DEDICATION

We dedicate this issue of the ICON to Carol Perich, our loyal, helpful friend, in recognition of her splendid contribution to 23 issues of our magazine.
SPRING, 1982

VOLUME XIX  Number 2

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.

ICON Advisor:  Elizabeth Hoobler
Editor:  Michelle Griffiths
Art Editor:  Jefferson R. Weekley

Staff:  Barbara J. Bell  Debbie Murphy
Vivian Bowker  Barbara L. Schmidt
Carole Davidson  Debbie Scofield
Bobby Elder  Pearl Segall
Roni Lucas  Evelina L. Smith
Bonnie Metzendorf  Connie Steffy
Patty Miller  Dorothy Sterling
Jay Molendyke  Grace Toro
Morningstar  Doris M. Vine
Rosemary C. Wilson

Cover Design:  David Victor

The ICON would like to congratulate Robert E. McDonough and M. R. Mumford 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.

Sisters by Norma Falasca

Carole Sue Davidson

Run with me across sunlit fields of wild flowers and we'll know the joy of spontaneity.

Sit quietly with me and perhaps we'll understand a part of life's complexity.

Laugh with me and we'll conquer a part of the world's oblivion with simplicity.

Cry with me and we'll heal a part of the world's disparity.

Touch me and we'll feel the very thread of reality.

Live with me and we'll experience life's continuity.

Die a little each day with me and we'll let go of that which has to be.

Leave me and we'll understand what it means to be free.

Come back to me and we'll share the affirmation of life renewed bound by our unique individuality.
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Beatrice McMillion

although each INDIVIDUAL dances to the
BEAT of a different drum... I want to be TOTALLY
different and dance to a different style!

Patty Miller

I'm a sinkin in the mud, Ma.
It's swallowin my shoe.
Ma. Look! He's comin down the road.
He's comin down the road Ma!
How come he don't have two boots Ma?
Don't the Army give two boots anymore?
When I go, you think the army'll give me
two boots Ma?
Ma?

Hush boy.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Dena Weilacher

Smarten: "I have found what I have been looking for!"
Wiseless: "What is it? Is it gold?"
Smarten: "No, but it is much more beautiful than gold."
Wiseless: "Is it diamonds?"
Smarten: "No, but it is much more precious."
Wiseless: "Oh! It must be power, fame, or wealth!"
Smarten: "No, no. It is worth far more than any of those things."
Wiseless: "What could it be?"
Smarten: "The answer."

Humility

Michelle Griffiths

Just
when I think I've got it all together...
And
I've got a four point going while carrying a four hour overload...
And
I've lost fourteen pounds and all my clothes fit again...
And
I've got the whole house clean all at once...
I sneeze...
And
I haven't got a kleenex.
Beatrice McMillion
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ADOLESCENT PRAYER

*Linda V. Gessner*

GOD! . . . Give me a sign.  
Adolescence is such a trying time!  
Guide me, less I lose sight,  
Of what is wrong and what is right.  
I'll try this, I'll do that.  
Tell me, do you like my cowboy hat?  
I may look silly but can't you see,  
I'm trying to find 'me.'  
In which direction should I go?  
Teach me the things I do not know.  
Drugs and sex and peer pressure,  
What ideals should I treasure?  
Help me to stand up to your measure.

SAFETY

*Jeri Bidlack*

He waits in rain-soaked expectation,  
One hand lifted in request,  
The other holding a banner marked BOSTON;  
And behind him a girl, lightly dressed.  
They're back-packed and booted for distance,  
Faces turned, bidding me pause - -  
But I pass them by with suspicion,  
Protecting my own safety's cause.  
A cloudburst obscures my vision,  
Except in my memory's eye,  
Where two by the roadside are waiting,  
Trusting—and I passed them by.
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Arousal

Beatrice McMillion

Silently he slips across the floor to my bedside.
   I sense his presence...
Softly he touches my cheek and kisses my closed lids.
   I feel his warmth...
Seductively he teases me in my drowsy state.
   I respond to his caresses...
Sensuously he comes to me each morning.
   I stretch...
   Eyes closed...
   Arms spread open...
   A ready embrace to greet my lover...
   the morning sun.

