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VOLUME XXII

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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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Our grateful appreciation is extended to Mrs. Carol J. Perich for her excellence in typing the ICON.

Our heartfelt thanks is given to Patty Jo Wilson for engineering a computer program to expedite our rating procedures.

https://digitalcommons.kent.edu/icon/vol19/iss2/1
The ICON's an image, a crystal.
Tuned to heaven, it holds heaven's gleams.
So an editor's more than a dreamer--
She is a shaper of dreams.

E. U. H.

Although this verse is principally for our dear Michelle,
It could fit other excellent women editors as well.
For lady editors who are also students and wives and mothers and cooks
Have to rely on a whole lot more than their dark and sultry good looks
To spin out an issue. They are soothers of printers and bookbinders
and advisors and clerks
And inspirers of writers and poets and artists and all kinds of people
who produce printable works.
They must be hostesses and bring cake and cheese and crackers for meetings
where final selections are tossed,
And they must manage the credit and keep track of the bills their
advisor has probably lost.
An editor is someone who slaves late into the night accurately adding
up rating sheets
Who must smile soft and sadly and not kick the shins of the wise guy
who sniffsles "She cheats
And only puts in the poem dashed off by her best friend Bess."
(He never understands that the staff rates all entries and his were--
all zeros--a mess!)
An editor is a sensitive English major whose taste runs to Roethke
and Yeats
But who reads endless verses of H. S. Rice tone or of gray lovelessloneliest
fates.
An editor nurses and powders and proofreads and pampers her dummy with
maternal affection
And upon publication finds that her baby ICON has arrived with three
typos and a misspelled name to ruin its newborn perfection.
And she must deal with the angry poet who is positively sure
That the error in her poem was intentionally typed by one who has it in
for her
And who cannot be convinced that any misspelling of her Beloved Words
was not premeditated.
So for all the hard work and patience and sensitivity upon which excellence
is predicated
We love Michelle, and with our thanks this work to her is dedicated.

— Elizabeth Hoobler
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To the Future

The house is empty now... children's voices echo, filling my mind.
Hushed whispers:
an outright giggle
peals of innocent laughter
as two young bodies leap from their
hiding places to dance in abandon.
The voices fade...

In the hall, I hear the chiming of
the stately old grandfather clock...
Poignant memories:
a warm summer's day
a swim in the pond
the sound of splashing as we make
cannon balls--arms folded around our knees.
The memory dims...

Following the hall to its end,
I look out the dormer window.
The distant sea:
crashing waves
her vitreous majesty--
now ruffled by the incoming tide.
Strong arms pull me back
to the present.

The realtor's voice carries to
where we now stand.
A subtle reminder:
children's laughter
precious memories
My husband's arms holding me in the present;
my tears, a legacy: of the past--
to the future...

— Kelly A. Gee

on the first shirt-sleeve day,
when the grass has turned grass-colored again,
the world looks cautiously over its shoulder
and asks
"is spring finally, really here?"

— Michelle Griffiths

RAT RACE

The world is too much with us*
We need time away
Together
 Alone.
We need to escape
from meetings
Classes
Appointments
and Schedules
We need to close our eyes
And open them to see
Just you and me.

— Barbara L. Schmidt

*Wordsworth · 1806

To my mom: though we move on, our memories will travel with us.
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SUMMER CLASSES

Lord, I'm feeling empty!
Deflated
defeated
depleted.
Someone always
pushing
shoving
squeezing.
Take a deep breath
expand
demand.
Survive!
Meeting legitimate needs.
Taking from my senses
Sense of timing
sense of humor
sense of wonder
sense of me.
Wasting
killing
spilling my senses
Lord, I need refilling.
Survive!
children
Spouse
professors
friends
All reaching toward me for a different soul
My ego
gutted
dismembered
Tests painfully consume my best.
Nearly
buried
within my roles
Does anyone know I'm alive?
Inadequate—yet stubborn
I
Survive!

BRONZE BABY SHOE AT A FLEA MARKET

I wandered through a treasure chest
Of other people's lives
Bits and pieces from the past
Like honey from beehives.

