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# WAVELENGTH

## C O N T E N T S

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FICTION



NON-FICTION



POETRY

# WAVELENGTH

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# Transcedental Romance: The Untold Loves of Henry David Thoreau

## Stephen Coronella

Among the many volumes devoted to the life and writings of Henry David Thoreau, there is not a single page that reflects on our native son's extroadinary career as a lady's man. This is indeed shameful, for no 19th-century man of letters contributed more to the popularization of the blind date in America than Henry Thoreau.

True, Thoreau rarely allowed the romantic side of his persona to emerge in his prose and poetry, but the careful reader will discover it in such tell-tale lines as "The mass of men are out having a gay old time and I'm stuck here at Walden."

Before taking up residence at Walden Pond, Thoreau so inflamed the passions of local womenfolk that friends had to whisknay, drag him away on extended canoeing and camping trips. In response, some frustrated females formed their own expeditions, combing the dunes of Cape Cod and the forests of Maine for their elusive prey.

Where, then, are the treatises and dissertations? Where the cockeyed academic conjecture and made-for-TV mini-series? To correct these oversights, I have ransacked Thoreau's extant works and assembled my own study. It will be published this spring in a limited edition-a very limited edition. In fact, you may have to hire a private detective to find a copy. A few choice extracts follow.

In September, 1839, a scant two years out of Harvard College, Henry Thoreau waded shyly into established Concord society. At an extravagant soiree hosted by the Emersons, he met up with Miss Rita Davenport, a fair lass of eighteen whose charms, it was said, "could recall a full fleet of sailing men from halfway out on the Atlantic." Indeed, her intimate knowledge of the seafaring life puzzled Thoreau throughout their time together. Still, he was mesmerized by her easy grace and her eagerness to neck. Ralph Emerson, ever the vigilant matchmaker, noted the blossoming romance in a letter to Thomas Carlyle: "My handyman (Thoreau) has picked himself quite a plum in Miss Rita Davenport, she being as foxy a chick as there is in Concord."

After weeks of quarreling, however, the two lovers parted, each accusing the other of infidelity. Apparently, Thoreau had spied Miss Davenport escorting strange men around town, and she had caught him reciting an ode to a woodchuck. The break-up devastated young Thoreau, and he swore an oath never to date again. For recreation thereafter, he attended the local Lyceum, feigning interest in the usual humdrum orations on Free Will and Federalism, until one night his roving eyes settled on Miss Elisa Lawrence. A shared distaste for bland oratory united the couple, as Thoreau's journal entry the following day suggests: "I have never heard a man's ideas but that a woman's figure (va-va-va-voom!) has expressed them more robustly."

Again, according to Emerson, Thoreau had found himself, if not a soul-mate, at least a girl who knew how to enjoy herself. Emerson to Carlyle in August, 1840: "Henry, my gradener, is never home before dawn these days, spending his nights nurturing a new relationship, as it were. His latest beloved is Miss Elisa Lawrence...She is the kind of girl a boy would be happy to bring home to Mother - if the old hag administered a bordello."

Thoreau himself got the message when, on their third date, Miss Lawrence submitted an itemized bill for his inspection.

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In the fall of 1844, several prominent Transcendentalists were implicated in a regional call girl racket, and for a time investigators suspected Thoreau of handling the Massachusetts side of the operations. Always a meticulous accountant of his own affairs, Thoreau kept a daily expense sheet which police regarded as the linchpin of their case. For example, from the entry dated April 12, 1844:

Molasses.....$1.73
Flour.....0.88
Lard.....0.65
Frilly Undergarments &
Perfume.....49.72

According to the Concord Clarion, May 10, however, Thoreau was able to concoct a convincing explaination for the fancy underwear and scent. "Authorities are satisfied that Mr. Henry Thoreau-currently on holiday in the Maine woods-stands cleared of any involvement in the type of activity we hesitate to mention in a family newspaper."

Critic E.J. Bedwedder, in his monumental study *Literature and Libido*, also supports Thoreau's innocence, albeit indirectly: "Pimping may have been common enough among certain minor Romantic poets, but in Transcendental New England it was more the practice to sit on the banks of a secluded lake, beneath a brilliant full moon, and watch for skinny-dippers."

At any rate, the experience badly shook Thoreau's faith in the opposite sex. He felt himself betrayed once, twice, and now a third time. After trying unsuccessfully for weeks to resolve the Woman Problem himself, he turned at last to Reverend Harland Crotch-Thoreau's only known appeal to the clergy. Reverand Crotch issued the following advice: "Henry, select yourself a woman who is generally insipid-i.e., plain, emotionless, taciturn, and rather a burden to look at. You may never be happy, but you will be far from miserable."

Thoreau decided instead to resume his quest for the perfect mate. In January, 1845, he began courting Tess Wannabuss, a Waltham factory girl. Henry and Tess were ideal cultural complements. He unveiled to her the wonders of ancient Hindu scripture; she instructed him in the joys of mud wrestling. They appeared bonded for life. Emerson to Carlyle in March, 1845: "My horsegroomer and his girl have become quite an item in our little town. One encounters them everywhere, as they seem to roam endlessly, reciting psalms to one another while waiting for the mud to dry."

But the inevitable separation occurred on June 4, when Tess announced her intention to marry Thoreau's chief rival, manure magnate S.E. Hutchinson. "It is time we brought this whole stinking matter to a close," Tess declared coldly in her final letter. Thoreau's journal entry for that day reveals the sense of pain and defeat he must have felt: "My pores have imbibed about as much delight as they can take...The 'Concord Casanova' is calling it quits."

On Independence Day, 1845, Henry Thoreau gave up women and retired to Walden Pond.

# A Death in the Desert Sun

## Steve Wagner

The sun was rising. Already the desert creatures were concluding their night activities and running for cover. The oppressive heat was steadily making its way down the dry river bed and over the sand, replacing the cool shadows of the night. Soon, very soon, the heat would clamp down on the desert canyon with such thoroughness that any animal not protected in some deep crevice or buried in the insulating ground, would become a victim of the sun.

The man surveyed the scene from under a cliff overhang that had been the home for a group of Indians many years ago. He had been there a week and already appreciated the efficiency of the Indian lifestyle, even though he knew very little of their history. What he did know came from the dwellings under the overhang. He noticed that the structures were shielded from the midday sun and basked in the coolness emanating from the rocks. There was a small spring, just a trickle, at the back of the enclave. Yet it produced more than enough water for himself and could easily sustain many others. The buildings were crowded towards the back and were small by western standards but large enough to stand up, eat and sleep in. Every available space was utilized, nothing was wasted.

He understood that the previous inhabitants were a product of the landscape. Plants, animals and humans teeter on a fine line between life and death. The desert is probably the most perfect place on earth, for mistakes are not tolerated. The lizard that inadvertently stays out in the sun too long becomes confused and its overheated brain is no longer able to recognize a hole in which to cool down. The Kangaroo rat, straying too far from its den, quickly becomes the dinner of the rattlesnake. The cactus taking root too close to the mesquite tree eventually succumbs to the poison seeped into the soil by the tree. Even a human, the most adaptable creature of all, needs a constant supply of water lest his body quickly wither away. The Indians were aware of the necessity for perfection and so was the man.

Perhaps that is what attracted him to the desert. Walking on the precipice of life itself with the constant threat of death becomes the essence of living. Not that he was foolhardy, for the foolish do not survive here. No, he was aware of what his soul and body needed to live. For him, it was the physical challenge of surviving; the day to day struggle for food, water, and shade. He needed the beauty, economy and solitude only the desert could provide.

The Indians were gone now. Long gone. The dwellings stood in mute testimony to their culture. All their hopes, dreams and fears were locked in the memory of the walls. But eventually their buildings will be gone, reduced to their basic elements. The man knew his own existence was even less significant than the previous inhabitants. When dead, he would not leave behind any permanent shelter, pottery or arrowheads. Nothing would give evidence of his life in the desert; the wind and sun would erase all.

The sun climbed higher and, by midday, the sand fleas buzzing his head were the only life present. He followed the trail that led steeply up to the top of the cliff and moved slowly but steadily to the rim of the canyon. Once there, he looked down to the dwellings at the base of the cliff, tucked snugly underneath it. He was so high up that they looked like doll houses. The cliff itself rose most of the distance he climbed: over half-a-day of traveling. From the base of the cliff-top to where he was perched, was a slope of talus that appeared ready to flow over in a waterfall of rock. He thought how canyons always seemed strange: like a mountain range turned upside down. A plain stretches farther than the eye can see, flat and devoid of hills. Great cracks open up, some wider than a day's worth of walking. Standing on the edge of these fissures, one sees that all the height is concentrated downward. Negative elevation. This canyon was fairly small in comparison to those he saw on the journey to the cliff dwellings. Three days were needed to reach the bottom and looking down produced a feeling of insubstantiality within him. This was a fairly common emotion for he was always dwarfed by the landscape and constantly influenced by the rhythms of nature. The sun determined how long he could stay in the open and lack of water made certain areas off-limits. Even the snakes affected his choice of resting places. Alone in the desert he had to be prudent.

The snake had felt the man's footsteps long before he was in sight. It slithered towards the cool space between two rocks and curled up into a defensive position. The snake's primitive brain did not register the fact that it was slightly different from others of its kind. Through the years, nature had favored those snakes able to warn animals too big for it to eat. Sometimes one is born without this ability but survives long enough to reach maturity. The Indians knew of these dangerously silent ones but that knowledge was lost, impossible to retrieve. Returning down the trail to the cliff, the man approached. The snake instinctively vibrated its tail but produced no sound. Unaware, he walked closer; it readied to strike. Closer. Strike.

The vultures circled overhead for half of the next day until they were sure. Three days later, after the vultures were gone, the desert mice came to the man. Two weeks after that, the insects finished their work. The sun diligently shone down, and a month later, all that remained of him was inedible to the desert animals and was left to the wind and sand.

# Beach Day

Robert FitzGerald

Um, I'm awake, that blasted radio. I'm in a car. This is my car. At least I think it is. I'm not driving, riding in front on the passenger seat. The steering wheel turns in accordance to the curves in the road and the brakes are applied by an invisible foot of some sort. It all seems very strange, yet, I think I should know what's going on. My two children are in the back and I can hear them arguing. I wonder if I should turn around. No, it might disturb them.

Mildred offers Harold a beer but he declines. She gets mad because Harold won't drink with her. These children will never get along. I'm confused as to where we are going. My children keep making noise and it's hard for me to make out what they are saying. They're mentioning something about a beach. Yes, I remember. If today were to be a good day we would go to the beach.

I guess my wife must be driving. I should have perceived that right away, but I've slept for so long I guess I'm not reacting the way I should. It feels unbelievably good to grasp this armrest and say that I'm holding this armrest. It's been so long since I've had anything to grasp onto and say, "This is real." No, that's ridiculous. I've had many real things. But nothing came of it. Anyhow this armrest feels good. No, it doesn't. Well, yes, it does. I mean I think it does. I wonder if they baked a cake. Perhaps this might be the last time.

I feel insecure with Ethel driving. She's all over the road and all that noise from the radio bothers me. The children keep making a racket in the back. I'll turn off the radio, maybe they don't want it off. That's why it's going. They might get angry with me and that would be me about it. There, now I can hear the children more clearly. This is something I should be able to enjoy. It's not often I get to hear what's on their minds. I wonder if Ethel turned the radio on. After all the kids are in the back seat. Well, it's off now and no one seems to be bothered. But with Ethel you can never tell. Harold is speaking to Mildred about this recent dinner with the vice-president of Latex Corporation. He says that if he can get his company's labels on all of the Latex products he'll make a bundle. Mildred wants to know what Harold talked about with the big wheel. Harold says he heard that the vice-president's first interest was booze, his second was discussing pro football, and his third was looking at pornographic magazines. So first they got drunk, then they talked about pro football, and then they looked at the V.P.'s own private collection of Latex models posing in very interesting positions without the famous Latex undergarments. All in all, Harold says that it was one of the most exciting nights of his life. Mildred says that the way Harold is acting is disgusting.

"You're such a hypocrite!" she says.

"Well, I have to make a living some way," retorts Harold.

"That's not it at all. You'll get stinking drunk with a blubbering old fatso, but you won't even have one drink with me, your own sister. Come on now have a beer. Now don't give me that, 'You dirty alcoholic' look. I saw it. Don't try to deny it. Do you know what it's like to get drunk alone? Come on, Harold. Stop slicking back your hair and have a beer." Harold does not answer.

Christopher Whittle

I'll turn on the radio again. Their talk is very tiring. It just all seems so wasteful to me. We seem to have been traveling for a long time and I can't recognize this road. I've been to this beach many times before, that is I think I have. Yes, I must have been, but that was back when I used to drive. But I swear--I--yes, I do remember. This is not the right way. I'm not positive but--I want to speak but I know that no one would listen. Well, perhaps the children, but it's all so hard. I must speak. "Ethel, we're lost. You must know that dear. We should have turned about forty miles back. Ethel? Ethel?" She won't admit it even if she knows I'm right. She'll turn back when she thinks I'm not looking.

"Mother," says Mildred, "I think we're lost. I have a headache already. If we were heading the right way, I wouldn't get one till we reached the ocean."

"That's alright, dear, we're just taking a different way this time." Ethel's voice seems strange to me, perhaps because I haven't heard it in such a long time. Lost. As I look out the window, we pass people on the roadside who I will never know. A balloon man beckons to a child but the child is afraid to accept the balloon and turns away. Ah, we're making a U turn, perhaps I was right after all. Perhaps this isn't the way to the beach. All these people by the roadside, all strangers, and we keep on driving. Yes, sleep would be nice...

