sometimes he’s funny
sad
sacred
profane
sweet
bitter
everybody’s grampa
an eternal kid
a prankster ---- a poet

Pappy.

This ICON is for Pappy
with love —
THE POETRY OF PAPPY HOLMES

one day
when one
meets his demise
does one rise
beyond azure skies?
sailing through
Infinity; to rendezvous
with the Holy Trinity?
or does one
remain on
earth unseen,
floating o'er God's grass
soft, sweet, and green?
some say, "yes."
others, "no."
one thing sure
we shall go....
true as sunshine,
real as birth
we shall, one day,
leave this earth.

— Harold A. Holmes

the weeping willow
is heavy laden,
after a night of rain.
it's branches hang low
as though it would weep again.
beside the patio there are vegetables;
tomatoes, carrots, beans, beets,
and flowers of different hue;
the creeping silver floss
has crossed o'er the walk
killing the grass, and weeds too.
in their midst two violets
dare to show their lovely face,
so tiny, and deep-dark blue
they seem to be out of place.
trees, vegetables, flowers, grass;
i ponder the mystery
of the fertile sod;
then, before sipping coffee,
i say, "Good morning, God."

— Harold A. Holmes

VOLUME XX                                 Number 1

FALL, 1982

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THE CHILD AND THE UNICORN

She walks in quiet, soundless world,
unseeing eyes to flags unfurled,
a child of witness dying.

She touches poppies, yellow, red,
unsleeping in their flower beds,
seasalt tears uncrying.

Until the lightning, stalking bolt,
upturned the earth, she gave a jolt,
and through the air came flying.

A beast of five dimensions rare,
white breast, gold mane cuts the air
its violet eyes a-spying.

And then the child lifts up her arms,
surrenders to the creature’s charms,
brown hair winds horn for tying.

’Tis where they found her, cold and pale,
upon the bloodied, gloried dale,
her earthly body lying.

— Jenny Blazek

DEATH WATCH

How exquisite were the colors of death!
Burnt orange, crimson red, burnished gold,
Each body in reverent repose created a
Breathtakingly beautiful wake.
The fallen souls laid prostrate upon
Their cold brown coffin.
Their brittle veins were crushed
Beneath the mourners’ feet,
And the remains were scattered
At the discretion of the wind.

Many of the resplendent victims were cremated.
A Satanic tool was used
To tumble the twisted bodies
Into a manageable pile
Where they waited to meet
Their caustic end.
A shroud of smoke hovered over the
Fire and death’s odor fouled the air
As barren branches stood with dignity
To the memory of—

Autumn.

— Linda V. Gessner
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IN THE YEAR 8000 A. D. ** the occupants of the planet earth would often amuse themselves with the study of their planet's ancient history/

IN THE LATE 1960's ** they found that the youth of the population often found avocation in watching one of the females of the species ** obviously in extreme pain ** stand before them and lament into an amplification device/this specimen was referred to as a Janis Joplin/

IT ALSO SEEMED that in these humans amusement was attained by gathering in a pre-arranged pleasure zone ** which was referred to as Vietnam ** and holding competitions in which the object was to determine how quickly they could exterminate one another/ 

WHILE A LARGE percentage of the population seemed to clearly enjoy these games ** there were certain deviant groups who protested that the games were not enjoyable ** and should be terminated/

IT SEEMED THAT another form of amusement during this early period was to exterminate political leaders/this was a constant source of puzzlement to ancient history students ** for there remained no clear definition of what a politic was/

OFTEN THE ANCIENT history students of the year 8000 A. D. would shudder to think that humans had been so barbaric at the dawn of civilization ** and then they would turn their attention to a more worthwhile study ** such as mathematics/ 

-- Joseph Michael Dudley

---

IN MY OTHER LIFE

So long ago, 'way down the road where willows kiss the stream, Did I hear your voice... in a far-off someday dream?

High upon the hilltop, in meadows green and lush, Did I feel your arms around me, our breathing but a hush?