When there on table, to be sold
I spied a mother's love once new
Mixed in with vases cracked and old
An infant's small bronze baby shoe.

Tobacco-stained and wrinkled man
Said he knew not where or who
Or if it'd been a James or Anne
Who once wore this baby shoe.

Glad to be rid of it, I confess
I've had it quite a while
I'll give it to you a dollar less
He coaxed with his toothless smile.

Like with old photos, interest grew
I touched, wondered, wished to know
Of she who had preserved this shoe
Next cast iron pots, a small bronze glow.

Just four dollars, make it three
The old man wheeled low
The shoe's now mine, transferred memory
Of someone's love from long ago.

—Gloria Alden

—Karen Derico
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SPRING RIDE

Whispering breezes tease
her mane and my hair
as with lightly dancing steps
she pricks her ears in anticipation
of what lies down violet paths.
Creaking saddle, background melody
for partners moving in harmony.
She nods her head in acknowledgement
as I lean forward to pat her warm neck
and sniff the pungent pleasant smell
of horse and leather
mingling with apple blossoms.

— Gloria Alden

January Dream

I dream of
sun upon my face,
wind through my hair.

I dream of
sandy beaches,
seashells resting there.

I dream of
water rising,
circling round my feet.

I dream of
palm trees swaying,
and oh, that luscious heat.

— Grace Owen

A Word or Two on
April Flowers, Autumn Winds. . .
(for Marianne)

On fragile ivoried pages
of this lovepoem
disguised so well as
merely a calendar of days, this
statement of ancient beauty, of
Oriental arts treasured so
these many centuries, I look upon
simplicity clear in indigo
hues, transparencies of
narcissus, the hermit known
in China as
Sage of the Waters.
Enchanted by the grace
of flowering plums in
fullest bloom, I learn
the ancients’ regard for it
as a metaphor
for endurance.
And now I fear for life
of any metaphor trapped
alive three hundred
sixty-five days, its
hope for freedom dependent
upon indifferent hands leafing
to discover next
Monday’s date.

— Pearl B. Segall
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Warm breezes blowing
swirls of brown earth.
Foliage—golden hues
against the red-streaked sky.
Hazy mists of smoke
shroud the countryside.
A subtle smell of
campfires’ dying embers.
Tom-toms faintly beating
a gentle rhythm, low.
Distant voices chanting prayers
in ritual, praising God.
A spirit stirs within my breast
memories from ages past.
Another time and place
of something long ago.
Be still my soul—
You cannot
return.

— Betty Hall
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KATHLEEN

— William Byland
He looked contemptuously upon the elderly person. Hadn’t he been taught that cleanliness was next to Godliness? Godliness? Yes, Godliness and God. His Christian upbringing well up in him. Yes, he thought, this poor, decrepit old man needed his sympathy. What he needed was a good cleaning with God’s all encompassing love. He saw himself as a sort of gleaming white angel descending upon this poor soul with a sword in one hand and a scrub brush in the other. “The sparks of light from his polished teeth would make the old man squint. ‘Come,’ he would say, ‘and be clean.’ The man would approach him on trembling knees and touch his angelic robe. Immediately he would be transformed to the freshly scrubbed, wizened and white-haired old man that must be beneath that grubby exterior. He would impart to him his knowledge of God, of cleanliness, of salvation.

Preoccupied with this heavenly vision he turned and saw the faces of the couple in line behind him, faces scrunched in disgust. They smelt it too, he thought. As he stood there facing them he realized all their disgust was aimed at him. My God, he thought, they think that smell is coming from me. He snapped around and felt his blood rising, turning his face a violent red. The old man was receiving his change from the check-out girl. He put down his few purchases and the girl rang them up. The thought crossed his mind to turn to the couple behind him and make some off-hand remark about the old man and the odor, thus clearing himself, but the offender was still standing in front of him, looking over his bill and recounting his change. Just as the girl was returning him his change the old man must have felt he wasn’t shortchanged, for he began to put the money in his pocket. On the way to his pocket a palsied quake overtook him and he spilt his change. As he stooped to pick up his money a fresh wave of the urine odor shot up and out.

