



The Windy Hill review. 1995

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The Windy Hill Review





The Windy Hill Review

17th Edition

1995

**University of Wisconsin Center -
Waukesha County**

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Cover Design by Mary Hubacek

Contributors:

Ann Arntson
Barbara Bache-Wiig
Carol Billings
Marc Bonkoski
Laura Borst
Kent Brown
b. crocker
Jan Alise Davis
Nanula Demos
Gloria Forthun
Eric Frank
Mary D. Hayes
Mech Johnson
James Kaczmarek

Kenneth Kaminski
Lorelei Kring
Tracy M. Kubiayk
Christine S. Leonard
Sean McEown
Michael Mullooly
Carol O'Leary
Chet Pendowski
Pieter Penkoff
Lee Rogers-White
Margaret Rozga
Mat Schmidt
J. P. Slater
Laurel A. Starkey
Garrett Warner

Editors:

Laura Borst
Lorelei Kring

Associate Editors:

Eric Frank
Garrett Warner

Printing Coordinator:

Lynn Paque

Faculty Advisor/Mentor:

Philip Zweifel

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17th Edition

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The way that I think we can break some of the prejudices we have is by not limiting our associations to individuals of our own race or social class. By not limiting themselves, individuals will come to appreciate each other and frequently may change their attitudes toward others.

Also, . . . if we do not return evil for evil, prejudice will subside. Just because things may have not gone your way due to prejudice, do not carry that experience to the next situation, because the next person you encounter may treat you more fairly than the last person you dealt with.

Of course, our negative views did not develop overnight, and they will likely not disappear overnight; but with time and individual efforts, feelings of prejudice can be overcome.

- Vincent Gleason
(from an essay dated May 9, 1994)

Dedicated to the living spirit of
Vincent Gleason,
1965-1994,
who came here from Milwaukee to
treat us as his neighbors,
who worked with younger students to
help them to succeed, and
who used his written words to
understand and forgive us.

i was sitting down under a tree
listening to the silence, quiet.
i picked up a stone and shot it at the moon
i missed by a lot and i tried again
the stone came closer but it still missed
it fell not far away on the slide with a hollow ting.
i picked up another and skipped it in the river
eight times and then it gracefully sank
i looked at the stars for a closer target
instead i found a branch in the tree
i hit it a few times and every time the stone hit the ground
why can't these stones hit the moon?
i tried again but i never heard the last land
the next night there was a small shadow on the face of the moon
i wondered as i sat shooting rocks if i had finally hit it

b. crocker

Looking on the Bright Side of the Fire

Hurling pebbles into space
I'm transported through time,
Transcending the reality of the moment.
I'm reminded of my childhood--at any rate--
when I used to toss pebbles
(or sometimes a basketball)
into the air
in order to tease the bats.

I've managed to maneuver several
to within four feet of the ground,
but the Airedale hasn't seen one yet.
Every time I get him to look up
it's already too late.
I can't imagine how
they could have survived all the smoke
when the adjacent barn burned last winter.

"How fortunate," I think,
"the insurance company certainly
wouldn't have given us a cent
for a hundred missing bats."
A superfluous thought,
since they're giving us nothing for anything.

Pieter Penkoff

The Math Lesson

Suppose the unknown is positive and rational, in fact,
A unique solution whose existence is guaranteed, so that
The calculation reduces to a mere matter of squaring,
Subtracting and finding significant factors of simplification.

An entire classroom becomes trapped in this daydream of coherent
Arguments dispersed within the drone of the professor's voice that settles
Into the dust of chalk and lead, permitting the numbers to coagulate into
A sluggish mass that interferes with the linear progression of time,

Until a front row hand suggests a stumble by the universe,
Third line down, a negative not cancelled, inspiring smirks
On the faces in the back row and the shake of a luxurios
Set of hair whose curls distract from the power of the equation,

Concurrent with a sly forward jump of the clock and a suggestion
In the air that perhaps numbers were stories, students nonclassifiable
Relations, the entire lesson a fanciful minuet of meaningless grace,
A sweet entertainment among comforting company. But alas!

The negative is swiftly cancelled and carried through to the
Remainder, resulting in a solution boldly circled, a true statement
Amidst the restless anticipation of dismissal after the assignment
Has been given out like shackles to be worn till the class meets again.

Mech Johnson

The (per)Adventures of Mow Snodgrass

Once there was a superman. His name was Mow Snodgrass (and please don't wear it out). He had the uncanny ability, as he zoomed through cold dead space, to approach all objects from either the right or the left. When he was 13 years old, he decided to approach all objects from the left. Since nearly all objects in Mow's Universe were coin-like disks, Mow never perceived much despite his walloping 302 I.Q.

One day he caught cold and his superhuman abilities malfunctioned. He saw that the coins had two sides. He was overcome in an epiphany of mindstopping beauty. And in a flash of insight, he saw that all nature is like a coin flipping; except the coin may have more than two sides. The coin may even have infinite sides.

After figuring this out, Mow traveled back to his trapezoid planet which is the center of not only his universe, but all universes. He put his findings in a book and decided to fritter away his days hiding behind it. As he would wear out the carpet in his room behind the book, Dr. Snodgrass often would remember this experience from his youth. He would often try to recreate the experience in his mind, always feeling slightly sad. But the book was always there--in front of him--with its lovely and pleasing cover, and the cover placated his restlessness, so he never was able to look beyond it again.

fin

Eric Frank

Square Works

*For Bethann Handzlik, on the occasion of her exhibit at the
U W Center--Waukesha County Art Gallery, October, 1994*

This work's intensely square
Like a game of tic, tac, toe,
Three rows, three times, that spare.

You play the X, I the O,
You mark the middle, get the third,
That game you win, and so

The fallen song of your muted birds,
Beneath mind and memory both there
On the walls, and here in my words.

Margaret Rozga

PERFECT WORLD

If everyone on the face of this earth
Would accept the fact
That they're not perfect
We'd be living in a Perfect World.

Kenneth Kaminski

CONFRONT

Life is perfect.
Except today,
When IT gushed out of my pores,
Old baggage, like a musty trunk
Forgotten under pigeon droppings
Sprung open suddenly

Lee Rogers-White

When from the deepest depths of madness
Comes a lonely, creeping sadness
And all the world is fast asleep
I take a giant quantum leap
And plunge into dementia.

Things fantastical appear
But never do I cringe in fear
For I too live in death's dark night
And I despise the things of light
I blame them for hypocrisy.

The imagery is dark and dread
Filled with creatures not quite dead
That leap about, groping madly
But I must leave them (sadly, sadly)
And go to face the light.

Carol O'Leary

9-27-94

When the axe falls
on my neck
I will be whistling
a tune that they will play
at your funeral.