In the twinkling of the starlight, on a curtain called the sky, Did I lay my head upon your chest, content... with just a sigh?

With the brightness of the morning sun, streaming softly through the air, Did it seem the world was ours, without a cost or care?

It was the wind that whips the meadows dry, that tossed your soul from me... on another day, so long ago... in a world that used to be.

-- Jeannie Bryner

---

THE LITTLE SCOTCH BOGGLE

The little Scotch boggle went a-haunin' 'ain night, he sought out the kletters, to give 'em a fright.

He scared Angus McTavish right outa' his skin, and sent him a-runnin' to McAllistair's Inn.

"Jesus 'n Mary,"' Angus swore with a shiver, "that wee little bastard nearly spooked out me liver!"

So the little Scotch boggle went home with a grin, thankin' the Laird for the night to haunt in.

-- Jenny Blazek
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– Jenny Blazek

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ROSE MARY

calling... 
praying... 

the spirit... 

baby, can you feel it?

Somewhere in time, 
In everyone's life it is written 
A day of happiness will be found, 
To fill the dark emptiness 
Felt deep inside 
Forever.

rising on the white crests, 
caught in the winds of time, 
passion as it's never been...

Somewhere in yesterday, 
We were used and abused 
By those we thought cared. 
Years of pain time can't heal. 
Scars that seem to last 
Forever.

baby, let it lift you...

Somewhere in a lifetime, 
A feeling seizes the soul. 
Deep, sensuous, fully alive, 
A feeling never before known. 
A feeling somehow you know will last 
Forever.

rising to the height of excitement 
when we lie in naked light...

Somewhere in today, 
Wandering with a stormy past, 
We found each other struggling 
To hold onto the endless dream 
Of a love guaranteed to last 
Forever.

a feeling so special 
found only in someone special, 
a feeling unknown to me...

And somewhere on the horizon, 
There is a place for you and me 
To be together as one in spirit. 
A place where no one can interfere. 
A place to be together as one 
Forever.

till i found you. 

— James M. Bogatsy

PASTORAL — Clifton
ROSE MARY

doll spirit... 

baby, can you feel it?

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CIRCUIT BREAKER

God help me, I'm on overload
My brain is struggling,
Fuses ready to blow.

Hierarchy of Needs, not mine
Maslow's
Cellulase and Deoxyribose.

Trips to the library,
A term paper due.
The capital of Spain is Timbucktu...
NO!

Albert Bandura, Walters and Freud
Distributive Law of Addition
over... . . . no make that void.

Instructional Objectives, does P equal Q?
And in what dynasty
fits Kung-fu-tzu?

Cognitive dissonance, Gray's Reading Process
How did I ever get in this morass?
(Is that \ma ras\ or \mo ras\?)

Zinjanthropus Bosei in Olduvai Gorge
Just a few more months
As onward I forge.

I can make it, I know I can
Now was that
Homo erectus or Neanderthal man?

— Gloria Alden

GENERICS

No name to confuse the issue,
No colors to boggle the mind;
Just utilitarian black on white,
Unspoiled and easy to find.

No frills, no extras, no marketing hype
To deter from the issues at hand.
Because, after all, digestion occurs
Regardless of price, or of brand.

You see, we've inverted our values
To where, we say, less is more.
And where can we better assert our new selves
Than in line at our favorite store?

So, our peaches may be a bit mushy,
Our green beans do not hold their shapes.
The colorless label on powdered soft drinks
Belies that it's flavored like grapes.

But, we're assured, it's nutrition that counts;
Appearance, not worthy of mention.
For the sake of the issues of dollars and sense
We are willing to defy all convention.

Alas, there is still one small item, it seems,
That should soon be considered a "steal"--
For I hear that they've plans for producing a new
Generic automobile!

Its outside exterior dimensions
Are free of adornments and fancies;
You pay for the motor, the brakes and the gears,
Not internal, inferior "can't-sees."

There's only one problem apparent,
(A problem I consider a gem):
When the motor conks out and everything fails,
Do you blame FORD... or GM?

