Spring 1981

Deja Vu 1981

Kent State University - Stark Campus

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OVER FROM 6684 STRAUSSER

—MARK PALOMBO
First Prize

DEJA NU
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VINES IN THE TIDE

A midnight moon
Reflecting silver light
From the calm oceanic mirror
Paints the artist's face
Behind an open seaside window
Ashen white
While the clock on the wall
Pulsates with pendulum precision.

A hand hovering over a palette
Laden with fresh tufts of ivory.
Saffron, and cerulean blue halts
Before a blank canvas with hesitation

With hesitation clouds form in colorless
Clusters above a murmuring sea
Seizing a brush the artist sketches
Lines discontinuous, isolated

Isolated, impressionistic swatches
Of time measured by clock-
Splintering silence
With a nervous tick
Begin to flow
In colors
That gather and drip
And splash to the floor
Of grainy worn wood
While the easel creaks

With creaking elbows and knees
An old man in black
Bent like a fishing hook
Hobbles across the sandy shore

Stringing a pattern of footprints behind him
As the first drop falls
Shattering a liquid mosaic
And thunderous clouds clash

Clashing colors merge and melt grains of sand
Stippled down hourglass outlines
Of azure cascade stream and foam dun-white
Sea gulls clamor cataracts crashing time-
Stopping deafening breakers submerge
Tangled clumps of seaweed varnished
Beneath sweeping sable brush until
Sunrise.

The clock beats.
The paint begins to dry.
A blond, barefoot boy
Scampers down to the white beach
Over blades of blazing green
Swinging a scarlet sand pail.

—PAT MANDIA
First Prize
ASIDE WINDOW

—KIM ZINDREN
Third Prize
The oak tree branches are dripping
Icicles onto my roof and my
Windowpane is strewn with
Frost fairies that dance in the
Moonlight.

Spring things fly away
to land upon treetops green
and mate with summer

With keys your pockets are stocked
for locks your keys you'll need
so when your doors are locked
you can go out and get keyed.

Falling stars seldom hit
the ground
they usually land on
mushrooms
but don't expect to find a star
atop every mushroom you see
sometimes they slide down
over the edge
to be underneath the mushroom
so as not to be exposed
to the immediate atmos-
phere
for stars melt in the rain

—LAURA CARROLL
Second Prize
VICTORIAN STILL LIFE

—PAULA REED
Third Prize
43rd STREET

Home of factory workers and small shop keepers:
One block, a hiding place from the city.
Frame houses jammed together, trying to escape
From the urban world around them.
Always, though, the sounds creep in—
Horns blaring, machinery grinding, neighbors fighting.
Always too, the dreams creep in.
Thoughts of green and rolling hills
Warm sandy beaches
Fields at harvest time
Friendly, familiar faces.
These things disturb the solace
Inhabitants come home to find.
Neighbors have something in common—
They do not want to know
Where you come from or what you do.
43rd Street is just a stopping place.
After a hard day at work they only want
To watch TV and pass the time
Until they can really go home.
No use making friends with people—
Who knows what kind of people they are?
Why buy a good car?
You have to park it on the street.
No use for a picnic table—
You go to the park for that.
Why get a dog?
You can’t walk it after dark.
No use buying lights for Christmas—
They’d only be stolen.
And anyway, next year you’re moving.
But you never do.
And then there’s no use in kidding yourself.
As far as the RTA takes you
Is as far as you’re going to go.
But tomorrow’s payday
So you can stop off at Ray’s Bar.
And maybe Sunday you can go down to the lake
And watch the boats go out.

—LINDA CAPPER
Third Prize
ZEBRA

—FAYE SHAW
Honorable Mention

BEACHCOMBERS

Scribble scrabble scurry sidle
Little crabs are seldom idle
As they make their crabwise way along the beach.

Horny toenails tap a-ticking
And their claws a-snick and clicking
As they shuffle shards and shells within their reach.

But soon salmon goes the sun
A single sign that day is done
And so they rasp and rattle sideways to the sea.