Marc Bonkoski

GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN

HUSH, CHILD, WHAT TALK IS THIS
TO SAY GOD'S EVERYWHERE AND EVERYTHING
GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN AND WE'RE ON THE EARTH

SHAME, CHILD, WATCH YOUR TONGUE
GOD'S NOT IN WORMS OR TREES OR BIRDS
GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN AND WE'RE ON THE EARTH

BLASPHEMOUS, CHILD, STOP YOUR CHATTER
YOU NEVER HEARD GOD TALK THROUGH THE WIND
GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN AND WE'RE ON THE EARTH

SINFUL, CHILD, PRAY ON YOUR KNEES
THAT GOD WILL FORGIVE YOUR WILLFUL WAYS
PRAY THAT GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN AND NOT ON THIS EARTH.

Gloria Forthun

God Is Dead

jesus dies,
his blood in my eyes
Burning.

I stand on trial,
this time there's no
Returning.

how will I wash my hands
to clean this blood from me?
he who knows his mind
controls his destiny.

oh, my god is dead.

Sean McEown

an apple

 increasing in size
 fills a darkroom
 otherwise known as a cheezebowl
 streetwalkers waltz - grimy lights shine
 the reality that entombs
 away persnickety and elegant birdheads
 snicker and sip wine

A lawnmower roars and deafens
slashes with the help of invisible concepts

 Untied walking down the street
 A boy and his dog
 shit on the lawn as a group of
 charcoal aficionados watch

Many chaos-tinged hues, lights and plants delineate untold
moments
many untold thoughts confine whilst slipping away

may many questions mull as beings enter my fray
lead me away from today from choice and towards
depth

Eric Frank

undone

immobilizing fear

stuttering idiotic words
collide with condescending
smirks stares sarcasm

self-power

v
a
n
i
s
h
e
s

just as a fragile egg
delicately made
with membrane stability
is rendered helpless
by gravity's

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Carol Billings

I know you can hear me. I know you're in there fucking with the stations, you and your games, innuendos. I'm so tired of pretending I'm asleep. You watch my eyelids quiver when I've understood; you slow down. When they lie still, when I'm thinking of long slow summer days, death, peace, you speed up, to scare me? If only I didn't feel the acceleration, I would be done by now. This would all be over with if I could just fall asleep. If only I were unable to hear your games, laughter. It is that which drives me speeds me to the edge of the cliff, kills me over and over. I am born again. I live with ears that no longer hear. I eat your words, wash them down with gasoline, light a smoke, explode into, into, in two, three, four and I am no longer one but there you are. Too late, I've gone, catch me in my dreams; that's when I'm most awake. Call on me when I'm most vulnerable, eyes closed, helpless. You don't know that I know that you know that I wish I didn't hate me, love you, want to fill this hole with your hate, hate your bloody love, love your bloody hate. Do you know? Do you know that I know that you hate me? That I love you for that? I am blackness, cold, hard and true; you should hate the love in me.

Laura Borst

LIZARD

Lizard, you've got no claim on me.
I hold you in my hand and feel
The cool soft touch of harmless feet
Climb my arm. You don't even spit.

Time was when I was terrified
Of you and only force could make
Me set foot in your dark hiding place
In that cool dank earthen cellar.

Seems fearing you has haunted me
Forever--you creeping symbol
Employed to threaten and control
A terrified, defenseless child.

No more! Today I hold that fear
And break the bondage of your power.

Carol Billings

High Above on a Windy Hill

High above on a windy hill,
high above the fetid swill,
I met a girl so sweet and fair.
Sunlight danced on her raven hair.

Her eyes, sparkling like diamond rings,
captured my heart's restless wanderings.
I knew from the instant she kissed my cheek
that I was in love on this windy peak.

I wanted to clasp her to my breast
and in her soul take my very rest.
I knew for me she was the best,
but she had married another.

Curse you, God, and curse you, Satan,
for tempting me with dreams
of salvation and damnation.
Do you take some perverse, unholy glee
in laughing at me and my ruination?

Since the time I left the knee of my mother,
I have sought for my soul, my life, my other.
My love has run off and married another
and left me alone to consider it.

High alone on a windy hill,
cast down into the fetid swill,
I tell this aching heart of mine
to be still and wait another time.

Michael Mullooly

"I took a shower today
couldn't feel the water
hit my face"
I was already numb
or just hard
and cold.
I couldn't seem to get clean
no matter
how hard I scrubbed.
I scrubbed until
the water turned red
but I could only feel
the dirt.

Marc Bonkoski

SCANT RECIPE

Her thirst
is
endless,
fathoms deep
and
he gives
well-measured
cupfuls
of his love.

Mary D. Hayes

Alone No more Due to You

like pale moonlight shining the pathway down a grassy hill
the quiet rushing of a small waterfall flows through the air
small band of moonlight reflected off the lake reveals two silhouettes
standing so close that they appear to be continuations of one another
yet never touching
a harsh shout cuts through the comforting sounds of flowing water
and the silhouettes which disappear from the watchful eyes of the moon
are replaced by a single daisy
glistening in the dim light

Jan Alise Davis

POWER STRUGGLE

Invisible
though felt,
Free
though bound,
Liberated
though controlled.

Compliant
yet defiant,
Domestic
yet wild,
Present
yet removed.

Married
autonomy.

Mary D. Hayes

N. G. N. L. T.

We may never talk about this.
Words may restrain,
but know I will always remember it. The way
your hands moved with my light, swaying hips.
I felt your shoulders glide.
And your eyes, your eyes
were crystal balls.
Into my fervor you stepped,
while sound rebounded
in that small, harmonious room.

Too long a wait to be so close,
and closer we grew with every beat--
Closer we grew with every beat
to touch.
Engaged to the music,
we became drafted
and released
as it guided
like ocean waves
flowing and splashing,
drifting and dancing.

Our eyes reunited.
And your hair--
the smell of white lilacs
so fresh--Your neck, soft as silk,
so pure.
Like a bird's first flight
our cheeks brushed
to a kiss.

Warm shivers crawled
to near unconsciousness.
This is it.

The song ended,
but the sound
continued.

Nanula Demos

have you heard your throaty voice
over the broadcast air?
can you be told too many
times how your power intoxicates me?
did you have me in your mind
when you wrote your latest--it matches
me and you ironically well
the shivers i get from memories
of your soft touch on my bare skin
excite and torment.
i can not escape the
hidden meaning in the tosses
of your head--
fingers running through curly hair
pleading arms to embrace you;
your all too real body.
pulsing heart beats felt
unrhythmed against warmed skins
touching through 50/50 shirts
your voice comes over the radio
and we pretend not to notice
the goosebumps forming on my skin
you kiss my forehead and turn to leave
lyrics dictate my behavior
and i reach out to pull you back.
come back when you're ready
(to stay longer)
forever yours, still, i'll wait
for the next dj to play you

b. crocker

CLINGING VINE

What do you know of departure, darling?
You're the tightly-knotted burl on vines
So thin and brittle from the clinging
Of what you think is love.
You are sucking life from stem and root
To save your stick from falling off.
Unaware to look up to the sun and reach for rain,
Departing from the vine you grab so fiercely,
Causing pain.

