Our grateful appreciation to artist, Ranan R. Lurie of the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour, for granting his permission to reproduce his original cartoon for our cover design.
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SPRING, 1986

VOLUME XXIV

ICON, the magazine for literature, art, and photography of the Trumbull Campus of Kent State University, is sponsored by the English Department in conjunction with the Art Department and is funded by the Student Affairs Council.

Faculty, students, former students of the Trumbull Campus, all Kent State Campuses, and other universities are invited to submit poetry, essays, fiction, art work, or photography. We welcome submissions from anyone--student or nonstudent--in the Trumbull County area.

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Special thanks to Carol J. Perich for her continued hard work and dedication in typing the ICON.

The staff wishes to thank Rick and Bob Segall for the miscellaneous illustrations which appear in this issue.

Spring 1986, ICON
"They slipped the surly 
bonds of earth . . . to touch 
the face of God."
— John Gillespie Magee

**CHALLENGER: BIRTH of a CONSTELLATION**

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to sounds of Earth
and gentle hands poised
to test its heartbeat,
a new drift of stars
ascends the chill
of morning sky
Joining galaxies and constellations
in a brilliant flash
of courage
to form the brightest
in the universe.

And in that flash which
stems our flood of pain
millions gaze toward the heavens,
nod grimly in salute
to seven brave souls
flying free; grant
silent testimony that
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the cleanest, most
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And only those whose reaches
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— P. B. S.

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THE
HART CRANE MEMORIAL
POETRY AWARD

Each in his own vehicle,
each traces his line through time and space,
a dimension in each speed and direction.
Each in his own mind
falls softly on the stony ground.
How is it we see one another,
as we whirr by
in our capsule of time?
Some dance is performed,
a pas de deux, and allez.
Our Mayflies' lives
glimmer a moment,
in the flip of soft wings.

Under a green panoply
last summer's ghost reclines,
as pale white as life,
as when last she fluttered by.
Pale ghost, robins bob again
about your feet.
But your bubble of time
has missed this rendezvous.
And I can't stand
to have any more buds open
this year.

— Theodore Irvin Silar

The ICON would like to congratulate Theodore Irvin Silar on winning the Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award. Ms. Zell Draz has graciously made this award possible through the Helen Hart Hurlbert Foundation. The contest is coordinated through the efforts of Professor Mary Ann Lowry.

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**HART CRANE HONORABLE MENTION**

Guitars

I heard her last night
for the first time in years,
my old Spanish Kay
with the soft nylon voice.
She was the first.
I had her re-bridged for steel
and my fingers learned to love the sting
of the heavy-gauge, copper-wound
strings pressed to the frets.
When I knew six chords,
I sold her for thirty bucks
and never looked back.
I bought a Harmony Sovereign.
She was Greta,
thick through the waist
like a burgher's wife.
I took her to the river bank,
and her bass rumbled out
like thunder over the light-loving water.
Keiko was next, a Yamaha twelve.
She was tiny in the body,
era action high and hard,
but she could do surprising,
bell-like, things to a man.
In six months, though,
all the bells had been rung.
I sold her
and took up with the Gibson
B-45 twelve with the blonde top
I'd fallen for in Zap's window.
She was Martha,
big-bottomed, handsome, all-American.
She made a C-chord sound like sunshine,
A-minor ring like a church organ.
I took her to family gatherings:
brothers and sisters and brigades of kids.
We sang rousers to potato salad,
fried chicken, and cold cuts.
When the kids drifted down
to the quiet grass like seedlings,
she sang alone, feather-soft,
to the kerosene lamps.
Since then, we have made some music.
But then, last night in bed,
I heard, deep back between my ears,
like sighing, like the rumor of time
high up in the trees,
that soft nylon voice.

— Joseph Meredith

**HART CRANE HONORABLE MENTION**

There are no Poets in the Yellow Pages

Had there been any,
they would have appeared between
Podiatrists and Police.
But what would they offer?
A buffer between bad feet and crime?
Or could they answer frantic calls
from housewives with clogged lines?
Or maybe they could be meter readers
for the East Ohio Poetry Company.
At any rate, I am not sure I can trust
a fat book
that has Abdominal Supports, Canoes, and Chimneys
and even Mechnotherapists and Metaphysicians
but no poets whatsoever.

— P. K. Saha

No Beebop, Baby

Beebop with you, Baby?
Not if you plead or beg!
It grieves me so to say this,
But there are two dogs chewing on my leg.

Why don't I just shake them off
And dance this night with you?
Dog number one is college,
Our dear kids, dog number two.