This was more than he could take. He hurriedly squeezed past the crouching old man, nearly knocking him on his face. He rushed out to his car and got in and just sat there trying to regain his composure. Under his breath he thanked God for being so lucky, for being so clean. He also thanked God that he hadn’t run into anyone he knew that would have recognized him. He vowed to make a donation to some worthy Christian organization that went around cleaning poor sinners like that old man. Some organization that kept that type occupied and off the streets, so respectable people, like himself, wouldn’t be forced into confrontations of just this sort.

As he sat there the old man came from behind his car and was approaching the old rusted-out car parked beside his. Seeing the man in his side mirror made something well up inside him; he felt that he had to get as much distance between himself and that old man. He started his motor as the old man was opening his car door. As he pulled forward he glanced in his rear-view mirror just in time to see the old man fall in between the open door and the car. He hit his brakes and turned around to see the old man sprawled beside his car under the open door. Blood welled up from a good-sized gash on his forehead and was beginning to freeze on the ice beneath him. He looked around to see if anyone was coming to help. No one had seen the bent old man fall between the rows of cars. After glancing both ways and seeing no one, he looked in his rear-view mirror and moved the mirror up so that the bleeding old man was no longer reflected in it. He automatically checked his hair...perfect...and drove off.

— Russell Zampino
The Least of These

"And the King shall answer and say unto them: 'Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brothers, ye have done it unto Me.'" Matt. 25:40

He stepped out of his car and closed the door behind him. His footsteps crunched on the snow beneath him and his breath came out in billowing white clouds. The cold sent an involuntary shiver up his back and he quickened his pace toward the department store. Approaching the double glass doors he automatically checked out his reflection: shoes polished, pants well creased, body slim, teeth white and hair . . . perfect. He liked what he saw.

Once inside the store he felt completely out of place. The tacky displays, grimy counters and gaudy over-dressed employees seemed to be the complete opposite of himself. He hated these kinds of stores and would rather be at one of the clean and pristine stores on the "better side of town," where he would gladly have paid twice as much just to be able to honor a more decent establishment. Why did he stop here then? He was running late and this store was on the way. In his rushed self-importance he stopped in to pick up a few meager necessities.

He stood in the lobby facing an overweight woman working at the hotdog counter. The smell of the hotdogs warmed by a heat lamp assaulted his nostrils. Taking a deep breath, he decided to pick up the few things he needed and get out as quickly as possible.

He went directly to the departments he needed and grabbed the items he required with no time for browsing or leisurely looking. As he approached the check-out counters he assessed the situation. It was relatively slow and only two lines were open. One line had a large woman with four children. The children were grimy and pudgy, with the youngest sitting in one of the woman's two carts. The carts were both piled high with the assorted bags that one of her station was forced to search out in departments such as "House Wares" and "Children's Clothing." In one hand she held a wallet open to her driver's license and in the other a checkbook. No good, he thought, two carts and the hassle of check clearance. In the other line were two elderly people—a woman who was being checked out and a man holding a few things. As he stood there he saw another couple approach the check-out counters with their purchases. He scuttled across and got in line just before they did behind the elderly man.

As he got in place, a strong, over-powering smell of urine reached him. He had to stifle a gag. The odor came from the small bent man in line ahead of him. The man wore an old torn pea coat and a filthy pair of blue work pants. The people behind him pushed him forward and closer to the old man.

Total revulsion registered in his face. He breathed through his mouth to try and avoid the smell, but he could almost taste it. Christ, this made him angry; some decrepit old fool who didn't have enough self-respect to keep himself clean. People like this were an offense to the better people like himself, people from the "better side of town." As he stood there he could envision this old man's whole life. Living in a rundown, ragtag apartment reeking of the same smell that he carried with him. Too lazy to clean his home, too lazy to clean himself, he shuffled across worn, torn carpets and walls of cracked plaster. He ate off dirty plates and out of cans, cold and hard from sitting open and half filled.