Lee Rogers-White

For You

I sit alone
in the dark
and smoke your thoughts
rolled up like joints
and get higher
than you ever did.

And you wait
for me
to call you.
And I say,
"Enough of you,"
and roll up your last thought.
It makes it easier
to forget you.

Marc Bonkoski

I'd steal and cry
I'd kill and die
Run to the end
Of wicked sanity

I gave one look
She gave one smile
Went on a walk
A thousand miles

A journey condemned
To love and lust
Learning to fly
With no one to trust

My guide has left me
Without light
Stronger I must be
Against the wicked night.

Chet Pendowski

Damaged Goods

Inside her

The feel of her melt around mine.
Brushing, sliding, shifting
skin against skin.
More, reaching for more.
Further and deeper. Burning her
with my touch. Touch of fingers
not simply lust, not exactly love.
Inside her,

In between.

Catching middleground.
Damaged goods, the both of us. Sharing
and looking for parts.

Garrett Warner

Winter Dreams

Who was she then,
before we met...?

A breeze swept up from a summer lawn
to become a soft thrumming in some man's soul,
the breath of a distant garden
on a warm night,
a rouge of sunlight
at the edge of the day,
or a voice in someone's troubled sleep?

...and who is she now,
down there among the dark swelling hills
as the last sliver of pale winter light
drains from the sky?

Alone in her room
where candles burn all night,
her perfect, polished hands
speak Chopin,
pressing the keys
pulling the strings
every note a murmur
in the shape of her heart.

Leaning into the candle
filling her face with the light of a winter moon
she breathes out the flame...

...miles away
across the frozen lake of days
I smoulder
in my bed of wax.

J. P. Slater

Betrayal

the end of august
she was to leave
the last week and a half
ours.

instead
we met but once
a desperate embrace
her remorse, my pain.

woman
how do I tell you
that your husband seduced
your son's lover?

Sean McEown

with one fatal mistake everything changes
soothing voices are no longer audible
affectionate faces fade into darkness
sterling confidants become black with tarnish
hopeful dreams lie shattered on the floor
yet through all the insensitivity
connections held dear
are
never
relinquished

Jan Alise Davis

Of all the men in my life, you are
you are the most elusive. We roam
the park path, a slash of ochre,
under maples rouged by autumn, slick
with mist.
wary of your eyes?
Egg-headed babies
in ambling prams
grapple with nannies in high white shoes
bleating their outrage.

Why am I

The tears of things that could not touch you.

now I love you.

now I love you.

Laurel A. Starkey

Garden, Tea Room, Teeter-totter

In my square-foot garden, Jack Russell puppies sprout in the rich, black, loamy soil. King Charles Spaniels play on the teeter-totter in my back yard. Going up and down, their eyes look sad. Boston Terriers sit in the tea room with crumbs of crumpets on their chins. They lap from Staffordshire teacups with their cropped tongues.

I take a walk down the street with a Maltese, and we discuss spousal abuse. She shows me the bruise on her thigh.

At the corner, waiting for the leaves to change, a man wearing a brown suit and derby pedals past on a unicycle with two bulldogs on lead. The man pedals into the bank.

When the leaves change into tangerines, the Maltese and I cross the street to the city park, where she tells me she will leave her husband, or maybe, she says, she'll kill him.

Kent Brown

bartender talks during commercials
(bundy strikes again)

he searched his mind
and said, "Three kinds:
There's WIVES and NUNS and SLUTS.

"There's only three,"
said he, said he,
"just WIVES and NUNS and SLUTS,

"and what you've got,
THEY'll get, but not
with knives or guns, but BUTTS.

"You're fools," he said.
"THEY'll mess your head;
your lives are run by BUTTS.

"Just look at HER--
you're had for sure.
SHE jives; SHE shuns; SHE struts.

"Stay clear because
that's all SHE does:
deprives undone men's nuts.

"And once THEY're yours,
THEY're PRUDES and WHORES;
all WIVES are NUNS or SLUTS,

"or maybe both.
Don't take the oath
for WIVES WHO're NUNS and SLUTS."

and while he spat
at home they sat--
the wives in one-man huts

in hopes they could
forgive for good
the knives men run through cuts.

Lorelei Kring

FLOWERS FOR JANE

Newly divorced and lonely, she feels
She is nothing without a man in her life;
Not seeing clearly because of her strife,
Too busy dating to let herself heal.
Seeing people who really mean nothing,
Going places she does not enjoy,
Becoming a plaything to men who are boys,
She suffers later from Friday night's fling.
Last week she thought she had met a good man,
Took her to dinner and later sent flowers
Enclosing a card that started the pain
The minute she read the note that began
With one word, unaware of its power--
He should have remembered, her name is not "Jane."

Mary D. Hayes

Reality Cheque

Dan, Dan, Executive Man
runs the show because he can
has a limo, has a van
has an artificial tan
has a plan to beat Japan
cruises in a black sedan
to a place

honk
honk

that he calls

one
side

the real world

me
first
I
work
you
don't

He turns on the wipers so the rain's not real
washes down some ibuprofen so the pain's not real
barely misses the pedestrians for they are not real
and the other, lesser drivers in his way are not real
He has to wear a watch because the sun's not real
and he wears it on vacation for the fun's not real
He lives in his career because his life's not real
and he prefers his secretary for his wife's not real
He keeps his wallet full because his greed's not real
and he doesn't help the needy for their need's not real
He has a perfect lawn because a weed's not real
but he cares not what he sows because the seed's not real
doesn't really fight pollution for the threat's not real
borrows what the earth will give him for the debt's not real
doesn't mind when there's a war because a vet's not real
pays the workers five an hour for their sweat's not real
and he says

huge
house

he's as poor
fast
yacht

as the grunts
golf
clubs

on the floor
you
think
/
don't
have
bills?

Any luxury he has but never earned is not real
Any money spilled from temple tables turned is not real
Any reason why a flag is ever burned is not real
Any principle his conscience ever learned is not real,
save the one

big
head
he can see
small
eyes

from the god
Bad
News

Carnegie
I
get;
there-
fore,
I
know

Dan, Dan, Executive Man
lives in each American
for we let him be real
for we let him be real
for we let him be real
for we let him be real

Lorelei Kring

CLASSICAL GAS

Portland, Maine's a Mecca for teenaged run-aways, throw-aways, all sorts of stow-aways, who in daytime congregate at the main town square. City fathers don't want kids around there, so they've installed loudspeakers, play music all day; classical music. "Kids don't like classical music." They seem to think that kids who have been beaten, sexually abused, molested, starved, who turn tricks for food, and live on the streets in zero weather will be driven off by Bach and Beethoven. Mahler, maybe.