MOON CHILD

Betty Hall

Emerge, expand, reach out
without significant direction
life begins.
   In your first phase,
   The word is...germination.
Grow, develop, assume a form
that soon surfaces
through articulated drives.
   In your second phase,
   The word is...growth.
Achieve, fulfill: a final pattern
once held repressed
emerges from a latent mold.
   In your third phase,
   The word is...maturity.
Rest, fade, reflect
on your own merit now
you can be intent,
   In your fourth phase,
   The word is...disintegration.

SEASONS

Jeri Bidlack

The flow of life, like seasons of the year
From start to end, seems destined to appear
In pattern. As January, silent, white,
In sleep, a tomb-like, waiting womb-like-night,
Stirs in a nest, as saps within a vein
Spring into youth, with face to sun and rain.
The vigor of budding body, fresh to find
The means for cultivation of the mind,
Warms to the charm of tender petalled bloom
As stamen seeks its mate, and she her groom.
Their cycle leads, in sprouted seeds to bear
The fruits of labor, babies, summer’s fare.
Each man is rich, and proud as he surveys
His wealth of green, the sunshine of his days.
He harvests fully every crop he’s laid
For good or bad, September’s song is made.
As autumn comes, with gold and amber leaves,
His storehouse full, his tummy fat, he grieves
For idle days, and packs his tools of trade
To watch the leaves before they start to fade.
The dew-wet nights, the sun-warmed autumn days
Pass in a blur of a time-worn cooled-down haze
That withers and shrivels hours, like trodden leaves,
Leaving behind the youth, for which he grieves.
His stubborn, gutsy, gusty blustery blows
Melt away at the edges of crusty snows,
While his angled limbs feel the winter cold.
And he knows that his life-span has grown old.
The hardened surface of each creek-like vein
Holds a tide of memories that wane
And flow between naps and time to weep;
But not quite ready for that final sleep.
And then it comes. And he is laid to rest.
Life, like the year, is short. And is it blessed?
December seems a cold and cheerless end.
But peace is knowing life may come again.
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Tanka  
*Vivian Anne Bowker*

Summer withered in  
Fall's colors, her breath smothered  
By Winter's frigid  
Blanket, finally to be  
Awakened by Spring's embrace.

**FEBRUARY**  
*Carol E. Farnum*

February is here  
High noon dulled  
By the cold gray sky,  
Cold cracking the snow  
With each reluctant step.

Fingers numb and stiff  
Feeding the glowing maw  
The insatiable appetite  
Of the big black burner  
Drudgery replacing glamour.

We sit together  
Feeling the warmth radiated  
From the burning logs,  
Exhausted from winter's test  
Of survival, only survival!

Our hands, calloused and rough,  
Touch and a new glow starts  
And grows, warding off the chill  
Triumphing together  
Overcoming February.

---

**THE NECESSITY OF WINTER**  
*Jeanne K. Williams*

branches make line drawings  
against the muted background  
skeletons of life revealed  
white velvet blanket serves as insulation  
absorbing the harsher decibels of sound  
screams reduced to whispers  
do you know the necessity of winter?

successive days of low slung clouds  
broken by the startling  
clarity of winter constellations  
branches in the sky  
reverse reflections  
unmuffled by outer din  
voices ascend from within  
murmuring  
heard now  
allowed at last to have their say  
not this a time of rest  
be not deluded by the quiet  
for when reduced to these so stark  
essentials  
our worlds demand  
attention  
Morningstar

daff-golden trumpets (o-
dutifullyharmoniouslysilently)  
herald each Scout  
making the scene  
(where)  
buds pregnant with  
chlorophyl cling to umbilical  
stems (resurrected Spring).
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Sandcastles

John E. Young

The ocean beats upon the shore
in syncopated rhythm;
it froths and flows and comes and goes
in nature's stoicism.

The water cold, the current strong,
the movement never ending,
suggests the answers' ebb and flow
of questions ever pending.

If time could mark the time we were
by waves upon the sand,
I'd try to build my castle higher
with walls that could withstand.

But as it is, it's washed away
in tiny crystalled grains,
And it like me the sea engulfs,
eroding what remains.

But castles last, though made of sand,
if only in the mind;
And though the love and walls are gone,
the palace, still, is mine.

