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## The Windy Hill review. 1987

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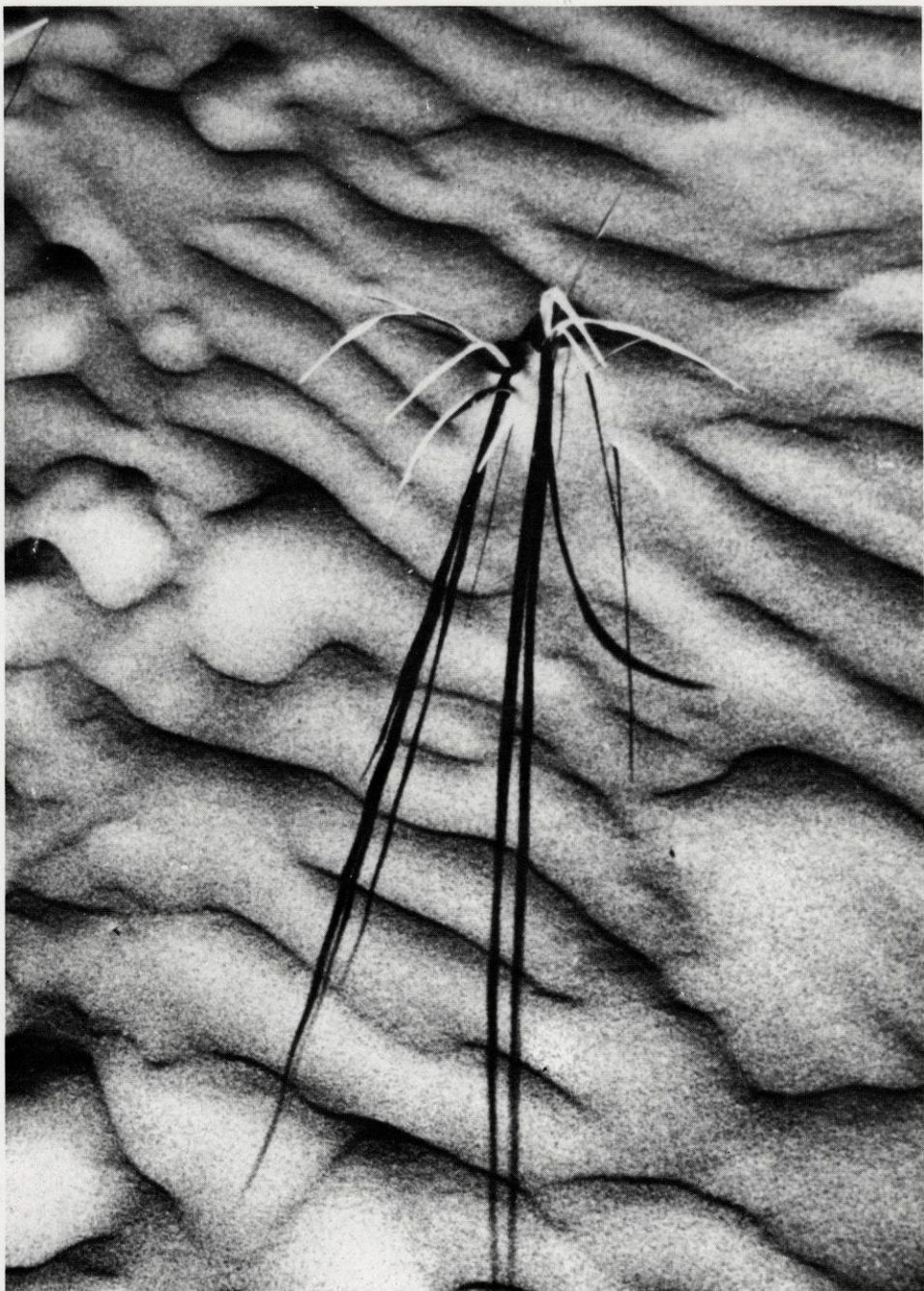
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*Windy Hill Review*

1117

# THE WINDY HILL REVIEW

UW-WAUKESHA  
1987



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Our thanks to all the contributors for making the 1987 Windy Hill such a fine issue.

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A special thanks to Lynn Paque for her help in coordinating printing.

## Bus Rides

on the school bus  
home in between Kuchenbeckers  
and Delongs lay an old car  
down in a deep ravine  
only visible  
in late fall  
and early spring  
when it wasn't hidden by  
undergrowth and under  
snow someone's older brother  
said it was a chevy to us kids  
it was bonnie & clyde's  
getaway car the broken  
windows shot out by the posse's  
bullets by the time we hit  
45 the bus had turned into  
a supercharged tank filled  
with twenty of the worlds  
most dangerous criminals  
we had'em all dillinger  
capone bonnie and clyde  
baby face badenov  
and whiplash  
with ten screaming sisters  
as hostages pencils became gats  
rulers tommy guns crayons into  
sticks of dynamite thrown  
out the window at the posse  
disguised as two old ladies  
in a lincoln continental  
at every stop each villain would  
make a break for his hideout  
followed by a snickering sister

Geo



## 2nd Floor Shenanigans

The baby sitter sleeps on the war-torn couch  
While late night monsters flicker in the dark.  
Upstairs, flannel jammy imps scurry to the bathroom  
Flannel jammy imps, crew cut, missing baby teeth  
Vandal brothers, partners in crime.

They stop the sink with a green washcloth  
Open the faucets, so the water runs full bore.  
"We'll go skating," says imp one  
Pouring a glassful on the tiled floor.  
"This'll be a lot of fun," says imp two  
Flashing a mischevious grin.

Standing water on the bathroom floor  
Hallway carpet flooded soggy beyond the corner  
All the way to the stairs.  
Flannel jammy imps skate, dive and slide like otters  
Whoosh on a homemade water ride.  
Crew cut goblins frolic at an upstairs carnival  
Until a calliope cry wakes the sleeping sitter.  
She catches a freckle faced vandal sliding on his  
Stomach down the stairs.  
She wonders why the stairs are damp.  
Snickering imps each take a high school hand  
And pull the sitter upstairs with anxious pride.  
"Ain't it neat, Judy?  
It's our own ho-made water slide."

The sitter takes off her glasses and cries.  
Frustrated tears fall into the standing water.

Kevin Harrington



## Chemistry

Chemistry set sounded cool  
to me at nine-years old  
but enthusiasm faded  
when nothing blew up  
To protect her investment  
Mom combed the instructions  
for something to catalyze  
my interest

"Here Scott, let me show you  
how to make a stink bomb"  
she said, impish delight  
in her eyes  
Two measures of sulphur  
and a piece of paraffin  
the size of a pea  
in a test tube  
heated over an alcohol flame

My father was furious  
when rotten-egg fart gas  
filled the basement  
and covered the smell  
of the yellow paint  
he was laying  
on concrete block walls

Through uncontrollable tears  
of laughter  
Mom told me  
to never try that experiment  
in the house again

It worked as well  
out in the garage  
and I wowed my friends  
for a few weeks  
until I forgot  
about science  
to be a kid again

One warm August Friday night  
Mom was inspired  
She planned all day  
to have fish fry  
and close the bar  
at the Coachlight Inn  
Dad was tired  
from a long week  
at the Post Office

Dad told Mom  
to make spaghetti  
and he was in bed  
by eight o'clock

By nine Mom knew  
that the television  
wouldn't satisfy her  
She asked me to get her  
some sulphur and wax  
a test tube and some clamps  
and my alcohol lamp  
"Your dad always farts  
in the bed"  
she said  
"and now its my turn  
to get him back"

We went outside  
to the corner of the house  
and with the smoke of her cigarette  
she tested her bedroom windows  
to find which one  
the air was blowing in  
We lit the lamp  
and soon the fumes  
spewed forth from the test tube

Dad burst through the front door  
and leaped around the front yard  
in his underwear  
shaking his finger  
swearing in Dutch

R. Scott deSnoo



## Elevator Bugs

I watch them bob,  
never seeming to tire;  
from the glass's bottom,  
to water's top.