Now the restive rocks are sleeping
And the shells have quit their creeping
As the turning tide untangles sandy scree.

—KRIS KURIAN
Third Prize
THE WORM

It clings to clay with clammy hands;
Away from sun in shadowed lands,
Where, lacking legs, it seldom stands.
A silken mist above it falls;
It looks upon the pebble walls,
From which quite quietly it crawls.

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Now some time past I chanced to nod
and dreamed myself a bird;
Soaring, skimming, lazy looping,
Riding winds to plummet swooping
Down to earth. Infected with the gift of flight
which morning light quite cured.

How vivid were those images of moments
wild and high.
I was a bird, a feathered thing;
I knew no other way but wing
And song. From birth to death I dreamed complete
existence in a sigh.

Years it seemed to me I flew and fought
the wind in play.
Nesting, feeding, winter’s death
Youth and age within one breath
Passed whole. And in the end my death
was waking to the day.

This charming dream is one to keep
forever if I can.
Imagine me confined within
A narrow coat of feathered skin
And bones. Why, it faint recalls those moments dozed
and dreamed myself a man.

CLOUD CLOUD

Cloud cloud
your passing loud
as moonbeams
and as bright.
A silver plume
fixed regally
on dark chapeau
of night.
You’re not the sort
to claim a port
or flag
of registry.
With silver sail
and planking pale
you ply a
shoreless sea.
And love, hate, sorrow,
earthquake, flood
reach not that
boundless bay,
Nor mark your course
not one degree
your graceful way
to stay.
Cloud cloud
your passing loud
as moonbeams
and as bright.
With lunar heat
your heart must beat,
impassive
on your height.

—KRIS KURIAN
Third Prize
TWO HAiku

DEJA VU —TAMMY SLEIGHTER
Honorable Mention

Hibiscus: Spring, 1980
New hibiscus leaves
Grow by dry skeletal stalks,
Stripped clean by sparrows.

Hibiscus, June, 1980
Abdicate, old stalks,
Stripped bare by nesting sparrows.
Young sprouts supplant you!

—BERNICE PHILLIPS
Honorable Mention
I'm ninety-one years old. Too old to be packed into the back seat of this crowded bus. My joints ache. My elbows creak. My knees grind. And what a grind it is. The driver grinds the gears and the bus lurches forward. Forward march. My husband was killed during World War I. About face. The face of the enemy. Ready. Aim. Fire. Fire can be nice. Its warm flames of yellow and orange leap and lap like licking tongues. My tongue is old and cracked. When I remove my dentures, I stick my tongue out and look at it in the bathroom mirror. Drops of spittle ooze from the compressed cracks. They dribble over my lips. They drip down fold upon fold of wrinkled flesh, like cars on a roller coaster, to my chin. My chin quivers. My hands shake. When you ride the roller coaster, first you go up, then you come down, then you throw up.

This damned bus is making me seasick. It twists. It tilts. It spins. Or maybe that's just my head spinning. It doesn't matter. We're turning right. Hang on. The man on my left, grey tweed suit, black briefcase, "William Clarke" lettered in silver, presses against me. He doesn't look up from his magazine. Forbes. A tangle of graphs and figures. The smell of breath mints, leather, and Old Spice. Blue eyes. Black hair. Black moustache. Not bad. Leaning against this old bag of bones, he doesn't feel a thing. That's okay. At my age I'm not supposed to feel anything either. No more fun and games. Electronic games go "Bleep, boing, buzz, pzing!" Games of hide and seek and tag go "You're it, Little Larry." Little Larry had baggy corduroy pants and picked his nose. Little Larry's father was called Big Larry. I close my eyes and shifting silhouettes on the cricket-cool farmyard fade into the sun and drop like an orange rubber ball. Drops of blood disappearing one by one into the ocean.

