This issue of the Icon is dedicated to daffodils and lilacs, kites and balloons, fishing and swimming, baseball and tennis, and...you.
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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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The ICON would like to congratulate Constance Pierce 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.
Perilous Flight by Gale Gordon
The Tale of the Weaver

John Downing

I am the Weaver of Dreams--
On the silver loom of my brain
I weave a pattern of beauty and truth--
A pattern that can only be seen
Through the distorting prism of a poem.

Nineteen

Betsy Hoobler

I was singing, running down the orchard lane.
My feet were bare, with dust between the toes,
Sun in my hair. I leapt and sang again.
They stopped me. “What’s your song?” “Oh, morning glows
With miracles. There’s music in the wind,
Tender green music, and the stars of spring--
The apple-blossoms to the dark twig pinned--
Are out for me to wish on. I must sing!”
They looked at one another, and they smiled.
“Your flowers one by one will die away.
But you be happy now. You’re just a child!
The bloom will hide the barren branch a day.”
I plodded on. The wild, glad words I’d sung
Seemed foolish.

God, am I so very young?

To a Grandson

Glori Brown

Brown from the sun, wiry and lean
Tender and stubborn, straight-eyed
Thinking as far as the hill that you
Frail as the sapling, strong as the tree
Boy, your spirit is fresh as the grass
Boy, your dream is new as the past.
Square your slight shoulders!
Tighten your chin!
Don’t let the grown-ups see you with
They’ve long forgotten the things they
They don’t remember what makes
A Spring Picnic

Kathy Santone

Time offers for consideration many valuable moments; my precious ones and I find delight in the simplest of these. The cloudless sky, the nippy air, the water's noisy silence--the early Spring invites us three to grasp her rapture.

The beach we three did romp on just such a day. Smiling hearts we wore upon our faces; even as the cool wind blows; our happiness shone like the sun capturing the universe. We could not refuse the winging robins, shells or smooth stones, traveled driftwood, a prized possession. Gold-tinted waves rushed from the setting sun.

Sandwiches and cookies nourished our bodies; Nature--our souls. The promised fun--our happy and graceful clown--round and round she did spin and laugh; together we watched; I in my love's arms and Nature around us. Like spring showers, thoughts of ecstasy spilled over me, and I felt the kiss of peace.

To a Grandson

Gloria Young

Brown from the sun, wiry and lean,
Tender and stubborn, straight-eyed and mean.
Thinking as far as the hill that you see,
Frail as the sapling, strong as the tree.
Boy, your spirit is fresh as the grass.
Boy, your dream is new as the past.
Square your slight shoulders!
Tighten your chin!
Don't let the grown-ups see you within.
They've long forgotten the things that you know.
They don't remember what makes the wind blow.
Spring Storm
Eula Hyer

Debutante daffodils
Strike a haughty pose,
Their blonde curls
Tousled by the breeze;
They dream of ball gowns,
Wrist corsages, dance programs.
The wind orchestrates
As skies roil.
Cotillion cancelled!

Renee Licavoli

You reside in the field beyond my doorstep,
Too far away to see,
Too far away to touch,
But close enough to cherish.

HAIKU
Beth Perine

Moonlight sprawled on stone
Uninhabited ruins
Steps leading nowhere.

I am a lover of hills,
A lover of high places and windy skies
When I look down on the valley-cliff
And see the phantom ghosts of cattle
Moving through the gate to pasture
The vague beauty stirs a new loneliness
I want you with me at my side,
That you, too, might see
The misty ghosts of cattle fading with the wind
And the silent, white beauty of moonlight
Feel the soft coolness of the mountain grass
Smell the moist hill grass, and the Crumbly mountain loam.
That you might know the peace of night
And the lonesome cry of the loon
Floating across the mountain lake
That you might know the secrets of the trees
Whispering through the trees,
Thrill to the terrible storm
Thundering in the rain-drenched valley
And ponder at the mysterious silence
At night.

I am lover of hills and high places,
The lover of skies and winds;
But you are away, and I am lonely.

Note: John W. Downing's poetry is being published by his daughter, Holly C. Slack. His poems were written while he was stationed overseas during the war years.
Letter from John

John Downing

I am a lover of hills,
A lover of high places and windy skies.

When I look down on the valley-clinging mist
And see the phantom ghosts of cattle
Moving through the gate to pasture,
The vague beauty stirs a new loneliness in me;
I want you with me at my side,
That you, too, might see
The misty ghosts of cattle fading with the stars,
And the silent, white beauty of moonlit birch,
Feel the soft coolness of the mountain woods,
Smell the moist hill grass, and the
Crumbly mountain loam.
That you might know the peace of the hills,
And the lonesome cry of the loon
Floating across the mountain lake
That you might know the secrets of the wind
Whispering through the trees,
Thrust to the terrible storm
Thundering in the rain-drenched valleys,
And ponder at the mysterious silence of the hills...
At night.

