

NUMBER ONE



HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

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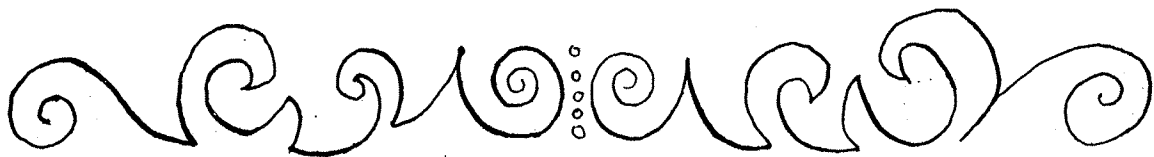
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PANIC

What have I done today?

Little: with paper and pen.

Where have I gone to learn?

Nowhere: museum, opera, and school.

Whom did I speak and befriend?

No one: a director, a doctor, (men of repute).

How did I struggle to gain and improve?

I didn't: sold three, invested four, studied algebra late.

So what do I know?

Nothing: what I should, memorized and corrected.

So how do I live?

Futile and frightened: 7 to 10.

OH GOD!

Allen H. Renear



Sndi Reed

In Pursuit of What Ends?

The alarm rang faithfully at 5:00 A.M., ordering me out of my sleeping bag and into my fishing clothes. This was our third day in Oregon, and I was finding it increasingly hard to arise to the cold damp air. But this was what we had waited and planned for; why the big 20 foot boat was bought and then reworked all winter: Five days of Oregon salmon fishing in our own cabin cruiser -- it was like a'dream.

By the time I was dressed Dad was already loading the car. After suffering a sarcastic "Thanks for your help," I finished putting in lunches and tackle, scratching the seat in the process. Halfway down the road to the harbor my eager anticipation was shattered when Dad asked if I'd remembered my license. Dad disgustedly turned the car around and we returned to camp with me in sheepish silence.

When we finally reached the dock we had trouble getting the boat to come off the trailer. After fifteen minutes of futile efforts Dad noticed the right rear tie-down was still attached. Removing that tie-down was my job and responsibility. I watched, embarrassed, as Dad unhooked it.

At last ready to cast off, Dad eased the boat away as I fumbled at the stern line knot. My hands were cold and the line was knotted, so I couldn't loosen it. When the boat reached the end of the line the jolt told Dad what was wrong.

"For crying out loud!" he said between his teeth and threw it in reverse. I worked frantically at the cleat.

.. .. .

Thirty minutes later we were outside the bay with both lines over. Sitting with nothing to do, I remembered our first boat: a twelve foot car-top outboard Dad bought on sale at Sears. Of course, it didn't quite suit him right out of the store. Dad's a discriminating perfectionist. He

set to work immediately, making innovations and improving it. Running lights, collapsible seats and an anchoring rig were added. He made brackets for the gas tanks and tool boxes and fashioned rod holders. He made his own car-top carrier to his specifications and a hoist for storing it. Dad put a lot of meticulous care into that boat.

I shall always remember the joyful trips that followed. Arising at 4:00 A.M., I'd put on clothes readied the night before. It was a customary fishing uniform: denim levis, black turtleneck, flannel shirt, knit cap and thermal underwear if the weather warranted. Then I'd go and wake Dad. Together we'd make sandwiches and coffee in the kitchen. We'd work silently and efficiently, not saying anything, yet communicating better than we ever did during the week. The outside air stung the fingers that fastened the car-top clamps and checked the gear as we made last minute preparations. After quiet good-byes to Mother, we'd leave the sleeping suburban neighborhood far behind.

Every sense was keen and aware with anticipation as we sped through the dark morning. Alone on the road we'd speak of meaningful things sincerely and with an ease rarely felt at home. The destination varied, from the lake, ten miles away, to Fort Bragg, four hundred miles away. I remembered how quickly and easily we'd launch the boat. Each of us knew what his responsibility was and we worked in silence and harmony. After undoing the clamps we'd take customary positions and carry the boat to the water. Then the gear was neatly stowed in the practiced manner and I'd shove us off.

Regarding the fish, there were good days and there were bad days; regarding other things, there were only good days. I can remember making landfall in a cold rain and a biting wind. Those were reluctant hands that carried tackle to the car, unwilling fingers that helped coil line, and a shivery, wet, exasperated back that carried its share of the boat ashore.

But back at camp drinking bitter coffee, the dialogue again flowed rare and sincere. I learned a lot about my father and myself and things in general over such coffee.

.. . . .

We trolled for six hours before I admitted to myself that I wasn't enjoying it. Immediately I felt guilt and self-contempt. This was what we'd been waiting for. But I couldn't escape it. The past two days out I'd just been kidding myself. But what had we come for? Why did we buy and ready this \$3,000 boat? What about the long trip up, flat tire and all? What about our docking fees, license, and gear? I had to enjoy it. But it was useless. I waited an hour more, then called to Dad. He didn't hear me over the 90-horse inboard.

Allen H. Renear

Old Men Sitting

Old men sitting,
thinking,
meditating,
a preacher's voice
coming through
the sound
of checkers
clicking on their boards
while leaves fall.

Wendy Wangberg

The Curse of the Whites

O divinest navy blue!
O purple most high, and gold!
We sing a song to the blue and red.
Pity the poor whites, cold.

'Twas an icy day in February.
The whites' turn to swim again.
"Into the water!" the coaches cried,
"What are ya--mice or men?"

Of course they're men at La Sierra.
O Thomas knew that well.
Cold or not--they'd swim that pool.
And God, would it be hell.

Tom surveyed the watery depths.
The wind blew at his back.
What torture can they think of next?
The guillotine? The rack?

"Come on, girlie," the warm coach called.
And with masculinity at stake--
Into the depths poor Thomas dived,
Letting numbness overtake.

Somehow it always came to pass,
It never seemed to fail.
For the whites the heater never worked--
Come rain or sleet or hail.

O divinest navy blue!
O purple most high, and gold!
We sing a song to the blue and red.
Pity the poor whites, cold.

Debbie Mansergh

Levels

The length of my hair exceeds the patience of my elders.
The volume of my music doesn't lend itself to a fox trot crowd.
The patterns of my mind mix poorly with a lot of people who don't
interest me, but seem to have a large say-so in my life. I affect
no one except those who let themselves be affected by me. A
tasteless majority considers me tasteless. They sneer at me from
their levels, and I sneer at them from mine. Which level is in
the right?Wrong?

Mark Pearson





HAIRY HARRY

Harry was a guy with a problem. You see, he had too much. . . uh, well . . . too much hair. Something had gone wrong with his chromosomes (or something like that) and as a result, hair flourished all over his body. And when I say flourished, I really mean flourished, for Harry's crop grew thick and fast everywhere. As anyone can see, the situation was rather embarrassing.

Everyone laughed at Harry. They all thought that he was a big joke, and they teased him mercilessly. So, Harry led a life of verbal harrassment. Nearly everyone made fun of him. Why, don't think for a minute that he was called "Harry" for nothing, because there was a reason for it. His parents named him that after they first set eyes upon him. . . the only baby in the hospital nursery with a moustache. He received his memorable "first haircut" when only three days old. And you should have seen how his baby pictures came out! But if you think these developments are bad, listen to this one: Infant Harry once won a contest as the "Baby with the Cutest Beard." Yes, it all started out wrong for Harry.

More problems arose as Harry grew older, and his hair grew denser. He had trouble learning to walk, because he was so top-heavy. Visiting aunts never kissed him. . . his beard smeared their lipstick. Harry was getting the idea that nobody liked him.

He had reason to believe so, too, because Harry's younger life was full of tribulations, all due to his over-shaggy body. Because his hair kept getting caught in the spokes, he never learned how to ride a bicycle. Harry had no friends at school because no classmate could get near enough to the "real" Harry to meet him; his voice was only a mumble from behind the muffling layers of tresses. And besides, who would want to hold hands with a hair brush? Things were so bad, Harry began to get some kind of a complex. Poor Harry!

But still Harry's mop grew, hiding his body from sight. Oh, how the kids laughed! They said he looked like an animated scouring pad (you see, Harry's locks were rather curly). Others imagined him as a mutated monster from a horse-hair mattress factory. Still others thought he looked like a girl.

And yet, Harry's hair lengthened. By the time he was in his teens, Harry was indeed in bad shape. He was the best known youth in town, and certainly the most singular. Who else left a trail of dandruff wherever he walked? Who else went around with his arms at right angles to his body because of so much hair under his arms? Who else was allowed to wander around town completely naked, yet not offend anyone? None other than Hairy. . .oops, I mean Harry.

One of Harry's biggest problems was getting rid of the cockroaches that nested about his body. And besides employing the pest control man, a personal gardener was also needed to keep the weed growth down. Yes, I said weeds; wind-driven seeds often found a favorable environment among the roots of Harry's bristles. In fact, an African violet once sprouted right out of Harry's forehead! And another time when a black walnut took root, Harry couldn't sit down for a week!

Finally, one day years later, Harry decided to do something about his appearance. He was tired of being called an ape (although he could always brag that he had the hairiest chest in the world). While trying to find his fingernails so he could clip them, a revolutionary idea came to him. Dropping his clippers, he hurried to the corner drugstore, and bought himself a lady's bathing cap. The pretty girl behind the counter smiled and asked Harry why he wanted the cap, but Harry was too overwhelmed with her charming manner to answer. It was love at first sight! The counter-lady, who also saw that the two of them were meant for one another, introduced herself as Miss Unu Sanshar, and explained that she was an Eskimo. She was pert and pretty (most Eskimos

are, you know) and, as it turned out, quite lonely. Yes, Harry immediately recognized that Miss Sanshar would be perfect for him, and romance blossomed deep within his heart.

Well, Harry took his bathing cap back to his own little apartment and tried it on. But first he clipped and snipped around his ears and all over his head, then jammed on the rubber covering before his hair could grow back. Harry beamed hopefully at himself in the bathroom mirror, and was amazed at what he saw. Beaming back, devoid of every single strand of hair, was Harry's apparently bald head!! With the bathing cap covering his natural mop, Harry's skull appeared wonderfully bare! Harry was overjoyed!

In his excitement, he executed a back flip, landed in the toilet, and, stepping out, continued doing cartwheels around his tiny living room. Harry was really happy for the first time in his life! He giggled uncontrollably while sneaking looks at himself in the mirror. He felt his head again and again, marvelling at the smooth, barren feel of his new-found baldness. Harry was so overjoyed by the fact that his troubles were over, that he decided to call all his friends and tell them of the "new" Harry.