PROMISING NEONS

K.A. Fowler

SO MUCH DEPENDS
UPON

THE SOMBER
HOURS

WHEN FLITTING
FIREFLYS

MAKE PROMISING
NEONS.

ancient love

Mary T. Brizzi

old bag
always in orange rags
stained with frost.
Fickle too; windy, sunny, even
rainy/ slipper underfoot.
Gypsy scarves she waves can be sodden.
One day, near the end,
she's cold, crystal on the grass,
the zinnias won't last much longer.
Capricious hag:
who says love has to be young?
April, true, was shifty--
but not nearly so mellow.
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WHY IS GRANDMA IN COLLEGE?

Betty Hall

Why is Grandma in College?
Well, professor, Sir!
With your doctorate you are wise.
But I will tell you why.
Women's lib became the thing,
ladies prove yourselves, be fulfilled.
You're never too old,
find yourself and do your own thing.
There is another reason,
the best one of all.
Grandpa had a fling; he found
another chick and quickly flew the coop.
Grandma needs an education,
she has to swim or sink.
She has to learn to cope
if she wants to survive.
So she has come to college
to take your time and space.
It is her own life now,
to plan, to rule and guide.
She can't give up or give in,
you see, she must go on.
It's her job to pay the bills,
fix flat tires, to do things once shared by two.
Her education isn't just in college but
to learn to care for one--HERSELF!
This may be a man's world,
but it is her world too.
She is an individual, a person, a woman
who wants to learn and grow.
She wants to stand alone and
not just muddle through.
She wants to share her wisdom
with the world and those she loves.
Today the world is educated
and with a college style.
To be successful, get a degree,
that is what they say.
And you professor, Sir,
are getting paid to teach.
So Grandma grabbed the books
of computer, psych, and math.
Now you will find her sitting
among the best and in front of class.
Why has Grandma come to college?
These reasons are just a few but
I hope professor, Sir, you understand why.

Here's to the Ladies of the Community Who are Finding Their Niche in the English Department . . .

Michelle Griffiths

They are a gang of literates
who write poetry about bringing a brain that has almost--almost--turned to sponge back to college.
They are jugglers
who can stay late for a poetry reading
if they have the kids picked up,
get a sitter,
and put supper in the crock pot.
They would like to write poetry
with universal themes,
deep philosophical meaning,
psychological overtones,
and strong sociological significance.
But they have laundry to do.
"Role Strain" is their middle name.

MID-LIBERATED

Carol E. Farnum

When you see me I'm an ordinary woman
So ordinary there's never a second glance.
Inside you'll find a tumult of expanding fire,
Slowly kindling, growing and consuming.
The inward piercing eye perceives the truth,
Accepts the flaws, embraces the good and sees
Limitations, self-imposed and attitudes learned
No longer mirrored into perpetuity.
You see me, an ordinary woman, you know me
As you did a hundred years ago and are frightened
By glimpses of my seething unlocked self,
Setting off reverberations of uncertainty.
I'm me - an ordinary woman
Aggressively chasing fears and shadows
That fettered me to mediocrity,
Jubilant with each small battle waged and won.
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METAPHORS

Dorothy Ann Sterling

ONE META PLUS ONE META
EQUALS A META-TWO. WHAT
SHALL I DO?
TWO METAS PLUS TWO METAS
EQUALS A META-FOUR. DO
YOU WANT ANY MORE?

Re: Poetry, The Meaning of

Michelle Griffiths

OK.
Poetry is a game.
You start reading a poem
and about half way through
you realize
that the poem is about something else.
See the poet writes from his own experience
and you, the reader,
the receiver,
receive it in your own mind.
This means that each receiver
filters
the meaning of the poem
in a slightly different way.
So a poem cannot have just one meaning.
It has many.
Or maybe it has none.
But never one.
Unless no one reads it.
Then it has one.
Get it?

Reflections Upon a Poetry-Reading

Pearl B. Segall

I sit...listening.
I fidget.
Shifting from hip to hip
my mind wanders from the words being spoken
to a shrieking voice within my head.
Its questions jolt, a kind of rear-end collision.
(Does my expression betray my emotion?)
MY reality is not here, in this high-ceilinged room
with crisply crinkling fire,
filled with animation-faces, assorted bodies, self-assured voices,
many speaking a language not really my own.
Webster's palette provided the colors
for their imagery.
Is that all we have in common?
Must I remain apart and never "a part"
of this group because
my neatly-ordered life
will not allow it?
Must I forever sit listening
while others voice the words
and thoughts and feelings
I dare not utter?
Have MY visions never soared with those of
The Astronaut?
Have I never felt that
I, too, 'must make strawberries'?
When did I last find whimsey
(did I ever?)
in a broken bra-strap?
Must the boxed compartments
of my components
forever remain in isolation?
I did not come for questions!
Nor self-recrimination.
I came to listen (what's WRONG with listening?)... and to enjoy.
I did, indeed, enjoy.
I also learned!
Forty-two-year-old naivete
is neither cute nor terrible believable.
And evenings like this
can age one more surely
and quickly
than crepey complexions and
silvery hair.
Perhaps, with time,
inhibitions
will fade enough for me
to also share.
METAPHORS