The boys would trek  
to the stream  
to capture them,  
bring them back alive,  
release them in a glass.  
They'd ride up and down,  
spinning and reeling;  
like a yo-yo  
on untwistable string.

It was not until  
I was twenty-one  
I learned these bugs  
that had held me  
for so many years,  
were simply raisins  
in my mother's 7-UP.

Kathy Held



## Bridges

"Whazzat?"

Helen looked up from stirring. The large wooden spoon stood upright in the thick gray mass. "What do you think it is? It's a cake." Helen's glasses slipped into the grooves on her nose, and she looked at the ragged old bag lady crouching down in front of her. She went back to stirring. Maybe if she ignored the woman.

"Well, you ain't going to take no prize with that one. Could pave walks with it." The woman reached over and grabbed the empty bag. "Medusa. Medusa, Portland Cement. Either you're putting me on, or you've been shopping in the wrong stores, lady."

Helen's flower-print cotton shift pulled taut over her breasts as she laughed despite her intentions to ignore the woman. Fingers automatically reached up to be sure the buttons stayed closed. The woman fussed about, arranging wads of newspaper for a seat. Helen leaned against the rusted-iron bridge railing. The canvas x-frame stool creaked beneath her shifting weight. She kept her face carefully averted. Still hoping.

"You're in my spot."

"Pardon?"

"You're in my spot," the woman repeated. Everybody who belongs here knows this is my spot."

"Sorry," Helen replied. "But I won't be long."

"Yeah, well that's all right. You seem a nice enough sort, even if you are a lousy cook. Everybody hereabouts calls me Meg. Ain't my name but it serves." Meg proceeded to peel off layers of clothing. Starting with a rain and shine coat, whose shine was mostly over the seat, she worked her way down to a filmy nylon jacket that was more wind-sieve than breaker. Next, a sweater that closely resembled a sweater Helen had given her daughter one long ago Christmas. The ingrate. Judging by the bulges, Helen guessed there were multiple layers yet to unfold and by the odor coming from the clothing, several layers of grime just as thick.

Helen went back to stirring the gray substance until it was free of lumps like a good cake batter. Two plastic bags were removed and placed over each of her support-hosed feet. Meg's beak-thin nose was poking into Helen's still opened, black leather handbag. Helen snapped the metal clasp shut in the woman's face.

"Hum." Meg smiled and turned to rummage in her own paper shopping bag. She came out with a pair of gloves. The once-bright red gloves had dappled and faded with age to the color of an autumn wine-sap. The gloves had been cut so that the tip of each finger was exposed. Helen had seen that done before, but Meg had left the glove tips hanging by a few threads so they jutted at odd angles from the fingers, each hand acquiring an additional five phantom digits. She

wagged a double digit pointer in Helen's face. "My invention. Get cold . . ." She popped the glove tip over her finger, "and there ya are, warm again. But ya need to pick something up, like a dime--dimes are nice. Small and thin. People lose them all the time. Might not seem like much, but they mount up quick--anyway, ya need to pick up a dime," she flipped the glove tip off, "and there ya got it."

"You know that's really quite clever," Helen admitted.

"What'll they do?" Meg asked.

"Pardon?"

"The plastic bags. What'll they do?"

"Keep the cement from burning my feet. Or at least that's what the salesman said. Told me to be careful of skin burns when working with cement because of the lime." And she plunged both plastic wrapped feet into the center of the shallow pan of cement. "Aaah." The sigh oozed from her like the cold cement over her feet. Both women watched in silence.

Meg nodded thoughtfully as the cement settled over the tops of Helen's feet. Then sifting about once more in her bag, she pulled out a plastic fork with a broken handle. She drew the tines through straying gray wisps of shoulder length hair then secured it with the fork like a hair comb. It brought to Helen's mind the set of tortoise shell combs at home. They'd been a gift from her husband, Hank.

"Ain't you going to clean it off?" Meg asked.

"Clean what?"

"The spoon. Seems like a nice solid wood cooking spoon."

"Yes," Helen mused, "it is. Served me well during some forty-odd years in my kitchen."

"Well, then don't you think it's kind of a shame to let it get all concreted up?"

Helen shrugged. "I won't be needing it anymore."

"No?" Meg snatched the spoon up. "Then ya won't mind if I clean it up to keep." She plunged it into the bucket of water Helen had hauled out onto the bridge to mix the cement. The spoon was cleaned and stashed in the shopping bag before Helen had a chance to say no.

They sat in silence for close to an hour by Helen's reckoning. At first she was mildly peeved that the woman insisted on remaining there with her, as if this weren't a hard enough thing to do. And then it began to wear on her that the woman didn't even have the wits about her to be curious. By the end of the hour Helen was outraged that the woman could be so uncaring about another human being. She simply could not believe this woman.

"I don't believe you," Helen said, doing her best to look down



on the miserable creature from her sitting position on the stool. "Don't you even wonder what I'm doing? Don't you think a person putting her feet in concrete is just a bit strange?"

Meg's face split open in a smile, showing strong, even teeth and her laughter was like the sound of litter blowing over the bridge road between the bursts of engine noise. "I seen stranger. Like the time Len paraded across the bridge in his sister's clothes. Her a short ninety pounds and him going well over two hundred. Now that was strange." Meg crossed her legs straight out in front of her. "I may not look real sharp, but I sure ain't no dummy. I figure you go through all the work of hauling a forty-pound bag of cement and bucket of water out on a bridge, you ain't planning to make footprints in concrete for your grandchildren. And face it, when a person sets to paving her feet in a tupperware bowl on a bridge--near the only opening in a quarter mile of railing--it starts a person to thinking she's not just passing through."

Helen flushed, dappled and red as Meg's gloves that flew into Helen's face to emphasize each point made. Of course, it was obvious. It was one of the reasons why she'd chosen this bridge. She'd thought with all the bums and crazies here, one more crazy woman wouldn't draw attention from the police. She hadn't taken the locals into account.

". . . shoes."

"I'm sorry. I guess I'm just a bit distracted today. What about shoes?"

"I said," Meg repeated, "nice shoes. Seems a real shame to just leave them here. Guess you ain't going to need them, huh? Real waste if they got accidentally knocked into the river and sank to the bottom where no one could use them . . ."

"You want my shoes," Helen stated as she watched Meg stroking the genuine leather Red Cross shoes painfully pre-broken in by Helen for bunions. "Take them."

Meg's hi-top tennis shoes were already half off her feet. For the first time, Helen noticed Meg's left shoe grinning largely with its flopping sole, the right shoe duct-taped into a grimace. The old shoes were fed to the ever-hungry shopping bag. Meg then removed several layers of socks, turning each inside out as she did so, and laid them in a straight row. "Do this and ya'll never have foot trouble again." Remembering suddenly, Meg slapped Helen heartily on a leg. "Not that that'll concern you anymore, hey?" She laughed short, sharp blasts like exhaust backfire, while carefully picking the lint from between each toe, then wiping them clean with the innermost sock. Reversing the procedure, she re-layered her feet with socks--grays once white, blacks once brown, browns soon to be black, and one canary yellow. "I rotate them once a week," she added, as her feet were socked

and then sausage into the new shoes.

Helen's hands flew to her breast buttons again. "No!" She said as Meg eyed the flower-print shift. "I'm going clothed."

