Spring 1980

ICON Spring 1980

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ICON

Spring, 1980

VOLUME XVI

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

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

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The ICON would like to congratulate Patricia Dobler on winning the Hart Crane Memorial Poetry Award. Honorable mention is extended to Duane Matthew Dodson for his poem. This award and the High School Poetry Contest are co-ordinated through the efforts of Professor Mary Ann Lowry.

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

by Harold A. Holmes

I'd rather walk in dying Winter's star-lit night
Than to sit at home and an assignment write... . .

It is sad to see a harsh Winter die,
The ice coated trees sway, and seem to sigh.
I gaze at the Evening Star up so high,
And see the blinking lights of a jet go by.
That which was once beautiful soft, white snow
Is messy slush. Into the sewer it does flow.
Soon buds on trees, and flow'rs, will do their thing,
This earth's beauty to us they shall bring. Yes!
I'd rather walk in dying Winter's star-lit night
Than to sit at home and an assignment write... . .

so there.

EXCUSE FOR NOT WRITING FOR THE "CREATIVE WRITING CLUB."

by Evelina L. Smith

I sat staring simply starry-eyed at my stupendous navel which was surreptitiously sprouting a sanguinary sansevieria that was becoming rapidly enamoured of my voluptuous body.

Being sapient, I cup up the sanguine sansevieria, tossed one hell of a salad, became satiated from the surfeit of red greenery, lost all inclination to write, thus avoiding a splurge into a spiral of supererogation! ! ! !

A THOUGHT FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS TO PONDER WHILE GRADING PAPERS:

by Grace B. Toro

The world's greatest writers have been quoted as saying that they have stared at their typewriters for days at a time unable to produce a single line. Therefore, to expect freshman students to write brilliant compositions on the spur of the moment seems a bit much.
THE JUGGLER'S VILLANELLE

By Mary Ann Lowry

Here on an empty stage I stand
Waiting to play the juggler's game;
And from the wings an unknown hand

Flings eight balls and a command:
"Revolve them all to gain your fame."
Here on an empty stage I stand.

A place become no longer bland.
The pressure's on; I want no shame.
And from the wings that unknown hand

Throws two more balls for sleight-of-hand.
I take in ten with no acclaim.
Here on an empty stage I stand

Now a place of reprimand.
I cannot cope and who's to blame?
And from the wings that unknown hand

Casts two more balls; I must expand
And take in twelve with arms grown lame.
Here on an empty stage I stand,
And from the wings that unknown hand...
Credo For April

by John Downing

If through this trap it strayingly may rove
Love still evades the analytic probe,
Whose shocking fingers delicately move
Within the stuttering electric tube.

Beloved, if the brittle moment come
When April’s subtle reason can be cast
In type and published daily on the street,
Then we are done, and time for loving past.

But April’s now; and I do say thereof:
Forever love—and always love—and love.

At Sea
December 2, 1945

A MIND SET FREE

by Sarah Rider

Another dimension of time
A world set apart
Where birds don’t sing
And lovers don’t love
And darkness surrounds us all.

A grey dawn breaks
With promises anew
Of life starting over
With slates wiped clean
And wishes come true.

Where people remember
Their pain no more
A land of sunshine
With fears set free
And darkness gone all before.

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Come sit here by me, Mary, have your tea
And tell me why these students grieve me so:
The ragged children with their burned-out dreams
(At least they still can dream, or hold a dream.)
The wild-eyed boy aspiring to be Pope
(Madness can take far crueler twists than this!)
Or--most--the ladies, fifty, plumpish, shy,
Left lonely in a world they never made
Who twist their ringless hands and humbly try
To understand just why their themes bleed red
Or why their husbands left (at least they cry).
Now you can enter into all these worlds,
Take out a symbol, or a metaphor,
A bit of lace, a high-heeled boot, a plot--
Enjoy them where they are, love what they are.