Dorothy Ann Sterling
ONE META PLUS ONE META
EQUALS A META-TWO. WHAT
SHALL I DO?
TWO METAS PLUS TWO METAS
EQUALS A META-FOUR. DO
YOU WANT ANY MORE?

Re: Poetry, The Meaning of
Michelle Griffiths

OK.
Poetry is a game.
You start reading a poem
and about half way through
you realize
that the poem is about something else.
See the poet writes from his own experience
and you, the reader,
the receiver,
receive it in your own mind.
This means that each receiver
filters
the meaning of the poem
in a slightly different way.
So a poem cannot have just one meaning.
It has many.
Or maybe it has none.
But never one.
Unless no one reads it.
Then it has one.
Get it?

Reflections Upon a Poetry-Reading

Pearl B. Segall

I sit...listening.
I fidget.
Shifting from hip to hip
my mind wanders from the words being spoken
to a shrieking voice within my head.
Its questions jolt, a kind of rear-end collision.
(Does my expression betray my emotion?)
MY reality is not here, in this high-ceilinged room
with crisply crinkling fire,
filled with animation-faces, assorted bodies, self-assured voices,
many speaking a language not really my own.
Webster's palette provided the colors
for their imagery.
Is that all we have in common?
Must I remain apart and never "a part"
of this group because
my neatly-ordered life
will not allow it?
Must I forever sit listening
while others voice the words
and thoughts and feelings
I dare not utter?
Have MY visions never soared with those of
The Astronaut?
Have I never felt that
I, too, 'must make strawberries'?
When did I last find whimsy
(did I ever?)
in a broken bra-strap?
Must the boxed compartments
of my components
forever remain in isolation?
I did not come for questions!
Nor self-recrimination.
I came to listen (what's WRONG with listening?)...
and to enjoy.
I did, indeed, enjoy.
I also learned!
Forty-two-year-old naivete
is neither cute nor terrible believable.
And evenings like this
can age one more surely
and quickly
than crepey complexions and
silvered hair.
Perhaps, with time,
inhibitions
will fade enough for me
to also
share.
THE HART CRANE MEMORIAL POETRY AWARD

Fragments of a Saxon Lyric
M. R. Mumford

Cold is this country of barren cliffs:
birds, buffeted, beat their wings,
wind whines like a young wolf,
snow slams against siding.
Your name is a rune against ice.

* * * * * * * 

* * * * * * * 
Your brightness
strikes a blaze, birch boughs bursting
to fresh flame on hearth of hall.
From the benches heroes hail us:
the drinking horn is held high,
handwork of gods. Your hair is gold,
shining, soft against your shoulders.
Light leaps from half of lance,
glint of gold glimmers dimly on
broad shields, byrnies and breastplates
fallen to floorboards forgotten for now.

* * * * * * * 

* * * * * * * 
I lift the love-cup
boldly swear, brazen boast of
my winning: words ring on walls--
Let the dragon have his hoard!
I have you, here, under my hands.
Your touch is truth, brave token of
braided words not broken between us.
May the monster mash himself!
We are sleeping breast to breast,
both bodies locked in love,
minds made into one artifice,
closed against cold... 

Cinderella's Stepmother:
Robert E. McDonough

i
At first she seemed the only thing about him
that wasn't dried out, bright as a berry
on a winter bush. When I accepted him
I thought, At last a beautiful daughter.
Then he broke over me like a wave
and she was just a little girl
and I was swimming for my life.

She never forgave me her father's joy.

ii
He died. And I was left
beached, gasping.

She has her turn now. The Prince
is a nice boy, believes everything.
He'll be happy.

I will live with my ugly darlings,
three dull women
no one will want to tell tales about.

