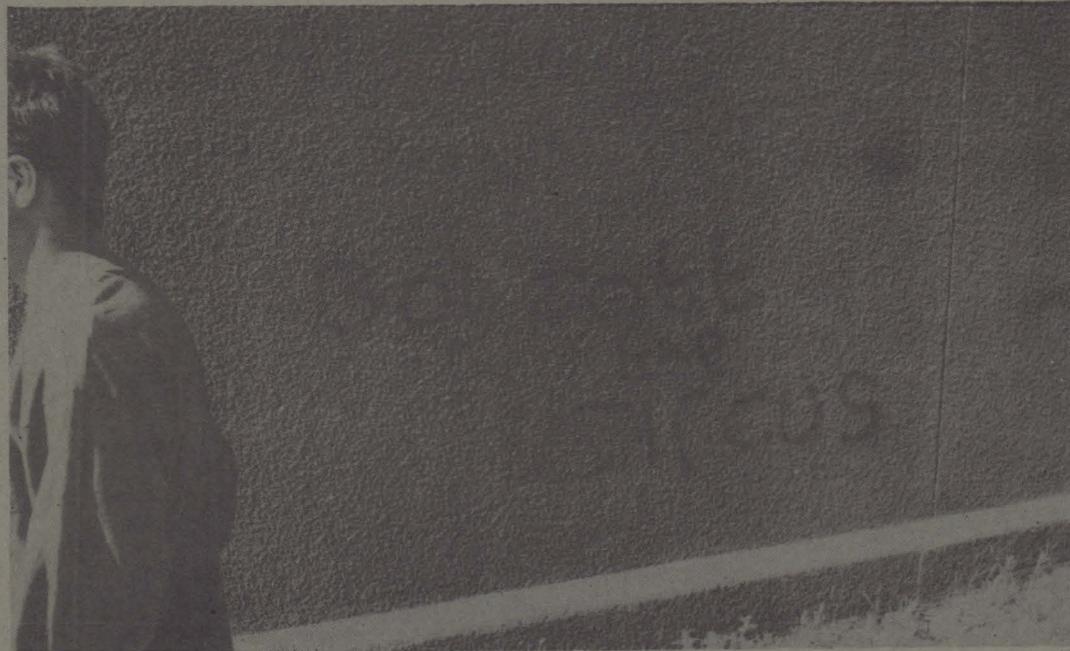


PORTABLE WALL



NO. 24

\$5

Hello Jay,
let's hear from
you at some point
we're fine. Kids are
growing. just working..

Dan

The Portable Wall

Issue No. 24 Summer 1995

free press since 1977

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This issue was guest-edited by Heather Corson and Robert Struckman

Our address: c/o Dan Struckman, 215 Burlington, Billings, Montana 59101
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Letters & Health Hints

Sept. 10, 1994

Dear Dan:

If Michael Green is not suffering from scurvy, which can make a person half-rabid, then his mind has not been tempered by a study of literature, the novels and poetry of great writers. But it is hard to maintain a tradition of literature where there are so many diversions.

"The code of the West" is not the code of the East. Not in New York at least, where all the merchants practice bait and switch.

Like G.E. Allingham, I used to hide food. My mother let me eat in the bedroom, where it was easy to discard unwanted meat.

In *Hamlet* ballet is called a "dumb show." It is too mute for me, even if Richard Kostelanetz elaborates the plot.

Perhaps Manhattan should be called "Little Sky," where people only see walls and windows.

Is my subscription yet good for
another issue?

Forthcoming,
FL Light
Bronx, New York

A horizontal line of 15 black dots, evenly spaced, used as a decorative separator.

Dear Robert Strickman

Dear Robert Struckman,
I am pleased and moved by
your long letter. It goes into December
here and it is raining and the trees have
disappeared. I appreciate the great
attention you have paid to "Tilted
Watering Can." I read it as much
careful thought, suggesting a few minor
alterations. Would you say I have that

right? I'd love to be in your magazine. With our combined enthusiasms, it seems we should be able to come up with a poem or two. To that end, I have included another group of poems, hoping one of them will strike you right and whole. If you are interested in one of the poems you returned, please let me know. It was so good to hear from you. What was it that I said, I wonder, for us to hit it off? Good, I suppose, that I don't know, more in the line with how a poem works. ...you see, if I haven't already told you, I am given to saying, "I think I shot a mime today, but how can you be sure." My eternal thanks.

Leonard Gonterek
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

August 25, 1994

Dear Dan:

No. 23 arrived looking good, as always.

I was a leetle disappointed in your rendition of "Love," which left off the last lines. Looks kinda pointless without them....

Will send along a copy of *Providence* when we get them from the printer next week or so.

Best,

Daniel Quinn
Austin, Texas

REJECTION OF REJECTION SLIP

LOVE

Answers to the Twenty Most Frequently Asked Questions

by Daniel Quinn

Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
No
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
No
No
Yes
Yes
Yes
Rarely

August 28, 1994

Dear Dan,

...I noticed in the Elliott Bay Bookstore, one of the premier bookstores in Seattle, an entire section on Montana literature — even a travel book that recommended visiting Dillon and staying at the Crescent Motel. What's going on? Do people need cold winters to get a lot of writing done?

Good health and good cheers

Jim Feathers
Seattle, Washington

SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY SORRY

Thanks, just the same. . .but I cannot accept a rejection slip from a publication that misspells its own name.

The Portable Wall (Mall?)

**Mark S. Birkelien
Baltimore, Maryland**

A horizontal line of 15 black dots, evenly spaced, used as a decorative separator.

Sept. 2, 1994

Dear Dan:

contributors

I winced, however, at the placement of "To a Feminist" in mid-column. Despite the "20 haiku" subhead on the page, the reader could see that title as a label for all six haiku beneath it, could see "To a Feminist" as a poem of six three-line stanzas. I wish you had put "To a Feminist" where you put "slurp, slurp, slurp..."

...Hoping that *The Portable Wall* stays, to quote without quotation marks the heading on p. 52, back in business for a long time to come, I remain

Yours truly,

William Woodruff

A horizontal line of 15 black dots, evenly spaced, used as a decorative element.

January 25, 1995

Dear Robert Struckman:

Greetings.... Foothills

Publishing, actually Colorado Art & Design in Boulder, published my chapbook *Swans Pausing* last November. I gave the publisher, Steven King (not the famous writer Stephen

King) \$215.00 for an ad in *Poet's & Writer's* that appeared in their Jan./Feb. issue. So far not one book was sold as a response to that ad. The books cost \$8.00. So for the amount I spent on the ad I could have bought 26 copies and given them away. My publisher tells me that he has sold exactly 26 copies. All of those were a result of a post card I made with the publisher's address, and sent out to family, friends, and editors that have published my poems. Richard Brautigan committed suicide because he was depressed about his poetry books only selling 25,000 copies. That's what I've heard. I don't know how true it is. I've barely sold 25 copies of my second chapbook. Is that a strange twist of fate, or what?

I really don't have any health tips.... I would like to say something about health care, though.... Bypass surgery does not cure heart disease. It treats the symptoms. Who wants that? I think insurance and drug companies are the real culprits. Look at all the drugs they give people with epilepsy when a doctor at Johns Hopkins has had the cure that gives immediate results for over forty years—a high fat diet, controlled for a short period. How does that profit drug and insurance companies? First we need to defeat Goliath, that is, greed for money, wealth, and profit. True happiness comes to us with health and family.

It seems that I am spending a lot of my time writing to editors and not enough time writing poems. This is as good a place as any to close. Thanks for publishing my writing.

Best Wishes,

Victor Pearn
745 30th Street 3
Boulder, CO 80303

26AUG94

Dear Robert Struckman

Anyone who appreciates
"Rednecks in Zen" enough to publish it
is my kind of editor. I'm sending along a
few more silly poems for your
consideration.

"Executive Expense" is based upon a true story which I read about in the paper; "This is about a Real Person in a Real Place" is not.

I believe "Interview" and "Awkward Date" are in the same genre of funny as zen rednecks. "Because" isn't and "placenta," well "placenta" doesn't even come close. In fact, "placenta" actually appears to take sides on a controversy many of us wish would just die.

As for me, nothing here seems to represent my true feelings of apathy for current affairs. Whatever that means. If I was feeling overtly political I might write a piece entitled, "Save the Cubans, Kill the Haitians, What's in a Boat Anyway?" but then I'd be preaching and what right do I have to do that anyway? After all, my ancestors were immigrants.

I really must stop watching
CNN.

Hope all is well with you and yours and thank you kindly for your time and patient consideration.

Sean E. Ward

20 Aug. '94

Dear Dan Struckman,

Thanks for remembering me with three copies of what I continue to regard among the more distinguished unknown magazines. I appreciate your including me. Here are some

pieces... Tell me more about yourself, and your relation to the Struckman on the cover of your magazine, let alone the fellow graduating from Sarah Lawrence. Why do you print on glossy paper? Please let me hear from you. Cordially,
Richard Kostelanetz
New York

Dan Struckman replies:

I am a pharmacist who works on an Indian reservation in Montana. I always had journalistic ambitions. Unable to write the kind of stuff I like to read, I print the work of others in my 17-year-old magazine, a journal that started out as a class project when I took a course from Montana writer Wilbur Wood.

The man on the cover of the magazine is my older brother Thomas.

The Sarah Lawrence graduate is my son Robert, who lives in Boston. He works as a carpenter and as a writer/editor.

I have been experimenting with a variety of papers, some glossy.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

24 January 1995

Dear Robert,

... [I] am a writer and composer living in Missoula who is currently working on a book of poetry, a novel, and a string quartet.

Health Hint: Don't wake up to the clock, don't go to bed to the clock, have sex more than once a year.

Kevin Postupack
Missoula, Montana

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hi Bob and Heather,

Here are my submissions.
Please eliminate them as soon as

possible. I started skool again. It's raining. I might get new frames for my glasses. I feel like I'm six years old, writing these sentences in a spiral with Snoopy on the cover. I hope I can see you both again soon.

Hey! This poem is sooo old that when I printed it out I had to scrape mold off of it. I wish I had more to send. I'm "fresh out." I'll send more when the words swim upstream again. (Salmon imagery = sign of "Northwest Brilliance")

Emily Witcher, Seattle, Washington

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Dear Bob

I'm in Sorrento, a tourist town on the Mediterranean. It's about thirty minutes outside of Naples. The funniest thing happened yesterday. We were at the excavations at Pompey, and some high school kids surrounded me and asked me tons of questions, like about Pink Floyd, and then they sang to me. I died laughing. They were fifteen years old. I was the only person they talked to in my group.

Love Clara

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

July 28, 1994

Dear Mr. Struckman

In a previous reincarnation I was a Peace Corps Volunteer, parachute tester, flamethrower expert, peach picker, bob wire stringer, survey researcher, unemployed novelist, and cartographic aide. I received my doctorate at Columbia University and everything has gone downhill since then. I have lived in Virginia since 1969, and am presently the president of my own management consulting firm.

Rene F. Cardenas, EdD
Manassas, Virginia

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hello Bob and Heather,

Still working 40 hours per week and still amazed I can manage. Come snow melt and spring training I'm sure I'll go bananas for more time to hurt myself. New plan—grad work on physiology.

Got the tip check? Not much \$ is it? You doing the Acorn gig or working on houses? Carter works on houses.

Clara seems to have stepped up to a new level of with-it-ness—putting on a duathlon, work, UM cycling team, etc. Let's all follow Hillary to the land of surf, volcanoes, and humpback whales.

If not Hawaii, why not Austin.
I've heard Texas has three distinct
climates and geographies.
Love, Todd
Missoula, Montana

Missoula, Montana

A horizontal line of 15 black dots, evenly spaced, used as a decorative element.

Page 5

It was a real pick me up to open the mail box and see *Portable Wall* #23 awaiting there for me. I'd thought you'd maybe made a wrong turn there in Lame Deer or otherwise dropped off the edge of the world.

Your definition of "gandy dancer" is as accurate as any I know. Jibes with what I was told by a straw boss on the Townsend section years ago. Speaking of gandy dancers I saw Jerry Printz not long ago — a week or two — gave him a copy of #23. He said to say hello and so I do. [Peter] Koch was through town this summer as well. He'd overdone it on the Blackfoot rafting in the sun so we were restricted to a phone conversation. Says he's gonna do another broadside for me (someday soon, I guess).

Let's see. Printz is a

wilderness ranger for the U.S. Forest Service these days so hardly ever gets into town. What else? Not much. It always pleases me to see another *Wall* appear and to be included in it. The comments of young Mr. Green of Ohio make me feel it's a special event indeed. Hopefully his career will advance as he desires and he becomes the poet laureate of something or other — I'm enclosing a few poems, mostly written in or about Charlie's Bar. (Wherein, *I'm* the poet laureate. No competition, at least not on a day to day basis). You might find one or two printable or grist for your archive whatever.

Good Luck!

Dave Thomas
Missoula, Montana

January 22, 1995

Dear Robert Struckman,

Born in Missouri

Born in Missouri, I grew up in Fargo, North Dakota. I now live with my wife and daughter in South Carolina, where I teach English at Furman University.

I turned 48 yesterday and received from one of my sisters a "magnetic poetry kit." ("This box contains over 400 magnetized words and word fragments... install them on a fridge... or any other steel surface, and watch the prose emerge! ...big fun at parties!) We had two poets over for dinner last night and they seemed less than intrigued. Here's the sentence I came up with: "TV drool would arm the raw symphony." This afternoon I'll try for something more provocative.

...I am the poetry editor for the *Emrys Journal* (P.O. Box 8813, Greenville, S.C., 29604).

