

The Portable Wall



NO. 21



\$5

The Portable Wall

Vol. IV No. 2 (Issue #21) Spring 1992

free press since 1977

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letters & Health Hints.....	2
Headlines.....	10
Mark Fryberger's Cosmos.....	11
The Men's Room at the First Baptist, story by Robert Weaver.....	13
Ora Wilbert Eads: two poems.....	21
Rush Hour, poem by William Woodruff.....	21
Pancho Villa's Widow, poem by Roger Dunsmore.....	22
Robbing the Children, Their Graves, poem by Roger Dunsmore.....	23
One Sunday Afternoon in Billings, Montana.....	24
Resolutions of an Unacknowledged House Cleaner, by Karin Schalm.....	25
Thoreau and my Yard, poem by Gene Rubenstein.....	26
Letters Home, poem by Peggy Fujita.....	27
Book Report.....	28
Wooden Pinto George, poem by Martha Weaver Adkins.....	30
Gordon Simard's poem: The Feel of Wonder.....	31
A Certain October Wednesday in Missoula, poem by Dave Thomas.....	32
Three poems by Jay Hopler.....	33
Emily Witcher's poem: tom tells me about a one night stand.....	34
Owl Farm Dilemma, poem by Todd Brendan Fahey.....	35
Grackles, poem by Merle Berry.....	36
Tarzan, poem by Maggie Jaffe.....	37
Hanoi, Jane? poem by Maggie Jaffe.....	38
Imelda Marcos, poem by Maggie Jaffe.....	39
Richard Davignon: two poems.....	40
brYan westbrook: two poems.....	41
Snow Flakes, story by Larry Blakely.....	43
Two poems by Mary Hale Jackson.....	49
Pond, poem by Mary Hale Jackson.....	50
A Revised Geography of Canada, poem by Frederick Moe.....	50
The Family Evolves, story by Joseph C. Ebertz.....	51
Money! Money! poem by Danny Barbare.....	55
Back in business.....	56

Our address: The Portable Wall
c/o Dan Struckman
215 Burlington
Billings, MT 59101

Copyright © 1992 by The Portable Wall for all authors

Letters & Health Hints

November 22, '91

Daniel,

Chief architect, *The Portable Wall*

Just rec'd. IV,1 (fall 91) issue. *Very good*. The little color illus. are a nice touch. Good variety. (Your letter-writer Davignon should be tipped off that my friend Dan Quayle is no longer merely a subject for humor except for those who get their political insights only from *Doonesbury*. For me, Fiedler (off the roof?) should include a full set of footnotes with poems like "world-waking") — *a la* T.S. Eliot. I haven't a clue as to what he's saying. Hopler's satire is a scream. *Lots* of good stuff. My second appearance in PW came out just as written. I didn't get mentioned in the "Back in Business" list, but no matter. I haven't been out of business since the mid-30s. A vol. of my poems (*Midwest Mosaics*) is in press....

Keep the wind at your back.

Ray Mizer

711 Highridge Ave.

Greencastle, IN 46135

November 24, 1991 (Birthday! 58!)

Dear Dan:

Thank you for the copy of TPW. AND thanks for printing my letter, AND thanks for listing my chap. It is all very much appreciated.

I am submitting a few poems for your perusal. "Alice" and her pals are still kicking — more homeless joining them every day, in spite of the depression being officially "over."

I read recently in the *Journal of American Medicine* that wintertime depression can be alleviated by being exposed for an hour per day to strong light. Supposedly it really works. My improvement is to scrounge enough money to escape winter entirely and I'm headed for Puerto Vallarta for a bit.

I've just finished Garrison Keilor's new book *WLT*. The man writes SO well. And then there's Normie Mailer's 1100 pages of ca-ca. Oh well, "and so it goes" said Kurt Vonnegut.

"Nough persiflage, balderdash and high cockalorum!
Back to work!

Best wishes to you and continued success to *The
Portable Wall*.

Sincerely,

Richard Davignon
55 Winterset Drive
Chatham, MA 02633

11/26/91

Dear Dan,

Mark Fryberger got a copy of the fall 91 *Wall* to me, and I was delighted to see it still going. And Dave Thomas's comments on why he arranges his poems as he does were as clean and true a piece of esthetics as I've seen in a long, long time. It was also very important for me to see Gordon Simard's words, to know he's still out there doing his dreams. And please, *more* of Fryberger's "Answers to Tough Questions" — whew. Anyway, we need every "wall" we can get — at least we aren't jailed for writing on them, like the young Chinese students and workers...

Sincerely,

Roger Dunsmore
1411 Stoddard #2
Missoula, MT 59802

December 3, 1991

Dear Dan,

Inspired while trekking in the Rocky Mountains where cliff dwellers of the past once left tracks, I came up with thoughts....

Please let me know when Kathleen Taylor's book is off the press. Her poems are favorites of mine....

1991 news from Mustang Island:

4 Letters & Health Hints

Best: Hearing Robert Redford say hello.
2nd Best: no hurricanes.
Best Springbreaker slogan: "Screw Florida."
Best City Council response: "Humph!"

Best newspaper lead: "The Inspiring Story of Local
Writer Who Almost Became Hostage In a Beach House On A
Quiet Seaside Street, To Her Vacuum Cleaner."
Worst: Robert Redford saying, "Up yours."

We'll keep tuning the rig with thoughts of snowman
architects. Build one for us, won't you?
Shantih,

Pam Smith
P.O. Box 202
Port Aransas, TX 78373

P.S. Tell Fryberger to quit whimpering.

**We are planning to print a book of Kathleen Taylor's poems
titled *Cemetery Series*. It should be ready this summer. --
Dan**

Dec. 9, 1991

...Well hello...just a card...don't know if you knew Grant [Lamport]
at all, just an old friend of mine, recently drove into a snowplow
in freezing rain...carried the poem in my wallet for 20-odd years...

Sure do like this typeface...Bernhard Modern
Roman...has a feel of being spoken...and of course, no longer
available in catalogues...careful careful I guess...

Well, in a pit of some rage or another...after two days of
frustrating make-ready...get halfway through the broadside with
the Iris and discover a typo...then two more days of make
ready—I lost it and smashed at the press...broke a knob, dinged
some gear teeth and (horror of stupidity) dented the press bed
with the chase...type went flying...threw a blanket over it and
forget about it...go skiing or something...that is just too, too
much...sigh

The chilly evening rain
brings me my nothingness
that I wish for

but the rain is seldom
and I am often. . .

Grant E. Lamport 1949-1991
copyright 1967

Dirk Lee
Graphic Arts
P.O. Box 7661
Missoula, MT 59807

1/18/92

Dear PW,

I was driving east on Pine in Missoula when I spied Dave Thomas marching along. I pulled over and jumped out and jammed a pile of *Portable Walls* into his hands. He looked startled. Oh no, I'm thinking, action without preparation only frightens and repels. Dave humored me and graciously accepted the Walls. He explained that he was headed for a meeting where people who knew and admired and loved Grant Lamport were going to gather. In the vicinity of the Catholic church, Dave said.

Mark Fryberger had called me the previous week to tell me of Grant's death. He had been friends with Grant from childhood. They had clowned in various classes in high school. You know how good those kinds of friends are. They help you cope with the world because they are cool and just plain fun.

Then when I got to Missoula to visit my son Todd I stopped at Dirk's who also grew up with Grant. Dirk and Grant went through a lot together and Dirk was in shock. That's when I left and I was driving down Pine and saw Dave Thomas, as I said.

After visiting with Dave Thomas for a couple of minutes I dropped the car off at Todd's and hiked over to that church. I don't remember ever having met Grant Lamport but the whole

town seemed to be at the church to comfort each other.

I remember thinking that Missoula really does have a counter-culture. The basement of the Catholic church had lots of people I remember having seen but never before meeting. But I saw Frank Sonnenberg. Remember Frank? Frank was one of the founders of the rock and roll group, "Golden Floaters." Frank ran a pizzeria at Luke's Bar in Missoula. He and Grant and others had explored the wilderness in Western Montana.

Sally Mullen was there. In about the time it takes to tell this somebody had us join hands in a circle. Several people, including his son, remembered some good and also some bad times. Made me wish I had gotten to know Grant because he loved adventures.

Dan Struckman
215 Burlington
Billings, MT 59101

Dear...All,

—Thanks for the...recent *Portable Wall*. It was nice to see the offerings from the younger Struckmans, ferreting out hypocrisy & reality. Congrats to you all....

Re: Jerry Brown: Beware of politicians wearing guru suits. He's interesting, in some ways, but has an attention span of about 30 minutes. I'm afraid he's mostly illusion and rhetoric. Too bad—when I first heard about him (~1973), he was being touted as potentially the most radical gubernatorial candidate since Upton Sinclair. Didn't prove to be the case—generally a poor administrator who appointed same to key posts, and was too ephemeral to implement many (any?) of his "green" slogans as policy—really too bad. But what about the alternatives? Hell, I don't know—maybe another nice "clean" little war will make people forget they're out of work and we'll get Georgie B. Back.

Love,

Larry [Felton]

(and Donna, I'm sure, if she only knew you) She *does* like your magazine.

1026 37th St.
Sacramento, CA 95816

Dec. 19, 1991

Dear Dan,

It seems like every time I've picked up a *Billings Gazette* this year, there's another major literary event happening in town. Billings is fast shedding its weak-sister-to-Missoula-and-Bozeman image in the area of the arts. This is great for Eastern Montana.

The problem with mass media coverage of the arts is insubstantiality. They will report that Maxine Kumin will be giving a reading, but then they're on to the N.I.L.E. rodeo. The reader seldom has the opportunity to garner a review of the actual event that relates some of the flavor, atmosphere and content.

This is why we have an alternative press: to dig deeper into the ideas and feelings of the world and bring this vision to readers interested in more than superficial coverage.

You and your publication fill a unique niche in your community. *TPW* must be the longest established literary (playfully so) magazine in Billings. I see an opportunity here for *The Portable Wall* to become more involved with the resurgent Billings literary scene.