My husband was flying over the ocean when he was shot down. Down, down, down the bus goes. I can't see where we're going. The icy rain patters, like cat's feet on kitchen linoleum, against the window behind me. The windows are all fogged up. Or are my glasses fogged up? Or was it foggy outside? I can't remember. My mind's in a fog. It doesn't matter. It's getting dark. Or maybe my eyes are getting worse. They ache. Sometimes it feels like pins are pricking my pupils and sucking out the light. The lights flash on in the bus, bathing everything in a sea of lukewarm lemonade. They sold lemonade at the amusement park. Fresh squeezed. Emma, my older sister, bought me some before I rode the roller coaster and threw up.

We go up, up, up and my arthritic chicken neck is pressed against the cold metal strip under the milky window at the back of the bus. It doesn't matter. Soon I'll be home. Home, home on the range where the deer and the antelope play. That's one of my favorite songs. On Sunday picnics we each got to pick a favorite song to sing. My mother always picked a religious song. I always picked "Home on the Range." Little Larry always picked his nose. It doesn't matter.

The bus stops. Three blurred shapes clink coins into the metal box. A flash of silver. Ice cubes dropped into lemonade. The smell of early spring rain and wet mackintoshes. The three dark forms grasp slender silver poles and the gears grind forward once more. The merry-go-round had silver poles, too. And brass rings. See the pretty horses go up and down and 'round and 'round. Sleek white stallions with flowing manes, impaled on silver spears.

Poetic. I should have been a poet. Nurse instead. I should have gone to Harvard. Hawvodd. Hhhawww, Vvoddd. Woman though. Lively Lydia with the juicy legs, to the men in the veterans' hospital. They pinched everything but my face. Now it's the only thing I have that's pinched. Except my shoes. They pinch. My feet ache. Blue veins snake over long brittle bones. Bones of eggshell. And when I wiggle my toes the snakes dance. I used to dance but now I have bunions. Paul Bunyan was a merry old soul. Or was that Old King Cole? Or Nat King Cole? Coal furnaces were hell. Shoveling coal on a damp freezing basement floor to feed the fire in the morning.
Ready. Aim. FIRE. Shot through the skull. Shrapnel burst bone. Blood gushed. Mind, knowledge, love painted in splattered smears of grey and red. My husband, Little Larry, dead. Eggshells. I am dying. Soon. Useless except to my plants and Arthur the cat. My eyes ache the lemonade fades the light dims and I must get home home on the range get home to feed my, something is terribly wrong, to feed...

Hand grips gasping throat. Falling to groaning slump. Heart attack they scream. You scream. I scream. We all scream for ice cream. It's so hot in here. The crowd presses in. Heart attack. Call an ambulance. I could use some ice cream. Call the good humor man. Little Larry was always in good humor. Eggshells scattered over the sea. CPR. Does anybody here know CPR they say. CPR. What's that? Cardio. Pulmonary. Resuscitation. Rings a bell. The ice cream man had a bell on his truck. Watch Arthur the cat lick the vanilla cone with his long pink tongue. My tongue is old and cracked. My bones are cracking. The strain's too much. Cracked eggshells. The fog moves in. The crowd moves in. Heart attack. Warm breathing and frightened, amazed faces set against a background of fog. Where are they? Paramedics? Heart attack. I'm doing the best that I can.


A paramedic stands outside of the bus. "One of the passengers practiced CPR on the patient," he says. Listen. He's talking to the reporters. Microphone. Camera. Fog. "I can't stress how important it is that people be trained, to insure that they will be able to do this correctly. A person not instructed in CPR can crack the victim's sternum, break the ribs, and possible puncture the lungs."

The faraway voice in the fog nears me. "Fortunately, the passenger had been well-trained. We credit Lydia Peterson, age ninety-one, with saving William Clarke's life." An arm around my aching shoulders. A hand shakes mine.

---

THE TERMYTE

Termyte! Termyte! smile so bright
With thy teeth so sharp and white,
What immortal hand could fabricate
Jaws so fit to munch and masticate?

O which distant hut or shack
Did thou have for a midnight snack?
On what wings did thou aspire
To chew the church that crushed the choir?