— Pearl B. Segall
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THE TALE OF THE ANTIQUE BED

Once upon a time
there was an antique bed
in which a not-so-antique couple
slept.

The antique bed
was beautiful, gracefully spindled and carved,
but no-so-big
as the not-so-antique wife would have liked.

For years
she bitchedbitchedditched
about the smallness of the antique bed... untill...

One fine Spring
the not-so-antique-husband
took his wife and flew south to a place by the sea
where... .

they had twin beds in their room.
And guess what... .
that not-so-antique wife missed
her antique bed and her not-so-antique husband sleeping beside her.

So guess what... .
she decided not to bitchbitchbitch
about the antique bed anymore... .
instead she found something else to bitch about.

— Michelle Griffiths

THIS IS A POEM ABOUT ROOT SHOCK

This is a poem about root shock
Only educated plants
And once broken-hearted women
Can read it

If it isn’t stem envy
It is surely something else

Watch your petals girls
Don’t unfold unless you’re ready
For leaves will cut clean through
Dew will get inside of you
And bees don’t sting half as hard
As a man

— Peggy Byrnes Grubb
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CXXIX

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despis'd straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme:
A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows: yet none
knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this
hell.

TH' EXPENSE OF CALORIES
(after Shakespeare, but in front of me)

Th' expense of calories in a tasty game
Are pastry bars. But at these bowers of gust-
O, the eater finds herself to blame
When, after gobbling to the crust
A chocolate pie, and having licked the plate,
She lets her belt out, somehow not so glad--
That pastry bar was but a honey'd bait
On purpose loaded just to make her mad:
Mad getting heartburn, mad at her own self,
Maddest of all when getting on the scale,
She pants and, swallowing a greasy belch,
She finds that she outweights a baby whale.
All this we know, yet none of us sets bounds
To chocolate pies that lead to extra pounds.

— Mary T. Brizzi
CXI

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— Mary T. Brizzi
MARY

Droplets on a sizzling pan,
A fey, female Peter Pan,
Firecrackers shooting. Bang! Pop!
St. Bernard Puppy, sloberry slop!
Darting minnows, babbling brook,
Nothing soothing like a book.
Lightning, thunder, electric storm,
Soft, purring kitten, cuddly warm.
Chipmunk darting here and there,
Thistledown, lighter than air.
Crashing chords, out of tune,
Noise and chaos behind her strewn.
Loving and kind, tactless, abrupt,
A slumbering volcano about to erupt.
Anger, explosion, a ticking time bomb,
Arms around neck, “I love you, Mom.”
Classroom but a waste of time,
Outside’s the wind and trees to climb.
Ragged little gypsy, hair so wild,
A little longer only to be a child.

—Gloria Alden

RED COAT

Standing in the grocery store filled with the odor of bananas, sweet rolls, and freshly ground sausage, I was busy making mental checks over undone errands. With the creak of the wheels over the somewhat stained green floor tile, I finally moved closer to the welcome tap of the cash register.

While glancing at the headlines of the latest movie star tattle paper, a swatch of a red wool coat sleeve brought her back to me. I’d noticed that recently bits of her would sneak up on me, someone’s laugh, my niece’s eyes, her picture near my grandmother’s mantle. I had never forgotten her, but lately she was in my thoughts without warning.

The sleeve of the red coat in the next aisle was clutched tightly by four small fingers. The voice that belonged to the coat said, “No, Sara, Mommy doesn’t want you to eat candy. It’s bad for your teeth. I’ll fix you peanut butter crackers.” The tiny face, surrounded by a knitted white cap, burst instantly into a beam. Her blue eyes were shining. Scuffed high tops swung back and forth beneath pink corduroy crawlers, while Mom savored her victory over dental plaque.

I closely observed the owner of the red coat, and secretly I was glad she had to run back for a box of Tide. Brunette bangs, with just a bit of curl, scooped over her forehead, and the remainder of the shoulder length waves were bound loosely by a white ribbon at the nape of her neck. Wearing faded jeans made her seem even more touchable.