There is no time this week
To plan on any fun.
In fact, there is no time to breathe,
Until all this work is done.

One child needs a volcano,
Another's lost within a paper.
The girl-child's looking for me.
I wish I could escape her!

Willie Shakespeare’s haunting me,
And Woodrow Wilson’s in my dreams.
I have a giant test next week,
Look out, I'm going to scream!

— Marla Richards
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Look out, I’m going to scream!

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METAMORPHOSIS

The metamorphosis began with Mendelssohn
While I sat unaware.
Everyone noticed the butterfly,
But I saw only my daughter there.

Afterwards, she flitted about
To each guest as lightly drawn
While they, colorful summer flowers,
Mingled on velvet verdant lawn.

She laughed and flirted and danced
On this, her special day;
And when the darkness came
On new wings she slipped away.

Still, she was my fledgling;
I felt no separation --
Was as if she left for summer camp
And not an abdication.

Realization slowly came in telephone calls
As we chatted of wifely things;
How I make my special pot roast
And general housekeeping.

There was no more talk of that cute boy,
My hair's a mess, a neat rock band,
But most conspicuous was the absence of
"Mom, you just don't understand!"

— Gloria Alden

choices

You can feel each day in a different way.
You can see the sun or see the rain.
You can feel the love or the pain.
You can see the good or the evil.

What
Do
You
Want
To
See?

— Rick Slatas

newteen: arrival at disenchantment's door

at thirteen
in eighty-four
life is all
butterflies
and batwings
flyballs and
linedrives
majors and
minors
dodgers and
forty-niners
sportscasts and
newscasts
cheerios and
nachos
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— Pearl B. Segall

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Poetic Justice
October, 1985
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Spring 1986, ICON
Who are they, that they cry?
Who are they, that they cry?
Old people, waiting 'round to die
"Just another burden on society"
Looking for their children, you and me.

Who are they, that they intone?
Street people who call New York their home
Without surname or number or address
For whose ills we always lack redress.

Who are they, that they fear?
Little children without parents near.
Some, having parents, still without
Lost in an endless love-hate bout.

Sometimes we look away, close hearts, deny
Claim we have no part in why they cry
Afraid to look, admit, our love supply
But who are we, if not reflections in their eyes?
— Margaret L. Pinkerton

MEXICO CITY DIARY

Patience.
Patience is so difficult to find.
When a father's daughter is buried beneath the rubble.

Anguish.
Anguish so intense that
He prays and pleads and promises in uncontrollable chatter.

Waiting.
Waiting so long that
Juan Sandoval fears that life is lost to an earthquake's might.

Remembrance.
Remembrance so vivid that
He can see Cristina smiling and skipping toward his outstretched arms.

Helplessness.
Helplessness so profound that
The body is limp and the mind is crazed with agonous despair.

Hope.
Hope, the essence of life reborn
As a child's voice is heard from beneath the twisted mound of steel and concrete.

Thanksgiving.
Thanksgiving for sparing his living joy
As Cristina is carried from a momentary grave to offer a faint smile and say, "I love you Papa."

"Mexico sigue en pie."

The Mexico Earthquake, 1985
— John M. Allensworth

Sombrero
— Wendell M. Panak
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to offer a faint smile and say, "I love you Papa."

"Mexico sigue en pie."

The Mexico Earthquake, 1985
— John M. Allensworth

Sombrero
— Wendell M. Panak
THE OL’ SWIMMING HOLE

We kids would go
in groups of four or six.
Fun it was to walk
through the woods
to the Ol’ Swimming Hole.

We’d talk of things
far in the future,
things we’d be doing
when too old to be
walking to the Ol’ Swimming Hole.

How many other groups
of kids once came
to swim here and
how long ago too
did they dream
of a future?

Pretend, we did.
The banks became
unseen ships and lands
of adventure. The water
our fate if we failed
in our plight.

Grabbed hold of branches
that surely were footholds
of a mighty castle.
We’d scale the banks
and encounter a fight.
A dunking most likely
ended our struggle.

Inner tubes,
the small vessels
of a gallant warrior,
tipped with ease
when struck
by a submerged missile.

As your feet leaped
from the castle wall
to the waiting vessel,
it became apparent
the current
had played a trick
for your vessel
did not wait.

With care we’d swim
to the shallow
still of the creek,
for the leeches
hidden in leaves
would stick
to our feet.
Mom never worried
about the matches
we took.

Upon the shoulders
of larger warriors
we’d sit and
we’d knock the
weakest tower over.
Hope they held
their breath.

