opportunity pass. "I guess I will need one of those horn things," I said.

She punched me again. "Oh shut-up. You're certainly in fine form tonight."

"As always," I said, then continued. "Speaking of nunneries, what's up between you and Don?"

I glanced over at her; she was grinning like a Cheshire cat. "The same thing that's always up."

I gave her my fake, 'oh, I'm so shocked look,' and said, "You're awful, just awful. You shameless hussy."

"No, seriously," she said. "Things have been heating up."

Then she stopped. I glanced over at her. She was staring out the window. I waited some more, but she still didn't say anything.

"Well," I said. "You're not going to keep me hanging, are you?"

She turned back toward me. "What do you want to know?"

I couldn't read anything from her face, and her eyes were looking every place--the car, the window, the road ahead, anywhere but in mine.

"Is something wrong?" I asked.

She looked back out the window. Her back was stiff, and her profile like granite.

"He didn't force you to do anything, did he?"

She still didn't answer.

I felt sick to my stomach, and I didn't know what to say. Then, seeing Jenny sitting there as if she wanted to float out of the car and fade into the murky sky, I got mad. Real mad. "That bastard," I said, and pounded on the steering wheel with both my palms. "Wait 'til I get my hands on him." Beautiful visions of scratching Don's eyes out came into my mind. "No, wait, I have a better idea. I'm going to tell Joe. He'll kick his ass. I know he would. I won't have to tell him why if you don't want me to but, if I know my brother, just me asking will be enough."

"It's nothing like that, Tracy." She still looked out the window. "Well, it is, but it isn't," she said. "It's hard to say."

"Do you want to talk about it?" I asked. I didn't know exactly what to do. If I pushed, she might think I was prying; if I didn't she might think I didn't care, and I still couldn't read anything. Jenny could hide her feeling so well that I like to think of her as wearing masks--different masks for different people and different moods. You never knew exactly how she was going to be on any given day. It made getting along with her a challenge. Sometimes I couldn't believe that we'd been good friends for ten years. Ten long years, and I thought I knew everything about her. I was wrong. It's easy to forget that a lot can happen in a week, in a year; a lot can happen in a minute, and most of it stays hidden, tucked away in the dark corners of our minds. Too much can happen in a minute, and the minute I waited for Jen to talk froze in time. If I close my eyes I see us sitting there, driving in our metal cocoon, everyone else oblivious to what was going on, to our pain, to our joy, to our very life.

When she did talk it was like a whisper. I had to lean my body toward her to catch it. "I guess I do," she said. She turned toward me and the streetlights glistened off her salty cheeks.

I patted her on the shoulder, as if that would help. We seemed so far apart, yet the gesture seemed helpless, wooden. Raw emotion has always made me uncomfortable; the pain stirring the helpless feelings I push deep inside.

Her shoulder was still stiff.

"Should I stop somewhere?" I asked.

"No, keep driving. Let's go somewhere new. Somewhere far away."

"Did you have anything in mind?"

"Not really, just get on the freeway, and let's get off somewhere that looks interesting."

I turned onto the freeway going West, or East, I forget. The silence between us grew heavy, pressing down and squeezing out all sounds.

"Is this O.K.?" I asked, waving at the freeway stretching in front of us. We couldn't see anything out the window but little white dots of light hanging in the sky. It was like driving through a sea of black ink.

She nodded. "Yes, it's good. I like the dark."

"Me too," I said.

"It's like this inside, all dark."

It wasn't like her to be talking like this. What the hell did she mean? I glanced over at her again. She was staring at me, her eyes reaching out and glimmering in the green light from the dashboard controls.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"It's like when he touches me," she said. "It goes all dark, I like it so much, but I feel dirty. Dirty and cheap and used."

Thank goodness, I remember thinking--it's only one of these Freudian things. I could deal with this.

"Everybody likes sex, Jen. We're sexual creatures. There's nothing at all to feel guilty about."

She sighed then, and shook her head. "But you don't understand."

"What?" I could feel myself tensing. None of this was in character. "I'm trying to. What am I supposed to understand?" I asked.

"When he touches me, I close my eyes, and I see HIM, and then it goes dark, like I'm falling and no one is helping me up. Then I start crying. When we first started getting heavy Don would stop and say it was O.K., that we were just moving too fast, but now he's starting to get upset. He thinks there's someone else. There's not, but I can't tell him. I can't."