James Kaczmarek

whose slaves are those
who run barefooted across
flattened wet grass?
under half-mooned sky
who scared and breathless
turn hopeful faces
forward and don't
look back.

whose slaves are those
who have been found
in free states and
hatefully returned?
what heart hath the
returner blackened
with the death of
love for all humankind?

whose slaves are those
who endure endless
harassing and torture
and do not allude to
true feeling: they
are not allowed to feel.

whose slaves are those
treated like animals
bred for endurance and strength
sold like domestic stock
siblings and children traded
away from their only true families?

whose slaves are those
who were called early mornings
from foot-covered miles away
and worked through each day?

what love hath the deceased
slave owner for his self?
for his slaves?

upon meeting again in heaven
both are equally loved by God,
yet unequally treated on His earth.

b. crocker

MURDER IN THE HENHOUSE

Why did he tell me while we sat
listening to the evening sounds
He had once wrung a chicken's neck
for clucking and squawking at dawn?

Deep in his pillow he slept,
never hearing the persistent hen
But his first wife woke to the sound
every morning at daybreak, he said.

Before sunrise one day he left
their bed and slipped out the door
Stole across perfect green velvet lawn
and entered through his neighbor's gate.

He stole past saucers of seeds
swinging feeders and birdbaths
tiny mirrors with perches
and wren houses swinging gently.

In the dark he found the henhouse
and let himself in quietly.
Before the hen could squawk
he thrust her under his arm

Gave her thin neck a mighty twist
until the head flopped limp--now
A rubber chicken from the Joke Shoppe--
and pushed it deep in a trash can.

Birds in their safe houses and soft
nests witnessed this deed
But he felt no shame, he said;
the chicken was the one to blame.

Later his first wife remarked
she slept so soundly now
undisturbed by early clucking
Suppose that woman cooked her hen?

He laughed mirthlessly then
He said to me he never revealed
what he did to the hapless hen
or why he kept his deed concealed.

She left him for another man,
he said, ungrateful bitch.
After all he had done for her,
known and unknown, through the years.

He looked past honeysuckle, climbing
clematis and trumpeter vine
and sought the noisy bluejays
feeding in our neighbor's yard.

Cool, damp air blew across the patio.
Hearing the wind chimes' knell,
I rose and walked away.
I knew I would not look back.

Ann Arntson

A SILO BECKONS

Erect, strong,
symbol of fertility,
your voice echoes
abundance, life.

Only I see the
beautiful composite
of life in the mosaic
of your stony walls,

melding, blending
with the greenery
that softens and
surrounds you.

Nestling in the rolling
hills, you reach out
and I linger
in your embrace.

Mary D. Hayes

On the Farm

Memories of the farm
come back to me with rain.

Sow on kitchen table,
stick through its middle.

Kittens.

Playing pet store in the sun
screams

Orange tabby running from scene
bloody slaughter.

Locked in corn crib
bellowing for help.

Rusty barbed wire
through young, pale flesh.
Blood tears staining
white carpeting.

Terrorized by those hands
The hands that bruise, scar
take from me my innocence
too young.

Playing Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz on
the railing of the pigpen.

Tormenting the geese and hogs
just to see if we could get away
without being bit.

I will die here
I have died here
more times than I can count
more times than I care to remember.

These were the days the
cruel, hard truth became real.
When death was within my reach
staring into hopeless eyes of
animals awaiting the end of their
existence.

Spending hours in the pet graveyard
behind the horse barn.
Seeing death at its ugliest.

This is the place I buried my childhood
right next to the
decapitated heads
of kittens.

Laura Borst

Guilty by Association

She came to get me from the trailer so I could help her. When we arrived in the woods, I looked down the hill and saw the head flopping. His neck was stretching up, but he couldn't get up. His body was paralyzed. "Oh my god," I thought to myself, "he's not dead." The poor thing was shot in the shoulder. One bullet wouldn't do it for this one. I waited on the hilltop for her to finish him off.

The cool wind blew the dead leaves across the ground between the trees. I stopped my tears and stared at the earth. All my life I wanted to be her. Yes, we are alike in many ways. But, we are also different in many ways. This was one of them. Bang! He was shot again and closer to death. "Is it dead yet?" I yelled.

"It will be in a minute," she yelled back. I stood next to her tree-house with her camera in my left hand and my cigarette in the other. At that moment I knew I would never take up this sport. She seemed to love it. I'm sure the hunters have their reasons, but at this point of my discovery I didn't know why.

After he died, I flung the camera around my shoulder and walked down the hill. The cold air made me sniffle. She grabbed her brand new, homemade knife and cut through the warm flesh of the innocent buck. I watched her cut off his maleness and toss it over her shoulder. She cut through the veins and arteries to remove the guts. The strong scent of his blood traveled right up my nose. Blood soaked into the prints of her hands and up her nails. She reached up the opened body to his neck. "I'm looking for the cord," she said, then pulled. Organs that had worked 15 minutes ago now slid out of his body. "When you cut, you have to be careful not to puncture the stomach or corn and shit will be all over." I had never imagined this. The guts lay on the dirt and leaves, still connected.

Then she dug through the stomach, the liver, and the intestines until she found the heart. Reaching her arm up with the heart in her hand, she asked me if I wanted it. "No."

My eyes told her of my amazement and she said, "Why not? You used to eat this."

It was time to drag the dead buck up the hill. I completely forgot about the camera. When we reached the top, she went to her truck and pulled out an axe, then chopped away at his pelvic area. After that she went over to a tree to chop off some branches while I stared at him. I

saw something. There was a small beating movement back and forth under the hair of his left thigh. I watched it for ten minutes and wondered how the muscle could continue after he'd been ripped open and chopped at.

We loaded him on the truck and drove to the tree, where we hung him. Then I took the pictures, but I didn't want my picture taken with him. I was already part of his death. However, I knew that later, I would probably eat it.

Tracy M. Kubiayk

SONNET #112: PERIOD

Remember when menstruation was a word
that you had heard, but failed to understand?
Now if you were a boy, your ears were banned
from hearing clues to what it meant. You heard
the clues, if girl, but all that seemed absurd
at first; then not considered to be grand
amusement; merely Nature's rude demand,
to which all girls must needs become inured.

In other cultures was more mystical,
connecting women to a grander scheme;
religious, spirit loaded, sign of life
renewed, imbued in ways holistical
with meanings, drawn from ancient sacred dream
of ruby gush, occasioned without knife.

James Kaczmarek

Dreaming for the World

Skimming endless seas, amaranthine,
deathless,
songs of the nightboats
deliver foamy ghosts.

He who holds me awkwardly
reads

Whitman aloud in a rented room,
our shoes tossed wantonly
to the Chinese rug.

Outside,
swans flare their wings like snowy planes.

Wickiup trees
flaunting fruit like scrota
dangle boldly as if to say,

"See, we are magicians,
makers of men's fire."

He knows my neediness
may swallow me whole

and only the singing
of the nightboats
will save my face.