Surely you have a friend or colleague who could write a regular *TPW* column covering local literary happenings. This would serve the dual purpose of keeping your far-flung friends and readers informed, and of helping to build a sense of identity and support for the Billings community. This type of cross-pollination is what keeps this blue-green planet re-creating itself....

Gordon Simard

Dec. 31, 1991

Hello Dan—

Thought you might get a kick out of the enclosed article about fellow small press editors....

There's a lot to be said for the personal approach to publishing. The world is being flooded with words, and often the bigger and mass-scale publishers are so far from a living truth center that language degenerates into a kind of pornography which sells products or ideologies. On the personal scale,

publishing is at least the reflection of an actual living presence, with inherent qualities and faults, which the reader can relate to. This has the potential to create real community without denying technology. Scale is important.

Gordon Simard
Box 1557
Sidney, MT 59270

Dear Dan & Penny,

I really enjoy'd the new *PW*— however you fail to understand my relationship with Montana—mostly romance and memories of wild nights playing bizarre music on the oval — doing unmentionable acts on every conceivable stimulant/ depressant! I wish the 60s on no one. We survived, much to our surprise & now jealously guard our health in hopes that wisdom comes with *age* & experience (which we had plenty of).

I'll always consider myself a lucky bastard for having had my times & orgones saved by the luck of the draw —

Cheers to you both

Peter Koch
2203 Fourth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710

Peter is teaching a course entitled, "The Hand-Printed Book in Its Historical Context." As a class project, students will hand-set and print a small book on an 1850 Albion hand-press. The above letter was written on a flyer advertising Peter's course.--Dan

Dear Dan —

Really enjoyed the fall issue of *PW*. I especially liked Dave Thomas' poems, William Woodruff's haiku and "The Old Fur Trapper" and "The Gazebo."

But I really liked the overall look and feel of the mag. The letters and casual articles (e.g., "I Get Busted on Easter)."

I'm impressed by the fact that you print the mag yourself.

I love the solid feel of the paper and the color icons here and there. A real labor of love.

Thanks too for the fine presentation of "Sick Day..." I appreciate it. Anyway, ...I hope to send you more poems at a later date. Until then, stay well.

Best Regards,

Joe Salerno

192 Mountain Ave.

N. Caldwell, NJ 07006

We received a newsy letter from Bonnie Olsen who still lives in Chapel Hill, NC, with her husband John. Here are a few of the lines she wrote--Dan

...The lab where I'd worked for the last six years lost its funding and although that grant was in no way denied because of poor technical work, all the technical staff was dismissed immediately in a frantic panic. Our salary money for the remainder of the fiscal year was rebudgeted and such niceties as six weeks notice were thrown to the wind as we were requested to leave *as soon as possible*....

... A benefit out of adversity happened when I apologized to my choir that I would no longer be able to supply the home made lollipops for our fund raising efforts. They responded by organizing a workshop which I conducted yesterday and at which I taught six members (one baritone, three sopranos and two altos), the skill and art of lollipop confectionery. We had a wonderful time and now I have *six* people who can take over the job and carry on. We're going to need all those lollies too, because we plan to do Brahms' German Requiem for our spring concert and we want to hire a great big orchestra to accompany us including timpani and harps and french horns -- the whole colossal ensemble....

...Sarah...has a few more business classes to take at Long Island University...and she'll be out upon the world....Leah completed the first half of her sophomore year at SUNY Purchase. John continues his work in cystic fibrosis gene therapy research....

Love, Bonnie Olsen

127 Justice St.

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

**Small Arms Manufacturers to Stop Making
Handguns and Semi-automatic Weapons**

*Arms Manufacturers to Switch from Guns to Blues Harps
For Export to Pacific Rim Countries*

Japanese Can Learn Harmonica

**Federal Government to Promote Safety
Through Handgun Buyback Program**

Government to Pay Twice-Market Value for Handguns

'Sports Medicine Clinics' to be Closed
Claude Scott Calls Them Fake Emergency Rooms

**State Licensing Boards to Limit Physician
Salaries to \$50,000 Annually**

Minimum Wage to Triple
US to Quit Growing Tobacco

Southern States To Grow Vegetables on Tobacco Farms

**Tobacco and Liquor Company Executives
Imprisoned for Large-Scale Promotion of
Addictive Substances**

**Public Schools and Post Offices
To House New Public Health Clinics**

New Law Prohibits all Campaign Contributions

**Defense Contractors Busy Building
Playground Equipment for Head Start**

Mark Fryberger's Cosmos

Dan,

It's true that I've accused you of being a grownup. But this is no curse. We *have* to become grownups — it's nature's plan for us. It's just that nowadays, in today's modern world, we tend to get caught up in the present. Grownups are supposed to be involved in the present — *involved*, not moping over the past or anxious about the future. But I, for one, find that as I age, my feelings about time are changing. Clearly, life is too short. Time's a-wasting. This sharpened sense of time helps me to concentrate; I have less time for foolishness. This is all well and proper, and yet the present, as Robert Frost says,

Is too much for the senses,
Too crowded, too confusing —
Too present to imagine.

There's no victory over time, but maybe we can play with time in ways that satisfy. In this regard I enjoyed reading *Timescale*, by Nigel Calder, recently. Direct quotes from that book:

"The human body is built from the ashes of stars of the Milky way.

"Among all the products of exploding stars, carbon showed an unusual talent for building elaborate and subtle molecules. These included proteins, and also nucleic acids, the self-copying forerunners of the genes of heredity. Pools of concentrated soup, on the flanks of volcanic islands, supported a ceaseless roulette among spontaneously generated chemicals. Some molecules, well-engineered and suited to their chemical environments, made copies of themselves more rapidly than others. Even before life existed, selective evolution was at work among the molecules.

"...superworms were the ancestors of all animals with hollow bodies — including human beings, who are descended

from an odd kind of marine worm with tentacles.

"By 69 million years ago the diminutive mammalian forerunners of carnivores and hoofed plant eaters were registering in the fossil record, and the earliest known primate, *purgatorius*, was living in Montana and watching from the safety of the trees as the tyrannosaurs passed by.

"A dramatic decrease of rainfall in eastern Africa occurred 2 million years ago, just when the true human beings first registered in the fossil record: *Homo Habilis*. They were mutant apemen, with overgrown heads and an unprecedented ability to enlarge their brains after birth.... They competed with dogs and vultures for the pickings of beasts killed by the big cats, or dead from other causes.

"The custom of carrying a baby on the left side, where it is comforted by the maternal heartbeat, sets the mother's right hand free, and that may have been sufficient reason for the evolution of predominant right-handedness in humans.

"Certain human beings went pale and started drinking milk. As the gardeners advanced northward into less sunny regions, their children became liable to grow up with rickety bones. Pink skins evolved, which admitted ultraviolet rays and promoted the formation of vitamin D... and a bizarre genetic mutation enabled children to go on drinking milk after weaning.

"Whites feed well because they conquered the world, but perhaps they conquered the world because they were well fed. Milk is five times more efficient than meat in converting grass into food energy for humans."

Nu? Moo!

Mark Fryberger
931 E. Beckwith
Missoula, MT 5980

The Men's Room at the First Baptist

by Robert Weaver

"You ain't never gonna be a writer, Billy Kitchens, not the way you writes," says They.

"I writes the way I talks," says I.

"And you talks like a Negro," says They.

Could be true. Don't know. Fact of the matter is that I learned everything I knows from two coloreds that used to help Papa around the farm, and they say I talk like the Devil. Their names was Gertrude and Brother. Brother was Gertrude's brother. That's why we called him that. Brother. They helped around the farm till Brother went and hung himself from the old oak. Then Gertrude moved to Macon to live with her sister named Sister.

Never learned too much in school. Most of my papers come back to me with red scribbles and red F's and red drawings of frowny-faces. Teacher didn't like nothing I did. She hated my compositions. But I'll tell you now, my compositions was never boring, not like that book by Ernest Henneyegg, *The Odd Man in the Ocean*. My stories was interesting and true.

Some of my stories:

The Real Reason They Tossed Mr. Johnson out of Boy Scouts. Mrs. Johnson called me a liar on that one, but I had my information firsthand.

The Mysterious Headless Chicken. We had a chicken that lived for seven days after Gertrude chopped its head off. Ran around like crazy, flapping its wings and dancing, till Papa squashed it flat with the tractor. I took it to show-n-tell the next day in a paper bag. Teacher made me throw it away when the bag began to leak. I got an F, and Teacher drew a red chicken with fangs on my paper.

Who Preacher Phillips Says Will Sizzle and Suffer for All Eternity in Burning Hell under God's Damnation and Torture. Preacher Phillips comes to dinner one night and tells all! Oh, but this story cause me nothing but trouble.

They was good stories, not like that book we was forced to read. I don't even know who Ernest Henneyegg is, but I'll bet he's hooked up with Teacher somehow, if you know my

meaning. Fact is, I never read his dumb book, but I did take the time to draw real dark lines through all the sentences with my No. 2 pencil.

I don't like being forced.

And I hate school. They threw me out for being crazy anyhow, soon after Brother took to swinging by his neck. But I wasn't really crazy. Just carved my initials. They don't take to people carving their initials.

I ain't crazy.

"Let's have an Easter picnic," says Mama.

"Out by the barn," says Papa.

"Okay," says I.

It was when we rounded the corner to the back of the barn that I first saw Brother swinging in the wind, the rope wrapped tight around his neck, his neck looking all long and stretched like some bones had come loose. His eyes was wide awake, and some flies had taken to laying some eggs in them.

"Kind of brings to mind a giant black spider, hanging there like that," says I.

Mama fainted. Papa threw up. I ate most of the chicken salad.

The next day, I woke up and looked out my window. There was Brother! Helping out around the farm again! Like nothing had happened, he was spraying blossoms in the old orchard and picking bugs off the trees. Certain ones he'd put in his mouth, crunch them between his teeth and spit them back out, like some people do with their fingernails.

I asked Mama about this.

"How come we don't bury Brother?" says I.