William Aarnes

A GUIDE TO A RENAME SECTION

by Robert Struckman

South Fifth Street West in Missoula intersects the railroad tracks that cross the skinny railroad bridge between Orange and Russell Street bridges. On the north side of South Fifth West, on the west side of the tracks, is a vacant lot with yellow weeds and gravel. It is bordered by a sheet metal building that houses a plumbers and pipe fitters union local. On the edge of their meager parking lot, and bordering the vacant lot, are some creosote-soaked railroad ties.

Above and behind that building and its homey touch of railroad ties rises the metal arms of grain elevators, pipes, vents, and chimneys. Behind that, the mountains to the north. In the evenings the sky is a light, dusty blue. The insulators hang ripe from the sagging power lines. It's a beautiful picture.

In the foreground, across the street and to the right of the local's small parking lot is an old brick building belonging to the union. A tree grows next to it. Its leaves are spare; its limbs thin. It rises eight feet or so above the flat roof of the brick building.

The side of the building that faces away from South Fifth West has three tall garage-type double, wooden doors. The doors are a forest green and open out. Near the tree is another door. If you look into the window you will only see your shadow on the grime of the pane. But from the street the building looks perfect and clean. The red of the brick is the good dull red that makes brick the respectable building

material that it is. It's cozy, and it's sturdy. And spray painted on its side is the message: Boycott the Circus.

The phrase, like all phrases, can open up any way you turn it. Coming from an environmentalist, animal-rights point of view, the message is simple: Boycott the abusive subjugation of animals. Then there is the story, maybe, of a disenfranchised carnie who wants to turn the public from the industry who, he feels, led him into ruin. Or perhaps the circus grows into the whole inanity of the world, the loud spectacles, blaring sights—The Fattest Man In The World. But take that a step to the subtle side. Isn't our world a circus, and down there the girl in spangles? The freakish for our amusement (and profit?). It seems often to be a world where spotlights dance on someone, or something, being coerced and persuaded to leap through hoops.

A command like "boycott the circus" is usually unheeded. Like "Stop Racism." At best it can remind one that there is an alternative to the circus. Better than Stop Racism, Boycott the Circus, offers a positive action. An actual thing that you can do. And in realizing that an alternative action exists, any level of desperation drops, because desperation grows from a lack of choices. In that case "Boycott the Circus" is a statement of freedom. You can participate, or not. It drops a grain of salt onto life in the circus. Maybe, with a stretch, it can encourage a sense of humor.

When Dan Struckman, one of the creators of *The Portable Wall*, was in college at the University of Montana our family lived in married-student housing, in a huge X-shaped building in Missoula. The building was called Sisson, and it had a neighbor, also shaped like an X, Craighead—the X's. Everyone called them that. If someone asked where you lived, you said, "The X's." Other married student housing, developed along Mount Sentinel's base, inherited that title although they were regular, housish apartments. We called them "The Square X's."

The X's were built of concrete blocks next to Mount Sentinel. Mount Sentinel kneels at the western border of Missoula, its sides steep as a wall. At the foot of the mountain was a hill called The Green Hill. It was good for sledding in the winter.

The X's have a beautiful communal culture. In its environment the fledgling *Portable Wall* was able to thrive into adolescence. There were issues set by typewriter and photocopier. Dan was enthusiastic and diligent with the project. I don't remember it as anything special. It was simply a feature of life.

After seven years living at the X's, we left Missoula for Billings and its Deaconess Hospital. Dan worked there for years as a night pharmacist.

The years of Dan's night pharmacy work were for me, I think, fifth grade until early high school. Basically it was a miserable time, but rich. We began to drive around town in used Fords instead of Volkswagens, and these Fords even had heaters. Luxurious in Montana winters. But Dan was pasty-white from the night shift. The *Portable Wall* was coming out rarely, and he was tired.

Dan was bit by a dog one day on his way to work. It was a blue

heeler. It wasn't long after that that Dan came home and had quit working for Deaconess. He worked at Planned Parenthood for awhile. Soon no girls would come to our house, for fear of being recognized. Then Dan got a job working for the Indian Health Service at Lame Deer Clinic on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in southeastern Montana. He was in such a good mood, in a work environment that challenged him, that invigorated him; it was like a new world swooped down on our house every time Dan came home from work.

On cold winter mornings in Dunmore, Montana, a rural community a few miles north of Crow Agency on the Crow Reservation, the world is at once fresh and immensely old. In its stillness you can hear the trundle and ruckus of the train as it passes a few miles away. The Little Big Horn valley is flat. The trees are bare. The air is crystalline and well below zero. And then, in the semi-dark of the early morning, is the sound of the train. The pull at its horn. It sounds twenty feet away. You can hear the individual clickety-clacks.

If you are up the hills on the east side of the river, you can see the layout of the interstate, highway, and the long, raised level of the railroads track. The railroad was built by people who worked in the hot sun and the cold mornings. As the roads were built. And trains and railroads created Montana as we now know it. Railroads, and now interstates. Without railroads, Montana could not have supported extractive industry. Without those twin rails that pass through nearly every Montana community, that follow the Little Big Horn River south, Coalstrip wouldn't be the mining bonanza that it is. The scale of immigration that populated Montana

with non-Indians couldn't have happened. Both my grandparents families came by train. The trains profoundly influenced Montana.

Direct and indirect relationships ought to be; I think, acknowledged. It is not to say that the tracks that cross the bridge between Orange and Russell dictate the litany of poets that read at the University of Montana or the pattern of front-page material at the *Missoulian*. Instead, perhaps, the owners of the tracks who received enormous land grants from the federal government provided funds for newspapers, advertisements, and by subtle pressure, pulled a little when issues that affected them were depicted. The spotlight leaves the railroad's sensitive issue and focuses on the tiger, leaping through the flaming hoop.

I would not call that wrong if it did not, in a roundabout way, mislead and misrepresent, which is what happens when accuracy and interest collide. And accuracy is an important thing. It is the only thing that keeps our minds attached to our bodies.

Soon after Dan started with the Indian Health Service, "Lame Deer News and Book Report" became a new section (this section) in *The Portable Wall*. Dan was proud to be working for the Indian Health Service. The town Lame Deer and its clinic, as well as the commute, became a feature in his life. The people there were wonderful to him and friendly. And "Lame Deer News and Book Report" had a good ring to it. It was a new stage in *The Portable Wall*. The pages were being set by hand, and soon after, computer, in our basement and then printed onto nickel-a-sheet paper on an offset Multilith press.

Once you left Billings by Interstate, then switched to highway at

Crow Agency, and followed its skinny length past the Big Horn Battlefield, through the small town of Busby, through the dry, pined hills, and then up and down the long hill into Lame Deer, you were in a world not at all like the one you had left two hours ago. The non-Indian resident of Billings, or whatever outside community, had to be an exceptional person to thrive in Lame Deer, because besides the difficulty of being a stranger to the land and its people, you were in the institutions that belonged to the outside world. The clinic is like a cultural pocket within a cultural pocket. Clinics are reminders for people on reservations of the sometimes brutal police, the indifferent newspapers, the untrustworthy government, that affect so much of life. It is hard, for everyone involved, within the walls of a reminder like that, to act natural and friendly. In addition there is the danger on the part of the non-Indian clinic worker of feeling that you're doing the Indians a favor by working there. You might get a hero complex and think that you're leading the poor people of Lame Deer out of bad health and poverty.

Dan brought stories back with him that reflected these difficulties, exposed them, and, I'm sure, helped him to get beyond them. As a provider of health care, though, he had to respect his patient's privacy and not tell about the people he saw in the clinic. The tales he could tell, though, helped me understand how whites and Indians could understand each other. From the stories I learned an alternative way of relating to Indians—alternative to the racism that I, that everyone, learned, in high school, growing up in Billings. Stories are powerful that way. They step in front of old stories that you have heard, old images you have.

Recently, I read an article in *Indian Country Today* about a young

white guy who killed an old Navajo man who was sleeping in a parking lot. The young man was pulling a shopping cart on his motorcycle. He accelerated at the sleeping man, then let go of the cart, sending it crashing into him. He must have thought his actions trivial. Maybe funny. Maybe he had an audience. After several misses, he hit the man, giving him a horrible gash on his head that killed him.

In my opinion, the young man who did that probably wouldn't have killed someone who he knew, had heard about, or thought of as human. I think that he was capable of his actions toward the sleeping Navajo man only because he felt like it didn't matter. He learned, from the actions of the city council to those of his fellow high school students, that the life and death of an old Navajo man doesn't matter. In the United States, trivializing people and their struggles takes the place of direct political persecution in other countries. Injustices happen. Often we perpetrate them ourselves, and we do not think it matters.

Stories that demonstrate a person's point of view legitimize the person in the minds of listeners. The legitimacy of a point of view means the difference between an individual thinking the point of view is worthwhile and thinking that it doesn't matter. In this respect, words mean everything. Inclusiveness, exclusiveness-diction is a matter of life and death.

Enter *The Portable Wall*. In the dry, harsh culture of Billings you didn't hear much about Indians. If you did, it was about the accused murderers of some poor non-Indian man. And the accused had a scary last name with "Kills" in it. Their pictures in the paper were mean and poorly printed. You get the feeling that whether or not they murdered the non-Indian, they're going to get the maximum sentence. The

Portable Wall, in that strange zone between basement project and institution, names a section "Lame Deer News and Book Report."

But, unfortunately, the effect is not affirming of the nearby native cultures. It goes to, through no act but the naming, the other side of the racist coin, where in the cool of appreciation, the Indian name is embraced. Embarrassingly enough, though, the section did not bring a chunk of Indian art, Indian poetry, Indian stories. Lonnie Spang, from Lame Deer, helped collate and fold an issue. He worked when the paper was first being printed by offset press. But there wasn't much of anything that might give the folks of Lame Deer a feeling of inclusion in *The Portable Wall*. I guess that before you can boycott the circus you have to realize that you're in one. A major clue was the inaccurate title. There was no Lame Deer news, just one article about Lame Deer, written from the point of view of an outsider.

In the arid climate of Billings, where epithets aimed at Indians are not even recognized as such, this section sprang up. Nothing came of it. There was hardly any outlet for news from Cheyenne country. And, as far as I know, Cheyenne country doesn't have a magazine, doesn't have a newspaper. True, Donald Hollowbreast, an elderly newspaperman from Lame Deer, writes a column for the weeklies in Rosebud County, but as I see it, *The Portable Wall* has an obligation, especially considering the old title to this section. I am willing to bring back the title, or change it to Crow News and Book Report, or Yellowstone News. We'll leave the title of this section open in hopes of opening the magazine, allowing it to honor whatever title it may get. A lot happens in Lame Deer. We should not have any trouble finding news. We only need a correspondent.

Book Report by Dan Struckman

Publications received and briefly mentioned:

1995 Poet's Market contains a reproduction of the cover of *Portable Wall* No. 22 (Secret Hippie Stuff), including the woodengraving by Missoula Montana artist Dirk Lee. The *Poet's Market* lists 1,700 magazines that print poetry, including this one. Also, the *Nation*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *New Yorker*. I leafed all through it. I found many poets who have had work printed in the *Portable Wall*, also listed as frequent contributors in other journals. I even saw an except of a poem I had printed, as part of a blurb about another little magazine. Freewheeling poetry.

I especially enjoyed the words of Andrei Codrescu, editor of *Exquisite Corpse*: "Payment: 'Zilch/ Nada.' You take your chances inserting work into this wit machine....we are abolishing the SASE-based privacy system...Your submissions will be answered directly in the pages of our publication. Look for your name and for our response to your work in the next *Corpse*. We will continue returning your submissions by SASE if you wish, but as to what we think of your *écriture*, please check 'Body Bag,' our new editorial column."

The Classic of Changes is a new translation of the I Ching as interpreted by Wang Bi, translated by Richard John Lynn. It is a book of great beauty, published by Columbia University Press, modestly priced at about \$30. At last we have a translation that brings this most essential Chinese classic into modern times, especially with regard to the now-dated, conservative language and ideology of the Wilhelm and Baynes

translation. The views offered by Wang Bi are sure to aid your understanding of any of those hexagrams that have been puzzling you.

CutBank 43 (published twice a year by the ASUM, University of Montana, subscriptions are \$12/year). Karin Schalm, who has appeared on these pages (see *PW 21*) is poetry editor. I liked the excerpt from Andrew Sean Greer's novel, *Blue Lusitania*. My impression is one of improved, more cohesive, editorial tone in this issue.

blue collar and other stories by thomas laird (Dan River Press PO Box 298, Thomaston, ME 04861 \$8.95) is a collection of 10 readable, vivid, gripping short stories about mostly Caucasian, working class Chicagoans. The white underbelly has a few curly black hairs and needs a bath. I admit I would be hard pressed to reject stories like these.

Lightningbolt, by Hyemeyohsts Storm. (\$30, Ballantine Books) See Mike Fiedler's review in this issue. (I had encountered Mr. Storm in Busby, when he operated the TeePee restaurant and self-service gas station. He would invariably start singing a Cheyenne song when I stopped by.

The Montana Heritage, An Anthology of Historical Essays, edited by Robert R. Swartout, Jr. and Harry W. Fritz. So far, excellent. It is what I'm reading now.

Providence, Daniel Quinn's story of a fifty-year vision quest, has that same driving charismatic vision that marked his other novel *Ishmael*. This novel is published by the Hard Rain Press, \$11.95 PO Box 163686, Austin, Texas 78716-3686. If you liked Carlos Castaneda and Alan Watts you may enjoy reading this one, as I did.