Laurel A. Starkey

An Autumn Refusal

October clouds encourage winds as cruel
As the words by a man who could see no charm

In the aging woman,
Whose task remains

To be a guardian of children who tumble defiantly
Among the driven leaves, an autumn march of death,
Where boys are skeletons risen from the grave,
While the girls are Snow Whites longing for a
Hundred years within one night of Halloween.

To the old woman,

The plastic skulls and evil grins of pumpkins
Foretell of winter, whose barrenness awaits her
Like a consoling dream, wherein she will wander
Over ice that shelters black waters whose pull is
Eternal sleep and she will smile seeing the snow
Littered with the diamonds he had refused her.

Mech Johnson

The Serpent Mound

The road to the serpent mound,
as intriguing as the mound itself,
takes us, twisting and turning
into the past.

We, the pale citizens
then pay homage to something
(we're not sure what)
prehistoric natives crafted.

Perhaps they worshipped
this long, tortuous snake.

In awe, we worship it as well.

I think they may be laughing
behind bushes and rocks.

Marvelling at what folks will marvel at.
Like a serpent they made
as a plaything
for their
offspring.

Christine S. Leonard

HOME

THIS IS MY HOME, I WALK UPON IT
I BREATHE ITS AIR, IT FEEDS MY BODY
THIS IS MY HOME, BUT I DO NOT LIVE ALONE
THERE IS MY FAMILY, ALL ABOUT ME
THEY FLY ABOVE ME, CRAWL BENEATH ME
THEY WALK ON ALL FOURS OR SWIM IN THE WATERS
THIS IS MY HOME, IT FEEDS MY SPIRIT
WARMs MY SOUL, CONSOLES MY MIND
THIS IS MY HOME, ALL ABOUT ME
THIS IS YOUR HOME, ALL ABOUT YOU
THIS IS OUR HOME, IT IS SACRED

Gloria Forthun

Sam

He stood
naked on the beach
his back to me
blond curls blowing in the breeze.
baby toes digging into fine, brown sand.
he looked out at the lake
blending into grayish mist.
his tiny hands were tense.
perhaps the lake was speaking to him.
I could not be sure.
I only know that if it spoke,
he listened.

Christine S. Leonard

The Inevitable

The pulsating rhythm
time
unceasingly slipping
sands through hands.

Burdened.
A love of life,
death,
the end.
Go here, do this,
now, later
yesterday's gone
forever dying.
One chance,
one moment,
one now, now
it's past.
struggle, settle
infinite dying dreams,
blowing in the breeze.
Blink, and you've lost a lifetime.
Have no notion?
Speak with agenda-filmed words,
smile often.
Just survive
live
never be,
never be,
never be,
me.

Laura Borst

PAUSE YOURSELF

There's a park to go and sit in nearby.
A river flows along one edge
between the bushes; you can look in
on the cattails, hear the frogs, see
the fish break the surface of the water.
The sounds of birds all around in the trees and flying low.
Across the way a lawn is getting its weekly mow.
If you sit still enough, a robin might walk by
searching for worms to lunch on
or throw down;
I don't know why.

Lee Rogers-White

WASICHU

Long, long time ago; before there were reservations, before the new sicknesses destroyed many of the people, when the people were still free; free to live in the old way; free to hunt the brothers who walk on four legs; free to move across the endless prairies. Back then, long time ago, the Dakota had never seen a ghost face one, who walks on two legs.

By and by, the people heard of such things, but did not believe. Then, one day, there came into a Dakota camp one who walks on two legs, with very white skin. Some thought it was a spirit. Some thought it was a sick thing, and should be killed. They reasoned that if it was a spirit, it could not be killed, but if a sick thing, it was best to kill it now.

The white face one that walks on two legs appeared weak, and full of hunger. There were fresh killed deer there, and the leaders of the people motioned that it should eat of the meat. The white face one, who walks on two legs, went to the hanging deer carcasses and tore out the fat, and fed on it; all the fat from the hanging deer. Thus it was that the Dakota knew their days were numbered. Thus it was that the white face ones, who walk on two legs, are called wasichu, which is to say, takes-the-fat.

James Kaczmarek

KABA

"I didn't come all this way to see something like *this*," Judy said.

"You're not going to sit in the bus, are you?" Dan asked.

Judy crossed her arms and looked out the window. The rest of the church members were already outside milling about, shading their eyes from the sun, kicking up dust.

Dan put his hand on his wife's shoulder. "Come on. If you can't stand it, I'll come back with you. At least the bus is air conditioned."

Judy sighed, took hold of her purse and stood. Dan stepped aside, letting her go ahead of him. Walking behind Judy, Dan suppressed a snicker.

Outside, the heat of the Indian dry season weighed on them like a wool blanket. The rest of the group was already in the Karni Mata Temple. Worshipers, entering and exiting the white marble temple, outnumbered the Western tourists.

Even before they got to the entrance, Judy and Dan heard screams and squeals coming from inside.

Dan laughed. "This ought to be good."

"I can't. I just can't," Judy said.

At the temple's entrance, several women dressed in colorful saris looked at Judy, bowed and smiled. At the same time, several members of the church group came out. One man smiled and wrinkled his nose at Dan. "Rats everywhere. Watch your step."

"Judy says she doesn't want to go in," Dan said.

Dan and the man laughed.

As they stood near the entrance, an Indian man with long gray hair pulled back into a ponytail approached. "May I be of some assistance?" he asked.

Dan and Judy looked at him suspiciously. The man smiled and bowed to them. "I am Vijay. I am a priest at the Karni Mata Temple. Welcome."

"Dan Anderson, my wife Judy," Dan said.

"Mrs. Anderson, there is no reason to be afraid. The Kaba are tame. Thousands of people visit here daily," Vijay said.

Judy nodded. "I can understand that, but they're so dirty."

Dan edged away into the shade of a tree, where he wiped his brow with a handkerchief. He mopped the glistening sweat from his upper lip, concealing his amused reaction to Judy's squeamishness.

Judy was looking into Vijay's large brown eyes and found she couldn't break eye contact with him. His calm voice was hypnotic.

Vijay took Judy by the elbow and led her into the cool temple.

Dan put his handkerchief in his pocket and hurried to catch up to them.

Judy touched at her hair. She took a small mirror from her purse and checked her make-up. She was self-conscious of her pale green eyes, long narrow nose, and fall-away chin. She was very aware her features contrasted completely to Vijay's.

"Watch your step," Dan said.

Native worshipers, some kneeling, others lying face down on the floor, all faced a trough of wheat and a large, round brass plate of water. They ate from the trough and drank from the same plate of water the Kaba were eating and drinking from.

"Look at all the Goddam rats," Dan said.

"Dan, watch your language," Judy said.

The smile left Vijay's face. "Kaba is the messenger of God."

Walking as if across a wet lawn in good shoes, Judy stepped up to the trough. She looked down at a man worshipping. Then she looked carefully at the dozens of Kaba feeding from the trough. She looked back at Vijay, who smiled, then to Dan, who was holding his arms up to his chest. He was looking at dozens more Kaba at his feet. They moved around him like a school of brown mackerel.