16 Honorable mention:
Francis Smith for "Cameo"

17 Honorable mention:
Val Gerstle for "Pelican"
Fragments of a Saxon Lyric

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I will live with my ugly darlings,
three dull women
no one will want to tell tales about.
No Tribute to Booze
Morningstar

What quaking of my Tree is this?
What power weakens limbs so strong
and causes them to shake?
What power or potion stealthily crept,
numbing senses and increasing
probabilities of everything
wrong.

Vivian Anne Bowker

In this world of the dollar sign,
How do we value love?
For, what is love but the spending
Of two hearts to purchase one?

REVIVAL
Jeri Bidlack

There's a brand-new way of worship in our land,
Its sanctuaries filled throughout the week
Electrically attracting all. The youth
Are most of those who come, so I am told;
Yet some are old, and others rather small
Who drift in from the hall, with coin in hand
To stand before the altars, some in lines
To wait their turn before the lighted screens.
Strobed lights flash bright colors, as they blink
Amid the bleeps and boings of bongs and gongs;
And standing there in awe they watch round bugs
With pie-wedge mouths devour each thing they touch.
One pew becomes a mad careening race
An occupant can drive to prove his skill,
Uphill and down. The next is outer space,
With asteroids careening all around.
I wonder if they learn in that new church,
That when their time to serve at last is done
They might expect those magic words to flash
Across a screen, to offer one more chance:
END OF GAME . . . INSERT COIN . . .
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Across a screen, to offer one more chance:
END OF GAME . . . INSERT COIN . . . .
Don’t give me compassion
if love you cannot share
I don’t need your pity,
or unthoughtful words “I care.”

I can tell by that restless look
and uncaring smile upon your face
that my undying love
will not keep you in this place.

WOMAN’S ROLE?

Linda V. Gessner

From the time that I was four or five
I believed in all that fairytale jive—
That on a white horse my prince would ride.
For what else should I strive?
   Mommy never told me.

I watched down the road and I waited a while,
And then I was married, as was the style.
I always had hoped that a man I’d beguile;
For why else perfect every feminine wile?
   Mommy never told me.

I ran from the courtroom with tears in my eyes,
For after eight years we had severed all ties,
And the words like “forever” had proved to be lies.
“What do I do now?” I cried.
   Mommy
   never
told
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Bonnie Metzendorf

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No Time For Him

Marcia Neilsen

Oh, I know, Lord, the song says take time to be holy.
I know I need a sweet hour of prayer.
But tell me, sweet Lord, is it possible
That the hymn writers had children there?

Each day I awake with intentions
Of rising with You all alone.
But somehow or other I’m too much “mother”
Being busy within this our home.

You entrusted these dear ones to my husband and me
To raise the best that we can.
But, Lord, you know for all the chores that I do
I really need another right hand.

What’s that, Lord? Make You first everyday before I do anything?
Take time for a prayer?
A word that You’ll share?
And through the day I will sing?

Just a minute, Lord, I didn’t mean to interrupt You.
But You know how it is in the morning,
Breakfasts, packing lunches, and finding shoes...
And then my temper starts soaring.

Oh, Lord, excuse me the phone’s ringing.
It might be my friend down the street.
She’s really depressed and she needs me
To help her get back on her feet.

Sweet Jesus, I took too long gabbing
And running around to catch up.
Now I have clothes to wash and the house to clean
I’m too busy to take time to look up....

You know that the baby’s feeding time is near
Supper needs thawed and it’s really quite clear
That You want me to meet all my family’s needs,
Besides the garden has too many weeds.

What’s that, Lord? Looks like I’m too busy for You?
Oh no, it’s just daytime’s not right.
I’ll meet to talk with You, Jesus.
How about later tonight???

Here I am, Lord. I’m ready for our time.
Each child is tucked in his bed.
But, Lord, You’ll have to give me more strength
‘Cause I can’t seem to hold up my head....

I can’t seem to soak in Your Word tonight
I’m thinking of all I must do.
There’s my Sunday School lesson to prepare
And some visiting to glorify You.

What are You saying, Lord? Martha or Mary?
Oh, no, You must be confused.
It’s me, Lord, Your faithful servant.
NO. I wasn’t beginning to snooze.....

What, Lord? You can help me sort out my day?
To clean and throw out the waste?
To get things done that You want done,
Without all this ridiculous haste?

To help me have a smooth morning,
And not to have all this confusion,
To show my friend that You are real
And not a childhood illusion?