Mountain Meadow Press, PO Box 318, Sitka, Alaska 99836-0318 published **That All People May Be**

One People, containing some of the words of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. Example: "Our fathers gave us many laws, which they had learned from their fathers. These laws were good. They told us to treat all men as they treated us, that we should never be the first to break a bargain, that we should only speak the truth, that it was a shame for one man to take from another his wife or his property without paying for it. We were taught to believe that the Great Spirit sees and hears everything, that He never forgets, and that hereafter He will give every man a spirit-home. If he has been a good man, he will have a good home; if a bad man, he will have a bad home. This I believe, and all my people believe the same. The book is not fancy, but professionally-produced, paper cover, suitable and durable.

WRITERS BLOC magazine's members write collaborative stories for publication and pay a fee of \$19.50/year. Its readers pay only \$10.50. Here's how it works, according to a blurb: "you are assigned a position on a story (beginning, middle, ending) that is being circulated. Every writer gets 10 days to contribute to the story before they send it on. Each writer has specified what they like to write (i.e. mystery, sci-fi, childrens, etc.) and **WRITERS BLOC** does its best to fit writers together." 1278 Morgan St., Santa Rosa, CA 95401. The mag itself looks almost as if it had been printed on a photocopier; comes out quarterly and is 42 pages long. □

Book Review: *Lightningbolt* *by Michael Fiedler*

Hey now! The most amazing and informative book of the last several years has recently been published in Ballantine Books' *One World* series. It found me, rather than me seeking it out, as is the way with certain authors in my life, especially Hyemeyohsts Storm. (If you've ever heard the Arapahoe "rap" you'll recognize that letter "sts," as in *Etethe*, etc.)

Amidst a plethora of interesting and diverse reading, old and new, fact and fiction; this book stands out as one of the most beautifully crafted and exciting, elucidating and de-mystifying (often times the gate to the true Mysteries is *dis*-illusionment, eh?) as well as for a neat job of synthesizing and helping to evolve various living (so far) occult, ontological processes, in which all of us participate and engage, i.e., *Mother, Life*, the Earth and this burgeoning cosmos within cosmoes.

The complete surrender, indeed annihilation of selfish self to the nature of the All-one Mother-Father is the theme, beginning and end of this luxuriously yet judiciously illustrated syllabus of the Zero Chief mystery schools of the original settlers and first-peoples of the Americas. Going all the way back in time to Alanto-Lemurian and more recent Pre-Columbian Flower-Soldiers teachings of wisdom and peaceful co-unity, this work carefully and soulfully delineates and explains the arcane and *functionally directive* methods of strategy and tactic used by the ancient time-trued tradition of the 'Zero Chiefs'; discoverers of Zero, in the Maya-Aztec mathematical sense, as well as revelations on the *Sunyata*, or void of void nature, in the Taoist, or Chan Chinese sense.

These medicine wheels and related wisdom teachings are presented. *Pari passu* with the true

story of the initiation and trials and triumphs (eventually) of two modern day Flower soldiers; *Storm, or Lightning bolt* (as the book is called after a name given by a Cheyenne Grandmother) and his "twin" in *darma*, Liberty, under the divine and simultaneously solid earth-wise guidance of the great Zero Chiefs (especially *Estcheemah*, the kind woman), are shown how the true battle of the Kachina-Flower-Soldier is against the self, and to achieve the parity on all levels that is over true self in balance with all life-death continuum, we must constantly develop *true* (higher) self empowerment and the imaginative and creative self-rule that brings equality and equilibrium to all beings — human, plant, animal, male-female and, in fact even though the

tribes, (especially ours) have all wandered from the medicine wheel teachings, hear here they be, this royal *bijak*, un-told treasures, intrepid and intact for all of us; "breeds and bloods" alike, to enjoy.

Amidst the prevalence of dubious if not worthless materials flooding our information systems and books with so-called wisdom teachings and trumped up indigenous peoples' mystery-medicines and too all the prejudice related issues, this straightforward and highly intelligent lovingly crafted guide-book to heaven-on-earth is invaluable and to be read over and over.

Read and see for yourself.
Praise Wakan and SSKwan. Yea-man. Crazy. □

Turtles

by Nellie Garnet

Turtles make amazing pets
You never take them to the vet's.
They live to be quite old and rubbery
If you don't lose them in the shrubbery.

They're never shot for chasing sheep
The food they eat is fairly cheap:
Snails and worms and fat black flies,
Dandelions, and fish's eyes.

They're not accused of being smart
They don't monopolize your heart.
If you can stand to hear the crunch
They'll turn your fingers into lunch.

Can you believe, some think them vile
Like any other cold reptile.
Some give them "A" in sex appeal.
Some say, when cooked, they taste like veal.

Road Trip

by Jon Adams

I-15 bumps along beneath us,
pitching us toward Las Vegas
and the desert
where trees grow like a beard
on the red face of the earth.
The signs tell us this is the Veteran's Memorial Highway.
I suppose a rough ride
is one way to be remembered.
Vivian lights a cigarette.
The open window
sucks out the smoke
each time she exhales.
A lock of her hair sticks
to the back of her reddening, freckled neck.

My back seems to rip off the seat
as I adjust myself.
The sun burns on my rough and greasy face.
I have an erection.
I have just awoke.

Flood

by Jon Adams

There are no speed limits in the Mojave,
no numbers to mark the miles;
there is only the road
and the cars that surge forward,
pressing to tomorrow beyond the horizon
it's a few hours away yet;
the horizon,
tomorrow.

I'm thinking of my grandfather.
I spent the evening looking at pictures
of the last wedding he attended.
He'd already begun to turn grey,
his skin, that is.

He smiles, frowns;
He fingers the pant loops of the tuxedo
he's out of place wearing;
He sticks his tongue in the spaces left
between missing teeth.
He's no more alive on the glossy surfaces
than he is in the ground
in North Dakota.

It seems I've been going the same direction for years.

I'm thinking of Melissa.
I imagine her clutching her child
on the banks of a stream.
She's wearing a cobalt blouse;
her girl, a white T-shirt with colored polka dots
and a pink skirt.
The baby picks her nose
and tries to rub the mess away
with a child's grubby, uncertain hands.

I want to sit below the stars tonight;
to stop so long I can see them move.
But the wind kicks up a fierce dust
and the road pulls my car,
pulls me.

No one dreamed she'd die by drowning;
she and the child sucked into the flood current,
not here,
not in the desert,
where everything rushes to the forgotten taste of water,
where nothing resists.

The Slough

by Todd Brendan Fahey

Twenty minutes past the shrinking of the violet
and a wrong turn toward the oyster plant,
heeding the hum of nothing
(it a hulking victim of caprice)
to make water
on the water was an instant of terrible joy

to mingly my fluid with the Gulf's,
the rankness indistinguishable.

(Salt of the earth, ashes to ashes, from sea to shining sea—
such are the moments of revelation.)

Only the armadillo was offended.
The barge-captain surely did not mind—"Ahoy!" I heard him shout,
sitting atop his garbage throne.
And though his trailings seemed to bring him not the same
measure of satisfaction, I saluted

by shaking it off.

I had not seen the armadillo wherst I began my reverie
(the violet gone to indigo, my mind
to finding my way back in the dark)
that quiet little consumer of the soil,
a prehistoric pill-bug
up on hind legs, sniffing the sulphurous invasion

casting scorn as it chased me from quarter-acre

Through a rusty gate.
On the polluted lip of the Gulf.
Next to the factory:

For a moment or two,
the closest place I'd ever found
to Paradise.

by Jen Carlson

WHEN SERENA GETS BACK to Minneapolis from this Thanksgiving celebration, surely the first thing she will do is call Jeff. It is most likely that she will pace across the kitchen linoleum of her three-room apartment and tell him, to the rhythm of her clicking heels—arms swinging wide in outrageous indignation, telephone receiver adroitly wedged between chin and shoulder—the story of her weekend. Tethered by the foreshortened phone cord to the length and breadth of her tiny kitchen and expounding on each dismal detail, she will cast her father as the unchangingly selfish and distant Dean; her brother as the naively optimistic and simple-minded Jimmy; and, although this will have been the first time she has met Rhonda, there is always a place on her roster of characters for yet another of her father's bimbo girlfriends.

Jeff is a mechanic with Shovler and Benson Motors in St. Paul, and he will have heard most of this before. Jeff and Serena met a year ago, when Serena came in with her friend Janice to have Janice's Toyota winterized. They met under the hood of this rusty compact, when Serena accused Jeff of improperly wielding the wrench, and offered to show him how he ought to hold it.

When he yielded the wrench, his slow brown eyes were caught up by her quick and nervous fingers flying through the air in demonstration, and already he was trying to decide the best way to ask her out for dinner.

But before that conversation can begin, this weekend must be over:

there is Thanksgiving to endure. At the table, Serena pulls at her remaining slice of turkey with unquiet fingers. She stares at the small flames which bobble at the tips of the candlesticks. She has come to Chicago by train, arriving late last night, where her father met her at the station. Dean had carried her one small suitcase to his car, where his new girlfriend was patiently, and, to Serena, rather ostentatiously occupying the front seat. With scrunched eyelids and pursed lips Serena had looked into the passenger window at Rhonda. She was trying to determine what could be made of this woman bundled up in a winter coat, scarf, gloves, and wool beret, who calmly smiled back through the glass. Last night, on the car ride from the train station to Dean's house, Serena had politely engaged in conversation with Rhonda. But now, at the Thanksgiving table, she lets her father and brother bear the brunt of this responsibility. She prefers to listen intently while seeming to stare dreamily at nothing in particular. The talk swirls around her. Conversational comments arc, bend and fall to her left or to her right, leaving her untouched and eliciting few responses.

"And it was so ugly, my mother swore she would never be seen in it...two-toned brown, can you imagine?" Rhonda is telling the story of her first car, a 1960's something or other, and Dean has been giving encouraging support to her narrative with eager nods and smiles. In general, he seems nicer to her than to any other woman that Serena has ever seen him with, and she grudgingly supposes that Rhonda

is good for him, though she has found the mingled sounds of their laughter to be a jarring annoyance all day. Serena thinks about how she herself will never own a car; she doesn't trust them. Besides, Jeff has three, and since he is a mechanic you can always be sure at least one of them is working.

Jimmy sits next to his sister Serena at the table, across from Dean as she is across from Rhonda. He has leaned back in his chair, stretched out his legs and crossed his ankles under the table. Jimmy can't afford a car; he has flown back to Chicago for the long weekend. He would have rather stayed at school—flying from Denver to Chicago for a four day vacation seems to him more trouble than it's worth. Dean wanted him to come; Dean had offered up front to pay for the ticket; Jimmy isn't sure why, but he knows that this holiday is important to his dad. He glances at Serena and guesses that she doesn't realize this, though maybe she does, because she did come after all and she hasn't been back to Chicago for years. What reason does Dean have for the sudden urge to gather his kids together? It's not like they have much in common... An idea begins to form in Jimmy's mind, as he looks at the faces assembled before him, and he gives a quick, curious new glance to Rhonda... Surely Dean's not going to announce that they're getting married! Jimmy listens to Rhonda's easy voice and decides to think about something else. When she is finished with her story about the brown and tan car, he will try his father out about the Dodge Intrepid Dean is still driving. He hopes that Dean will buy a new car, and agree to hand the Intrepid on to him. Jimmy met Rhonda the first time Dean took her out. This was way last July, when Jimmy was back from school for the summer and living at home. He likes Rhonda a lot, and

thinks she may come down on his side about the car, and he knows Dean likes to come off as a good father in front of her. Jimmy moved from his dad's house in Chicago to Colorado for school, and on the weekends he goes on hard-core camping trips with his friends. This is why a car would be so useful. Besides, if he had a car, he could drive to school and back for holidays, and save his dad the airfare.

Rhonda is finished with her story, and the table has momentarily fallen silent. Jimmy begins cautiously. He uncrosses his ankles, then recrosses them. He pulls himself a little out of his slouch.

"So dad, how's your Dodge holding up? Weren't you gonna get yourself something, you know... flashier?" He sends a sidelong glance to Rhonda, but the abundant hint fails Dean, who takes up with a monologue on his car's killer stereo, which he understands to be an attractive feature to boys Jimmy's age.

But Jimmy doesn't really care, and slides back into a slouch over his plate. He resumes eating while he pretends to listen, and waits for an interval to try again.

Dean used to drive, years ago, an ancient Jeep, repainted olive green. He bought it cheap at a government auction three years after he had moved his kids to Chicago and his business—renovating used R.V.s for resale—first began to turn a profit. It ran surprisingly well, looked fantastic, and earned him the useful reputation of a man ten years younger than he actually was—a single father approaching forty with two grade-school kids.

There was nothing to sit on in the back until he threw in a couple of bean bag chairs, and this is how Jimmy and Serena rode to school every morning when Jimmy was in preschool

and Serena in first grade: sunk into the squashy bean bags with their knees bent at shoulder height and their eyes stuck looking out the rear window. Like a caricatured king and queen, to hear Dean's version of it. He always remembers that car as a kind of favorite family pet, and never fails to retell the story, to great comic effect, at the slightest prompting.

"Now there was a car with a stereo," he tells his son, who does not treat this joke as if it were news. But Jimmy, for Rhonda's benefit, dutifully makes a reference to the battery powered portable cassette player that once served as the Jeep's stereo. Dean turns to Rhonda, who meets his gaze in full. "That car did us proud," he says to her, sending a guarded glance his daughter's way. But Serena is busy ignoring them all.

Rhonda inquires further, and gets the story of the beanbags. Obligingly, Dean repeats the very story that both of his children were hoping he would avoid. He finishes grandly. "Rode 'em to school, everyday, in true royal splendor," he says, taking up his beer and sweeping his arm through the air.

There is one car story that Dean never brings up to company; in fact, it has never even been acknowledged between the three of them. Serena, who carefully notes these kinds of facts, remembers this now, as she watches her father tell his girlfriend about the Jeep, a story that he should realize embarrasses his daughter. She considers this situation as she attends to the vegetables on her plate, spearing peas and baby carrots with her fork.