But then Harry remembered that he had no friends . . . no friends except the Eskimo drugstore clerk. So Harry called Miss Unu Sanshar and related denuding experience to her. She was very glad for him and was happy that she could have played some part in Harry's revelation. The phone conversation ended, as Harry just had to take another look at his new-found forehead. But alas, upon borrowing a magnifying glass from his landlord (who did not recognize Harry without his hair, but rather thought him some kind of male nun) and closely inspecting the mirror image of his cranial covering, Harry was deeply chagrined to discover a few pioneer hairs poking through the top of the bathing cap. Oh, no! It couldn't be true! Another look confirmed the tiny hairs' penetration of the rubber wrapper. Harry witnessed, in the depths of dismal disappointment, the study of natural succession that took place right

there on his head. Before long, the bathing cap had completely disappeared under the thick shocks of his sprouting protein. Harry was once again. . . hairy!

Well, although the experiment ended in failure, it still partially solved Harry's dilemma. Twice a week, sometimes three times, Harry would stroll on down to the corner drug and buy the needed supply of bathing caps. After a few minutes, when one cap was ruined, Harry would simply slip on another to "hold back the tide." So, Harry and Unu were seeing more and more of each other, and their acquaintance had become quite intimate.

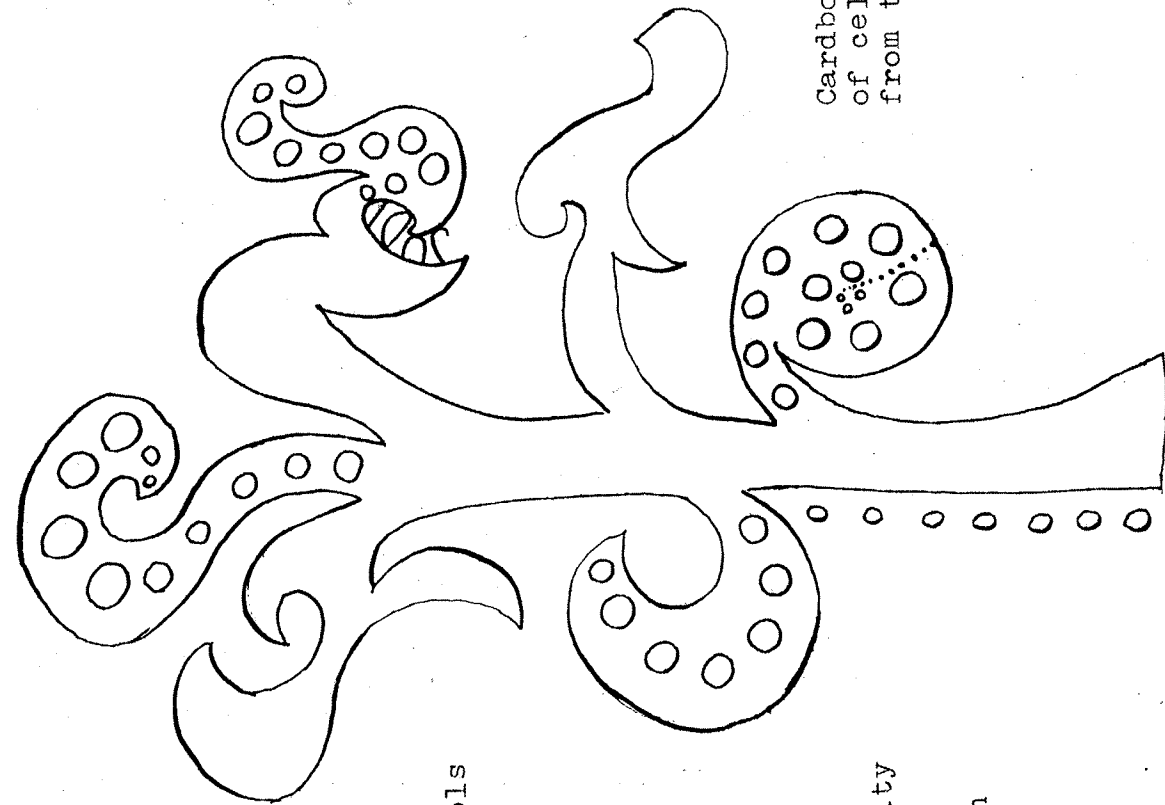
After a few months of this, Harry finally got the idea . . . he asked Unu to marry him. She readily accepted, and soon afterwards they were wed. There was a little trouble at the nuptial ceremony, though, when Unu gagged upon Harry's kiss; because, as you know, hair grew out of Harry's mouth, too, in the space between his teeth (just like weeds out of the cracks in a sidewalk). Anyway, the situation was easily remedied when someone found a strong piece of old dental floss in his pocket.

Well, for years afterwards people said that Harry and Unu were just about the strangest couple paired up in the whole country. The two lived in a normal neighborhood, had normal children, and Harry (with the help of the bathing caps) even held a normal job. But it was not their social status that made Harry and Unu odd, the people said. . . it was their appearance. Because, in all the world, there was not a more unusually matched mate for hairy Harry than the former Miss Sanshar. You see, by nature Unu was totally and utterly bald!

Craig Baldwin



Sally



Love, the emotion
that turns wise men to fools
and fools to wise men.

Carrie Dye

Dust floats softly
In pools of tranquility
Sleeping until rain.

Greg Anderson

Music's hidden notes
Breed love vibrations of joy
For understanding.

Marty Anderson

Cardboard trees with leaves
of cellophane, achievements
from today's Great Minds.

Judi Notes

The picture hung straight,
The scene vividly stood out,
But no one to look.

Holly Beedle

RECESS

The screaming laughter of the recess bell let loose a playground's fill of dancing children. In the second grade, I loved recess more than anything, probably even more than getting a box of Tootsie Rolls, or my father telling my Phoney Baloney stories. I had no friends to speak of, so I always invented my own game: and that day I ran. Some girls shouted at me to help them with something, but I just kept on running. And some of the older boys came snarling over and tried to trip me, but I flew lickety-split whistling past them. That made me feel supersplendiforous. So when I ran faster and the ground melted beneath my feet. That's when I grabbed the tether ball pole and started to swing around it . . . spinning and spinning and colors blurring around and round and houses and faces blurred and the teacher yelled stop stop recess is over . . . but no . . . round and round and colors whirling and everything meaning absolutely nothing . . . because who cares . . . never counting, never reciting, just spinning and spinning and laughing and the teacher said that if I didn't stop I'd get sick but I knew she was wrong I wouldn't get sick just spinning and spinning and laughing and spinning. . . . I'd get sick if I stopped.

Mark Pearson

GAMBIT

The game of Chess will undoubtedly be one of the last bastions overcome by the advancing computer. This is probably enough to endear the game to the advocates of modern humanism, but at the same time it creates the feeling that Chess is too complex to be enjoyed. The complete analysis of a Chess game is of such nearly infinite magnitude that formulation is certainly impossible. Yet it is this impossibility of knowing the best move which raises Chess from an exercise in logic to a medium of individual expression. I had succumbed early to the appeal of Chess, but until recently my brother, Andrew, had resisted its fascination.

"In Chess," Andrew once stated firmly, "as in any game, there is a winner and a loser. I do not enjoy losing; therefore, I will not play Chess."

Ignoring, for the moment, the possibility of stalemate or perpetual check, I neatly parried this argument by explaining that because Chess has no bearing on actual life, a loss is not a matter of great concern. Chess players do enjoy a happy freedom of mind which permits them indulgence in the play of their imagination, knowing that their responsibility does not extend beyond the chessboard. In addition, I pressed forward with the point that Chess combines judgment and fancy into a whole in which elements of both imagination and creation are present. I concluded that Chess, if played with total dedication to the unique beauty of the battle, can be correctly called a living art. Andrew stood unshaken by my assault but agreed to play one game, in order, I suspect, to crystallize his bigotry.

At the appointed time, Andrew, in definite anguish, but bearing up well, approached the chessboard. I began by explaining the object of the game, but was swiftly interrupted.

"What is this pamphlet?" inquired Andrew, picking up a copy of the

International Chess Code.

I told him, and added that it contained the basics of the game only, the rules of Chess.

Slowly he leafed through all seventeen pages. "These are the rules?" he asked.

I nodded, unsure of what to expect.

"There are too many," he stated emphatically. "But another question. How long does a typical game last?"

I replied that it was difficult to say, but that the average game time was perhaps one hour to ninety minutes in a friendly contest.

"Much too long," he said, shaking his head gravely.

Desperately, I cut my instruction to a fifteen-minute lecture, deciding to let him taste the magic of Chess before explaining castling, en passant captures, and other confusing aspects of play. We then proceeded to the game and, as expected, I won handily. I began a detailed analysis of his mistakes, introducing the elements of strategy through examples from my own moves. I was cut quite short.

"I have played one game," said Andrew quietly. "I did not enjoy it."

In vain I argued that he had not given Chess enough trial to appreciate its broad scope. I told him a player must thoroughly learn tactics before reveling in an imaginative creation.

"I have kept my agreement," stated Andrew on his way out.

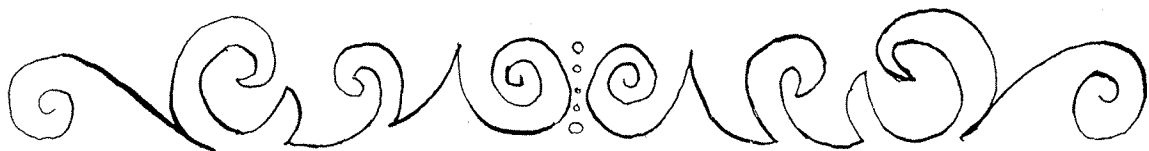
A Chess player is by nature a tenacious individual. The convenience of having a fellow-devotee in the same house was an attraction I could not pass up. A few days later I noisily set up the chessboard and men. I opened a book of famous games and carefully baited my trap with one of the most beautiful short games on record, a 1911 contest between Edward Lasker and Sir George Thomas at the City of London Chess Club.

Attracted by the activity, Andrew wandered into the room and seated himself auspiciously near the chessboard. He soon became openly interested in the beautiful combination that unfolded as the game progressed. I sensed that the lure of Chess was finally reaching him. He seemed surprised--and I thought a little disappointed--when the game ended after only fifteen minutes of actual play.

Trembling with excitement, I asked, as a personal favor, if he would play the moves of Thomas in a second game. When he left the room an hour later, Andrew had been subtly inducted into the mysteries of Chess, and I had exacted a vague but sincere promise of continued interest.