I still don't understand. I knew every boy she'd ever dated or even been remotely interested in since sixth grade. If there was a mysterious lover, it was news to me. "Tell him what?" I asked. "And who is this HIM?"

"This is hard," she said, and her face crumpled. Her body started heaving, caving in on itself; her chin had sunk to her chest, and she was pounding the sides of her head lightly with her fists.

I pulled over to the side of the road. No words would come. I sat silent. My throat lumped. My chest squeezed. My stomach burned. Waiting. Just waiting.

"It was my uncle," she gasped through sobs. "He started out showing me dirty pictures. I remember giggling. Then he told me to pull down my pants and turn around." She raised her head and slammed her fist against the side window. "Then it all goes black. Damn him. Damn it all. It all goes black. An then I'm falling, falling again. And I don't know what to do."

Still no words would come, only tears.

The dark closed around us.

She reached out and grabbed my arm. "What should I do? I don't want to tell him, I can't. He'll blame me, but I couldn't help it. Really, I couldn't. I was little. I didn't know any better. You believe that, don't you? I didn't know any better. Say something." Her fingers bit into my arm and I winced. "Say something, Tracy."

I put my hand on top of hers. "No, you couldn't help it. None of it is your fault. Whatever you do, believe that. Did you tell anyone, Jen? Did you tell your Mom? Did you tell the police?"

Her shoulders drooped disspiritedly. "It was so long ago. I told my mom, but she shrugged it off. I guess she thought I was making up stories. I hate her for that. She could've stopped it. She could've done something, but instead I had to see him. Every holiday. Every birthday."

She shook with the chills, wrapped her arms around herself, and looked up into my eyes for the first time since she began her story. Then she gave a sad smile. "Don't cry, Trace. I didn't mean for you to cry. I just had to tell someone. I feel like I'm going crazy, like someone is tearing me in two."

"I don't know what to tell you, Jen, I'm so sorry."

"So am I," she said.

"What can I do to help?" I asked.

"Nothing. Just listen, I guess."

"I'm listening," I said.

She shook her head. "I don't want to talk about it anymore. It makes it too real, especially here in the dark. Let's just crank the tunes and drive, O.K.? Let's pretend this never happened. Let's pretend that this is any summer night and we're just cruising. O.K.?"

"We need to talk about this, Jen."

"I know, but not now. I can't handle it right now."

She sat next to me, a broken china doll whose spine had snapped in two. "O.K.," I said. "But first I need a hug."

We clung together for a moment, forging a bond to fight the night away.

"Now let's drive," she said, putting her feet on the dashboard and turning up the tunes so loud my ears felt like they'd melt into my body. I rocked my body to the beat, and Jen tapped out the rhythm on the dashboard.

I set back out on the highway. For a while we were safe, but I knew it would come again--the pain, the despair. Outside the window flickering lights caressed the car. Night shadows. They slipped and slid in the distance, smugly waiting for another chance, for the silence and dark to bleed our day into night.

Christy Steele

SILENT MOVIES

The black,
shining wall
has begun to pit,
scratch, and bleach
by sand from the storm.
Fingerprints of remaining
friends and comrades survive
the polishings by the tourists
of a war, called 'Nam. Refusing to
be buried, to be hidden away, secured
from prying eyes, the ghosts still walk
in jungle greens that will not fade as tan
will often do, too many back then, came home,
to wander somewhere between hell and what's now.
Too many still touch the crumbling wall deep inside,
where the red, white, and blue can only wave in silent
movies with heroes whose names have been etched in stone.

Deb Alaimo

COMMUNION

**In tall grasses
Beside the quiet river:
I sleep**

Andrew Pells

DREAMING MINDS

I wish dreams were like another chance
For when I close my eyes you're still there:
Out of touch, but within a glance.

A deep vision of you my mind plants
Into every thought. Until I wake and my dreams
are snared
I wish dreams were another chance

To live instead of hope. But reality grants
Us only one life--dreams another. They're
Out of touch, within a glance.

So close to happiness, if I'd break this trance
And open my mouth, instead of closing my eyes where
I wish dreams were another chance.

For I'd sweep you up as in some old romance
And keep you warm not in my mind somewhere
Out of touch, but within a glance.