I am lover of hills and high places,
The lover of skies and winds;
But you are away, and I am lonely.

Note: John W. Downing's poetry is being published posthumously by his daughter, Holly C. Slack. His poetry was written largely while he was stationed overseas during World War II. "Letter from John" was a poem enclosed in a love letter sent to his fiancee during the war years.
Unfinished Portrait

Elaine

See the sadness in their eyes
when they speak of you;
No illusion can change the fact
you're gone!
Only your grave is warmed
by the spring sun
not touching the coldness
below.

When seasons pass in their turn
My eyes relish the fall color
My cheeks feel winter's sting
My heart has cried in pain
and pounding with joy
accenting the days of the year
And while I've watched
the children grow,
I've surrendered my youth
to time.

You think I didn't know
you were broken apart
by hard times and hard
I knew --and know
because I lived
your yesterdays just as you
It's your tomorrows
that have passed unlived and
Not mine.
No more tears you cried, it's true
but neither did you know
another spring.

Renée

Across the great expanse
I stare
Trapped within a glance
I dare not look
Chance I become entangled in

Patterned Still Life by Ellie Steines

Published by Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries, 1979
Unfinished Portrait

Elaine M. Rogers

See the sadness in their eyes
when they speak of you;
No illusion can change the finality,
you’re gone!
Only your grave is warmed
by the spring sun
not touching the coldness
below.

When seasons pass in their turn--
My eyes relish the fall color,
My cheeks feel winter’s sting,
My heart has cried in pain
and pounded with joy
accenting the days of the years;
And while I’ve watched
the children grow,
I’ve surrendered my youth
to time.

You think I didn’t know
you were broken apart
by hard times and hard hearts--
I knew --and know
because I lived
your yesterdays just as you.
It’s your tomorrows
that have passed unlived and empty --
Not mine.
No more tears you cried, it’s true,
but neither did you know
another spring.

Renee Licavoli

Across the great expanse
I stare
Trapped within a glance
I dare not look
Chance I become entangled in those eyes.
"Off with his foot notes," cried the red queen of arts and sciences. "I'll type you to death," screamed Lady Kate of Chicago. "Watch out," yelled Duchess Citation, "I'll turn you into a fragment."

"Aw," said Alice, "You're nothing but a pack of cards (index)."

It had all started with the basketball. It was all he had wanted was a basketball. It didn't even have to be something he could play with outside with his friends. He had said how hard it was to make ends meet, that he would be lucky to have a birthday cake. Squid was on his way out to play, all the filth they contained, lying across the floor, and he saw was the image in his mind of the sin basket.

His mother could see the want in his eyes. She had ever had wanted, really. One year she had given him a baseball. It was $1.98 more. Another year of shoes; they were certainly not something he had wanted an electric football game, but they were. This year, though, he should have something he remembered. It was a fob watch that had detail, it also had a lovely hand-painted face behind the glass.

Squid was in school when his mother went to the pawnbroker shop. She thought the pawnbroker would only give her $12.00 for the watch; after she had been able to somehow save, she had a total sum of $16.00. The ticket stub in her shabby coat pocket. She was never given the money she said; she would never have the money and it was 79 years old--it had the date inscribed on it.

She stopped at the sporting goods store and the salesclerk told her the basketball would cost $4.96, the wrap would cost extra. She took the unwrapped basketball home from school, waiting for his mother to return home with the package. Avoiding the obstacle of the tenement hallway, they went into the store.

The incredulity of what he saw upon opening it in Squid's eyes; the ever-widening smile on his mother. He truly loved his solitary birthday gift.
THE BASKETBALL

Ted Pawcio

It had all started with the basketball. It would soon be his birthday and all he had wanted was a basketball. It didn't even have to be a leather one, just something he could play with outside with his friends. But his mother had said how hard it was to make ends meet; there were far too many bills to pay; he would be lucky to have a birthday cake.

Squid was on his way out to play, all the while thinking how nice it would be to show his friends his birthday ball. He didn't notice the litter strewn in the tenement hallway, nor did he see the overturned trashcans, with all the filth they contained, lying across the sidewalk. The only thing he saw was the image in his mind of the single coveted birthday gift, a basketball.

His mother could see the want in his eyes. There were few things he ever had wanted, really. One year she had given him a baseball bat, sans the baseball. It was $1.98 more. Another year she had gotten him a pair of shoes; they were certainly not something he had wanted then (he had wanted an electric football game), but they were something he needed. This year, though, he should have something he really wanted.

The watch had been handed down in her family ever since she could remember. It was a fob watch that had detailed inscription on the inside; it also had a lovely hand-painted face behind the Roman numerals.