It has been said that what Chess has in common with art is its utter uselessness. I am sure I detect a faint note of praise in that statement. Civilized man, an impractical creature at his best, often gets most pleasure out of working on very "impractical" problems, simply because they lead him into unexpected, beautiful pathways of thought. Chess, in its small way, perpetuates this search for beauty without offending man's sense of logic. I firmly believe that it was this creative beauty of Chess which convinced my brother, at least momentarily, and will continue to convince others of the worth of the "Royal Game."

Joe Archer



TO STAND FREE

To stand free and alone
 on a high grass knoll,
To feel the wind blow free
 on invisible roads of time,
To hear Mother Nature
 call you in to shelter warm,
To taste the freshness of
 the morning dew,
And to see, ah yes, to see
 the quiet solitude
 of God
 at His highest.

Ramona White

Man Apart?

Bowser slurped his crunchy supper,
 while father carved the roast.
In the spring I see the birds mate and nest,
 Johnny Taylor (down the street) married Roberta.
Our kitten chases butterflies,
 I rollerskate every day after school.
Our canary stopped eating when his mate died;
 mother was sad too when Grandma passed away.
At the zoo monkeys play baseball and dress themselves;
 I built a crystal radio by myself.
Miss Sheldon says we came from apes.
All the animals I know are born, grow up, live, and die.
 Just like me.
 Just like me?

Allen H. Renear



THE FIRST LESSON

"I'm leaving now for school, Ma!
I'll see ya, Ma," he said.
"Now you just take good care o' yerself!"
She smiled, and pat his head.

So gay was he as he set off,
His black hair slicked in place,
"I love you, World!" he sang aloud,
A smile spread cross his face.

"Hello there, Mr. Blue Bird!
I c'n see ya in that tree--
But I can't stop and talk now.
The first grade's callin' me.

"An' there I'll learn ta read 'n' write--
An' even spell my name!
Yep--I'll be smarter than all the kids
When I come home again!"

"I love you, World!" again said he.
"You're my best friend, you are!
You're kind and good and noble too,
Just like a shining star!"

Happily he skipped along,
His dark eyes clear and bright,
Till lo--at last--a dream come true!
The school yard came in sight!

And there were lots of strange kids
And one called out and said,
"Hey look, why there's a new one!"
"Let's get him!" one more said.

And while the teach stood smilin'
They beat him to the ground.
His new books scattered here and there,
The air rang with the sound.

"Now beat it, kid!" at last they cried.
"We don't want your kind here!
You just come round this way again,
You'll have a lot to fear."

And as the crowd increased in size
The small child's eyes got bigger.
And then the leader spoke again,
"You hear me, Black Boy? NIGGER!"

The world reeled round a pinwheel
As homeward bound he flew,
And yet, home was not quite the same,
For in his heart, he knew.

Inside at last--his mother frowned
As fallen teardrops gleamed.
"Why, Honey, what's the matter?"
"I HATE YOU, WORLD!" he screamed.

Robin Levine

EMPTINESS

They call me a paranoid. It's not true. I'm as sane as anybody. When I smell poisonous gas seeping silently into my room, they say I'm having a delusion because they smell nothing. My senses tell me the deadly gas is present as surely as theirs deny the fact. My ears warn me of the stealthy approach of enemy feet. When I tell them, they smile sadly. I sometimes wake from a deep sleep to see a man's head and shoulders profiled on my window shade. I lay as though my back were broken, staring at the silhouette and listening to the blood pound in my ears. They tell me calmly that I am "imagining things." My eyes say differently. My eyes also say that the sea and sky meet, that the sun circles the earth; and when the breeze blows, the top most twig on the tallest tree in the orchard paints the sky with a delicate green brush. They have labeled these last three "optical illusions." I am so confused. I cannot even turn to ask God what is real because they say that God is dead. If God is dead, and a man dare not believe his senses, what is left for him to trust?

Meredith Morse



THE TALES OF THE CANTERBURY CLUB



From 1827 to 1844 Crockford's Club of London operated as the most celebrated gambling casino of Europe. There such elite sporting bloods as the Duke of Wellington, the Marquess of Queensberry, Talleyrand, Prince Esterhazy, and Disraeli wagered huge sums at the popular games of the day: Roulette, Faro, and Quinze. Accounts of their notorious parties and enormous losses are numerous.

Despite the fame of Crockford's, however, few people knew that the establishment devoted one of its back rooms to a literary society. Even today very little is known of the Canterbury Club, an organization dedicated to the tradition of Geoffrey Chaucer. The club's membership totalled only sixteen. At each weekly meeting four members would present tales based on Chaucer's pattern, and at the end of the month the best story was selected by vote to be preserved in the club's archives.

The Canterbury Club was apparently founded in June of 1827, soon after Crockford's itself. King George IV was a charter member, but the club's most gifted authors were General James Woolsey and Sir Harry Bailly, who claimed direct descendance from the Harry Bailly who hosted Chaucer's pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales.

The club's existence was, unfortunately, much too short to bring about a complete revival of the Chaucerian tradition, for it was dissolved only seven months after its founding, in December of 1827. General Woolsey's diary provides the only known account of the events leading up to the end of the Canterbury Club. The first six contests had been won by King George IV, whose stories were long, rembling romances of knighthood and chivalry, or sometimes risqué tales concerning his own amorous adventures. But the seventh contest resolved in a tie between General Woolsey and Sir Harry Bailly, each

with six votes, while four members voted for the King's story of his latest love affair. Both General Woolsey and Bailly had served in the Napoleonic wars, and each had based his story on his own war adventures. General Woolsey's tale was an exciting war story in which the General himself, personifying honor and justice, triumphed over a French army. Sir Harry Bailly's tale, which follows, was a rather facetious comment on soldiers' honor. The final vote gave Bailly the victory with nine votes, against six for General Woolsey. His Majesty abstained.

Shortly after Sir Harry Bailly's tale had been included in the club's collection, a royal proclamation dissolved the Canterbury Club. General Woolsey preserved the seven winning stories at his home, where a fire in 1837 destroyed all but Sir Harry Bailly's tale.

Sir Harry Bailly's Tale

In eighteen-twelve Napoleon had lost
In Russia, and this great campaign had cost
Him heavily in men and in supplies.
New hope united others as allies.
Great Britain, Spain, and Sweden fought in France.
With Prussia they began a great advance.
The south of France was lost to Wellington,
For when he fought, this mighty leader won.
I served with Captain Radcliffe in the war-
To forage for provisions was our chore.
A worthy man, this Radcliffe loved to fight;
In other days he would have been a knight.
Yet he loved nothing quite as much as truth
And honor, which he'd reversed from his youth.

Once on a rainy morning we left camp.
Brave Radcliffe led nine soldiers through the damp.
Two drove a wagon and the others rode.
We hoped to fill our cart with quite a load
Of food and drink for those who came behind.
But near camp there was nothing we could find.
And so we turned toward town ten miles away;
Through rain and mud we splashed along our way.
Before we had gone far a wheel came off
The wagon, and a man began to cough.
So when I spied a monastery door,
The captain said that we would ride no more.
Dismounted, wet and tired, Radcliffe strode
Up to the old, gray, crumbling abode
Of holy, coarse-robed brothers and he smote
Upon the door, while rain ran down his coat.
Bold Radcliffe beat upon the heavy oak,
Until within a gentle brother spoke.
In French he told us, "Clamor and uproar
Must cease. Now trouble solitude no more!"
But Radcliffe answered, "Vanquished must obey!"
And through the door he tried to force his way.
"Besides," he said, "my men are cold and wet.
You'll let us in for love of God, I bet."
Then swiftly did the kindly monk throw wide
The door, and let his enemies inside.
We looked upon a low and spacious hall.

A fire burned against the farthest wall.
The room was almost bare, the floor hard stone,
For very little did the brothers own.
A table stood there, on it bread and meat.
A group of monks had just sat down to eat.
Beside the gentle monk an abbot stood.
He was the very model abbots should
Be like, a monk both lordly and benign.
This Abbot Peter met us with a sign
Of greeting. "Come in peace, my friends, he said,
"Now, Brother Andrew, see these men are fed."
But Radcliffe answered, "Sir, I must make clear
The reason why my little band is here.
We've come to find provisions for a force
Of English. Now, we'll eat with you, of course.
But when we leave, our wagon must contain
The larger part of all your food and grain."
Then spoke the abbot: "Sir, you're over-bold
To think that I will act as I am told
By you! Although you think that you have won,
Your conquest of this abbey isn't done.
Although I do not even wear a sword,
I'll not surrender to some dauntless lord
Until I'm beaten," Abbot Peter said.
"Now if you're ready, Captain, come ahead."
Then Captain Radcliffe proudly drew his blade
And said, "Come, let us make a little trade:
Your life for food and drink to fill my cart.

Now hurry, load it up and we can start."
But swiftly came the abbot's bold retort:
"Why, Sir, I do not think that you're the sort
Who would cut down a helpless, unarmed man,
So go ahead--come past me if you can.
You once bet I'd unbar my door for you,
And now I'll wager you'll not run me through."
The captain threw his weapon from his hand,
While calmly Abbot Peter took his stand
With nine robed monks against his larder door.
He stood and watched as Captain Radcliffe swore.
For Radcliffe's duty ordered him to take
The abbot's food, yet it was hard to break
Into the home of one who was his host,
When honor was the thing that he loved most.
"I will not," Radcliffe said, "resort to might
To take what I can't win in equal fight.
But I can't yield my cause without a test,
So choose the means of battle you think best.
I promise I will not resort to violence."
The Abbot Peter stood awhile in silence,
Then answered, "Sir, one riddle I will ask,
And if you answer, you'll complete your task,
For I will give you food; but miss it, Lord,
And you must yield to me your trusty sword."
Bold Captain Radcliffe instantly cried, "Done!
And now to find out which of us has won."
Then stated Abbot Peter: "In a race
Between two men, each wished for second place.

For when they had gone once around the course,
I found the prize went to the losing horse.
Now tell me, mighty Captain, if you can,
How such a race is run in which the man
Who owns the losing horse is said to win.
Your answer will decide our fight-- begin."
Brave Captain Radcliffe saddened as he thought
About the countless battles he had fought
And won. His list of conquest was complete,
Except for this: the ultimate defeat.
The riddle's answer Radcliffe could not guess,
And so he took his sword, in great distress,
And gave it to the abbot. Bowing low,
The captain said, "Now, Sir, I've sworn to go.
Although I still could win by sword and gun,
My honor says our contest here is done.
And, while I know my loss will stand the same,
I'd like to learn the answer to our game."
Then Abbot Peter said, "Your actions show
You as a man of honor. Now you'll know
The losing horse's owner wins, indeed,
If each contestant rides the other's steed.
Now, noble Captain, though you're not the winner,
You've shown your worth, so please stay for our dinner."
But Radcliffe answered, "Sir, I cannot eat
With one who wears my sword, for you have beat
Me. No, with empty wagon I will start
For camp. I see my men have fixed the cart."