And what poor mansion did thou nibble
While the sawdust from thy lips did dribble?
Of what timber sweet and nutritious
Did thou grin and pronounce "Delicious!"

What the board? what the lumber?
That thou could not bore inside and slumber?
Thou did the leaning tower gnaw
With more whizzing teeth than power saw.

As thou dine on thy repast
Feasting on splinters while they last,
Does he giggle his work to see?
Did he who made the copper-anodized aluminum
skyscraper make thee?

Termyte! Termyte! smile so bright
With thy teeth so sharp and white,
What immortal hand dare fabricate
Jaws so fit to munch and masticate?

---

-PAT MANDIA
First Prize
MARTI

—CLAY DALE
BEAUTY'S FLAW

Her beauty shone like the brightest star, fit
For any constellation to behold.
So blinding was her perfection, that untold
Admirers travelled far, only to sit
And bathe in the radiance of her smile.
But beneath that beauty a tigress heart
Stalked. A heart so cruel that it tore apart
The tender weave of Love in those she did beguile.
And, in time, her admirers fled, as did
The beauty she held so dear. Then, alone,
She walked with memories in that heart of stone,
Unaware that they valued more That which was hid
Behind the Mask she wore. Her flaw was to believe the Lies
That the depth of Beauty is fathomed only with the eyes.

—DAVID ROESER

SOLDIER

Beginning the end
The gods they war again
Underground there is madness
As the people
Cry their sadness
Fire in the air
The soldier's face
Can't care
Inside
He fears tomorrow
Though death
Will calm his sorrow
He lives inside the glare
Of dying bombs' despair
Morning wake the chill
And know
That you must kill
Again your hands
Stained blood
Forget within the flood
Of friends
Slain on the ground
Head turns you
Round and round
The end
Pray it to save you
There's nothing soldier
That dreams do
When the gods bring war again
The lies that they defend
But senseless stupid men

—THERESA CARROLL
MOTION IN RED

—LYNN NAUGLE
FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE NUDE NO. D 33

Majestically she waits:
standing there like a
Picasso of the rose era—
thighs flabbing inward
with her head and torso
slightly deformed.

She exerts her strength
in the way she mounts her hand
on those adolescently fat hips
without losing the firmness
of her breasts. Her smile seems
to reveal our intimidation.

—DAVID BRION McCOY
I flew into the sky one day
to sit upon a cloud
To rest my troubled soul,
to lie in the feathery white
vapordust
to share in the treasures of the heavens
and gaze down at the earth. My
naturelust
carried my unknowing soul
to a star blue
and tempted me to sit upon this
star and
converse with the star
and the star blue was welcoming
and warm.
and I opened up thoughts
and the star listened with great blue eyes
and minimal reply
Stars don't talk much.

—LAURA CARROLL
Second Prize
LOST

Failingly, I attempt to reconjure the poem I contrived while you were well into your dreams and while I suffered through the early hours of my waking.

But like a cold stone, I fall mute.

—DAVID BRION McCOY

SOMBER JOURNEY

Cold and icy falls the frigid rain;
Dirge-like drops upon the window pane
Beat their measured cadence, long and slow.
On this somber journey I must go.

Windshield wipers keep the steady beat;
Winding, curving road and sleeted street
Mark for me the maze, the treacherous way.
Bleakness haunts this sun-secluded day.

Jutting from the jagged hills ahead
Loom the stone walls, prison-grey and dead.
Iron curtains shroud and hide my mate,
His mind deranged by twisted hand of fate.

Shell of man with catatonic stare,
Monotone for voice—disheveled hair
Frames the mask that used to be a face,
Not aware of me or warm embrace.

Never knowing he once took a bride—
Strangers we've become—I try to hide
That I have dreams of my lost youth to keep,
And nightly act out fantasies in sleep.

Duty only keeps me at his side,
Chained to him by rules and foolish pride.
I am weary of the guilt and shame;
I am worn out from the grief and pain.