Squid was in school when his mother went to the pawnshop. She knew that nothing was too good for her son, and she meant him to have the one gift he truly wanted. She thought the pawnbroker was ridiculous; the man would only give her $12.00 for the watch; added to the $2.15 she had been able to somehow save, she had a total sum of $14.15. She had put the ticket stub in her shabby coat pocket. She knew she had seen the last of the watch; she would never have the money to take it out of the shop, and it was 79 years old--it had the date inscribed on the back.

She stopped at the sporting goods store while walking home. The salesclerk told her the basketball would cost $13.56, including tax; gift wrap would cost extra. She took the unwrapped ball home to her son.

Squid was home from school, waiting for his mother, when she came home with the package. Avoiding the obstacles of litter strewn throughout the tenement hallway, they went into the shabby apartment.

The incredulity of what he saw upon opening the paper bag registered in Squid's eyes; the ever-widening smile on his face gave satisfaction to his mother. He truly loved his solitary birthday gift!
Patterns of Sun

Sandra Capeci

There were oranges on the tablecloth, in the sun...
and you were the only one who could peel a conversation from my toughened hide.
I watched the shadows lying 'cross your fingers on the cloth. Each made gigantic castings of your gestures which were soft.
And you spoke of what you believe in, what happens to you each year, this season, and the changes that could come, dead to fear, without end, if we'd bend, if we'd let them.
I listened to your circles and I watched the shadows change around the bright orange oranges that begged to be deveined.
When they were warm from sitting on the cloth and in the sun, I knew I had to peel them just to watch their juices run.
No one dared admit it, no one dared complain that I had broken patterns of the shadows on the plane.
The cloth lay creased for each to see, the peels they were undone. And looking up into your eyes I found reflected sun.
Milestone

Michelle Griffiths

I stand and look at the gravestone
All filled out
with both of their names
and all of the dates

The wind has blown the pages of the final chapters
Past me
so fast that I didn’t get to read them.

I close the back cover of the book
And it makes a loud, hollow sound.

EVOLUTION

Eula Hyer

A trip
to Neptune's kingdom
through a conch shell:
Salt air,
Seaweed,
Sand dunes, slipping seaward;
A legacy
of the past
Married--
to the urgency
of the present;
An uncertain future
Obscured--
by ecological rape.

So loud the silence, and it speaks
Of loneliness and heartbreak.
And the mind's sad whispers:
No human voice, no motor
No sounding knock upon the door.
The silence speaks of voices:
Of friends who've gone away.
It tells of letters never written
And calls we've never made.
It tells of children grown and
And toys all stored away.
So stilled the sound, the silence,
With thoughts of yesterday.

Hot Iron-Cold Sweat by Marty Cohol
SO STILL THE SOUND
Viola Smith

So loud the silence, and it speaks to me
Of loneliness and heartbreak
And the mind’s sad whispering.
No human voice, no motor’s roar
No sounding knock upon the door.
The silence speaks of voices stilled
Of friends who’ve gone away,
It tells of letters never writ
And calls we’ve never made.
It tells of children grown and gone
And toys all stored away.
So stilled the sound, the silence loud
With thoughts of yesterday.
If the sun be warm tomorrow,
I'll climb three hills
To where a meditative sky
Rests his chin upon their tops,
Bare my body to the sun,
And let its golden liquor
Seep through my skin
Down... deep and deep
Until my bones are gold,
My blood is hot with light,
And when the sun has set
I'll turn my face toward town
And stagger home--
Magnificently drunk; alive;
Aware of shadows crossing through
The deep colored smell of turned
I shall know the silence of the hur
And the song of each tree.
Oh, I would turn my face up to the
And kneel, and make my prayer a
To you, forgetting hate, and sorrow
If but the sun would shine tomorrow
Therapy

John Downing

If the sun be warm tomorrow,
I'll climb three hills
To where a meditative sky
Rests his chin upon their tops,
Bare my body to the sun,
And let its golden liquor
Seep through my skin
Down...deep and deep
Until my bones are gold,
My blood is hot with light,
And when the sun has set
I'll turn my face toward town
And stagger home--
Magnificently drunk; alive;
Aware of shadows crossing through the hollows,
The deep colored smell of turned earth.
I shall know the silence of the hungry stone,
And the song of each tree.
Oh, I would turn my face up to the sun
And kneel, and make my prayer and run
To you, forgetting hate, and sorrow
If but the sun would shine tomorrow!
Sundays at the V.A.
by Constance Pierce

My father is an old soldier,
Taking too long to fade away.
Too long for him:
Whose buddies come no more,
Whose mouth is bereft of language,
Whose leg hangs like a stone in a metal sling.
Too long for me:
I sink into the hospital,
The warehouse of missing parts,
To offer a tith of guilt and time.

Penitent of my health,
I wind through halls of amputees and old men--
Survivors of Normandy and Anzio,
The creditors of my easy sleep;
Of Quang-tri and Vinh-long,
The hacked symbols of a nation's shifty reason:
There but for a quirk of sex go I.