To Abbot Peter, Radcliffe gave his hand,
Then back to camp he led the little band.

But for its moral, now my tale is done.
The moral: Men of honor all should shun
The wars, and for the kind this warning's double.
Kind men who carry swords will get in trouble.

Joe Archer

Creak, the rusty old wagon stops,
overflowing with its load.
We kids waiting, anxiously climb
the ladder,
and gladly tumble onto the mattress
of soft yellow hay.
Creak, the wagon starts off again
and jogs along the dreary road
lined with dark trees.
We shiver with the cool wind and
cover ourselves with hay.
We are quiet and content.

Carrie Dye



A wisp of wind,
a chilly breeze,
Two in one
Are both of these.

A pile of foliage,
A mound of leaves,
Two in one
Are both of these.

A playful kitten,
A clumsy cat,
Two in one
Prevail in that.

A villainous animal,
A dirty rat,
Two in one
Prevail in that.

A gleeful boy,
His love named Beth,
Two in one,
Happiness left.

The joy in life,
The peace in death,
Two in one,
Happiness left.

And all that's good,
And all that can please,
Two in one
Are both of these.

Richard Grix

Frustrations

Our feelings are worn raw,
Our emotions teeter-totter
On the edge of a cliff.
Our strong bonds of knowing each other
Are fraying, dangling from a wall of doubt.

Brad Flint

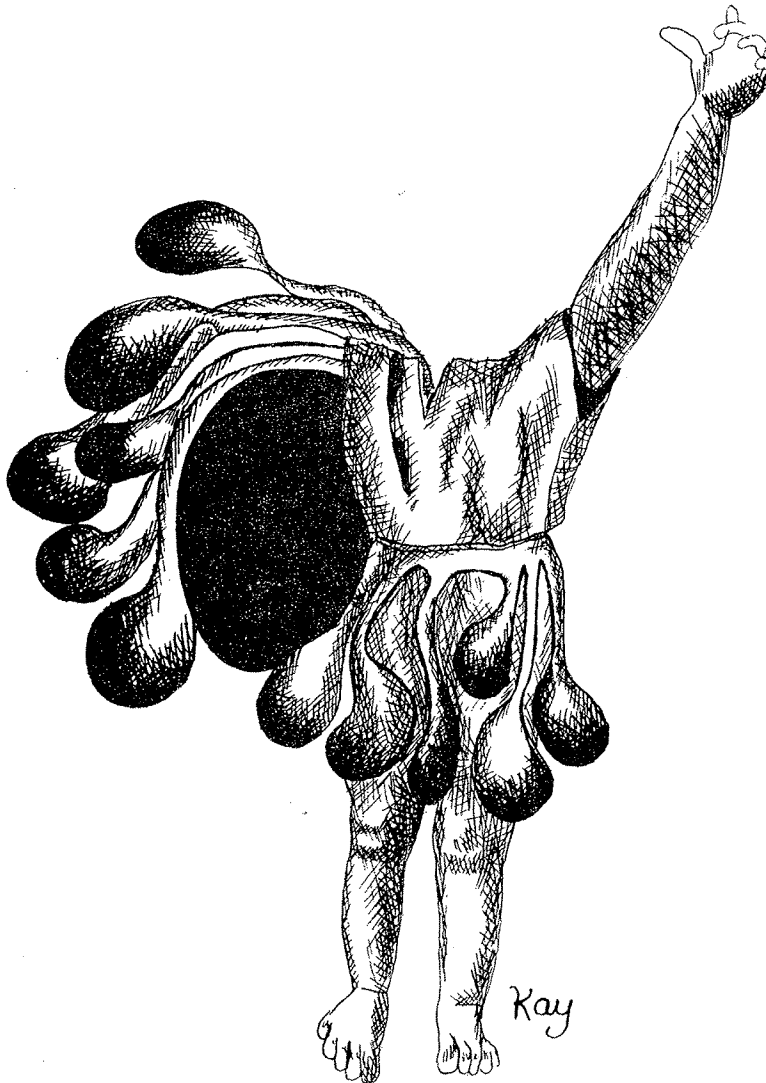
HYPOCRITES ALL

A knight in search of the Holy Grail
Rides forth, with pomp in high esteem.
An evil fortress to assail
To insure that good shall reign supreme.

To triumph God is the noble quest
Demanded of man to secure his rest.
And wounds for justice must be endured,
So thus may virtue be insured.

A knight in search of peace of mind
For the Holy Grail would gladly seek,
Though not as much the Grail to find --
As for his sake God's will be keep.

Allen H. Renear



To the White Knight (because I know he really cares)

He rode most of the night on a white steed wiping the soot from the face of the world with his gun, the light fluttering in and out of his head; they ran around in circles and fired at all the stone faces in the windows; the plane hovered over the green jungle, and at once the night split into a thousand luminous pieces, paper flesh and the burnt green and brown of the land merging with the red, yellow and orange flashing lights of the atmosphere; the officer stood on the top of the hill and yelled shoot to the men who knelt praying below him, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America..."until eight of them lay bleeding on the already blushing terrain. This is war, and, no matter how you look at it, war is beautiful.

Some people don't like to look at war in this light, however. Someone will rip a toy flag from off a shelf in the supermarket, crumpling it and grimacing as he shouts, "War is ugly. War means dying." But, though, when you look at him, the twisted expression on his face says love; and his hands are upraised in a gesture of peace; what he is really saying is "Please, I don't want to bleed."

What is apparent is that this person knows nothing of war. Obviously he has never bled, for war is not ugly; war is beautiful; and the beauty of war is that you, as a mundane little person, can offer up your black heart to a cause. You can be one of the beautiful people lying prostrate on the ground, blood gushing from your nostrils, while the flag flies high a million miles away. You can bleed for the benevolent nation that flag symbolizes--that benevolent nation that protects one group of people by killing another.

Certainly war means death, but there is nothing horrible about dying. As a matter of fact, there is a certain sublimity in death. As you crumple over and touch your face to the ground, you are going to sleep. You can

feel it. Your mind is bared red, yellow and orange against the black background of night. You have become one of the beautiful red people, and red is such a lovely color. Your family will receive you in a box, perhaps with a ribbon or a piece of scrap metal. What's more, you will have been given immortality as a number. I can't understand people's qualms about dying, particularly on the battlefield where death means so much.

Even more ridiculous than people's qualms about dying are their qualms about killing. How can you say it is wrong to kill on the battlefield? We kill, because it's our nature to kill; and, because we so value every man's right to "life" as in "...life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...." We're not Christians; we're hedonists at heart. So shoot. Kill now. You may never again have the chance to take human life without serious repercussions from a society that cares. Don't try to blot out the stains of war. In the words of Bob Dylan, "Forget the dead you left. They will not follow you...."

Still there are those who react to the statistics in the evening news of the numbers killed by saying war is purposeless. War, however, is an education in itself. War makes one aware of some of the "shining" slogans of life-- "love" spelled backwards with a small "l"; "truth" printed upside down and hidden in a garble of words; "peace" written at an angle with an edge to it-- all these little toy building blocks that make up life. War knocks them down one by one. One learns in the green jungle that lollipops and life do not go hand in hand; and ideals just don't hold up against a picture of real people lying dead beneath the burning brush; so the soldier returns home a realistic pseudo-citizen too young to vote, yet old enough to have been thrown in jail for refusing to fight. Thus, in one respect, war is beneficial to the individual; it teaches him what it means to live.

Why don't we withdraw from the battlefields and build up the building blocks of a peaceful society from a firmer base? Because peace is mundane. Peace is a midget crouched in a corner. War is a giant sprawled over the roofs of our pretty, white houses. The suspense, the threat of total annihilation, the fear makes life interesting, bearable. War is a way of life.

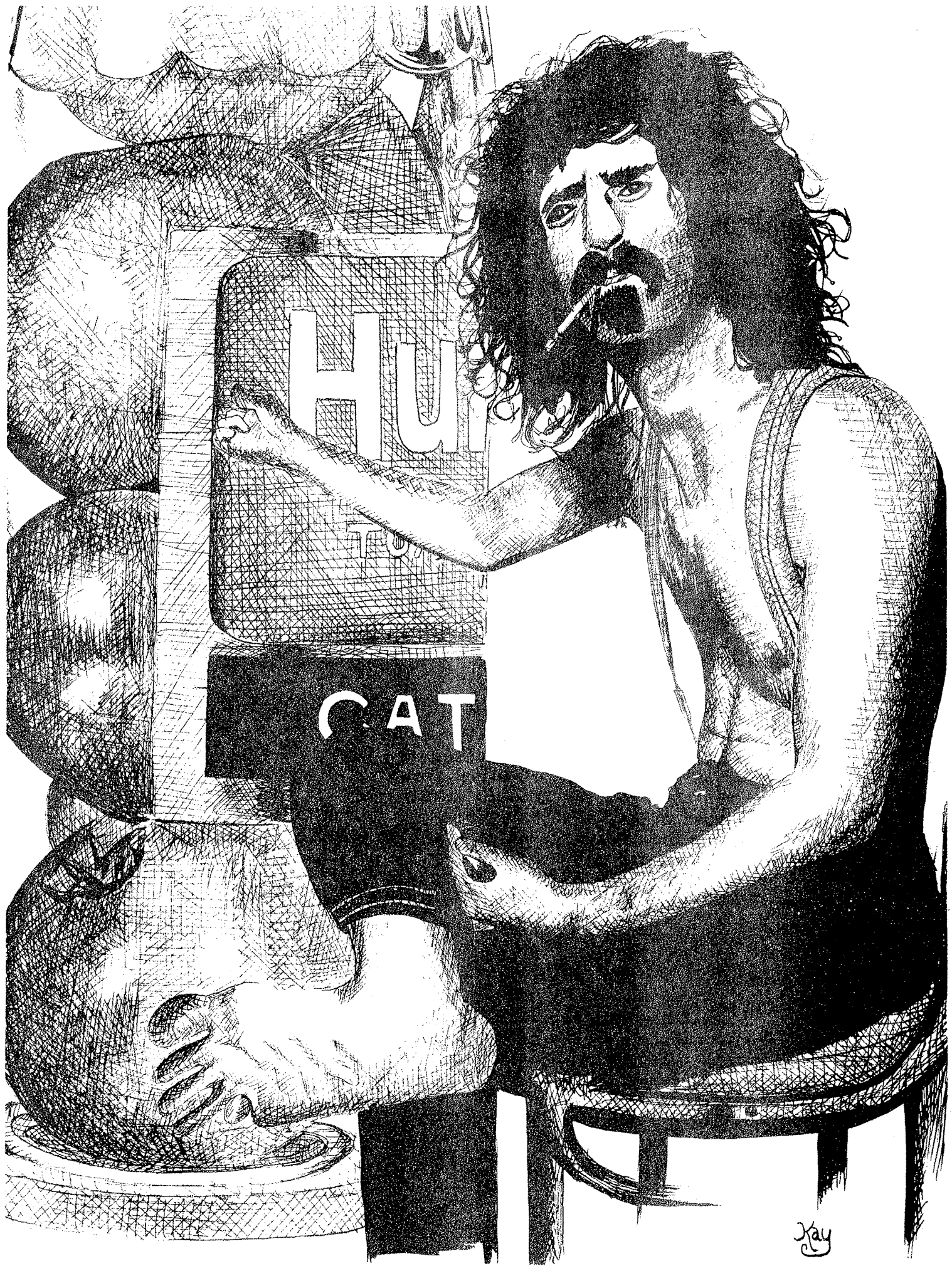
Hence, war is neither inhuman or grisly. It means nothing to die on the battlefield. It means nothing to kill on the battlefield. War is beautiful, because you are so free. War is flashing lights splitting the night into fragments of glass, dirt and paper flesh. War is people crouched over one another waiting. War is the white knight trying to clean the world up. War is simply life bared bright but not blinding.