He looked contemptuously upon the elderly person. Hadn't he been taught that cleanliness was next to Godliness? Godliness? Yes, Godliness and God. His Christian upbringing welled up in him. Yes, he thought, this poor, decrepit old man needed his sympathy. What he needed was a good cleaning with God's all encompassing love. He saw himself as a sort of gleaming white angel descending upon this poor soul with a sword in one hand and a scrub brush in the other. "The sparks of light from his polished teeth would make the old man squint. "Come," he would say, "and be clean." The man would approach him on trembling knees and touch his angelic robe. Immediately he would be transformed to the freshly scrubbed, wizened and white-haired old man that must be beneath that grubby exterior. He would impart to him his knowledge of God, of cleanliness, of salvation.

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TWELVE TWENTY-FIVE OLD OAK DRIVE

Oh, I slept so well and deep
like a babe, the old man said.
She replied, But you kept me from sleep
as you sawed off your head.

For breakfast, I think I've a taste
for some eggs, ham and toast, that's all.
Humph! Remember your waist
and all that cholesterol!

I think I'll go out to weed
and dig in the garden, said he.
You know there's really no need.
You'll sprain your back, be a burden to me.

Then instead I'll take my pipe,
a book and sit in my easy chair.
Scatter your ashes, she did gripe
and be in my way, I swear!

I'll stroll down to the park then
to visit with Pete and old Lee.
What a waste of time to gab with old men
when you could sit home in comfort with me.

— Gloria Alden

who are you?
our lives have crossed
our souls entwine
now we walk together
along the same path
we laugh together
and at each other
we cry together
sometimes cry alone
the other wipes the tears
we talk—sometimes
not with words
we listen—sometimes
hearing through silence
we see each other
accept each other
just as we are
we make mistakes
we are fools together
and happy for our
successes and glory
here we will remain together
who are you
who am I
we are

FRIENDS! ! ! !

— Betty Hall
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FRIENDS!!

— Betty Hall
LOVE IS LIKE ROSES (beautiful)

— Shirley Sterling

ANNIVERSARY

I do not mind that I am growing old.
The dust of gray that dims my own black hair,
The lines that star my skin—all unaware
They came. And I accept. But no one told
How you would change, or how my heart grows cold
To hear your footstep slow upon the stair
Or see your shoulders stooped. I cannot bear
That time should tame you—you, my green, my gold,
My husband.

Be for me the slender boy
Dressed for a war, splendid in Navy white,
Who waltzed me where the stars came down to mesh
With lights of Central Park and summer. Joy
Forked through the darkness on that long-gone night,
Brass buttons sharp against my virgin flesh.

— Elizabeth Hoobler

CAMELOT

Some evening as you lie awake in bed
Think back to all the stories that you've read;
Recall a rather legendary spot—
Known to us as Camelot.

Though history would reveal it isn't true
I'll leave the pondering to you;
However, please to keep in mind,
The truth is in one's heart to find.

Some like the dragon-slaying best; King Arthur's
Knights; court balls; the rest . . .
Tradition, though limelight picks a few,
Begins with his and hers—just two.

And sometimes, when one least expects it so,
One finds a final party—trouble, no?
A Frenchman, young and strong and bold—
They fell in love, both heart and soul.

Guinevere and Lancelot; King Arthur's wife;
His friend—his foe? It would cause such strife;
But Lancelot, a noble man, took his leave
The lovers parted, though all would grieve.

King Arthur, wise and kind and very sad,
Who loved his wife, his friend—and felt a cad . . .
The lovers, innocent of grievous intent,
Must suffer; by law—repent!

Lancelot had gone, quite true; Guinevere,
Alone, was left to take the final cue.
The burning stake her fate was to be—
Yes, now it's all coming back to me.

The hour was five a.m. the next morn;
The burning of Queen Guinevere at dawn.
Would Lancelot return to save his love?
(A message had been sent to him by dove.)