"What do you mean?" says Mama.

She didn't seem to remember seeing Brother swinging by his neck on Easter Sunday, said I must've imagined the whole thing. Papa called me a liar and took me out to the driveway and threw gravel at me. Brother said I was crazy. Gertrude said it was a sign from the Devil, and she made Brother pack their things. They was out before nightfall.

A week later they throws me out of school for carving my initials into Sally MacFarland's forehead.

"That's not true," says Mama. "You're out for Spring

planting. And I saw Sally MacFarland just this morning with her Mama, and she could not have a nicer forehead if you painted one on her, except for that one wild eyebrow."

It don't matter. I don't care about being throwed out of school. All They ever say is, "You ain't never gonna be a writer, Billy Kitchens!"

Well, all I have to say about that is—

I writes the way I learned.

I writes the way I wants.

I writes as I is, as I is.

And I don't care what They say, nohow. Fact to the matter is, I don't even want to be a writer. I mean to be a tap dancer like I sees in the movies. And I plan to marry Judy Garland.

"Judy Garland is dead," says Mama.

"She ain't dead," says I. "I seen her in a movie just last week with Freddy Stares. She big, though. Covered most the screen."

But now I don't know if I is ever gonna be a tap dancer. The events that brought me to that realization has thrown me to the depths of despair. I hates it. And now I feels like doing something evil. Wild. Mean. Maybe the Devil is in me. I can see him in my eyes when I look in the mirror. I ain't never gonna be a tap dancer (maybe) and I hates it. It seems now that I got my bones all worked up for nothing.

But I is getting ahead of the story.

The beginning:

It all started that cold February morning, when the ground outside was like hard rock. Papa had been missing for two days. Finally Mama went to the barn, and there he was, dressed in only a nightshirt, slumped over the steering wheel of the tractor. And frozen stiff, he was! Three fingers snapped off when we tried to pry him loose. This caused Mama to cry most of the day. Even a visit from Preacher Phillips couldn't stop her wailing. Me, I was mostly unaffected. Most twelve-year-old boys do have other things on their minds.

"How we ever gonna plow the fields this spring? How we ever gonna harvest the crops come fall?" Mama cried.

"You had best concern yourself with how you gonna thaw out Papa. he ain't never gonna fit in no pine box all curled up like a frozen rag doll. You try now and he will crack in half for

sure." says I.

Well, with that Mama let out with the most horrible holler that echoed throughout the house, and she called me the Devil. Then she ran to her room and cried some more.

I followed her the entire way and yelled through her door that I wasn't the Devil, and I didn't appreciate being accused of that just for speaking my mind. Then I told her that I was now leaving for Hollywood to become a tap dancer in the movies, and any future visits she cared to make with me, she could do so at the Stillwater Movie House with a tub of popcorn in one hand. And I was marrying Judy Garland, dead or not, and I was taking the suitcase with the simulated brass buckles.

"The hell with that!" Mama cried. But I didn't pay her no mind, and I went on with my packing.

I was almost finished packing when I heard the shotgun go off. Busting Mama's door down, I saw that she wasn't gonna be arguing no more, so I called Preacher Phillips and told him what had just transpired. He said that he and the Stillwater Baptist Church would be praying for Mama's soul come Sunday, but most likely she was burning in hell, even as we spoke.

Now was my big chance. I took the keys to the Cutlass and Mama's "Save-the Money-for-Bingo" jar, and I started off for California.

Driving west to California is no problem for a twelve-year-old boy who's been driving since he was ten, especially with the *See America* road atlas at my side. But I began to get tired after just a few hours. Long day for me, becoming a double orphan and all, so I decided to rest a spell in Montgomery, Alabama. The first five motels wanted to know what a young'n was doing out and about on his own, but I finally found Hotel-Hello clerk who asked no questions, and I commenced to bedding down for the night.

Later on, I was awakened by a loud knock. Putting my ear up to the door, I heard a lady's voice: "I don't know, honey. I must've left my key at the bar."

"Well, I ain't driving back to get it. It's too far. Besides, I've already given you the money."

She had a man with her!

"Knock again," the lady was saying. "Celia's a heavy sleeper."

The man started pounding on the door.

"Not that heavy a sleeper!" says the lady. "I wonder why she's not answering."

Finally I opened the door as far as the chain would allow.

"Some folks like to sleep at night, like the Bible says we should," says I.

"Look, Celia's got a little boy in there." The lady was all made up like a doll, red lips, orange hair, and eyelids the color of Grandma Kitchens's veins. She was wearing what looked like a night robe that should only be worn and seen in private, with lots of black and red lace down the front and on the sleeves. "Looks like we got a little boy thrown in with the deal."

"I ain't paying extra," says the man. "You already got all my money."

"Honey," says the lady, "I know for a fact that fifty dollars ain't all your money. She narrowed her eyes the way that Gertrude used to when she was cursing someone. "Celia," yells the lady into the room, "come to the door, honey. It's Lolly."

"Celia ain't here," says I.

"Where'd she go, little boy?"

"I don't know no Celia," says I, "and I'll thank you to just go on your way now."

"Well, what name did she give you?" The lady laughed. "Celia, are you in there, honey? Celia..."

"Look, little boy," says the man, "just open the door."

"Nothing doing. I'm going back to sleep. And I don't mind telling you, I'm getting just a little fed up at this point."

"Lolly, if he don't open that door..."

"Calm down, honey, calm down. He will. He just needs a woman's coaxing, that's all." She looks down at me, and I realize that I wasn't wearing nothing but my underwear. "Come on, little boy. Open the door. Lolly will make it all work your while."

She reaches her hand in through the door and begins caressing my cheek. Well, I done what any normal boy would've done—I bit her square on the hand, almost hard enough so as to draw any blood. She yanked her hand back, and I slammed the door.

"He bit me!" I could hear her scream. "That little devil bit me!"

The man started pounding on the door again. But suddenly all the screaming and pounding stopped, and it was all quiet as if they was never there. When I fell to sleep, I dreamed of sheep, riding lawnmowers, and Judy Garland.

Fate. That's what it was. Fate. The next morning I reads in the *Montgomery Herald* that the First Baptist was gonna be featuring a Christian Variety Show that very evening. Now, as we in show business know, a tap dancer has got to have some kind of experience if he's gonna take Hollywood by storm, which was my every intention. Me, I didn't have no experience, then I reads about this perfect job experience opportunity! Preacher Phillips would've called it a gift from God, and he and the congregation would've broken into a hymn about sheep.

I took what was left of Mama's jar money and drove to the nearest Higgledy-Piggledy Clothing Store to buy me a proper tap dancer's suit. Of course, Higgledy-Piggledy ain't got no tap dancer's outfits, but between men's, ladies, and toy departments, I was able to rig up something a might fancy. The main feature of my costume was this gold and black imitation leopard-skin jacket. Most of the rest of my day was spent gluing fake pearls to the collar and cuffs. I had also bought these tight Spandex leotards to wear on my head, giving the illusion of long, floppy ears. The pants was fuzzy cowboy chaps that I should've tried on because they was about nine sizes too small, but my privates didn't show, so they was all right. For lack of proper tap shoes, snow boots with All-American Cherry Cola bottle caps stuck on the bottoms with JiffyChew Chewing Gum had to do. Back at the hotel, I admired myself in the mirror for a solid hour. I did look like a wild jungle animal. I did, I really did. That night, in the First Baptist Variety Show, I was going to make Montgomery history as Tap-Dancing Tony the Tiger.

Then I stay in the middle of the floor and colored in my Captain Miraculous Coloring Book. I stayed within the lines.

Wouldn't you just know it? Later that night, I arrived at the church to find that the night's festivities had already been committed to program. And they was boring acts, too, let me tell you. Mostly gospel singing. No dancing whatsoever, at least not what I calls dancing, just lots of swaying back and forth. Kind of

like Brother on a rope.

But don't think that I was discouraged from making my debut. No sir. I walked right in to that hall, all decked out in my tap dancing gear. You should've seen the faces as they, one by one, noticed me walkin' toward the front of the church. There was a few gasps. Then total silence. And at the height of the silence, I broke into a song that I made up off the top of my head.

*"Oh! You can never feel down
with your tap-tap-tapping shoes
a-dance-dance-dancing.
No, you should never wear a frown
if you're prance-prance-prancing.
Tappity-tap! Slappity-slap! Tap!"*

Then I danced: Thumpity-thump! Thumpity-thump!
Thumpity-thump! Thumpity-thump! Thumpity-thump! Thumpity-thump!

I reached out to take Judy by the hand, and two ladies swooned and fainted. I kept dancing and singing, but soon I ran out of words that rhymed with tap. I didn't mean to say "crap." It just slipped out. My privates didn't stay covered, my bottle caps flew off into the choir, but I kept going.

Then all hell broke loose. That's right, all hell, right in the middle of the First Baptist. The preacher, a man not as attractive as Preacher Phillips (all the girls like Preacher Phillips, he tells them they smell good) and twice as old, calls out toward me in a loud, booming voice: "Stop that boy! He's of the Devill!" And most of the congregation comes after me with outstretched paws and leering eyes. I knocked over the pulpit and a whole slew of candles. Red-velvet curtains started into flames. (Baptizing water saved the day there.) Three hymnals and a Bible hit me, no doubt throwed by someone who don't care much for tap dancing, Freddy Stares, or Judy.

Oh, and the crowd kept coming! fearing for my life, I ran blindly down one hall, the congregation behind me like a pack of hungry wolves. Somehow I managed to make it to safety, the men's room, where I bolted the door behind me.

That's where I is right now, this very moment, as I writes this story on the bathroom walls, at the men's room at the First Baptist. That mob keeps pounding their fists on the door, but I ain't opening it, not on your life! It's a crazy mob. Instead, I writes with the crayons I picked up at the Higgledy-Piggledy, and I'll keep writing until I runs out of wall or crayons, whichever comes first.

And as for that crazy crowd! Every once and awhile it'll get real quiet outside, just to where I can barely make out the whispering. Then, they'll start talking real sweet to me, making all kinds of offers and promises if I'll just open that door.