Dusky shadows darken into night,
Void of concrete answers to my plight;
Drained of any hope, I journey home
Through the coupled world I face alone.

—KAY WILLIAMS
STAIRCASE

—FAYE SHAW
SUMMER SALVAGE

i gotcha! you’re dead cap gun
bangs firecracker sparklers
shimmer waxed weather-warped
table rocks with loose-leg wobbly
child knees before green and white
lawn chair executives bartering with
crowds of dusty feet and halter tops
it’s twenty dollars if you want it hot
pants tanned hairy chests of treasure
open amidst black wide-brimmed hats and
stiff suspenders stretched over white shirts
and long grey beards of Amish wagon wheels
spin round and round barrel of crackers
beside bins pregnant with watermelons i’ll
give ya ten bucks for it ripe corn sheds
shreds of husks wilt silk on gravel crunches
under flat black shoes rising to long grey
dresses and white bonnets bob over thick
fragrance of fresh straw carpets parking lots
and lots of horses and buggies creak to racing
mustangs and purring cougars PARK FOR 75¢ scent
of soft sticky donuts orange filled center oozes
navel jelly to fat flies twelve twenty-five and
that’s my final offer!....no?
plastic whistles SCREECH hair-raising arm
brushes against sweaty skin as cold as cut glass
red punch bowl—antique—doll with paintless
pores porcelain cracked face unloaded from a
battered ford station wagon all right she’s
yours for fifteen bucks with one missing blue
eye she slumps in a cane-bottom rocking chair
no the chair, i’m sorry, doesn’t come with her
that’s forty bucks more and watches the sun
draw back soggy monday morning fog curtains
revealing a sleeping hound dog i’ll
give you twenty for the chair, then,
two grandfather clocks tock
time in i’ll let it go for
thirty bucks country tick
and flea market talk.

—PAT MANDIA
First Prize
CATDRAGON,
SERIES I

—LYNN NAUGLE
VICTORIAN IN BLUE

—PAULA REED
WINTER WALK

As I walk across frozen ridges in fields of broken corn stalks,
Crystals of ice crackle under my feet;
Winds howl, snatching at scarves wrapped snug around me
Protecting cheeks from winter’s thrust.

A barbed fence confronts me, swaying from the assaults of winter wind;
A rusted gate groans at my touch, but
Offers passage to the forest beyond where trees whose Limbs, embraced by snow, genuflect towards the ground.

Tracks of animals, large and small, mar the pale pristine surface;
I catch a glimpse of the red plumage of a fox
Rapidly disappearing into an obscure thicket, seeking Protection in the deepening denseness beyond.

Shades of darkness slowly close to stain the white sheltered ground;
I change directions and hasten my steps,
Striding to outpace the encroachment of shadows Against the light.

My pulse quickens, gasping breath exhales into vaporized mist,
Retreating from woods and across the field,
Closing the gate from its repose against the Stealth of winter night.

—K. K. OKEY

SEA OATS

—DONNA SENSE
NEVER SAY I LOVE YOU

Never say I love you just to echo me. 
If you say I love you 
let it be because it is from you, 
not from the mirror of the one you think I am. 
Let the words come from you as they come to you, 
Virgin, Pristine, Clear, 
Undiluted by the filter of the need to be accepted. 
Let them come as flowers growing in the fringes of the garden. 
Not planned, 
but there because they were meant to be. 
As are those words when said to you from me.

—ROBERT D. PAPPAS
FADING

I am the eagle who lives on the mountain.
I was the strongest—the ruler of Sky
Back when above me there was only blueness.
The blue slowly faded; I couldn’t grasp why.

Off then I ventured beyond the horizon
In search of the beauty I used to know.
Long did I fly across the great mountain;
Alas, I discovered my encroaching foe.

So high they did stretch somewhat like my mountain,
So many together arranged in a row.
All belching out filth with grey pathways between them—
The sky was so cloudy that nothing could grow.