I want you back in a world where estranged hearts dance,
For when I close my eyes, I have you there
I wish dreams were like another chance--
Not out of touch, but within a glance.

Tom Creasey

A SONNET OF CHOICE

The lonely night echoes across the sky,
Whispering into the ears of the young
And ill at heart; screaming outward "Why? Why
must in our nights a sad song be sung?"

The night does not respond to the cries they shed,
only silence will fill these darkened hours
Of pain and regret for harsh words once said.
Now nothing is heard but the ominous power

Of the night's grip upon their young lives.
Do they give in and begin to fade away
So they once can feel safe, loved and right?
And open their eyes to a bright new day?

Which way will these tattered, broken hearts go?
Down a path to darkness, or one leading home?

Tom Creasey

**Brown corn stalk
Blown by cold autumn breezes:
Shrill scream of a hawk.**

David Keller

CASUALTIES OF COMMUTING

Eight a.m. Monday, late again,
I must by pass the crowded by-pass
And head west on an alternate route,
Smooth sailing except for a skunk
Dead on Greenfield Avenue
Its markings almost aligned
With the white road stripe.

Back on the freeway at Moorland
A slender doe, maybe just a fawn,
Appears to sleep in the distress lane
Dead up against the concrete median.
The clean sight of her stays with me
As I continue on cruise control
The rest of my usual route to Waukesha.

Margaret Rozga

STORM DAY

A drop here,
A drop there,
The storm is brewing.
The wind is howling like a hungry wolf.
Animals, all scared away
By the pounding rain.
A gray day,
The day to stay in.

Kara Wickliffe

TRAFFIC

Traffic
speeds over
the steel
girder bridge

Horns honk
as one
impatient
driver curses
another

In
the pond
beneath
the beams,
lily pads

un-
furl
slowly,
smoothly

Stretching
in
the morning
sun

Leisurely
spreading
themselves
upon
the surface
of the lake

Kathy Grieger

BROTHER MOUSE

We're at our Door County dacha,
Virginia and I, when one A.M.
she called, "Jim! You awake?"
"Ich bin jetzt!" (I'm learning German.)

"There's a dead mouse on the floor
right by the davenport."

"Maybe it's just asleep."

"No. I'm sure it's dead."

(I remember the Norwegian Blue Parrot

skit on Monty Python.) "It's yours,"

I said, "finders keepers, you know."

"No! You know I hate those things."

"But it's one of God's creatures."

You shouldn't just hate God's creatures."

(Not bad considering I'm half asleep yet.)

I pulled on some pants, grabbed it by the tail,
took it outdoors, and threw it in the tall
grass behind the cabin. Probably some
wandering cat, or perhaps a crow will eat it,
or the bugs will get it, maybe beetles or flies.

Eating breakfast I thought about that mouse.

You know? What did it die of? (I keep saying it
'cause I never actually determined its gender.)

Was it old age or disease? Or maybe foul play?

I do have mouse poison in the cabin. I saw
no marks, no stab wounds, no trauma or such.

Maybe it was mugged by some gang mouse? Or
maybe it was an explorer mouse, some Columbus
who discovered our cabin, and claimed it for
some far distant queen mouse, and the local mice
took offense, and smothered it with a marshmallow?

Maybe its brethren will somehow find it, and give it a proper mouse burial. It must be a great mouse indignity to be eaten by a cat, or torn apart by some wandering crow. I know mice can dig, and mama mice carry their young from nest to nest, so maybe they'll find it and grab it by the scruff of the neck, and drag it to some hole they dug. Some Reverend Mouse will likely squeak a few squeaks, and they'll cover it. And there would be mouse tears.

After breakfast I went out in the tall grass and looked for that mouse, got a shovel from the shed and dug a proper hole for it.

Pacem in terris. Et cum spiritu tuo, brother mouse.

James Kaczmarek

AUTUMN'S LEAVING

When autumn heaves its gaudy sigh
Cornstalks scratch, grasses dry;
Bereft of summer's verdant run
Trees undress--their penchant done.

The rub of wool, a radiant blaze
Deign to heed the pending phase,
Neutralize the hoarfrost glaze.

Then vigor stoops to silent muse
To search for providential clues
Regarding summer's parting cruise,

Hazy thoughts, gently tossed,
Not loud--they whisper--then are lost
Among the throng and sodden lees
Of fallen leaves from fallen trees.