Young, I mused. Her only child? Perhaps. Though her years were tender, her manner was easy and natural with the child. Skilled more, I thought, than many whose age surpassed hers.

Then ever so slowly, my eyes came to rest again upon the coat. Red...thought association, fragments of another day long ago, a red coat and a small hand. Memories filled my being.

How long ago that must have been! Was it...first grade? Yes, I think so. There...the face at the door, ..smiling, eyes twinkling, my friends whispering, my pride swelling. It is she and she is so beautiful! The red coat buttons at her neck, flows loosely past her waist, and on a bell sleeve rests a black pocketbook.

When the door opens I burst from my seat and rush into the arms of the waiting red coat. The wool itches my face, but it is so warm and it smells of her cologne. The familiarity of the scent makes me forget the itch. The brief embrace is broken by my teacher’s voice. They chat over my educational progress while I gather my Snow White lunch pail and my spelling test.
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Firecrackers shooting. Bang! Pop!
St. Bernard Puppy, slobberly slop!
Darting minnows, babbling brook,
Nothing soothing like a book.
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A little longer only to be a child.

— Gloria Alden
I am so anxious to go, I nearly forget my boots. The hand from the red coat reaches down and the light of the classroom sets a glow on her diamond. The sparkle of the ring mesmerizes me momentarily. The spell of the ring is shortlived. I am impatient, for we are off to Grandma's. The soft skin of the warm hand leads me down the stairs of the brown brick schoolhouse. Outside the snow is deep, and I'm thankful she remembered my boots. In the car, I cup her chin in my hands and plant a kiss on her red lips. My father gives me a wink and asks if I'm ready to go. My head nods a swift "Yes" and he starts the engine. It is my turn to share the front seat with them. I'm happy and feeling just a little smug. On her lap, my arms reach for her soft brown curls. I twirl her hair and share the story of my day.

Her brown eyes sparkle and her laugh is gentle when I tell her Johnny Grey shot Tammy Smith with a rubber band during the pledge of allegiance. She looks in the back seat where my baby brother sleeps soundly in my sister's arms. She is so beautiful I lean my head to her chest and hear her heartbeat. . boom-boom, boom-boom. It lulls me off to sleep. Her lips brush my forehead as she strokes my hair. In my childish slumber I am unaware of her attentions.

An easy nudge from the cart behind me breaks the spell of the long ago daydream. My buggy ambles forward. Red Coat's groceries are now moving down the conveyor. Rice Krispies, Peter Pan, Crest, a blur of "choosy mother's" products are whisked gingerly to the long-haired boy at the end of the counter. I realize now that I am almost starving.

Red Coat glances my way, but her look is all encompassing, non-focusing. I am but a piece of grocery-story jigsaw on Tuesday morning. I am grateful for my invisibility. To be... but not to be seen. To feel... but not to be found out. The moment of red coat is suspended. I can see a swift exchange of money, the loading of stiff brown sacks into the cart, and the automated doors seem to swallow Red Coat and the child.

The clerk gets my attention with “Good morning, Louise.” I stumble over an inappropriate greeting and begin lifting canned goods and produce from the buggy.

While loading the groceries into the car, I am thinking of my next two stops. I have to pick up Kathy's cheerleading uniform from the cleaners. My next stop will be at the post office to mail Dan the chewy brownies he loves so much.

Dan... could he really be old enough to be a second year law student? Time had passed so quickly. It seemed only yesterday I watched him play first base in his blue and white striped baseball uniform.

Now, he is on the debate team in college. His weekends at home are getting farther apart, especially since he met Julie. It seems they are in love.

Kathy's uniform is crisp and clean. The tiger on the sweater actually looks like he could roar. I smile remembering how she looked last week as she cheered the football players on--her blonde curls tightening in the rain, her saddle pads and her voice hoarse as they beat their local rival.

I feel almost misty as I drive through the familiar streets of our small cozy town. I remember Flo saying the other day, "It's the change, Louie, sometimes it's hot flashes, other times it's melancholy. Me, just take my estrogen and watch Donahue every morning."