"Billy," some lady's saying, "Billy, open the door. It's Mama, Billy. Open the door, Billy. Let's go home. Papa's here. Talk to him, Papa."

Now some man: "Billy..."

Well, I don't make a sound, but every now and then I flush the toilet and let the swirling gurgling tell them how I feel about this whole damn situation. I ain't budging.

And I'm about to run out of wal...

(Out of wall.)

Now in press:

The Cemetery Series

poetry about love
by Kathleen Taylor
with graphics
by Dirk Lee
printing by Basement Press

Ora Wilbert Eads

Stature

The most accurate guage
Of national stature
Is something more important
Than military might;
Any great nation
Activates compassion
For its least fortunate people.

Too High

The military budget
Is dangerously high;
Its authors deprive social programs
Of adequate funding;
This imbalance is a threat
To national security.

William Woodruff

RUSH HOUR

The truck before me plods, and stops, and plods;
So plods this vehicular herd in which I'm trapped
Like a paralyzed flea immersed in oozing sap —
Home seems as far away as Novgorod.
Stupefied by this sultry heat, I nod;
This sickly smog is probably poisoning me;
And my leg's about to cramp and I've got to pee —
The truck before me plods, and stops, and plods,
Speeds up a bit, then once again stops dead.
The radio warns of thicker jams ahead.
Another end of another week at work,
And another damn commute; I'm such a jerk
To do this every day! I shout to the gods.
The truck before me plods, and stops, and plods.

PANCHO VILLA'S WIDOW
(for Ed)

At school I tell them
Ed Gallagher got his first paycheck—for ranchwork—
and headed for northern Chihuahua
to find Pancho Villa's widow.
The Mexican field hands had told him.
He found her dressed all in black,
the bullet-riddled sedan still parked in the garage,
the pistols and spurs, the lariats and bandoleers
still hung on the walls of the house of Pancho Villa.
This was 1953.
Ed was seventeen, Montana,
his first season as a man.

I walk the streets of Shanghai,
the halves of naked meat
stacked next to the butcher shop
or hurtling down the street on three-wheeled bike-carts;
a child in her small seat on her father's bike
pointing at the dirty sky with one finger;
a whole neighborhood standing with bent teakettles
around a fire hydrant pouring its water gently
into the fresh vegetables in their hands;
a well-dressed woman in the front window of a bus,
her deep-closed, tired face;
or another, a woman also, walking the street in great silence;
large truck loads of sand and gravel
blasting straight through;
or a daughter meeting a father coming home from work,
walking the last block with their arms around each other's waists—

All these, I think,
asleep each night
in the room next to the riddled sedan,
wait for the young farm worker,
his first dream in his pocket,
seeking her, seeking her,
the widow of Pancho Villa.

ROBBING THE CHILDREN, THEIR GRAVES

Start where these big, smooth-skinned sycamores
 grow out of the river,
where this limestone cliff
 cradles adobe walls going back,
a wild bee's nest in the rock.

In the museum under the green-smooth sycamores—
these bracelets of glycymeris shell
taken from the forearm of a dead child,
these paint sticks and fragments of cloth
from a baby's hand,
this reed basket coiled over her face.

What will they find in our children's graves?

 money. . . .money. . . .
 dark children whisper at our backs.

The lavender window
of a small car casts
a lavender light on the ancient wall,
1100 A.D., Sinagua Indian, they say.

We leave the big, smooth-skinned sycamores
in the bend of the river.
We cannot stop the perfect blue kachina
on the door of a redi-mix truck
going uphill,
or the small face dreaming glycymeris shell
beneath the coiled reeds,
these big, smooth-skinned sycamores,
in the bend of the river,
blowing.

One Sunday Afternoon in Billings, Montana

Every word is true! The minister told us *he* did not think the new exhibit at the Yellowstone County Art Center was sacrilegious. On the contrary, he said it was fitting and beautiful.

We wasted no time getting to the art center and we did see at least one or two others from church.

I headed for the scandalous art. First floor. A basket. Some weird sculpture. Some lumpy paintings. Academic art? A lot of that stuff looked like academic art. Satisfied the good stuff was not on the first floor I headed to the narrow stairway up. A wolf mask by sculptor Ken Little on the wall. (Ken Little is a genius who uses junk store shoes. He turns them into life-size grizzlies (he uses old logging boots nailed to a wooden taxidermy form), leaping deer (red patent leather high heel shoes), polar bear (nurses shoes), alligator (tennis shoes, sole side up) and more.)

Upstairs in the Gallery I pressed forward and it was a poetry reading! I took a chair at the back. Not much knee room. I tried to tune in, but I felt drugged by ethereal language. At last the 50 or 60 people applauded. Huge paintings hung on the wall. Looked like 17th century Flemish with large fleshy figures.

Then a young man took the mike. He shook his head as if to awaken himself. He said he hoped he wouldn't offend us.

It described his first sexual experience with his friends and a 15 year-old girl. A gang bang. Clinical detail. Vagina that looked like a cut. The audience studied their shoetops. At the end they *did not applaud!*

The next poet's stuff rhymed. Sweet. Patriotic.

The next poet, a schoolteacher, gave us a chance to stretch, so I attempted escape.

The stairs were jammed! Ahead of me a woman said to her younger male companion, "I didn't like it. It was too gross."

"What was gross about it?" asked the other in a sort of rough, too-loud voice.

"It was too realistic!" said the woman, with a giggle.

Once downstairs I browsed. I saw the poet! He swiftly—and alone—headed across the lobby and out the front door. I wanted to talk to him and we remained a long time but he did not return.

Resolutions of an Unacknowledged House Cleaner

I have decided to take small liberties
at the house I clean each week.

I'll turn the heat up in winter,
wear my shoes on the carpet.

To save money on detergents

I will dilute my windex
with half a quart of water.

I have a plan to use just one sponge
on the toilets and kitchen counters.

No one will notice.

I'll take home light bulbs and tissue paper,
a can of chunky chicken soup.

Why not do my own laundry on the job
and nap for a bit between green satin sheets?

It is easy to leave the dusted figurines
in strangely suggestive positions,
make mai tais as I listen to Beethoven,
string the bras, underwear and jockstraps
along the rafters, feed the cocker spaniel
from the meatbox in the refrigerator.

I have a hankering to steal manuscripts of poetry
and publish them as my own.

I am tired of this lack of recognition,
my very job contingent upon my ability
to be invisible. I'll move the house to Persia
and live like royalty for a week.

(The dog can stay or go).

Back home there will be a small crater
on the other side of the driveway
where the house once stood.

Thoreau and my Yard

When I look across my yard,
I feel the way
Thoreau must have felt
when he looked across Walden Pond.

The trees
are broad and tall
 (due to the fertilizer we inject into their roots)
and their leaves
are full
 (due to the insecticides we spray them with biweekly).

The grass,
which is a shade of the deepest green,
 (due to the chemicals we mix into the soil)
compliments the flowers
that seem to grow haphazardly about
 (due to the haphazard places we planted them).

A dog runs,
fast and wild,
 (due to the car that grazed him as he crossed the street)
chasing a squirrel
who has stockpiled provisions for the coming season
 (due to the garbage we leave on our curb every Tuesday).

Thoreau once said:

"Being near nature
brings one's self
closer to
God."

 (or something like that)

If Thoreau were in my yard now
he might say:

"Being near nature
brings one's self
closer to
the Dow Chemical Company, Inc."
 (or something like that)

Letters Home

I

Dear Father

It is hard to write,
to know what to say
without words.

Would you like to know that
I have a daughter, named Anne,
who is seventeen now, or
that Mother died two years ago?
She lived quite close to us, and
was mowing the grass.

That's all the news I know.
I don't expect an answer,
we never were able to talk

but I'll keep in touch.

II

Dear Mother

I touched you goodbye, there,
on the grass, under the apple tree.
Did you feel it?

Was it all right?
I'm sorry about your wedding rings.
I found them in your drawer

too late
for you to wear.
I'll bring them when I come.

Book Report

Publications Received

Fiction International is edited in part by artist and poet Maggie Jaffe. ***FI*** comes out twice a year and, in Maggie's words, "its twin interests are postmodern and political writing, not necessarily together....we're gathering stuff for a 'Pornography/censorship' issue." Her magazine was strong on theme and was produced by a big city university print shop. Less strong on style and consequence. If I were a writer I'd like my stuff accepted by ***FI***. I lost my sample copy, but Maggie's address is 3551 Granada Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104.

Found Poetry In the Titles and Lines from the 1991 "Poet's Market" (Responses, Put Downs, and Such Included) "A" Through "E" Book One, by Q.Z. Blaze. This 5-1/2 by 8 -1/2 inch bookpoem was typewriter set on typing paper, just as the *Portable Wall* used to be. It came folded so that it would fit in a business envelope, and since it consisted of 12 sheets of paper and a cover, it defied my attempts to flatten it out to read. The type was set irritatingly close to the margins. I just didn't get the point. Published by Excursions, Ltd. Box 330507, Houston, TX 77233-0507.

1992 Garden City Seeds catalog is the best yet. Produced by Kerry & Sue Wall-MacLane, Karen Coombs, Rod Daniel, Mark Waltermire, Nina Maclean and John Schneeberger, this volume is packed with excellent information for gardeners who may appreciate the self-reliant lifestyle of Quakers. It is printed on recycled newsprint with soy-based inks. Send \$1 to Garden City Seeds, 1324 Red Crow Rd., Victor, MT 59875-9713.

HUP, a comic book by Robert Crumb is funny, especially if you are male and are not offended by the truth. It has the Ruff-Tuff Cream-Puffs, Flakey Foont, Mr. Natural and some of R. Crumb's sexual confessions. You probably cannot get a copy. I got mine from Fryberger and I'm sending it on to Gordon Simard. Fryberger told me to keep it "in state." \$2.50 plus postage Last Gasp Eco-Funnies, 2180 Bryant St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

Jeannette Rankin Peace Resource Center newsletter has some good-feeling essays and serves its purpose to allow dissemination of information on issues concerning the environment, the peace (and justice) movement. Innovative programs, such as the Missoula Bike Bank. Remember when Bob Koostra rebuilt bicycles and gave them away or sold them for a dollar or two? You can be a member of the Jeannette Rankin Peace Resource Center for \$20 (\$10 for students/low income). Send to 211 West Front St., Missoula, MT 59802.