To do my chores as unto You?
They’ll get done at an even pace.
To take that frown away from my brow
And put a smile in its place?

To tell me where I am to serve
Within Your church, O Lord?
Revealing what I need to know
Within Your Holy Word?

To give me strength and inner peace
I’ve never had before?
A clean heart, clear mind and that
You will open every door?

Oh, Lord, please, please forgive me,
I made no time for You.
And for all the other mothers
Please forgive them too?

Thank You, Lord, for opening my eyes
That I might truly see.
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SLEEPLESS

Jeanne K. Williams

restlessly awaiting sleep
I feel the tension of both hands clenched
in close hard fists

and consciously spread the separate
fingers out against the sheet
intending relaxation

they have intentions of their own
and slowly begin to fold in once again

perhaps to become weapons
against the demons
of my night worlds

perhaps to hold a secret
safe within the warm
hollows of my hands

RECURRING NIGHTMARE, DURING HOLOCAUST STUDY

Pearl B. Segall

STOP!
Let me get off
at the next station.
There are no stops?
No relief from the
anguished, deadly horrors
surrounding a
one-way trip to
hell?

No.
Hang on, you'll make it.
We lived through it,
so will you.
You must!
Feel our pain,
die a little
each day
with
us...
but your fortune
will enable you
to
walk away
after
sixteen weeks.
Your nights in those weeks
will be
comfortable.
Sleepless, perhaps,
but
comfortable.
Ours were hideously
tortuous.
So, stay...
please!
Keep company with
our memories.
Uplift your spirit
through learning about
ours.
Hang in there!
If your stomach allows,
you'll be
stronger for it.

Those silent pleas
could not be
ignored.
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Forgive me, 
please... 
for ever wishing 
to flee from 
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existence 
back to the comforts 
of my life.

Please know the 
guts have been 
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from my body 
during the painful 
process 
of learning. 
I am glad, 
so glad 
my ticket was 
one-way, 
no return. 
Sixteen weeks was 
nothing 
compared to your 
bottomless 
P
T

I can still 
breathe. 
I can still 
speak.

HEAR ME, 
Never, never, never 
again. 
Dear God, 
NEVER A 
AGAIN.

A RAINBOW

Dorothy Ann Sterling

IF THERE WERE NO BLACK, WHITE, RED, AND YELLOW PEOPLE, 
I WONDER WHAT COLORS THERE WOULD BE. 
OH, THAT IS EASY, LET ME SEE. 
I THINK WE ALL SHOULD BE GREEN, OR EVEN BLUE, 
THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING NEW.

CAN NOT YOU SEE HOW EASY IT WOULD BE, 
IF WE WOULD BE PEOPLE INSTEAD OF COLORS. 
IF WE ALL WERE LIKE A RAINBOW, 
WE WOULD LOVE EACH OTHER FOR WHAT WE ARE 
AND TRY VERY HARD TO DO OUR PART 
TO PUT LOVE IN OUR HEART. 
THIS WOULD BE A GREAT START.

WHY DO THERE HAVE TO BE BLACK, WHITE, RED, AND YELLOW 
PEOPLE. 
IT IS SIMPLE, LET'S ALL BE A RAINBOW!
Forgive me, please... for ever wishing to flee from your dehumanized existence back to the comforts of my life.

Please know the guts have been wrenched from my body during the painful process of learning. I am glad, so glad my ticket was one-way, no return. Sixteen weeks was nothing compared to your bottomless pit.

I can still breathe. I can still speak.

HEAR ME. Never, never, never again. Dear God, NEVERA AGAIN.

A RAINBOW

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WHY DO THERE HAVE TO BE BLACK, WHITE, RED, AND YELLOW PEOPLE. IT IS SIMPLE, LET'S ALL BE A RAINBOW!
SAYING GOODBYE

_Gloria Alden_

Saying good-bye has always been hard for me. When my sisters were leaving for college or friends were moving away, I always dreaded the good-bye. I wanted to cling and hold on but I didn’t want to embarrass anyone, so I ended up either avoiding the departing person or making inane jokes or superficial comments.

“Would you stay up and watch TV with me, Mom?” John asked. “Of course,” I replied. Although I was tired because I had waited up late for him to come home the night before, I would stay up all night if necessary to say good-bye.