Alas, this story can't be true, it seems . . .
A lover's love? A dreamer's dream?
But Merlin cast his legendary spell—
Do you believe? Then it's just as well.

Camelot, my friends, is surely real;
A legendary place with great appeal.
Where there's a legal limit to the snow—
Where every one of us doth long to go.

The rain would never fall 'til after sundown
According to the order of the crown;
There, summer lingered until September,
But only this must we remember;

Once there was a briefly shining moment . . .
Say it proudly; as if it's really meant.
Our dreams will certainly ne'er be forgot—
For that shining moment is . . . Camelot.

— Kelly A. Gee

Dedicated to that mythical kingdom of dreams . . . in everyone's heart.
LOVE IS LIKE ROSES (beautiful)

— Shirley Sterling

ANNIVERSARY

I do not mind that I am growing old.
The dust of gray that dims my own black hair,
The lines that star my skin—all unaware
They came. And I accept. But no one told
How you would change, or how my heart grows cold
To hear your footstep slow upon the stair
Or see your shoulders stooped. I cannot bear
That time should tame you—you, my green, my gold,
My husband.

Be for me the slender boy
Dressed for a war, splendid in Navy white,
Who waltzed me where the stars came down to mesh
With lights of Central Park and summer. Joy
Forked through the darkness on that long-gone night,
Brass buttons sharp against my virgin flesh.

— Elizabeth Hoobler

CAMELOT

Some evening as you lie awake in bed
Think back to all the stories that you’ve read;
Recall a rather legendary spot—
Known to us as Camelot.

Though history would reveal it isn’t true
I’ll leave the pondering to you;
However, please to keep in mind,
The truth is in one’s heart to find.

Some like the dragon-slaying best; King Arthur’s
Knights; court balls; the rest . . .
Tradition, though limelight picks a few,
Begins with his and hers—just two.

And sometimes, when one least expects it so,
One finds a final party—trouble, no?
A Frenchman, young and strong and bold—
They fell in love, both heart and soul.

Guinevere and Lancelot; King Arthur’s wife;
His friend—his foe? It would cause such strife;
But Lancelot, a noble man, took his leave
The lovers parted, though all would grieve.

King Arthur, wise and kind and very sad,
Who loved his wife, his friend—and felt a cad . . .
The lovers, innocent of grievous intent,
Must suffer; by Jove, by law—repent!

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Maze

Just bought a car
Now I'm someone
I finally realize
How to have fun

Bought a new house
Married a wife
I suddenly realize
The meaning of life

The kids are all grown
Walked out the door
I finally realize
What life has in store

Now I'm divorced
and having a ball
I suddenly realize...

I know nothing at all.

— Thomm Savage

LINES OF CHROME

— William Byland
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Now I’m someone
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LINES OF CHROME

— William Byland
THE WIDOW SAAVEDRA

The widow Saavedra mourns again,
The flowers of her life are gone.
How could it be?
How can it be?

Humanity.
Humanity so dear and so precious,
Plucked from its roots and
discarded without care.

The crimson sunset over Chinandega's
verdant savanna
Bathes her face in the color of her grief.
Is it anger or sorrow now?
Wilfredo, a disappeared one;
Alicia, her combative spirit
slashed out in a Leon street;
And now Pablito,
Cut down by a contra's bullet.

Where is the peace?
To live was their dream.
To create a land of justice was their cry.
The fruit of a generation,
in defense of humanity
Now lies beneath the coarse, red earth.

The widow Saavedra mourns again.
Will she ever laugh once more?
How could it be?
How can it be?

Humanity?
Her children plucked from their roots
and discarded.
Does anyone care?

— John Allensworth

The Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award

Awakening of Flora

Mama, silent to my heart in life
(though at night
still I dream
the rosary of your fingers),
silent, still, of rest-home years
amid odor of urine on the stair,
silent to those who stared
in mirrors for vanished faces,
silent before Papa, I and children
and talk of realities of light,
you are not silent now;
your hair, again, is long and dark
and your voice sings
(I can hear it!)
as you respond in me
to the serpentine crescendo
of Drigo's
"Awakening of Flora."