"Yeah. I suppose ya should." Though she didn't sound convinced.

Helen removed her glasses. "But you can have these. Never know when a good pair of glasses will come in handy."

"Genuine rhinestones?" Meg fingered the sparkling polished bits in the pointed corners of the pink plastic frames. Helen nodded and watched the glasses disappear into the depths of the shopping bag. She leaned back, feeling good.

Meg seemed to be feeling good too and lifted her face to the sunlight that eased the street-map of cracks on her face until Helen began to believe Meg was not so much aged as weathered. As if the heat and cold had raised and sunk whole portions of her face like the city streets. Helen wondered what moved a person to such a life.

"It ain't easy."

Startled, Helen tilted dangerously on her stool. She grabbed Meg with flailing arms, her feet helplessly anchored.

"Ya can't have 'em back!" Meg fought her off, and Helen latched onto a rail to haul herself back to safer seating.

"I don't want anything back. I just lost my balance."

Meg arched a shaggy eyebrow, and with measured dignity, re-fastened the fork-haircomb which had shaken loose in the tussle. She nodded somberly, but kept a winesap hand locked about the bag--ready to bolt if necessary.

"It was just what you said before . . ."

"Huh? It ain't easy? Well, I don't think it is. Drowning always seemed a tough way to go, to my way of thinking."

Helen relaxed. "Oh, that. Yes, well I suppose it must. It just seemed the best way. Seems as though all my life I've done things the wrong way. So I've thought this out pretty carefully. I've heard of too many suicides getting rescued. I figured there's no way, once I jump, that I can be rescued."

"Always heard people who jump from buildings lose consciousness on the way down, so they never know what hit 'em. But then I read this story about a guy who jumped from an airplane and lived. Said he was conscious right up til the time he hit the ground. His body went like this . . ." Meg's hands telescoped in on each other, her gloves suddenly looking blood red. She looked away, her eyes avoiding Helen's.

"Yes." Helen nodded slowly. "I had a friend who tried to do it in a car in her garage. She got rescued too late--or too soon. Brain damaged."

"Hey, that's like Jose down on Fifth, right next to the main and fifth vent. Put a gun to his head. The bullet went clear through, took his smarts but left him. Some people say he used to be real normal."



"Well, I certainly don't want that happening to me." Helen shook her head.

Meg shifted uncomfortably. "How's that cement coming?"

"Can't move my feet so well anymore. Doesn't take very long, does it?"

"Guess that's why they call it quick-drying. Nice shallow bowl."

"Yes. I planned that too," Helen said with a note of pride in her voice.

Meg looked away again. "Hungry? Got some food here somewheres." Out of the bag came a heel of French bread, one half-eaten apple, and a prune Danish old enough to be squashed yet not lose the prunes.

"Thanks. But I'm fine. Had a nice big breakfast." Meg wasn't in the least offended by the refusal. The French bread snapped under her strong, straight teeth, and having taken two more bites out of the apple she placed the remainder in the bag. The prune Danish she devoured.

"Did ya leave a note? Always liked that part best. You know, the kind that says . . . 'Why'd ya leave me, ya bum?'"

"No. Been thinking about that too. Seems to me, its been my choices all along.

Meg leaned lightly against Helen. Helen thought she saw a flicker in Meg's eye. A look of, "Yes, I know you." Strange, Helen thought, Meg didn't seem to stink anymore, or maybe it just didn't matter so much. Helen felt a certain familiarity with Meg, a genuine fondness. It had been a long time since she'd felt that for another person. But the bag-lady could be disconcerting. Even without her glasses, Helen could see Meg was searching her face, as though looking for some small crack to enter. Meg's next words took Helen by surprise.

"How about slitting your wrists? That's a pretty good way I hear."

"Oh, no. I couldn't do that." Helen's face wrinkled, annoyed with Meg for asking and annoyed with herself for being unable to admit that it was the many years of housekeeping that made the thought of leaving such a mess behind abhorrent to her. "No. This is the best way. I'm sure of it. For once, I've done something absolutely right." Helen's jaw was set. It was her bulldog look, or so Hank had been fond of saying.

"Still think ya ought to leave a note. To your children, maybe?"

"She probably couldn't find the time to read it, even if I left one."

"A daughter, hum?" Meg drew her legs up and wrapped her arms around them in an almost forgotten gesture of youth. "Pretty?"

Helen nodded, then tilting her head to the side, considered the question again. "No. Not pretty. Handsome. A handsome woman. She has some pretty children though."

In a voice dark as the river rushing beneath the bridge, Meg spoke. "My boy was a pretty child. Pretty."

"You've a son?"

Meg shook her head mutely. After a moment her eyes swung back out over the river. "Dead." She cleared her throat. "He . . . died," her wrinkles becoming crevasses, "when he was real little. Got sick and died."

Helen touched Meg's shoulder, feeling the terrible thinness beneath the bulges of clothing. "It must have been awful for you and your husband."

"Yeah. Well, I didn't hang around much after that. I just sorta went my own way. Knew it wouldn't work anymore. Just knew it. Didn't seem to be any point. So I just left. Ya make your choices, right?"

"Right," Helen answered quietly.

"So ya got a daughter. Come on," Meg's voice took on its familiar rasp, "let's write her a good note. Hey, we'll do it in concrete. Got a stick?"

"I don't think--"

"I must have something here we could use." She dove into her bag, and out flew the old hi-top tennies, the apple rolled out after them. She stuck the apple in her mouth to keep it safe while freeing her hands to scavenge. "Humphf . . . Yah, knew I hash shomething," her words slushed over the apple. She took a good bite and dropped it back into the bag with the tennies. "Here we go." She waved one half of a pair of chopsticks grandly in Helen's face. "Just what we need."

"I really don't think--"

"Damn!" Meg swore. "It's hard already."

Helen looked down in surprise, knocked on the concrete tentatively and felt a sudden shiver run down her body.

"Looks like you're ready."

"Maybe just awhile--"

Meg glanced up at the sun. "Good time of day, too. Another half hour or so and the cops'll be doing their rounds. Ya make your choices, right?" Meg's voice was gruff as she stood up slowly and stretched her stiff legs. "Here, I'll help ya." She hauled at Helen's arms.

Helen was amazed at the small woman's strength. But she was soon on her feet and swaying in the breeze like the Bobo doll her daughter had loved to bash in the face as a child. "Whoah! Oh, my!" Helen grasped the railing. "I don't think I can do this after all," she said her voice wavering.

"Change your mind?" Meg asked, peering up at Helen, who stood a good six inches higher and rocking on a rounded tupperware and concrete base. Meg started laughing. "Sorry, you look like one of those toys--"



"Yes, I'm sure I do. And no, I have not changed my mind . . . I just don't think I'll be able to get over to the opening. Maybe I should sit down."

"Nah. Ya got half the battle licked. Here, I'll help ya." She gave Helen a gentle push. Helen tilted forward, her feet staying anchored. "Maybe ya better sit down. We could drag ya over there."

"Drag me?" Helen's voice rose shrilly. "I will not be dragged to my end. I'll just have to call it off."

Meg helped her down onto the stool. "Ya got a buck?"

"I suppose so," Helen answered, feeling an overwhelming relief at being seated again. The water sounded loud and heavy beneath her. Her chest ached a bit.

"Good. We'll get old Vern to help us out. He'll roll ya off for a buck." And she was scrambling across the bridge, gesturing widely to a man stretched out on the walk across from them. Before Helen could get her wits about her, they were back.

"This here's Vern."

"Where's the buck?" Vern asked, his breath fruity with wine.

"Wait--wait, I--"

Meg turned on the surly man, small but formidable. "Ya get it when ya finish helping. We got to carry her over to the opening."