A Kaba jumped from a marble ledge, landing on Dan's shoulder. "Yikes!" Dan squealed. He slapped at the rat and did a nervous two-step.

"You will have good luck!" Vijay said to Dan.

Judy, to her own surprise, calmly knelt down and took a handful of grain from the trough. She held her palm open, allowing a dozen Kaba to circle her hand and eat.

"Judy!" Dan yelled. "Let's get out of here!"

Two of the circling rats were then climbing up his pant leg. He started shaking first one leg and then the other. "Judy!"

Vijay put a hand on Dan and said in a calm voice, "Please, Mr. Anderson."

"Dan," Judy said. "They're nice. They won't hurt you."

"I'm getting out of here," Dan said.

"Mata is our goddess. Her son is Kaba," Vijay said to Dan.

Dan wasn't having any of it. He swatted and two-stepped till the squealing Kaba were flung from him.

Worshipers looked on in horror. Tourists shrieked and some laughed.

Judy rose to her feet with several Kaba still balanced on her arm.

"Dan, it's all right," she said.

Dan flung his arms up and went screaming from the temple, knocking

people aside as he sprinted out the entrance.

"I'm sorry," Judy said.

Vijay bowed to her. "It happens sometimes," he said.

"It's different than I thought it would be," Judy said. "It's so peaceful."

They sat next to each other on a low marble bench. Vijay said, "Mata lost her son six hundred years ago. The boy drowned in a pond."

Judy gave a sympathetic look, tilting her head to one side. "How awful."

"Mata begged God to return her son to the world. Which God did, as Kaba, so she would never be parted from her son again."

Judy looked at the two Kaba still perched on her arm. She smiled.

Vijay said, "God made Mata goddess of our temple."

"Well, it was a happy ending to a sad story," Judy said.

Vijay smiled an expression of great joy. He held Judy's free hand. They looked deeply into each other's eyes.

When Judy got on the bus, the rest of the church group looked at her suspiciously. They were drinking bottled water and mopping sweat from their faces.

In her seat, Dan was guzzling water and scratching his head viciously. On the floor between his feet was a pile of used wetnaps.

"Where in the hell have you been? And *what* is *that* around your neck?" he asked.

"It's a Kaba necklace," she said, touching the small brass Kaba hanging by string.

"Oh, for God's sake," Dan said. "What else did you buy?"

"Nothing. I made a small donation to the Temple," she said.

Dan rolled his eyes and shook his head.

The bus pulled away, leaving a cloud of dust and the smell of diesel exhaust.

"They're barbaric," Dan said.

Judy touched his arm gently and said, "It's all in how you look at things."

Dan looked at his wife, paying particularly close attention to her brown hair, pale eyes, pointy nose, and weak chin. His eyes widened as if seeing something horrible. The sensation of a million little paws running up his back came over him.

Dan reached for more wetnaps.

Judy looked out the bus window and smiled.

Kent Brown

Seasonal Depression
written for C.

The sun, winter-weakened,
Withdrew in defeat to allow

Grayness to grow in weight and darkness,
Until the very weariness of the air yielded to

The seemingly lighthearted seduction of snow falling,

Crystals as numerous and hard-edged as
Thoughts longing to settle into the earth

Underneath the white shroud,
Where sleep needs no dreams.

Mech Johnson

Inside--black walls that give off a mild
happiness--head fits in between--head
expands--bursts through ceiling
vast desert appears
machine monsters tell jokes, laugh and lazily
kick the sand--the continuum of the periphery
(all 360 degrees) flies away as if being sucked--
black space appears--fluorescent colors
humorously move towards your general
vicinity which coalesce into vivid holograms
Later (?) which blur and become dissolute into
colorful patterns that randomly repeat--
discernable nice patterns
you pull away and resume your normal
method--eating milk and cookies

Eric Frank

DON'T ABUSE ME

i am hurting i am hurting i am hurting i am hurting
u am hurting u am hurting i am hurting
i am horing i am horing
u am horing u am horing u am horing u am horing
u am hurling u am hurling u am hurling my head out the door.

Lee Rogers-White

Why the Cat Has My Ex's Name

He whines for his supper
and insists on meat every night,
then curls up on the couch
without as much as a thank-you
while I wash the dishes.
When I finally sit down,
he rubs his whiskers into my face
and then goes off to pee on the bathroom floor
and leave it there
while he bathes himself faithfully. Coat clean
and mouth foul, he moons me and
swaggers out, never saying when he'll be back
to get friendly while I'm trying to sleep.

Lorelei Kring

Dear Dr. Salvage:

In lieu of cash payment, enclosed
in these deflated words you sniff in passing, find
for your own mental health, for you own mental health, a prescription

as hard to read as
I found yours
was, as hard to believe

in, as hard to pay
for, as hard to fill without
shame, and as stifling,

potentially; written with
authority as hard-
earned as yours was:

a pill as bitter as yours was. Your running shoes thump out
of synch with your heart. This medication will enter your system
if you walk your white halls slowly enough, once

daily, after your rains. Leave your galoshes
in the closet, so you will know
a puddle when you step

into it. Visit the settling tire heap where you hurl
us, your punctured ones, after you pry
us off our wheels, leaving holes in our middles;

where your thunder's spray rinses mud off
what's up, and nothing else; where treads, hardly
worn, only need nail holes patched; tread

where you lay us to rest
on each other; tread
to hear the precarious squeak of your

guesses; where cobwebs are useful, tread
to hear the buzz of an efficient reality breeding in your pock-
market pools, sucking the warm

red from our metaphors, spitting your diagnostic
irritant, "You're hallucinating,"
from barbed hypodermic mouths. Dis-

infection swells, whitens, itches like
mad. Try not to scratch it.
The itch means the treatment is helping you.

Where the sun dries what it illuminates, tread
to purge what you can from the musty wells within
your white walls; tread

to find the inner
tubes you can refill
with fresh air. When the itching stops,

do not discontinue treatment; the bug will
return. You may purchase unlimited refills from us, but
take our words only as directed.