— James Magner, Jr.

The ICON would like to congratulate James Magner, Jr. on winning the Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award. This award and the High School Poetry Contest are co-ordinated through the efforts of Professor Mary Ann Lowry.
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—James Magner, Jr.
WE THINK ALIKE

We think alike.
We need
and want
and avoid
Each other.
You complete my sentences.
You say I complete you.

We think alike.
We wait
and hope
and wonder about
The next move.
I answer your call
Before it comes.

We think alike.
Fencing,
Skirting,
Fitting
Near and yet so far.

— Barbara L. Schmidt

OPTIMISM

With what we learned yesterday,
We'll improve upon tomorrow.
For humanity's deliverance is hope;
Its nemesis is sorrow.

— Linda V. Gessner

EMMA MAE

The splintered wooden door creaked as it slowly closed behind her. Emma Mae wrapped the blue woolen sweater tighter around her thin body as she stepped off the sun-bleached porch. The dark brown hair had been parted in the middle allowing the rest of her hair to be drawn up into a loose bun; her tan wrinkled face reflected the years, giving it the appearance of a dried raisin.

Her pride and joy, a small garden surrounded by large rocks, brought a smile to her face. She reached for the sprinkling can as she made her way to the pump that stood underneath the apple tree by the side of the house. The pump groaned as Emma Mae made the long handle work to bring cool delicious spring water from the well. She hummed to herself as she made her way to the garden to feed her thirsty children.

Her gnarled hands touched the stems of the gladiolus and the brightly colored hyacinths as she watered them. Yes, they were her children lazily soaking up the summer sunshine while the dew sparkled in the morning's soft golden light.

Emma Mae could hear the hooves of the horses pulling the milk truck on the red brick pavement. She had lived on Oak Street a long time. Her neighbors had lived there almost as long as she and it gave her pleasure to visit back and forth. Mr. Morton, who could usually be found sitting in a chair in front of the small hardware store across from Emma Mae's house, tipped his straw hat. She waved before stooping to pick up the two bottles of milk the milkman had left on the front porch.

Emma stepped inside the small kitchen and opened the door of the ice box; the milk bottle felt good in her hands as the day promised to be hot and humid. She closed the ice box door and slowly walked into the living room. As she opened the desk drawer and took out a dust rag, her eyes surveyed the narrow front room with its mahogany mantle standing above the fireplace graced by the cut glass vases that had been a gift from her son.

She put down the dust rag and picked up a tiny faded picture of a small boy holding a spotted dog. Emma Mae stood in the middle of the living room, while the summer breeze made the lace curtains gently rise over the top of the sofa, lost in time and memory.

— Sandra Percy
WE THINK ALIKE

We think alike.
We need
and want
and avoid
Each other.
You complete my sentences.
You say I complete you.

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“KENT STATE”
(PARABOLUM THROUGH UNTIME)

A fracturing of time and space in flight,
False ending of a decade steeped in change.
He centered at the head of state and light,
Yet bullet-shattered dreams began the mange.

On paths of self-destruction life ran bent,
This flame of youth the martyr to its cause.
Into the holocaust my dreams were sent,
To Viet Nam, those were the legal laws.

In sacred places sanctified for love,
These pantheon powers to the bullet prayed.
While Xanadu was taxed to toll the dove,
And to the total price four students paid.

For that was a time, UNTIME, when time was not,
I cried the day it rained, in Camelot.

— Richard F. Harvey

HOLOCAUST: PYRE of PREJUDICE

Prejudice and degradation—
Innocents burned to create an Aryan nation.
Madness and murder formed a new liaison.

For an ideology so bold
Moral values and souls were sold
(While “priceless” bodies lay pale and cold).

One man’s hatred fed the flames
And mass graves were dug for people with no names
(While history tried to find the blame).

Auschwitz chambers now at rest
With only ashes and survivors to attest
To the unholy “Pyre of Prejudice.”