The Lakota Times is the largest independently Indian-owned weekly newspaper in the U.S. and it is dynamite! The Sioux tribe has a powerful spokesman in Publisher Tim Giago, who shows what a great newspaper can be. You can probably get one at a reservation near you, or you can subscribe. Only \$38/year. Box 2180, 1920 Lombardy Dr., Rapid City, SD 57709.

Missoula Independent is, according to our friend Nathaniel Blumberg, surviving competition from the Lee chain of newspapers, and, unlike the *Missoulian*, has vast amounts of humanity, tone and sense of commitment. Our friend Barbara Burt saved a stack of **MI** for us and they are good to read and re-read. They have serious, probing articles. Subscriptions: P.O. Box 8275, Missoula, MT 59807. Send \$25/year, or for students, seniors or living lightly, \$20/year.

Out of Plumb is Elizabeth Hahn's poetry chapbook. We've published some of her work in the *PW*, and if you liked her stuff as much as we did, you'll want to order a copy from Nightshade Press, P.O. Box 76, Troy, Maine 04987. The work is very nicely printed by offset, 48 pp, perfect bound.

Treasure State Review of Journalism and Justice is Nathaniel Blumberg's baby from Wood FIRE Ashes Press, Box 99, Big Fork, MT 59911. Send him \$18 so you can get this. I will wait here until you return. Back already? Nathaniel and his cohorts critically examine Montana news media. They are well able to do so. Former *Missoulian* editorial page editor Sam Reynolds shares one of his editorials--one the *Missoulian* would not print--about a sales tax for Montana. Bob McGiffert, one of the most astute editors anywhere, having written books on the subject, critiques the editing of the *Missoulian*. His report shows that Lee owners may not care as much about telling news as they care about making money. Surprised? Nathaniel has 12 large pages of good stuff, and all of it bears his almost evangelical style. He even has something from *The Portable Wall*. Need I say more?

The ultimate catalog of Comix Art from Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Get yours by dialing toll free: 1-800-657-1100. It has underground comix: Peter Bagge, a series of *The Complete Crumb* (signed hardcover version, only \$55) Howard Cruse and his *Barefootz*, Art Spiegelman and *Raw*, and lots of shirts, rubber stamps and buttons. Missing: *Zippy*, *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, *Zap*, *Weirdo*. Check out some of these other writers: Kim Deitch's *Beyond the Pale*, Dennis Eichhorn's *Real Stuff*. You'll recognize Jules Feiffer, Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and *Maus II*.

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree! --Ezra Pound in *The ABC of Reading*.

Wooden Pinto George

George was from Colorado.

He came to Gardiner in an old blue Pinto

With no hood, but a plywood box built around the engine

Because the engine had burned up and been replaced.

George didn't see any use in replacing the hood, since he couldn't
find one second hand, so he made the box instead.

That's why we called him "Wooden Pinto George."

George had naturally curly hair, a head full of dark brown curls.

His disposition was free and easy, and his smile came natural, too.

He put up at the Parkway Hotel 'til he moved in with the Frenchwoman
Madeline and her friend Jan, sharing rent.

There was nothing to it except they were all broke

And the house they got down by the river was reasonable

Because it didn't have insulation and the floor tipped a little.

George found out pretty quick there was easy money in hunting
antlers, elk horn, in spring.

He went out on national forest, which was legal, and in Yellowstone
National Park, which was illegal, because others did it.

There were all kinds of antlers lying around; eight pounders brought
six dollars a pound.

Sometimes there would be a set, two together.

George met a local girl and by spring they were going together.

He and Fred R. had a big cache of antlers up Black Canyon,
near Knowles Falls.

Instead of carrying them out on their backs they built two rafts,
and floated them down the Yellowstone at night.

Except when they got to the boulders at the mouth of Bear Creek,
Fred says they tipped their load; the rafts went over.

He hollered for George but George didn't answer.

His body washed up on the riverbank late in spring.

By then his girlfriend was several months pregnant.

She left Gardiner a while after with her baby daughter.

His brothers took George's body and buried it in Colorado.

He wasn't very old.

THE FEEL OF WONDER

I crossed into time,
not recorded in ink or blood,
where gravity bodies sink
and planet tight spirals
hum systems to life.

Time within space
is a reference device
for cycles discerned in infinity.
I threaded its eye
and tongued diamond light.

Taste of zinc, moist
of sweat like tin, yet soft
and yielding to the skim of teeth.
The furrows channel near blue
greys to a funnel for seed.

Quantum Big Sur spring morn.
Drones stroke stamen
for ochre pollen balls.
Fuchsias seduce in androgynous mauve.
All is One. All is Won.

Wonder. You circumscribe my pulse.
So far behind the forebrain window.
Foreign to thought. Unhusked. Demasked.
Thorough sloughing the foreskin of mind.
Assimilating each boundary crossed.

A CERTAIN OCTOBER WEDNESDAY IN MISSOULA

polluted nerves
cough to the laundro
mat it's noon
all the high school
sweeties parade
budding butts
and blossoming
 tits
to a dirty old man
sipping a soda
while his laundry
 dries
then he walks
back into blue sky
and brown air
a rope bag
full of clean
 clothes.

d. thomas
29 Oct 1980

SCHNAUZER THOUGHTS

To My Mother

I wonder if...
No...
I...think it's time...
Smells like bacon...
She's wearing those things...
I wonder if my nose could...
Smells like...like...like...
Too many...
My nose is...she's wearing those...
Hmmmmm...
There's no place like...there's
No...smells like bacon...
Here she comes...she's been doing that funny business again...
Smells...
Bird...no where to...
Could snap its...if I ...nothing to...
She's looking at me again...smells...bacon...
So much bacon...so...
She's talking to me...why is she...maybe I should...
I wonder if...
No.

THINK TANK

In a white-tiled world.
Filled with aromas of everyday life,
I stand in a stall built for one and
Read the essays of thinkers in passing.

BARTLEY'S ODE

For Sharee

So many nights
I sit by the window,
Eating ripe bananas
And thinking of you.

tom tells me about a one night stand

it was like eating potato chips.
it had sharp salty aspects
impossible to swallow whole;
filling, but not quite food.

it was the stare of a stranger
too soon after letting go
old memories nagging the house
like overdue library books

cookbooks if you will, he laughs
that i am afraid to return
for fear of never again having a decent meal

(the case of the metaphor taken too far
solved by coffee ice cream for dessert)

man i was just bored as a board
a dumb still slab chopped out of a tree
it was the stare of a stranger
the truth will not let me be.

i listen
and the story is a french fry
a softer potato.
we are sharing a pair of glasses
one lens for him
the other lens for me
the table between us a flat white nose

it's hard not to compare the whole evening
to the meal—tomato sauce dried like scabs
around my household apathy;
wine sat cold in our mouths
like words more comfortably spat out

i think about how we talk.

there is a negotiated looseness
a realization that what we throw
is delicate — a tossed salad
made of sand, water, and glass —
we are careful about what we catch.

i am in love with
the first time he is dishonest
but he rambles on
and i do the dishes.

Todd Brendan Fahey

Owl Farm Dilemma

Stoke the whiskey-ragged fire
'till the coke runs dry
and your nostrils send you begging for a dab of vitaminE,
'till the peacocks peck you awake
in the morning of a silent snow,
and you wonder if the madness
had been written by anyone you know—
a man in a voodoo mask, perhaps,
sparring with the great Ali,
snuffing boric acid between sips of benzene and vermouth,
then shifting into third at Mauna Kea and a lava boil
that reminds you of your head right now.
The Sawtooth Bank just closed, there, Doc,
and the neighbors don't trust your face;
the Lambo dropped its tranny around Mobile Bay,
and not even Kesey understands you howling over the transom
about special octane and spontaneous human combustion.
Your cheekbones are hollow, and giardia rules your colon;
you know where the gun's kept, but you love the Old man,
and the sea isn't big enough for two.

Grackles

Raucous screeches and whistles greet me
As I step out the front door.

It's the grackles again.

Like a bunch of disorderly winos,
They lean drunkenly together on their
Telephone-wire perch
And gleefully attempt to raise the nose level
Of the neighborhood.
They eye me with a look of beady-eyed malice
And flutter their wings, hurling down
A shower of half-eaten seeds, dust,
Excrement and dirty feathers.

(One walks beneath them with caution.)

They gurgle and buzz, coo and shriek;
Long descending notes, aimless whistles,
Stray hoots and rasping clicks
Round out their bizarre repertoire.
I hum to distract myself
And sweep an endless accumulation of debris
Off my front porch.
The rowdy grackles scare away more timid birds
And monopolize the bird feeder.

They terrorize the cat.

Hunched together in dull-black clumps
And looking like mad clerics,
The grackles spit seeds, scratch and
Natter the day away in delirious bird-talk.

As I turn to go back inside
I hear from out of the din
A perfect rendition of a
Leering, juicy wolf-whistle—
And who's to say that it wasn't deliberate?

TARZAN

fears race mixing,
not only with "Savages"
but Apes who raised him.
In truth, he's an Englishman
from the jolly good mother country,
who innately knows the value of private
property & Darwinian hierarchies.
By his own account,
"killer of beasts and blacks."
Tarzan's the romantic image
of Edgar Rice Burroughs himself.
Burroughs, like Custer before him,
joined the Hostile-slaughtering 7th Cavalry.
Hostiles metamorphosed
into *Noble Savages* once they died.
Custer too lived by the pen & sword:
his student-essay, "The Red Man,"
justified Indian genocide.
He's better known, though,
for *My Life On The Plains*,
an "Aryan" romance,
similar in genre, if not in style,
to *Tarzan of the Apes*.