Lorelei Kring

Slick shot, white coat
swift, sharp needle--
annual flu shot

Barbara Bache-Wiig

Psychobabble deconstructs monkey pathfinders--useful for fishing trips outside the stand-up comic circuit--last place was reserved for a special face which remained beautiful even when sprayed with mace--someone mysteriously making clacking noises in the makeshift darkroom at the top of Mount Everest--laughing--a repetitive pattern decipherable as π --lifting curtains, but not per se lifting a finger--chasm opens--black dust sucked inside with cartoon characters--the memories of which are extinguished forever--my head chopped off but alive whirls through dark cold space away from stars--the sweat in my face crystallizes producing an exquisite christmaslike feeling--a description which belies a certain MouseHouse--spiraling Mr. Stellate Eyes thinks of his puppet hand and chuckles to himself at the very moment John Tesh of tv's Entertainment Tonight fixes a cup o' coffee and sits down by a fire to read a paper in which a freak accident kills a 40-year-old family man--cause of death--a secret bad thought projected on to a movie screen--we shouldn't hold illusions that movie screens are like us

Eric Frank

Gorecki's Symphony No. 3

listened Henryk Gorecki's
(Gor-etz'-ky's) Third Symphony

slow quiet beginning double bass
hum distant drone heavy pre-jet
bombers, coming, coming, bringing
instant destruction, destroyed
Berlin cousins forty-three, but
we must also have unknown Polish
cousins also destroyed, bombs,
different colored bombers, all
still dead.

slowly slowly builds, bombers coming
closer, closer, bombers symbolic
anonymous war death, Picasso's
"Guernica" eye flashes distant
explosive bomb bursts, blinding white
otherwise black velvet sky, instant
flash Guernica gone, gone cousins
known and unknown.

Auschwitz. Oswiecim.

Zakopane Wanda eighteen years scratched
name date wall Gestapo dungeon.

What did she do?
What did we do Gor-etz'-ky?
What did we do?

Voice comes back hope maybe hope
maybe
hope.

James Kaczmarek

Tobacco Row

FIRST LADY BURNED IN EFFIGY

Owensboro, KY (AP)--An effigy of Hillary Rodham Clinton was doused with gasoline and burned as a congressman, a senator, and Stan Arachikavitz, president of the Kentucky Association of Tobacco Supporters, stood by. . .

Came out from Owensboro, they did,
in pickup trucks and old cars,
young and old and in between,
to set this matter straight as a field row.

They gathered near drying sheds,
suntanned faces to the crude platform
where their chosen people stood
alongside Stan the Tobacco Man.

A cross of pallets, rough and splintered
was raised high above the crowd,
now surging with clamor,
above the platform where leaders stood.

They draped a shabby cabbage-rose dress
about her stick arms and waist
Pulled straw through her raggedy sleeves
and stuffed it into the worn bodice
Looking hairy and coarse where her dress
lay open.

They tied a straw hat with pink ribbons
fluttering on her wobbly mop head
And last they hung a sign on her
sad bosom that read, "I'm Hillary."

Stan the Tobacco Man cried out
Burn, baby, burn.
The crowd roared as he anointed her
with Mobil unleaded, burn, baby, burn.

Musicians picked at fiddles
and beat on washboards
Two women wielding lighted torches
nudged fire into the cabbage-rose dress.
Hate flickered hotter than any flame.

Children shrieked in delight
while women danced before the blaze
Cigarettes hanging from red lips
Burn, baby, burn, they chanted
as the newsmen from CNN wrote on.

Then she too joined in the dance,
straw breast crackling, roses smoldering
Her name curled burnt edges inward
and rose in the air, now reading..."ill"...

Burn, baby, burn, chanted the crowd
and Stan the Tobacco Man stood tall
and shouted through his brown teeth,

"She didn't last as long as my Marlboro."

Ann Arntson

Cancun (or bust)

Finally,
a trip to be taken
2 weeks away from home,
sun-drenched beaches,
cars laden with chrome,
tequila and cervezas,
drinks on the rocks please,
sooner or later it happens
stomach-ache makes me wheeze,
they told me not to
drink the water,
forgot about ice-cubes,
spent 2 weeks in the bathroom,
cleaning out my tubes,
sent home postcards,
it was part of my plan,
“Having a great time!”
(even though I never left the can)

Mat Schmidt

Snapshot

What a picture
we must have made.

The two of us
standing on the beach,
swollen bellies almost touching,
both births imminent. We chatted
unaware of people chuckling and of
future trials we both would
have to face. Secure in bonds
we had forged
with our children
and with
each other.

Christine S. Leonard

Mothers at a Track Meet

Your daughter awaits her event
We can see her at the fence--
Right knee flexed, yet that leg
Holds its share of her weight,
Arms bent at the elbows,
Hands knit together at her waist
Almost as if she feels no tension.

Later we see her cross over
Onto the track. She gets off
To a good start, though she has to
Jostle for a position, but then
All through the long stretch
She perseveres at her chosen pace,
Keeping some energy in reserve

For the final push. We rejoice.
Already she seems to know
What took us many events to learn.

Margaret Rozga

Smiling John

Standing self-consciously in the cramped examination room, clad only in his underwear, he looks up at me. His little face lights up and his arms reach out to me. I do not know him, this dark-haired, handsome four-year-old, but my heart responds to his charm. He is here at the clinic to be examined by the Doctor, and I am the Student Nurse working and learning here. It has become obvious to us that this beautiful child is an abused child, for some reason not as good, as wanted or as loved as his older brother. Dark bruises in varying shades of blue, purple and brown pepper his slight frame. "He pinches himself," his mother explains nervously. I gather him into my arms and feel his small body relax. I am just starting to rock him when I feel his teeth sink into my shoulder. Startled, I push him away and look into his face. He is smiling. His mother quickly dresses him, takes his hand and marches out of the room. I watch as he turns and looks at me.....smiling.....still smiling.

Christine S. Leonard

GRANDMOTHER NELLE

Nelle was still a beauty and she knew it.
Hadn't she been told long ago
by men she teased and whispered to that
Her ankles were so slim, her hands
so slender and graceful?

She fashioned her dark hair in Grecian style,
pulled back from her almost smooth cheeks
Brilliant violet-blue eyes looked out
from each winged arch of eyebrow
Beneath her perfect widow's peak.

Jars of rich lotions and smooth creams
exquisite perfumes and fresh colognes
a manicure set in a black velvet box
a crystal bowl of faintly tinted powder
adorned her mirrored dressing table.

She would dress carefully in her best suit
call a taxi and go to lunch in tea rooms
Downtown where crisp salads and light muffins
are listed on a lace-trimmed menu
And the waitress knew her name.

Afterwards she shopped for the softest
calfskin gloves and smart handbags,
Sleek black satin slips and strapless bras,
fashionable pumps from Peacock's,
Paisley silk blouses imported from India.

Her warm lilting laugh encouraged
cab-driver and clerk to ask about
Her life and how she managed
to look so grand and so young.
She took this as a compliment.

She would tell them graciously
She never cleaned a house or
did the wash or carried groceries
nor ever planted a garden,
That's how a woman stays young.

On the day she died, at age 92,
she held the nurse's scrubbed hand
gave her a wonderous restoring cream
and told her working hard is virtuous
but looking your best is no sin.

Ann Arntson

Brother's Keeper

Geese towed their V
through smeared clouds, slicing the strait's fairy bridge to St. Ignace
where a chinless Crow sold
fake beaded moccasins and fake beaded belts
along the gimcrack veldt of Indian lore. Nothing genuine,
not even the strait, so clear, it ached.

Our daddy pointed out the welted hills dug raw for ore.