But I--I yearn to take my students home.
I have a heavy Maytag waiting there.
I'd stuff them in head-first--boots, books, and all,
And turn the dial to hot, the speed to fast;
Add soap, add bleach, and cycle them complete.
Then I would hang them on the line to dry.
I'd starch them, iron them, send them off to church
(Episcopal preferred), and get them jobs
In nice clean offices.

I'd wash away
Their patches, comma faults, and greasy hair.
But would the dreams go swirling down the drain?
Would I iron out the wrinkles of their joy
As well as sorrow?

Mary, drink your tea.

I'll wash the cups.
MENTOR
by Mary T. Brizzi

Now and then there's a student, talented, special, and I become his mentor. I coach him through Grad Records; I read his essays and his poetry; I nod solemnly at his macho poses over triumphs and failures in the romantic line. He's my student. My student! not in the least like having a son. Braver, more stiff lipped andivy league. And I didn't need maternity clothes. I imagine myself smug and pleased when he gets his first teaching job, when he publishes an article or a poem (though God forbid he should overreach me, the pup). And imitating some imaginary prof and a mythical university in England or Boston, I serve him sherry, or lunch sophisticatedly with him over Eliot and Woolf, with a secret giggle at Bukowski. He is not allowed, however, to talk Rod McKuen or Kahil Gibran to me. He knows that; but I suspect he secretly hides a cache of that trash in his room and reads it to his girls, but with the wit not to imitate it. At least in front of me. He will graduate, get a hood, and teach dozens of sections of comp, and I hope he will be somebody’s mentor and find it an easier version of fatherhood.

In the meantime, it is my job to make sure that in the same order, and at the same age, with the same blind naiveté, he makes exactly the same mistakes I made.
Helpless

_by John Downing_

Must one build continually,
Exactly accurate dreams,
More frailly slim
Than slender girls who danced in Babylon
While the caught moon
Paced her cage of hand-carved stars?

I build dreams and watch them fall...
Shatter in the dust,
Nor know the reason;
I build because I must.

Dreamers

_by Renee Licavoli_

Disillusioned dreamers are but vagabonds,
Drifting along placid seas, searching for
Cresting waves on which to ride out fantasies,
Finding only mirrored pools, shattered by
The falling rain.
Steel Dream Prophecy
an elegy

by Sue Linville

The gloaming winter wind was iced
With doleful moans of pelting sleet
As it extended beyond its delimited time
And faded into infinity

The red glow of the outer light convulsed
Reflecting on her hot moist cheek
In sleep she tossed the rumblings of a dream
Sweat melted down across her lash

Heavy red iron lashed out quickly
In the hissing steam of the 56 inch mill
He sauntered by the machinery’s roaring
A lewd joke was told
He laughed
And wiped his brow with a well-worked sleeve

A shrouded dream above, she quivered
Overshadowing prior remembrances
Its mantic fingers reached out slowly
She rolled her back to the night air’s chill

A catwalking toolman in a squatting pose
Suspended cautiously above the cooling swelter
His greased hands labored for attentive thoughts
His son’s game tonight?
He turned
And exposed, a sodden stain emerging

Visions appeared in uncontrolled sequence
She tried to escape from the man’s screaming cry
He fell in the darkness toward the stifling fire
An anxious awakening from a dream’s morbid image

Unnoticed metal approaching too swiftly
Unimpeded by his life’s delicate frame
He gasped a last breath as darkness descended
A limb’s existence severed
He fell
To the fiery ingots of his last 30 years

Veteran’s blanket, a well-creased flag
Folded neatly amid cold and tears
Revealing silver cherubs in silent flight
An ethereal journey already begun
Solitude

by Gail Hedden

What does compel me to seek solitude
In lonely places of forest and field?
What feeling bids to me this attitude
That to daily seclusion I must yield?
I have only to sit beneath a tree,
Or spend a quiet moment by the shore,
And my mind in beauty becomes free
And my soul cries for more, for more.
When pacing the restless shores of my life,
I speak with gulls instead of my own kind.
In the green fields I dream without strife,
And thought of ancient times swim in my mind.
Leave me, I pray, alone in my silence,
Why should I speak with souls of violence.
Spring Planting

by Ted Pawcio

I had a lover once or twice like you.
My eyes saw their eyes as star sapphires
Though their fruits were not quite seasoned yet, in spring
They gave me liberation from my youth.