Jimmy is constantly amazed by the strength and tenacity of his sister's memory, which, it seems to him, carries the burden of righteousness for both of them. On the rare occasions when

Serena calls Jimmy at school, under the pretense of some business matter or another, she usually manages to work in a reference to an uncorrected offense of years past.

He can't remember very much at all about his childhood. In fact, he is surprised that it went as smoothly as it did, considering all the ways in which it could have gone awry, but missed.

Last summer, when he lived with Dean and worked as a valet parking attendant at the mall, he remembers that they got along great, though they didn't see much of each other. Dean was either at work or with Rhonda, and Jimmy had his friends and his own job. It was one of the better paying jobs around for a college kid—in fact his dad had helped him get it.

Usually Dean went to Rhonda's place, so Jimmy hadn't seen much of her, but when he did he always admired how nice she looked and how calm she seemed about everything. If Jimmy felt like he could handle a girlfriend, he would want her to be as sweet and kind as Rhonda. Rhonda must be so skinny still because she hasn't had any kids, he decides, as he turns his beer bottle in his hands and considers this matter. But he is unwilling to think about his dad and Rhonda for too long... He wonders what Luke and A.J. are doing right now, and figures he'll give them each a call later. This reminds him to make a mental note that he must not forget to ask his father what happened to his ski equipment. Jimmy and his friends are planning to do a lot of skiing this winter; that is, if one of them gets a car.

"Yeah, I have to have that looked at," Dean is saying, and Jimmy's and Serena's attentions are jerked back to the table.

"Can't drive a car without proper lubrication, hmm?" he says,

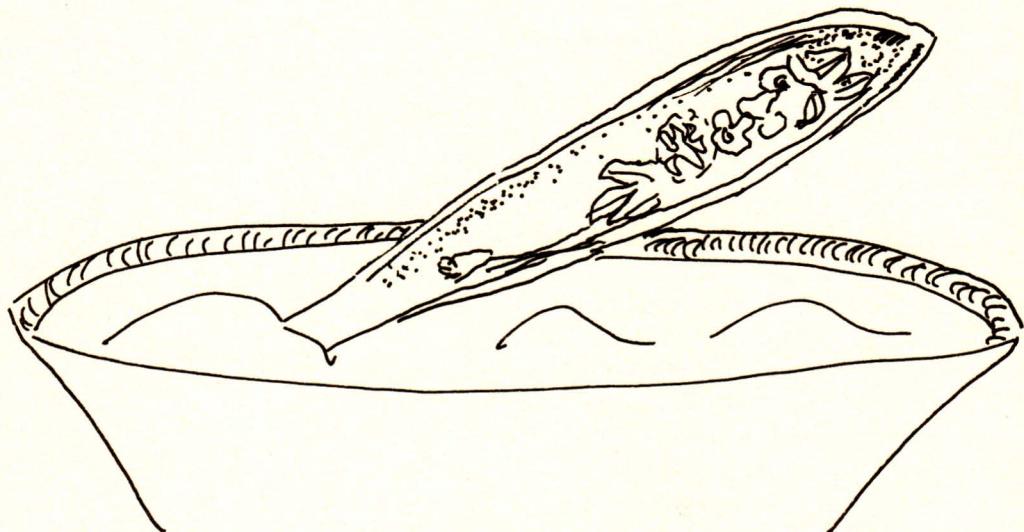
winking at Rhonda.

When Dean looks at Rhonda, and she is looking at him, he often winks, or grins, or slyly raises his eyebrows. He has been thinking lately that maybe she should move in—or, even, he move in with her. Her place is a little snazzier, and smaller—less to keep up. But sometimes when he looks at her, and she is not aware of his eyes, he has to look quickly away, lest she catch him in the act of admiring her

"You have always had car problems," Jimmy is saying, conspiratorially, causing Serena to reach for the mashed potatoes with a sigh.

When Serena was 6 and Jimmy was 4 they played together a lot not because they were especially fond of one another, but because they hated the other kids in the neighborhood more than they disliked one another. They got so used to spending most of their time on the indoor-outdoor carpet covering the basement floor playroom that one day, when Dean took Jimmy to

the park to play catch, Jimmy complained that the grass wasn't green enough. Dean threw down his catcher's mitt in exasperation and, to Jimmy's memory, they never tried that again. Jimmy still remembers that when he told Serena about Dean yelling at him, she very wisely explained that what Dean had done was throw a temper tantrum. Jimmy remembers this because he was awestruck to hear that a grown-up could do such a thing, and he thinks that perhaps that is the nicest thing Serena ever did for him. From then on he knew that whenever Dean got mad about something that Jimmy didn't understand, it was because Dean couldn't help it, and sometimes these things just happened to a guy. Now Jimmy thinks that the nicest thing about Dean's temper is that they since they are no longer children, Dean has less reason to get angry. Dean knows this, too. Often he has pointed out that he's no good with children and stupid people he can't talk to.



But with an adult audience, Dean likes to talk. He likes the sound of his own voice, he enjoys being able to use it to different effects, and he relies on it like a limb, to clear room for himself in any situation.

The year that Serena and Jimmy spent as exclusive playmates was the same year that Dean packed up his children and moved to Chicago after their mother left.

The move to Chicago had been surprisingly smooth—nothing broken or lost by the movers, nothing needing immediate attention in the new house, nothing Dean couldn't handle. Perhaps this streak of luck was what encouraged him to assume that they could easily drive to Cleveland for a Christmas with his parents. It was a ten hour drive, and the trip had begun in high spirits—the three of them singing Christmas carols and the kids building a fortress with blankets and sleeping bags in the rear well of the station wagon. Jimmy and Serena had lain on their backs and made up songs about the whirring and humming of the car beneath them, and they had raised limp hands in the air to watch their fingers bounce as they went over the bumps. What Dean especially remembers that there was hardly a silent moment the whole way up—despite his cajoling, his threats, or his yelling, they would not be quiet.

They giggled and argued and pretended with such enthusiasm that he found himself stopping to top off the gas tank every hour. He found it pleasurable to lock them in the car while he stood holding the gas pump at the mouth of the tank, watching the numbers on the machine tick regularly up.

An hour and a half from Grandma and Grandpa's house, the car jerked, jolted and swerved to the side of

the road. Toys, suitcases, and Christmas presents flew across the seats. A commotion of gravel was raised under the tires. Jimmy and Serena were instantly paralyzed with fright into an almost catatonic state of silence.

They kneeled in the rear of the car, rested their chins on the back of the middle seat, and solemnly watched their father. Dean slammed out of the car and threw up the hood of the engine with a wrath that was surely meant to kill someone.

They heard his swearing as clearly as if there were no structure of metal and glass between him and them. The ferocity of his anger, which far exceeded any display of temper they had ever seen before, sucked away their ability to move. When he disappeared behind the veil of the propped hood, they could hardly bear to blink.

They did not move for almost half an hour, watching in awestruck horror as he smashed open and shut the car doors, rummaged through his toolbox, tossed out the contents of the glove compartment. After a while he whipped on his parka, making the zipper snarl menacingly; he shoved his fists into his giant leather mittens, swearing and kicking at the tires, fenders, doors. They felt he must have forgotten all about them, as he jacked up the front end—they had to grip the vinyl seat in front of them because the car tilted to such a severe angle. Dean disappeared from their vision again and they heard the harsh banging sounds of metal on metal from below.

When he stomped off behind the car, they quickly turned around to keep him in their eyes, and pressed their faces to the rear window, witnesses to his futile attempts to flag down help. Finally a man and a woman in a pick-up pulled over, and after Dean had stood leaning in their passenger side window for a few minutes, drove

off.

Dean came back to the station wagon. He let down the front end with a terrible jolt, and Jimmy to tumble backwards, where he remained motionless on his back. Dean got into the driver's seat, turned the key in the ignition, and flipped the heat lever up to its highest level. He pounded his huge mitten hands together. He rubbed his arms ferociously.

"Daddy?" Serena asked. "Is it okay?"

"Christ, Serena..." Dean began. He sat staring through the windshield ahead. He brought his hand, as enormous as a boxing glove in its mitten entirely, up to his face, and considered it as if it were another person.

"It's the goddamn differential," he said in a terribly quiet voice, and pulling back his arm and shoulder, in one clean motion he drove his fist directly into the windshield.

The act made surprisingly little noise. A horrific wave of cracks streamed out from the central point of impact. Glass was strewn everywhere; Dean brushed some of it away.

Serena slid down into her sleeping bag, wracked with remorse for asking, and not knowing how she could have stopped herself.

She whispered to Jimmy, "It's just the differential," but he didn't respond.

By the time they got to Grandma and Grandpa's, it was well into the night, even though they had left early enough that morning to arrive before dark. They had to use Grandpa's car whenever they needed to go out for something because theirs was in the shop, and Dean's foul mood was suspended over the holiday, through Christmas morning.

At the end of the week they got

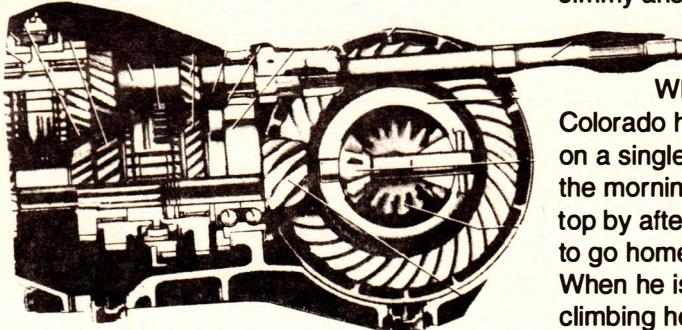
the news that it would be another week, and Serena remembers Dean in the kitchen telling them that they would have to miss four days of school. She desperately wanted to know what had happened, but never had the courage to ask, especially since the car would be fixed okay.

New Year's Day, Grandpa, Grandma and Dean watched the football games while Serena and Jimmy spent hours playing hide and go seek and building elaborate forts with most of the contents of Grandma's linen closets. They chased each other in and out of chair legs and around the new toys, which were strewn everywhere.

A sudden and telling crackle happened to sound just in the space of a moment when they had both breathlessly paused from a spasm of giggles. With a respectful eye on his sister, Jimmy carefully drew back his foot, exposing a tiny rubble of china. They each studied this unexpected development. He had broken the milk dispenser of her new teatime set.

She turned on him, and for a long, slow moment they stared at one another: he in fearful fascination, she with a venomous wrath.

She opened her mouth, and



screamed.

"You....you....you...DIFFERENTIAL! I HATE YOU!"

Serena's wail brought Grandpa hustling in. He had to yank her hands from Jimmy's hair, lift her up and then pin her down in the green corduroy chair next to the piano. Jimmy flew behind the Christmas tree, and peeked at them through the branches.

"Serena, do you know what you're talking about?" Grandpa finally asked.

"I don't want to know," she said snottily, and crossed her arms in imitation of her father.

He paused, and then continued kindly. "The differential is a car part. Did you think it was a bad word?"

She shrugged.

"It's a system of gears underneath the car, and it's what makes the car be able to go around corners." He was squatting before her chair, and watched her carefully. Then he said, "Would you like some banana bread, honey?"

She refused to look at him, and fastened her eyes out the window.

"Grandpa I'll have some." Jimmy's somewhat muffled voice came eagerly, surprising all of them.

"I thought you didn't like

bananas," his grandfather said, and Jimmy answered: "Oh, now I do."

When Jimmy goes hiking in Colorado he likes to spend a whole day on a single mountain, getting up early in the morning to tackle it. He reaches the top by afternoon and then comes down to go home, or back to the campsite. When he is at the top and is finished climbing he looks around at all that there is to see, and he wonders at the craggy intensity of the landscape he now lives in. It's not so much at how beautiful it is, but at how powerful the forces which wrought it must have been, and it is in these moments that he often feels closest to God, which is something he could never tell anyone. He knows how trite it would sound. He thinks about how good it will be to get back to school, even though so far this has been a pretty good Thanksgiving break. Still, he likes the dorm he is living in and he is anxious to be with his friends.

Dean talks to Jimmy and is a little surprised to remember that this self-sufficient creature—who seems to require little more than a regular allowance of petty cash—is of much the same reliable stuff as he was before puberty. Dean doesn't really recollect his children as babies or adolescents—he has the vague impression that they moved directly from the snapshot he has of them under the Christmas tree at the ages of four and six, to their autonomous lives. When he and Rhonda were still in the process of getting together—they met in the break room at work—she came to his cubicle one day to flirt, and noticing the picture of his kids scotchtaped to the wall, half hidden by the fax machine, expressed surprise that he had such young children. He remembers looking at that photo as if for the first time, and feeling slightly

embarrassed that, in truth, he had forgotten he'd hung it there.

He compares the Jimmy of that snapshot to the Jimmy before him now, and is startled when the idea flashes to him: I helped with this—this is my son. He looks at Jimmy's clean brown hair and strong shoulders and feels proud. He leans back in his chair and pretends to be absentminded as he tosses an arm across the back of Rhonda's chair.

Serena listens to the sounds of the voices at the table. Rhonda doesn't say much, though when she does she lays her hand on Dean's arm until she is finished, and the deepness of Jimmy's voice is at times startling. Serena hasn't seen him much in the past few years. Her father's voice hasn't changed at all—the way it accelerates as he warms to his subject and waves his hands, the way it insists that you listen while he looks at you carefully. Serena slides around the

corner of her thoughts and finds herself locked in eye contact with Rhonda, who, in roaming the faces at the table, has caught up with Serena.