I am the eagle who dies on the mountain.
My wings have grown heavy; it’s so hard to fly.
Soon I’ll be gone, but the humans won’t notice.
They don’t realize that they’ll be next to die.

—ROGER C. MAYER

IN THE MISTY RAIN

It’s evening and the streets are glistening
With a high gloss shine from the rain
That hangs like a misty veil o’er the pane
And round the lights where I stand listening.

The tires of the cars sing a swishing hymn,
While a lone dog gives voice to some canine thought
From the city cage that his master bought,
A shelter from this misty water-whim.

A man pauses to fire his pipe, sending
Puffing messages skyward to some unseen
Receiver who has forgotten what it means
To walk in quiet mist that seems unending.

A would-be poet sits at kitchen nook
With paper, pen poised to capture
His random thoughts of poetic rapture,
All meaningless verse, enough to fill a book.

Still the misty rain falls, hiding from view
This evening vantage place from where I see
The Quiet, the Contented, and the Would-be,
Each enjoying or creating the New.

—DAVID ROESER
THE ARTIST GIVES ME SYMBOLS
In intricately organized designs.
If I attempt to penetrate the labyrinth
Of what is being said,
I encounter myself again and again,
I expand infinitely, within ever-narrowing limits.
Thus am I created.
Thus do I create myself.

—MARY McDERMOTT

I AM THE ROCK
Which cannot be broken.
I will create
Order out of chaos,
Quiet out of clamor,
Existence out of nothing.
I will create
A place of harmony,
A quiet place to rest
On the infinite search
For something more
Than nothing.

—VIRGINIA WILHELM
"Boyland, Mary Helene, age 39, died Friday. Survived by her husband James, a daughter Jennifer, and two sons, Kenneth and Thomas, all at home. No calling hours. Services will be held Monday, 11:00 A.M. at the Byerly Funeral Home. Burial will be in Walnut Grove cemetery."

A charge of electricity surged through Anne's body, shaking her hand. The paper dropped. She stooped and picked up the pages, reading the obituary again. Rereading, as though this time something would repudiate her recognition of the name and the person to whom the name belonged.

Anne pulled one of the captain’s chairs from the table and sat down. Rubbing her forehead she stared out the window, trying to make sense out of what she had read.

When was the last time that she had seen Mary Helene? Then she remembered; it was at the Westbury Women's Club style show luncheon. That was a week ago Thursday.

While Anne gushed over each outfit as models pirouetted among the tables, Mary Helene nodded her approval, her head bobbing up and down over daisies in hues of lavender and canary yellow that adorned each table. Between bites of shrimp salad and sips of pale, semi-sweet wine, Anne chatted on and on. "Will you listen to that commentator? The way she's embellishing those outfits, you'd think she was the social editor in charge of wedding articles," said Anne, raising her eyebrows. "Oooh," Anne drew in her breath, "look at that gorgeous knit. I'd have to lose 20 pounds to even think about getting the zipper up on that. I'll bet that you could wear that. Pink looks best with dark hair like yours."

"Are you chairing the Awards Banquet again this year?" asked Anne.

"Yes, I couldn't get out of it," said Mary Helene.

"Well, that's your fault. You shouldn't always say yes," said Anne, spooning another spoonful of salad into her mouth. "Once a club gets its hooks into you, you're stuck from then on. By the way, whatever the menu is, promise you'll put some of these slivered almonds in something. I love them in this shrimp salad."

"The menu is the least of my worries," sighed Mary Helene. "There's the program, the speaker, ticket sales, and table centerpieces, for openers."

"Well, stop trying to do everything yourself. So what if someone doesn't do something quite as well as you would. Is the world going to end?" stated Anne.

"Oh, it's not really as bad as it sounds," shrugged Mary Helene.

"Say, if you aren't going to eat your dessert, may I have it?" asked Anne, eyeing the untouched parfait in front of Mary Helene.