And now my spring is moving on to summer.
My time of planting one day will have passed.
The days of tending, nurturing, should be mine;
Yet I don’t want a garden I must plough.

When my autumn comes I won’t regret
Not having had the usual plantings of spring.
I will have no fruits season in my time;
I will always be an original piece.

And now you’re in the summer of your life
With autumn hovering around the corner.
Like a pregnant moon up in the sky.
In quiet solitude I contemplate you.

Did your path part before you went your way
And did the foliage, one by one, come--
Each separate, with its own flowering?
Come winter, I will reap no harvest.
What Is Loneliness?

by Pam Bush

There was once a man whose whole life revolved around his wife and family. As time passed, his children left home one by one, until there were just he and his wife left together. This was fine, because as long as they had each other, they were happy. But when the old man's wife died, his world was shattered; he didn't know how he could go on living without her.

The time after the funeral he spent trying to recover. This was extremely difficult for him because everywhere he looked, there was something that reminded him of her—a special song or a joke they had shared. To make matters worse, it was fall, which had always been her favorite season. She would spend hours gazing out the kitchen window, marveling at the array of colored autumn leaves. He tried to keep busy, to keep his mind occupied. He kept the yard so neat and free of the falling leaves that it seemed as if there were no trees at all. All the jobs which he had put off for months, he now had time to do. But always, no matter what he was doing, his mind wandered back to thoughts of his beloved wife.

The three children tried to help. They were very sympathetic and understanding at first. They tried to include him in as many of their activities as they could. Every Sunday, one of them would pick him up and take him to church and then have him stay for dinner. He tried to be appreciative; but he just couldn't understand how his children, his own flesh and blood, could seem so indifferent to the loss of their mother. He felt such a great emptiness inside, and they seemed not even to miss her.

Even with all that the children tried to do, he was still alone a good part of the time. They had their own lives and families and could not spend all of their time catering to the whims of a grumpy old man. Sometimes they didn't even try because they were tired of trying to please him when it seemed utterly impossible. Many times, one of them would offer to take him somewhere and he would refuse, preferring to sit in his overstuffed armchair, staring into space and feeling sorry for himself. He spent most of his time in the past, reliving every moment that he and his wife had shared.
The last straw was when his son tried to talk him into selling his house. He said that it was just too much for an old man to take care of. But the man knew that the only reason that the children wanted it sold was so they could get the money from it. The house wasn't much, but it was all that he had left, and it held so many memories for him. He couldn't stand the thought of strangers living in his home. And besides, he wondered, where would he go if his house was sold? Surely none of the children would want him, they were always complaining about him. His son had the answer to that too. They were going to put him in a nursing home. They thought it would be best for everyone. The truth was, it would be easier on them, and they didn't seem to care how it was for him. They said that he would be around people his own age and there would always be someone to talk to. But they didn't understand. He didn't want just anyone to talk to; he wanted his wife.

One cold, rainy day he wrote a note and left it on the kitchen table. He carefully put on his raincoat and boots and, taking a shotgun, went outside and back to the woods. He climbed up to the top of a small hill and put the gun to his head. Slowly and deliberately, he pulled the trigger. After the echo had died away, the only sound that could be heard was the soft splashing of the rain on the soggy autumn leaves.
TO CURSE, AND CURSE AGAIN!

by Evelina L. Smith

I have cursed this verse
And I must curse it once again.
This unrhymed verse
That has no end.
I began in anger
I ended in pain!
Because this unrhymed verse,
Drives me to write inane things???
This cursed verse is due on Wednesday next.
I tell you, Joker, friend Clown,
I must do my thing or take wing! ! ! !
This cursed verse cannot end,
I must not rhyme,
Lest I have to begin again! ! ! !