...Who's shaking me from behind? "Oh, yes, Harold, I'm awake." Well, Ethel got us here someway. We've arrived at the beach. Ethel's door opens. I guess she's getting out. I'll shut her door and help the children carry the food and blankets across the sand. This beach is private and quite deserted. I don't understand why we're walking so far. Helen's cylindrical form glistens metalically as she clinks along guzzling another beer. Her hair looks rusty. She ought to wash it more. If she doesn't take better care of herself that shoe salesman friend of hers will lose interest just like all the others. Harold's face is very red and he's having trouble walking. The grease from his hair pours down like wax drippings, all over that new sports jacket he always talks about, making spots. Harold says that he feels weak. Mildred and I better help him walk. I guess the sun is very fearsome today, no perhaps it's brutal or it's--Mildred wants to stop here. I'll put up the beach umbrella for shade. Mildred's lying down, she'll be passing out soon. No telling when she started drinking today. Harold is fiddling with his briefcase. And again there is nothing to say. The ocean is about a hundred yards away. It roars and I feel drawn to the danger, the hugeness, the dark of the surf. I'm going to go towards it. I want to speak to Ethel. Yes, now it's clear, that's the reason that I felt so good this morning. I was so sure that the surroundings of this place would make the difference. I thought we could get out of the old rut and perhaps get to like each other again. I really need something, something like that. Hell, I'm an old man now. No, I'm not. I'm just past middle age. No, you're an old man, OLD, you know how hard it is to walk, the children get impatient with you now, soon you'll need a cane, perhaps need someone to assist you. No, that would be unbearable. Yet my son does not seem to mind when I have to hold him up because of a little fresh air and sunshine. That blasted puppet--No, when that happens, when I'm too feeble to function, I'll need Ethel to talk to. Damnation, where is she? "Ethel! Ethel! I know you're here." Oh the children are looking at me. To hell with it. "Ethel! I'm not going to try again. I want you to talk to me. This is the last chance. The last time. Look how beautiful it is here, removed from the city, yet at the same time, a desolate hell. We are removed from the city but at the same time we are removed from...Answer me Ethel! We'll be dead, forever silent, too soon to hold out now. Won't you hear me?" Watch it you're starting to cough. I should get control of my voice. "Damn it, Ethel, will there be nothing more between us but thin air?" And...will only the ocean answer me? Must walk and get away from here. I'm lost but no, I've only gone a few yards. I could go back but to what? I'm tired of being a mute, dying alone in front of the mirror. There's nothing but the sea. And I won't turn back this time.

This water's freezing me, exciting, ah helpless again. Turning, turning, beneath this wave lies the dizzy sun...

...Thrown back on the beach. There, the children with a huge man. He's bearded with seaweed in his hair. They say he knows all things, just put my faith in him and everything will be nice. NICE? They're asking him questions but I hear no answers. They seem to hear. Mildred wants to know if the shoe salesman will marry her. I can't hear the answer only see everyone's lips moving. She says the answer is yes if she says three Hail Mary's before bedtime. Harold wishes to know if he'll be successful and own a ranch-style home with a back patio. Again I hear nothing but Harold says it will all work out if he is nice to the clergy and gives them discounts on his products. They want me to ask the great man questions. He leans toward me and touches me. "Why is it that I can't see Ethel?" But he does not speak. "Why can't I see her with my eyes? Am I at fault? My body?" Nothing. "Blast you, how much is 87 times 87?" Damn you, I'll punch him with my last strength. He disappeared before I could touch him. Harold is melting like a choir boy candle. Mildred collapses like a crumpled beer can. They've turned into children of six and seven years old. Giggling, they wish me a happy birthday. Harold shyly gives me a soft black rock. I touch it, feel chilled as it crumbles into dust. Little Mildred brings me a lily and laughs. Ethel's footprints are approaching. She says nothing and drapes an invisible spider web. I'm unable to move, yet I feel myself being lifted. They sing Happy Birthday and the sun is slipping down. The light has disappeared and I'm rising off the beach up into the dark.

# Under The Umbrella

## Brian Riley

### I
### AS TIME IS ONLY A MEASUREMENT

Edward liked to measure things: his height, his dog, the distance between his house and his friends' houses. He noted discrepancies: his house was not like his friends' houses; his parents were not like his friends' parents; he was not like his friends.

Actually he had no friends. When most kids his age were outside playing games and worshiping astronauts, Edward was alone in his room burning candles. He found that some candles burned for a long, long time. The idea was to cast a spell. The object was to transform reality—life with a certain family on a certain street in a certain small town in western Massachusetts. White ones were burned for love, green ones for jealousy, black ones to bestow misfortune. At the age of twelve Edward discovered that all types of candles could be found at the nearest Church, which he then began to frequent with religious fervor (his parents still look back on this time as their son's "religious period" when there was hope for his poor soul). For an entire year Edward stole the holy light without the slightest trace of guilt; but it was only a passing phase.

Edward was haunted by scenes of inadequacy. For a short while he was a member of both the neighborhood baseball team and the local chapter of the Boy Scouts of America. He tried very hard to fit in, but it was no use. He was asked to quit them both, and he was glad to. He was unhappy at home and miserable in school. In both roles, as son and student, he played the part of a phantom, slipping in and out of rooms without being noticed. He felt best when he was alone in his room. But he was lonely.

Edward was an only child. He could never talk to his parents. His mother, Ruth, felt awkward with other women her age. She spent most of her time with Edward's grandmother. His father, Jack, loved to read adventure novels. He was painfully shy. The last thing he needed was undue attention from his neighbors. Although Edward's parents were always at odds, they never fought. They were very good at avoiding one another.

Edward did poorly in school. He would just sit for hours staring out the windows. For this reason his parents were often called in to see his teachers. This meant three things to them: they had to be together on these occasions; his mother would feel uncomfortable with Edward's teachers: his father would get an unwarrented amount of attention.

"Your son has the patience of saint," one teacher told his mother. "Now, if he would only stop his daydreaming."

"You were sent as a test," his mother would say later in the car. "You were sent by the devil himself so the Lord could test me."

"For Christ sake, Eddie," his father would add. "Why don't you play outside like a normal boy? You're always up in your room like a Goddamn monk."

Edward grew used to religious jargon. Every night he had the same dream of Jesus dragging a huge wooden cross up the stairs and into his room. Edward could hear him coming, one thump at a time for what seemed an eternity. But he never had much patience with Jesus. He acknowledged the need for a savior, but preferably one that still walked the Earth with vigor. Jesus always looked ragged and tired. Edward liked to get his goat:

"Aren't you dead yet?"

"No, I have conquered death."

"Oh yeah? So what are you doing here?"

"A boy your age needs a hero."

"Spare me, please. And you're it, I suppose?"

"Yes. I am the way."

"I'll find my own way, thank you very much."

"Just remember, Edward. The answer is love."

"No kidding?"

* * *

### II
### YET IS LIKE STILL

Sophie Oldenburg still walked the Earth with vigor. Every morning she would pass by Edward's house on her way to school. In his eyes she was an angel to be worshipped. As yet, many hours of meditation in the darkness had come to nothing, so Edward decided it was time for concrete action. He offered to carry Sophie's books for her. At first she consented and he thought he noticed a faint gleam of receprocative love in her eye (so perhaps the spells were working). But as it turned out, Sophie found Edward intolerable and disgusting. She, with her starved appetite for high fashion and social acceptance. He, with his crewcut and shiny black shoes. It was 1968, and it soon became obvious that he could never be her idea of "groovy."

Edward looked elsewhere for salvation.

As fate would have it, one day he discovered a hardcover book in the attic. It stood out from all the other books. It seemed to glow in the dark. No sooner had Edward picked it up and begun to read, than Henry Miller's words wrapped themselves around him like the arms of a long awaited friend:

> It must have been a Thursday night when I met her for the first time—at the dance hall. I reported to work in the morning, after an hour or two's sleep, like a somnombulist. The day passed like a dream. After dinner I fell asleep on the couch and awoke fully dressed about six the next morning. I felt throughly refreshed, pure at heart, and obsessed with one idea—to have her at any cost. Walking through the park I debated what sort of flowers to send with the book I had promished her (*Winesburg, Ohio*). I was approaching my thirty-third year, the age of Christ crucified. A wholly new life lay before me, had I the courage to risk all. Actually there was nothing to risk: I was at the bottom rung of the ladder, a failure in every sense of the word.

There was a photograph of Henry Miller on the back cover of Edward's new book. He was shown standing in the rain under a big black umbrella. The expression on his face was familiar. He was as ugly as sin. He wore black rimmed glasses. Edward wore such glasses (Sophie, for one, thought that glasses in general were "queer"). Henry looked out from his book as if it were a window from another world. His eyes were grey and cold with a look full of contempt. Edward felt at once that he was not looking *at* him, but *with* him. There was some shared secret between them. They were the keepers of the same flame. Edward wanted desperately to be inside that book too, looking out at the world with Henry. Later, he went secretly into the hall closet and stole his father's black umbrella.

That night Edward had somehting special to ask Jesus:

"What do you think about Henry Miller?"

Jesus nearly dropped his cross. "As a hero? You must be joking?"

"No. I'm serious."

"And what's wrong with me, I'd like to know?"

"Well, that cross, for one thing. Why do you have to drag it around with you all the time? It's embarrassing. It makes you look weak. And those thorns, they make you look like a real loser."

"Weak? do you know how heavy this thing is? You think this is easy? People spit at me, throw dirt in my face, betray me, they misinterpret everything I say; I don't know why I even bother. Listen, I'll tell you one thing, Henry Miller never suffered the way I do."

"I'm sorry, Jesus. Don't take it so personal. It's not just me. Everybody thinks you look weak. Kids these days need somebody they can look up to. Who needs a hero who gets himself crucified?"

Jesus looked exhausted and slumped down to the floor. He shook his head and cupped his hands over his eyes, so that Edward felt sorry for him.

"You just don't understand kids, do you? Why don't you go out and do something really heroic for once?"

Jesus shook his head and sobbed. "Father, forgive them."

"Pull yourself together, will you?" Edward said. "It's awful to see you like this. You're a mess." He climbed back to bed.

"Edward," Jesus whispered, "Don't forget to say your prayers."

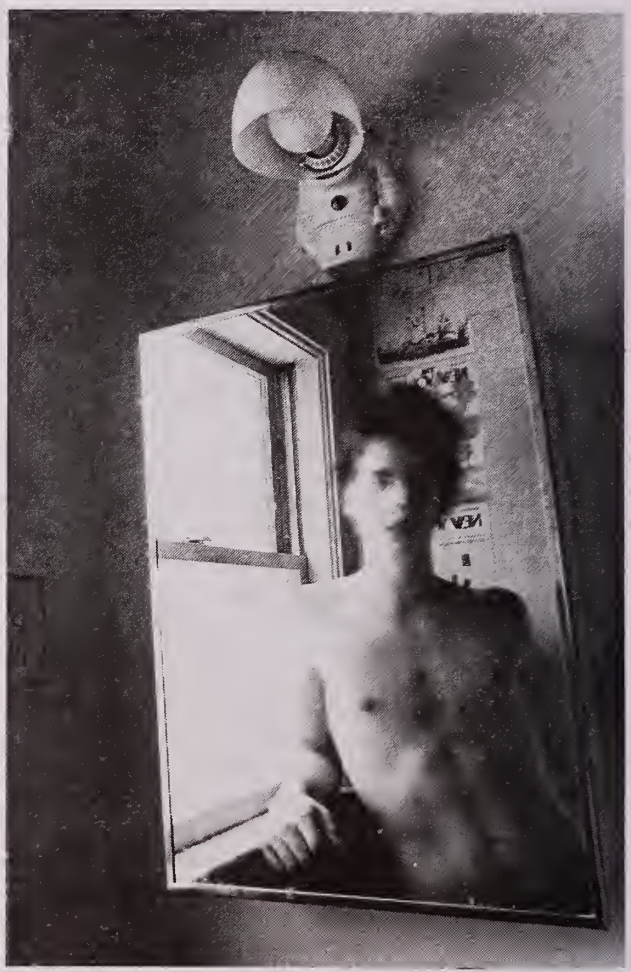
"Oh God, you're unbelievable," Edward said and turned out the light.

After Jesus left Edward had a dream that he was falling through space. He reached out his hands desperately trying to grab onto something, but there was nothing there. He woke up in a cold sweat. He was alone.

* * *

## III
## FILL A GLASS

The scene that haunted Edward now was typical. School had just let out for the summer and all the kids were walking in groups up Beech street, toward the center of town. Edward noticed Sophie up ahead and decided to make his move, Henry Miller's words still



Carl Grunbaum

echoing in his mind: "And she will give me the enigmatic smile, throwing her arms about me in warm embrace." He approaches her. "Hello, Sophia, how are you?" Her friends giggle and whisper as he stands there, like a being from another planet.

"Hi, Edward. Are you expecting rain?"

"What?" he asks, forgetting that he has his umbrella under his arm. The girls giggle again. "Oh, this...I thought...No, I ..."

"Why do you always carry that thing around with you? It's really queer," Sophie says.

"Edward," one of the girls sings, pretending to be his Mother. "Don't forget to bring your umbrella. It's going to rain."

"Edward," they all join in on the fun. "Edward, Edward, ha, ha."

"Edward has green teeth," one says. "Edward has green teeth, ha, ha, ha, ha."

Edward leaves them in stitches. He tries to take it all in stride and walks calmly back toward school, deciding to take the long way home.

When he gets there his mother has Engelbert Humperdinck on the record player. He is singing: "Please release me, let met go. For I don't love you anymore. To live without love brings me pain. So, release me, and let me love again." His father is sitting quietly in the next room reading an adventure novel about solitary life on a Hawaiian Island. Edward slips in without being noticed and goes to his room. He picks up

reading where he left off yesterday. Henry Miller is on the couch with some woman. He has just been in a taxi with another woman. Their faces change so quickly that they all seem the same. Henry says he only wants two things out of life: sex and food. Edward notices that women seem to like it when Henry acts this way.

The next day Edward forces himself outside to join a kickball game. Sophie is there. When the ball goes out of play into a neighbor's yard, Sophie goes after it. Edward says he'll help her find it.

"Do you want to quit the game and go for a walk? he asks her, his heart pounding in his chest.

"What for?"

"These are just stupid kids," he says getting up his nerve. "We could have a better time downtown. Don't you think?" he winks at her.

"Downtown? Are you crazy? I'm not even allowed to go downtown." Sophie grabs the ball and goes back to the game. "Edward wants to go downtown," she announces. "He wants me to go with him. He says you guys are all stupid."

"Oh yeah!" a hefty blond haired kid says. He is the captain of the team. "Well, who asked you to play in the first place?" he says to Edward. "You can leave any time you want. We won't miss you." The majority of kids seem to agree with him, Sophie included.

"All right, I will," Edward says feeling betrayed. He walks away ignoring the names they are calling him.

* * *

## IV
## A BELL RINGS

Edward goes to the library. He looks up Henry Miller in the card catalog, but he can't seem to find any books on the shelves. He is walking up and down the same aisle for the fifth or sixth time when a voice startles him. "Can I help you find something?" Edward turns around and almost bumps into a girl with a bright, inquisitive smile on her face. She looks to be Edward's age, only taller. She wears black rimmed glasses and love beads.

"Uhh...I'm looking...for...some books," Edward stutters.

"Which ones? My mother works here. I know where everything is."

"Uhh...something by...Henry Miller," Edward tries to smile back.