Werner Menck

A WINTER'S SLIGHT DESCENDING

There! Careless snowflakes falling;
fluttered by incidental
buffets barely blowing...calling
in whispered phrases...elemental,
spreading wide to public splendor
like rumored sin without defender.

White, so white though soft and
without wetness that so often
weighs snow's lift to earnest struggle;
instead is blowy, light, carousing,
pillowed into molded snuggle
like newborn puppies blindly browsing.

Till depth perceived urgent pleads
for plowing or for shovel's need;
better yet a snowball fight...
wash a lovely squealing face,
kiss her cheeks so rosy, bright
then wrestle in some hidden place.

Werner Menck

DAYHAWKS

Solitary and

Hopper-still, red tails waiting,
white chests in sunshine.

MEY

Maybe his brother will come now. And it will give to a proper mouse burial. It must be the last male mouse species. Least it great mouse indignity to be eaten by a cat, or torn apart by some wandering crow. I know this. But who can tell, and mama mice can. They are mammals, existing between the alld of other mammals and it by the scroll of the mother mice before us to give birth the lungs. So

RAY & HARRY

**Ray and Harry lived one block over,
only house on a triangle block
nice and flat where we played ball
in the warm, and football in fall.**

**Ray and Harry was maybe eight years
older than me, and Ray, he had polio
so walked on crutches. But batting
he kind a leaned on one crutch, funny
like, and if he got a hit, ran to first
on his crutches, and when he got close
he threw one crutch towards the base,
and if it got there before the ball
he was safe. sometimes one of us little
kids could pinch run for him then.**

**Then later houses covered our field.
We was too old to play anymore, anyhow.**

James Kaczmarek

THE MORE I LEARN

Perhaps I will fall away from your heart;

But I won't forget this love endeavor,

You always caught me when I fell apart,

I will hold that memory forever.

If I let go will you still brace my fall?

Is it better this way? What will I do?

My heart is fragile, I often crawl.

Yet I used to walk so swiftly to you.

But I must be strong and create this break,

I am too young to fall so quick and fast.

For now I must release this dream, and wake.

I must know myself, alone, at last.

Love is strange: You must walk before you stand.

The more I learn, the less I understand.

Jami Klinger

INACARO

For reasons any
teen
knows

this is the perfect
place
for nooky

from Sara to Jane Jane to Lisa
Lisa to Mary Mary to Laura
oh Laura oh Laura by Shelby

So any parent knows not to let kids drive
on dates

until
they are married

but why?

when
without cars

their kids would not be alive.

David Keller

BECAUSE I'D MISS YOU

If someone paid me
To go around the world,
I'd come back
Because I'd miss you.
And if I moved to a different state,
I'd come back
Because I'd miss you.
So if a storm blows me away,
I'll charge back
Because I'd miss you.

Kara Wickliffe

CEDARBURG

Listen to the bells, barely discerned
 but clear, so clear;
Over the tree-tops...hear, oh hear...

There's a balance here,
 comfort, yet pertinence,
 understated, but eloquent;
Each street, and arched cathedral,
And basis for clumps of birches,
 planted in random profusion,
 bent to the wind's choosing,

Where houses--void of pretension--
 are framed in the glowing
 beatitude of floral o'erflowing,
And sidewalks are blemished by cracks

 oozing ants and green weeds,
Where re-stored stores entice
 those who please their whimsy,

While regulars partake of Coffee Pot
 beef-barley soup..must be Tuesday,

City hall, et al:
 utile, centenary, symmetrical,
 as their builders intended,

The sky frequently pierced by spires,
 one Catholic, the others, Lutheran;

There's balance here,
 a fit--comfortable--
 like old shoes with new soles;
A place to break into the ground
 and take the time to reap its benefit.

Werner Menck

UNTITLED

**If Wisdom follows the wing of a bird in flight,
then I have never walked higher than the
shortest peak a few inches from the ground.**

**If Wisdom is the water lapping against an alien shore,
then I have never felt its stark warmth and
wavering coldness, as it draws near my feet
sinking in the sand.**

**If Wisdom is naked in its true form,
then I have never lain unclothed; and I have
never known the purity of bare skin touching me,
pulling me toward some unknown force that lies
across uncounted galaxies.**

Vicky Escoe-Kelly

If someone paid me
To go around the world,
I'd come back
Because I'd miss you.
And if I moved to a different planet in gear of unit out what
I'd come back
Because I'd miss you.
So if a storm blew me away,
I'd come back
Because I'd miss you.