Not My Style, A Sestain

by Lee Butler

Cinquain
Oh what a pain
For sure I'd go insane
If I could write only that strain
It should not rhyme, or show the pass of time
Cinquain
you are the first flower of spring
so lovely and alone
i am the last frost
waiting for the arrival of spring
i hope you will endure that frost
and blossom when spring arrives
our lives are like the seasons
spring a time for beginning and growth
summer which will warm and swell the heart
fall an era to thrive and mature
with winter on the heels
ready to rid of the other three
i wonder what season i am to enter with you
i pray it be spring
for the sake of summer and fall
you are like a rosebud
creeping into existence
may i see the bud bloom and grow
for there is no flower fairer than a rose
and no rose more fair than you

---

by Pam Chermansky

You've given me the pot of gold
that I was told only existed
at the end of the rainbow in my dreams.
Details

by John Downing

Formally:
Your hands are graceful gulls
Wheeling in liquid arcs
Over white curling water.
Your eyes are brandy-colored,
Like old violins in candlelight;
And your face is clear and cool,
Yet these are not so important
As the way April rain lies in your hair...
The frail curve of your smile.
Not as important as our silence...
Or the pulse in your throat.

by Renee Licavoli

We are wanderers amidst a field of timothy,
Lost in a rush of windswept sheaths,
Wayworn from the endless swaying to and fro.
Implore as we may, the winds never cease to
Blow our crowns to a frenzy, while our shallow
Roots rip away like leaves in a whirlwind,
Leaving us to land, once more, lost among
The grasses in the field.
Have We A Choice?

by Vivian Bowker Bloomquist

We live from day to day
Planning our life’s way.
But do we have a choice?

Are we characters in a novel
Living life straight off the page.
Dying because the author
Suddenly became enraged?
Are we acting out a play
On a universe called the stage?
Is our private life
Observed on channel eight?
What if critics don’t like us?
What if we don’t rate?
Will they lock us up in vaults
Next to our ancestors’ video tape?
Are we Barbie and Ken dolls
Who are put away when children grow?
Is our omnipotent God
A mad man named
Edgar Allen Poe?

What will be the price we’ll pay
For being merely child’s play?
Do we even have a choice?
ELEGY ON WHOM—ODE TO WHAT

by John Parkinson

Nine years together--
And we had fully begun,
To share
To love
To understand each other's ways.

She was thirty-five--
When You took her from me,
Not quickly
Not painlessly
Not without months of agony.

You left me here--
My life is very empty now,
I'm lonely
I'm frightened
I'm full of deep anger.

This is Your way--
In this I'm to be devoted,
Without thought
Without question
Without a trace of animosity.

Oh God--How could you?
IN OUR AFFAIR

by Cheryl Ann Harvey

If our affair as lovers
ever has to end,
I pray that you will always
love me as a friend.
For a lover shares a bed with you
then turns away to sleep.
But a friend remains forever true--
to share your dreams,
to laugh with you,
and hold you when you weep.
In the realm of things to be,
If any prayer were granted me;
I would ask that God,
with His blessing send--
A lover who would be my friend.
JEALOUS WIFE
by Patricia Dobler

I

When we built the house we faced
a blank wall north: no openings
for storms or winter wind. I want to live
like that wall, blind to how you see yourself,
or be the dead and shining moon,
swollen hunter’s moon in the bare elm,
or less: shadows cast on a kitchen window.

II

Here lies the full skeleton of a deer.
You hope the hunter dropped him
with one shot, dressed him out
in death’s hour, though you know
it didn’t happen that way.
The delicate puzzle of footbones,
precise as a map, tells you
he climbed here to die.
You pity the animal who
dragged himself into this alder stand.
But everything reduces to sexual bones:
gates that swing open, glittering, underground.