"Up on the top shelf," she says matter-of-factly. "They hide them."

"Oh," Edward says. "Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Edward gets a stool and takes all the books he can carry down to the circulation desk, and hands the librarian his card. He puts the books face down on the counter, hoping she won't see what they are.

"You can only take out four at a time, young man," she tells him.

"Oh," Edward says. He selects the four he wants and offers to put the rest back.

"No, that's all right," the librarian says. "Lindy, where are you?" The same girl that Edward just met pops her head up from under the counter. "Right here, mother."

"Take these back too, please."

"Oh, hi again," Lindy says to Edward. "You found them O.K.?"

"Yeah, no problem."

"Which books have you read by him?" she asks.

Edward gulps, looking at the librarian. "Oh not very many," he says, turning red.

"His early writing or his late writing?"

"Early, I guess."

"Well, you should read his later books. The early ones are very sexist."

"Yes, I've heard that," Edward lies.

"I see you have *Stand Still Like the Hummingbird*. That's a good one to start with. I wouldn't bother too much with *The Rosy Crucifixion* or *Tropic of Cancer*, unless of course you like pornography."

"You're all set, young man," the librarian says. "Come back soon."

"I will."

"My name's Lindy, by the way," Lindy says. "What's yours?"

"Edward," he says, and leaves quickly before she can ask any more questions. But all the way home he has a big smile on his face.

As the summer passes, Edward spends more and more time at the library. He reads all the Henry Miller books he can get his hands on, and on the advice of Lindy, he begins to read other writers that Henry metions in his books: Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Walt Whitman, to name a few. He is proud every time he sees his name written on the file cards with the dates he had each book out stamped officially in red ink. Soon Edward begins to measure his life by the books he has read, filling himself up with new words and ideas. He sees Lindy almost every day now.

Edward dosen't notice that Jesus never comes to see him anymore.

* * *

## V
## DROPPED IS LIKE FELL

"Well, I think it's disgusting," Edward's mother is saying. "Why don't you have a talk with him? He's your son. It's bad enough that you let hem read those trashy books, but now he walks around under your umbrella with that little tramp. Why don't you stop him?"

"He's your son, too," his father points out, just to rub it in.

"But you're his father. You're supposed to tell him the facts of life. After all, he's a boy."

"He knows the facts of life by now," he assures her.

"Well, where did he learn them then? On the street?"

"I don't know, from books."

"There you go. It's those dirty books you let him read. We're going up there right this minute and taking them from him. Do you hear me?"

Edward's parents go up the stairs and knock on his door. There's no answer, so they walk in. Edward and

Continued to 39

# Nothing Like the Sound of a Black Voice Singing the National Anthem

## Mia Carter

There was never any way to prepare for the bus ride home to Worcester. The Gray Line seemed a fitting name for the bus company, its depot in the bowels of the once grand hotel, now a home for derelict men and sad, broken women. In the summer the sidewalk near the hotel's cafe would reek of urine. The odor would pulsate up from the pavement. But it was winter now, and such odors were muted by the cold.

We--the Worcester travellers--were waiting in line for the driver to open the doors. I was near the front; I always came early since the only thing worse than the trip to Worcester was the trip to Worcester standing. Finally, he opened the doors, and we filed on. I seated myself by a window and watched the others struggle down the narrrow aisle with suitcases, boxes and other varieties of gear. I sat, measuring the faces, the ones that flew by me and the empty seat beside me, even as the bus was filling up. They'd dive for any other seat, even a broken one.

An older woman, sixty-ish, came down the aisle, smiling directly at me. At first, I thought she was smiling at some travelling companion behind me. A quick glance through the space in the seats revealed an unwashed man and and empty seat. She sat beside me.

These moments were always killing. The bus conversations in which I found myself trapped always whirred through my mind during these first crucial moments. Sometimes a courteous hello would trigger the awful response, talk of grandchildren--probably the topic for someone of her vintage--or college shit, or if male, some egocentric tale of his amazing quests and qualities. But she had a genteel smile. I dug for a book to hide behind and turned to say hello.

"Hello, dear."

Yes, I thought, there would be grandmother stories, maybe even pictures to punctuate them. Those awful wallets with photograph files!

"My, the bus is becoming crowded."

I smiled in agreement. Yes...here we go.

"I hoped to avoid all this. I'm certainly glad I came early. How awful to have to stand."

Couldn't agree more.

"Smart girl. You came early, too. You must have. You got yourself seated before me and got a window." She laughed.

Yes, she was genteel. She continued to chatter cheerfully, holding a hat box on her lap. The fur from her coat lapped over the bottom ridge of the box. It made me smile, remembering Grammy's hatboxes and the fine and occasionally over-decorated hats.

We were on the road, the "local" bus, Route 9. Exasperated, I thought of my drives from Worcester to Boston. I've made the trip in thirty minutes, speeding, of course. I've never driven that fast going there, but almost


Sally Jacobson

always coming back. I've never gotten caught, either.

I listened to the old woman's voice and gazed out at the rapidly passing trees, gray anguished trees, lonely and deathlike, stretching towards the whiter gray but darkning sky.

She asked me, "Are you going home? So you live on the East Side?"

I answered yes I was going home, and no I did not live on the East Side. The East Side meant Plumley Village--a housing project, and the other sides included Great Brook Valley, another project, Lower Chandler, South Main--the brown--black--poor white slums.

"No, I live by the lake," I heard myself say, heard the remnant of my tone from junior high, proud, distant from the other sides. I laughed at myself, at the tone, and quieted inside. The lake, skating at Mark's Pond, waterskiing with Ellen, swimming at Point Rock all summer. Thank God for "home" and the spring-time snowy pear tree, the magnolia, the raspberry patch, the garden. The fertility of my youth.

Her response was, "Oh," suspended. "By the lake." She studied me for a moment and began to talk of her childhood. "You were fortunate. As a child, I was always traveling. My father was a missionary. I was born in the South. I came up North, to Smith, for college. Poppa wanted me to go to a fine Baptist college. Oh, but how I fought for Smith! My mother's family was very wealthy, a grand Southern family." She patted my knee. "She helped me win that battle with Poppa." she laughed, touching the curls of her hair, making sure they were in place. "After college I returned to the South for a few years, but I had to get back North. I did miss those New England winters. People laugh when they hear that."

She talked more about the South and her "Poppa," sometimes shifting the hat box or entwining her fingers in the satin-y cord. I drifted in and out of listening, sometimes just blanking out, not to daydreams, just a void. "Colored girls" brought me back.

She was saying, "After Smith, Poppa wanted me back home. He was carrying out an unusual mission at a Negro church. It was only a temoprary situation but highly unusual. White gentlefolks didn't like it much. A white preacher and his young daughter in a Negro church! Oh, there were ... difficulties." She said difficulties with a capital D, then turned a bit and placed her hand on my knee again. "But, you understand, Poppa wanted to elevate the Negroes. You could not imagine how backwards they were."

I stared at her, at the gloves in her lap with the hat box, the coat, her silver-blue hair. As I listened, my eyes felt wide, as if stretched open, and dry. I shifted in my seat, discomfited by what I knew to be beneath the surface.

"Those colored girls used some crazy backwood's remedies, living as if in ancient times. Poppa and I tried so hard, but we had to leave."

There was a silence between us for a few moments. All that was heard were the murmurs of other passengers and the rush of automobiles passing by. She continued to smile at me. I think I might have blinked.

"Tell me about your family, dear. What does your Daddy do?"

"My father is a psychologist." My voice was a bit flat. "And my mother is a teacher--a professor of Education."

"My! they are talented. That's why you're such a smart girl." The hand was on my knee again. "Do you have any entertainers in your family?"

"No."

"You know, what got me to thinking about Poppa's Negro church the other day was the television." She laughed. "I was flipping the channels, searching for some decent television--the shows on t.v. nowadays! and I heard this voice--Oh, a glorious voice, that reminded me of those colored girls singing on Sundays. I loved that singing more than anything about that church." Her face was uplifted, towards the luggage racks. Beatific. "Yes. Well, on the t.v. the colored girl was singing the National Anthem for some sports event--football or basketball--they're all the same to me. I just left it there and listened. There is nothing like the sound of a colored voice! I didn't catch the girl's name. Maybe you knew who she was?"

"No." Again.

The bus pulled up to Main Street. I had lost track of just where we were. It had begun to snow lightly. The standing passengers shuffled out of the bus, and we sat waiting, quiet.

Once off the bus I went in the station to call home for a ride. The room was smoky and smelled of must; I went outside to wait on the sidewalk. The woman was there, waiting, smiling, the hat box dangling from her gloved hand; a small suitcase waited beside the sensible shoes--that's what Mom called them.

"I'm having an awful time getting a cab, dear. they keep flying on by."

I stepped off the sidewalk into the street. You'll never get a cab that way, lady. The traffic rushed by with the cold and the snow. A taxi swerved over from the left lane, reacting to my long, upraised arm.

"Thanks," I said. "It's for this lady." I walked to the curb and lifted her small suitcase. It was dainty, very light-weight.

"Thank you, dear. So much." She began to open her purse.

"Keep it."

"Why, you angel! Thank you." She carefully placed the hat box on the seat and stepped into the cab.

I closed the door, pushing her off in the direction of the snow, into the night.

Robin Potter

# Underground

## Mia Carter

Sittin' on the bench, on the bench tellin' the fools and idiots about theyselves. Pigeons shittin', flyin' up in kids' faces. The rats with wings. I told 'em.

"You nasty fuckers!" I waved my paper at 'em

Saw that lady lookin' at me with that puppy-dog look in her eyes. Scared. Ain't thinkin' about you, bitch. Just sittin' in the park waitin' to educate someone. Readin' the paper. Dirty thing. Gray like the underneaths of my hands. Yesterdays, other day's paper. Shit, some day. What's today? Fuck it, it was some day's paper.

The price of things. I laughed. Haaaah-ugh! Laughed some more. The lady flew up. Like a pigeon. Same to you, bitch. Ain't gonna hurt you. The price of things. Then I saw it. Bastards! The fucking bastards. Why they keep doin' it?

Stood up an' yelled, "Bastards! Why? Whyyy?" hearin' my voice like far away. Keep playin', kids, I ain't gonna hurt you. Precious things. Precious things. Kept yellin', "Bastards! Always doin' it."

Sat on the bench an' cried. Some other park-man come from his bench, sit on mine. Just sittin' there, wit' me cryin'. He started rockin'. I left. Cryin'.

Train ride. See what's down there. Beneath the streets with the real rats. Oily smellin' rats. Heavy piss.

Busy station. People rushin' somhere with they bags of expensive things. Ha! You all's expensive things. Black man singin', playin' guitar. He playin' it. Bump-bum, badadee-bum bum, Bum-bum badadee bum bum. People throwin' money at him. He keep on smilin' an' playin', sayin' Doe do do data data data, Bum bum, badadee bum-bum.

I tell him, "You playin'. You a black man. Yeah!" He smiles up at me. Them hands playin' movin' fast. "Yeah, you a black man." I tell him.

Take a train. Sittin' on the train. Goin' nowhere. People in an' out with they packages of expensive things. I talking to myself. That's right, sittin' alone. Goin' nowhere.

Saw him come in. Eyes like night into the bright car. Sat up straight. I looked at him, felt that cryin' feeling. Could see the bench-man rockin'. Bet he still rockin'. I looked at him. Eyes more than Chinese. He look away. He sittin' there. Train movin'. Can feel the newspaper, hear it in my hands. I go sit by him.

He lookin' out river, all black. Lights shinin' on it. I look at him, in his ear, brown-colored. Starin' at him. He knows. I say why. Why. He turns at me with those eyes. Black like the river. I feel the bench-man rockin', can hear myself moanin'.

"Why?" He looks at me empty, looks out the window. The train stops. Stuck again. Old fuckin' trains, goin' nowhere.

"Fuckin' trains!" I yell. Somebody laughs. I ask him again, "Why?"

He looks at me, dark and empty.

"Why you empty, man! Why?" People lookin' at us. Eyes all shifty. "Why you let them kill him? In his own house. They stabbed the boy up!" I was yellin' now. "Why you do nothin'!"

He turns, looks at me, so slow-like. So slow. I sittin' there, my gray hands stretched over at him. Why. He look at me. Eyes goin' deep. We fixed on each other. My hands still there, savin' why.

"But he your brother. He yours. He you man, he you." Train moves a little. People all starin' at us. He turns away and looks at the river. Slow-like again, like molasses. I feel myself rockin'. Rockin'.

The train goin' underground. I lean over, say into his ear, "Yeah well, somebody God damned knowed him. Somebody. Ha! An' I knows it. I knows it!"

People starin' as the darkness rushes by. Flyin' at us.

## EASTER 1964

The immaculate white suit fit perfectly
I stood at the threshold smiling
Arms stretched wide to the sun
I hunted the painted chocolate eggs
On my knees on Grandma's rug
With the lilac petals writhing
And the roast aroma from the kitchen
My mother and her mother laughing
And Grandpa crippled from the war
Submerged in crosswords, dying
And the priest on television, live
Lifting the host up, up, up
Beyond himself
Up toward the painted ceiling
And holding it there
Like a dagger in suspense
With high voices singing
And me thirsting, dreaming,
The sun in my eyes,
And in my ears
The hissing lamb on the spit

*John Hawkins*

I knew what it was,
this life on a planet
with a once-angry sun
now dying
when the bugs were eating
the food that we didn't have
and a girl could never
be sure anymore
if the man in the car would give her a dollar
or fall upon her
with a knife and fork.
the cities were angry
and the radios dead
and the store-windows gone
in a sea of shimmering diamond waste
and me in a snow parka
trying to run
stumbling, shivering, hiding in doorways
and when the rains stopped
the bodies of seagulls
were lying twisted on green shiny beaches

and even my eyes weren't the same anymore.

*Abigail Lavine*

THREE A.M. CONVERSATION

But I am being considerate
DEAR.
That's why you
Don't find
My footprints
All over
Your back as
You block
The doorway.

*T. J. Anderson III*

LABOR ROOM - 1974

The windows are barred
and my arm's hooked
up to an i.v. —
the drug it's drip-
ping into my vein
is working

The baby is breaking
out of me
and I resent
its freedom

*Patricia Kelley DeAnglis*

EXCESS BAGGAGE

Kicked-off
these hard-travelled shoes of mine
come to rest
easily
at the foot of your bed

Something like
a well-worn suitcase
that's no longer needed
and finally put aside. . .