Good old Flo, what a friend. How many years now? Our husbands, David and Bob, worked at the same shop. That's how the friendship started. Over the years they had become family, closer than ever we imagined. We must have spent hundreds of hours together over the past twenty years. As I drive on, a sigh escapes me. Today is my birthday. I'm forty-five and it's snowing. It's a wet snow, the kind that produces huge snowmen to stand guard over laughing children and then dwindle slowly in a warm November afternoon's sun.

When the car nears our street, I remember David will be home early from work and I'm glad. No cooking tonight! Ah, I'm relieved. A hot tub sounds good to me after I wash the grub away in the kitchen cupboards.

When the last cupboard door closes, I run my hand over the surface. David made these cupboards, years ago when we couldn't afford factory-made ones. He is good with his hands and our house is filled with his touch of carpentry. The thought of him warms me, even though we've been married twenty-three years. I am amused by how his voice can soothe me and somehow make everything all right. How strong he is and yet so tender. The splash of tub water is tempting me, but I hold off long enough to brush my one hundred strokes. Lately, I'd been noticing more gray! I wonder if I should color it. So far, I had escaped the "Only your hairdresser knows for sure" syndrome. As I look into the mirror I think maybe I won't look so bad... I mean when I'm gray.

The ringing phone ends my silent debate over hair coloring. As I dash to answer it I stub my toe on the corner of the maple chest. "Damn!" My pinky throbs on my right foot.

"Hi, Flo, yes we're going out for supper... Thanks... No, not really. I don't feel any older." The conversation is brief and happy. Flo is a good friend.

Placing the receiver down, the cedar chest seems to draw my attention. David has threatened to move it at least a hundred times over the years. But, I like it and I want it in my room. It was hers... and I have so little of her. I run my hand over its warm honey-colored finish and slowly raise the lid.

Years of memories are tucked in its every corner: Danny's baseball suit, Kathy's tu-tu, pictures of David and me at a Halloween party, our wedding album, old report cards, and there on the bottom I see the turned up sleeve of the worn red coat. Carefully, I lift it from its nest of yesterdays. It smells of cedar as I hold it close.

How many times I have held the coat over the years, I cannot say. Dozens? Hundreds? Whenever I have felt the need for her... somehow the coat has helped. Like the day Danny wrecked his motorcycle and the doctors weren't sure his leg would mend. The first time David and I had a real argument. And what about the first baby we never brought home from the hospital? This coat was my secret stronghold, my link to another time... to a special person who could give me strength.

I hug the coat tightly against my chest and press my cheek into its collar. My thoughts engulf me: "How I miss you. Why did you leave before I got to know you? If we could only sit and chat for one day- I don't remember if I ever told you... that day you picked me up from school... you were so beautiful and I was so proud to be your daughter."

My eyes hot with tears, I gently return the coat to its resting place. For a fleeting moment the fragrance of a long-ago cologne fills the room.

"It's the change," Flo would say. "One day it's hot flashes, the next it's melancholy."

Jeanne Bryner
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MY THANKS TO THE MODERN GOD

Thank you for letting me eat tomato soup and crackers for lunch with my daddy on weekends.

Thank you for cheap windshield wipers that keep the rain off nicely.

Thank you for sweet jasmine incense imported from India.

Thank you for the $2 in my hand for Chicken McNuggets with Hot Mustard Sauce (it clears my sinuses).

Thank you for a car radio that tunes in on rainy nights (even though it's only AM).

Thank you for my baggy old olive drab army fatigues (nobody knows how good I look underneath!)

Thank you for eccentric English professors who make me read Chaucer.

And thank you for 18 year old boys with sandy hair and big hazel eyes who love me.

Thank you.