We sat side by side, holding hands and watching “Benny Hill,” then “Dave Alan at Large.” It seems strange now, but we even laughed and enjoyed those two shows. Sometime after the late show started, he said he was tired and would like to sleep. “Would you mind sleeping on the couch?” he asked. “I planned on it,” I replied. As I took my pillow from beside my sleeping husband, I wondered if I should awaken him. He, too, would want to say good-bye. I decided against it. There would still be time, I hoped.

I didn’t think I would sleep as I lay listening to John’s labored breathing. “Oh, my darling,” I thought. “I’m not ready to say good-bye. It’s not fair. You aren’t even nineteen yet. God promised if we have enough faith, all things are possible and I believed, oh, how I believed you would be cured. I even promised you. And what about the hundreds and hundreds of people praying for you?”

But the doctor had said no more than two weeks and the two weeks were up. He put up a gallant fight did my long tall son these past seven months, and his poor thin body could fight no more. I was glad we had brought him home from the hospital. I dreaded the pain the doctors said he would suffer when his other lung collapsed, but he hated the hospital so much that this was the last thing we could do for him. I knew Dr. Dymant approved. He truly loved our son and called almost every evening to check on him.

And John had made the most of these last days, seeking out his friends, going to movies and out to eat and even attending a practice session with a rock group. How he loved rock music. His record collection was extensive. He visited as many friends as he could find. A lot of them avoided him because they couldn’t bear to say good-bye to this bright, laughing friend of theirs.

My tired body gave in. I slept.

Six o’clock. The alarm went off. “John!” I thought immediately. But softly from his bed came the sound of his breathing. “Thank God,” I thought. “I’ll still have time to say good-bye.”

As I packed my husband’s lunch and shushed the kids as they got ready for school, I wondered if I should ask Jim to stay home, but I decided against it. Maybe I was imagining that this was John’s day to leave us.

About 8:30, John became restless. “I feel so strange, Mom,” he said. “I’m not taking any more of this medication.” “This is it.” I thought and went to the phone to call Jim home. He came quickly and John asked. “Why are you home, Dad?” “Because I switched oxygen tanks and wanted him to check them,” I immediately answered for Jim. I still could not say a straight-forward good-bye. I don’t know if Jim could have either.

Father Crumbly called that morning, and Jim told him John was dying. He came out at once. “Why are you here, Father?” John asked. “I told you I’d be out Friday morning to give you communion,” Father replied. Again the avoidance of saying good-bye. After Father Crumbly gave him communion, he sat with us for an hour or so. I know he thought of the magic John had performed for him only two days before. John was an extremely talented magician. Those long slender hands of his could baffle everyone. They also played the piano with great feeling, and a pencil or pen in those hands produced beautiful works of art. Too much talent here for us to say good-bye to.

At one point John sat up and looking at Father Crumbly asked, “Why, Father? I have prayed so hard. Why doesn’t God hear me?” “He hears you,” Father Crumbly replied.

I stood beside John all that day holding his hand and crying. Jim wept, too. John dozed off and on and restlessly kicked and threw his covers off. “What’s in that corner?” he asked once. “Your white dove,” I replied. “Oh,” he said. But later I was to wonder if it was the dove he saw or the spirits coming for him.

“Would you fix me a cup of coffee, Suzanne?” I asked my sister who had been staying with us. I was reluctant to leave him for even a moment. John said, “I would like one, too.” Poor Suzanne. She is so introverted that I wonder if she will ever survive this terrible experience. As John sipped his coffee, he watched “Wheel of Fortune” on TV and even managed to figure out the puzzles. I tried as we used to compete against each other with this game but I couldn’t focus on the screen through my tears. “I can’t say good-bye,” I cried inwardly, “I can’t, I can’t. Not my first born, not my darling, John.”

The afternoon wore on with him dozing restlessly. At one time he sat up, looked at Jim and said, “Thank you, Dad, for being here.” About 2:00, he sat up again, and stared off into the corner with a puzzled look on his face. Finally he gave a nod of acknowledgement and said simply, “God.” With that he lay back into my arms and I held this child of mine against my breast while he slept. We had almost come full cycle from birth to death. Soon he would leave me, and I still hadn’t said good-bye.

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I didn’t think I would sleep as I lay listening to John’s labored breathing. “Oh, my darling,” I thought. “I’m not ready to say good-bye. It’s not fair. You aren’t even nineteen yet. God promised if we have enough faith, all things are possible and I believed, oh, how I believed you would be cured. I even promised you. And what about the hundreds and hundreds of people praying for you?”