Candy King

The Closet

Twenty minutes till the closet door
swings open again.
Plunging toward me they will come-
a thousand purple daisies
and
a million crimson sins.
Before the door slams shut behind
me, do you think I'll have time
to
get
back
in?

Shirley Griffith



Jay

The Star-Studded Christmas

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

Christmas again. It's all
happening again.

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

And it's all the same. No,
maybe the sales are up 2%.

More! Flash . . . Flash . . .

The Mad Ave speaks. I hear.
Everyone hears. In doubt? Listen.

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

Sleep smothers me with
lukewarm syrup and lies to me
until I dream. Dream of:

Driving through forests.
Green, alive, splendid forests. My
feet sting. I stamp them and turn
on the heater. The snow is making
the most of its fall, hopping
in the wind. Flash! But then . . .
into synthetic fluffs spritzing
from giant spray cans. Flash . . .
Flash . . . Plastic snow. Flash . . .
colored lights flashing Flash . . .
flashing Flash . . .

Dream of:

Walking through warm Macy's.
Santa Clause is sitting on his
trusty throne with a long
line of eager children awaiting
their turn to sit on his lap
Dot Flash . . . 5:30 rolls around
and Flash . . . Flash . . . Santa, in

pg 410

Click! "And when Mommy
gets home, you tell her you
want a big 'Flashing Santa' for
the top of Your house!" Flash . . . Flash . . .

Tell the kids about:

"It was the night before Christmas
And all all through the house . . ."

Watch them. Just look at them
laugh!

"Aarrgghh!" The Mad Ave
roars for more food. Here come
the zoo-keepers, parents. Why,
if it weren't for parents, the
Mad Ave might have (heaven forbid)
perished years ago.

Watch the parents get into
the Christmas spirit:

"Hey, Martha, I just can't
seem to make up my mind
between the 'GI Joe Flame
Thrower' for the kid or the
robot over there that has the
chest that opens up and shoots
four guns at the same time."

Watch the parents get into
the Christmas spirit:

"Martha! would you get
back over here. I told you we're

front of all the children,
takes off his costume Flash . . .
reveals a thin man in a
tweed suit Flash . . . Flash . . . He
takes some money from the
manager and leaves Flash . . .
Flash . . . Flash . . .

But the children aren't
shocked. No, they know. They walk
away. . . knowing.

Ask the kids, "Santa Clause?"
Watch them laugh.

The Mad Ave speaks to me
like an old cathay:

"Look at what we got!
We got the trees. We got 'em all!
Purple ones, pink ones, blue ones
and especially orange ones. Yeah,
orange is going to be very big
this year. We think people will
really dig orange, if you
know what I mean. Over here
We have what we call 'Green Swirl'.
Y'know, for the teenagers. It should
hit real hard with the new
psychedelic movement."

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

The Mad Ave speaks. I hear
Everyone hears. Children hear.

not going to buy a powder blue one again this year. Now the nice man over there said that these orange ones are very big this year."

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

"What's that, Daddy?"

"Why, Son, that's a Christmas tree. And Mother and I are putting all the presents under it right now.

"Oh, Martha. Don't put that one so far back. The Simpsons are coming over tonight, and I want to make sure that they can see exactly how many more presents we have under our tree than they have under theirs.

Flash . . . Flash . . . Flash . . .

Watch the children get into the Christmas spirit:

"Hey, Roger, I wonder what Santa Clause is really like.

"Y'know . . . Festivity-wise?"

Mark Pearson



QUIET, MY CHILD

"Oh, no!" she thought. "My God, I thought this thing was over with!"

It was not that she minded so much, but the thought of her friends ever finding out was too much for her.

"Why do these things always have to happen to me? They never happen to people like the Smiths or Joneses. Only people like me. I guess I must have a hex or something on me." Her brooding was interrupted by the slamming of the screen door.

"C'mon kid! Do ya' think I've got all day? Ya' know I don't have to help ya'. I thought maybe I was doin' you a favor, but I guess I was really wrong that time!"

"I'm sorry, Cyrus," she lied. "I didn't know you was comin' so soon or otherwise I'd 'ave been ready sooner."

"Don't apologize! Just hurry up."

"I gotta get a few things together. Ma'll be wonderin' if I don't. She thinks I'm goin' up to Enos's for a couple of days."

"For God's sake, Becky! Where you're goin' you don't need no fancy clothes!"

Hurriedly, she threw together her night things and a change of underwear. Before leaving the house, she wrote her mother a note telling her not to worry and that she'd be back in a few days.

As Becky left the house, she said a silent prayer asking for His forgiveness. She climbed into the car beside Cyrus, and almost wished she were dead.

The drive to the Glades was longer than she remembered it to be. Everything looked so unfamiliar. Even the old homestead she lived in as a baby... The word stung her mind. "I'm not gonna have this baby!" I'm not gonna have this baby!" she told herself. "Nobody's gonna make me! I don't want it! I

hate it!" She sobbed uncontrollably.

Cyrus slammed on the brakes. "God in heaven! What's wrong with you now" Would ya' stop cryin'? You're makin' me sick! God! If I knew you was gonna be such a little bitch, I wouldn't have said anythin' at all!"

Vehemently, he started the old car and drove ahead on the ruddy dirt road.

Rain began falling about a quarter to nine. The road was sloshy and almost impossible to drive on.

"Where are we?" Becky asked.

"About five miles from her house. If we don't get stuck, we should be there in fifteen minutes."

Silence. Nothing but the sound of rain and squeaky windshield wipers could be heard.

The road wound crazily through the steep gullies. Finally, an old run-down house came into sight atop a small hill. The car climbed uncertainly toward it. As Cyrus parked the car in the driveway, an old lady in tattered black clothes appeared on the rickety porch. Her greeting was a nod of the head, and nothing more. Becky, trembling, got out of the car. Cyrus grabbed her roughly by the elbow and guided her to the steps in front of the porch.

"Afternoon, M'am" said he. "I spoke to you the other day about this here girl. Well, ah, how long you reckon it should take?"

"No more than half an hour, I imagine," she stated very quietly. "Come along, Miss-"

"Becky," she said terrified.

"Come along, then Miss Becky."

The large dark lady led her to a back bedroom which was filthy.

"Lie down," she commanded.

The rain fell steadily on the earth, with no hope of interruption.

"How did everything go at Enos'?" inquired her ma.

"Fine."

"Is that all you've got to say for yourself? You're usually bubbling over with all sorts of foolishness that went on up at that nuthouse!"

"Oh, yeah, we went down to the ol' house to see what was left. Not much anymore, though."

"Don't reckon there could be anymore. After all, its been nine years now. Poor Jacob, may he rest in peace."

"Now, Ma, don't get yourself all worked up. As ya' said, it's been nine years since he was killed. Did they ever find out who set fire to the barn?" inquired Zak, Becky's older brother.

"You know darned well," Ma said, "they never did. Now go out an' pick up the eggs!"

Zak got up from the table, and all six-feet-four inches of him sauntered to the kitchen door. He opened it and continued looking out towards the hill country.

"Ma's always gettin' mad at me lately. I'm plenty old enough to be off by myself without havin' to be like a baby. I'm seventeen now, a year older than Becky, and she lets her do more'n me!" he grumbled to himself. "Ah, damn!"

Becky climbed the stairs to her room. It was nothing more than a cubicle six by seven feet in diameter. She stared at herself in the hand mirror lying on the vanity. "How could I go and do somethin' so stupid? How? My God, please forgive me. I don't deserve forgiveness, but if you c'n find love in your heart for the likes of me, you're wonderful. I know I don't speak so good, but you know what I'm trying to say. Oh, God!" she sobbed. Tears running down her face made her look even younger than she was.

Exhausted, she climbed on her bed and sank into a troubled slumber. In her sleep, scenes of horror flashed through her unresting mind. Bathed in perspiration, she awoke with a start, expecting herself to be in that awful room again.