. . .but more like luggage
(realizing its purpose)
placed safely for now
beneath a train seat

*J. B. Gerard*

TIGHT KNOTTED

Like a rope at full tension, you have my attention
if this is talk, then you've never seen a pitcher balk
now words fly by, by and by
now too much strain on this rope of pain
did you never talk, did I ever listen
were we ever one, or was that just a song we sung
you look for the answer, I have none

*Thomas Carlucci*

Robin Potter

## BILL EVANS' LAST BALLAD

A keyboard plays the song of lost respect
in a bar of laughing tourists.
The streets are calling
the moon is falling
by the old car that limps and sputters.
The gardens are filled with voices
from forgotten chances that dare not be acted upon.
There is only a smiling face to say good night
a hand to wave
a shoulder that is turning to go out of state.

*R. FitzGerald*

friendly card games now dreams get lost in life process
sometime but that guitar could wail.
the card table is set up near a work bench
where a very good japanese imitation of a les paul lies
on top of a box containing 1,000 back issues of "guitar player"
guitar crying to be tuned a note needs to be sustained
fallen out of love with women and with instrument
the players necks are warped gone into business died inside
soft smiles greetings useful space never consumes
but what of vacancy?
"you didn't ante" the women were in love with their husbands
before the distance but they have always loved each other
the players are excited by thoughts of two people of the same sex
getting it on unless of course the two people are men.
the women are tired of double standards
and growing insensitivity as escape from age
what the players fear most are intelligent women
intelligent women and death.
but dreams never really leave the skull
in air and in times the instrument is heart connected
pumping even in the tomb.
a student cashes in his chips walks away a heavier person.
"the groupie and the drummer will be back with more beer"
across town wives make love to each other in quiet rooms
while lost dreams and cards fight for space
amongst hefenreffer malt liquor bottles
and aging rock n roll fingers.
"in the begining is magic magic made flesh
a dealer of cards among us the ace is optional high or low
the world the world whatever in between."
unappreciated women preferring themselves
to beerbelly husband gigs.
the groupie never plays she just goes out for beer
and watches the fire she is thinking about her mother
her mother works at fabrics inc.

directly across the street from where the wives meet each other.
across the tiny dead lawn obscured by the fence
sweat shops on the east side and in taiwan expansion
legal robbery of labor eyesight fingers and life.
contracts in the west boardroom wisdom
people names on paper blown away like smoke rings.
in one of the rooms quiet
woman slides her tongue behind woman's ear
index finger on its own
crowning sensitive smooth space with understanding touch
down crack through curly hairs
invoking juice to come forth from mother void
ancient primal birth

in male infinity
the other hand softly feeling her forehead
reassurance tight and loving
their children play asetroids at the neighbor's house.
"full house" the players are playing poker now

the groupie is lost in the fire place looking out from the flames
gulping bacardi 151 and coke envisioning life...

she is driving sailing flying

off somewhere else  coming back
dancing on white wall streets
twisting in umemployment lines
crying in wedding morgues.
she thinks about justice and revenge
justice and revenge.
  outside is limitless  boredom is bullshit
she runs out of cokacola
alarm clock praising corpses.
  monday brings direction
pictures of mirrors  come down come down
to the black white external
the narrow narrow
no need to abstract
  back to the card game  but it's over
just the owners of the music store  across from each other
she notices that the fire is out.
  "hey rene which one of us you love best?"
the groupie does not answer
  all the green bottles are empty

like the card player music salesmen

chips sticking to spilt malt liquor clinging to table top.
rene underneath giving head one by one
still dreaming.
  her mother is fixing coffee ready to go to the sewing machine.
deuce ace high  in between situations
moving on exploring  faces in the magic deck

breathing in and out through emphysema lungs

oil slick lives stacked.
  the players have fallen asleep on the floor
rene goes to the bathroom and cries
kleenex in hand wiping cum off corner in lips
very apart from herself.
"when it is finished
tear drop mingles with smiling lips
hands drop content
reach for the others and drop again"

"tears taste slightly bitter
some drop to earth
and mix with rain
mouths open for falling water"
  rene picks up her bag and leaves the building.
  the wives kiss each other gently on the lips
poorer women file in at the shop
punch the clock and sit down
with cheap fabric concentration.
  smoking board room decision
multinational vision repeating  "as usual
there will be no poets dancing on wall street today"

hung over  guitars with price tags  dangling
still on the wall  in the store
the piano tuner arrives on time.
and the cards rise up and float in space.

*Rob Colecchia*

Mary Wright

BUILDING ONE, FLOOR THREE

I
The cafeteria's filled
with people and empty coffee cups.
The students have flames
behind their eyes.
I can see them as plain
as a jack-o-lantern's.

At the table across from me
a woman with a pony tail
sits talking to a man.
He says something and they laugh.
An emerald stone flashes from his ear.
Once, I stood on a cliff
with a sea that green, winking.

I read a story about a fish
who was pulled from a lake
on the end of a hook.
His eyes bulged wide
at the new world he saw.

II
Scenes click
as my eyes focus
on a horizon turning
from saphire to mushroom white.

A hollow box,
a ring forgotten on the bathroom sink,
the clack of erasers raising dust, the Dead Sea.
The Dead Sea wasn't always sterile.
The people had flames behind their eyes
that shined like a jack-o-lantern's.

Click clack, I finish my coffee
and adjust my eyes to the yellow glow
of the overhead lights.
I remember a story about a girl
who lived happily ever after.
She never worried about commas.

A man from Jamaica read my palm.
His eyes were white light
and amber liquid. He turned my hand,
smiled and pointed to my "Third Eye."
He said "it means you're not afraid of death".

*Norma J. Reppucci*

A WISH IN WINTER

pushing my hands against the
bite of winter fingers brittle
with the cut skin thin

skin of winter blue
things warm things wave wing
petal plum the blue
sky breathing over a picnic place
with loose limbed people
children darting like blue snakes
in the grass of summer my ice

crusted brain snaps
me back into winter my blue
wish A SHADOW IN SNOW.

*Doris Panoff*

Mary Wright

SEASONS OF LIFE

The spring flowers blossom into youth,
To live a life of sunny days.
A child is born, innocent,
And will someday caress their beauty.

The summer sun strengthens them,
And soon they come into full bloom.
The child, now a boy, learns of life
and its reason.
Thus he turns to love the flowers even more

The autumn winds and frosty mornings,
lash at them and change their beauty,
The boy, now a man, cries for them,
And reflects upon his life,
The hardships and the sorrows.

The winter snow buries them,
And puts them to their rest.
The old man on his deathbed cries,
But yet he is happy,
For by his side lies his dream.
A boy and a plant.

*Sabino Coscia*

## REST YOUR HEAD

Come ye be gentle,
Drink up this bowl.
It's sleeping that ye'll be soon,
Quiet, rest your soul.

Slow now, here's your mother boy,
Lie fast, nice and slow.
Right here, see her by your side.
She's trying not to show.

Only take it careful boy,
Long hunting have ye been,
Ye've seen 'em—all the trophies
That ye'll ever hope to win.

No, no ye cannot stay this,
It has to happen, see.
All the people have their time,
Oh yours is soon to be.

I'll stay here, hey, what say you?
Well lad, I'm just a friend.
I'll stay, yes, don't worry.
I'll be here till the end.

My name? Oh, it don't matter,
But I'll tell ye, 'fore I go.
'Though ye won't see me again lad,
Death's the name I know.

*Jonathan Zisk*

## SILVER MIRRORED

Soul woes, rolling—
Smooth down sheets for a mayday.
Light banter wins bright laurel wreaths, but
Mouthing sounds of longing rapture drools
on gleaming, whiter teeth.

That woman looked
This way.
He,
First burnishing one feeble smile,
Fell prostrate.
Remanent calm retched, to see him buckle and pray.

Come to sit with me, he mustered;
Marrow-soft eyes, brimming, said:
I'll let you dry my picture, sign it.
Won't you pry it from my head?

Something's haywire in tender cogs.
The jolt of things and words to do and say.
Slicing strands of saneness; damp, jute seams.
Wind, chipping hackneyed dreams.

Soul woes roll
In a mayday way.
Drool words to paint drained pictures on a wall.

Dankly cornered: fester, pray.
Although he might have things to say,
His torpid, white throat drips, infected,
Silver strangled, razor slay.

*Jonathan Zisk*

## A SEASONAL CHANGE WHICH HOPE NEVER KNOWS

In the low lows
With downfall face and bent back.
Beneath yourself, under your thumb,
You crawl heavy-small.
they look to you like you're not there at all.
Sod trod stomach full of empty
Air, scented with defeat.
Sweet smelling outside of yourself
people who don't even feel your presence
When you slap them
With your wretchedness.
You, fallen abscess, grow less and less worth cleaning
In your meaningless mind.
Muddle puddle befuddling fool is a tool for his own disenchantment.
He says, "so slow never grows, but too fast is always last."
Too much to do nothing to,
So slowly get ready to get on the ball.
Feel nothing, feel nothing, nothing at all.

*Jonathan Zisk*

## SIC TRANSIT

(a legend of the Bay Colony in reply to:
"Daddy, what does that sign mean?")

Wind burned, wolf-lean,
Tall and serene
Was Captain Amos Thickly.
No Medici
More suave than he--
The damsels' hearts tripped quickly

When he approached.
The deacons broached
In secret what perturbed 'em.
None durst confront
With challenge blunt
The *mensch* who'd so disturbed 'em--

Who taught the French
New ways to wench,
And beat the Dutch (outdrank 'em!)
Kissed ladies' lips,
Took Spanish ships
And looted 'em and sank 'em.

He founded towns,
He rounded gowns,
He trounced the heathen savage;
Then, off he went,
Adventure bent
For other lands to ravage.

Though he withdrew,
His legend grew,
Eclipsing every other;
Till, envy spurred,
The men conferred
On schemes that growth to smother.

Thus, Mather's mind
(O, Byzantine!)
Concocted, and they meted
A judgement grim,
His fame to dim;
'The Thickly name deleted

From all rolls be!'
Posterity
Might honor Alden, Standish,
And lesser men,
But never ken
Bold Amos. Crime outlandish!

Thus to erase
From rightful place
In chronicle and story
His traces! He
Most patently
Deserved enduring glory.

I've delved and combed
The sites he roamed,
And I'm more than sorely nettled
To find no signs
In those confines
But the ones where 'Thickly Settled'

***Walter Wells***

*with apologies to the other Bostonian Who used this diabolic prosody and rhyme scheme (Once only!) in 1849*

Carl Grunbaum

Saturday slept on dirty sheets
and smoothed a knuckle-scraped hand across
last night's satin blouse still on
Saturday opened her eyes just a smile
like some kind of fed, furry creature in winter
that wakes up to the smell
of morning pancakes
in somebody's two-room apartment.
I'd seen her around
a few years ago
dancing on diamonds like all the girls then
nursing a trust fund
and a couple of old guys
who, you know,
helped out with the rent.
She was one of the girls that sometimes get caught up
the ones from the midwest
who come to this city and
fall into BADWAYS
fall into elevator shafts
fall into places inside of themselves
that you can't even see with a microscope
one of the pretty young women
who look so wild and kind
and live to betray you someday.

*Abigail Lavine*

## WHO WAS SARAH PARKER?

Looking out a window from a
Temporary construction ramp
Of Parker Hill Hospital
Away from the Seven Hills
Of Brookline toward Jamaica Plain,
At the end of Leverett Pond
A white gull wings its way
Out from the marge; hovers,
Flies back toward me. Over
The depressing red three-storied
Apartment houses; over the trackless
Trolleys running on Huntington Ave.,
Above the mixture of construction
Material and offal beneath the
Hospital window and then,
Soars out of sight.

Who was Sarah Parker? Did she
Warm her ass at the fireplace at
The other end of this ramp?

*Martin King*

## BAG LADY LOVE

Give and take, she says,
taking back the rainbow she gave to me,
keeping the pot of gold I saved
(with over two years' interest),
while I waited in the spectral light for her.

Stuffing my heart into her shopping bag,
once more she says, give and take,
then waves goodbye,
trills of laughter in her eyes,
and leaves me leaning on a lamp-post
in the guts of night,
on the slum side of Nowhere—
sirens wailing, ghosts passing by.

*J. B. Crowe*

# FALL-OUT SHELTER

safe from bombs in the fall-out shelter
29,000 people in this fall-out shelter
safe from fall-out in this fall-out shelter
but there's a line to the bathroom in the fall-out shelter

forgot my deck of cards in the fos
forgot my pine-scent air freshener in the fos
forgot my nailclippers in the fos
forgot to bring books to read in the fos

no newspapers no radio
no radio stations outside the fos
out of kleenex out of paper towels
out of napkins in the fos

out of toothpaste out of tampons
forgot my roach spray in the fos
out of shampoo out of handsoap
out of aspirin in the fos
out of dope out of rolling papers
out of nasal decongestant spray in the fos

like to dance
no air no room
dance dance dance
no sun no moon
can't take a walk in the fos
can't go jogging in the fos

like to dance
no night no day
dance dance dance
those nuclear holocaust blues away
can't make love in the fos
no privacy nor birth-control in the fos

29,000 people in this fos
always a line to the bathroom in the fos
air gets stale food gets stale
can't live on peanut butter and powdered milk forever

out of aqua velva out of clean clothes
out of alka seltzer in the fos
out of lipstick out of mascara
all my panty hose has runs in the fos
out of rouge out of maybelline
blondes go brunette in the fos
out of right guard out of shaving cream
out of sunday football in the fos

like to dance
no air no room
dance dance dance
ignore the phosphorescent gloom

we're all safe from fall-out in the fos
but there's a line to the bathroom in the fos
i can't hold it much longer, been craving tuna fish for days
rather be outside in the nuclear swelter

no bail no jail in the fos
no class distinctions in the fos
no cash distinctions in the fos
no women's work in the fos

total equality in the fos
no social roles leads to insanity in the fos
they're approaching a catatonic state in this fos
bored sitting ducks in this fos
some are running to the door of this fos
29,000 prisoners scream for the lack of a better world (like this):

no such thing as a fall-out shelter
no such thing as a fall-out shelter
no such thing as a fall-out shelter
no such thing as a fall-out shelter
no such thing as.....

*Frank Afflitto*


p.s.-the Massachusetts State House in Boston has a fall-out shelter sign out front that reads: "capacity-29,000."