— Jennie Blazek
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REFLECTIONS

Little boy promises,
Little girl dreams.
Pampered and nurtured,
beneath the sun’s gleam.
Remembering days,
Filled with laughter and fun.
Remembering nights,
When the two of us formed one.
How fast little children
Grow up to be old.
How fast the warm sunshine
Begins to turn cold.
Fifteen and sixteen,
Such wondrous ages,
Streetdragging cars,
Putting parents in rages.
Sneaking a kiss,
In the back of the show.
Consuming our love,
Thinking no one would know.
Yes, babe, I recall
Shooting pool Friday nights,
The noise and the smoke,
The eruptions of fights.
How simple things seemed
In those far away times.
My age must be showing,
I’m seeing the signs.
Hold tight as you lead me
Across the dance floor.
At dawn kiss me softly,
As you walk out the door.

— Lynn E. Kalan
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NEW FRIENDS-- ALMOST

They meet in the Forum every week;
not meet really, for they seldom speak.
It is chance that has thrown them there (prophetic fate)
together in that tiny room
There are often other voices; other people there
But, for a time, it seems
they are alone
They do not watch one another,
but yet they are always keenly aware,
each of the other
It seems there is a chemistry there--
almost affection--
for there are always the quick glances
when the other isn’t looking
And a shy smile--if their eyes happen to meet
The moment of germination--
even impregnation--
IS AT HAND--
and then
it is gone

For, you see--
they seldom speak

—Joseph Michael Dudley
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A FRIEND

A laugh, a cynicism recognized
A cup of tea, hot and steaming
When problems threaten to overwhelm
Or a drink, hard and straight
Sharing laughter from the gut
Opening to each other
Facets shielded from the world.

It's my friend, a woman
Supporting without judgement
A being not yet ready
To face the world alone
A relationship made easy
With no necessity for pretense
Or obligatory payments.

It's not static this thing we have
Emotions, intellect run hot and strong
Dealing with life on every level
Hitting, falling, stumbling, rising
Experiencing to the quick of our being
And still a part is saved, aside,
To be a friend and care.
— Carol E. Farnum

MY FRIEND

The moving van goes
up the road,
past my house,
off our street,
heading West.

In it are
the chairs we sat in,
the cups we drank coffee from,
the tapes we listened to,
the books we shared.

You were part of my life
in joy,
in sorrow;
through good times,
through bad.

Will we ever meet again?

I have come to know
compassion through your sorrow,
patience through your steadfastness,
strength through your perseverance,
hope through your new life.

Even if I never again
see you,
talk to you,
touch you,
hear you,

Our lives have intertwined.
Part of you is me.
Part of me is you.
Forever.
— Lois J. Cline
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FOR JOANNE

Brave lady, my friend so dear
whose pain, whose fears
are ever near... 
Brave lady whose chin is held so high,
whose will is strong,
whose eyes don't cry...
(at least her friends don't see her so,
although we wonder... want to know;
what inner visions does she see
while vauntingly she smiles at me?)
My heart is lightened when I perceive
her will to live and not to grieve.

Brave lady, my friend, you show me how
we all must live, today, for now.
We all could learn so well from you—
from how your love all ways shines through;
from how you bravely face each day
despite the fears and skies so gray.
In sharp perspective do you place
each trial, each terror, with lovely grace.
If I could but some strength impart
I'd want it so, with all my heart.
But no, I see it can't be done—
for, of us both, YOU are the one
who has the strength enough for two;
it was meant, it seems, for only you.

Brave lady, my friend, my spirits soar
when I see you take that one step more
than perhaps you'd want, or feel you can... though I know it seems you feel you ran!

Determined friend whom I admire:
if for one day I could acquire
just half your fortitude and fight,
just half your strength and half your might,
just half your will to wear a smile
(while bearing discomfort all the while.)
I know just what I'd want to do:
I'd want to be a friend like you
who gives far more than you receive,
who gladly shares what you perceive
to be the lesson by which you live:
that today is our only chance to give.
And give, you do—as give, you must... If you're to live a life of trust!

Brave lady, dear friend, I hope you see
why all these things mean much to me.
It is from you I've learned of life,
from all your trials and years of strife... I've learned that one must live each day
to full extent in every way,
and with each friend must fully share
a trusting love, to show we care.