Karen Wicklund

A WORLD OF MIX-UPS

A world of mix-ups
We all live together.
Some with blue eyes,
Some with green.
A world of mix-ups,
All together.

Some with brown skin,
Some with white,
A world of mix-ups,
We all live together
In peace.

Kara Wickliffe

KNOWN POINTS

The point of it all,
What is not thoroughly
Known.
Religious owls and Political tarts
spin tops at the point,
but never make them,
Just state them.

Justin R. Rupp

DETERMINATION

Men
rate
nations
not
on
innate
traits
or
ornate
art,
instead
on
arms,
ammo,
armor.

Man
treats
man
as
one,
not
a
torn
nation,
an initiation
to
termination
retreats.

Brian Herbst

KEEPSAKE

What is a Keepsake, but a thing to keep,

For Keep's sake.

Memory, magazine on magazine,

Musty clothes; Who knows?

They could be in style, for keep's sake!

pictures, Pictures, PICTURES!

Keep 'em!

"Uncle Howie's new hat," write on the back.

For "Archives de Attic,"

In case of attack.

Of memory lapse,

So keep it.

Lee Olsen-White

THE FIRST DAY OF WINTER

Outside my window I awake
to see the first snow.
I go outside and touch it.
It is wet and cold, like
I thought it would be.
I go back to bed.

In my room
the blankets on the bed
are great mountains and valleys--
made and fashioned
carefully with my hands.
I am the Great Earth god
who sleeps beneath them.

I dream. I dream about
my family when I was young.
Mother and Father are together.
They laugh together, listen to Bob Dylan
and hold hands in public places.
We are at the zoo. Father smiles
at me and says, "Look inside the
monkey cage." I do.
It is empty.

I awake, destroying my world
with one swift stroke. I crawl out
of my room: Mother's at work,
the cereal box is empty,
snow is on the ground.
The bananas are brown,
the table is cluttered,
it is cold in here.
It is cold outside.
It is the first day of winter.

Andre Pells

LOST WORDS FOR LOVE

When it comes to words what can I say?
So many feelings are locked down inside
pleading to find a way out.

People say "Listen to your heart," but mine
is so confused.

"Love hurts," says another, to which I agree,
Yes, it does.

Where can I find the right words to say
how I feel?

It takes time.

Yes, I know, but it's been so long; how much
time does it take? What if people get hurt
by my words?

Seems like I somehow hurt, anger, or disappoint
the people I care for.

I remember the saying, "you always hurt the ones
you love." Tell me, is this true?

Oh, if only I could find my words and give
them meaning.

Tina Jaeckle

Happy Boss Man's Two-Step Waltz

Dressed to kill gently,
an icicle fringe on your sleeve lightly chiming,
you're dancing with Pain, your obedient partner;
you turn half-around and she steps once alone with all
eyes but yours on her.
She steps only once, but she steps on her own.

Her heel, sharp and smooth, cold and shining, descends.
You turn back; as you see what she's done, you move quickly
by choice or some instinct you bought with
two tears and
a fear of the rod and
a hope for a say in the course of events
(such a bargain);
you can take it smiling this time and the next.

Your foot, smooth and bare, soft on top,
living leather on bone,
sweeps under her heel as she's stabbing the floor.
That was easy.
With one fluid, musical yell, red toes pulsing with grace,
dancing hands on her calf, chiming ice on your sleeve,
you extract her small weapon, her sword, from your stone.

Still smiling, you leave with your fresh souvenir,
the tattoo of the crucifix, healing and bleeding;
she watches you, wipes the sweet blood from her heel
as your wound pours the words of your law on the floor:

WHEN I DANCE, I WILL LEAD.

Still dancing, still smiling, the icicles chiming,
you bow, tip your hat to your partner;
the door opens for you,
the room full of dancers all watching and swaying
away from your partner,
who,
watching and motionless,
knows as you know,
as the dancers all bow in your wake,
that your ice can be melted.

Her heel will not break.