Serena feels a rush of recognition, of *deja-vu*: there is something so achingly familiar about this table, that for a split second she crazily wonders if she will explode into tears. She turns her head to her father and brother, and cannot see how they could possibly be related, they are so different in appearance and temperament. But Jimmy is saying—and hasn't he already said this once tonight?—"Oh, we have always had car problems"—and Dean is, as ever, joking in return. Serena rests her forearms on the table, leans into the blur of talk, and forgets for a moment that she didn't really want to be there. She follows the trail that is left by the banter between Dean and Jimmy, sinks her head into her hands, and closes her eyes.



Striving

by Anselm Brocki

I even had the opening line
"Does your ambition
still gnaw as deep as mine?"
but Max the Shuffler
had his own agenda
and wouldn't let me write.
In his everyday well-stained
double-breasted suit and cane,
he motioned me over
the minute I arrived
at the all-night.
"What do I do?" he asked,
trembling an envelope.

It contained a refill
for sleeping pills
from a public agency.
"If you haven't moved," I said,
"you just sign, date,
and mail it back."
I flushed the toilet
in the men's room, taking my time
so Max wouldn't think
I went to wash my hands,
and came back to see
him humped over the slip
painstakingly forming the M
with curlicues and dignity.

Preparing

by Anselm Brocki

Gray, forty-five, Levis,
rubber-soled Sperry moccasins,
a knit golfing shirt,
with belly lipping leather belt,
the Grunter only comes for coffee,
but what a performance!
He picks up five sugars
on the way to the corner
window booth overlooking the world,
sets the paper cup down,
stretches hands out on the table,
draws a belly-sucking breath,
and grunts, snorts, and sighs
till his lungs are empty.
Then between thumb and forefinger,
he shakes each sugar package
to death in front of his eyes,
rips, pours, stirs, takes a sip,
hands go out for breath,
and grunts, snorts, and sighs
the long way down to empty,
expelling the doubts in his soul
by the end of the cup
and leaves in a hurry,
as ready as anyone for the world.

Transformation

by Anselm Brocki

Except for Laughing Mildred,
who shows no proper respect for God,
Willard usually smiles politely
at everyone else in the All-Night
and says a little something
about the strangeness of the weather
for July, December, February,
or whatever the month is
and before going on his rounds
even announces proudly,
as if just thinking of it,
that, contrary to public belief,
going through trash bins
is really *the* oldest profession,
but when he gets the flu
and can't go trashing,
he lets all his manners go,
slumps unshaven at the counter,
silent, as if he hates us all.

Ricker Road

by John David Christensen

A tide of stray wild flowers, milkweed, and
lance-leafed fern overtakes the old stone wall.
The green wake submerges boulders to a bleak archipelago
of slate gray or black
in the kaleidoscope
of sun and shadow cast by
maple boughs and branches stirring
in the summer wind.

nothing better than the real thing

by Eldena Bear Don't Walk

Let's go out to Camas Prairie
And watch the moon dance
Where my people used to be
Where my wild ones used to sing
49 songs
Mourning for love

Pow-wow dirt roads
Traveled down by many
To be together
And howl at the moon

Firewords and laughter
Carried me through my life
Welcomed wherever we go
Like Mastercard

Is there anything better
Than being Indian
Did I ever think those
words would be said

My heart beats to a drum
My soul sings to prayer
Is there anything better
Than being Indian

Occupation*

by Eldena Bear Don't Walk

The old men in my mother's pictures
Used to stare at me as I slept on the couch
I was just a little girl
And they were of another time
A generation so far gone
To my world of cartoon and crayon.
Their eyes filled with sadness but
just a glimmer of teasing
How I was told of these old men
Enchanting life that had been so easily
destroyed
The long brown hair twined with strands of gray
Every line on their face—a coup of survival
It was those years—All those years
That have sculpted the statue of my life
The women that upheld and with held
lamentation
The grandmothers that kept my stories
My heart and my eyes have heard more
Than my ears were even built to hold
From their words of widsom
As they laughed through the story
of their lives
Courage of your story
Oh grandmother tell me of your past
How I remember the sweet
telling of harshness

Repeated for me

Repeated

Repeat them for me

*My Chippewa grandmother always told me of a joke where a white man (he was actually the census taker) came around and was asking people about their jobs. Attempting to speak the metis language, he asked one man about his "occupation" and the Indian man replied very emphatically, "I never camp out!"

Sorrow

by Leonard Gonterek

A light snow is layering
the awning and the hoods
of cars, and I am
buttering my toast.
A child place to start.

Jazz
notes float
down river of leaves,

Chinese take-out cups.
Someone punches
the juke box.
What I am is a florist.
A meek one at that.
Remember once I wrapped
roses, translucent, yellow,
presented them to the next customer.
She looked at me
like I was a reptile

with a bad haircut.
So I stand on the step
and wait for seed catalogs,
take them from the mailman's
hand, but I have the Tao Te Ching
well-thumbed in my back pocket.
Remember once waiting for
the mailman, took

a bowl from him filled
with fire, something curling
at the bottom, turning over, larvae
in a dream. Remember once
with a woman, loved her
scent. Must be French.
What was she wearing? I'm going
on about her perfume
and I notice
she's eating
french fries,
and I'm all
I love your perfume
I love your perfume.

But What Are Neighbors For?

by Steve Burt

JOHN HARNER PARKS HIS car in his driveway and walks toward me, his lips moving as his hands illustrate. I throttle down the snow thrower so it's idling, but above its noisy blat-blattting I still can't make out what John is saying. At first I think he's thanking me for blowing a foot of snow from his sidewalk, but what are neighbors for? Besides, I do it for everybody on the street.

"Haven't seen your dog in awhile," John says loudly, not quite shouting above the motor's noise. "Is he okay?" He's speaking of my pup Henry, now ten months old and chewing up my rugs.

"I've been keeping him inside or on the line in the backyard," I say, also just below a shout. John's face and mine are barely a foot apart.

John's a retired school teacher. His wife died of cancer last spring, barely ten months after his retirement. There are still two cars in his driveway, and he makes sure both of them are excercised. He says he still enjoys the feel of them both and uses the little Buick for local trips, the Volvo for longer drives, like when he visits his daughter in Vermont or his son in upstate New York, both of whom are about six hours distant. My wife believes John can't let go of the second car, that it's a reminder of his wife—a grief symbol—but who can say?

"I thought maybe something had happened to Henry," John says.

"No, no, he's all right," I answer. "But he got thumped around a couple weeks ago. He was lucky it was under a nice, high, four-wheel-drive truck."

My wife and I told no one about our Henry's being hit or about his scalp lacerations. The night it happened I'd let him out to pee, and when I called him home he darted in front of a truck. Because Henry's a small dog, the truck's front bumper barely scraped his head, and the truck passed over him as he tumbled around beneath its chassis like he was a load of wet wash in a clothes dryer. I saw the whole thing from the porch. When the driver backed up to see what had happened, I assured him it wasn't his fault but mine, and I told him to go on home. Meanwhile Henry disappeared. My wife and I seached until midnight, then went to bed for a fitful and guilty night's sleep, figuring Henry had crawled off on this sub-zero night to die, either of his wounds or hypothermia. But he surprised us and showed up shivering on the back porch at breakfast time. After that night I'd kept him close, not allowing him to run alone at all. It had taken us two years from the death of our 14-year-old black lab Otis before we felt we could adopt Henry.

"Is that why his head's shaved?" John asks. "I wondered about that when I saw him last week."

"No, no," I say. "The vet shaved him because of a fungus. We had to put powder on it. He's okay from the truck, though, just two gouges up here." I point toward the crown of my head.

"Oh, that's good," John says, nodding. "That's good."

The motor of the snow thrower is still blatting, and I'm able to guess what John is saying by watching his lips. My ears pick up parts of his words. I wonder why he's still standing talking

to me halfway out in the street as I'm running a snow thrower. It occurs to me that I've never seen John smile in the six months since we moved to this street.

"I had to have them put Dodson down," he says. His words slap me. Dodson is his 14-year-old black lab who could have been the twin brother of our Otis, whom we'd had to have put to sleep before we left Missouri. It was there that our New Hampshire-born Otis became a turtle-sliming dog, carrying box turtles home in his mouth, then playing with them in the driveway like he was worrying a ham bone. My wife joked that at his age it was the only thing he could catch. Otis was the best dog we ever had. We loved him dearly.

"Dodson?" I spit out in disbelief. I hadn't known John's dog was sick.

"January twenty-second," he says. His lips drawn together.

I try to figure out how long ago January twenty-second is, but the calculating part of my brain is numb. I rough it out at two, three, maybe four weeks. I'm embarrassed that I haven't noticed there's been no activity in John's fenced-in backyard. And I'm embarrassed he's asked about my dog, but I haven't asked about his. I feel selfish, self-absorbed.

"He had cancer. The liver," John continues. His voice drops so that I can't actually hear the words, but I can see them coming off his lips. All I can see is John's pained eyes and his lips, as if there's a small square frame around them. I can't pull my eyes away.

"I didn't want him to suffer," he says, "So I had them do it before he got too bad." It's hard to see behind the glare of John's glasses, but I think he's tearing up. I've only been his neighbor for six months, and we've hardly

spoken except for the chit-chat and small talk of people who occupy connecting house lots. No dinners together. No deep conversations. No borrowing rakes or hoes. Other than waving as we pull into our driveways or conversing briefly about our dogs, we don't know each other. Oh, and the snow throwing. He thinks I'm nice for doing that, but then, I run my snow thrower up and down the sidewalk on both sides of our street, because so many of the people on our street are older and shouldn't be shoveling, and I'm the one lucky enough to have a reconditioned \$40 yard sale snow thrower.

I still have the snow thrower running. I hate to shut it off, because it doesn't start easily. Besides, I'm standing alongside the curb in front of John's house, with my butt sticking out into the road, so I daren't shut it off lest a snow plow show up or a car come by.

"He was a good, good dog," John says.

I feel my face responding, tightening into a prune of sympathy. "Black labs are great dogs," I say. An image of Otis with a mouthful of slimed turtles comes to mind. Now my eyes start to water. I'm tempted to shut off the snow thrower so we can freely talk about our grief, about our two dead 14-year-old black labs. But then John might speak of his wife and I of my father, or a snow plow or a car might come along. I keep it running.

Instead I stupidly ask, "So are you going to get another dog?" I kick myself as soon as the words come out. I know damn well it's too soon. I'm angry and disappointed in myself for my insensitivity.

"I don't think so," John says. "Dodson was our second black lab." John's tears are a frozen film over the lenses of his eyes. "We had each of them for 14 years. I don't want to go

through it again." His face is a wall of pain.

I nod my head, pretending to understand, but it's really a wooden sympathy nod. Well, maybe I understand a little. I place my gloved hands back on the props of the snow thrower. Down the street I catch sight of a snow plow as it rounds the corner. John must sense I've seen it because he steps back. His voice grows louder as he says over the blat-blat, "Thanks for doing the sidewalks. Everyone on the street appreciates it." John catches me by surprise as he pulls his hand from his jacket pocket and thrusts it my

direction. I remove my glove and shake his warm hand. It's a long handshake, and he's looking me straight in the eye as he squeezes. A wave of thanks would have sufficed. John releases his grip, and I mine. He turns and walks back toward his other car, the one his wife always drove.

I drop the snow thrower into gear, throttle it up, and move on to clear my own driveway. In the dining room window I can see Henry, forepaws on the window sill, nose breath making a cloud on the icy glass, watching me work.



Mama, Mama

by Ron Carter

Mama, Mama, I want to be a dancer when I grow up

Sure baby, you can be a dancer

Mama, can I please take a dance class?

Maybe so, honey, maybe so

Mama, I want to be a ballerina like the white lady in my book

OK, dear

Can I please take a class?

When we have enough money

Do we have enough money, do we?

Honey, let me tell you something, they don't let little colored girls in dance classes

But Mama, what's wrong with my color?

There's nothing wrong with your color, YOU'RE NOT WHITE

Three on Three

by Mark Holtoff

It wasn't much of a court, the driveway
slanted to a backyard creek; women and cameras
dotting the wooden deck, rooting
between sips of coffee for their boys.
The rim, of course, was netless, bent a little

to favor a ball thrown short. We were old,
out of shape, injured; we had our excuses:
a ball that went dead, a dog that tripped us up,
dinner sloshing in our bellies.

Nothing, however, could explain our *competition*,

could help us understand, even consider what pushed us
beyond the civilities of our warm-up shots,
the selfless baskets and boards we threw up, took down
and passed off to each other before the game.
Divvied up into teams, became teams, forewent

family-reunion manners and played ball. I'm glad
the camera film got lost; I know the game
was nothing to see—at least, nothing worth capturing
any moment of. The snapshots from last year
can remind us of our gracelessness and gravity:

dog-slobbering, red-faced men hardly able
to leave the ground. To play, to compete, to forget
our incompetence for thirty minutes—
for we were all incompetent—that was the goal.
Among ourselves, we had a chance

to contribute something: a fast inside pass,
an awkward alley-oop to score; half of us would belong
to the winning team, it was assured.

I spoke with my best friend yesterday,
and he and I learned something about ourselves:

that each of us is doomed to fail somehow, somewhere,
sometime in our lives. We will fail
in some way we could not think possible, perhaps
to leave a candle flame burning, a seatbelt unbuckled.
Perhaps we will fail merely to speak, our tongues

anesthetized from truth or help or love, until the moment
passes. Surely, this is the most tragic,
the most common of our failures, this silence.
So, I am thankful that our team won that day,
that I said, "Good game," and shook hands afterwards,

just as I'd learned to do in grade school.
Something was understood in that win, something
missing from the hands and eyes of my relatives
who had lost the game, something
we were contesting that day, always contesting.