HANOI, JANE?

*"Some of the best people
in Amerika today
are behind bars."*

—Jane Fonda, 1968

Like Hera, Zeus' consort,
she's everywhere:
on videos, cassettes, cd's.
At ball games, parades,
doing the Tomahawk Chop
& the Persian Gulf Rag.
Living high on the hog
in Georgia, known for its juicy
peaches & electric chair,
"affectionately" called
"Yellow Mama."
Still she pisses people off.
Beautiful women should be spread
not heard, according to Jimmy
Swaggert & a recent Gallup Poll
conducted by CNN news
& the Heritage Foundation.
She *is* annoying.
Hollywood High,
followed by Finishing School.
Her father's good looks,
her silicone boobs,
her unbearably shrill voice,
in spite of elocution lessons.

IMELDA MARCOS

No more stale jokes
about her sixteen hundred
pairs of shoes.
Sure she laundered
money but never asked
anyone to kiss her [ass]ets.
Though charges against her
are dropped, exile's rough.
At the Maui Hilton, barefoot
& lonely as Friday, Imelda's
too bummed to shop.

Blame it on Manifest Destiny
"which swept these magnificent
Aryans across the Pacific,"
bringing light to "goo-goos,
niggers & their squaws?"
The bodies stacked up like
shoes in a shopping mall.
Black soldiers deserted in droves:
they never could cotton
to water torture.
Still, William James,
speaking for the Anti-imperialist League,
had [for what it's worth] the last word:
*"God damn the U.S. for its vile
conduct in the Philippines."*
And god damn the Marcos-acquitting courts.

norman the mormon & me

drove
700milesnonstopin12hours
pausing
only for gas mars bars co'-cola &
to pee
o normie for gods sake please
slow down
i pleaded o america were we to know
you better
we might love you less he replied
weeping

COUCH POTATO LEGEND NO. 19

. . .also in the news today,
the Vice-President,
on a state visit to Mexico,
publicly regretted
that he had never studied
Latin,
as he would have liked
to converse
with Latin Americans
in person. . .

Nil mortalibus arduum est.

—Horace

(Nothing is too difficult for mortals)

Adhibenda est in jocando moderatio.

—Cicero

(One should employ restraint in one's jests)

Y'can observe a lot by just watchin.'

—Yogi Berra

An Afternoon Tryst at the Motel 6 with Jesse Helms

He grabbed her _____ly
and ripped her _____ off
as he _____fully threw her upon the _____.
He _____ upon her _____ form
and began to _____ her _____
until her _____ began to _____.
In the throes of _____
she began to scream _____
and dig her nails into his _____
as he _____ and _____.
The walls resounded _____ly
with her _____ of _____
when she reached her _____ing _____.
As they lay _____ in bed smoking
he began to feel his _____ rise again
so they went for another _____
before the afternoon Senate session.

This poem was made possible by a generous grant from the National
Endowment for the Arts.

Ode to a Crushed Mass that Used to Be an Armadillo, But is Now Just a Bump on the Highway

My dear armored friend,
the night once was yours,
but now the afternoon sun
bakes the bones
in your cracked shell
and fries hour soul:
a hot lunch for circling buzzards.

Their crucifical shadows
dance across your grave
consecrating this greasy blacktop
as holy land
while motorists pass,
never realizing the importance
of the brief jolt that interrupts
a peaceful drive in the country.

Snow Flakes

by Larry Blakely

Frank Brewster and me, we're a team. Me, I'm Eben James, and I ran a skidder in the woods till I was sixty-four years old. I was good at it, too. Spent over forty years logging, and it never broke me like it did some men. Frank, he's got two fingers missing from his left hand, but all his marbles are pretty much in order. Frank bounced around in a bunch of jobs over the years, but always gave an honest day's work wherever he was. Now we're in this place, passing air and passing time, frittering away the ass end of our days, pretending we didn't miss a better life by a step or two. Some people around here say Frank's ornery, but I'd just call him feisty. There's a difference, you know.

Every winter, Frank Brewster and me sneak out to go sledding. I guess sneak isn't the right word, since technically speaking all the residents at the Happy Canyon Manor are free to come and go as we please. Still, the rules say we're supposed to sign out so they know our whereabouts at all times, but I doubt the keepers would go along with trespassing at the golf course, risking serious bone breakage in the bargain. I tell you, they got more rules than geezers with heartbeats in this joint. There's even a rule your wife can't be younger than fifty-five, I guess in an effort to keep our excitement level down. I say if I can snag a twenty-two-year-old, let me keep her.

We've been sledding for six winters now, ever since Frank checked in after Martha passed. Course, we've been fast friends for a good many more years than that, having grown up and then grown old in this tired little town. Went to the same high school, fought over the same girls, played on the same football team—wore leather helmets, not that there was much underneath in need of protection. In those days, we had more guts than good sense. This year, we're creeping up on our seventy-third Christmas. It snows here in Shaniko, and you can count on at least one good dump, two feet or better, every year, generally in January. That's when we haul out the sleds and give it a go.

We always slip out in the middle of the night—you have to be "ambulatory" to live here—and fire up Frank's Chrysler

New Yorker. It's got more years on it than some of the help around here, but the old tank runs like a champ. Frank keeps the studded snow tires on all year and we check the battery every month. There are ninety-seven residents in this place, and only ten parking spots in the basement, but that's more than enough. When Frank turned seventy, they tried to take his license away, but he passed the driving test with flying colors. I know, I was there.

This early December afternoon, we're sitting by the picture windows in the rec room--Frank says they call it that because everyone in here is a wreck--watching the snow come down heavy for the second day straight. Frank's got one moccasin propped up on the window sill and he's drinking beer out of a plastic cup. They frown on consumption of alcoholic beverages on the premises, claiming it dulls our senses. For those who like to take a drink, they recommend a glass of wine with dinner only. It's not exactly a rule, but they definitely try to steer you that way.

"Get some underwear on, Mrs. Sellwood," Frank shouts to a creaker sitting in a corner to our right. "Your boobs are falling out again!" Frank's got this thing about breasts, to the point of taping Playmate photos inside the cupboards in his room. Only the top half of the centerfolds will fit, but that's all he cares about anyway. Mrs. Sellwood's seventy-six and ambulatory all right, but her mind is about half shot. Her son, a smartypants lawyer from the city, checks on her, or his inheritance, about once every six months.

"Now Mr. Brewster, is that any way to talk?" Mary Ellen Walters appears out of nowhere. She's an orderly, been here going on two years and hasn't tired yet of trying to civilize the disorderly Bad Boy Brewster. To my knowledge, he has never once called her by name. According to Frank, you can't trust anyone who goes by three names.

"Wouldn't mind if it was your kajoobies hanging out," Frank says to the chesty Miss Walters. He raises his eyebrows when he says it, but there's not a hint of a smile on his thin face. Jesse Wade, sitting with his shrunken wife on a soft brown couch, lowers the large print book he's been reading to her for weeks. He's a poker face, but I think he's enjoying the show. His wife, wearing a new purple jogging outfit, just sits there. Her eyes and ears are both fading fast, and lately she's been off her

feed. Jesse's standing joke is he has to stay married to her so he can get three more tax exemptions. She's failing, as they say, so the Wades will probably be shipping out to the rest home before long. The warehouse, Frank calls it.

Mary Ellen Walters sighs, shakes her head and makes a clicking noise with her tongue. She says "Mr. Brewster, Mr. Brewster, what are we going to do with you?" I've got a pretty good idea what she'd like to do with my friend Frank. She's got a body that billows out in all directions and tight little pinched-in lips that are about two sizes too small for the marshmallow face. "What's in the cup?"

"A boilermaker," Frank says, even though there's no hard liquor mixed with his beer. "Know what that is?" He's still focused outside, sizing up the snow.

"Little early in the day isn't it?" She knows better than to separate Frank from his booze. She tried that once and Frank went out and bought a rock and roll tape. Played it full blast on his portable cassette player during her shift. Didn't bother him—he had his hearing aid turned off—but it caused quite a stir in the cafeteria.

"Never too early to get a glow on. Want some? Might loosen you up," he says, still watching the snow fall, raising the cup overhead toward her puffy face.

She turns, leaves the room, stopping to button the top of Mrs. Sellwood's dress on the way out.

"Sometimes you ride her pretty hard," I say.

He takes a sip of beer, then mutters, "She's a cluck."

Outside, the storm is letting up a bit. There looks to be a good twenty inches on the ground, maybe more. After a while, Frank says "Tonight's the night," the same thing he says every year to announce our sledding event, but this time he says it like he's carrying a heavy load.

"Paper says won't blow over for another day," I reply.

"Tonight's the night."

That evening, I lay out my sledding clothes on the bed, mostly stuff left over from my logging days—union suit, sawed off frisco jeans, hickory shirt, sweater, stocking cap, cork boots and Mackinaw cruiser. At our age, you're no stranger to cold. After the eleven o'clock news, I layer up and wait in the darkness for the single sharp rap on my door. Frank won't come in my room, he's funny that way. I'm welcome in his, which is three doors

down and pretty much the same as mine. We live like Spartans.

Just before midnight, Frank arrives and we go down the freight elevator at the end of the hall, the same one they use to sneak the occasional stiff out of here. He's wearing his pea coat, white silk scarf, wool knickers and rubber boots. Underneath his tattered sweater is a Frank Brewster favorite, worn only on special occasions—a black tee shirt, with the words *Born To Bark Like A Dawg* on the front in big white letters. His first year here, Frank bought it during a field trip to the coast. Don't know what it means, doubt if he does, but he sure loves that shirt.

The Manor is located on the outskirts of town, as well as on the outskirts of a lot of lives. It's only 1.7 miles to the golf course, a private country club for the rich and famous of Shaniko. We've never been on a golf course except here, to sled, which is against somebody's rules I'm sure. Frank parks the dark blue Chrysler in our spot, next to some lunker Ponderosa pines lining the north border. It's a good parking place, away from the clubhouse where the restaurant and bar are open all year, and there's a gate in the cyclone fence which you can't see from the road.