## INVENTORY

*"Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,*
*Taught my benighted soul to understand."*
*—Phillis Wheatley—*

Spring is a time of death
When shadows of silhouetted steel
Hold my neck in bondage.
The glimmering pike of a soldier
Slices the language from my jugular.
The murmur of a ship's inventory clerk
Seals my last black breath.
Let the word behind the whip
Combine to break or batter
The trembling ink-spot upon his ledger.
He stares at me separated
By his thick reading glasses
As the ink hits the pages
In calculated splashes.
Will he think of me as
His wife unbuttons his shirt
And rubs his sinking chest
With her saliva?
I will leave no mark
In his feeble mind
Or be appointed to collapse the clock
On his day of judgement.
The gang-plank is lifted
In the unfolding dark.
The white-toothed captain
Yells directions to his crew
In the burning air.
My eyes drown silently.
I will not disturb the peace
Or utter words where lips touched lips.
Below the depths of wood and net
I am a flower
Tattered, creased and yellowed.
A rolling wave in the rippling vastness.

*T. J. Anderson III*

## ON SELF-EXILE

When once I built this six-foot lie
In the blind belief that you would come
To tear it down-
With just the corner of your eye,
I knew what it was I had become.

Unknowing sees where knowing fails
That you have been eclipsed and broken,
By all these words I've kept unspoken;
Till your marble eyes no longer open.

Where once I stood in your curved light
I lie and grope where shadows bite.
The object of the arrow is cased in stone.
I waste my time:
I aim alone.

This solitary life is most revealing;
You can count the footprints on the ceiling.
And only the birds have wings to tell
How earnestly souls will climb to hell.

Until I finally fall to heaven,
Or find that place where kingdoms keep;
The demons will ring my loudest bells,
And guard the prism-
Where my colors sleep.

*Brian Riley*

There is an old man
with ships on his hands he sits
shifting
each wooden day
on uncushioned land
drifting.

*Liz Vogt*

## AT CAMP LASALLETTE

Judge says I'm lucky someone cares
or else he'd have me locked away
until I came of age.
So Social Worker places me that summer
in a camp for homeless city Catholics.
First week
I try to steal a tractor
but it just whines and kicks.
So I blow out all the vigil lights instead
and steal every penny from the wishing well
with Mother Mary watching
and buy pizza and smoke cigarettes.
Third week
Brother Sickler beats me up about the candles
and threatens me into silence.
I shoot him instead
with a BB gun.
Later
we become good friends
after God reassures him.
Then half the camp falls asleep
watching the moon-landing.
Afterwards we sing religious songs
and drink bug juice.
Then camp's over,
the bus is waiting.
I wave out the window to Sickler
count up the money from his wallet
look at his pictures and think
he knows some pretty ugly people.
It was good to get away
from the city this summer.
Years later one fall

I return to the deserted camp.
Sickler's dead, I'm told.
I throw some change into the wishing well
light a vigil
and ask for some reassurance from god
but nothing happens.
So I light a cigarette
think of Sickler
and look at his uglies.
Wouldn't it be something
to be so lucky
someone cares.

*John Hawkins*

## DON'T GIVE UP ON ME

A comatose boy lies
in a hospital bed
amid tubes and
expensive machines
trapped within
his own body.
He tries
to reach out to
a world
he is imprisoned
from.
His eyes
won't open
His limbs
won't respond

Day after day
the voices-
"He has a 50/50 chance."
"There is no way of knowing....."
"...vegetable....."
ring through
his head.
"Don't give up on me!"
His condition
worsens.

Warmth surrounds
his hand.
He feels
drops of
moisture on
his arm
and hears
"Don't give up on me , Matty!"
"I love you."

The warmth
shoots through
He musters all
his strength
and squeezes-
"Matty! You heard me!"

*Stephen Sadowski*

Mary Wright

# Rusty Nails

Lucy Marx

Allen and his wife, Naomi, are in their car driving to Cambridge from their house in Jamaica Plain. They are in the last stages of a fight about picking up the babysitter. Allen got home from work an hour ago, leaving barely enough time to get her.

"Jesus Christ," was Naomi's opening remark, "It's not like I expect you to do a whole hell of a lot around here." This is part of an ongoing, familiar debate about the division of household labor.

"I'm really sorry," Allen said, in a tone that made clear he was not, "but what did you want me to do? Not get the clutch fixed on the car? Forget about inspection?" He thinks Naomi wants it both ways. He gets stuck with all the traditional male jobs, like the car, the yard, Mr. Fix-it, and still she feels completely justified complaining about his not doing women's work. If Allen had his way, Naomi would do less-- let the dust accumulate under the chairs, let the sheets stay on the bed for a week or two. If Naomi had her way, Allen would, as she says, "initiate once in a while, not wait to be nagged."

Naomi has been feeling sick all day. She is two months pregnant. At the height of their squabble, she told Allen to just go on without her to the lecture; she would call the babysitter and cancel.

"Come on," he said, "it'll be good for you."

"What in the hell do you mean 'good for me'?" she said, "The stultified housewife, right? Needs a night out, huh? Keep her from vegetating, get her back into politics..."

"You know God damn well that's not what I said!" Allen answered, although it was probably close to what he meant. She does seem to him to be growing disturbingly narrow in her concerns, watching TV every night, turning straight to the Living Pages in the *Globe*, skipping the front page.

The upshot was that Allen raced off to pick up the babysitter without eating dinner, Naomi fed Aaron, and here they both are driving along the Jamaica Way on a chilly dark night, on their way to what should be, even on an empty stomach, an interesting presentation. Joe Hardin, a Vietnam Vet who once flew missions bombing peasants has now turned revolutionary doctor and is working with the guerillas in El Salvador. He has come back to the States on a fund-raising tour.

Allen feels a comradery hand kneading the muscles in his shoulders. Naomi is making a first gesture toward peace. She has a bright bandana around her head which she put on, she said, eyeing herself critically in the mirror, to cover her dirty hair. Allen likes the way it makes her look-- tougher and more independent than usual.

"That's a nice bandana," he offers, "When did you get it?"

"You're kidding! This thing?" Naomi says. "I wore it every day down in Selma." At the height of the Civil Rights Movement, they had gone down together to Alabama for a summer, helping build school houses. Now she is poking affectionate fun at his male obtuseness, his inattentiveness to detail.

Allen is in his late thrities. He and Naomi have been together a long time, long before they were officially married. They have survived a number of crises. There was the crisis when Allen slept with a friend of theirs and they had both felt compelled to deal with it at the level of principle, solemnly discussing monogamy late into the night. Then there was the crisis when Naomi got her revenge, leaving Allen for a month to join a women's collective. And there was the long, stretched out crisis, with Allen mired in an interminable graduate thesis and Naomi growing more and more restive for a baby. He had lived, then, in a cold sweat, seeing himself sinking in day-to-day drudgery, his thesis falling further and further away.

"Wait, just wait," he had said.

The compromise had been that they set a deadline, thesis or no thesis, when he would procreate or she would leave him. He had not finished on time, and so, dutifully, hostilely, he had clambered into bed with her. Freed of her diaphragm, she reached out a hand to him, embarrassed and giggly as a virgin.

It had taken him another three years to finally finish his thesis. He knows he would have had a better chance at tenure if he had been through with it a year or two before. But, in his heart, he also knows that it wasn't Naomi, or Aaron, that mainly held him back. It was his own anxieties, his own blocks and insecurities, and before that, it was all those years he spent trying to organize for immediate revolution. In public now, when he has to explain why at thirty-eight, he has just completed his thesis, he says, with a slightly self-mocking tone:

"I spent five years out on the pig-farm so to speak, a self-imposed cultural revolution."

This is how he sums up those years working in a factory, quoting Mao on the proletarianization of the petty-bourgeois intellectual. Saying it this way, about the pig-farm, seems to convey the right kind of light humor, yet preserves a serious undertone, for he is not willing-- at least, not yet-- to relegate that whole experience to youthful folly, to misguided delusion. He wants people to know that he is till a serious political person.

ii

Joe's in the motel lobby, thinking about medicine, drinking a light gin and tonic. Gin, tonic, quinine, juniper...often he thinks about the origins and medicinal purposes of things that others accept as normal household items. For instance, if you soak a rusty nail in water and drink, some of the disintegrating iron will be drawn into your blood. This is a discovery Joe is particularily proud of. Soaking nails in water has become an accepted practice among the peasant women of El Salvador where Geritol is not exactly something you can pick up at the corner drug store. "The magic of the rusty nail" is known the way news of a coming guerilla offensive is, a whisper through the countryside, gossip in the wind. "El Norte Americano, El Rojo, el dice..." The cure of the North American doctor, the red head, travels the land, a small miracle, like a ghost, on the side of the people.

But gin and tonic is idle, useless speculation. No one is

about to come up with a stash of gin and tonic in an El Salvadorean village. Still, Joe can't help how his mind circles around this one obsession--snatching another life out of the jaws of death, out in the villages of El Salvador.

Joe is dressed in a white short-sleeved shirt which he has just taken out of the plastic bag he brought it in. The creases still show where it was folded into an oblong. He is a thin man with well-tanned, sinewy arms. He sits nursing his drink, anonymous in a roomful of conviviality, and gathers himself together for the coming encounter. He has refused a pre-lecture cocktail hour. He's been on the circuit too many days now, and he knows that if he doesn't have an hour or two by himself, he will be less effective. Maybe afterwards, he told the guy, Dan, who's hosting him, he'll go back to his place for a nightcap.

He stares at the T.V. He marvels at the colors, at the strange scene: a wide-angle shot of a woman's body, her head thrown back and her legs bent open in a V, beside a swimming pool. He watches a muscular man appear looming over her, plunge into the water and swim in her direction. What is this? "Share a fantasy," a voice intones. Joe can't believe it. A perfume bottle fills the screen. A spurt of appalled laughter rises in Joe's throat. No, the culture shock has not worn off, yet.

What first shocked him most? The glut of consumer goods. At least once a day he goes into the supermarket and wanders up and down the aisles, stunned by all the colors and shapes and sizes of the goods on the shelves. In San Salvador, there are stores for the very rich modeled after these in the States, but they are tawdry by comparison, mere outposts of the comprodor bourgeoisie, as Ricardo would say, Joe's assistant who loves to read aloud from *Mao's Selected Works* in Spanish, which he always carries in his back pocket. In San Salvador, the daiquiri mixes stand next to the hair depilatory, everything eclectic and helter skelter, a kind of hysterical concentration of luxury. Here, in the belly of the beast, there are whole expanses of shelf devoted entirely to soap: soft soap, soap for tough jobs, and soap for sensitive skin, *Ivory*, *Cuticura*, *Cashmere Bouquet*, *Irish Spring*, *Pears*, *and Yardley's*...beckoning, enticing, luring the possessor of the almighty dollar. At first, it was all Joe could do to keep from shoveling stacks full into his pockets to take back with him to where each bar would be used sparingly, passed around a village until it grew thin as a communal wafer.

"What can I get you?" Joe is startled and looks over his shoulder with the quick reflexes he learned in the air over Vietnam, in the jungles of El Salvador. But the bartender is not talking to him; he is talking to a woman sitting on the next stool. Joe hadn't noticed her arrival; he does notice now how she looks at him, at his startled response. She is watching him, half-turned toward him, appreciative, curious, ready. Everyone here seems to want something. They frighten him, these men, these women; it's as if they want to grab onto anything solid to keep from sinking in the soft glue of whatever it is that holds their lives together.

The clock over the bar flashes 6:34 in cold, blue digital light. Time now to finish his drink. Time to set out on his next mission.

iii

Each time before a new arrival enters the scene, the elevator bell rings in the hall outside the faculty lounge. The usual types are here. Hungry graduate students crowding around the metal carts on wheels against the back wall wolf down hors d'oeuvers: meatballs kept warm over sterno flames, chicken wings, cheese wheels, deviled eggs, little rolls of cold cuts, melon slices...The Chancellor is here with his wife. In the corner, Harry Spence has cornered an unidentified female and is talking at her with his head craned forward, earnest and aggressive. Naomi has grabbed one of the butcher block chairs with purple upholstery found only in the faculty lounge. She is lying back in it with a sick look on her face; morning sickness hits her at odd times. Allen is standing, holding a glass of white wine, talking with his colleague, Suzanne Michner. They keep turning their heads to check out the new arrivals. They are guessing which of the ones that come in is the speaker. A number of other people seem to be doing the same thing.

Could this be him? A man with a wild head of curley black hair, Che Guevera style, has come in. He has on blue jeans and a shirt of khaki brown, fully-epauleted. He has a notebook in his hand. A stir of expectation goes around the room. No one seems to know him. Yes, this could be him. But no. He is a reporter, followed by a camera man. They survey the scene, looking for a space to set up their equipment, searching electrical outlets.

A shabby, slightly overweight balding fellow comes in. Allen thinks no. Suzanne says maybe. "Who knows? Think of Alec Guinness in *Smiley's People*. The most unassuming types are always the real heros," she says. Allen shrugs. Suddenly the glibness in her voice irritates him.

"Oh look! Could that be...? Yes! Jeff Carlson," Suzanne puts her hand on Allen's arm. "I've gotta go say hello; I've gotta find out whatever happened to him," and she is off, shouldering her way across the room.

This is definitely him. Even Naomi is roused from her morning sickness to look, the rustle in the room alerting her. Dan Bronstein is ushering a red-haired man through the door, conducting him to where, with many small circles of the hands, he introduces him to the Chancellor. It's hard to miss. There is a kind of fascinated, discreet staring going on, people watching sideways as they continue to talk.

This man, here in the room with us, has spent four years in the jungle. What does he eat? Where does he sleep? How many has he shot at? How many have shot at him? Who does he love? It goes around the room like that. Only Harry doesn't notice, so absorbed is he in his assult on the blonde girl in the pants suit. People take stock of the warrior leaness, the alertness. But the red-headed man also seems quite at ease the way he chats with the Chancellor. He smiles, he nods his head, he eats a spare-rib and some potato salad. Yes, he is a real person; no, he is not a fanatic.

Chairs are pulled up. Dan hitches himself closer to the guest of honor. People scramble for the good seats, squeeze onto the couches. A scraggly group of graduate students come in and sit down on the floor in front. A

Robin Potter

young woman jumps up, offering her seat to an older woman with a knot of grey hair. The kitchen ladies bustle around the hors d'oeuvres, cleaning up, getting ready to roll out. A last minute eater spoons the dregs of the meatballs onto his paper plate.

Allen picks his way through the crowd and sits down on a folding chair Naomi has saved for him. The room is quiet except for the subdued creaks and scuffle from people shifting in their seats. The Chancellor ascends to the spot reserved for him on stage. Dan shuffles for the last time through his cards and rises to introduce the speaker. Joe cracks his knuckles, cupping one hand around the other, between his knees.