— Linda V. Gessner
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INSPIRATION

In a flash of inspiration
I can set goals
And achieve them.
I can make plans
And realize them.

In a flash of inspiration
I can reach out
And touch eternity.
I can become the person
I long to prove I am.

In a flash of inspiration
I can live dreams
And dream lives.
I can reach deep into my soul
And pull from it infinite hope.

I can touch the top.
I can move mountains...
In a flash of inspiration.

— Marilyn Patrick

POETRY

Excites your mind by—
Painting pictures so real you could almost touch them,
Shining on your deepest emotions
Like a ray of light dancing on a prism
Illuminating inner feelings and
Expanding your awareness about yourself
And the world around you.

— Tricia Franklin

SERENITY

— Richard Segall
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Serenity

— Richard Segall
PROCRASTINATION
(Death of a Poet)

I thought I'd try to write a poem,
But the words just wouldn't rhyme.
Perhaps I could write about my home,
Or a fictitious little gnome,
But I haven't got the time.

I'll try again tomorrow,
If the weather is sunny and bright.
Keep out bad things, and sorrow;
Write about neighbors who borrow?,
I'll try later on tonight.

I oft think in prose while working,
Then hurry to jot down the same.
I feel my duties I'm shirking,
My mirrored image is smirking;
I can't even remember my name.

Perhaps I'll join with the masters,
Write poems about moon and spoon.
Or become a criticaster,
My knowledge needs to be vaster,
My rhyming word is disaster;
Well I'll just wait until June.

— Evelyn B. MacKenzie

Inheritance

The room was filled with the rosy glow of firelight. Shadows danced on the ceiling, then darted swiftly to fill a dark corner. I sat, curled up on the old woven rug, just beyond the slowly moving rocker—listening half-consciously to the creak of the elderly chair. It was always such a special time when I came to visit Grandma. She had such wonderful stories to tell. I lifted my gaze to her blue eyes meeting brown in mutual affection. It was then that she began to speak—softly, as if loathe to break the comfortable silence.

"Once upon a time, in a world of golden light, there lived a tiny moth—his beauty unequaled. He loved the brilliance of the sunset; the twinkling of the stars. But most of all, he was attracted to the glowing warmth of a crackling fire. It seemed a great temptation; yet, he could never quite convince himself to fly that final inch. Oh, he would hover—his eyes filled with the marvelous sight. But he didn't know if this was the right path to take—so many had perished before him; lost in this realm of great heat. It was after one such time that he had the dream. Oh, such a dream! Could he ever convince his fellow moths of its reality? But, no... they would never understand. He'd have to fly this one alone. He carefully approached the ever-present flames. Closer and closer he flew, until it seemed his very soul would melt. And then, he was there—at the core of its burning heart. He'd reached his goal—fulfilled his dream... Hours later, as the flames grew dim, one could just catch the shimmer of the lifeless wings—their beauty never equaled..."

There was silence for a time as I thought over what she had said. Then, "Grandma, the little moth died, I know. But, was he happy?"

Her face grew thoughtful as if she were recalling her own life's memories. Then she smiled, as a single tear rolled down an old, withered cheek.

"He was very happy in his life... But when the time came for him to leave his world behind, he knew that he would find even greater happiness..."

I slipped a hand into hers as we both turned to look into the dying flames in the hearth. I felt my hand tightly squeezed for a long moment, then gently released. As my glance left the glowing ash to look upon my beloved friend, I couldn't stop the tears that ran slowly down my face.

Somewhere nearby, a door opened admitting another into my world. I heard a soft gasp before footsteps brought the person nearer. I felt my mother's hand on my shoulder as I stood beside my grandmother, her lifeless hand against my cheek. Bending slightly, I gently placed the blue-veined hand onto the still-lap. Turning to face my mother, whose cheeks were now as wet as my own, I almost smiled as I whispered: "Don't worry, Maman. She's even happier now..."