A great stallion
friend’s back became,
as we’d get a free swim.
Wonder what
land and time
we thought
we were in?

If this Ol’ Hole
could tell tales,
a book I’m sure
could be told
in splashing delight.

— Rhonda Thomas

Billy’s Coat

Billy’s coat hangs in the closet,
But he won’t be home tonight.
His playpen sits here empty,
And it just does not seem right.

At dinnertime he was not there.
I missed him in the old high chair.
At bathtime there was one child less.
Though he is safe, I feel the stress.

I pray his health comes back again.
I miss his silly little grin.

I miss his warmth, his loving touch,
The way he hugs me tight.
Billy’s coat hangs in the closet,
But he won’t be home tonight.

I breathe a prayer for Willie Dear—
God, let him be all right . . . .

— Peggy Byrnes

Charlie

When I remember you, the eye
Of my mind sees foremost your hands—
Big hands—broad—scarred and worn by life—
Still strong, but gentle when they touch.

Wide shoulders, strong arms match your hands
And steady penetrating eyes . . .
Before, those hands might have gripped gun
Or ax—those eyes sought a new world.

But now, your shoulders hunched forward,
One hand grips a pen firmly as
The other moves slowly, guiding
Your eyes down the latest print-out.

It’s a different “new world” for you
With changing tools and challenges—
Where mind, not strength, rules; but, still I
See first your strong, your gentle hands.

— Lois J. Cline
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Transition

One common fallacy we have is that bad things, such as the death of a loved one, only happen to other people. We often read or hear about shootings, stabbings, and car accidents; we shake our heads sadly and offer our sometimes awkward condolences, yet we fail to fully comprehend the long, agonizing process people go through during the mourning period. Since many of us are destined to become mourners, it is wise to understand this process, to realize that this transitional period is both normal and necessary to effectively recover from the emotional upheaval caused by death. This period is divided into three distinct phases and may be described as the three "R's" of mourning. I found this to be true after my husband Larry drowned.

Larry disappeared into the Mahoning River while canoeing. His body was not to be recovered from the deep, murky river until four days later. My life as I knew it completely changed during those four long, miserable days. I was consumed with the conflicting emotions of hope and despair. I did not eat. I barely slept. When he was found (my hope was shattered), I was faced with the somber task of Larry’s funeral arrangements, which I accomplished in an oddly calm and mechanical manner. I did not cry. This placid response was due to the first phase of mourning, REFUSAL (to believe the truth), which may be compared to the "calm before the storm."

This period of denial is characterized by severe lethargy and appears as a dense fog in the brain. Most of the painful emotional fluctuations are pushed into the dark recesses of the mind. I think this is a defense mechanism of the merciful mind. It knows its own limits. It filters out some of the pain temporarily until it can later be coping with. This numbness and shock serve as a cushion to guard against total emotional collapse. This period generally lasts about two months and explains why some people seem relatively unbothered by ordeals of this magnitude. However, if this pent-up emotion remains repressed, it could fester, causing even more stress. Supportive friends and family members can help to ease the transition to the next phase.

The second phase, RELEASE (of frustration and emotion), is a healthy, yet hysterical time exemplified by crying spells and a variety of jumbled emotions flowing at once. This is the most difficult phase. It is full of self-pity, severe depression, a feeling of isolation, guilt of being permitted to live, and anger. I felt anger in two ways: I was angry at Larry for being so careless and angry at God for taking him, in spite of my fervent faith in his survival. I demanded an explanation.

Fear is another difficult feeling evident every day: fear of being alone, fear of inadequate financial means, fear of raising your children alone, fear of forgetting your special person. . . . Another effect death causes is an increased susceptibility to physical illness due to excess stress. All of these emotions help the mind to consciously accept the situation, leading to the third stage.

The final stage of mourning is RECOVERY, "the light at the end of the tunnel." During this phase, important decisions must be made to help fill the void in your life. It is time to direct your thoughts and actions toward positive goals, to face the future rather than to live in the past. You should seek and/or expand your own individual identity by getting a job, by volunteering your services to others, or by continuing your education. With these activities, you can participate in social functions, and you can become involved with people again without feeling "in the way" or "out of place." After getting back into the mainstream of life, you may be surprised by your new-found ambition. I know I was! This entire period of recovery is full of changes, choices, and challenges which help you to grow into a more complete (and compassionate) person.

All of these changes take time. This entire process of mourning, I have discovered, seems to last about one year (no matter what the individual's circumstances might have been), though it seems like forever at the time. Each of the phases is equally important for acceptance, recovery, and growth.