Removing our wooden sleds from the trunk, we silently work over the metal runners with steel wool and sealing wax. I go light on the wax. You don't want too much speed, as far as I'm concerned.

For some reason, the gate is never locked. We trudge toward the hill, trailing our sleds behind us on frayed yellow ropes. It's slow going, the snow is deep but light, and we stay in the middle of a fairway.

On the back side of the seventh hole, our hill slopes out gentle at the bottom, but otherwise it's steep, and getting steeper every year. As we make our way to the top, I think this is what I would have done many winters ago with my son if he had lived. One of the things Frank and me have in common is no kids, and therefore no grandchildren. Emily and me tried for years, until Eben Jr. was stillborn an July 5th, 1946, then we gave up on the notion. Emily's heart failed her eleven years later, and I still think there was a connection.

At the top of the hill, we stand and survey the terrain, the clubhouse lights glowing in the distance. The weatherman was wrong—hardly a cloud overhead and there's a gibbous moon

out, lighting up the course. Frank won't wear a hat, and the moonlight is in his hair, a full thick head of hair that's been a sore spot with me for more than fifty years. The black long ago turned to silver, but I swear he's never lost a single hair in his whole life. Most of my hair vanished around the time I was twenty, and that's when I first realized it's a crap shoot, fairness is a random event in this life.

"Let's get cracking!" Frank yells as he takes two hops, flops down hard on his sled and plows down the hill, virgin snow roostertailing in his wake. Caution takes a holiday with Frank Brewster on the hill. My sled, a Yankee Clipper, is longer, slower, and I get down gently in a flat spot, then push off with my hands. The first cruise is sluggish, but after that we get a good hard pack going in our track and pick up speed with each run.

Every time, Frank hollers "Wahoo! Wahoo!" at the bottom and rolls off the side of his sled, tumbling through snow, laughing. Going up and down reminds me of when I was a young buck logging, scampering around like a billy goat, setting chokers. It doesn't take long out here for me to forget my left hipbone isn't original equipment, just like Frank seems to walk better on his gimpy knee, despite the 25 degree night. By the third go around, I'm giving him a good run for his money.

After our fifth run, we're puffing hard so we take a break at the bottom, sitting on our sleds. I'm in charge of refreshments. There's snow in my right glove so I take it off before reaching inside my checkered coat for the flask.

"Look at that skin," I say, flexing my fingers, feeling the arthritis. "It's like brown paper. No wonder we get cold."

"I'm not cold," Frank says, not needing to look at my skin.

Twisting the silver top from the leather-covered flask, I take a long pull of peppermint schnapps, and feel the fire light up my insides. The flask was a Christmas gift from Emily and it's the one really nice thing I have left, though I don't drink much. If I had a will, it would state the flask goes to Frank Brewster, and make sure it's full of Irish whiskey. I pass it over to Frank, who seems to be drifting with the snow on the far hills.

Taking a swallow, he makes a face, strikes his chest and says softly "I always figured I'd be the first to go." He's talking about Martha again.

"We all do. that's the way it should be," I say, and then I'm off in those same hills, wishing for a better answer.

Let's build a speed bump!" Frank's up and at it before I can think, making a jump at the bottom of the hill, just where it starts to level off. This is a new wrinkle for the senior sledders.

Right away, I don't like the angle of it. "Jesus, I don't know. Fun is fun, but that could hurt like the dickens if we hit it wrong." I'm eyeballing his work in progress, trying to imagine the result of taking it at full speed coming off the hill.

"Not a chance!" He's pounding the ramp with both fists. Frank's never been known to cut anyone slack, least of all himself.

Climbing the hill, I'm wondering how an ambulance is going to get out here, when Frank pops out of the blue with "Remember that bar in Pocatello?"

Naturally I remember. Sometimes I forget to zip my pants, and half the time I can't remember where I left my glasses, but Pocatello, Pocatello will be with me till I'm put to bed with a shovel. We were kids, eighteen or nineteen, and had thumbed over to Idaho looking for steady work one summer. After damn near getting ourselves killed in a silver mine outside Kellogg, we were heading back to Oregon, taking our sweet time. One night in this bar I get into a fight over a dame or a pool game, I don't recall which. The other half of the scrap is a big, slow palooka with a red beard and a chip on his shoulder. Would have been a fair matchup, except two of his cohorts pinned me across the pool table. The big bruiser is thumping me pretty good when Frank strolls out of the john. He charges over, yanks the big guy's head back by the hair, pops him once hard on the nose, and streaks out the back door. Well, all three of them hightail it after Frank, leaving me alone, bleeding on the green felt, counting my teeth with my tongue. The front door is open, so I took off like a big ass bird.

"What about it?" I ask.

"You never said thanks. I coulda been killed if they had caught me." He's right on both counts.

"I was just working up a full head of steam when you butted in," I say, recalling that 1935 version of Frank, the kid I called Blade because he was skinny as a blade of grass. Back then, he probably carried all of 130 pounds on his wiry frame, but there's nobody I'd rather had backing me up, I don't care who you are.

"You gotta admit I was a pretty tough customer," Frank says.

"Maybe in your mind," I say, picking at the icy crust on my mustache. "But sometimes that's enough."

Frank spits, scoops up a handful of dry snow and halfheartedly tosses it in my direction.

At the top, we prepare for our final run. I'm searching for courage in the schnapps when Frank springs it on me. "I'm letting my Playboy subscription go," he says, wiping the runners clean on his sled. "Unless you want it, Eben."

"The hell you say." For a second, I think maybe he's got religion at this late date.

Then it hits me. We jawed about it one summer, a year or two back, just piddling away the time like you do. The last man standing is supposed to take both sleds to the top of the hill, toss down a stiff one, pour gasoline on the sled to be retired and torch it. Then disappear fast—jet down the hill, highball it to the car and peel out while the country club set watches the fire blazing at the seventh hole. I haven't driven in better than five years, but I sink in that I'm behind the wheel next winter. I always fancied Frank'd be last man off the mountain, laying a match to the golf course on his way out. "What are we talking here, Frankie boy, the big C?"

What's that? Cranky?" the Blade shouts, hits his sled and barrels downhill like a bullet.

My belly bangs the wooden slats and I'm right on his tail. Snow's kicking back in my face, and the speed makes my eyes water. It's our best run, easy. A clean getaway in the New Yorker, I'm thinking, they'll never lay a glove on me.

I know the jump is coming on fast, but I'm blinded by the cloud of snow ahead. Just as I start to feel my sled level out, I see Frank tum off the side of the ramp and roll, grinning up at me. I hit the jump full tilt, dead center, rattling my neck bones as I shoot skyward, aiming for the stars. Airborne, hanging on for dear life, it's a clean getaway. Wahoo, Frank, wahoo!

"Today medicine continues to set its own priorities and terms with physicians controlling about 70 percent of the medical decision-making...Surgeons generate most of their own income by self-referral ('I recommend this procedure and I will also perform it.'). a practice judged unethical in other countries."--Hillary Salk in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*

American Glories in the Nineties

We have a Liberty
statue that is both
obese and hollow

A Liberty bell that
cracked the first
time a slave
walked by it

A national anthem
almost no one
can sing

A Vice President
we try not to
think about
except in jokes

And a President so
kind and gentle

The number of his
victims soon will
equal Tamerlane's.

Oh, ain't we the
lucky ones?!

SUSANNE

The girl carrying
baseball bats
in a shoulder bag

The girl nobody
bothered

Mary Hale Jackson

Pond

Tall emerald-necked geese
twirl red tongues
edge near for bread
beg for chocolate

Crowd out waddling fat
brown ducks and
curving-nosed terns
and tiny sparrows

In a frenzy of greed un-
matched except in
TV's soap operas

Frederick Moe

**A REVISED GEOGRAPHY
OF CANADA**

We are picnicking
in a park
with trees & grass
& maybe people
& i ask her
"what are we going
to do after we eat?"
& she smiles
revealing a cavern
of responses
says "bury the bones"
& i wonder what thoughts
are crossing her mind
like a map of the
Northwest Territory
open white spaces
between places with names.

The Family Evolves

by Joseph C. Ebertz

Stanley Collins walked into the street level office building containing the local branch of the Anarchist and Communist Litigators Union, leading Henrietta by one of her hairy hands. He chose the conventional door instead of the revolving door because Henrietta feared revolving doors. Together they walked up to the receptionist, who gawked at them in amazement.

"I talked to you yesterday on the phone. My name is Stanley Collins and I have an appointment for three o'clock with a lawyer in your office, a Mr. Wilkins."

The receptionist was attractive, blond, about twenty-five. The look of profound dumbfoundment on her face annoyed Mr. Collins; he expected to be treated with the kind of respect and professionalism he'd imagined befitted this progressive organization. She'd be more at home behind the counter in a convenience store, he thought.

"Sir, I'm aware of your appointment. B-but I'm sorry, we don't allow pets in the building," she stammered.

She drew back in fright from the look of outrage which contorted Collins' face. He appeared as though he might slap her.

"Henrietta is no pet," he said angrily. "Look, you've hurt her feelings." And indeed, it appeared as though her feelings were hurt; she whimpered softly, with one hand covering her eyes. "She's very sensitive you know."

At that moment a middle-aged man with stylishly long hair and a bushy black moustache strode into the outer office. "You must be Mr. Collins; I've been expecting you. Won't you and, uh, what's her name again?"

"Henrietta."

"Yes, you and Henrietta come into my office. Excuse us Ms. Pearson."

They walked down a plushly carpeted hallway, past several offices, to an open door where they followed Mr. Wilkins into a darkly paneled office which smelled overpoweringly of wood and furniture polish. Henrietta tugged at Collins' hand and smiled up into his face. She seemed to like the office, he noted.

"Have a seat." Mr. Wilkins motioned them to sit in two chairs placed side by side. He took a seat behind his desk. "Now what seems to be the trouble that you and ... uh, Henrietta are having?" He was terrible with names — a continual source of embarrassment.