"Carry her?" Then for the first time he seemed to notice Helen's feet.

"By God!" He squatted down in front of her, rapped on the concrete bowl around her feet. "Will ya look what she's done. Har, har, har--" his laughter broke into a chain of choking coughs.

Helen pulled herself as straight on the stool as she could.

"Pay no mind to him," Meg soothed, patting Helen's shoulder.

Vern was doubled over, sputtering with coughs and laughs and rapping on the large concrete bowl again, as though the bruise of concrete on knuckles made it real.

"All right. That's enough now." Meg pushed Vern clear of Helen's paved feet. "Ya want that buck, ya help us. You grab the feet." Vern looked to protest, but Meg's scowl shut him up.

Helen was having a hard time hearing the talk with the hammering pulse in her ears, or was it the thrashing of water below? She felt her skin go slick with cold. We make our own choices, right?

Vern dropped her concreted feet with a grunt. The thud bounded through Helen's body. "Careful, Vern, ya'll hurt her."

"And droppin' her off a bridge won't? Har, har, har . . ." Vern fell to coughing and laughing again, but he moved up behind Helen and, laying her flat, started rolling her down the walk.

Helen flung out both hands. "Stop!" She reached down to pull the flower-print cotton shift back down about her knees from around her hips. "Lord! Oh, Lord!" Vern started rolling her again. He had her at the

opening and then stopped. Meg helped her to sit up.

"See. Nothing to it."

Meg's face floated before Helen, as though she were already submerged. Helen's arm flung out and locked firmly about the guard rail. We make our own choices, she thought. It suddenly occurred to her that Meg had made a similar choice and had jumped into her own dark river long ago. And, as though Meg read her thoughts, she just smiled that "I-know-you" smile and nodded slowly, then paid Vern the dollar out of Helen's bag.

"Well, what ya hanging around for?" Meg asked him.

"I want ta watch." He grinned largely at Helen. "Make a hell of a splash. Har, har, har . . ."

"Go on. Git, before I take that dollar back, and ya know I can do it too!" Meg shook a gloved fist in his face.

Vern backed off. "Yeah, well why don't you plant your feet next to hers, you old bag?" Helen could hear bits and snatches of his griping as he left, "Dumb broad . . . cemented . . . dry this year . . . dumb . . ."

Helen sighed, her shoulders slumping hard against the railing's end.

"Made your choice, huh?" Meg asked and sat down, swinging her feet out over the edge.

Helen nodded, afraid to try speaking yet. The water sounded thunderous in her head. But after some odd minutes in silence together, watching the rough water rolling beneath them, Helen spoke, "Thanks, Meg."

Meg spat out over the edge and watched it disappear in the dusky water below. "Didn't do nothing. You're the one made the choice. Made the right one too. Been a dry year, though. Didn't know how to tell ya, but the river's only about three-feet deep down there."

Helen started laughing, then wept softly. "Oh Lord. I still can't do anything right."

Meg patted Helen's scraped knee and pulled the shift modestly back over her thigh. "Ya got a quarter, Lady?"

"Yes. Sure. In my purse."

"Well, I'll go call the fire department for ya . . ." Meg walked back to her shopping bag. "Suppose ya'll be wanting your shoes and glasses back, huh?"

Helen smiled and felt a fullness moving in her. "No. I think it's time for new shoes and glasses."

"Yup." Meg agreed happily. "Good time for new shoes and glasses." She picked up the paper bag and turned once more to Helen, her face washed young by the late afternoon light. "You're wrong, ya know. Ya picked the right bridge." And she walked away, bag swinging in her hand.



## In the Dying Grass Moon

In the dying grass moon  
our ancestors we grind.  
Inside this circle of yellowed  
blades and pine, the shadow of a tepee  
stands here this morning. Above the conicle tree  
looms wind pines and  
the songs of Sitting Bull--soon.

In the dying grass moon,  
we hear what sounds like  
the crying loon. It is only a man  
who sucks on legends that are dry  
as corn husks, and they fall from his mouth like  
kernals of teeth.  
He tells me:

I-ki-ci-ze wa-on  
kon he wa-na  
he-na-la  
ye-lo  
he i-yo-ti-ye ki-ya wa-on

In the dying grass moon,  
the final crescent,  
suns become insolent. The past and dearth  
of hyacinth, human, rotted loon  
are one calloused earth.  
Spirits with gapping mouths, green veins  
sing from the gruel of grains.

In the dying grass moon  
from the concrete my grandfathers poured  
for this house,  
from the white chalk of bonemeal,  
a crescent cracks--  
unraveling from a cocoon--  
a tree reels.

In the dying grass moon  
I cull up an arrowhead  
from the upturned earth.  
It is as sharp as a dead blade  
of grass or pine needle. This will be a souvenir  
to prove that circles and moons  
were here.

Glen M. Blenkush



from: **From August 13 to October 12**

So while I wait I place this moment here  
It turns I find out once again second hand of him  
And the second hand of my mother made a scent  
Lighting a cigarette and looking quite young  
Still in love with his cheezy remains  
While I was far inside reading fuel and fire  
And guiding a scent as a cell smirk within her grinning

The libido: my mother's arches rug burned from being on top  
My mother moaning  
Like the even better buzz of shivers  
Pent up and temporal  
Sax in the wings off slippery fingers  
Long and drawn for the molding into command bundles  
Built till the bottle tips  
Another lung fellow traveller of tipping lore  
Slippery nimble  
Built in fine fettle  
Enough for total focal rising

My father the layman muted bloom  
Out of Harvard fresh  
That the rest were all of another very young and aged side  
And sighted after Walter and Willie and Peter, Nate and Roger

We must find father now  
We must find a pedigree  
We must go even further now

Sighted after Walter and Willie and Peter, Nate and Roger--  
One to take care of the nubs and edges  
One centered for another shuffle  
Another one is a driller and a fairy  
One right proud in civvies and beer proud as well at it  
Left one sorts spaces for the city  
This forsaken place is full of gods

Wish I was Catholic or Jewish like  
Damn'd Walter and Willie or (Bishop, Casey, Horace) Peter,  
Nate and Roger  
Damn you all won't you tell the truth because there are so  
many liars?  
Damn I'm suspended in check with no tube to stuff  
No teet to suck  
Not a liberation literally  
Must reach to get rich  
Not a dime through education  
Only sight in stacked imagination  
And is not life the eye of me  
What wanders forward helping free?

Scott Zieher



## Tight Shoes

Olaf Bjorn jounced down the gangplank grinning widely. America at last. The crossing from Sweden had been long, but he had finally arrived. The broad shouldered, blue-eyed blond took a deep cleansing breath of New York. Pungent scents of dead fish and debris assailed his nostrils, before wracking his lungs, setting off convulsive coughs.

He fell into step with Cal Summers, an American who had befriended him on board. "Do America all smell such bad?"

"Nope, just around the docks. Can't judge a book by its cover, you know?"

"What book, Cal?"

"Never mind. Where are you headed?"

Olaf reached upwards to feel his head when Cal corrected himself, "I mean where are you going? You know, a place to crash . . . ah, stay?"

Understanding replaced the look of confusion on Olaf's face.

"Ya! I have place to stay. It is Brooklyn. You tell me how to go, Cal?"

"Come on, I'll give you a hand." Olaf reached for Cal's hand, which was not uncommon in his native land. Cal jerked his hand from Olaf's light grip. "For Chrissakes, I ain't no fairy. Just keep your Goddamn hands off men in this city or you'll find yourself getting decked."

Olaf had a hurt look on his face from Cal's harsh speech. Cal felt his anger ebb like the tide. "Listen, just follow me. Put your best foot forward and give it a shot. Just think about things before you do them and you'll get along just fine."