But the doctor had said no more than two weeks and the two weeks were up. He put up a gallant fight did my long tall son these past seven months, and his poor thin body could fight no more. I was glad we had brought him home from the hospital. I dreaded the pain the doctors said he would suffer when his other lung collapsed, but he hated the hospital so much that this was the last thing we could do for him. I know Dr. Dyment approved. He truly loved our son and called almost every evening to check on him.

And John had made the most of these last days, seeking out his friends, going to movies and out to eat and even attending a practice session with a rock group. How he loved rock music. His record collection was extensive. He visited as many friends as he could find. A lot of them avoided him because they couldn’t bear to say good-bye to this bright, laughing friend of theirs.

My tired body gave in. I slept.

Six o’clock. The alarm went off. “John!” I thought immediately. But softly from his bed came the sound of his breathing. “Thank God,” I thought. “I’ll still have time to say good-bye.”

As I packed my husband’s lunch and shushed the kids as they got ready for school, I wondered if I should ask Jim to stay home, but I decided against it. Maybe I was imagining that this was John’s day to leave us.

About 8:30, John became restless. “I feel so strange, Mom,” he said. “I’m not taking any more of this medication.” “This is it,” I thought and went to the phone to call Jim home. He came quickly and John asked. “Why are you home, Dad?” “Because I switched oxygen tanks and wanted him to check them,” I immediately answered for Jim. I still could not say a straight-forward good-bye. I don’t know if Jim could have either.

Father Crumbly called that morning, and Jim told him John was dying. He came out at once. “Why are you here, Father?” John asked. “I told you I’d be out Friday morning to give you communion,” Father replied. Again the avoidance of saying good-bye. After Father Crumbly gave him communion, he sat with us for an hour or so. I know he thought of the magic John had performed for him only two days before. John was an extremely talented magician. Those long slender hands of his could baffle everyone. They also played the piano with great feeling, and a pencil or pen in those hands produced beautiful works of art. Too much talent for us to say good-bye to.

At one point John sat up and looking at Father Crumbly asked, “Why, Father? I have prayed so hard. Why doesn’t God hear me?” “He hears you,” Father Crumbly replied.

I stood beside John all that day holding his hand and crying. Jim wept, too. John dozed off and on and restlessly kicked and threw his covers off. “What’s in that corner?” he asked once. “Your white dove,” I replied. “Oh,” he said. But later I was to wonder if it was the dove he saw or the spirits coming for him.

“You need a fix me a cup of coffee, Suzanne?” I asked my sister who had been staying with us. I was reluctant to leave him for even a moment. John said, “I would like one, too.” Poor Suzanne. She is so introverted that I wonder if she will ever survive this terrible experience. As John sipped his coffee, he watched “Wheel of Fortune” on TV and even managed to figure out the puzzles. I tried as we used to compete against each other with this game but I couldn’t focus on the screen through my tears. “I can’t say good-bye,” I cried inwardly, “I can’t, I can’t. Not my first born, not my darling, John.”

The afternoon wore on with him dozing restlessly. At one time he sat up, looked at Jim and said, “Thank you, Dad, for being here.” About 2:00, he sat up again, and stared off into the corner with a puzzled look on his face. Finally he gave a nod of acknowledgement and said simply, “God.” With that he lay back into my arms and I held this child of mine against my breast while he slept. We had almost come full cycle from birth to death. Soon he would leave me, and I still hadn’t said good-bye.

Morningstar

I refused to mourn
the death
of a body
She opted not to live in
long before
anybody knew.
Her gentle spirit
too dignified
to sustain the
blighted hope lodged within
those bones
withdrawn.
Teary tradition walked
single file;
a deceptive wake
unknown but to myself alone,
who refused
because
no one died...

It is Finished by Jefferson R. Weekley

Benediction

Betty Hall

I will not see you again,
but you will be there
in the sunrise
in the sunset
in the shadows.

I will not see you again,
but your smile will linger
in the corners of my mind
and I will hear
echoes of your laughter.

I will not see you again,
but I will wish for you
love pure and true
and life forever young
in a heart filled with contentment.

I will not see you again,
but I will remember you
and I will smile softly
because just for a little while
I had known the best.
Morningstar

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