Lorelei Kring

SANITY,
CONTROLLED, INHIBITED
FUNCTIONING, RELATING, EMPATHIZING
RATIONALIZATION, REALIZATION, ISOLATION,
DAMNING, WITHDRAWING, DYSFUNCTIONING
FANATICAL, MANIC
INSANITY

William Lapaz

PSYCHOANALYSIS

OH,
LAY IN SIN
PSYCHOS SIN
I SIN,
SIN IS ANAL.
ANALYSIS INSISTS ON
YO-
YO'S
AND LISPS,
IN A CHIC
PAIN IN THE ASS
OH, ANNA!

William Lapaz

UNTITLED

Isn't it funny how we keep score, as if life
were poker chips waiting for a chance to
win among thieves of time and accord.

The scorecard sits in our back pocket,
wrinkled and wet with grime and enchanted songs.

We pull the card, analyzing
every bet; every wish; every deed;
while the runner waits, peering inside,
anxious to collect every penny and dime,
like confetti held suspended over
wide city blocks.

Vicky Escoe-Kelly

LONELINESS

Cold feelings,
heartaches,
broken dreams,
depression sets in...
sorrow.

The old rocking chair rocks,
a baby's cry heard in the distance
crying...
a leaf falls,
howling through the trees,
the wind is gone,
dismay upon the earth,
a tombstone shivers.

Heather Siebold

HER LAST HIGH

Way back in Hippie times
has this kid, Gale, in
my painting class.

Fifteen she was in years,
but lots older in experience.

One day she says to me, "Mr. K.,
you do drugs, dontcha? L.S.D.,
a little pot maybe?"

"Nope!" says I. "I don't need dope.
I'm crazy enough."

"But you drink, dontcha?"

"Nope!" says I. "Ain't been drunk
since I was a teenager. Oh, I do
take a beer with a fish fry sometimes."

"Oh!" says she smiling. "Then you're a
natural freak. Them's the best kind."

Little over a week later, she
tied one rope end round a basement
beam, the other round her neck.

Few days after that, was on the
school daily absence sheet,
"Remove from the Roll."

James Kaczmarek

SANE WEALTH

Lord, need I sanity?
I have it not myself
I tread the line so daintily
Weirdness I have in wealth.

Normalcy, what is that?
To me, it's but a bore
Life's too short to stand pat
Dullness abhors me more.

Am I in the wrong
To dare to be different?
I've been this way all along
Well...

I guess I'm dissident.

Crystal Schuenemann

RUNNERS

Runners
race past
Flashes
of Spandex
color
show the speed
with which
they move

Old man
steadies self
against
the flow
Resting
on his
shopping cart

Watching,
as reds,
pinks, blues
and yellows
stream
beyond him

Beneath
his breath,
he gives
a curse
to this river
of youth,
and the ease
with which
it runs.

Kathy Grieger

MOM 'N THE MOON

**Mom and Mister Moon,
Well, they've got somethin goin.
He's always shinin down on her,
'n her face is always glowin.**

**Mom and Mister Moon,
well, it's like a new romance.
She's smilin all the time now'days
'n His beams've learned to dance.**

**Mister Moon and Mom,
well, now they're a pair to see.
He's up there beamin ear to ear,
'n Mom's happy as can be.**

**Mister Moon and Mom,
well, I'm not one for starin,
But when I see the things I've seen,
I wonder what they're sharin.**

**Mom and Mister Moon,
well, nighttime clouds can't cover--
Facts are facts all round the world,
'n fact is, the moon just loved 'er!**

Brittany McCaffery

CONVERSATION AMONG THE DEAD

"HE WAS A WISE MAN,
WHO INVENTED GOD,"
SAYS PLATO

"MOST CERTAINLY MAN IS
STARK MAD. HE CANNOT MAKE
A WORM, YET
WILL BE MAKING GODS
BY THE DOZEN,"
MONTAIGNE CONTRIBUTES.

"MAN IS MERELY
A GOD IN RUINS,"
REPLIES EMERSON.

ALL INVOLVED EVENTUALLY COME
TO THE SAME QUESTION:

"WHY IS MAN
THE WAY HE IS?"

MARK TWAIN ANSWERS,

"I AM GRATIFIED TO BE ABLE
TO ANSWER PROMPTLY:
I DON'T KNOW!"

JAMES COBB

I STILL DO...THINK OF YOU...

When I'm feeling down.

I think of you.

When I'm scared and alone.

I think of you.