Olaf stood there debating. He certainly had no intention of further angering Cal. He needed his help to reach his destination.

Cal had walked several feet towards the customs building when he noticed that Olaf was not behind him. Turning, he saw the Swede staring intently at first one foot and then the other. "Now what the hell are you doing? I haven't got the rest of my life to see you through customs. Move it!"

"Move what, Cal?" His eyes moved quickly over the ground.

"Step on it! Let's go!"

"Step on what, Cal?"

Cal strode back and grabbed onto Olaf's hand, dragging him towards the building.

"I do not understand, Cal. Do not give hand, give hand, put good foot first, move it, step on it. I am, how do you say, mixed up."

"Oh, did that just dawn on you?"

"No, no. I been up long time. Before sun come up."

Cal rolled his eyes and shook his head, "Look, I know you want to get to Brooklyn. When we get through immigration I'll see about a hack for you."

"Hack? Like China?"

"Yeah, Pal, New York is filled with all kinds. Chinamen, Nips, Wops . . . and dumb Swedes," Cal muttered.

Cal guided Olaf through the turnstiles and literally pointed him towards immigration. "I go that way because I am an American. You have to go through those doors." Jesus, I sound like I'm talking to a kid, he thought. "I'll wait out front in the lobby for you, OK?"

Olaf pumped Cal's hand effusively. That jovial look that turned up his mouth, raised his cheekbones, and crinkled his eyes made Cal feel guilty. What the hell, maybe they could share a cab, Cal thought.

"Ya, Cal. Tank you. I be there."

Cal made a phone call while waiting for Olaf. He kept muttering things to himself like, "the stupid idiot will be taken for a ride," and, "New York will eat him alive," and, "They eat guys like him for breakfast and spit em out by noon," and, "Why did he latch on to me aboard ship?"

"Jammer--Cal--Yeah, I'm back and through customs--No problems--thought I had a tail, but I lost him in Copenhagen--Right, see you later--I'll call again."

Cal was working on his fifth cigarette when Olaf, all rosey cheeked and smiles walked towards him.

"America! Goot country, ya?"

"Yeah, let's go. Listen, we may as well share a cab uptown. We're both going to the same area. I didn't claim my luggage--thought I'd wait for you."

Cal had grabbed a large suitcase and a knapsack. "Say, Olaf, could you carry that tan gym-bag for me?"

"Ya, sure. That all?"

"That's all, let's hit it."

"Hit what, Cal?"

"It means go. Geez, Pal, you're gonna have to pick up the lingo if you plan to get by."



"Be glad--which is lingo? You have more cases?"

Cal rolled his eyes heavenward. "Man, you're hopeless. This way." He jerked his head towards the door.

"How about a drink, Olaf. You still haven't given me the exact address you're trying to get to. Maybe you should give your friend a ring."

"Ya, a ring. I tell you on boat. We marry soon."

"I meant, that you should telephone her. Let her know you're in town."

"That is goot idea. I like drink too."

The cabbie dropped them uptown and Cal led the way to a tavern called Freddie's on Fifth. The place was jammed with people. Olaf stopped just inside the door. He tried to take everything in at once, but his gaping mouth caused heads to turn in his direction. Cal was moving through the people searching for a table in the rear, nodding acknowledgements to familiar faces. He found a corner booth along the back wall. He glanced over his shoulder as he pushed his luggage under the table, shoving the small tan bag snugly against the wall. The hell with the nerd. Let him find his own way. I've had enough babysitting for the asshole. Sucker looked like an owl the way his head kept swiveling in the cab, Cal thought, as he sauntered toward the bar.

Olaf still stood rooted to the spot. Rich mahogany gleamed, framing the huge bar. Brass rails and ornaments sparked in reflection of the soft globe lights. Frost etched mirrors complemented the walls and bounced pictures of crystal glasses suspended from the ceiling. The entire scene looked like an interior designer had deposited colorful patrons all around to enhance the beauty of the room.

"That's quite a fly-trap, my Man."

Olaf swiveled about and felt the front of his jeans. Everything seemed to be in order. He turned to question the man who had spoken to him, but he had vanished into the crowd. He had watched Cal make his way to a back table and did the same. After checking on the luggage, he turned towards the bar.

"Where is telephone, Cal?"

"Down the hallway, next to the cans." Cal signalled with his head, never taking his eyes off the breasts of the woman he had been talking to.

"How much you want to bet he looks for a stack of cans back there?" said Cal. The woman laughed as if it were the funniest thing she had ever heard.

Cal walked down the hall a few minutes later to use the phone.

"Ya--I am at Brooklyn. You come for me--here? I ask my friend Cal--where is this place, Cal?" Before Olaf could stop him, Cal snatched the phone from his hand.

"Yeah, this is Cal. Olaf has told me all about you, Honey. I've been helping him out since we met on the ship--are you there, hello--Oh, okay--We're at a place called Freddie's on Fifth--You know the place--Good, sure--See you in a little while--here's Olaf."

Olaf spoke rapidly in Swedish and Cal turned to the other phone. "Jammer--Cal . . . " He turned to the Swede with a look that conveyed his thoughts. Olaf moved away. The men's room was next to the telephone that Cal was using and Olaf moved through the door, leaving it open a crack. He leaned against the wall listening to Cal's conversation.

"I'm at Freddie's--Meet me here with the cash and don't forget to put it in the identical tan bag--Yeah, an hour."

Olaf was washing his hands when Cal came in. "Yessir, Olaf, I'm going to be rolling in the dough real soon."

"You get job and make bread. Goot job, Cal. We bake bread on farm."

Cal laughed. How could anyone be so dense? Well, he thought, I'll be rid of his company soon. "Come on, we came for a drink. Let me buy you a toddie."

"No, tank you. I drink beer."

"Okay, Pal, I'll buy you a Heineken. How does that sound?"

"Ya, Heineken is goot beer."

Cal amused himself for the next hour introducing Olaf to people. Olaf struggled with the American slang to everyone's amusement. In particular one woman said, "Boy, if you don't sound like you just stepped off the boat, I don't know who does."

Olaf responded with enthusiasm. "Ya, zat is what I do today. Get off boat in America. You are smart lady. Pretty too." The group howled while Olaf smiled and nodded.

Cal excused himself, "Got some business to attend to," and made his way to a table.



Olaf spotted the man with the tan leather gym-bag making his way to Cal. He made eye contact with several people scattered about the room, nodding imperceptively, and slid off the bar stool. Four other people converged in the same direction without drawing attention. Olaf slid into the booth, pushing Cal over at the same time that an attractive black woman did the same to the man across the table.

"Beat it, Olaf," said Cal. He gave the woman a derisive look.

"Ya, I like beating it."

"I'm not talking about your dick. Now, get the hell away from here. I have something going down here and I need privacy."

"I've got something 'going down' too, Cal. It's called beating it. Drugs, that is. You know that American saying, up the creek without a paddle? This gun pointed at your 'dick' says that you're going up the creek, no, make that river."

"What the f---! Where's your accent? What are you talking about?"

The woman sitting across the table jabbed her gun into the stranger's ribs. She pulled out her wallet and flipped it open to expose her badge. "You're both under arrest for possession of narcotics with intent to deliver. You have the right . . ."

"You Goddamned bastard! You let me think you were such a dope. How do you fit into all this?"

Olaf revealed his badge and said, "NYPD Detective, Narcotics Division. My partner and I trailed you from New York to Stockholm, but you made him on the return through Copenhagen. I took over from there. We already busted your contact in Stockholm. The Swedish authorities express their appreciation to you. That little delay in immigration convinced you that I was the real McCoy, and it gave us enough time for the dogs to ID your luggage. We weren't positive until you asked me to pick up that piece in claims. Pretty clever of you to ship it through under another name."