Beyond shame they scuttle along,
Strung with plastic urinals;
Neutered and used to the eyes of strangers,
They allow their robes to flap,
Expose their stumps,
Never meet your eyes.

Beyond them down the hall,
Daddy (who was hard, a mountain man
From West -- by god -- Virginia,
Veteran of Schofield and New Caledonia,
Stripe a year, Army all the way)
Waves his good hand high
And begins a frantic coordination
Of flesh and mechanism,
Advancing like a half-track,
A thing unto his machine.
I bend to kiss his skull,
Bony case of his broken brain;
I see the veins and wonder
Which one leads to the black clot
That traps his past
And steals the moment as he creates it.

As always, we head for the canteen,
Tires squeaking on linoleum,
Bearing down on nurses that escape a bad eye.
He wheels up to a booth by the window
And waits for me to bring the tray,

Squinting at his scrambled watch.
I come with cakes and root beer
("Beer" -- a name not quite forgotten
Thus relished with a feeble wink,
A wet smacking),

Puckering
His lips around the straw,
He drinks in long swigs,
Careful not to dribble.
When the cup is sweating on the table,
He uses the good hand to lift the badly
That is full of dead blood,
Then lets it drop in his lap,
It lies there like a swollen fish.
He smiles to show me
It is a thing separate,
Not of him, not of our communion.
But I am shamed that he must waste
Disintegrate while he still lives in it.

Out the window a few wafers
Of snow drift down and drift up,
And there is a discarded spruce
Lying on its side in the khaki grass,
Tangled with tinsel.
"Get used to it,"
Ollie the paraplegic who shares his room,
Has told him. "You're going to be
Looking out a window the rest of your life.

We crumble our napkins into the cup
He digs his heel into the floor
And swings his chair around,
Smooth as a turret.

By the elevator I inhale his odor
Of baby powder and spilled food,
Rest my hand on the soft flannel of
He kisses my fingers:
The old soldier, the bumbling cavalier
Giving me absolution
That never lasts the week.

We pose:
Father and daughter, mother and child
A portrait for Gray Ladies
To smile over on their way home.
I step into the box
And watch its doors compress him,
Feel myself absorbed into his back
Which exempts only the frail silks
That tie one week to the next
On a hazy calendar of apterus time.
Squinting at his scrambled watch.
I come with cakes and root beer
(“Beer” – a name not quite forgotten;
Thus relished with a feeble wink,
A wet smacking). Puckering
His lips around the straw,
He drinks in long swigs,
Careful not to dribble.
When the cup is sweating on the table,
He uses the good hand to lift the bad one
That is full of dead blood,
Then lets it drop in his lap.
It lies there like a swollen fish.
He smiles to show me
It is a thing separate,
Not of him, not of our communion.
But I am shamed that he must watch his body
Disintegrate while he still lives in it.

Out the window a few wafers
Of snow drift down and drift up,
And there is a discarded spruce
Lying on its side in the khaki grass,
Tangled with tinsel.
“Get used to it,”
Ollie the paraplegic who shares his room
Has told him. “You’re going to be
Looking out a window the rest of your life.”

We crumble our napkins into the cups.
He digs his heel into the floor
And swings his chair around,
Smooth as a turret.
By the elevator I inhale his odor
Of baby powder and spilt food,
Rest my hand on the soft flannel of his pajamas.
He kisses my fingers:
The old soldier, the bumbling cavalier,
Giving me absolution
That never lasts the week.

We pose:
Father and daughter, mother and child,
A portrait for Gray Ladies
To smile over on their way home.
I step into the box
And watch its doors compress him,
Feel myself absorbed into his black and bloody mire
Which exempts only the frail silks
That tie one week to the next
On a hazy calendar of apterus time.
Somber Adirondack night in the cold and whitewashed rain while the car rolls to a sputtering wipers clacking codes of arrival as the last family squints in the dark. The house is deserted, lonely in a U.S. 30 running by a grey shag of white lines and furniture salesmen passing the lights without so much as a glance, merely a tired speedometer and three gargled martinis urging them on to shelter in the hot and sweaty city arms. Up here, the door creaks open, as the last family smells leftover shredded wheat and tuna fish adorning mouse-dropped kitchen shelves. For the unsophisticated the freezing toilet-seat becomes a talisman for survival, a bond of holy necessity. Hauling the T.V. over the scaffold like a newly-bought bride as the vast display of Samsonite creeps stealthily from the trunk onto chairs and oaken limbs. Thinking of sleep the noisy springs sag depressingly. The last family snores the morning reads the Times, sends post cards of how much fun, and then realizes that arrival is the best part of getting away.
VACATION BEYOND THE TIMBERLINE