— Kelly A. Gee

In dedication to my grandmother, Florence, whose acquaintance I never had the privilege of making. Her spirit lives on in the hearts of those who loved her, and to those, like myself, who have heard so much about her, she comes to life once more.
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Why Did He Paint A Tear?

Why did he paint a tear on her face,
When her eyes had finally dried?
Why does she feel it so useless
When she really really tried?

Why does she feel like a puppet
Wondering all about pain?
Whenever she drops to the ground--
They just pull her strings again.

There is no greater emptiness
Than an aching heart inside.
Why did he paint a tear on her face,
When her eyes had finally dried?

—Peggy Byrnes

EXPECTING TO FLY

—Jefferson R. Weekley
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EXPECTING TO FLY

— Jefferson R. Weekley
By Time forgotten; 
(yes; even by these two
slowly moving hands)

she sits, silently waiting--, 
sipping orange blossom tea (lukewarm)

making vague plans and dreaming
(yes; even)

vague dreams

Even the snow today has forgotten her,--
old, creepy shadow of antiquity in a
Granny Dress--

; quietly (as twilight comes) she still
is sitting:

- thinking ever so cautiously

of her tomorrows

; ;

— Joseph Michael Dudley

— Mike Gustovich
By Time forgotten;
(yes; even by these two
slowly moving hands)

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PRINCESS and
KILLER T

They roam the streets
now hand
in hand, two
elfin waifs
of tender age
with chocolate eyes
so close in tone
to drying skin stretched
over bone
that barely covers
knobby knees
as silence greets
their daily pleas . . .
And hunger strikes
upon the hour
as sister plucks one
brown-tipped flower
from trashcan backed
against brick wall
emblazoned with
disgusting scrawl.
And yes, within
this ghettoed-night
without fair chance
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to us it seems
she'll likely be
the Princess to some
Killer T.

— Pearl B. Segall

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MIDWEST POETRY REVIEW, Jan. 1984

PRINCESS AND KILLER T

— Nathan L. Segall
PRINCESS and KILLER T

They roam the streets now hand in hand, two elfin waifs of tender age with chocolate eyes so close in tone to drying skin stretched over bone that barely covers knobby knees as silence greets their daily pleas... And hunger strikes upon the hour as sister plucks one brown-tipped flower from trashcan backed against brick wall emblazoned with disgusting scrawl. And yes, within this ghettoed-night without fair chance of early flight to us it seems she'll likely be the Princess to some Killer T.

— Pearl B. Segall

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LITTLE LOST GIRL

I found her
In a dirty street gutter.
Hair disheveled, dress torn,
Eyes that had never seen kindness.
Their mirrored fear told
Of her tearstained life.
A little orphan girl
Lost in a civilization of cruelty,
Tossed like a stray animal;
Born without happiness.
One tiny hand tightly clutched
A dirty rag doll--
Her only friend.

— Jennifer Ann Saksa

Sabbath candles shining bright
Like a beacon in the night
Lead me home.

Mother's waiting table set
Many years have gone, but yet
She knew I'd come.

— Frances Sieman

MUSICAL DUO

Chopin skipped stones on the water's surface
And watched the ripples touch the shore.

Mozart hurled a rock into the water and saw
Giant waves--then threw in some more.

— Barb Savage

DANCE ON THE FLOOR
IN THE ROUND

— Jefferson R. Weekley
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Eyes that had never seen kindness.
Their mirrored fear told
Of her tearstained life.
A little orphan girl
Lost in a civilization of cruelty,
Tossed like a stray animal;
Born without happiness.
One tiny hand tightly clutched
A dirty rag doll--
Her only friend.

— Jennifer Ann Saksa

Sabbath candles shining bright
Like a beacon in the night
Lead me home.

Mother’s waiting table set
Many years have gone, but yet
She knew I’d come.

— Frances Sieman

MUSICAL DUO

Chopin skipped stones on the water’s surface
And watched the ripples touch the shore.

Mozart hurled a rock into the water and saw
Giant waves—then threw in some more.

— Barb Savage

DANCE ON THE FLOOR
IN THE ROUND

— Jefferson R. Weekley
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