I dream of meeting somewhere

To talk;

To tell you everything;

To tell you...Sometimes

I still...Think of you...

Lee Olsen-White

CRUCIBLE

Golden circular diamond dull
Cannot surround the finger full
Blazing rage red-blackened blue
Ringing eardrums (i love u?)
Lies of lifetimes, two that shared the
Risks that only lovers dare

Spinning spheres shattered GLASS:
"Drama Unfolds! Two In Cast!"
Curtain downward shrouding all the
Secrets anger

CRUCIBLE

Brittany McCaffery

WHAT IS ME

There are places in my soul
Where ugliness and pain I hold.
(Break Through)
I've been an object; a trophy on an arm,
Not a person sharing life and purpose.

The dreams that I adored
Pushed and locked behind iron doors.
(Break Through)
I always inhabit myself in a shell
When life is about to take me to hell.

Lee Olsen-White

INSECURITY

**unsure
in
rusty
sunrises,
sin
turns
cute,
entices
us.**

**success
ruins
us.**

**rescuers
cry,
yet
curse
us.**

**i
sin.**

Beth Blachowiak

SOLSTICE

Five-thirty, dark, snowless Sunday
I walk toward the automatic doors
and fluorescent lights
of the grocery warehouse

I pass through
in my own silence
sensing Hell
in the tall walls and wide aisles

Row after row
of frozen foods
styrofoam egg cartons
and bloody meat packages

Haggard faces
in uncanny light
magnifying every wrinkle
in their lives

I write my check
show my number
empty the conveyer
and continue toward the darkness

Darlene Hampel

THE BORROWER

In 1945 I was newly arrived in Milwaukee and was spending my evenings at the old YMCA on North 4th St. across from the Boston Store downtown. The Y offered many athletic and social programs and I found it a congenial place to meet people.

"Don't lend Joe any money," an acquaintance warned me. "You'll never get it back."

Joe was one of those characters who was always long on prospects but short of money. He was always "hoping to get a job next week," or "expecting a check in the mail any day now." Inevitably, Joe approached me for a loan.

"I won't lend you any money," I told him. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you this ten dollars on one condition. Some day you'll meet someone who needs ten dollars more than you do and you'll give it to him. O.K.?"

"O.K." replied Joe with a grin. "You've got yourself a deal."

I did not tell Joe, but that was how I was once given ten dollars when I needed it.

Robert Gordon

IN MY HEART A FIRE BURNS BRIGHT

**In my heart a fire burns bright
for someone whom I deeply care for
Do you believe in love at first sight?**

**I hear her voice in the breeze tonight,
softly calling my name as no one before.
In my heart a fire burns bright.**

**I look into her eyes and think I might
be overtaken by my feelings for
her. Do you believe in love at first sight?**

**How do I talk to an angel? Might
I just be myself and hope she wants to see me more?
In my heart a fire burns bright.**

**This flame burning bright
is what allows my heart to soar.
Do you believe in love at first sight?**

**When she smiles I feel safe from dangers in the night
and I wonder that destiny has in store.
In my heart a fire burns bright.**

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Brian Herbst

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

It was the Depression year of 1935 and I was exploring the pleasures of Coney Island on a summer afternoon. Amid the cacophony of side-show barkers, roller coasters, merry-go-rounds and concession stands, I stopped to stare at a sign over a doorway that read: SEE YOUR HEART BEAT. A SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT.

"It's the opportunity of a lifetime," remarked a persuasive young man who was lounging in the doorway. "How many people in the world have ever seen their own heart beat?"

"How much does it cost?"

"Ten cents."

I hesitated. In my youthful ignorance I knew nothing about the dangers of radiation, but in those days five cents would buy a hot dog and another five cents would buy a twelve ounce bottle of Pepsi-Cola.

"Try it, he urged. "I'm sure you've got a dime."

I entered. While his partner adjusted the apparatus, the young man explained what to look for on the fluoroscope screen. He pointed out my ribs, lungs, trachea, bronchi, and there in the center was the dark shadow of the heart rhythmically expanding and contracting in its lifelong labor of keeping the body supplied with fresh blood.

By the end of summer the two were gone. Who were they? Medical students? Scientific experimenters? Fast-buck artists? Where did they get their equipment? I never knew, but they were right about one thing. Never again would I have the opportunity to see my own heart beat for the small sum of ten cents.

Robert Gordon