Paul Schoenberg

Somber Adirondack night
in the cold and whitewashed rain
while the car rolls to a sputtering stop,
wipers clacking codes of arrival
as the last family squints in the dark.
The house is deserted, lonely in a hick town;
U.S. 30 running by
a grey shag of white lines
and furniture salesmen
passing the lights
without so much as a glance,
merely a tired speedometer
and three gargled martinis
urging them on to shelter
in the hot and sweaty city arms.
Up here, the door creaks open,
as the last family smells
leftover shredded wheat
and tuna fish adorning
mouse-dropped kitchen shelves.
For the unsophisticated
the freezing toilet-seat
becomes a talisman for survival,
wedding flesh and frame,
a bond of holy necessity.
Hauling the T.V. over the scaffold
like a newly-bought bride
as the vast display of Samsonite
creeps stealthily from the trunk
onto chairs and oaken limbs.
Thinking of sleep
the noisy springs sag depressingly.
The last family snores the morning,
reads the Times, sends post cards
of how much fun, and then
realizes that arrival
is the best part
of getting away.
Point of View

"Does the road wind up-hill all the way?"
"Yes, to the very end." (Christina Rossetti)

Gloria Young

The poet did not understand the curve
earth's principle
the fluid arc of
ascent
incalculable point
descent
invisible form merging into
circle
unseen but measurable,
theoretical.

When does going up become
coming down?
The sun rises and sets
only eyelids are
different,
Resistant toward the
downward tread.
Closing the circle
as aesthetic
as any completion,
theoretical.

Elaine M. Rogers

This is but one truth I know --
You can never go and be truly gone
For you can never escape
The paper mirror I captured you on.

A STROLL THROUGH

One Step Forward . . .

I am the innocence of babes
Living in a surrounding of warmth
Feeling the joy of new love.

Two Steps Forward . . .

Experiencing the pride and pain that come
Confused with changes about and within
Longing to grow older.

Three Steps Forward . . .

I am now older
Facing, once again, new surroundings
Filled with new fears that are harder too
Longing to be able to take

Two Steps Backwards . . .

On The Other Hand

John

If it rains tonight
I'll move my bed upstairs;
Lie there close to the roof;
Thinking, just something thin between
I will lie there
And ponder in an adolescent way
Why rain, making a small thunder sound
Should be a satisfactory accompaniment
To dreams.
A STROLL THROUGH LIFE

Vicki LaVelle

One Step Forward...

I am the innocence of babes
Living in a surrounding of warmth
Feeling the joy of new love.

Two Steps Forward...

Experiencing the pride and pain that comes with learning
Confused with changes about and within me
Longing to grow older.

Three Steps Forward...

I am now older
Facing, once again, new surroundings and love
Filled with new fears that are harder to cope with
Longing to be able to take

Two Steps Backwards...

On The Other Hand

John Downing

If it rains tonight
I'll move my bed upstairs;
Lie there close to the roof;
Thinking; just something thin between me and rain.
I will lie there
And ponder in an adolescent way
Why rain, making a small thunder above my head,
Should be a satisfactory accompaniment
To dreams.
RELIEF
Barbara Spitzer Young

Off it comes;
To the floor it goes;
Careless.

There it lies;
Limp and unshapely
Burdenless.

Here I stand;
Obesely grinning;
Girdleless.

For My Lost Love:  A Sonnet
Bet

A sonnet's made of fourteen rhyming
That tell of love, or death, or weal, or
I love iambics and their ringing chim
So I'll write you, my love, who come
My heart was like a bird within my b
You pulled its trembling wings off, o
You burned my fingers when you fi
My hand, and now I've nothing but
When first we met, my eyes pipped
I ran my legs off--now I've just a stu
You once skinned me alive to do y
Twisted my arm--and threw it on the
And with no heart, or hands, or eyes
Or you--I'm not attractively tucked i
RELIÈF

Barbara Savage

Off it comes;
To the floor it goes;
Careless.

There it lies;
Limp and unshapely;
Burdenless.

Here I stand;
Obesely grinning;
Girdleless.

For My Lost Love: A Sonnet

Betsy Hoobler

A sonnet's made of fourteen rhyming lines
That tell of love, or death, or weal, or woe.
I love iambics and their ringing chimes,
So I'll write you, my love, who came to go.
My heart was like a bird within my breast--
You pulled its trembling wings off, one by one.
You burned my fingers when you fiercely pressed
My hand, and now I've nothing but a thumb.
When first we met, my eyes popped out. Blind, still
I ran my legs off--now I've just a stump.
You once skinned me alive to do your will;
Twisted my arm--and threw it on the dump.
And with no heart, or hands, or eyes, or skin,
Or you--I'm not attractively tucked in!
When I remember my childhood, in this very young house by Proserpine Snug (along with a garden plot near the cabin in Tours), it seems that I and my sister dragonflies imbedded in some jewel, moving slowly. Soma from childhood; she was a beautiful, somber girl whose mother dressed her always in dark, rich royal blue jumpers, hunter’s green skirts and a navy velvet dress which came to her calves, with trousers underneath and shiny black shoes. Her hair was tied with a blue ribbon, and for some reason my movement of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, the first one. Her eyes were dark and sad, and her steps, if you year old child, were stately. She must have heard me laughing Leom to distinguish me from the other, was always laughing, always good tempered. Yet myself as somber in my inner soul as Soma, and my earliest memory.