— Pearl B. Segall

THE LAST WAR

listen!
the echoing cries of today's child--
tears of fear.
the child feels the storm rising,
the violent wind bringing death and destruction,
beating loudly--the next war is the last.

listen!
the fears of today's child--
fears of no future.
the child's dreams of crystal horses are broken
by tales of total death,
dark walls echoing--the next war is the last.

listen!
the chants of today's child--
protests for the right to live.
the child demands a chance to build sandcastles that
will not be washed away by the dark roaring waves of--
the next war,
the last war.

— Shelley B. Wilkes

RUNNING FROM YESTERDAY

Running from yesterday,
trying to find tomorrow.
But yesterday's haunting echoes
follow close behind.
Tomorrow, where are you,
with your unfilled dreams.

— Betty Hall
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SWEET GRANDMA AND THE OLD RAGTIME

Grandma Sweet Grandma and the old ragtime
Ten fine toes to wiggle in the sand
How I lived to watch your hands

Even with the crooked thumb
You could play quite a tune
Elmer's Tune for Grandpa Moon
Easter Bonnet for me...

Canary we buried you
In a cottage cheese cup
And yes months later
I tried to dig you up
But Grandma wiped the tears
And got her old piano out

She confirmed your death
And soothed the grief
With just a song

I recall your songs to her
I recall your death
She will know your gift of flight
When she draws her last breath
Grandma sweet Grandma and the old ragtime
You will find the cure

—Peggy Byrnes Grubb

THE LIFE OF THE OLD

Old man-
withered and worn-
skin like leather

Toothless grin;
his upper plate hurts him-
he says

Eternally rooted to a park bench
feeding pigeons,
and occasionally a squirrel

Dreaming of youth;
of days long passed
and dreams
long forgotten

But there was a time
when life was full, cheerful
days long ago

Once, there was a reason to live

But now there are only the pigeons
for company

And occasionally a squirrel

—Joseph Michael Dudley

The cheerful mintgreen polyester ladies
are kind and good
at making jello salads mincemeat church suppers
washing and wiping
dishes and babies
singing hymns and lullabies
and growing fewer
everyday.

We will miss them.

—Michelle Griffiths
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PEDAL POWER  – Nathan L. Segall

SPLENDID MOTION

Soaring, jumping, leaping,
She tantalizes my eyes as they follow her around the stage.
With every leap, I catch my breath.
The air holds her as if never to set her down.
Graceful butterfly dancing in the breeze,
Will you float on air forever?
Will you return to earth someday?
Dance on, my little ballerina,
One continuous motion lasting an eternity.

— Cindy L. Tobey

TIME THE HEALER?

Two years? It can’t be.
Why only last week or yesterday
I heard your laughter, John.
I heard you talking.

Two years? It can’t be.
I still see you clearly.
Your long hands never still.
That quicksilver essence of you.

Two years? It can’t be.
Yet the piano waits without music.
Untuned.
The book with your bookmark.
Unread.

Two years? It can’t be.
You have paintings to finish, John.
And your magic is collecting
Dust in the attic.

Two years? It can’t be.
Grief doesn’t last that long.
Or at least so they say.
So why then am I still crying?

— Gloria Alden
PEDAL POWER — Nathan L. Segall

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Two years? It can’t be.
Yet the piano waits without music.
Untuned.
The book with your bookmark.
Unread.

Two years? It can’t be.
You have paintings to finish, John.
And your magic is collecting
Dust in the attic.

Two years? It can’t be.
Grief doesn’t last that long.
Or at least so they say.
So why then am I still crying?

— Gloria Alden
CONTRIBUTORS

GLORIA ALDEN is a Sophomore Elementary Education Major in the College of Education. She is the 1982 winner of the Virginia Perryman Award. This is her second appearance in the ICON.

JENNY BLAZEK is a Sophomore English Major in the College of Education. She is a "Theater Groupie" and a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. This marks her first appearance in the ICON.

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The Unicorn represents strength, judgment, and playfulness; the butterfly represents new life; grapes represent the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit; liliwumps represent friendship.