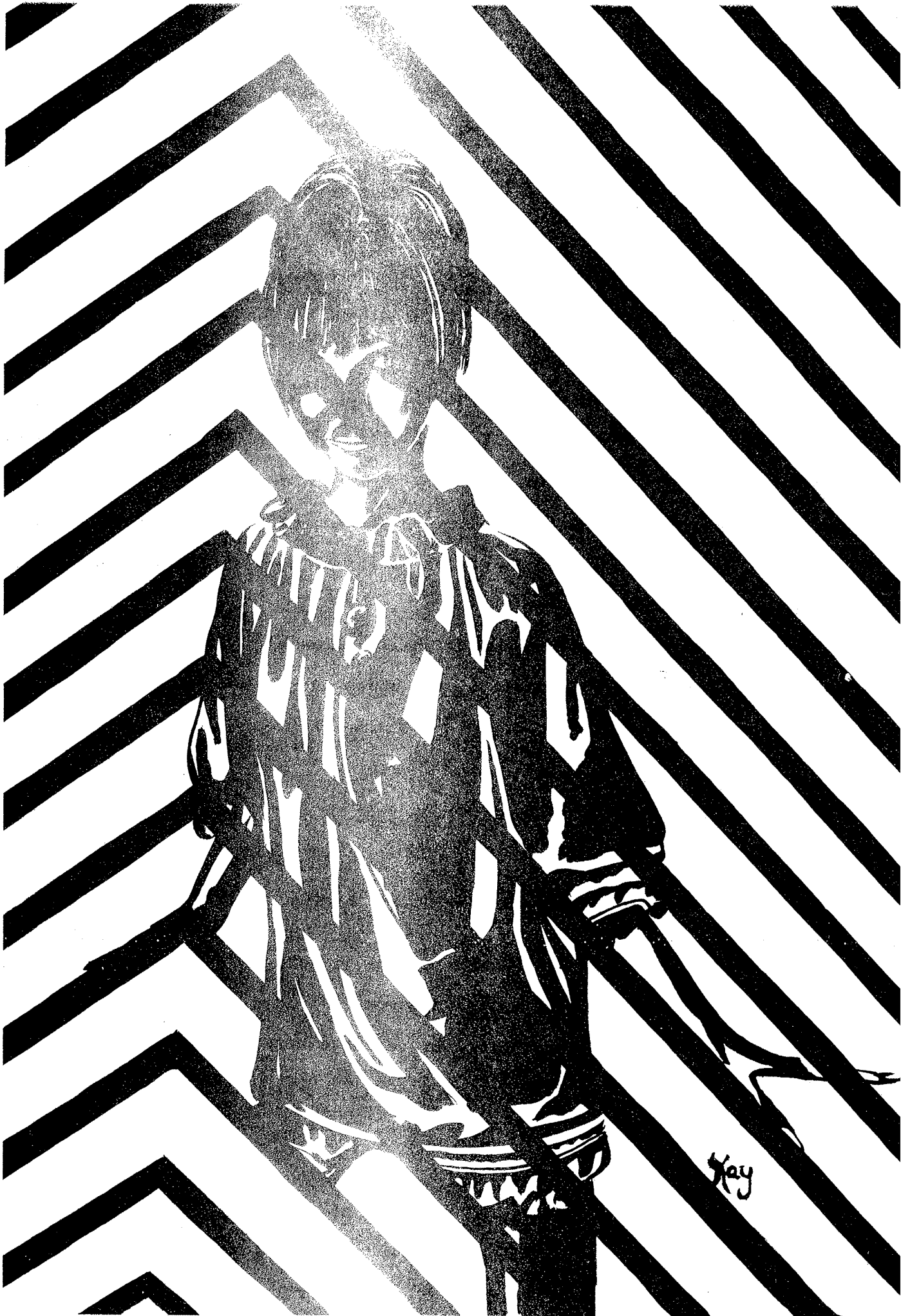
"Becky," she told herself; "you're home and nobody's gonna' hurt you ever again or find out! How come you're so worried? Why?"

Her thoughts were interrupted by the voice of her mother calling her for breakfast. She dressed in a pair of her brother's jeans and an old shirt. She went downstairs to join her ma and brother for the morning coffee and sweet rolls.

"I heard Judge Swansy talkin' about a young girl who went up to the ol' Ranger house a couple a' days ago. There's this woman who seems to be doin' evil things to young girls who don't know any better. Imagine! Here in this peaceful mountain town!" Her ma shook her head in dismay.

Zak looked at Becky sharply out of the corner of his eye.

Jeanne Guenard



PARODY ON PSALM 23

The Grade is my shepherd; I always want.

It maketh me to copy and cheat from my friends: it leadeth me
beside black waters.

It restoreth my fears: it leadeth me in the paths of crib sheets
for a "letter's" sake.

Yea, as I walk through the valley of the shadow of "F", I will fear
detection: for lies are with me; those "C's" and those "D's"
they frighten me.

My "A's" and "B's" prepare a place for me in the presence of the
collegiates; my grades anoint my head with praise; my books
become dusty.

Surely questions and doubt shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of ignorance forever.

Meredith Morse

May All the Joy of Living

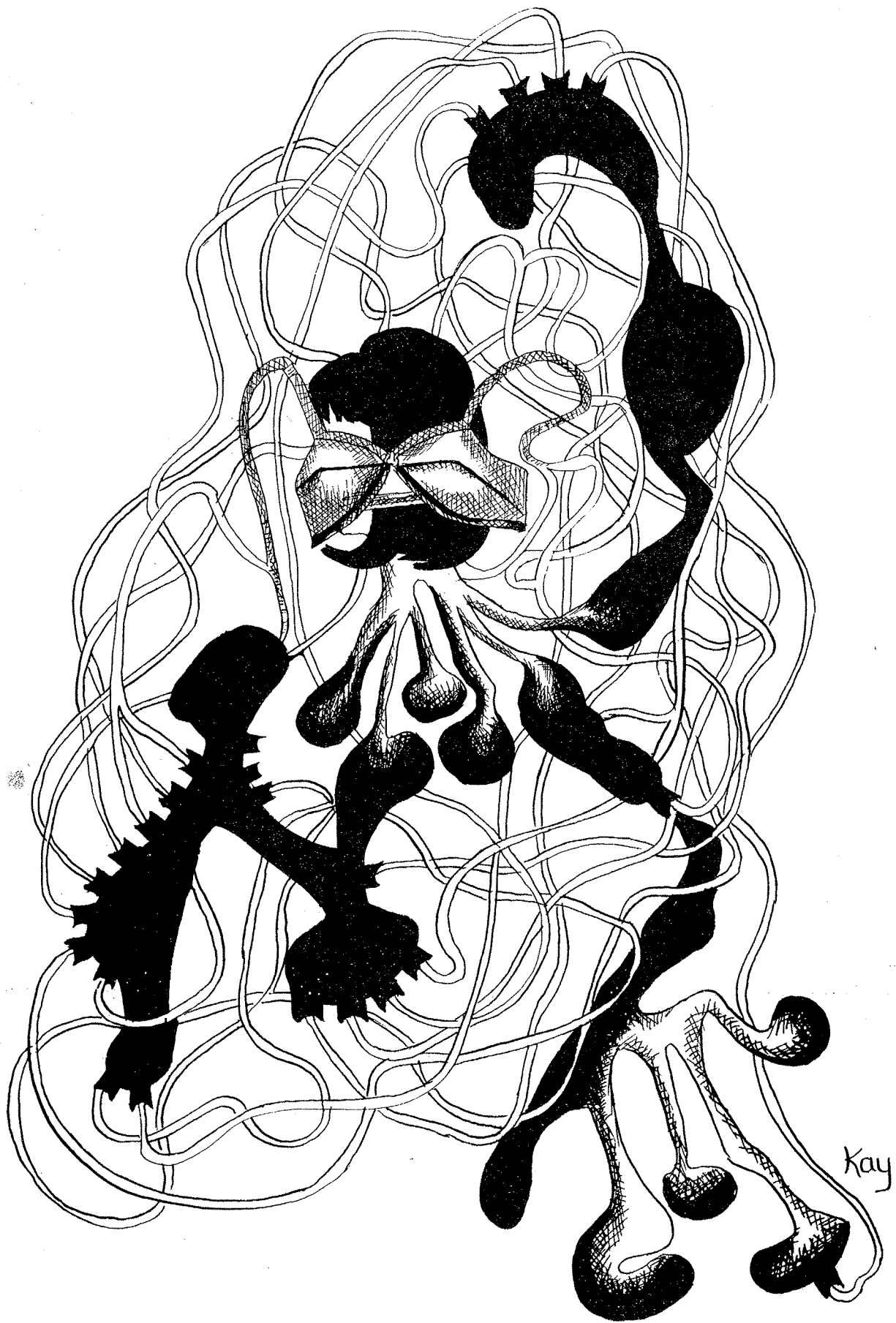
May all the joy of living

not bring unto you

the sorrow of seeing others

caged up in a zoo.

Neal Crosbie



DEATH BY EDUCATION

It is hard to see why man today should fear death, when in general, he has ceased to participate in the living experience by the time he leaves college.

In the modern world only young children continue to vigorously and truthfully experience life. The small child follows his fancies: he plays the games he enjoys, goes where he wants, says what he thinks. His manners are frank and unpretentious. There is a concrete valid reason for all his actions. Even though that reason may be only a nonsensical whim; it is what he feels like doing. If you compare the day's activities of two children, you will rarely find them similar. They know of no patterns which they are to follow and therefore will often explore the new and untried. Two children on any particular day encounter an entirely different set of circumstances and perceive a different set of stimuli. Even upon experiencing the same circumstances, they will usually elicit unique responses. And most important, these responses will be truthful, straightforward, and wholly indicative of the emotion the child actually feels. His living can be described as vigorous, his life as sincere.

Psychologists claim that our personalities and demeanor are completely formed by the age of ten years. This is only logical, since it is within those first few years that the only true education of our lives takes place. The child, relatively free from instruction as to what circumstances he should be seeking, actively explores his environment without following any arbitrarily conferred pattern of activity. Instead he takes different, unchosen routes and welcomes all stimuli he encounters. His reactions to experiences are unhampered by the opinions and attitudes of others. It is only thus that true education can take place. The conclusions he forms result from only his real and sincere response; he is concerning himself only with the situation at hand.

Society cannot tolerate this manner of education. The conclusions formed are often incongruent with its present structure and operation, therefore posing a threat to its existence. Efforts to instruct the child in the "proper" manner of living are begun immediately at home through his parents. They are intensified by his teachers and various authorities when he begins school and broadens his contact with the world. The child learns, both directly by instruction and indirectly by the pressure of prevailing attitudes, what circumstances and experiences it is right for him to seek. He learns also what responses he should give on encountering a certain circumstance and what conclusions he should draw from those reactions. He is supplied with the arbitrary "proper" attitudes and convictions under the illusion that he has determined them himself. Rather than being encouraged to sample his environment, he is informed of it. Schooling and all contact with society provide him with patterns to follow and a design for living.

Compare the life of a child as mentioned at the beginning with the result of this described training. The young man is equipped with a repertoire of patterns by which to respond to any circumstance. It is unlikely that he will encounter a circumstance not provided for, since he

will seek only the experiences that are accepted, "right", and "proper": those already explored and recommended by the majority. His daily activities are then nearly identical to his colleague's at the office. Since the only conclusions formed from experiences common and similiar to all are the same, modern man exerts no pressure for change.