I particularly remember her descending the long hall—it was carpeted in a maroon floral print then, navy velvet dress which came to her calves, with trousers underneath and shiny black shoes. Her hair was tied with a blue ribbon, and for some reason my movement of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, the first one. Her eyes were dark and sad, and her steps, if you year old child, were stately. She must have heard me laughing Leom to distinguish me from the other, was always laughing, always good tempered. Yet myself as somber in my inner soul as Soma, and my earliest memory.

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Proserpine Snug

Mary T. Brizzi

When I remember my childhood, in this very house, the house owned by Proserpine Snug (along with a garden plot near the river and a small cabin in Tours), it seems that I and my sisters and cousins were like dragonflies imbedded in some jewel, moving slowly or not at all. I knew Soma from childhood; she was a beautiful, somber, black-haired child whose mother dressed her always in dark, rich colors, red velvet gowns, royal blue jumpers, hunter's green skirts and cardigans. My mother (rather foster mother, since I was raised by my father's sister, my mother having died when I was eighteen months old) always bought me dresses of pale lawn and linen, covered with pastel primroses and daisies. They called me Laughing Leom to distinguish me from the other Leom girls because I was always laughing, always good tempered. Yet in truth I remember myself as somber in my inner soul as Soma, and we were playmates from my earliest memory.

I particularly remember her descending the long staircase in the front hall—it was carpeted in a maroon floral print then—and she was dressed in a navy velvet dress which came to her calves, with little eyelet embroidered trousers underneath and shiny black shoes. Her hair was brushed back and tied with a blue ribbon, and for some reason music was playing—the third movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, I think, barbarian music. Her eyes were dark and sad, and her steps, if you can imagine it in an eight year old child, were stately. She must have heard the music even as I did, for we often read each other's thoughts. I thought, that is very ancient music, music from before the Gay Wars. Odd that so much from the barbarians should have perished—all their fiction and poetry and operas and even most paintings and sculptures (for I imagined that they had those, too)—but not this music. And the antiquity of the music, contrasted to Soma's fragile transient youth, put me in mind that Proserpine Snug was my home forever, as it had been my foster mother's home, and my grandmother's, and my cousin's, and Soma's.

Indeed, Soma was my cousin, too, though we were raised almost like sisters. When I went away to school, it was Soma, and especially the memory of Soma in that navy velvet dress descending the stairs to music, who was an emblem of home to me. I am very inclined to home sickness; perhaps it was no accident, then, that I fell in love with my cousin Soma, and she became my legal mate.
She was a tiny woman, dusty and brittle-eyed, lost in a field of wrinkles, gazed out at chair by the window. Occasionally she pulled a sweater or ran a hand through her white hair.

When the car came up through the pines, she watched from behind the curtains. A slender jacket climbed from the sedan and strode up the path.

When he knocked she let him wait, then answered, "Cavendish, what do you want?"

He smiled. "Hello, Mrs. Dickens. Just parked and say hello." He was tall with longish brown unruly.

"You weren't. That road down there doesn't look used by much," he said.

"All right. I came out to see you."

"What do you want?"

"Well, I just wondered how you were doing."

"I'm doing okay."

"Glad to hear it." He looked around. "Here." The decaying cottage sat on a knoll, surrounded by oaks. In the front yard a dying willow stood leathery.

"It's a dump."

"Well, maybe it could use a little paint."

She snorted. "When are you going to shave?"

Hands in pockets, he shrugged.

"I guess you might as well come in."

It was a small room, cluttered with bric-a-brac. The far wall lined with worn books. She took them from a low easy chair and threw them on the floor.

"Sit down."

"Oh, I can't stay."

"Sit down!"

"I am a little tired." And he sat.

She snapped on a lamp and sat gnome-like in a form rocker. "You look terrible, Cavendish."

"I suppose I am off my feed a little. But you should see yourself.""Hell, I'm ready for the glue factory."

"Nonsense. You're only seventy-two."

"Four. And teaching breaks you down."

"You're telling me."

"You still letting your classes run all over you.
AN EARLY FALL

Gary Robinson

She was a tiny woman, dusty and brittle like old newspaper. Her eyes, lost in a field of wrinkles, gazed out at the ashen day from the cane chair by the window. Occasionally she plucked at her oversized gray sweater or ran a hand through her white hair.

When the car came up through the pines, she struggled to her feet and watched from behind the curtains. A slender man in a frayed sports jacket climbed from the sedan and strode up the stone-paved walk.

When he knocked she let him wait, then threw open the door. “Cavendish, what do you want?”