"Shit, you really had me snowed."

"Ya, you look like the yokel now. How does the shoe feel on the other foot?" Olaf pulled his tennies off his feet saying, "Ahh, it'll sure be great to have mine on the right ones."

Sue Spiering

## The Literary Bartender's Guide

White wine goes with fish and myths  
of Venus and Adonis;  
Red wine goes with beef or pork  
while reading Gothic horror.

Sherry goes with salted nuts  
and stuffy English novels;  
While brandy in a snifter goes  
with mystery and suspense.

Scotch straight-up is needed for  
historic family sagas;  
Bathtub gin goes well with sin  
in modern autobiographies.

Margaritas rimmed with salt  
taste best with western adventures;  
But fantasy and sci-fi  
need a kick from pale champagne.

Romance requires saccharine sweets,  
pink ladies and mint juleps;  
But racy stuff needs something  
hot like spicy Bloody Marys.

While Aesop's fables, fairy tales,  
require ice cream fizzies;  
Beer goes well with anything--  
poems just need water.

Mona Dalsin



## Night Vision

At night my eyes leave me,  
roll out to explore a whole new world.  
They're always back when I wake  
and they always leave their trails.  
"Sleep seeds" we call them  
the sand man was here.  
I know what it's really all about.

Sometimes I'll have memories  
and not know where they're from  
*Deja' vu* we call it  
needing to give it a name.  
Memories of crevices much too small  
rooms I've never entered.  
Points of view I've never seen, never will.  
(Don't fit behind a flower pot.)  
The time I lost an earring  
only to know for sure the next morning  
it was in the corner behind my desk.

Used to wonder how I'd know these things come the A.M.  
no need to ask that now.  
Days when things are "Not quite right"  
it takes but a moment to figure why.  
At these times I am aware that  
in their haste to return they've erred  
gone back to the wrong sockets.  
I know I need to catch a nap  
not out of drowsiness,  
but to give them a chance to right themselves.

I try to catch them  
but the little REM's know when I'll awaken  
they're back before I get a chance to peek.  
Kept a mirror beside my bed, wanted to catch them.  
Realized the futility of it all,  
they had me either way.  
How could I check to catch them out  
unless they were in?  
And if they were in to see that they were,  
how could I catch them out?

Kathy Held



## In the Kitchen

Dad anchored barber shop quartets  
In his three-packs-of-camels-a-day, whiskey bass.  
"Down by the old mill stream  
Where I first met you."  
"Skinamarinky dinky skinamarinky do  
Skinamarinky dinky dinky do oo oo."  
"By the light  
Of the silvery moon."

It was a place with a lot of standing  
At the sink, the stove, the counters  
At parties. I sat at the round table  
That wasn't truly round,  
One side cut off  
To fit against the wall,  
A dark marbled linoleum top  
With metal edges,  
Under which crumbs festered.  
Sat next to the toaster,  
And amidst the smoke and song,  
I'd stare into its shiny sides,  
Disheartened once again  
By the red hair and freckles I saw.  
I could sometimes turn the room  
Into a long corridor and all the people  
Were far away, even their voices.

Mornings, I savored spicy Taylor Pork Roll,  
Toast, butter melted in,  
And the box scores of the last place A's:  
Jimmy Finigan, Lou Limner, Spook Jacobs,  
Arnold Portocarrero, Marion Fricano,  
Joe DeMaestri, Gus Zernial, Elmer Valo,  
A lackluster, but beloved team,  
Soon to be gone from the city.

Afternoons, it was Tastykakes,  
And Mom watched through the jalousie windows  
As my friends and I played basketball  
In the driveway, occasionally losing the ball  
Out of bounds, into the tomatoes or flowers.

Evenings, after dinner,  
Simple things like meat loaf and fish sticks,  
Dad led the family in reciting the rosary,  
A much despised event.  
I mumbled most of the "Hail, Holy Queen"  
And panicked because I could never remember  
Which mysteries were on which days.

I was the last of the children to leave home  
And when I returned during semester breaks  
Or for vacations, the kitchen wasn't the same place.  
There was no singing. It was my father's refuge,  
Where he poured himself  
Gin after gin  
To blot out the beating he took at work.  
No apologies. His lack of fight,  
Misconstrued for gentleness,  
And the drinking were weaknesses,  
No disease, but they ate away at him like cancer,  
Till he could hardly walk or breathe,  
This man of words who scored  
Minus three in a Scrabble game  
And was reduced to a few fast ones before bed  
So he could sleep  
And, perhaps, not dream.

Steve Tighe



## Gary

In the morning in a picture near a headline

Hazy dots stiff unsmiling

a likeness unlike you

I didn't want to see you there

I knew I might

I hoped I wouldn't

You thought you'd never be there

so carefree and confident

potential with privilege

God, why did he spirit you out of college?

Your great friend

the rebel just because

"Let's kick around the country

like Woody and Dylan"

'cept times were a'changin'

They took you and left him to wander

His dream became your nightmare

uniform and all

He wandered back to college

You learned to fly

He studied history you made

I know he worried he felt guilty

when he studied stats

and you became one

I didn't keep that picture

it didn't fit the memory

of you in my mind alive

I used to picture him with you

laughing in that old car of yours

now I just picture you.

Linda Hurd

## Burning Leaves

At ten, I spend all Sunday afternoon  
raking the big lawn around Grandma and Grandpa's  
white frame farm house, oak leaves lined  
in long piles like Grandpa showed me,  
then dragged on a musty canvas  
back behind the barn.

In the house, Grandpa hands me  
a few wooden matches. I go out and light  
the pile and watch the flames.  
My clothes smell of leaf smoke  
and Grandpa comes out,  
says the lawn looks good.  
He lights his pipe,  
Prince Albert smoke curls up  
from the burnt bowl.  
I see his face soften as he watches the flames.

He smiles, and says come in  
after the pile burns down some,  
your Grandma has an apple pie ready,  
and the sound of the howl  
of the late November wind  
blows a chill through me  
as I stand alone in the dark  
and rake the embers in.



## *ERRATUM*

The name of Dennis Held,  
author of the poem  
"Burning Leaves," on page 33,  
was omitted due to editorial  
oversight. Our apologies.

## Blues Moon

Sometimes the blues  
just need to be played  
sitting on a stump  
the moon shuffles  
across the lake  
to my feet

Behind me the radio  
of a parked station wagon  
plays rock and roll  
too quietly  
to stop my song

Two long bent draws  
on the second reed  
six quick draws on the fourth  
up to the sixth  
back down the scale  
sustain a low wail  
radio falls silent  
and I know  
I'm not alone anymore

R. Scott deSnoo



## Bleaching Shirts

I fill the laundry tub with  
water and liquid bleach.  
The air is filled with the  
powerful smell of forgiveness.

Humbly, in go the white shirts,  
grey with living. The sins  
of the shirts will fade  
in the waters of Jordan.

My cat watches from the bank of  
the waters. His white is also grey  
with living, but bleach would not  
work on him. He is not a believer.

The white shirts are. In faith they  
will be cleansed of dirty cuffs and  
collars. Blessed are the pure, for  
they shall live another year.

I lift the shirts from their baptism  
and hang them to dry. They are the  
saved. Forgiveness drips from the  
shirt tails, forming puddles on the floor.

My cat keeps his distance. He runs from  
my reach. He smells bleach on my hands  
but sees they are no whiter than before.  
Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Mona Dalsin

My brother, Damon, lures with success,  
wealth and power his draw. Sensual  
subtlety, my asset, attracts not less  
but more, as my men, thinking me casual  
fall believing they've drawn me in.