Perhaps the next time you offer your sympathy to a friend and say, "I know what you’re going through, you actually will know, or if you are faced with this situation personally, I hope I have helped you to develop an understanding into the private hell of this experience. Fortunately, it does not have to remain a hellish nightmare. If you begin to feel the insanity invading your mind, remember how normal this process actually is. Happy are those who learn from experience and can bounce back from the pitfalls of life (and death). After all, death is but an extension of life; a cold, hard blow of nature that can make or break you. Let it 'make' you. Let it make your own life a victory over despair and a celebration of your own individuality.

— Leslie A. Fisher

Evening Twilight  
Robert S. Segall
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— Leslie A. Fisher

Evening Twilight

— Robert S. Segall
DEATH OF AN INTRUDER

An omnivorous guest hid secretly
Safe from winter cold
And late at night feasted from my larder
Until he became so bold
He waited brazenly one night
Without fear or fluster
Watching silently from shadows
As I fed my motley cluster
And moved about conversing
With each hungry fowl and animal
Filling empty pans and pails
In ignorance of marsupial
Whose unblinking black eyes watched me
From some primeval land, this pilgrim,
Until I reached for empty dish
In deep shadows and noticed him.
The cats by their indifference showed
He was no stranger here.
They shared their food and he in turn
Showed not a bit of fear.
I grabbed a broom, poked at him
Ready to give chase.
He gave one low and warning hiss
And refused to leave his place.
Perplexed, I stood and stared at him
Not knowing what to do,
Considering his right to life
And that of my chickens, too.
In craven retreat I left my kingdom
To this temporary victor
To fetch my son, a braver warrior,
To battle this usurper,
Because tender-hearted I have never killed
More than fly or gnat --
Or have I?
Is my guilt the same as Pilate?
By washing my hands
Of this creature’s blood and life
Did I not in fact wield in my heart
The bullet or the knife?
Or maybe worse
Because to fight my just and holy war
I joined the march of elders
Sending youth to fight what we abhor.
It was only a possum, unimportant,
And now like Yorick some putrescent thing.
No one grieves; my chickens safely sleep;
Yet somehow I cannot sing at grave-making.*

— Gloria Alden

*Shakespeare’s Hamlet

In Search of the Storm

Waiting for the thunder
So anxiously,
Trying so hard to be patient

Bolts of lightning
Across the sky
Chasing each other like children

Darkened clouds
So many
Different illusions appear

Wind blows
Through tangled trees, darting
In and out of ancient cracks and crevices

Finally rain
Falling
With its own indifferent emptiness

Sunshine
How unexpected, so bright
Through the clouds

Rainbow
So diverse and enchanting
With its very own
Pot of gold

— Tina M. Rose

Depth of Uncertainty

Wild wind,
Tormented mind.
Twisted thoughts
Like the wicked dancing branches
Outside my window.
I’m a scattered leaf
With no direction
And no connections.
A frightened child born
Into a storm.

— Jennifer Ann Saks
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A LOVE STORY FOR JULY

Jim Hauser passes in the town square
To chat with his pals of old.
"'Nice day, eh, Jim?'
"'Yes, fine day indeed.'"
Smiling gently to all of those near.

Indiana’s midsummer is green and muggy.
The warmth of the sun comforts all.
The corn thrives in the day and
Stretches toward heaven at night.
"Yep, it sure is a fine day.'"

Farm market town,
Heart of America;
Its pace is so slow it
Belies the fact that it’s busy.
But intense passion runs deep
Beneath the stoke calm of the Midwest’s townsfolk.

For Jim Hauser, the recurring heartache of three decades
still touches his soul
As he stroll the sidewalks of town.

Was it back in ’53 when Donna Jean Johnson
left his life
In the back seat of her husband’s ’51 Buick
Calming her two boys as they struggled
to get a last glimpse
Of the town they had called home?
California was at the end of their rainbow.
Distant.
In the sunset.
In an instant she was gone.

Jim Hauser and Donna Jean Johnson,
Who would have thought them to be lovers?
A young farmer
Proud of his new acres and
Widowed so soon by the demon of polio.
And Donna Jean,
The city-born wife of Bill Johnson the clothier,
Her soft brown hair and quick laugh
Brought radiance to the clouds of March.

A stroll around the town square
On a summer’s night.
Jim, with his pals of old.
"'Nice evenin’, eh Jim?'
"'Yes, a fine evenin’, indeed.'"