"Well you see, Henry — I call her that for short--" Mr. Collins laughed nervously. "Well you see, we want to get married, and we can't get a license, or get anyone to perform the ceremony."

Mr. Wilkins stared at Mr. Collins for a long time, then he began to chuckle. Soon he was convulsed with laughter, with tears rolling down his cheeks. Mr. Collins silently fumed in his chair; his fat double chin vibrated as he ground his teeth together in suppressed rage.

Mr. Wilkins finally spoke, wiping tears from his eyes as he did. "OK, did Nelson put you up to this one? Boy what a sense of humor. It's been a long time since I pulled that toilet paper stunt on him —"

"Damn you! It's no joke!" Mr. Collins shouted. Henrietta covered her eyes with her hands and slunk down in her chair. "If there was one place I'd expect to be taken seriously it's with you people — you're supposed to be the progressive ones — the ones on the leading edge of social change. I'm goddamn tired of this kind of reaction from people." Mr. Wilkins' laughter stopped as suddenly as it had started. He could see that Mr. Collins was on the verge of an even stronger emotional reaction, like crying, or punching him out. "I'm sorry Mr. Collins, but I really thought Nelson was pulling something on me. You called me yesterday and said you were bringing a chimpanzee in — I thought perhaps it was in reference to a pet-discrimination situation or something related. I had no idea —"

"You had no idea that a man would want to marry a chimpanzee, I know, I'm used to hearing it, and I'm tired of hearing it. It never ceases to amaze me how people persist in their antiquated belief systems."

"Now wait a minute," Mr. Wilkins interrupted, "I've been accused of a lot of things, but never of being old-fashioned. We are an organization of progressive thinkers — there's nothing I believe in so strongly as to exclude the possibility of rethinking it."

That was what Mr. Collins wanted to hear; he sat forward in his chair, his eyes narrowed. "Then why did you laugh when I told you I wanted to marry Henry?"

Mr. Wilkins looked at his hands. "Because I've never heard of someone wanting to marry a ... an animal."

Mr. Collins started to speak, but Mr. Wilkins interrupted him. "That doesn't mean I'm dead set against it, a man just needs a moment to regroup when he's caught off guard. Tell me, why do you want to marry ... Henry?"

"Because we're in love, and we're perfectly suited for each other. We are able to communicate well, and she does whatever I tell her to — I need that kind of control in a relationship," Mr. Collins confided, his expression softening.

"But she's an animal! My God man, what kind of life would you have?" Mr. Wilkins leaned across the desk toward them.

"Did I hear you mention God?" Mr. Collins asked, suddenly suspicious.

"Figure of speech, figure of speech." Mr. Wilkins said, as he leaned back in his chair and held his hands up in front of him, as though warding off an attack.

"Through this marriage I hope to strike a blow in favor of animal rights, as well as a blow in favor of alternative lifestyles. Our world today suffers from a rampant case of 'specism.' That is to say we, as human beings, believe ourselves superior to the animal kingdom— something I dispute very strongly." Mr. Collins had rehearsed his speech well. "While it is true that we are able to do some things better than our brothers in the animal kingdom, it is attributable only to the vicissitudes of the evolutionary ladder. With a different throw of the dice, we might have been the hairy ones here, conversing about a smooth-skinned Henrietta. In light of this blind luck, our claims to inherent superiority sound hollow. Are we in any way morally superior to our cousins, the apes? Reflecting on the wars, and crimes in our past I think not."

Mr. Wilkins was leaning back in his chair, listening intently. What Mr. Collins was saying made sense, he thought. he was somewhat taken aback by his delivery; the man was no kook; in fact, he was quite articulate. The Anarchist and Communist Litigators Union could use a case like this to make a

great deal of publicity; it was something new, something unique — the press would eat it up. And why shouldn't a man marry a chimp? He observed Mr. Collins stroking Henry's head, and her rapt gaze in return. A thought occurred to him.

"Have you thought of simply living together instead of marriage?"

"We do live together Mr. Wilkins, but I want more than that, I want the legitimacy that comes with marriage. Oh I know it's just a piece of paper, but it's also an announcement to the world: 'We've cast our lots together.' Then of course there's the tax benefit..."

Mr. Wilkins looked away in embarrassment with his next question. "What about the, er, sexual aspect of your relationship?"

"Well I'm certainly not bound by conventional bourgeois morality on that issue; marriage, or a lack of, hasn't kept us from consummating our relationship — just as is the case with most couples about to be wed these days."

Mr. Wilkins felt himself turning crimson, much against his will; he didn't blush easily, but this was really too much. "You — you know there are laws on the books against that." He stammered. "There are laws against bestiality. Not that I agree with them, but they stand in the way of you two getting married. If you want to get married we'd have to successfully challenge these laws in court; I can't imagine the legislative bodies doing anything to change them."

"You know Mr. Wilkins, I get the impression that you don't approve of our relationship. And why shouldn't we have sex? We're both consenting adults — Henry's four years old — an adult of her species. I don't force her to do anything against her will."

"You must forgive me Mr. Collins ... this is simply out of my sphere of experience — it takes a minute or two to adapt myself to new ideas." Mr. Wilkins mopped his suddenly wet forehead with a handkerchief.

A voice came out of the speaker on Mr. Wilkins' desk. "A phone-call for you Mr. Wilkins. It's your wife."

He sighed heavily and picked up the phone; she had a

knack for calling him when he was busy, but he dared not put her off. "Yes dear?"

"Felix, I just called to remind you that it is your week to take care of the cooking and cleaning chores around the house. I was not happy with the way the bathroom looked this morning, and the muffins were burned on the bottom. You know that I like to have things just so and when they're not, it stays with me for the rest of the day. I can't have that — I'm on the verge of a big promotion, as you know, after which we can probably afford to hire a maid. Oh if only they paid you a decent salary there! And furthermore..."

But Mr. Wilkins wasn't listening. He was observing Mr. Collins and Henrietta. Mr. Collins had produced a large, ripe banana from his coat, and was slowly peeling it. She watched him with rapt attention, her eyes shining like pools of black water. he stroked her head gently when he finished peeling the banana — she whimpered in anticipation and delight. He broke off a piece and held it in front of her mouth. Her lips puckered out and grabbed it from his fingers. His face literally shone with love.

As his wife's voice continued to grate on his ears he observed the deep affection between Mr. Collins and Henrietta. It was touching. 'I wonder if Henrietta has a sister?', he thought.

Danny Barbare

Money! Money!

Fast Food!
Fast Food!

Open the door,
line them up.

Fast Food!
Fast Food!

Where are
the customers?

Some sick.
Some dead.

Back in business

Martha Weaver Adkins lives and writes in Gardiner, Mont. **Jon Angel** now lives in Flagstaff. **Danny Barbare** has had his work in the *Wall* before. He lives in Greenville, SC. **Merle Berry** says he is an aspiring and [heretofore] unpublished poet with a special interest in nature and our environment. He lives in Norfolk, Virginia. **Larry Blakely**, writer of "Snow Flakes," is 44, a newspaper columnist, deskmaker and lawyer. He lives in Hood River, OR, with his wife, two daughters and three dogs. He says Elvis makes a cameo appearance in all his stories. **Richard Davignon** still writes poetry in Chatham, MA. **Roger Dunsmore** taught us how to read, write and think at the University of Montana where he taught humanities. His poetry as been published widely, including the anthology, *The Last Best Place*. **Ora Wilbert Eads**, of LaFollette, Tennessee, says that she has some 4800 poems. She is 77. **Joseph C. Ebertz** lives and writes in Woodbury, MN. **Todd Brendan Fahey**, Salt Lake City, teaches writing at Weber State and Utah Valley Community College. He calls "Owl Farm Dilemma" a riptide ode to Hunter S. Thompson. Our guru, **Mark Fryberger**, has been sending us copies of *The Realist* and an occasional R. Crumb comic book. This is **Peggy Fujita's** first appearance in the *Wall*. She lives in Oregon City, Oregon. Remember **Jay Hopler** from last issue? He still sends us his remarkable work from Mountain Lakes, NJ. **Mary Hale Jackson**, of Littleton, Colorado, is a retired welfare worker. U2 fan. Constant reader. Avid traveler. Anti-war and anti-nuke demonstrator. Movie and dance buff. A resident of Hawaii 27 years. Grandmother. Poet. **Maggie Jaffe** has poetry recently accepted by

G.W. Review, *Visions International*, Vol. No, *Without Halos*, *Bakunin*, *Free Lunch*, sub-TERRAIN, AND GYPSY. She is co-author of 1492, Monthly Review Press and art editor of *Fiction International*, of San Diego, California. **Frederick Moe** edits his own homegrown magazine called *Color Wheel* and a series of chapbooks under the imprint 700 Elves Press. He is buying a home. His address: 4 Washington Court, Concord, NH 03301. **Gene Rubenstein** lives in Huntingdon, PA. **Karin Schalm** is a writer and environmental educator living in Missoula. She is currently working on wilderness issues related to the Rocky Mountain Front. **Gordon Simard** is going to get a big black Gibson acoustic. He writes and lives in Sidney, Montana. **David Thomas** told me he was an alchemist long before his work appeared in *The Last Best Place*. **Robert Weaver**, author of "The Men's Room...", lives in Atlanta, Georgia. His short fiction has appeared in *ila*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *Christopher Street*, *The Somber Reptile*, and elsewhere. He is working on a novel. **brYan westbrook** sends us his poems from Fayetteville, Arkansas. **Emily Witcher** is from Billings, Montana. She says she spends most of her time at Brown University looking for excuses to laugh. She suggests we change the name to The Potable Wall and inscribe it on Liquid Paper™. She adds, that'd be kinda lethal — never mind. **William Woodruff** writes of life in Pasadena, California.

Special thanks to **Gerry Oblander of Midland Printing** in Billings, Mont., who lent us the antique letterpress engravings.

Typefaces were Helvetica and Palatino, printed on PassportText, a recycled paper.

Subscribe!
\$18 for 4
issues!