Society has provided man with both his actions and reasons for his actions. He knows what should be done -- so he does it. He knows what should be felt -- so he feels it. He knows what should be thought -- so he thinks it. And so does the man on his left and so does the man on his right. What meaning can be attributed to an individual's life when his experience and response are identical to every other man's? How can he attach significance to himself when he is indistinguishable from all others? Moreover, how can one respect oneself in the midst of self-delusion? The men of today are not living lives; they are following patterns, obeying instructions, fitting the form. Having withdrawn from life, they continue only to speak, shake hands, and roll over.

Allen H. Renear

my animal spirit

my animal spirit
the deepest segment
of my soul

it could not be broken
without breaking
the best part of me

and so dear Lord in heaven
if that is what You
want of me

FORGET IT

Chris Metcalf

LOVE

Love is when we can recognize each other's faults,
and love in spite of them.

I can recognize my faults.

Does this mean I love myself?

Holly Beedle

Mornings

Mornings are lonely,
leaving me to orange juice and cold cereal.
The sunlight has not yet regained its brightness,
but the moon has lost its' appeal.
Coffee seems tasteless,
and the paper hasn't yet arrived.

Sleep, and the memory of my warm bed
still hang heavily on my eyelids.
But I force down remnants of my morbid meal.

At 8:15, I must sparkle and be the student
I know I'm not.
But it's worth the effort,
for tonight won't be as bad,
as this morning.

Bart Phelps

Red yellow and blue
Kites on a windy spring day
Caught by power lines.

Judi Motes

Sunlight sparkles from
Morning dew raveled on,
A spider's thin web.

Greg Anderson

All life is a dream
A minute fantasy world,
Or is our dream. . . life?

Marty Anderson

It's so strange, the jest.
Everyone laughs at tragedies,
Perhaps death does grin.

Greg Anderson

The harmonica
Seeping and guzzling new tunes,
Plays to dancing fools.

Greg Anderson

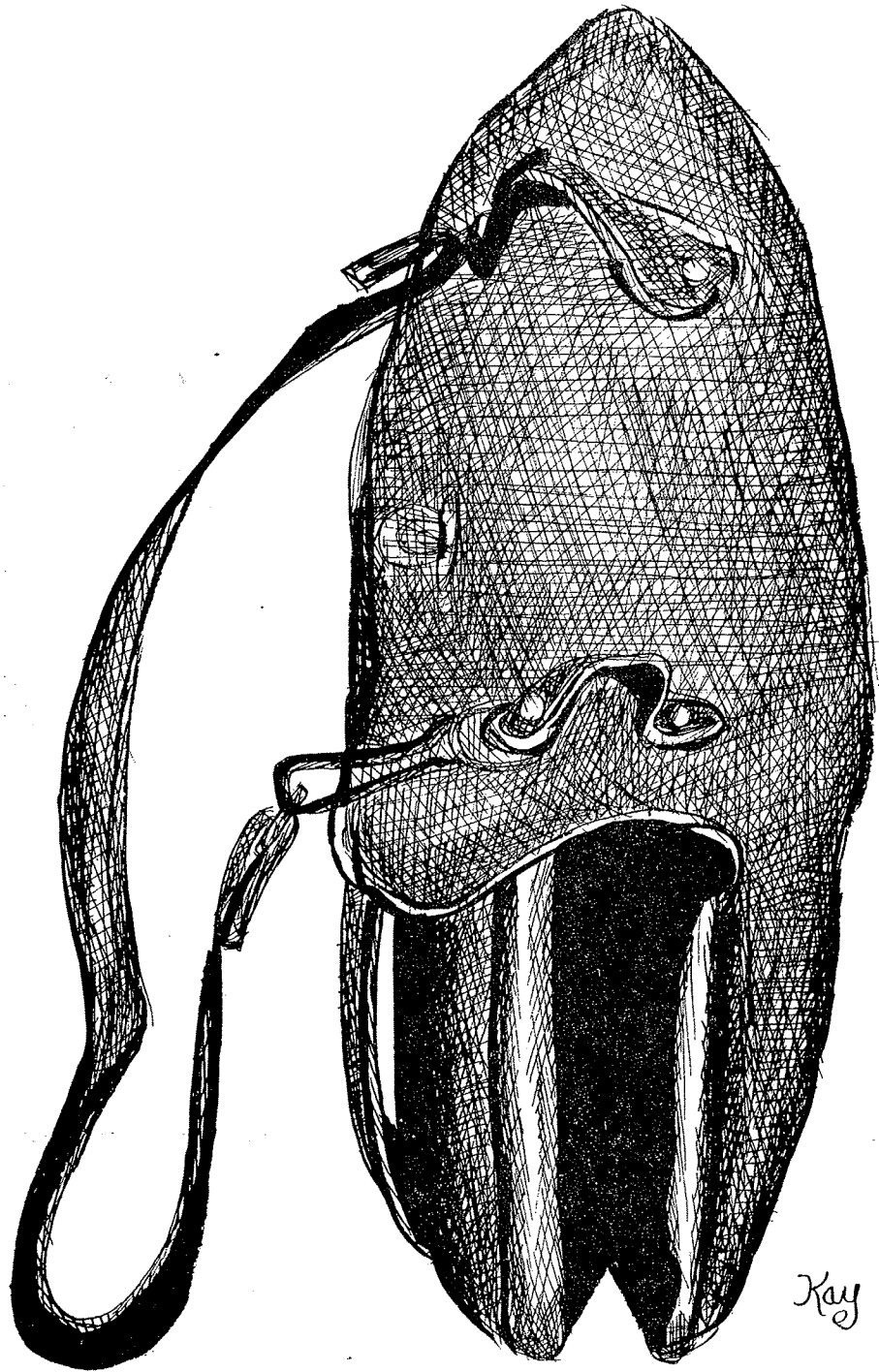
Reality's arm
Lost in fantasy's shirtsleeve
Never to be seen.

Marty Anderson

Is it possible
To see and be blind at the
Same time? Most men are

Judi Motes

Judi M.



Kay

The Ambulance

Joe Bronson rubbed his eyes and resumed staring ahead into the darkness. His hands were wet with perspiration from trying to keep his car in the correct lane. A light fog was settling in; the darkness would have company.

Moistening his lips, Joe kept going. "Only one direction of travel possible," he thought to himself, "forward." There was no turning back, no place to turn off, not yet anyway. Too dangerous in the darkness, and now the fog....The highway was a black snake, waiting to bite with its fangs.

"I'm not going to get bitten," thought Joe. No one could have heard him if he had said it aloud. Joe was alone with windows closed against the cold. Roughly an hour had passed since he had left the airport and headed for home. Home was still an hour's drive away.

Joe rubbed his eyes again. The merger had been all set up. Everything had been ready. All that had remained to be done was to send a man back East to get their end straightened out. Complicated business, merging. Tricky too, and discouraging. Joe had flown back to the Connecticut firm only to discover that everything had fallen in, caved-in rather, when he was somewhere over Montana. Tricky business, merging. Something like a black snake, something like a freeway.

A honk from the car behind him reminded Joe that he had to move with the others. Slow down, stop, or pull over and those fangs will get you. Keep moving, keep flowing, just don't hesitate.

"Didn't get much sleep on that blasted plane," thought Joe. Didn't get much sleep in Connecticut either, for that matter. Oh, maybe an hour, two at the outside, but that was all. Then hustled onto another plane, this one going the other way, after being informed of the cave-in, after being bitten by the fangs.

The black sedan kept moving, plowing through the now heavy fog, plowing through the darkness. Traveling cautiously over a road of black scales, moving forward, inching forward.

Joe Bronson moved his hand to turn up the heater, but discovered it already switched high. The hand found the radio and flicked that on, settling for second best. Somewhat relaxed by the soft, unhurried music, Joe drove on cautiously but less nervously than before. Then came the piercing sound.

It wasn't really piercing then, but dim, as if miles away. Joe heard it, and instantly his senses were quickened and his nerves tensed. No motorist, no matter how far from it, could fail to hear that sound or mistake it for something else. An ambulance, a police car, a fire truck, it was one of these. That distant, piercing, unearthly cry was the only sound Joe Bronson was now aware of. It was coming closer, biting through the stillness.

Joe reacted in an instant. He began pulling over to the shoulder of the

road, but the fog wouldn't budge. The darkness was darker than ever, the sound closer. Joe guessed at the distance from his lane to the gravel edge of the freeway, and slowly pulled over. Cautiously, carefully, delicately he maneuvered the vehicle until he heard the crunching of the gravel on rubber. "This has made my day," Joe thought as he stopped and waited for the ambulance, or whatever it was, to flash past so he could continue his monotonous journey.

Nothing flashed past except other motorists. They stared at him through the fog, wondering if he needed help, then deciding that they had better not stop if they wanted to get wherever they were going. Blank faces, questioning faces, alien faces stared at Joe Bronson through the darkness. No flashing red lights, or sleek white ambulances, or flaming red pump trucks. Faces, all alike, were all Joe Bronson saw.

Then he realized that something had happened, that something was wrong. The ghostly cry of the siren was gone. Joe strained his ears but he couldn't hear it. It was gone, the air was still, and only the whoosh of cars through the fog was audible.

Quickly Joe rolled down the window and listened intently. The siren was definitely gone. He rolled the window back up and managed to find a hole in the traffic. Squeezing in, he resumed driving. The radio was soon turned off.

Trying to forget about the incident was difficult. The sudden screaming of a siren followed by a sudden stillness is hard to forget. Joe tried to look for a logical explanation, but found it impossible with his senses trained fully on inching forward through the blackness.

He heard the siren again about ten minutes later. This time it was so close, perhaps 500 yards behind him, that he immediately swung over to the shoulder and was almost hit. A car honked wildly, lurching ahead.

"What you tryin' to do, get yourself killed?"

"Pull over! The siren! The siren!"

The driver only sped onward. Joe yelled at him again, but his voice was engulfed by the fog, and the driver had already disappeared. The unearthly, unemotional scream was also gone.

Shaking rather badly, Joe remained there for twenty minutes, trying to think, to reason, to put the pieces together. He held a square peg and a round hole. The round peg was lost somewhere out there, in the fog.

The black snake coiled endlessly through the stillness of the night. "I've got to get home, get off this freeway, I can't stay here." The thoughts rambled freely through Joe Bronson's fogged mind. Home...off the freeway... must get there.