Johnson’s Clothing Store is empty now;
A shell of a building in the town square.
Bill Johnson moved to Visalia,
His fortune to be made selling suits
to Central Valley farmers.
Has it really been three decades now?

Donna Jean’s teasing laugh
Floating across the summer breeze
Was a concerto of love and passion.
The fragrance of her soft brown hair
Was as rich as the smell
of a July evening.
Jim had loved her so.
Life anew she had brought to him
after Carol’s passing.
Now, thirty years later.
A westerly breeze still caresses his face
with a reminder of her warmth.

Bill Johnson was a fine man,
A pillar of the community.
Donna Jean, his life’s companion,
Mother of his children.
Was always at his side.
But it was in the early spring of 1952,
When Carol Hauser died that Jim,
Saddened and alone,
found comfort in Donna Jean’s smile.

So confident she was,
Understanding and tender.
They would talk for hours while doing volunteer work
at the Methodist Church.
She felt alone in Indiana.
No one really understood that.
Bill Johnson didn’t,
the good man that he was.
Jim Hauser did.
And one evening they touched --
Their souls and bodies embracing
in a moment of joy.

The encounters were brief.
The encounters were sweet.
But the bonds of family and
the responsibilities of life are strong.
And one day, with a smile and a tear;
she touched his face for the last time.
"'I love you so,'” she whispered,
And turned away.

He last saw her in July of ’53
In the back seat of her husband’s ’51 Buick
Calming her two boys as they struggled
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Of the town they had called home.

Farm market town,
Heart of America;
Its pace is so slow it
Belies the fact that it’s busy.
A middle-aged farmer strolls
Along the town square on a summer’s evening.
He catches a glimpse of the empty old
Johnson Clothing Store;
A westerly breeze bathes his face while a tear
flows gently down his cheek.
He smiles and
Whispers.
"'I love you so.'”
"'Nice evenin’, eh Jim,’
remarks a passing pal of old.
"'Nice evenin’ indeed,’” he replies,
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— John M. Allensworth
EVEN IN DREAMS

One winter day it seemed too hard to teach. The poems, crystal carved, crumbled to chalk; And dreams of valor, seized for student reach, Were lost between the blackboard and the chalk. That day I could not listen to the pain-- Our mills ground slow, our valley rusted red; The shabby father out of work again, The child unborn, and now the lover fled. That night in dreams my students came to me. Their sorrows--wrapped in paper, tied with twine-- They thrust into my hands. I struggled free And ran--into a wall of rock and vine. I turned, arms back, heart bare to them, and wept. And lo! The rocks bloomed primrose as I slept. — Elizabeth Hoobler

— Wendell M. Panak

Primroses

— Wendell M. Panak
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— Elizabeth Hoobler
STILLBORN

Anticipation has run its course.
I cry out in pain
As the world prepares to welcome you.
But I awaken and behold
Not the lusty cry of Life,
But the cold silence of Death.
It fills the room with its despair
As hope flees.
But a mother's love does not know Death,
And I wonder if the earth that is your blanket
Keeps you warm and dry.
And with angels as your playmates,
If you laugh, and smile, and run.
You once had a resting place under my heart
And now I ask of you
To save a resting place in heaven—for me.

— Barbara A. Banish

Life Support

A steady silver beep
orchestrates your death,
leads it step by step
as a conductor leads
his musicians through
the intricacies, the
darkness of each piece.

That beep connects you
to life, offering soft
assurance as each note
 progresses, playing its
duo lullabye with the hiss
of mechanical breath.

We shiver in anticipation
of a sudden crescendo, fear
its final plummety
to the depths
of a whole note
released too soon...

— Pearl B. Segall

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ORPHIC LUTE
Winter, 1985

One Flickering Candle

The sun glistened through the stained glass window as the white tapered candles were lit in preparation. Black lace covered the beautiful woman’s eyes, and her fingers nervously caressed the tiny white beads that lay upon her lap. Her form took on the appearance of a granite statue as the procession of small children passed by her, wearing miniature wedding gowns. She watched with great pain, and her heart yearned for a glimpse of her precious little one from another time. She was tiny, with twinkling green eyes and blonde hair that glistened in the sun. Her eyes were dancing waters on a deep summer day, and her laughter was from the spirit. Rainy days were filled with coloring books and cutout dolls. The mother’s and child’s lives were entwined in life’s joys, and the loss of this precious one suspended her in an endless limbo. The wailing of an infant nearby somehow comforted her. As she lifted her stony gaze to the altar, one of the small candles that had burned so brightly flickered and died.