He smiled. “Hello, Mrs. Dickens. Just passing by and thought I’d stop and say hello.” He was tall with longish brown hair, sun-streaked and unruly.

“You weren’t. That road down there doesn’t go anywhere.”

“All right. I came out to see you.”

“What do you want?”

“Well, I just wondered how you were doing.”

“I’m doing okay.”

“Glad to hear it.” He looked around. “Nice little place you’ve got here.” The decaying cottage sat on a knoll, surrounded by pines and pin oaks. In the front yard a dying willow stood lone sentinel.

“It’s a dump.”

“Well, maybe it could use a little paint.”

She snorted. “When are you going to shave that moustache?”

Hands in pockets, he shrugged.

“I guess you might as well come in.”

It was a small room, cluttered with bric-a-brac and newspapers, the far wall lined with worn books. She took a stack of dusty magazines from a low easy chair and threw them on the floor.

“Sit down.”

“Oh, I can’t stay.”

“Sit down!”

“I am a little tired.” And he sat.

She snapped on a lamp and sat gnome-like, peering at him from a platform rocker. “You look terrible, Cavendish.”

“I suppose I am off my feed a little. But you’re looking good.”

“Hell, I’m ready for the glue factory.”

“Nonsense. You’re only seventy-two.”

“Four. And teaching breaks you down.”

“You’re telling me.”

“You still letting your classes run all over you?”
"Keeping them just this side of total anarchy."

She nodded, looking away. "I don't like company. I'm too busy."

He ran a hand over the chair arm. "I can't stay. I was...uh, just a little lonely and thought I'd say hi." He started to rise.

"Sit still. I can give you a few minutes." She shook her head. "God, you do look terrible. Here, let me get you some pie." She rose and hobbled to the kitchen.

"You come out here."

He went through the curtain to the tiny kitchen and sat at the table. She put the pie on a chipped china dish in front of him and sat down.

"It's cherry. Last piece. The dog got the rest."

"Well, here. I don't want to take the last of it."

"I don't eat that crap."

"Oh."

While he ate she stared out the window, watching leaves fall on the side lawn. "It looks like an early fall." It was quiet for a while. "I hate fall."

"You always said it was your favorite time of year. You should be able to relax and enjoy it now. How many years did you teach?"

"Forty-nine. I'm very busy. That's why the house's such a mess. I have too much gardening to do."

The gardens are about done. You can take it easy now. Spend a lazy winter inside." Outside, a cold wind hummed around the downspouts.

"They made me quit, you know." She looked at him with tired eyes.

"You deserve a rest, Mrs. Dickens."

"My name's Nan." She broke a loose thread from her sleeve. "You want a drink?"

"No, thank you."

At the cupboard, she said, "Wont hurt you. I'll put lead in your pencil." She opened the door to reveal a shelf lined with bourbon.

"No, really. Thanks anyway."

She took out a shot glass, filled it and drank, coughed. "Phew!"

"That's pretty strong stuff."

"Ah, it's half water anymore. How are things in the library?" She put the glass in the sink, came back and sat.

"Not the same since you left, of course. But Miss Lippman's doing the best she can."

"You still diddling her?"

He coughed and went green, picked up the napkin, wiped his mouth.

"Well, I...uh." He laid the napkin down. "...Yes." He went back to the pie, not looking at her. After a while, he said, "You must miss school."

It was quiet, then she said, "I'm too busy. I don't miss anyone. I don't like people, you know." Her tiny arm lay extended on the table, as if reaching out to him. "I don't have to live in luxury."

"I'm sure you do. Are you ready for winter?"

"Who's ever ready for winter?"

"How do you heat?"

She gestured toward the other room. "Wood."

"Who chops your wood?"

She glared. "Well, I do, of course. Look off your sleeve."

She struggled to her feet and left the room, cradled a maple box sewing kit.

"Nan, you don't have to-"

"Oh, shut up." She sat next to him, took out a cup with her teeth. "I want you to know, I don't like to cook. I never was one of the knitters and,"

"I'm sure you weren't."

She squinted at the needle. "Here, you do this."

He threaded it. "Do you want me to take over?"

"No. Just sit still!" She jammed the needle into the wood and distracted her mind from the girls what women's lib was telling her. "I was just- I couldn't live all by myself when Albert died."

"All of it?"

"That's what I said, wasn't it?" And I built it!"

"No bathroom?"

"No running water. Don't need it. There's more to being a good woman than being a man's mattress."

"I will."

"No you won't." She knocked off the thread. "I'm busy." Looking at his watch, he stood. "Thanks a lot."

She waved him out of the room. "You run your own/ I'm very busy."

In the living room, she went to the piano, steering him into the easy chair. "Did you see my wood?"

"I didn't know you have children."

"Had." She pulled a huge leather-bound book and drew the cane chair up next to his. Patting the cushion of the willow. "My entire life's in here. There are young. I was pretty once. I wasn't always ugly."