Anne blinked her eyes, re-focusing on the kitchen wall. The glare of the snow outside the window had temporarily blinded her. What could have happened in so short a period of time? I can't stand this...I have to find out something from someone, thought Anne. Mary Helene never complained of a sick day in her life. If the woman knew the words headache or cold...I never heard her say them.

I'll phone Fran Deering, decided Anne. She lives in the Boyland neighborhood. If anyone knows the story, she will. Anne pushed herself away from the table and walked to the phone, checked Fran's number, and dialed. "Burr, burr"; hanging up, she waited a minute and dialed again. Another busy signal. After three more tries, she walked back to the table and sat down.

Pouring coffee into a stained mug, Anne sipped the hot brew and lit a cigarette, staring at the obituary. Pictures and events rolled past her eyes. Wiping a smudge on the pine tabletop brought to mind Mary Helene's furniture.

Plopping into a couch, Anne stared at the wall and pointed. "What in heaven's name is that thing?"

"That's a relic from prefeminist days. It's a carpet beater. Also good for chasing flies and whacking kids," smiled Mary Helene.

"You have more interesting junk than any 10 people I know. In fact, we could make a few extra bucks by conducting guided tours through here," smirked Anne, glancing at the contents of the room. "I'll say one thing for all this, it must be originals. I've never seen it at the
local Colony Furniture store. I can't even guess what most of this is."

Mary Helene just shook her head. "Most of these objects are primitives. Over by the window, that's a lard press. By the spinning wheel is a yarn winder. To get the more unusual items takes a long time and a lot of patience. Occasionally, I've traveled 200 miles or more to an auction for just one item. It's taken years to accumulate most of this...I only buy the real thing, not a copy."

"I'd hate to clean this. I hope you have a cleaning lady?" questioned Anne.

"No. Cleaning people are apt to break things...and no one cleans your house the way you will," replied Mary Helene.

Mary Helene would have a field day in here, thought Anne, noticing the dust on the windowsill. Anne put out the cigarette in a ceramic ashtray and walked towards the phone. Once more, she looked up Fran's number and dialed. Again, a busy signal. Disgustedly, Anne pressed down the phone hook and re-dialed. One more "burr." Sighing, she sat in the chair again and poured another cup of coffee. Rubbing her eyes, she looked around for something to eat. Spotting the cookie canister, she got up and lifted the lid. Taking out three peanut butter cookies, she gingerly replaced the cream-colored lid.

Nerves made her hungry. For that matter, anything made her hungry. Chewy cookies seemed soothing. Small wonder she couldn't lose the weight she had gained. Guiltily, she placed the last morsel into her mouth. Downing the coffee, Anne returned to the telephone. "Burr, burrr, burrr"...like a fork scratching an aluminum pan. How she hated that sound. She banged the receiver into the hook and lit another cigarette, sliding into the chair.

I wonder how the family's taking this, she mused. James would bear it well. His tanned, lean face impassive during the ordeal. Tragedy would only enhance the aura of his appeal. An ironic grin flickered across Anne's mouth. The Boyland family wouldn't lack hot meals tonight. I can see the neighborhood women compassionately toting hot tokens of their sympathy into the Boyland kitchen.

Inhaling the last puff, Anne squelched the cigarette's last smolder into the ashtray. Another try at the phone. Another of those darn busy signals. That woman has more to say than a chattering squirrel.

Anne leaned against the wall, thinking of Mary Helene again. She would really miss her. Mary Helene was always there to listen to her problems, or for that matter, to anyone else's problems. So many times, almost as a rehearsed line, Anne heard someone say, "Isn't Mary Helene the most interesting person you've met?" What they meant, thought Anne, was that she was the best listener they had ever met. Almost as a second thought, Anne wondered, had Mary Helene ever confided a problem to anyone...or even had she ever had a problem? I guess it's too late to know now.

Thinking of problems, what will the Springers do with Sammy now? Coping with a retarded child must be the pits. What was it, one or two years that Mary Helene had taught Sammy Springer privately? There had been a noticeable difference. Would he revert now without Mary Helene? That's what the Springers had pleaded when Mary Helene tried to end the arrangement. Too much time, she stated. But the Springers had begged and made concessions. "No one else had really helped Sammy," they appealed. Praise accomplished what money had not. Mary Helene continued her work with Sammy.