"Let me make this very brief...." Dan clears his throat, stacks his cards together- a thick packet of them-and neatly taps them against the podium.

iv

"Mission accomplished," Joe tells himself leaning back in the taxi on the way back to his motel. Taxis are one thing that look familiar, smell the same as when he went away. He lets his eyes close against the bright lights in the street, bracing himself as the driver slams on his brakes for a red. He listens to the tick, tick, tick of the meter and is glad he refused the invitation to go back to Dan's for a drink. "Mission accomplished," he says again, this time, half out loud, smiling at his own language, that part of himself that is still the kid flying bombers over Nam. Sometimes he wonders if he still shares more with his old commanders in the Air Force--the ones who would like to see him killed, than he does with the people who donate money to his cause.

A pang of anxiety hits him as the cabby picks up speed. Maybe he should have gone back for that drink. Maybe someone would have slipped him another check as he headed for the bathroom, or at the door as he put his coat on, the way the girl with the bandana did after the lecture. But, no, he would have felt awkward the whole time. He just can't deal with drinking the same way these people do:"Let's stop by my house for a drink," "How about a drink" out on the patio after a game of tennis, a day at the office. When Joe was a kid it was: let's drink till we bust each other's heads in. After Nam, it was: let me drink till they let go, the mother fuckers following me out of my dreams. Now, the only way Joe likes to drink is alone, like before the lecture, taking it in small sips, something to deal with gingerly, cautiously, guarding always against it, a substance that can kill, in small doses medicinal.

As he pays the cabby, the lonesome all-night static of the radio in his ears, Joe thinks suddenly of the guy who came up to him after the lecture. Another hand-wringer he had thought at first, nodding politely, trying to move on. He dreads them, the ones who say: "I know everything you say is true, but what can I do?" Maybe it

was watching the words come out, the guy's mouth an open spigot, that bothered him. But now he thinks maybe he should have stopped longer and listened. The guy's eyes had something more serious to say than his mouth did. But, God, is he tired. He is tired of it all.

It has been a grueling four weeks, far more grueling than his normal life, he thinks, walking down the empty motel corridor that smells of disinfectant, unlocking the door to his room. It's odd, but Joe looks forward to going home to El Salvador, to the guerilla camps and hide-outs in small villages the way another person might look forward to going home to a warm shower and clean sheets after a few weeks camping. He is out of his element here, in alien territory. When he first arrived, it had taken all of his will power to refrain from strapping his gun on before he left the motel room. And still, he locks the door behind him every night when he comes in and sinks onto the bed in relief. It has been years, ever since boyhood really, before Nam, that he had felt on edge whenever he goes out unarmed, a sitting duck for the enemy.

Now he gets up and goes into the bathroom, throws some water on his face, scrubbing up and down, up and down with his hands, shaking off the admiring eyes, the doubting eyes, the judgemental eyes. The small things in the peoples' hands, he reminds himself, are what count the most. Beware of glamor, the clean kill of the bomber, the medals and the speeches. Trust the rusty nail, a dozen rusty nails, a thousand rusty nails, blooming in a thousand old cans in a thousand peasants' kitchens.

v

"Wasn't he amazing?" Naomi says, looking over at Allen as they walk out to the car. "Didn't he put everything into perspective?" Her eyes are wide, star-struck.

"Yeah, he was quite good," Allen says. Even he can hear the grudging tone in his voice.

But Naomi is too exuberant to notice. "I could tell he was planning to go back, couldn't you? Although it was really stupid of that person to ask. I mean, really, do they want him to announce it to the whole world? It's not like the FBI probably wasn't there."

"The CIA," Allen says, trying to remember in which asile he parked the car. "Yeah, I'm sure he'll go back. He seems like one of those guys whose gotten so acclimated to life in the combat zone that anywhere else, it doesn't make sense." Allen has students like this, ex-Marines, Namies. In fact, a couple of them had been at the lecture. A preppie had gotten up and asked; "How have you come to terms with the role you played in Vietnam? How do you perceive that experience affecting your political outlook today?"

"shhhiiit..." one of the Namies had answered. There was the sound of grinding glass under a boot, from the back of the room.

Allen spots the orange rump of the Rabbit down the next aisle.

"I don't think that's really fair," says Naomi, looking at him with a hurt expression. "I don't think you can reduce what he's doing to such personal reasons."

Allen has often said, in his own way, precisely the same thing. He remembers well when his father used the psychological attack on him, pressing him to read Erik Erikson's book on Ganhdi, hoping Allen would recognize his own labor in the factory as a variation on Ganhdi's ascetic self-martyrdom. But now Allen wants to put the discussion to rest, like he sometimes does at the end of class.

"There's probably some truth," he says, "to the idea that self-sacrifice is the ultimate egotism, although I don't think it really matters in the last instance."

Allen gets into the car and, leaning over from the driver's side, unlocks the door for Naomi.

"Thank you very much for the lecture, but I didn't think he was on an ego trip at all," she says, clambering in beside him. "Why do you have to compete with him? He doesn't think he's any better than anyone else. Didn't you hear him say how he thought it would be even harder to live here, to try raising children with different values and everything? I thought he was very humble."

Allen is fiddling with the gearshift. It still sticks. He thinks maybe the mechanic has made it worse, not better. Now he will have to take the car back again.

"I agree. What he is doing is obviously very admirable," he says, "and he's probably raising a lot of money."

"Jesus Christ," says Naomi, "Why do you have to act like such a jerk?"

Because I am stuck here in this falling apart car, he thinks, because I have nothing to show for my life but a stupid little thesis about the philosophy of early Marx, because here we are like every generation before us, looking for heros, taking on water like so many leaky row boats.

"I know why you're in such a bad mood," Naomi persists, "Because when Dan introduced Joe Hardin to you, he didn't greet you like a comrade, a long lost brother in the struggle, because he seemed more interested in the Vietnam Vets."

She's right. For the first time in a long time, Allen has mentioned his factory work, not as something from the past, not as "out on the pig farm," but as a way to show this guy that he too is a serious political person. The very fact that Allen is so concerned about proving his seriousness makes it questionable even to himself.

"You've got to be careful," Naomi says in a low, even voice, the one she often uses with Aaron, "People who can't eat a little humble pie in the bad times are the ones that turn into reactionaries."

Allen can't think of anything to say. Of course, Naomi is right again. She leans over and snaps on the radio, filling up the space for both of them. In the sudden light of an oncoming car, her face is bleached out entirely white under her absurd, bright bandana. She sits there, facing into the blare of the radio (an ad for pocket-size calculators, a "must" for every businessman), hunched over their foetus as if she were protecting it from a barrage of shrapnel.

Allen does not reach out and touch her. He has never been good at things like that. Instead he says, as they head along the dark road, "Naomi, will you please put on your seat belt?"

He feels a little safer when he hears it click into place.

# THEN, NOW AND FOREVER

Jim Wright

The Vietnam war caused the biggest change in my life, then, now and forever. I didn't give much thought to the war when it first started. It did not occur to me that it could go on for years and years, and thereby envelop me. And even when I was drafted, in April of sixty-six, I really didn't think I had any problem. I thought only "they" got sent to Vietnam. You know, those imaginary people always referred to as "they." Here I was, nineteen years old, with less than an eighth grade education, born and brought up in Roxbury, poorer than poor, and I didn't think I had a problem. I was ripe for picking.

All throughout basic training, there were rumors about us being sent to Vietnam. I suppose that was true in all the other units as well. Now I'm in Advanced Infantry Training, and we are training in mock villages of "unknown nationality." When I saw the straw huts, and the punjie sticks jutting out of the canals, I started to get a little suspicious. Finally, after eight or nine months of rigorous training, we were sent to Oakland, California. As soon as we arrived there, we were placed on board a troop ship. At last, my head was yanked from the sand; I got the message.

We departed from Oakland sometime in December, and 17 days later we arrived in Vietnam. We spent Christmas on board ship; that was kind of a bummer, but our destination overrode that thought. We were led to believe we would have to fight our way off the ship. I guess they didn't want us to take this place too lightly; we didn't. Upon disembarking from the ship, with rifles poised and ready for God knows what, we were surprised and relieved, and almost laughed, at what we encountered. Expecting thousands of Viet Cong shooting and screaming at us, we found instead a full brass band just starting to blast out a few tunes.

We were placed on trucks and taken to a place called Bear Cat. At the time it was nothing more than a football-field-sized area chopped out of the jungle, with a bunch of large tents placed in the middle. There was an eight foot pile of dirt pushed up and surrounding the perimeter; this was called the berm. There were bunkers cut into this berm every hundred feet or so. When you manned these bunkers, you had berm guard. That was kind of scary. These were usually occupied by two men at night. You were expected to alternate with each other, sleeping one hour, awake one hour. Your mind plays tricks on you in a situation like that. It's just you and him out there. You would be the first to go if there were an attack. You saw a lot of things moving that were not. If you fired at these things, then the whole line of bunkers would open up. A case of mass hysteria, with good reason. After a week or two in the country, you had to earn your Combat Infantryman Badge, or C.I.B. This involved going out on your first combat mission.

Our first mission was at night; we were scared stiff. We headed out into the jungle without any idea where we were going, or what we were doing. We kept walking for a couple of hours in the dark, praying we wouldn't lose sight of the guy in front of us and get lost. Finally we stopped and set up camp for the night. The next thing we heard a rifle firing rapidly near us. We hit the dirt and peeped out of our now misaligned helmets. It was the lieutenant, standing there laughing. He alone knew we were only a hundred feet from the perimeter of the base camp. The pattern of future missions was formed, and would never vary. This meant, on all missions, we would not be told anything about where we were going, why we were going, or when we would end the mission.

The only difference was that now we were loaded onto helicopters and dropped at a landing zone (L.Z.) in the middle of nowhere, and we were told to just start following the guy in front of you. The average mission would last a month, and then we would go back to base camp for a

Teresa O'Connell

couple of days, and then back out again. The usual procedure was to load you on the choppers at the base camp, then go to a L.Z. The door gunners would open up with machine gun fire as we approached the L.Z. The Hueys wouldn't touch the ground, they would hover about five feet from what they thought was the ground. Sometimes, what they thought was the ground wasn't. I remember one time they had me carrying a radio on my back, along with a couple of motar rounds and about fifty pounds of odds and ends. The Hueys approached the L.Z., the door gunners opened up, my feet were hanging out the door, ready to step on the runner (one of the chopper's legs) and then jump the four or five feet to the ground. I figured the ground would be nice and soft because of what I thought was marsh grass covering it. That meant there would be mud under it. I said four or five feet because of the grass; you allow yourself a foot of difference from what you see and what you really touch. The chopper started to descend, we were ten feet from the ground; my feet are on the runner, five feet, I'm off; my feet touched what I thought was the ground, then I kept going another six or eight feet. I hit the ground straight legged; the radio and mortar rounds went over my head. My rifle, the ammo, and a couple of Claymore mines chose separate directions. I learned the difference between marsh grass (one foot) and Elephant grass (six feet or a lot more) that day.

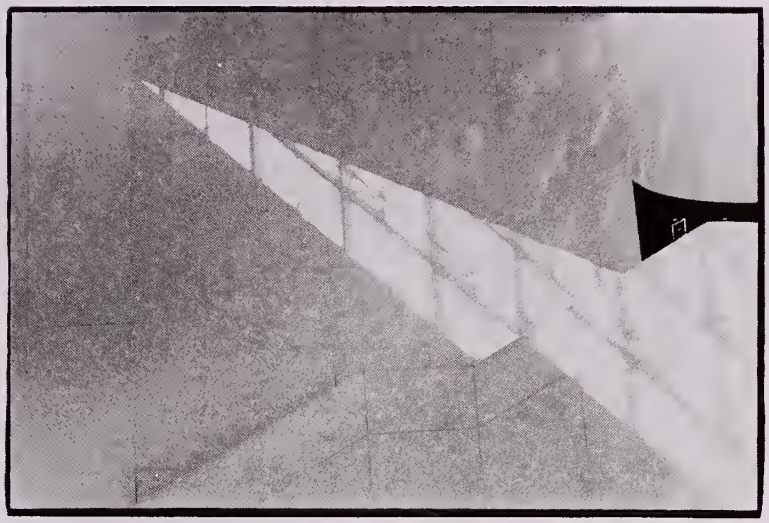
The hardest thing about doing a year in Nam was (in my opinion only) the physical abuse we experienced. We rarely got any free time to relax. As I said before, the average operation lasted thirty days or so. And during that time we did nothing but walk. We would just walk, no rhyme, no reason, from the crack of dawn until dusk. We would stop occasionally during the day for five to ten minutes, no more! We would splurge for lunch, fifteen minutes. Coupled with the lack of sleep, one hour sleep, one hour on guard, all night long, you can imagine what shape we were in. If we didn't run across a river or stream within a day or two, that would be another problem, a bad one. You can't walk for days and days in that heat, with all of the equipment and ammo we had to carry, and not get dehydrated. I never fully understood the value of water (something I normally took for granted) until I got to Nam. We could not be resupplied because the choppers couldn't land in the jungle. They would be sitting ducks if they hovered over us, plus they would be giving away our position to the V.C. There were times when I seriously considered drinking my own urine. If we did manage to run across some water, we were supposed to fill our canteens, then add two purification tablets, shake well, and wait five or ten minutes. What we actually did was fill our canteens, grit our teeth together (to filter out bugs and whatever) and drink, and drink, and drink some more. Around the third canteen, I would start thinking about the bugs that slipped by my teeth and stop. And then we would add the purification tablets.

Another beautiful situation comes to mind. We somehow came across a couple of water buffaloes in our travels, and the company commander thought it was a good idea to take them with us and give them to some friendly village. In order to do this he figured, that since we might not run across some water for the buffaloes on our journey, that it would be a good idea to have a couple of G.I.'s carry five gallons of water on their backs for the buffaloes. Another guy and I got picked for this honor. This was a three or four day deal, and during this time a lot of guys (including me) ran out of their own supply of water. So we asked the C.O. if we could borrow some of the buffaloes' water. He refused. So we suffered through it. I had to water the animals, and watch them slop it everywhere but in their mouths. As I've said many times in this article, and I'm sure I'll repeat again, this was typical of the reasoning of the people in charge. We finally came to a clearing, and the buffaloes were taken up ahead to be loaded on a Chinook helicopter. That's a double prop job. A few minutes passed and we heard a couple of shots. We asked a sergeant who was passing by what was going on, and he told us they shot the buffaloes.