No matter. Let them think what they may.  
With ecstasy greater than Damon's trappings  
the men I destroy do not lay the blame  
on me, but themselves, as they lie gasping  
never knowing it was I who broke them.

Damon, had he heart, would envy me.  
Though we're equals in destruction  
he knows our father has made men need  
my woman's ways, my lusty attention.  
He knows if he fails, they will fall to my passion.

Once fallen, my father will gather the souls  
of men we have conquered, my brother and I,  
with riches or fame, or, for me, their egos,  
and they'll find themselves in my father's domain,  
some cursing my brother, some calling my name.

Linda Hurd



## Untitled

When talking to her,  
he used his ideas like building blocks  
to construct a large and heavy foundation,  
and he walled it all together with  
the mortar of a rational mind.  
His words formed the rooms that kept them apart,  
but he placed a roof upon his beliefs,  
and he closed his oration.

Her thoughts, though, sped past him  
in an elliptical orbit,  
pausing to wonder at the motion of an atom,  
before encircling the orb of earth again.  
She found life's joy expressing itself in  
the rotation of this  
universal dance,  
but dared not speak of it  
to a surface-minded man.

Carol Perszyk

## america, land of the free

america  
land of the free  
    man  
land of the fathers  
land of equality  
    for all  
    men  
land of opportunity  
    for every  
    man

america  
home of the brave  
    men  
home of the wise  
    men  
home of the fathers  
home of the fighting  
    men  
home of the brotherhood  
    of all  
    men

america  
home of the learned  
    men  
home of the fathers  
home of the great  
    men  
home of the man  
    on the street  
home  
    of the man



america  
 land of the fathers  
 land of the rising  
     son  
 land of justice  
     for all  
         men  
 land where any  
     man  
         can aspire to be

Rose Czerwonka

## Pizzeria

Purse-lipped stone head on rigid neck  
protruding from expensive three-piece suit  
tired silent from arguing with three hundred  
pounds of well-dressed wife  
casts reproving glances across  
barely touched pizza  
as two well-behaved little girls  
silently squirm anxious to get away  
Waitress assaulted  
by tin voice

"Well, I guess we weren't as hungry  
as we thought. Can we have  
a doggy bag? We're just so busy,  
we never get out. He's working  
two jobs, and I'm working two jobs.  
These are our accidents.  
This was our first accident,  
and this was our second accident.  
And I was on birth control both times.  
I just don't know."

Eyes-front striding dad leads  
out to late Friday night  
followed by mom  
holding her breakfast  
and two little girls holding  
each other.

R. Scott deSnoo



## Her Child

Her child calls  
Entreats her to join him  
As a child  
In an under-table world  
To build the roads  
And bridges from blocks  
That meet where his blocks

Gap

To recover the pleasure  
Of random play,  
One instant  
Tumbling into the next  
When her instants

Gap

One child is not enough  
Beneath the flat of tabletop

As her life is flat  
Papers books thoughts

pushed  
about, piled and  
placed

Lined and level white  
Thin and flat

"Mom!"

She peaks beneath  
Smiles and sighs  
Eyes the mess he's made,  
Slides below

To be a child,  
Her child

Julie Dickson

## Paperwork

We can't do our job  
if you don't give us a problem.  
We can't give support  
unless you send in your request.

Typed, double spaced  
Proper margins  
*I just need a hug*

Wait to be processed  
hopefully they will get to you  
before the need goes too far.

Sitting on the cool blue tile  
of the bathroom floor  
she shatters her drinking glass.  
Then, bending her wrist properly forward  
makes the successful cut.

They shake their heads  
can't understand what has happened here.

Three days later her request  
is found buried  
in the paperwork.

Kathy Held



## Hike

Orchard spills over fence  
full apples pull branches down  
Deer path crosses creek  
grass pressed flat  
buck track pushed deep in mud  
shallow fawn prints

Soy bean field dull green  
heavy with seed  
Blue heron glides above fenceline  
turns and wheels one tight circle  
to marsh pothole nest  
Breeze rattles cattails

Low grey sky drops scattered drizzle  
Thick brush covers fieldstone piles  
Leopard frog leaps quick  
into wild grape vines

Tail of doe flicks white  
in neck-tall weeds  
One waist-high oak  
Queen Anne's lace puckered brown

Sumac presses out from fenceline  
Tan hawk glides over low  
Deer path winds through far fenceline

Rusty handsaw hammer nylon straps  
with wide steel buckles  
sap drips below iron pegs pounded into tree  
rope hangs down from a high branch  
foldup camouflage deer stand

The sound of a truck from a far-off highway

Dennis Held

## The Fourth of July

It was 1955  
she lay waiting  
for a sign

some message  
of her coming doom.

If she had known  
then what she  
would know in 1959,

maybe another road  
would she have taken,  
or maybe some  
other life would she

have chosen. Or maybe  
she never would have  
come this far

and would have  
taken the easy  
way out. But

this was 1955,  
and she did not  
know what

the wait  
would bring.

Nancy Schram



## Ambitions

I hold them in abeyance lest they roar  
And build my hopes of winging towards success.  
If I could feel but one side of the war  
Within my spirit, I'd sense failure less  
And loose my passions without fear of hurt.  
But deep depression taunts me from within  
Awaiting the right moment to exert  
Its power in a battle it can win.  
So I keep my feelings tightly guarded  
Against a close attachment to my dreams.  
Thus, I control the side of me that's lorded  
Complete destruction of my grandest schemes.  
I wonder, though, if I have been outdone.  
If I feel nothing, has the dark side won?

Linda Hurd

## To Youth

I've heard some say they really envy you  
Who must inherit this neglected site.  
I think we had it better than you do.

For all the gains, advantages are few.  
Yet, they insist your futures are so bright.  
I've heard some say they really envy you.

In making Things, we've left a residue,  
Destroying nature with industrious might.  
I think we had it better than you do.

Although we left Earth's balance all askew,  
In blindly reconstructing nature's sites,  
I've heard some say they really envy you.

You have it good in some ways, but a cruel  
Impending devastation darkens life,  
I think we had it better than you do.

The darkened skies and rivers we now view  
Were caused by generations without sight.  
I've heard some say they really envy you.  
I think we had it better than you do.

Linda Hurd



# Inverse Functions

*found poem*

Two functions  
Inverses of one another  
if each  
undoes  
what the other  
one does.

Sheri Race

## Milwaukee Domes

No Xanadu  
No Kubla Khan  
No sacred river  
And no, no, never,  
Though sometimes smokey enough,  
No opium induced dream.

Long maiered and breiered years  
Marched at, yielding  
Only meticulously measured movement.  
Official city decrees make  
No poetry.

Yet only the innermost circle  
Suffers such aridity.  
Dried up breweries notwithstanding,  
This is not a dry city.  
Off center, to the east,  
Enter a different world.  
In fertile humidity, life  
Rises to its highest form  
Or dances in many colored  
Orchidian glory  
Plays and sings and feasts  
Who would have thought  
To look here for such  
Sturdy and solid growth  
So contrary to the  
Established climate



To this west side in this  
City fond of symmetry  
A circus of special events blossoms  
Yes, parades, yes, two.  
Yes, weddings & dancing &  
And, yes, children  
Yes, ordinary, extraordinary  
Coleridgian, handicapped equipped  
And free in the early morning  
Source of art and poetry and fun.

Margaret Rozga

## Images

Little child in sepia,  
Nightgowned and barefooted.  
Eyes shining with fear.  
Was this the day your mother died?  
I did not know you then,  
But I know your eyes were blue.

Little boy torn in half,  
In knickers and old cap.  
Was this the winter you were farmed out?  
I did not know you then,  
But I know your hair was red.