— Jill M. Nethers
STILLBORN

Anticipation has run its course.
I cry out in pain
As the world prepares to welcome you.
But I awaken and behold
Not the lusty cry of Life,
But the cold silence of Death.
It fills the room with its despair
As hope flees.
But a mother’s love does not know Death,
And I wonder if the earth that is your blanket
Keeps you warm and dry.
And with angels as your playmates,
If you laugh, and smile, and run.
You once had a resting place under my heart
And now I ask of you
To save a resting place in heaven—for me.

— Barbara A. Banish

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Life Support

A steady silver beep orchestrates your death,
leads it step by step
as a conductor leads
his musicians through
the intricacies, the
darkness of each piece.

That beep connects you
to life, offering soft
assurance as each note
progresses, playing its
duo lullabye with the hiss
of mechanical breath.

We shiver in anticipation
of a sudden crescendo, fear
its final plummert
to the depths
of a whole note
released too soon…

— Pearl B. Segall
For Baggypants

I went into my room the other day, and on the dresser by the lamp was that old metal globe-of-the-world change bank, the one that my grandfather gave me when he came home from vacation in Florida. The coin slot is in the Arctic Ocean. You can’t miss it. I remember when he would bring over ice cream in the summer (usually on a real scorcher). Whenever I spotted his car in the drive, I stopped playing baseball and ran home. Boy, would his face light up when I dashed into the kitchen. He usually said, “Welllll hello there!” as my mother silently dished out the ice cream. It was small talk back then—mostly adult stuff that I couldn’t and didn’t want to understand. But sometime during their conversation, my grandfather would look at me. He would wait until our eyes met, and then he would smile the warmest smile that I have ever known in my life, even to this day. Then he would look away and go back to Mother and their dialogue, where the adults lived. Back then, I liked his smile second and the ice cream first.

A few years later my parents got divorced and I was responsible for cutting the lawn. I wasn’t doing very well, and so one summer’s day my grandfather came over to the house and asked if I would like to go for a ride. At first I refused. I was embarrassed and ashamed of myself. But he said that we could stop for an ice-cream cone, and he knew that he had me. He never said much as we were eating our cones, but when he looked at me, he waited until our eyes met, and then he smiled. He seemed to know when I felt good inside, and then he simply looked away. Back then, I liked his smile just as much as I liked the ice cream.

Some years later, I went off to war. I thank God that I made it back home, alive and in one piece. I went over to see my grandparents, and when I walked into the house, my grandmother made a big fuss and started to cry—tears of relief, I’m sure. When my grandfather entered the room, he hesitated a moment. And then that old light went on again, all over his face. I was so happy to see that beautiful expression that I didn’t know how much I had missed it. His first words, of course, were, “Welllll, hello there!” In the living room he went directly to his chair and motioned me to the side of the couch that was close to him. He began to talk almost immediately, not letting me have the first say. He spoke of his youth, how a small-town farm boy from western Ohio had gone off to France in World War I. He spoke of things he had seen and how his life had changed from them. He did this as we held each other’s gaze, expressionless, just understanding each other. After some time, he stopped talking, and he smiled that smile, the one that had touched my heart so many times before. But this time was different. This time I understood something that I had never known before. I had come to realize that he was saying, “I love you” with that smile. That he wanted to be my friend and my grandfather. I was overwhelmed. Everything went blank, and then I smiled the biggest smile I had ever smiled in my entire life. I had just met the man, my grandfather. Back then, I didn’t need the ice cream anymore.

— John Chegar

B Flats

Just beyond the oaks
fringing a line
to the East

Someone has tackled
for the third time tonight
the bagpipes

And they moan
a discordant agony
in the thin

Night air
perpetrating lies
in their intended ecstasy

While eager young lips
search to hoard answers
they’ll not likely find

in a wood

— Pearl B. Segall

Reprinted with permission:
Midwest Poetry Review
October, 1985

Trees

— Andrew R. Segall
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Trees

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Spring 1986, ICON
How Cruel

How cruel of you to bury your troubles in alcohol.
The heavy hearts we feel from the death you caused.
All this emotion, all this pain,
because you could not cope with the life you created.
Your life has now spilled over into our lives,
as the open liquor spilled out of your car onto the road.
You are unharmed for killing one of the beautiful
parts of our lives.
How cruel...