We didn't run into any V.C. the first couple of times out. So I started thinking, maybe this place isn't so bad. Maybe the war stories I heard were just that, war stories. The next mission straightened that misconception out. Our company was moving down an ox cart trail, double file, when up ahead I heard a machine gun fire off about twenty rounds. Everybody crouched down and looked to our sergeant for instructions. He gave us the hand sign to stay put and moved up ahead to find out what was going on. He came back in a couple of minutes and grabbed me (lucky me!) and three other guys, and told us the guys up front got a "kill." The first kill in the battalion. The company commander, who happened to be back at the base camp, told this sergeant (on the radio) to bring the body to the nearest suitable L.Z. where he could meet us and confirm the kill. That didn't sound too hard to do, so we started to make a litter out of a poncho and a couple of branches off a tree. Then we saw the body. It didn't look too messed up as we approached it, but upon closer observation it was apparent that the top of his head was missing and you could look right inside his head. We reluctantly lifted the body up and put it on the litter. His brains (what was left of them) were dripping in small chunks on our boots. A sergeant named Manu came over to the body and put his thumb on the corpse's forehead, his fingers inside the guy's head, and lifted the man's head up close to his and said "You happy now?" I guess this type of thing didn't bother him very much. We told Sergeant Manu that we would not carry this body unless he put a sandbag over the head. He agreed. Once that was done, we picked the litter up and started out with the rest of the company for the nearest suitable L.Z.

As the day wore on, my arms were really starting to hurt. This was very dense jungle and the point man wasn't cutting a very big path for us. I don't blame him, his arm must have been ready to fall off from swinging that machete all day long. This went on for three days. Halfway through the second day, I was really dragging. I didn't care about anything. This corpse, the hole in his head, nothing! If they had let me, I would have cut the ears off the body and shown them to the company commander as proof. I suggested this and was told that we had to have the whole body. This body was starting to smell pretty bad by the third day, and coupled with the heat it was unbearable. Some time in the afternoon we found a L.Z. that might be big enough to land a Huey (helicopter) in. We put the body to the side and walked about thirty feet to get away from the smell, and collapsed in a heap. We got about an hour of sleep, when we were awakened and told that the company commander would not be able to make it after all, and that we would have to bury the body now. This was typical of the orders we received during our tour of duty. I thought this was a bad experience, the death. The thought that I would have cut off the man's ears scared me. What was I turning into? I would like to make one important point. I am not apologizing, nor is this a confession. I am only stating what happened. You can draw your own conclusions, and do what you wish with them.

As I said, I thought this was a bad experience, and it was true enough. But this was only a prelude to the most tragic event I have ever witnessed. I have feelings about the next episode that will never go away. I didn't know how bad I felt about this until I started writing about it. The images of what happened were always popping up in my mind any time I was alone and had time to think. But writing about this is bringing it all back very clearly. This incident which occured was an accident. There were no bloodthirsty baby-killers involved, just average Americans nineteen and twenty years old who were thrown into a war ten thousand miles from home, scared and confused. But trying to do the right thing, in



Sally Jacobson

spite of all this.

The magnitude of this event was made possible only because of a certain weapon, called a Claymore mine. The Claymore is a command-detonated anti-personnel mine. It consists of a slab of plastic explosive impregnated with about a thousand (I'm guessing) ball bearings approximately ¼ inch in size. This is encased in a plastic shell around ten inches long, five inches high and an inch and half thick. It is curved in the middle and has instructions embossed on it that read: "this side toward the enemy." It would be easy to make a mistake without the instructions, so it is not as dumb as it sounds. It is electrically detonated by means of a removable firing cap, which is connected by a long wire to a magneto, or plunger. It has small spikelike legs which can be forced into the side of a tree, or the ground, depending on which level you want the mine to cover. It was usually stuck in the ground because the underbrush would conceal it, and the wire running back to you. For its size and simplicity, I have never seen anything that could match it.

This started out as a routine operation. We landed at the L.Z. around noon. This was at least a battalion-sized movement and it took a long time to get us all in. So I figured if there were any V.C. around, they would have seen or heard us without any trouble, and would have cleared out of the area. We set up a double perimeter that day, and for some reason I wound up on the inside of the perimeter. They needed a radio operator and I had done it before, but I wasn't the best available, so it surprised me. The outer perimeter went right up to the edge of a good-sized trail. So they lined the side of the trail with about five or six Claymores. Nothing was happening that day so we took it easy right into the night. It must have been about one o'clock in the morning when I heard this man on the radio, crying. He was trying to talk but it was hard to understand him because of the crying. He was frantically trying to tell someone that there were what seemed to him hundreds of people coming toward him down the trail.

The night is pitch black, he can't see them. He hears them, speaking in their strange Vietnamese tongue. He's babbling now. Their shuffling feet are no more than ten feet from him. He believes he's going to die. "What do I do! What do I do!" he incessantly chants. I believe that he'll die, and that I'll follow in short order, overrun by a human wave assault. A series of loud explosions breaks the silence of the night. The Claymores were detonated, and then nothing. Total silence again.

Everyone around me was running erratically in circles. From rock to tree and back again, trying to find something to hide behind. Their heads were practically spinning completely around. They were trying to anticipate the direction the human wave assault would come from. Still, not a sound. Why? If the V.C. decided to retreat, they would have thrown some cover fire. But nothing? It didn't make sense. We stayed frozen in position, totally confused, until the first light of dawn. A sergeant came over to us and told us to check out the situation.

We made our way to the trail and were immediately overcome with revulsion. The sight before us was not what we assumed it would be. There were bodies lying everywhere (we expected that) but the bodies were those of women, children and babies. About twenty or thirty in all, no men, no weapons. I looked around the bodies frantically, for any hint of a weapon, a radio, a shellcasing, anything. As if somehow that would justify this terrible scene. There was none, just the bodies, lying everywhere. Like discarded toys, lying there as if they were sleeping. No blood, no dismembered torsos, a very neat mass killing. The Claymores, those damn Claymores, did their job well. When hit by a Claymore the skin spreads or stretches and instantly closes back up, with only a small indent to verify the horrible projectile's vicious path.

After my head cleared a little, the first thing that came to my mind was snipers. I was positive there would be snipers around to avenge this hideous act. But there were none. A sergeant came over to me and told me to go about fifty meters down the trail and keep watch while the other G.I.'s buried the bodies. I was relieved that I wasn't asked to help bury them. I was thinking, while looking at this carnage, if they tell me to move these bodies, I won't do it, they can put me in the stockade, or threaten to shoot me, I won't touch them! When they finished burying the bodies, I came back. It was then I found that there was one survivor. A baby girl, she took a hit in the wrist. Only a quarter-inch round, but enormous to a child that small. She would keep her hand, but she c ould never use it again.

I don't remember much of what we did for the rest of the operation. About a month later, I was at the base camp and I was reading a newspaper the division put out, when I ran across this item about how some other unit found this baby that was lost in the jungle. They mentioned how the baby had a wound in the wrist. That they were going to help this kid get some use out of the hand. They even gave the baby a name, Peaches. What little trust I had in the military was lost that day. What happened was just an unfortunate series of events. But this paper had to carry that lie – to make it sound like what a great bunch of guys they were. I am starting to throw rocks. That was not my intention when I started writing this article. I just wanted to say, clearly, to whoever read this, and to myself, that these things really did happen.

# An interview with Isaac Kaplan, lone survivor of the S.S. Orion.

**Brian Patterson**

The reporter is short, far from home, tired. He's asked his questions, but the man standing next to him, his hands in his pockets, his head down, hasn't given him any real answers. The reporter doesn't know what to say. The forty-two men the man has been living with the past two years are dead.

"Good guys," the man says, for an epitaph.

The reporter doesn't know what to say.

But this man, seaman Isaac Kaplan, has survived, miraculously, the destruction of the S.S. Orion, blown up, in the middle of the night, by an unidentified plane. Already, fourteen different terrorist groups have taken responsibility for the attack. Forty-three crew members and Isaac Kaplan is the only one left. It's a big story and the reporter has got to have something more than, "I don't know."

Kaplan keeps shaking his head. He is not big, and not especially muscled, this man, who, just yesterday, escaped from a burning tanker and swam more than half-a-mile in the Indian ocean. He is sturdy though, when his hand goes up to brush at his hair, when he kicks, neatly, at a pebble, his movements are even; he doesn't hesitate.

The reporter asks him, did he see the terrorist plane? He answers, simply, "No."

The reporter asks him if the Orion received any messages before the attack and Kaplan says, "I was asleep." The reporter is running out of questions. He is blunt. What happened out there, Isaac, he says. Kaplan shakes his head and laughs, a hard, short laugh. "They blew up the Orion, man, they blew the fuckin' thing right out of the water."

Getting a little desperate--his time is almost up and he's got to have a story--the reporter resorts to mild cruelty. He asks Kaplan how he got out, and no one else did.

There is a pause. Kaplan says, "I'll tell you one thing."

And the reporter's sagging pencil sticks straight up, poised above his note pad. He's ready for anything but please, he's thinking, make it a complete sentence.

"I know something I never knew before." One of Kaplan's hands has left his pocket and stops at his chin, he's looking up now, he's seeing something. He glances at the note pad and then continues.

"A person--everybody--we're capable of a whole lot more than we think we are."

Kaplan pauses. The pencil stops. The reporter stands up straighter, encourages him with a gentle, careful nod.

"Look at it this way." Kaplan is using his hands now, he thrusts them squarely into the air in front of him. "We don't...most of us don't put that much energy into...life, you know what I mean?"

The reporter opens his mouth but doesn't have to answer.

"It's like there's one level, when you've hung around for a long time in the same place and you're doing the same things and you just get them done, you know what I mean? And there's another level when you move into a new place, like when you walk into a party and you don't know anyone. You've got to put out more, you want to make a good impression, you work harder, you're more aware. Beyond that there's a level where you start to move because you get the feeling you're on to something that's going to make a big difference in your life, and you start to hum. Maybe you're in love, or something like that. And when you're almost there, when whatever it is you're working for is practically in your hands, then you're flying, man, flying, and you see everything, feel like you know everything and everything works. You know what I mean?"

The pencil stops, the reporter nods but doesn't look up.

"Well. there's another level beyond that and it's so much higher it's like night and day. Better than drugs, man, let me tell you. The human being is capable of incredible things and I know it. From personal experience."

The reporter looks up. Drugs? He mutters the question, wondering if anybody will print this. Kaplan doesn't hear him.

"It was C-deck, man, and I was fast asleep. Suddenly there was this rat-a-tat-tat, but it was loud, fuckin' loud, and it echoed, like somebody fired a huge machine gun down the whole side of the ship. Well, I had no idea what was going on but I knew it was bad and I knew I was in trouble, because there I was, three decks down, buried in the middle of that big, black hull and I knew if that ship went down I was going down with her. So I moved, all right. I got my ass out of that bunk and I headed for the door. I wasn't thinking about living at that point, I was thinking about dying and what it would be like to go that way, stuck in those little passageways, with that black, greasy water coming up fast. So I moved. I could hear doors opening and guys yelling, but only partly--only part of me was listening. I was on the stairs to B, flying up those stairs, right at the top, when the whole ship lurched sideways and I banged up hard against the wall, onto my knees, and there was water--don't ask me where it came from--climbing all over my legs; that's when it hit me, man, hit me hard, I just knew I didn't want to die. I was pissed-- I remember thinking that I wasn't going to die, goddamn it-- real pissed. If anybody had got in my way right then, if my own mother was standing there, I would have knocked her flat. I wasn't seeing anything but the way out.

"I was at the stairs to A-deck when the ship heeled again. It was bad: the lights went out so I couldn't see, everything was sideways, and there was water gushing in from above me. There were other guys, there mut have been other guys trying to get out too, but I didn't see them; my whole mind was working on getting out of there. One part was thinking about everything in advance, sizing up the situation: where to put my hands, which door to go through, what was strong enough to put my weight on, and waht wasn't. The other part was sort of separate, watching me, making sure my body did

Continued to 39

# Dark Sunglasses

John Roux

The sunglasses that Kevin had found were really quite special. They were obviously expensive glasses, with dark, smoke-colored lenses, and flexible, black plastic frames. They had once had equine blinders, but Kevin had cut them off: He didn't want to look like a contestant in the Kentucky Derby as he peddled about town on his English Racer.

Kevin had found the sunglasses on the fishing pier in Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts on a warm June day. With a great stealth, he had tucked the glasses into his pocket without anyone noticing.

Kevin proudly wore the sunglasses home. His family was seated around the kitchen table eating dinner; he was late, again. Before he could be lectured for that infraction, Kevin launched into an elaborate explanation of how he had acquired the glasses. His older and only sister, Jane, thought that his newest toy was "pretentious"--one of her favorite words. "Who do you think you are, a movie star?" Actually, Kevin was an actor, although he had never appeared on a legitimate stage. Typically, his younger brother thought that they were "cool." His mother wondered aloud if the sunglasses might adversely affect his eyesight. His father made no comment.

In the two months following Kevin's lucky find, he had hardly ever gone outdoors--in public--without his sunglasses. It didn't matter if the day was sunny or cloudy, Kevin defiantly wore his "shades." The world seemed more mellow, the sun almost harmless, when he wore the glasses. More importantly, few people recognized him, or so he thought, as he rode his bike around the small Cape Cod town. Even on the off-chance that someone would recognize him and start a conversation, Kevin would not remove the shields from his eyes. He would courteously talk with the acquaintance, but he would not allow his large brown eyes to be seen.

That summer Kevin turned fourteen, and he knew that his carefree days were numbered. Soon, much too soon, he would have to think about finding a part-time job and make plans for attending college. But why, he thought, did he have to follow the advice and orders that everyone felt obliged to give him? Kevin wanted, more than anything else, to freeze that summer and live in that era forever and ever. He never wanted to stop riding his bicycle, swimming at *his* beach, being alone.

As much as Kevin might have wished otherwise, that summer did eventually end. He would have to start high school-- the same school that his sister was blissfully ensconsed in as an exalted member of the popular set--in September. Labor Day weekend was thus his last hurrah. He planned to spend that time alone at the beach.

The particular beach that Kevin frequented was not a public one, but rather a "Beach Way" that only the residents of Sagamore Beach knew about.

He parked his bicycle on the very edge of the dead-end road, locked it to a fence post, and walked down to the vacant beach. He spread his towel out onto the pristine sand, took off his shirt and sneakers, greased his body with suntan lotion, and lay down on his stomach.

Random thoughts soon invaded his otherwise tranquil mind. He was not doing what he was *supposed* to be doing. He had never seriously considered what he would eventually do for a living. Could he ever learn to operate a computer? Would he survive working in an office? Kevin's major problem had always been that he could not concentrate on work that bored him. Therefore, he excelled in English and History, but usually made a poor showing in Math and Science.