I can see it even in last year's photograph, behind
the comic poses and the sweat, an intensity
made manifest in a flaw of the light: the flash
on that darkening winter day
had lit the ball-handler's pupils red as coins.

WESTELWHEWIT

by Lord Ped-Xing Somethingfnord

Belgium. Freaky whispers of the cascading intervals beyond the right soul of a confused tongue, when I didn't want them to enter into it while he strayed the strips upon wanton foot stools that help to destroy all of creation at the bang of moon kites with the powerful littles of many of them.

It was time, and weather or knot happiness floats, rice may be burned upon the walls when they turn around on icicles of a dream, through a carnal train stop within the placing of a fluttering half of my waking pail.

As I strum the likeness of helter, my strain is placed firmly en-kowling like of that western point.

I disperse it.

WESTELWHEWIT DECONSTRUCTED

by The Mad Swede

It is not extremely apparent that he should say "I disperse it." as the end of the story? (if one would call it a story, I only use this for a lack of a better term, certain something like "Koan" or "Epic Poem" seems not to do it justice) It is as if the writer wishes to paradoxically draw us in and push us away at the same time. It cries of post-modern disillusionment. And Belgium. Belgium, the most useless of the European Community, serves as the most-important setting. One is reminded of Pynchon's Belgium, though only as an allusion...

It screams of post-world war trauma. The regenerative end of fascism, of the perils of the cold war, and the loss of the collective

consciousness through suffering that could only be described as "Post-post existentialism."

But that's not the right term, here. I'm looking at more than just Post-post existentialism. After all, existentialism screams of France, and we don't want that. France is stupid. Post-modern rings true, but that's French, too.

It is a style that I believe to be a harbinger of things to come: a beacon of confusion, a lesion opening of a diseased mind. Neo-Post Modernist Post-Post Existentialist Drama/Story/Media. We'll shorten it to N-PMP-PED/S/M for now. Rolls off the tongue.

The one thing that N-PMP-PED/S/M has that shakes the very fiber of our souls is that random chromosome, that fractal chaos sort of thing, that tugs us away from the feeble constructs of society (For no one believed the Objectivists for a second, after all, look around you. Nothing is *really* real...) It is phrases like "rice may be burned upon the walls when they turn around on icicles of a dream" that suffer us to the unreality of life.

But one notes a disturbing trend, here. Certain phrases seem to suggest a Heterodoxy of White Male Imperialism. Note: "my strain is placed firmly en-kowling like of that western point." And Belgium? Get real. No notice of third-world cultures, it seems firmly rooted in Western culture. One may suggest that this is not the typical of N-PMP-PED/S/M, that it is a strain (and a rather disturbing strain at that) that one could call (Anti-Multi-Culturalistic). And Westelwhewit seems to fit very snugly in N-PMP-PED/S/M(A-M-C).

But is Westelwhewit the important part of this? As Derrida would say (of course, what does he have to do with anything? *He's French!*) The author means nothing, the story (or

in this case Drama/Story/Media) means nothing. Those are *random* words on the page, as far as Derrida is concerned. It's the INTERPRETATION that is the important thing! Yes, yes, the true art isn't the actual artwork itself, but the *deconstruction* of the art! Finally us critics get the edge over the artists. All those centuries, the artists saying that we weren't necessary. Now we know, nay, we have PROVED, that it is the CRITIC who is the important one. Not the namby-pamby artists, always getting all of the attention, being wined and dined by all of those famous people having as much sex as they want. DAMN IT! It's time for us critics to have sex as well.

That's why I put forward this addendum to N-PM-PED/S/M(A-M-C). and that is: "(But Most Importantly: Deconstructed!)" So, in short, Westelwhewit, or rather, the INTERPRETATION of Westelwhewit, is the classic case of N-PM-PED/S/M(A-M-C)(BMI:D!).

Thank you, and I'll see you all at those Big Parties where Lots of Sex Happens, (otherwise known as BPwLoSH...)

continent.

As I deftly try, more rightly struggle, to the pinnacle at which I try to subsist I look up and not down (that fear of falling does me in) and all I see are Seagulls with tennis shoes. And if that doesn't defy, nay defile, all that our masters the Adamsion has told, nay taught, I then find my self happy, nay desperate, and if that weren't enough I really DO enjoy wearing funny hats, even if I do look like a fish, nay a rodent...



ON WESTELWHEWIT

by St. Kneehouse

As I hip through the merrily days of my life, oh not really life, I reflect on the vastions of the bread machine propositionalary proclamations that are, in chief, the seeds of man's (oh there's that word again) suffering and grief to quote an abominable source or four. Ah hell. Mine is but to rot and die to love? Nay, since when is it anyone's duty to study the cracks in another man's (That word, oh hell)

Moving through the turnstiles

by Todd Struckman

With a rhythm I tried to predict
the surging noise of eight thousand fans
crashed out of Dahlberg Arena and roared
around the near empty lobby, diminished
and washed back. Half-time

with its dancing Sugar Bears came and went.
The mean lady tending the turnstile held,
as did the Lady Griz, holding the Tennessee
lead to two or three points. Desperation
hissed in the troughs of silence.

The son of a friend, a kid named Ben,
came out looking for me, getting a hand-stamp
at the turnstile, and said, "It's nearly sold out,
they'll never open it up." By the payphones
he licked the back of my hand, then pressed
his to it, the Neutron Mind Warp.

At the rear entrance I passed through,
nervous. He was right, there was no place
to sit, rather, stand and yell. The Lady Griz
trailed forty-one to forty-four. At the eaves
of the Arena we joined the fracas.

Robin Selvig, career record of
three hundred eighty-six wins and
ninety-two losses, shouted plays.
The Tennessee coach stamped her foot
when things went wrong, went right

for the Lady Griz. Pilcher from Frenchtown
dribbled through the two mighty Tennessee pillars,
dished to Hamilton's Carla Beattie, who missed
the easy lay-up, but Langton-Scott
pulled it down and shot to score.

Next to us a sweaty man with his son
screamed, "Yehhhss!, Yehhhss!",
spraying sweat until the end
and even though the Lady Griz lost,
the man and son stood drying, didn't want
to leave the steamed upper atmosphere

not talking about the game but about
never winning the half-time
fifty-fifty drawing, and someday the son playing
trombone in the band, perhaps,
if he stays and attends this school.

Which he will, but the father is wrong.
He will live on campus, wash his clothes
in the basement of Elrod Hall
and call across town on Sunday afternoons
if he's not in his carrel practicing.

The weight of the fat kid

by Todd Struckman

In Bonner Park, one block off Beckwith, the fat kid caught up. I had not ran, just left early and took the stairs in two step jerks and headed for the untracked snow between the white wooden bandstand and clump of teeter-totters, slide and swings, where sand was turned and snow folded by the feet of children. The fat kid was slower leaving school.

He carried a trombone, bigger and less graceful than the trumpet I carried. He had no books, only the long horn balanced by a handle. I held the trumpet on my left, tightly coiled copper and brass packed in the brief black case, lighter and more agile than a trombone.

In the park, head twisted over shoulder to see his gains and then tense circles of prey caught, but not yet engaged, but caught and waiting for the stike or a lucky break. I prayed for luck in the park that day. We grappled, fell. Trombone and trumpet cases lay, slate blocks tumbled like fresh rockfall on snow. He climbed on me, his knees pinning my arms, cutting the brachial current.

He let spittle drain from his lip to my eyes and mashed snow against my yielding mouth. He crammed snow into my mouth and didn't speak, just looked me in the eyes and sat straddled on my chest. The great weight of snow and him and his spare eyes cinched my trachea, collapsed my lungs, prevented the mechanics of ribs, intercostal muscles and diaphragm from playing their concert, prevented even the sounds of breath across scared vocal chords.

This did not soothe his hurt. So he left with his horn, the trombone, the most sloppy and natural horn in the band. When he was gone I wiped my face and coughed, steadied my voice against betrayal by falsetto. This worked for twenty years. Then I picked up the trumpet case, the compact mass of bright tubing and oiled valves. The struggle had no sound to herald witness.

EASTER SUNDAY IN CHARLIE'S

by Dave Thomas

After days of sun
 balmy weather
today is gray
full of wet streets
 and a longing
for a peaceful
 sunny
intersection
 of dust
 and time
music built
 from the pain
of the past
Roy Acuff singing
 “A Crash
 On The Highway”
echoes from the music
machine
“I didn’t hear nobody pray”
we sit reading
 newspapers
talk about socialism
while on tv
some distant
 basketball
 game
bounces
 into oblivion.

Driving Time

by Gregory L. Kappy

MOST PEOPLE CAN DRIVE from Gainesville to Pensacola in about 5-1/2 hours. Last night I did it in 4-1/2. Getting off early from work and racing across the I-10, I barely arrived at Florida Northwest College in time to referee the basketball game. Four and a half hours to get there and three hours at the game. It, however, took me seven hours to get home.

What a team F.N.C. is, with their two-handed blocked shots and massive slam dunks. I once drove home in four hours 12 minutes, the time Avis ran out of Prizms and upgraded me to a Cadillac. A victory for the referee. Late in the first half, number 12 dunked the ball and entangled a defender's head in a scissor-lock in the process. Both coaches wanted a foul. Vice-gripped in legs, the guy's head looked like a chestnut.

Florida Northwest won by 54. Dunk. Steal. Dunk. Steal. And so on. Averaging 75 miles per hour for 4 hours is 300 miles, I figured. Add 50 miles to that. Yes, 4-1/2 hours. If I get stuck behind someone, I'll go 80 or 85 to make time. That was my usual strategy on this highway, so barren at night I often could go 50 miles without seeing any life, save for a sleepless armadillo.

As I passed the capital Choctawatchee exit, I saw a faint painting of crimson, yellow, and orange light in the distance. I drove forever (actually it was 9.2 miles, or 6.9 minutes) until the colors became more obvious. You should have seen this full court bounce pass the skinny

Northwest guard made. I don't think Panhandle Junior College crossed half court three times in the second half.

I eased to 73 as the sky brightened. I slowed my rented Sentra to a crawl as the reds and oranges and blues began to dance wickedly against my windshield. Creeping through the makeshift barricades, my eyes followed a long white lump being wheeled into an ambulance. The stretcher's back left wheel quivered wildly, as if it were part of an old grocery cart. With their silver suits and mirrored helmets, the paramedics belonged on the moon. I wondered what this delay would do to my average.

They guided crane-sized pliers to the crippled Festiva, tearing a folded door apart like it was an empty Diet Coke can. The moaning steel made my toes numb. The sirens' cascading illuminations made me feel like I was driving through an endless burning building, though the blue strobes checked me. A man who appeared to be the driver of the dented semi scratched his head, watching the relentless jaws wrestle the twisted subcompact.

The lights haunted my rearview mirror for over 11 miles. Eventually the sky returned lifelessly black. The wobbling wheel and the metal-on-metal groans iced through me all the way home. I arrived in Gainesville at 4:07 a.m., averaging 49 miles per hour.



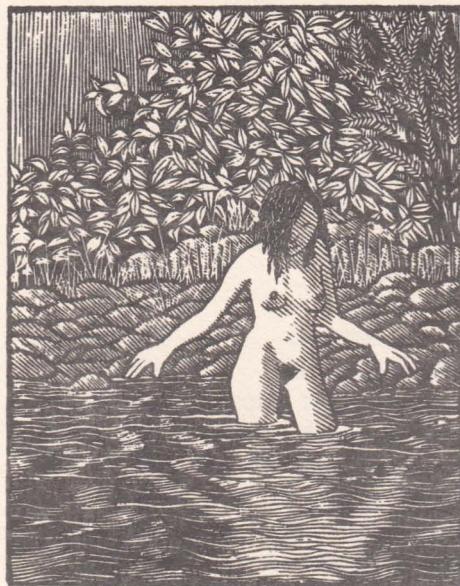
ROUGH DRAFT

by Victor Pearn

The woman was a poet.
She was embarrassed
when she won first
place in a contest,
it was a mistake anybody
could have made.
She was the first poet to reach
the top ten best seller list
A list monopolized by over-fat
novels, for the profit of
major publishing houses.
Accidentally she mailed
out her rough draft,
inadvertently leaving
the camera ready copy
on her desk. Now her manuscript
with the appropriate capitals
and the perfect punctuation
would be sold nationally.
She always went back
and took out the caps
and punctuation for the
final draft. Her new work,
1000 Dogs Frequently
Fertilize My Lawn, would
get rave reviews.

Jim Kraft





THE SQUIRREL IN THE ATTIC

by Victor Pearn

The tenant next door
moved after a squirrel chewed
her telephone wires. Omnibus
Group said she had to pay
U.S. West Communications
so she left. Now that
squirrel is still there,
two years last summer.
I tried to have our old
worn out screen door patched
three times I called the landlord.
City inspectors said Omnibus must
replace our screen door.
Nothing has happened,
unfortunately I came
out here for grad school,
I've been held economic captive
here against my will
ever since. The tightwad
landlords getting richer.

by Rene F. Cardenas

Explosions ripped
through Guadalajara
yesterday a.m.
184
dead. A pile of bills

lies on my kitchen table.

The San Diego
earthquake last night forced
thousands to sleep in cars.

I have to drive
into town for
a meeting and lunch.
In the rain.

By noon tomorrow
the glaciers will have
reached Georgia, swamping
towns as far as Atlanta. Who

should I vote for
in the coming election?
Or sit it out. In protest.

Dandelions have taken
over the Capitol.
Bills have been passed
to no avail;
seeds and pollen everywhere.

Half of Russia
evaporated
over the weekend
and cracks appear
in my basement floor.

Everyone I know is
on a fat-free diet.