— Nancy H. Packard

GHETTO SCENE

Dilapidated townhouses,
Life of dismay.
Smashed windows like shattered dreams.
The graffiti tells the story.
Written on muddied, mottled walls,
It depicts forgotten lovers
And scrawls from opium minds.
Pleas for help here
Are heard by deaf ears.
A dog cringes underneath a porch;
Its ribs point despairingly at a
Dirty newspaper that says, "Have a nice day!"
Does life exist here?
Yes. A pregnant woman
Sits in the sweltering heat,
Awaiting the birth of a "healthy" child.

— Jennifer Ann Saksa

— Andrew R. Segall
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Awaiting the birth of a ‘‘healthy’’ child.

— Jennifer Ann Saksa
SAFON-ESF
Someone should teach a class for us
Uneducated fools
Who never learned the language
That is taught in beauty schools.

All I need to know's the lingo
Not the derivation meant.--
To communicate my wishes
Would be worth the time there spent.

Though I speak in simple language
And not in tongue unknown,
My words must alter meaning
When I enter a salon.

And I never would have ventured
Had I known what was in store--
When I said, "Just trim it this time."
She said, "What was it before?"

Well, I thought I could explain myself
By saying, "Gypsy shag."
She said she never heard of it--
Now, would I pass that bag
Of curlers she left there on the shelf?
She would execute a cut and perm
True to my inner self.

"Okay," I said, and passed the bag.
"I'll be a little trooper
If you'll promise, when you're finished,
I won't look like Alice Cooper."

"Well then," she said, "just tell me
Exactly what you want."
"No miracle," I told her,
"Just a simple, layered cut--
One that will perm into a set
Of loose and sexy curls.
One like Farrah Fawcett's
That naturally unfurls."

"Okay," she said with confidence,
"I know just what to do."
A half an hour later
I was permed, a poodle-do.

Now I'm afraid to let my sweetheart
Run his fingers through my hair;
We might have to call a surgeon
To untangle him from there.

Yes, someday I'll hold my Master's,
But my pride is not appeased
For my lack of understanding
Of (what I call) Salon-ese.

—Wendell M. Panak

Margaret L. Pinkerton
SALON-ES

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— Margaret L. Pinkerton
The Ballet of a Graduate Assistant

or

How I Learned

to Stop Worrying

and Find

My Level of Incompetence

I am an "advised traveler."

Commute, commute, commute . . .

ice, snow, sleet . . .

dark, dark, dark . . .

six semis doing seventy-five . . .

Windshield?

What windshield?

(This is the worst part.)

You will be a teacher.

impose your literary opinions

on their little minds

after you teach them to spell

D-I-C-T-I-O-N-A-R-Y.

(This is the fun part.)

She will have been a student.

Read, read, read

Arnold, Blake, Carlyle, Derrida (huh?)

Empson, Frye, Graff, Hopkins,

ipe! !!

Jackson, Kreiger, Levi-Strauss, Muir

N

O

Pater.

(This is the best part.)

We were bureaucrats.

Sign, sign, sign:

paper, paper, paper;

black marks, black marks, black marks . . .

government employee . . .

paycheck.

(This is the serious part.)

You had been a mother.

Fit it in:

contacts, orthodontist,

football games, softball games, soft football games . . .

Puberty is Hell.

(This is the scary part.)

I was.

once upon a time,

someone who just did housework.

Who, me?

I remember.

I think it was easy.

(This is the funny part.)

— Michelle Griffiths

I have had enough

of poetry,

mimicry

of solemnity,

reductive

and imploded

ehos.

Take from my shelf

the tomes

of catachresis

embowered

in cloying hyperbole.

Titivate me not

nor cultivate

with logos, cosmos, or,

invariably,

synechdochal vision--

tropes

of integration or alienation

of ironies, evasions,

ennui--

cyclic, organic,

banal.

Spare the exquisite anecdote,

fabilau,

discursive mode,

variation and emanation

of metaphors aesthetic,

of heightened rhetoric

replete with intertextual oracular

fictions,

vehement or lethargic

(and always,

ALWAYS

demanding

to be taken

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— Michelle Griffiths
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or
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I have had enough
of poetry,
mimicry
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— Michelle Griffiths
MUCH ADO, PART II

Good Lord, Help Me!
I looked in the mirror this morning
And saw Aunt Virginia’s cheeks
And Mother’s legs!

(Not that there is anything wrong
With those cheeks or legs--
Provided that they are not
In my mirror!)

How could my mind
Lie to me like this???
It’s been whispering,
"Youth, youth, youth..."
In my ear
When it should have been
Giving off an air-raid siren:
"Age! Age! Age!"

(Is this the phantom
Mid-life crisis
That I used to laugh at?)

Really, it’s just another fine example
Of how I fuss over
Stupid, insignificant things
That don’t matter!