When his mind turned on him
those trips stopped. Everything stopped.

We were in the way,
interlopers
walking on eggs as he baited God. Smoke in the trees made him cry, he
put his gun to your face
to snuff the dark candle of your heart

You vanished adroitly
in dawn's dim blue ache
where the sateen lake drowsed with promise,
the sun dispersing her mizzled caul of fog. I followed
the hollow toll of your oars
geese grebe grackles cackled and muttered in their sleep.

And at last came one morning's cold crow-back shine
we stopped foraging the lake
ran out of need for keeping safe

for daddy was gone
and mom was, well no donna

fucking reed. We grew invisible, opaque. Our eyes became smudged windows. I joined the war. You

grew your hair as long as you
damned well pleased.

Laurel A. Starkey

Victim Stance

surrounded by rats,
wearing her short shorts
a bit of cleavage,
no occasion.
tattoos in full view
they spot her
only the rats
see her.
losing herself in their image of her
unable to focus
running completely on emotions
not a hint of intellect
seems a child, giggling with compliments.
she knows who they are
they think she doesn't
she continues to play
can't live without their compliments
can't afford to lose their attention
does not become angry at them
she's doing it to herself
she's the stupid one . . .
the slut
the freak
headcase.
she is none of these things.
she is not what others perceive her to be.
she loves you,
cares if you're happy.
she is destroyed continuously, stabbed.
finds the strength to carry on
finds hope to care still.
unable to hurt again, still capable of love.

Laura Borst

5 O'clock Shadows

The sun explodes at leisure,
a red eye opening,
an expansive dawning,
a calescent flirting,
filleting, furrowing, washing
blooming.
zooming in on lawns, fences,

the shadows of lawns, fences,
on leaves, cars, and tramps,
the shadows of leaves, cars, and tramps,

all beings perennial
seasonal
existential,
surreal
non-existential,

bringing muted rose and purple hues to
screaming reds and blues.

Our sun is a golden thing.
White gold,
white hot gold,
molten honey blossom,
her saporous breath
gilding, wielding
sleeping cats on wicker chairs
into pure sweet fire.

torching

Laurel A. Starkey

ALONE IN ADISON COUNTY

I fell in love with Juan Valdez the moment he appeared. I was alone at daybreak. I was filling the perc with fresh cold water, measuring carelessly, humming tunelessly, watching the sunrise.

I started the coffee and opened the cupboard, seeking the sugarbowl. There he was, calmly stroking his burro, a smile on his sweetly curved lips.

“¿Viaja usted sola, Señora?”

Good grief, I thought, he is so handsome it makes my eyes hurt to look at him. Glistening coffee brown eyes looking directly at me, shadowed only by his sombrero. Strong jaw and beautiful white teeth beneath a luxurious moustache. Wavy chocolate brown hair. Broad shoulders and muscular arms. He was fairly tall and stood with sensuous ease.

“Si, viajo sola, Señor. ¿Hable inglés?” I asked.

“Good, you are alone. I do speak English,” he replied in his husky voice. “For you, my Beauty, anything. I have learned many languages in my travels.”

“Juan, I have waited a long time, dreaming of you in the mountains filling your basket every morning, as I fill mine. Rich, full-bodied berries, mountain-grown, no bitterness, the best of the crop, hermetically-sealed-in-freshness, aromatic and superior. You can put your beans in my pot anytime. Oh, Juan, at last you have come to these lonesome hills and ridges.”

“Yes, Señora, I have been sent by the Colombian Caffeine Cartel to walk these ridges and find true coffee lovers. Cleo and I are sometimes very lonely, as perhaps you are, too, Señora.”

He removed his serape, a soft wool wrap of faded magenta, blue, and ivory, as he stepped lightly into the sunlit kitchen. Cleo, the burro, clopped in behind him, looking about with Disneyesque eyelashes and a faint animal smile.

Cleo delicately nudged a bowl of apples on the table with her muzzle, selecting the largest. She curled her lips back to reveal huge burro teeth, which she sank into the apple. She chewed noisily, dropping bits of apple on the Congoleum.

Juan held out his strong arms, and happily I floated into his embrace. His soft homespun shirt smelled deep and rich as any cup of coffee I had ever sipped. An almost imperceptible aroma of stable also wafted about the room. I realized Cleo was standing as close to Juan as

I, looking every bit as interested. "What's with the burro?" I asked.

Apparently not concerned with Cleo, he pressed me gently to the floor. My long hair spread fan-like on the floor. Cleo stepped closer and planted her two front hooves on my hair. My hair was pulled tight against my scalp, and I couldn't move. Juan leaned over me, lips parted slightly, with only a wisp of hay in his moustache. I closed my eyes, breathlessly waiting for his kiss. Suddenly shiny dark coffee beans spilled from every pocket and from the lid of his sombrero. They fell in my hair, on my face, in the corners of my eyes, down the V of my robe, and spread across the kitchen floor.

Cleo took this as her cue to move off my hair. As she stepped on the marble-like beans she careened about the kitchen, trying to gain her hoofhold to no avail. She skidded into the table, sending the apples flying about the room. Then she collided with the stove, and the morning oatmeal landed on the floor with a flat splat. She narrowly missed the fridge, brushing it just enough to send the silly magnets and messages kite-like into the air. The percolator toppled from the counter and spilled in a hot, dark river running towards us. Cleo came to rest on her burro bottom in the open cupboard door, among the canisters and spices.

Juan moved his lips but I could not hear what he was saying. I realized a coffee bean was wedged in my good ear. I pried it out in time to hear him say, "...good to the last drop." I didn't know if he meant Cleo or me. I didn't have time to think that one over, since I heard footsteps on the hallway stairs.

Juan was not one to hurry. He calmly stood, wrapped his serape about his shoulders, took Cleo's halter, and straightened his sombrero. He smiled rather sadly and said, "Adios, Señora." Juan Valdez disappeared like mist.

Moments later, my daughter walked into the kitchen. "What in heck happened here, Mom? Did you throw some kind of hissy fit? Look at the mess. Why are you grinning?"

I mopped up the spilled oatmeal and coffee and said nothing. But I'll write it all down and put it in the safe with my Last Will and Testament. When I am gone, my children will read it and write a book about it. They will call it *The Ridges of Adison County*.

Ann Arntson

Age Has Its Benefits

Seventy-plus going on seventeen
with a considerable crush
on my young professors
who ask "How so?"
or "How about researching these issues?"
or "How would it sound if you tried
this line another way?"

Am I jealous of their wives?

No

Do I want to--shall we say--
sleep with them?

Well, no

Am I happy when I talk with them
or audit their classes?

Yes

Do they warm and illuminate my days?

Yes

Do I think my crush is just a passing phase?

Hmmm--probably not.

This crush is safe, secure, and
sends thought waves electrifying
my gray head with enough jolts and volts
to light up my years ahead.

Barbara Bache-Wiig

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Philip L. Zweifel, Ph.D.