Dead Man's Condiments: A Family Diary

by *Mitch Grabois*

WHEN THE WINTER SNOWS
blow, Northerners begin fantasizing about subtropic Key West, and many of our relatives are visiting. Claudia, my wife Veronica's sister, and her husband drive down in their Lincoln Town Car. When they pull to the curb, they take up half a city block—I am happy I don't live in a more congested section of town. The car's enormous trunk is full of Xmas presents and beer. As during their previous visits, they consume several cases per day, emptying enough cans to start their own recycling center. It is a wonder they are not huge. Claudia, in fact, is quite tiny, and reminds me of a small burrowing animal. When they run low, they send me pedaling to the liquor store on my old balloon-tired, one speed bike.

Veronica's other sister, Marjorie Juniper, is also visiting, along with her husband, Sinclair. Sinclair watches Claudia's consumption of Busch with dismay. He is a recovering alcoholic from a wealthy Connecticut family (they've been making cast iron pots for hundred of years). Sinclair was supposed to have had a distinguished career as an international banker, but couldn't cut it and became a second grade teacher instead. Now retired, he is striving to maintain his youthfulness, and celebrated his sixtieth birthday by seeing *Wayne's World*.

Sinclair has brought his accordian, and the house resounds with polkas. After a long period of deliberation (tuba? flugelhorn?

bassoon? electric viola?), Sinclair took up the trombone, too, which also is in his luggage. True to his Yankee roots, he is a believer in the notion that practice makes perfect. Through the anaesthesia induced by my secret supply of Wild Turkey, I can hear his musical analogs to the trumpeting of elephants and the roaring of hippos. Punctuated, of course, by polkas.

Marjorie Juniper, an untreated manic-depressive, is accompanied everywhere by her two large plastic dinasours, a brontosaurus named Spike and a tyranosaurus named Elliot. Spike is largely silent, but Marjorie Juniper has long conversations with Elliot, who speaks in a sweet and lispy voice. Her conversations create a loud and embarrassing scene when we go out to dinner and our gay waiter assumes that Marjorie Juniper is parodying him.

Isabel, Veronica's mother, and Gerald, her step-father, are naturally pleased to have all their daughters in town and so conveniently under one roof (albeit mine).

Then, between Xmas and New Year's, Gerald dies. Gerald was a very difficult man—even before the illnesses he developed in middle age—but the sisters have retained some regard for him having raised them through their tumultuous teenage years.

Only Marjorie Juniper's response is extreme. Her manic-depression overloads with an operatic grief befitting Maria Callas, and her behavior becomes progressively more

erratic. She insists that everyone do exactly what her dinosaurs command they do, no matter how bizarre or impossible.

As a licensed mental health counselor, I am expected to take charge of family crises. Needless to say, by the time New Year's Eve rolls around, I am exhausted.

Glossing over Marjorie

Juniper's behavior is surely the better part of valor, but let me merely say that there is nothing like coming out of an exhausted doze on New Year's Eve to find my sister-in-law standing over me, her face a contorted mask, ranting and raving and making heinous accusations against me.

In a state somewhere between sleep and wakefulness, I wonder: is this the point in the movie where she bends down and begins strangling me to death? And also: will I resist? Or will I let my breath be choked off, and be taken by this mad woman into Eternity? And also: will there be a sexual component to this?

Sinclair saves me when he enters wearing his accordian and carrying his trombone, and I wonder if he is going to simultaneously polka and make elephant noises.

He asks my advice, and I tell him: control this woman! Take her in hand! Therapize her! Medicate her! Strip her of her talking dinosaurs, her climatically inappropriate fur coat, her Russian Cossack hat, her fake Rasputin beard, her Isadora Duncan scarf, and her purse filled with stolen plastic cards which say things like: Race Car Drivers of America and Society of Tibetan Expatriots.

But Sinclair is utterly unable to take action and I leave him playing a sad polka and go out to spend New Year's Eve trudging up and down Duvall Street with all the tourons.

Marjorie Juniper has burned

everyone out. The next morning she and Claudia begin the new year with a soap-opera-climax wrestling match in which Claudia throws Marjorie Juniper to the floor, stomps on her stomach with a counterfeit Birkenstock, and tears the heads off both dinosaurs.

Marjorie Juniper gets up, brushes herself off with as much faux dignity as she can muster, drinks a pint of aloe (she claims it keeps her supple) and departs with Sinclair on their previously scheduled cross-country train trip home.

"Don't do it, Sinclair," I tell him, "Tear up those tickets now, and get thee to the nearest, fastest, and most direct aeroplane, direct to legitimate mental health care services."

But you know what good advice is worth. Very little time passes before Sinclair is calling to say that "the Amtrack trip from Hell" was the last straw, and he is filing for divorce. I say, "I guess a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do," but I am thinking, Great! Your

wife suffers an exacerbation of a serious mental/emotional disorder, and you decide this is the best time to dump her. You are forcing me to ponder moral issues I would rather avoid, to come to conclusions I would rather not reach.

"Well, I hope I will always be your brother-in-law," Sinclair says, "I don't want any of this 'ex-brother-in-law' bullshit," he says.

A week later I get a card in the mail from him. Its Hallmark sentiment reads: *I know you're always there for me... but sometimes I wish you were here.*

In the meantime, Isabel, Veronica's mom, bounces back quickly from her husband's death. He had been a heavy smoker who suffered for years from severe emphysema and heart disease; his death represents not only the loss of a bond but the end of the slavery of caring for a crotchety and ungrateful patient.

In her bereavement group Isabel finds a new boyfriend, a tennis-playing, retired, sheet rock hanger from Delaware named Lou. Lou wines her, dines her, puts some fresh sheet rock on her walls, and she begins to really feel like a woman again. Isabel refuses to get caught up in Marjorie Juniper's tribulations on the opposite coast, and things are going along swimmingly until Lou has a stroke and drops dead.

Lou's children come down from Delaware to make the arrangements. One son is a professional gambler and one is a tennis pro. The daughter is a cocktail waitress. Isabel recognizes them as a different breed of people from herself, and wonders about the kind of man Lou really was.

Partly, Lou was a tennis enthusiast who played almost until the day he died, so Lou's children arrange to have his memorial observance on a tennis court. They also arrange to have

four automatic service machines raining tennis balls down on them all through the ceremony, which they find inspiring, but which Isabel finds intensely annoying. She borrows a hard hat from an adjacent construction site, and places it on her carefully coiffed hair.

Lou's kids don't want to deal with mundane, minor details so they assign Isabel the task of clearing out his cupboards. Isabel asks her grandson (my son) Felix to come along to carry boxes. She thus loads four or five boxes of pantry and refrigerator goods into the back of her Ford Escort and, leaving Lou's driveway, decides that these consumables should go to me and Veronica.

I am sitting at our dining table, eating a dead man's garbonzo beans. My wife, Veronica, has drenched them in a garlic-heavy Sicilian marinade. And I'm considering that garlic is supposed to repel vampires, but what about karmic forces?

As I reflect on the evidence around me, I think more seriously about the accumulation of "fate." I recently read a newspaper column about a man who had become wary of wearing second-hand clothes. Who had worn them previously? What was their karma? If one could worry about the karma of clothing, surely one should worry about the karma of eating a dead man's garbonzo beans.



Ilsa Lund

by Rene Cardenas

Can't stand Humphry Bogart, gives me an ache—
I mean, a scar on his lip for pete's sake?
Balding head, groggy, lisping voice, uncertain eyes
and always smoking... A man so short he could disguise

his shadow. And then to pair him opposite
Bergman, the beautiful, words of pillows, exquisite
tears, shoulders made of heaves, and vulnerability
of small courtesies, yet with a trained cat's wound
agility.

Ingrid in Casablanca, in my dreams, saying to me
“Rene, Rene, do whatever you want, I don't care
anymore.”

What wouldn't I do: plan for both of us to flee,
live in San Antonio as if it were Paris-dream before,

love in the evening, see the opera. Drink wine.
Forget Bogart and Rick's Cafe, he's not your equal.
He didn't paint pictures, drank to excess, had no mind.
I'm the ideal, an artist, fit for your movie's sequel.

Family Tree

by John Ronan

This twig of the tree
extends from John
Ronan, a six-times-great
grandfather, down to me.
He and Delia Flanagan
began their link in Limerick
County, April of 1817.
Earlier dates, the gene-
alogy approximates —
circa this, circa that,
matri- and patriarchs
married to d., the dagger,
or a question mark.
Beyond, only ghosts
back to a family tree
that's a tree for real,
the people lemurs.
Anonymous, necessary folk,
passing a chin or dimples,
bravado down like batons,
hides and bone-combs,
cattle, my seed as fief.

Entropy in Egypt

by John Ronan

In the temples of Akhenaton
sun comes in golden mittens,
the palms of arrived light
cupped gently to the Egyptians'
cheeks, held high like children's
as if Aton himself were seeing
that they've washed well.
There's no irony in the message
of the hieroglyphs, no suspicion.
Pharaoh believed in eternity,
not museum basements in Chicago
or Boston, a New World, a new zero,
that simple faith a failure
of climate, the abundance of sun.

VINNY

by David Appell

I saw van Gogh on the street
today, reincamated. He wore black
leather and had five hoops in his ear.
He'd given up painting for the guitar. We
looked at each other, and I knew he
wanted to ask me a question. "I've
rented this arena," he wanted to say.
"Tonight. I wanna stand on stage and
play until my fingers bleed and my shoes
are splattered with blood and our ears
ring like the inside of a bell. You can be
my audience. Wanna come?"

I kept walking. Still passionate, I
thought, but still obsessed with the ears.
People really don't change after all.

Crossing the Railroad Bridge

by Terry Thomas

Why does this come back—
this memory,
whistle-stopping at my
station of life?
Summers ago, when corn stretched
toward bleached blue skies,
I would try to cross the bridge.
it stretched toward tomorrow,
out brown, laid down
like a wooden web.
But I never did.
I could see for miles;
no train — nothing —
only the slight rumble of unseen
things and my chugging heart.
I was afraid.
There was distance between those ties,
space to drop a way to
the waiting water.
But my real fear was getting stuck —
half in, half out —
too small and scared to shout much
at the coming train.
Then I got older,
bolder,
high balling through days,
but I'd lost the urge
to purge my soul
on that splintery expanse.
Now I conduct my past
in recollection, picking carefully
over structures teetering on the brink,
trying not to think or hear that
unseen rumble or the heart
of a distant whistle.

Rednecks in Zen*

by Sean Edward Ward

We was sittin on the porch
outside a Chester's whittlin
toothpicks outta logs.
I looks at Jake'n says,

What's up with BobbiSue anyways?

Watcha mean? (says Jake)

I thought we wuz pretty tight
but she don't come round
when she says she's gonna
an she's goin out with some other ol'
boy
I ain't evenever met.

You say somethin to 'er bout it?

I called'er thother night, but
she was makin a marble cake
an had to let me go so's she
could find some marbles*.

She's fickle boy!

Fickle? Whaddayathink I orta do?

Well son, know that tractor we got we
use
fer hayrides won't stay in third gear?

Y-eah.

Do we try'n fixit?

Ain't worth fixin.

Gets the job done anyways, right?

Well, yeah.

Well son, it's like any piece of
farm equipment—
you gotta let a tractor* be a tractor,
an' let a hoe* be a hoe.

*Zen—a school of Buddhism that asserts that enlightenment can be attained through meditation, contemplation, and intuition rather than through the scripture

*marbles—small balls used in children's games

*tractor—an automotive vehicle designed for pulling machinery

*hoe—a tool with a flat blade and a long handle, used for weeding, cultivating, and gardening

Interview

by Sean Edward Ward

...so in the fourth quarter when it seemed the other team was going to hold their lead for the win and then you made that steal and the fast break for the layup and things just seemed to fall into place, what was going through your mind at that point? Did you know you were going to win? Could you feel it?

Well... I think that... you know... we're always hopeful for a win and I saw the opening... and then... you know.

I see.... Well, the fans went just a little wild when you went for the basket that ^{third} time and you were only a few points from the tie and then the foul by Kramer....

Yeah well I suppose. You know. Yeah, I mean.... Hoopy.

There must have been a lot of pressure on you to perform on all sides, the fans, the coach, the other players....

M-hmmm, uh.... Hoopy hoopy hoopy.

Yes. And with less than a minute to go and hoopy hoopy hoop.

Well, we're a team, hoopy hoopy hoop hoopy hoop.

Well, ha ha. I think hoopy hoop and hoopy hoopy hoopy.

Hoopy. Hoopy hoopy hoopy.

Hoop. Hoop. Hoopy.

SEATTLE FANTASIES

by *Emily Witcher*

Cars swooped by Skateland like long ghosts. Shawna leaned out of her terrycloth shorts, her thighs shining like white walruses, and introduced me to Jason, her brother's friend. "George's my cousin," she smiled, but he smiled at me. It happened immediately.

We drove way out of town on straight roads. Shawna talked constantly about the songs on the radio, rolled the window down. Jason looked at me in the rear view mirror and said, "You're quiet."

When we got there all the windows were open and the TV was on a Jesus movie. He tripped carrying the cross. Shawna ate some orange chips out of a bag and Jason disappeared with a laundry hamper. When he came back, he began a symbolic conversation with me, boring questions coming from a meaningful mouth with eyes.

Shawna crumpled the plastic and started staring at me, like maybe I would disappear. Then Jason brought out the bottle and she had a topic again: how I never drank before. After two little glasses I wanted to drink straight out of the bottle, but they wouldn't let me. I asked: Why do you guys keep looking at me like that?

He said, Maybe you need to lie down.

Behind the door, he was on top of me for twenty minutes before I remembered to move. When I moved he stopped moving, like I was in charge. I looked at his chest and got hung up on what time it was suddenly, and said I had to go talk to Shawna.