Take my Valentine’s Day...
As I lamented over a sink of dishes
And a stack of books
About the lack of sizzling romance
In my ordinary life,
I turned on the radio
And heard about Afghanistan.
Atrocities. Horrors beyond words.
Thank you, Lord,
For ordinary living.

I’ve aimed my dissatisfaction
At my son, too, and raved
About living in a rat’s nest, a fire-hazard.
(I was the rat.)
I looked again and saw
A sweet, loving boy
Who cried over a friend’s illness.
Lord, help me to see
The important thing in that room.

Help me realize
That there are all kinds of truths
Standing side by side.
Help me to choose the truths
That matter.
When I look in the mirror
Let me see a woman
Who is older, yet learning.

— Marla Richards
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— Marla Richards
Theresa, My Child

Theresa, my child, are you crying
As you fall asleep tonight?
Why did I speak so harshly
And make you turn out the light?

It wasn't you, sweetheart, who hurt me,
But the truth and the pain that truth brought.
And sometimes I can't see the victory,
Though I know I won when I fought.

And all of the unbaked cookies,
The baby-doll clothes we won't make,
Have been traded for stacks of print-outs
And this "living" I have to make.

And I wonder, sometimes, if it's worth it--
To have won, if it makes you so sad.
Would I be a better mother, somehow,
If I'd give you back to your dad?

— Margaret L. Pinkerton

Nana — Douglas Mann

— Wendell M. Panak
Theresa, My Child

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THE NEEDS OF THE MANY...

I watched with anticipation and a great sense of pride
I had never felt anything like it.
I had no reservations that everything would be okay
I never realized how wrong I was

For the rest of my life I'll remember
Exactly where I was, who I was with, and the way I
felt when it happened.
I had never felt anything like that either.

During that afternoon, as I watched the faces of those
I came in contact with,
I realized the state of shock and disbelief was a
human tragedy in itself.
For in our own way, we each felt a loss on that day.

It has been said in many ways that
"The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the
few or the one." I
If sacrifice must be made to advance in a new frontier
Who is to say if the price to pay is too high?

We can only hope that as our nation continues
To "reach for the stars"
We don't take for granted a windy day, a faulty mechanism,
a hastily repaired puncture, or a technical difficulty.
No life lost because of human error can be justified.

Every dream that turns out to be a nightmare
Deserves the opportunity to be resurrected.
So that this dream, in time, may in fact
Become a reality.

The dream of the Challenger Crew has not been lost
And when a new launch is attempted
it will be a continuation of their dream.
The only consolation being that every member of the crew
and their families
Would have wanted it that way—

To the families and in remembrance of the Challenger crew—
Christa McAuliffe, Francis Scobee, Michael Smith,
Judy Resnik, Ronald McNair, Ellison Onizuka, and
Greg Jarvis
My greatest admiration
Their encouragement to do the best you can do and be the
best you can be
Has touched the lives of so many
A part of each crew member will live on
As inspiration for all of those who do
Reach for the stars

— Tina M. Rose

1 Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy) Star Trek II and III

— Monica Wooster
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Contributors' Notes . . .

GLORIA ALDEN has a degree in Elementary Education and plans to continue towards her Master’s degree. Her interests are varied and include folklore, collecting epitaphs, and gardening. She loves the outdoors. Her work has appeared in numerous ICONs . . . JOHN M. ALLENSWORTH teaches Geography at KSUTC. His sensitive works have appeared in previous ICONs. As a geographer, he illustrates in his writing “a sense of place and landscape.” In addition, he strives to project “the universality of human emotions regardless of ethnic or national background.” . . . BARBARA A. BANISH is an English Major who has had material published in past ICONs, Liguorian Magazine, and The Harmonizer. When she transfers to Main Campus, she says she “will miss the closeness and camaraderie” here at KSUTC . . . PEGGY BYRNEs has contributed to several past ICONs. She loves children, music, and poetry.

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Swimming in Plastic

— Leslie A. Fisher

Spring 1986, ICON
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Remembrance

Save me a tear, Jenny.
Surround it in gold.
Hang it from a delicate chain.
Write my name upon it.
Seal the latch with a kiss.
Then tuck it away safely.
This to you will be me.
Never open me again, for fear I will mist away.
Put me protected from the light.
Guard me with your memory.
I cannot now be lost to you.
And the day when your life is ready,
Take me out, place me around your neck,
Hang me close to your heart.
I offer to protect your dreams,
For you will have one, in me,
That will never end.

— Walter T. Lamson