Before moving back on the freeway, Joe convinced himself as best he could that the siren was either the wind or the result of inadequate sleep and tiring driving or earstrain or eyestrain or all four or any number of combinations of them. He had to have something to hang onto, and nothing wasn't enough.

When Joe Bronson next heard the strange siren his nerves were as tensed and tangled as was physically possible. When the piercing wail stabbed through the night for the third time, Joe tried vainly to get to the safety of the gravel shoulder. He was going too fast, and his movements were too sharp. When he hit the gravel he immediately began a spin, skidding and lurching on the soft mixture of sand and pebbles.

Fighting to regain control of the car, to regain control of his sanity, he turned too sharply and toppled over the protective embankment, finally coming to a halt upside down near a small grove of trees.

Cars stopped on the highway. Men ran down the slope. People were yelling, running around and confusion broke loose. A young man was first to the black sedan and carefully removed Joe Bronson from the crumpled auto, setting him down gently, yet hopelessly, on the ground.

"Did you see it?" The question was faint and soft as Bronson gazed out through foggy eyes and awaited an answer. His face glazed with perspiration, Joe breathed choppily yet spoke peacefully.

"See what?" questioned the man.

"The fire truck, ambulance, whatever made the noise."

"I didn't hear any noise. Don't talk now. We've sent for an ambulance."

Joe heard a siren and knew within him that it was his siren. An ambulance, pale and ghostly, emerged from the trees near the wrecked car, shimmering in the moonlight. Two attendants, completely void of emotion, silently approached him, nearly floating through the fog. Messengers of the night, of the freeway, of the black snake that coiled endlessly waiting to strike, they approached. As his eyes clouded over, as his breathing grew fainter, as his heartbeat faded, Joe Bronson realized that the siren had been calling for him.

Andy Archer

Man's Eyes

Man's eyes seek what's not there
He sees, but is not aware.
Man's feet take him where he wants
But does man think before he jumps?

Richard Grix



A Single Thought

Worrying is but a poor pastime,
Nothing is worth a single depressing thought.
For things that mean the world to you,
Will never stay, but go away
Just to lash back and punish your feelings.

Brad Flint

Empty People

Jimmy says he'll never eat.
He's afraid of being full.

Tommy says he'll never love.
He's afraid of being hurt.

They are both dead now.

Debbie Mansergh

Second Childhood

As I sit pondering in my most inner thoughts,
One thought seems most prevalent.
An infant puts all his faith in the hands that care
for him until they are no longer needed for
survival.
Yet when the same loving hands need comfort to face
their second childhood; where is the infant?

Holly Beedle

The Carousel

"Foolish girl!" someone cried.
"That's not a safe carousel.
You have no seatbelt!"
But the girl rode on
Clinging with her heart,
Knowing that invulnerability
Does not go with carousels.
Knowing by the soft hurt
She felt at sudden vicissitude.

"Foolish girl!" someone laughed.
"Your carousel has no music."
But the girl rode on;
Hearing the whispered rhapsody
Perfect for carousels.

"Foolish girl. Do you not see
Where the paint is chipped
On your carousel?"
But the girl rode on,
Happy in her blindness.
Loving the wind-gown
Which dressed the carousel.

Debbie Mansergh



MerLLYN

Reminiscing

We never realize the value of something until we have lost it. I must also admit to having fallen into this trap. In my case, the "trivial" object which I took so for granted was a mere childhood -- mine. Having now passed through that magical period and entered the shadow-show world of grownups, I must also admit to a strange new habit -- reminiscing. I find myself remembering a person who was at a loss for a definition of sophistication, phoniness or defense mechanism. I was once a child like that. Weren't we all?

I loved others because we had a common bond -- we all shared life. As a result, every acquaintance was a friend and every stranger soon became an acquaintance, much to the harassment of my mother.

Living in an extremely small town made a shopping trip seem like an expedition, especially to a child of three, since it entailed traveling at least twenty-five miles to a department store. As a result those trips seemed few and far between, and to me, they were like a marvelous adventure. One such trip especially stands out in my mind.

One morning my mother announced that this would be a shopping day, and I should prepare accordingly. It was early when we arrived at the store. I still remember what a surprise it always was to me that a building which was so drab on the outside could be so bright and exciting within. Soon after we entered, I wandered off, as was my usual custom, probably because I had spotted a friendly face in the crowd of milling giants. My mother found nothing too distressing in this, since I wandered often, but never far, and always managed to return. It was only after some time had passed that she began to become concerned. Soon after starting in search of me, checking through department after department, she noticed a crowd gathering.

Elbowing her way through them, a sight even she had not bargained for met her eyes. There I was, in the middle of lingerie, playing ring-around-the-rose with the salesladies.

I can still remember how the size and brightness of the area made me dizzy as I spun around faster and faster, clasping the large, warm hand that was wrapped around mine. The ladies' faces were smiling, but their giant-steps caused me to run-walk in order to keep up the pace, which seemed unbelievably fast. It made me feel as if I was back on the merry-go-round I had first experienced at that year's fair -- the one that was so kaleidoscopic it made my head swim. But I felt good. There was something wonderful in the fact that a silly child could make four sedate matrons become children again, laughing as if they, too, were on that merry-go-round -- their faces pink from cotton candy -- the world about them fused into a colorful blur.

I've often wondered what made me get off.

Jayne Breunig

there i was

so there i was
way the hell up there
lamenting the fact
wishing i were back down
again

Chris Metcalf

A Poem Without End

The master of the finest art
of poetry will meet his match
When asked to add a final part
to this terse verse. He must attach
A line which rhymes with (horrors!) orange.

(Good luck.)

Gregory Giel

All About Floating

Steel ships sail the seas
Darn it, I can't get my popsicle stick to float.

Neal Crosbie

The Accident

A jolt . . . Automatically, I threw out my arms, feeling a numbness in my hand as it struck the dash. I silently cursed the loss of another fingernail with my sleep-thickened lips. The blast of horns burst through my shadow world and forced my eyes open. Ahead, cars were blocking both lanes and I could see the usual congestion that accompanied an accident.

We crept slowly by, snaking through the flares, people, and cars. In the middle of the road sat an old truck--looking like something straight out of The Grapes of Wrath-- a few of the produce crates still in the back. The rest of the boxes, which had carried lettuce, lay broken open on the ground. The driver writhed on the sun-baked asphalt as if he hoped to push through it--losing himself and his pain. The man wore a once gay shirt that looked pitifully second-hand under the bright sun, and a pair of faded overalls that slowly saturated his life as they turned the color of the purple grapes that were growing only a few yards away. Under the same sun. The truck stood silently, the water-green, decapitated leaves forming a kind of untended mat, as the flares slowly glowed their life away, looking like some mad excuse for vigil-lights--that had been bought by an insincere penitent.

My eyes burned from the light and heat the sun forced on everything that belonged to this bizarre scene. I sought relief in the dark asphalt under my feet, but instead, my face felt the sear of a steady exhaust of steam. The whole panorama revolved kaleidoscopically around me; steam hit my face again--I felt the damp sting long after my father had acknowledged the man who motioned us on.

My mind raced--drowning out not only my parents' incessant chatter, but also the terrible hum of the other car's, and our own, tires--endlessly gorging themselves on the licorice asphalt. My father's voice sliced through my careening thoughts: Would I like to drive . . . I couldn't face taking the wheel again--eating up mile after mile--playing a morbid game with all the other faceless pilots . . . Take the wheel . . . I don't want to drive . . . His face registered nothing. After a moment of silence, he turned to me with that blankly reproachful, slightly distracted expression which every parent masters after quite a few annoyances, and with little practice. He repeated monotonously that he was tired, and I should drive awhile. I looked at his eyes--they glistened water-green. I took the wheel.

Jayne Breunig

A ROUTE TO TIME'S END

My relation with her is simple,
and Deep as the Universe.
I know every inch on her face,
yet I'm not accustomed to it.
She makes my mind passive
and my heart a warrior.
And in my thoughts,
she lingers, and her beauty haunts,
in the harness of time
that pulls me along ----

Brad Flint



The English "X" Class

At the premonitory peal of the minute bell, all but most of the English "X" students are found sitting attentively, waiting for the instructor's daily flow of academic witticisms. At least three of the popular couples stand just outside the door, clinging to those last precious moments together. Other students linger in the hallway, as road-blocks for friends passing by on the way to their classes. Inside the classroom, forming an elite partition, a group of girls vehemently discuss rumors of Tri-Hi-Y underground movements, while in another corner a student madly copies last night's homework from a friend's lunch-work. With ten seconds left, the rest of the class rambles in, weaving their way through the palavering clump of athletes who, by lolling all over the heater and four desk tops, have managed to block the entrance, and then through the frustrating one-way desk aisles. The tardy bell rings, adding to the racket of books clapping desk tops and the continual chatter. The "Taking of the Roll" provides extra minutes of fun and relaxation until a distant authoritative throat-clearing is heard at the podium. A grasping hand reaches out to the body of students demanding open minds, giving of a profound education, offering its extension . . . The teacher lays down his solo-colloquy, in quest of colloquy . . . Eyes look down, around . . . a student coughs, then all is silent.

Lori Jensen



Sally Guthrie

Beauty in Transition

Knowing the rain would come that night, Kit snuggled down into her covers to await the signs of its arrival. She made the most of her warmth for soon it would be one with the dominant, damp cold. From the distant foothills that faced her bedroom window came the roar of thunder like the breaking of a wave that would soon rush water to the land. But she wanted to see, before the rain fell, the midnight blue of the sky that subtly hints of what is to come--the premonition of obscurity--and even more, the stark, black nakedness of the Oak tree with its bundles of matted, hair-like twigs resting on still larger boughs, silhouetted against the dangerous sky. She entered the still cold and crawled to the end of her bed beneath the window. On knees, with her already chilling hands, she parted the fading green curtains that hid the night, and her shoulders quivered from the realization of her new, cold surroundings. But then she forgot everything. There were the Oak and the sky in their most upsetting, lonely yet beautiful union. The wind--the wind, it came and brought a thousand new things to watch. The Oak began to surrender to its persuasive temptation, unrhythmically and spasmodically twisting and bending under its pressing force. Soon each part of the tree swayed in unison, and Kit thought the Oak would give in and let the wind lay it to rest. The wind was urgent in its touch and command, and the Oak undecidedly turned toward the ground. And then in a burst of power, it snapped back to a stance only to once more turn for the ground.

Virginia Baxter

me-i wrote it
you-you read it
together-we car-
ried it to its doom