"You're not ugly."

"I had boyfriends. Lots of them." She sighed.

"Do you have any idea what it's like to outlive"
as if reaching out to him. “I don’t have to live way out here. I like it.”
“I’m sure you do. Are you ready for winter?”
“Who’s ever ready for winter?”
“How do you heat?”
She gestured toward the other room. “Woodburner. It’s all I need.”
“Who chops your wood?”
She glared. “Well, I do, of course. Look here, the button’s coming off your sleeve.”
She struggled to her feet and left the room. When she returned she cradled a maple box sewing kit.
“Nan, you don’t have to—”
“Oh, shut up.” She sat next to him, took out brown thread and broke it with her teeth. “I want you to know, I detest knitting, and I don’t like to cook. I never was one of the knitters and darners.”
“I’m sure you weren’t.”
She squinted at the needle. “Here, you do this.”
He threaded it. “Do you want me to take off my jacket?”
“No. Just sit still!” She jammed the needle into the sleeve. “I could have told these girls what women’s lib was twenty years ago. I built this house all by myself when Albert died.”
“All of it?”
“That’s what I said, wasn’t it?” And I built that outhouse out there.”
“No bathroom?”
“No running water. Don’t need it. There’s a pump out back.” She squinted at the button. “Hold still. You ought to tell that Lippman girl there’s more to being a good woman than beating the stuffings out of a man’s mattress.”
“I will.”
“No you won’t.” She knotted off the thread. “There.”
Looking at his watch, he stood. “Thanks a million, Nan, I—”
She waved him out of the room. “You run along. You’re keeping me from my work. I’m very busy.” In the living room she caught him by the elbow, steering him into the easy chair. “Did I ever show you pictures of my boys?”
“I didn’t know you have children.”
“Had.” She pulled a huge leather-bound album from the bookshelf, drew the cane chair up next to his. Patting the album, she gazed out at the willow. “My entire life’s in here. There are pictures of me when I was young. I was pretty once. I wasn’t always ugly.”
“You’re not ugly.”
“I had boyfriends. Lots of them.” She sighed. “And there are pictures of Albert, and Ward, and Marshall.” She turned to him, her eyes watery. “Do you have any idea what it’s like to outlive your children?”
“No,” he whispered.
They sat looking at the closed album on her lap. “I haven’t opened this album in five years.” She ran a bony hand over the front, got up and, crossing the room, slid it back onto the shelf. “You’ll be late.”
“Yes.”
She went out the front and down the walk with him to where golden leaves drifted in the gravel drive.
At the car, he said, “That willow must be beautiful in summer.”
“I planted that when we first moved here. It’s dying now. Maybe it’s just getting old.” Clouds massed to the northwest, and the sky had gone a deep leaden gray. Shivering, she pulled the limp sweater about her and spoke to him through the open window, clinging to the door. “Like I said, I don’t have much time for company. I’ve got leaves to rake.” She looked away to the hills. “But I guess you can come back if you’re lonely.”
He smiled, starting the engine. “You’re right, it does look like an early fall.”
She stepped back, shivering.
As he coasted down through the pines, he looked back. She huddled beneath the willow, plucking at the oversized sweater.

Stylized Twig by Dee Phillips

Some-Juan by Sandy Capecci
Some-Juan by Sandy Capecci

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SUNNY RITCHIE of Kentland, Indiana and Amherst, Ohio both received an honorarium from Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award Show, "Hart 8:30 a.m." and Richard Zbornik for "Hart Crane and friends." Our grateful appreciation is extended to Mrs. Zbornik for her assistance.
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SUNNY RITCHIE of Kentland, Indiana and RICHARD ZBORNIK of Amherst, Ohio both received an honorable mention in this year’s Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award—Sunny Ritchie for “July 29, 8:30 a.m.” and Richard Zbornik for “Hiram (pop. 652)”. Our grateful appreciation is extended to Mrs. Carol J. Perich for her typing assistance.
HOW SUBMISSIONS ARE SELECTED

Works to be considered for publication are submitted to Mrs. Hoobler, ICON faculty advisor. She substitutes, in place of the submitter’s name, a number; thus only she knows the identity of the individual authors. Each staff member is then given a xeroxed copy of each submission to be considered for the current issue. After final selections are made, the staff’s copies are returned to Mrs. Hoobler and destroyed, thereby prohibiting the circulation of unauthorized copies of anyone’s works. The final step in the selection of material is the staff selection meeting, when the ICON staff in its entirety meets to discuss and vote upon the final selections for publication. This choice is the sole decision of the student staff. Only after the final selections have been made does the advisor reveal the identity of those individuals whose works have been chosen.

The art submissions are given a number and at the staff selection meeting, each member rates them accordingly. The scores are then averaged and the highest rated pieces of artwork are accepted for publication.

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