Young man in khaki,  
Saluting in soldier's garb.  
Was this the war that brought such pain?  
I did not know you then,  
But I know your face was determined.

Grown man in black and white,  
Wide lapels and trouser pants.  
Was this the year you went in business?  
I did not know you then,  
But I know your mind was shrewd.

Middle-aged father, colored  
With you're bundle of joy.  
Was this the morning you brought me home?  
I do not remember you then,  
But I know your arms were strong.

Fish Jobs      Bouillabaisse

Lonely man in grey,  
With your head against the wall.  
Was this the Sunday mama died?  
I did not know you then,  
With your eyes far away.

Old man dying,  
Nightgowned and barefooted.  
Eyes shining with fear.  
Was this to be the end of life?  
You did not know me then,  
But I know your eyes were blue.

Mona Dalsin



## Bouffant Muleface

His long  
low slung  
jaw hung  
down under  
well oiled  
hair pile  
like a misplaced  
grudge

Dennis Held

## Fish Jobs

Northerns are ruthless, cold-blooded killers  
(I hear Mack the Knife was a big northern pike)

Alewives fill factories, go home and get loaded  
And die in a car wreck one Saturday night

Sturgeons are Old World, dinosaur royalty  
Deposed, they eat caviar and drink Earl Grey tea

Trout are the gamblers, high-rolling card counters  
Smugglers of diamonds, con artists supreme

Salmon are fat cats, industrial magnates  
With mistresses, penthouses, champagne and brie

Panfish are students: perch, bluegills, crappies  
Many drop out for the lure of the line

Bass are broad shouldered blue-collar bullies  
Chugging down Pabst in mud-caked work boots

Carp are dull brutes, half-wit old farm hands  
Scaring young daughters with thick-lidded glances

Walleyes are finicky, artists and craftsmen  
With an eye for detail and a taste for the grape

Dennis Held

## O Period K Period

" I'm OK You're OK  
I'm not OK you're OK  
You're not OK I'm OK  
I'm not OK You're not OK "

You could be OK  
but you won't be OK  
You once were OK  
but you're not OK any longer  
I think I'm OK  
but I'm not sure I'm OK  
I felt OK once  
have you ever felt OK?  
I won't be OK  
so you can't be OK  
I have been OK  
you've never been OK  
You pray I'm OK  
I pray  
that you're praying to be OK  
I pretend I'm OK  
but I've never been OK  
I want to be OK  
but I can't be OK

She said I wasn't OK  
now she isn't OK  
The court doctor said I wasn't OK  
but with help I may become OK  
I'm not in jail, which is OK  
but I'm stuck with soft walls, which isn't OK  
The treatments really arean't OK  
but they're once a week, so that's OK  
My mother comforts me, which is OK  
but she's been dead for six years, so it isn't OK  
The nurses tell us we're OK  
but I know it's a joke, they don't think we're OK  
My roommates a smoker and that's OK  
but he sets me afire so that's not OK



If I could just figure out what's considered OK  
then pretending I was OK  
I could be saying things that they felt were OK  
Then they could decide I was OK  
and let me out to be OK  
And I could do things that would make me OK  
to get along with people that are *really* OK

Now . . .

Just what exactly is meant when we say OK?  
And what do they mean when they say we're OK?  
Does anyone care what makes us OK?  
Just who decides what is OK?  
Is the person who decides what's OK OK?

Does he consider himself OK?  
Could we know if this person was really OK  
when he decided what was OK?  
And what if this person really wasn't OK  
when he showed us the light as to what was OK?  
Does this mean we all get to choose  
what we think is OK?

If this the case, I know I'm OK  
You can get my bags now, I'n off to be OK  
In a world full of people who are also OK  
As long as they don't try to figure out  
what others mean by OK  
and settle with whatever they think is OK

OK?

Kathy Held

## Maybe I Should Get Fat

I feel like you don't love me  
  anymore  
it's like you've accepted  
  and expected  
  my presence  
like before . . .

When I searched deep inside  
and uncovered my heart  
I found it had  
  a crack,  
much like the one  
  on the kitchen wall

I feel like the kitchen wall  
standing here  
  cracked  
  and  
  alone

If I could search deep inside  
and uncover your heart  
Would I find a crack  
or too much plaster  
that you applied  
to harden and hide

I feel like getting fat  
then I would have  
  a reason  
for your lack of  
attention and  
loving looks  
gentle words  
passionate kisses

Oh, how I've missed them

I've learned to survive  
without them

except that . . .  
I yell too much  
cry too much

And you . . .  
do you just sit there  
and yell too much  
and cry too much too?

Maybe I should get fat.

Nancy Schram



## Self Portrait in a Hand Dryer Nozzle

Their dinner date was going splendidly.  
He had worried about lulls in conversation,  
But discovered they had much in common.  
And he was on a roll,  
His wit never sharper.  
But he had to excuse himself.

The men's room gleamed  
In the fluorescent light,  
Silent, empty, dazzling  
The porcelain and tile shone.  
The stainless steel sparkled.  
The mirrors magnified the brilliance.  
All was spotless.

He stepped up to the bright white urinal,  
Large fresh pink mints, no cigarette butts,  
Aware that any mistake  
Would speak volumes on his khaki pants.

He waited that extra time  
After shaking, before tucking.  
But fate had been plotting against him.  
Above, a stainless steel apparatus  
That released the cleansing waters  
Into the urinal  
Was building up condensation.  
And while he paused  
To be certain of no drips,  
It was forming its own.

As he tugged at his zipper,  
A drop descended like a bomb,  
Exploded in a puddle atop the urinal,  
And splattered in the groin area of his trousers.  
He looked down, then up,  
Then closed his eyes trying to ignore the pain.

Washing his hands mechanically,  
He wondered how long he would have to stay  
Till the spots disappeared.

While he rubbed his hands gently,  
As instructed, under the hand drier,  
And stared at his misshapen image in the nozzle,  
He was struck by a curious and creative thought.  
Could not this hand dryer  
Be used to dry more than hands?

He hit the button again with his elbow,  
Stood on tiptoes, pinched his pants  
Away from his groin into a little tent  
And drew it and himself and his groin  
As close to the nozzle as possible.

This was no time to contemplate possibilities  
Other than drying those damned spots.  
And it did seem to be working.

He elbowed the button again and read,  
"Medical tests prove that electric drying  
Minimizes the possibilities of disease."

Under the hot whoosh of the hand dryer  
He never heard the door open.

Steve Tighe



## The Raveno Ballroom

or just the raveno  
it was bought at an auction  
by my grandpa george  
i was named after him except  
my dad forgot a birth  
certificate is a legal document  
and just put down geo  
it was named after Lawrence  
Ducal's Red Ravens the house big band  
before that it was the Valley Gardens  
a speak-easy in the early 30's  
it was painted white then with  
fake palm trees inside Ducal took  
over in the 40's took out the palm trees  
and put in beer but besides blowing  
for the Ravens he played with the  
chicago boys and ended up in the joint

my mom's dad was at the estate sale  
and added a bar to his cemetery  
and construction business he brought in  
rock and roll bands and the Raveno became  
the place to be for the next twenty years  
there'd be a line of people outside  
the door waiting to get in if someone left  
my dad met my mom there and never left  
taking over after my grandfather died  
they began having weddings and other sorts  
of parties along with the bands  
and they painted it barn red  
people began calling it the hotdog  
because of its length and color

it's still red today and my friend's parents  
are having their anniversary parties there  
the place where they held their wedding  
twenty-five years ago the place they met  
thirty years ago  
it's still there at the intersection of Highway  
114 and breezewood lane in between 45 & 41  
a big red flat barn god sat on

Geo