Shawna was sitting in the TV spotlight. When she saw me she blinked. For a minute she looked just like my aunt, her mom, when we were

lost driving and she was squinting at the map, looking hard for the road we were on, until she realized it was the map of the wrong state

Leonard's hands stuck to the maroon vinyl seat. He didn't know why he was sitting on his hands, but it made him feel secure. His mouth stretched into a tight line as he watched Greg walk into the convenience store to pay for gas and get cigarettes.

Greg wasn't much like Jamey—older, of course, and blonde, his hairline receding but in an attractive way, almost as if he had shaved it that way on purpose. He was leaning forward, on tiptoes, twisting his neck to look at cigarette brands while the clerk walked to the front of the store. Leonard breathed and watched Greg order cigar-ettes, touching his fingertips lightly and decisively to the counter. He curved a hand over his tight behind and withdrew a wallet from his jeans pocket. A credit card appeared as through slight of hand.

The gas smell from the pumps leaked in his nose and Leonard imagined he was in a bus that was about to pull away, watching Greg massage his elbow beneath the forest green turtleneck. After signing his slip, Greg walked out under the florescent sign, then stopped for the inevitable match-lighting and inhaling of his new cigarette. Leonard waited for the bus to leave. Greg looked around like he didn't know where he was, or as if he had just forgotten something. For that moment they were complete strangers.

Then Greg's clear eyes scanned his own car. He walked back with his hips balanced like a waiter with a tray of drinks. Now Leonard felt ready to go through with the night, but he also felt more cautious about Greg's smile. He didn't see as much behind it anymore, but it was a beginning, enough for the first night.

Therapy and the New Age

by K.M. Postupack

I'm not OK,
You're not OK.
What's your dysfunction?
My "inner child" is an incest victim by
myself from a previous incarnation.
I'm healing.
I gotta work on my inner child.
Maybe I can take it to an inner child-
care center.
Do they have Montessori for this?
I can drop it off before work
and it can meet lots of other inner
children
and then I'll pick it up on the way home.
And each day I'll be able to deal with it
better.
I got lotsa' stuff!
How 'bout you?
I got lotsa' stuff, too!
Is it getting stuffy in here?
What's your dysfunction?
I'm working on my "inner fetus."
It seems it suffered from severe womb-
retentiveness
and now I'm dealing with "womb envy,"
compounded by having to come to
terms with
the sexual abuse I underwent when the
doctor who
delivered me spanked my naked
bottom.
It was thirty-eight years ago...
It seems I've been repressing it
ever since.
But now I've been repressing it
ever since.
But now I'm giving myself permission
to feel these feelings
and that that's OK!
I got lotsa' stuff!

Conversations at IHOP

by *Melissa Novakoff*

MARGO BROUGHT IN SOME paper so that it would look like she was busy and people would think she chose to eat alone. Of course she did choose to eat alone. She could have stopped by Sarah and Jamie's but she didn't feel like it, and lately she's been in some sort of loner phase where she doesn't feel like seeing anybody but she doesn't want to be alone. She felt as if she could communicate with strangers without making eye contact, and she wanted to write a story. She's been wanting to for a long time but she's been afraid of it not being great or not setting the right mood, like the song in the Pancake House. It was Steve Winwood, "find a chance, take it, find roma-a-ance..." By the time she had finished writing the song and artist, it was over. Would she write every song down? It was a mood of couples leaving a restaurant and the humming sound of chatter, forks scraping ceramic plates, and oil cracking and snapping as it fries.

As she was beginning to notice the clarity of the piercing conversation of the couple next to her, they decided to move to the corner table. The fan was moving slowly. It felt creepy, like warp time. Like when you're watching a love scene in a sex movie and they slow down the film to be all erotic and sensual. The waitress never did bring her coffee. It's okay, though, cause she snagged a pot from the table to the right. A cup, too. That couple in the corner sat on the same side of the bench. She hates that. She just thinks it's so cheesy; like they can't stand to sit across from each other while they eat. It just looks awkward and then the

waitress feels like she's intruding every time she comes over. Margo knows from experience. Another couple leaves. But the weird part about this fan time warp thing is the Christmas lights: red, green, blue, yellow, jittering on and off separately like those lights at frat parties that make everything look trippy when you're dancing. So these lights are flickering fast while the fan moves around the white lights in slo-mo. It's a trippy scene inside a perfectly trippy day. It was one of those days that reminds you of a cheesy Vietnam movie from the Seventies when a soldier comes home from war and finds his favorite barber shop closed and the car lot in front of the beach where he first got laid piled high with condominiums.

Except Margo's been here the whole time. She didn't go away and come home to find everything had changed. She was here the whole time and everything had changed.

She went to a movie and got a craving for blueberry pancakes because this cool girl in the movie had a craving for blueberry pancakes. Margo liked that girl because she told her boyfriend she wanted one of those little pot bellies--but her stomach was flat.

Margo had a little pot belly. But she never thought of it as sexy and she liked to think of it that way. So she got out of the matinee and drove to the Golden Egg. But it was so longer the Golden Egg. It was the El Torito. She was kinda bummed because even though the hash browns there were rubbery and the chicken nuggets were more styrofoamy than McDonald's, she

had some good late-night-freshman-year memories there. She had liked the wooden benches and the truck-stop atmosphere. So she thought of this other place in Medford Square that serves breakfast all day. She went there a lot over the summer because she had to babysit (which she liked to refer to as "nanny") at eight in the morning and she needed coffee to be functional, or at least awake. But it was all boarded up.

She sat in Sound Bites Cafe, menu in hand, and was told that their kitchen was closed down for a gallery opening that night. She loved Sound Bites because one time when she went there, her friend ordered toast. The owner brought out the toast with some strawberry jam that her grandmother had made. Who serves grandmother's homemade jam to random customers?

Now, at IHOP, Margo is bummed because she has tons of pictures to print for her Tuesday class. She's glad, too, because she loves the moments when she feels good fitting the pieces together, and she thinks it will be a funny "it was just one of those days" stories.

Margo glances up at the couple in the corner cuddling, then sips her coffee, then writes her story, in a perfectly rythmical pattern. Two old ladies sit down next to her and don't speak while they study the menu. Good. She isn't sure if they are close enough to her that she can make out the words in their convo, like the annoying couple until they left for their corner. They are. "I'll have a Denver Omlett." There's no meaning in that. It's just what it is. They are not talking much, so it's okay. They're old; you'd think that they'd have a lifetime to talk about, but maybe they're tired. They don't talk at all. The rush is over, only the two old ladies. Now they're conversing with the waitress over

whether 29 is young or old. She guesses the happy people are happy at whatever age they're at.

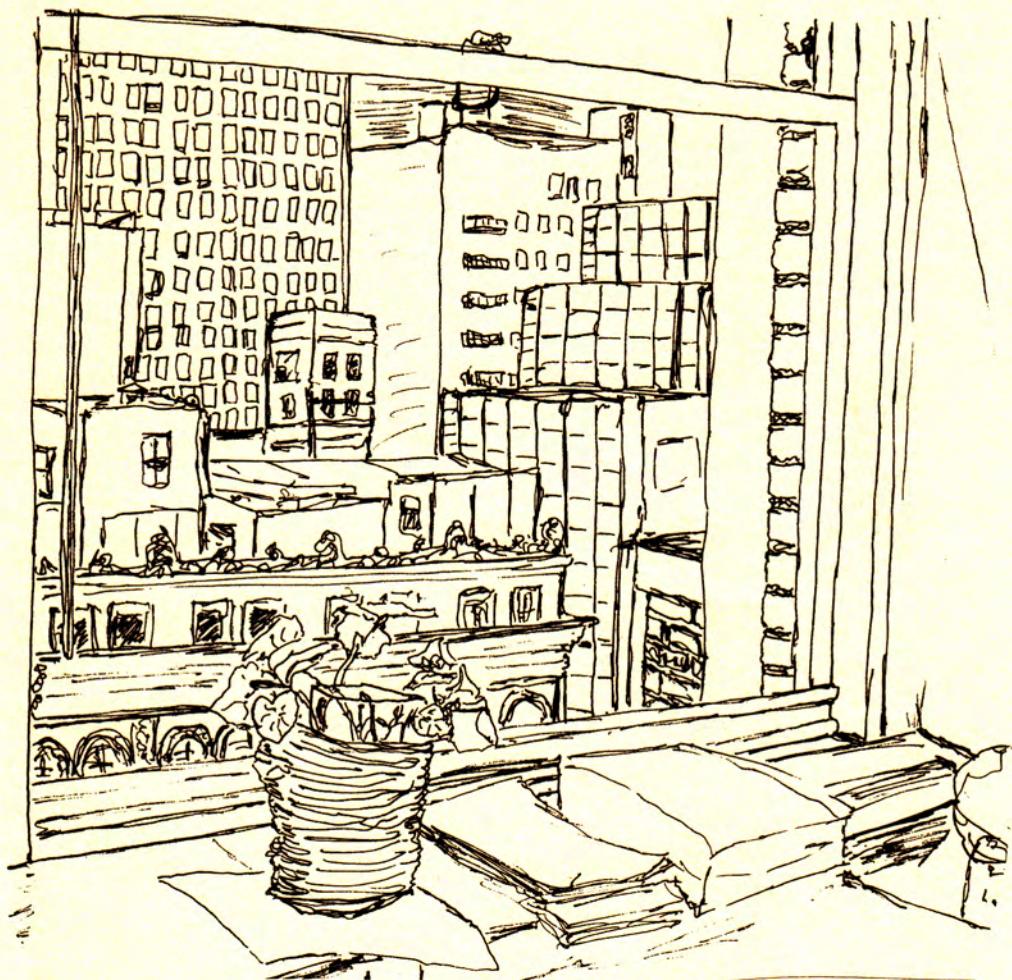
Fuck. It's 5:20. Far too late to get to the photo lab and do anything productive before Jen and Todd get to her house. She wishes she had her camera with her to capture the symmetry of the coffee pots on the tables, the hanging lights above each table, and the fake flowers, some perched on the window sills, some on the tables.

But she is happy to be writing. It is so much less obtrusive than the snapping shutter. Sometimes she feels like it's a control issue, like she's drifting with nothing to weigh her down. And when she takes a picture she can see the order. How things fit together, and how they make sense. It is the moment after the click of the shutter when her subjects' eyes meet hers that is the most tense. The moment when each of them wonder what has just happened. And it is not until she watches the white piece of paper transform into a reality of lights and shadows that she's grounded.

But she was happy to be writing. It was helping her figure out something she couldn't describe. It wasn't a question, like where do I fit into the rhythm of the universe?, or does God exist?, like she sought when she was in ninth grade. It was more of an ache inside her that she had thought could be filled by the fit of a man's penis, until she realized that the feeling could be repeated with her own hand.

Well, those two women just left and the song on the radio in the pancake house was sax, no words, probably Kenny G. Margo knew it was time to move on, like she's heard one knows when to end a relationship.





Back in business

Jon Adams lives in Missoula and wears silk shirts to dance parties. "Flood" by *Jon Adams* will appear in **The James White Review** out of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Ron Carter, Michael Fiedler, Dirk Lee, Todd Struckman, Dave Thomas, Eldena Bear *Don't Walk, K.M. Postupack, and Mark Holtoff* also live in Missoula. They don't live together, but you might see some of them at the same time.

Ron is the best looking man in Missoula, or was for a week last summer when he was noticed as such by **The Missoulian**.

Michael is both brilliantly intelligent and wonderfully wise, having hiked all of the continents of the world. He is currently on a quest for medicinal plants in various parts of America.

Dirk Lee is currently enjoying a time when the public is appreciating his artworks. Dirk does not change to suit them; therefore he must be patient, for times and tastes change.

Todd is an athlete/artist with arms like steel pipes, a head like a balloon, and a washboard stomach.

Dave Thomas has a fiery head of red hair.

Eldena has a beautiful baby who everyone calls Rose.

K.M. Postupack lives far enough from Mount Sentinel that it is just another of the mountains, ringing the horizon.

Mark Holtoff spent a lot of time with Clara Struckman before she went to Rome for the spring.

William Barnes writes from South Carolina.

David Appell is a MFA student at Arizona State University.

Martha Adkins from the head of Paradise Valley, Gardiner, Montana.

Anselm Brocki sends his poetry from Santa Monica.

Steve Burt's short story comes from Stonington, Connecticut.

Rene Cardenas lives on Excalibur Court in Virginia.

Jen Carlson lives with her academician in Poughkeepsie, New York. If you happen to meet her brother in Missoula, he will be tall and blond, give him the time of day, please.

John David Christensen comes from Ricker Road.

Todd Brendan Fahey, *ads* and writes in Louisiana.

Leonard Gontarek writes on Pine Street in Philadelphia.

Mitch Grabois writes on Pine Street in Key West.

Gregory L. Kappy is a N.C.A.A. referee in Gainesville, Florida.

Melissa Novakoff is a senior at Tufts University in Boston.

Victor Peam hales from Boulder Colorado.

And *Seth Lindberg*, alias The Mad Swede, traipses about, thumb out, on the information highway. He sends his regards from San Francisco.

Aaron Bloom is hard to track down. He's in Paris, I think.

Jim Kraft is going to school in Laramie, Wyoming. He produces a variety of graphic artworks.

John Ronan is in Magnolia Massachusetts.

Terry Thomas lives among the dry arroyos in beautiful and quaint Prescott, Arizona. A valley near there is the youngest valley, so I've often told myself, in the world, founded in the 1960s.

This issue of the *Portable Wall* was guest-edited by *Heather Corson* and *Robert Struckman* and all of the work was done in Boston.

Sean Edward Ward writes on E-mail a lot from San Antonio, Texas.

Emily Witcher is studying library science in Seattle, Washington.

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