Anne refilled the mug, took a few more swallows, and scratched her head. I'll give Fran one more chance.

Walking back to the phone, Anne dialed. No need to look up the number this time. It was imprinted in her mind for infinity. This time persistence defeated the "burr, burrr". Fran's highpitched voice answered the phone. Anne had to restrain the impulse to ask if her ear had grown a receiver.

Anne anxiously said, "Fran, this is Anne Miller. I'm really sorry to bother you, but I just read about Mary Helene in the paper. I couldn't bother the family, but just what happened?"

"Oh, Anne, Mary Helene killed herself. They found her in the Olds, parked in the garage. There was a note. It didn't say much. Just that she loved her family and hoped they'd forgive her. No one understands...why would she do a thing like that?"

—K. K. OKEY
WE THREE

Unknown the chance that brought us together that day,
Each of us coming from our own separate worlds.
Perhaps, our hunger—the bond that linked us together,
All praising God, each in his way.

There we stood, we three.
So very different, or were we?
Eager to eat our fill, then move on,
Enjoying the moment, until it was gone.

We shared each other's company,
So rare the joy,
While the warm summer breeze
Moved through the old tree's leaves.

There we stood, we three,
All eating fruit from off God's tree,
All for the moment so happily free,
A chipmunk, a bird, and me.

—CHRISTINE DICOLA
DESIRE

Day by day
in every way
I want you.

I want to see
your eyes undress me,
to feel your hands caress me,
your naked body under mine, skin on my skin.

I want to touch your hardness,
to smell your softness,
to taste you.

And when at last
it's through,
I'll still
want you—
All anew.

—KAY WILLIAMS

POEM FOUND IN THE DIARY OF A MAD ENGLISH TEACHER

The evidence for the trial was presented:
Mr. Participle was found dangling
From a rope in his basement.
Was it a suicide?
The call for law enforcement officials
Was answered by several auxiliary verbs
Who believed that the victim, suffering
With a splitting infinitive, had taken
An overdose of morpheme.
The possessives refused to believe that
Participle was a morpheme addict
And the demonstratives, trying to find
The real murderer, stood up, pointed,
And shouted, "This! That! These! Those!"
The jury, consisting of common nouns,
Most of whom were singular,
Could not come to an agreement
With the anxious auxiliary verbs
Who stated that it was a suicide.
The judge, whose mind was on another
Matter (he had been prepositioned by a
Copulative verb on the corner in front of
The courthouse), said he would pronounce
The sentence in the future. He told the
Verbs that there was no reason for them
To be tense because the victim was really
Only the village idiom anyway.

—PAT MANDIA
First Prize
MY ROOM WHEN IT'S CLEAN

-A PRAYER

Even those to which I cling
Hold capacity to sting.
Desperately attempt to cleave—
Forces sometimes make me leave.
Grant me, please, the needed grace
To keep my smile while losing face.
If at times I am not strong,
Bring me back before too long.
Let me chase away the night,
Even if by candlelight.
Let me, in my living length,
Share with all your loving strength.

—ROGER C. MAYER

THE HARVEST

The old man nods.
Scrawny branch
Letting leaves fall.
Earth spreads herself.
The cold wind comes.
A death angel
Reaping harvest.
Earth is satisfied.

—VIRGINIA WILHELM
BOHEMIA

You do not see the hidden words
Within the portrait I have drawn
The world that you perceive is blurred
And subtle things
On petal wings
Are lost upon the winds of dawn
There is a light within your eye
But I can see the shades are drawn
And I am left, my pens and I
To streak and stain
Beneath the rain
My eyes yet blinded by the dawn

—CLAY DALE

BRAZILIAN RHAPSODY

—LYNN NAUGLE
DESERT REMAINS

—JULIE FEDEVICH