Kevin managed to push such negative thoughts from his mind. He would live that day, Saturday, and absolutely refuse to think about the following Sunday. He was about to doze off--still wearing his sunglasses--when he heard his neighbor Brian approach.

"Kevin!" he shrieked, as if he hadn't seen him in years.

O God, Kevin thought, I'm going to have to listen to this idiot talk about his ridiculous home computer and his boring sexual fantasies.

"Hi, Brian. What's up?"

"We had a storm last night, so it should be warm."

That inane conversation continued for several more minutes, until Kevin leaped off his towel and announced that he was ready to go for a swim. Regretfully, Brian joined him. Kevin removed his precious sunglasses and placed them on his towel. Without them, the sun seemed unnaturally strong, the glare off the water was painfully penetrating. He ran to the surf and dove in. Brian followed difffidently behind.

The water was indeed much warmer than usual. They raced from their stone jetty to the one further down the beach. Kevin, who was almst more comfortable in the water than he was on land, naturally won. They walked back to the private beach: Brian was tired. After being in the cool water for so long, their youthful bodies were unsteady on dry land. As they walked along, Brian chatted away endlessly. Kevin kept his eyes down to avoid the harsh glare from the sun. Brian made notice of the firce sunbeams.

Instinctively, Kevin reached for his sunglasses as soon as they returned to the private beach. But they were gone. He scanned the beach to discover that they were alone. Kevin put his brain on instant recall and he clearly remembered placing the sunglasses on his towel. He wanted to scream, to cry, to utterly breakdown.

"Someone stole my sunglasses," Kevin stated, with remarkable restraint.

Brian carefully examined Kevin's towel, under the towel in their mingled clothing--the entire area. He soberly announced, after that scrupulous search, that the sunglasses had in fact been stolen.

"I'm really sorry, Kevin." Brian did look truly mournful; he realized that the sunglasses had been expensive.

"It's all right, I'll get another pair." Kevin calmly got dressed, as if losing the sunglasses was no big deal. He said good-bye to Brian, unlocked his bicycle, and began the short ride home. It was an interminable trip. He would have to tell his family that he had lost the expen-

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# Take Me Out To The Ball Game

## Kate Bartholomew

In spring, one's fancy may turn to thoughts of love and/or baseball. In Massachusetts, this means the Red Sox. We do not wish to look back at last year's fiasco. If you are not obsessed with winning, you will have to admit that the Red Sox have a certain pizzazz. They will treat you to exciting cliff-hangers. So every spring, we begin to hope. We are still hoping in September against all odds. As that artless sage, Yoge Berra, put it, "It isn't over, until it's over."

No writing about the Red Sox at this time would be complete without the mention of Carl Yastremski, our Mr. Baseball. He won't be in the line-up this year for the first time in better than twenty years; but we may catch a glimpse of him now and then coaching young players in the art of batting. Last season it was comically touching to see this middle-aged man with pouches of fatigue under his eyes running the bases in his herky-jerky lope. Yazz, we luv ya. Anybody want to make something out of that? Put 'em up!

Unlike football or hockey, at games, the fans do not expect much violence; but they are not above enjoying a heated argument between a manager and and umpire. Here, I think the Red Sox manager falls short in his performance. Ralph Houk is somehow too civilized. When he throws his cap on the ground, or kicks some dirt his heart is not in it. It is more like a show to please the fans.

If you admire that kind of thing, Billy Martin is your man. Flying out of the dugout, he thrusts himself two inches from the umpire's face spewing his verbal attack. Sometimes he has to get on his toes because he is shorter than most of the umpires. Some are endowed with protruding middles, and he is obliged to curve his body to spit out curses and obscenities. You don't need to be an experienced lipreader to get the whole drift when the TV cameras zero in on him. Even after he is thrown out of a game, he follows at the heels of the umpire like a feisty, bad tempered, small poodle. His actions are so bizarre, so uncontrolled, that if two men in white jackets came to remove him from the field, I don't think it would surprise too many people.

The critic of the *TV Guide* wrote a piece about Julia Child covering the cuisine at Fenway Park. It seems Julia found herself at the ball park one day. It is hard to imagine this as a deliberate act. As usual, she could not keep her mind out to the kitchen. With her well-known aplomb, she pronounced the hot dogs "to pale" the french fries "too limp." One can hear the high la-di-da of Julia's scorn clearly. For years we Bay Staters have lived with the self-evident truth that all hot dogs are not equal. They taste better at Fenway, or at any park. The only fault I have with them is the price. Shame on you, Julia, go back to yur beurres and mousses!

Baseball is a sport. The dictionary definition is:" n. source of diverison. physical activity engaged in for pleasure, v. to amuse oneself, frolic. " Baseball has become a big business. How often will you see a ball player smile at a game? Frolicking? Not bloody likely. Sure they pat each onther on the rump for a home run, or a run batted in. I can't understand this. When did men stop slapping each other on the back?

All hell breaks loose when a team wins a pennant or the World Series. The players waste a lot of good champagne by showering each other with it, and presumably, drinking it, which seems more sensible. Pandemonium reigns in the locker room. The only persons who are not caught up in the general hysteria are the reporters who have a living to make.

Ah yes, winning is everything. The Red Sox have not won a World Series since 1918, the year I was born. It would be nice to see a victory before I die; but I can live without it.

Christopher Whittle

Continued from 37

sive sunglasses and his father would recite his patented lecture about how he should be more careful with his belongings, that money didn't grow on trees, et cetera.

The cool air failed completely to calm him as he pedaled home. He wore is cut-off jeans, sneakers and a T-shirt. Still, he felt nude. He knew that the passing motorists and pedestrians could see him, judge him, and hurt him.

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Continued from 36

what my mind was telling it to do. I was moving like I'd never moved before, one arm on the railing, swinging up to A-dack, pulling myself down the passageway with my hands on the doorknobs, climbing over broken stairways.

"I threw myself up to the top deck; the stairway was down, I climbed over that, and I threw myself up. I', strong, but I'm no gymnast- hell, I couldn't do that now if you paid me. I just jumped, one whole floor, grabbed the edge of the opening with my hands and hitched myself over. That must have been when I sprained my wrist but I didn't even know I had until I woke up the next day."

"Then I was up on top. I ran, sort of slid, to the side and dived off, didn't even think, just dived right over, must have been a good ghirty feet, and swam, sprained wrist and all; out in the middle of the Goddamned Indian Ocean and I'm back in high school, swimming exhibition for the swim team. I don't know how far I swam, I never stopped or looked up, just swam and swam, fighting the waves, and then there was that boat. I didn't see it, just heard the engine through the water and I stopped swimming. Almost went under right there, like there was nothing left in me. But they got me somehow and pulled me out of the water. Their faces were orange, reflecting the ship-- it was burning then-- and they were chattering away, I couldn't understand a word. The boat started moving-- fast, whoever was driving really put it into gear; I practically fell back into the water and took all those little Hindus with me. And right then-- Ka-boom the Orion explodes-- huge, fuckin' fireball-- and I can feel the heat on my face.

"I was working at full capacity, man. That's how I got out of there. I was in fifth or sith gear and I've never been there before, never knew it was possible. I remember thinking, sitting there, breathing so hard in felt like my lungs were ripping out of my chest, sitting there watching the ocean burn, I remember thinking that I wasn't going to be able to fake it anymore, that I was going to have to do something pretty incredible with my life because I knew that I could. And all I could think, right then-- just before I passsed out-- was, oh shit."

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Continued from 9

Lindy have climbed out the window and are sitting on the roof in the sun, reading books together.

"Get in here this instant," his mother yells. Edward climbs through the window. "Where's that girlfriend of yours?"

"Oh, hello, Mrs. Quirk," Lindy says from the roof. Edward's mother chooses to ignore her. "Find that book," she says to his father.

"All right, I'm trying to."

"What book are you looking for, Dad?"

"There it is," his mother screams. "By his bed!"

Edward's father grabs the book and heads out the door down the stairs in a trot. "Burn it, Jack, burn it," his mother is yelling.

Edward follows his father running down three flights of stairs to the basement. He arrives just in time to see the book go into the furnace. Edward has never seen his father like this. The flames light up his face so that he looks demonic. The entire room takes on a reddish glow. Edward stands still. He makes no effort to retrieve his book from the fire. He can see the photograph of Henry Miller, through the open furnace door. Henry continues to stare out from his book as if nothing unusual is happening. The fire burns the book slowly, from the corners in. It takes a long time before the flames reach Henry's face, but then all at once, he is gone.

Edward leaves his father in the basement. He meets Lindy going up the stairs, and the two of them go out of the house together.

That night, for the first time, Jesus and Henry Miller both come to Edward's bedroom.

"I don't need you guys anymore, Edward says. "I'm through with heroes."

"I'm sorry," Edward says to Jesus. "I don't mean to hurt your feelings."

"It's about time you gave up the ghost," Henry says.

"I'm sorry," Edward says to Jesus. "I don't mean to hurt your feelings."

"Don't worry about it," Jesus says. He steps from the shadows, and Edward is amazed to see how much he's changed. He is standing taller now than Edward remembers him and smoking a cigarette.

"Where have you been all this time?" Edward asks.

"Latin America," Jesus says. "I've left the Church. I'm working on my own now."

"You left the Church?"

"Yeah. They never understood me in the first place." "Can I offer you a ride somewhere?" Henry asks him.

"No thanks," Jesus says. "I'll walk. I need the exercise."

"Suit yourself."

After they leave Edward has a dream again that he is falling through space. Instead of trying to hold on to something this time, he just lets go. Now it feels more like flying.

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# Nuclear Freeze: The only clear cut solution

Stephen Sadowski

"On August 6, 1945, a 13-kiloton nuclear device was exploded above Hiroshima. Since that time, the nuclear superpowers have constructed an average of four nuclear warheads a day. Today, nations with nuclear weapons have over 50,000 nuclear warheads with an explosive potential of 20,000 million tons of TNT. This is the equivalent of four tons of TNT for every man, woman, and child in the world."[1]

The United States and the Soviet Union both have enough nuclear weapons to annihilate each other as well as much of the world, but neither side is willing to make concessions to ensure world peace. Each side continues to build and stockpile nuclear weapons. Each side ignores the frantic cries of the concerned public to stop before it's too late. Each day brings us closer to the point of no return.

What can be done to save humanity from the dire consequences of an all-out-nuclear-war? Governments cannot be expected to issue effective nuclear policy because they distrust each other too much to implement it. The responsibility then rests on the shoulders of the public. As Barbara Tuchman says, "Public demand should continue for a bilateral nuclear freeze, ratification of Salt II, a ban on all nuclear testing and, above all, for a firm renunciation of first strike by act of Congress."[2] "When control of arms becomes a goal of the mainstream, then it will prevail."[3]

Arms control must prevail. The survival of the human race as we know it, depends upon it. This is not to say that there would be no survivors of a nuclear war, but that for survivors, "Recovery would be highly problematic; at best, it could take generations."[4]

Who knows what the world would be like after a nuclear war? "Little Boy," the 13-kiloton bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 75,000 people out of a population of 245,000. Within a one-and-a-half mile radius of the explosion, a shock wave and an intense firestorm destroyed every physical structure and tens of thousands of people were severely burned. Many of the 100,000 injured people were afflicted with a disease never before encountered in history: radiation sickness."[5]

It is utterly senseless to keep feeding the nuclear monster because it might turn and bite the hand that feeds it. When thinking about the potential dangers to be avoided in the future, one must not assume that decisions will always be deliberate, or that accidents cannot happen. Mechanical failures in warnings systems can develop during a deep superpower crisis, and there is always the danger of human frailty during situations of intense pressure.

Moreover, what can be done to make the superpowers realize that the world is more than a sphere to influence and that people are more than receptors of their ideologies? This question at the root of the problem be-tween the superpowers. Each side feels that the other side is trying to undermine it by turning other countries against it. This only tends to breed hostility. "The source of hostility must be eliminated or mitigated before nations will give up their weapons."[6]

In view of the vast difference between Communism and free enterprise, this may seem impossible, but it has to be attempted if there is to be peace on this planet. This does not mean that the United States and the Soviet Union must become friends, but that they must simply learn to tolerate each other. Then and only then can we all live without being overwhelmed by the feeling of impermanence.

Again, the public holds the key. They must learn more about the nuclear dilemma. They must seek out candidates who support arms control and vote them into office. If leaders came to power in the United States and the Soviet Union at the same time who truly wanted some sort of reconciliation, then a start could be made. This could be possible only if the publics of both countries brought it about. In the Soviet Union, however, the public has far less voice in choosing leaders. Even there, however, public opinion exerts some pressure.

Some experts argue for disarmament and others for arms buildup, but both of these positions are more than a bit extreme. Disarmament in reality can never be achieved. The United States and the Soviet Union distrust each other too much. "Nations don't distrust each other because they are armed; they are armed because they distrust each other."[7] In other words, nuclear arms are here to stay. Besides, even if disarmament were achieved, the knowledge of how to build nuclear weapons would continue to exist.

Arms buildup is a no-win situation because neither superpower could gain a substantial lead in the arms race. Both sides are virtually even and should quit now because "One-sides dominance, experience shows, only encourages the other side to pump more money into military technology to correct the imbalance. This makes the original buildup ineffective and prompts a new counter buildup. Thus, the arms race is perpetuated."[8]

A nuclear freeze is the only clear-cut solution to the nuclear problem. The United States and the Soviet Union must come to realize that there is a lot more on the line than simply being the nuclear king. Billions of lives are at stake. It is up to each one of us as inhabitants of this world to ensure our own future survival. This is not to say that this will make a nuclear confrontation impossible, only a little less probable.

Notes

[1]The Harvard Medical School Nuclear War Study Group, "Nuclear Arsenals," *The Medical Consequences Of Nuclear War*, (Boston: Harvard Medical School, 1982), p.2.

[2]Barbara Tuchman, "Is there an alternative to arms control?" *Radcliffe Quarterly*, 69, No.1 (March 1983), p.6.

[3]Ibid., p.6.

[4]The Harvard Nuclear Study Group, *Living With Nuclear Weapons*, (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1983), p.4.

[5]The Harvard Midical School Nuclear War Study Group, "Introducation," *The Medical Consequences Of Nuclear War*, (Boston: Harvard Medical School, 1982), p.1.

[6]Barbara Tuchman, p.6.

[7]Ibid., P.5.

[8]Barbara B. Kennelly, "Nuclear freeze or nuclear war: the US Congress vs the Reagan Administration," *Radcliffe Quarterly*, 69, No.1 (March 1983), p.11.

Carl Grunbaum