III

Bad dreams, bad dreams, a woman outside
points to our door, but it is locked.
The red chair holds me in a stiff arm,
smoke rises under the lampshade, my hand
unravels the light gathered in a wineglass.
This is fear, it should be anger,
my face should rise like the moon,
searching outside, the policeman’s beam
shining in your car.
(Second Prize)

WATCHING THE PERSEID SHOWER
for Bruce

by Patricia Dobler

We lay like casualties on the rough blanket,
four heads propped south toward the unlit desert,
watching for fireballs, shooting stars,
whatever heavenly debris dashed across the sky.
You and the children lay there so quietly.
I wanted to pick up the blanket with my teeth
and fly away, each of you swaddled inside,
stretching my wings until they shadowed the moon,
my legs grown luminous and long,
throwing off atoms of light until I claimed
sanctuary: cold chimney and a thatched roof.
Not that I thought those fires above us
would touch down. It was the lying there,
logs for a fire we had not kindled,
the fire we had no choice but to keep burning.

(Honorable Mention)

ANTICIPATING HER DEATH, GRANDMA DREAMS ABOUT GRANDPA

by Patricia Dobler

I remember the wasp nest breathing,
every wasp a cell in that thrumming heart
glued to the barn window, a vague cloud
of sound blurred by the tune of your mouth.
The slant light, light with dust,
your bare legs powdered with dust, and the sheen
of your back as you pulled the shirt from your body --
I remember, the spring was all but dry that summer,
stones in West Brook showed their veins, rusty or blue --
the fine veins pulsing under your skin.
The priest says, “In heaven, no marrying.”
But I believe in your body, Janos, believe
my dream of your leaning from a carriage:
“Louisa, I have waited too long,” and your mouth
covering mine, spelling my thirst.

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BECAUSE THE MIND REMEMBERS

by Kathleen Balash

When the rain obscures the sun and starts to fall,
and the roses fade along the garden wall;
when all my summer days become Novembers,
I live in dreams, because the mind remembers.

When time becomes a burden to endure,
while memory takes me where I've been before,
back to carefree days of gay Septembers,
my tears begin, because the mind remembers.

Why must my soul relive our summer days,
when you loved me in a thousand different ways?
Oh God! Release my heart from these Decembers,
I can't forget, because the mind remembers.

Oak Street

by Ted Pawcio

On Oak Street, cradled by sheltering boughs
Women would promenade the walk glancing
To the right, to the left, as their cigarettes
Smouldered in dainty fingers of kid glove.

Oak Street was hit hard by the war
And women returning home late at night
Found no brothers of sisters waiting --
Keeping silent watch by the door.
Nocturne In B Flat

Remember--
We sat on your front step... 
In the night--
With star-silver pelting;
And we talked...
Remember?
Then I knew you,
And my walk home was a mirror of you,
Sitting there on the step,
Next to me--
With star silver on your throat.

TENDER
by Evelyn B. MacKenzie

tender
words not spoken
are saved for naught; those who
should receive them will know that you
forgot

by Cyndi Slade

A flower reaches to sky
From a soaked clammy ground of soil...
The birth of spring.
Villanelle

by Ted Pawcio

Reluctantly I walk across the green.
I halt where grandmother now lies resting.
Names of Smith, Jones, Roberts, and mine, are seen.

I want back all the years that might have been.
Winging the skies, a cardinal is singing.
Reluctantly I walk across the green.

Upon her loving memories I now lean.
As the bells of churches, nine, are ringing...
Names of Smith, Jones, Roberts, and mine, are seen.

So far away to youth, a childhood scene,
Just one, fleeting, of her being,
Reluctantly I walk across the green.

She’s now of the past with her arms between
My brother and me, she was once our sheltering.
Names of Smith, Jones, Roberts, and mine, are seen.

Rest softly, you, whose eyes once were so keen.
Rejoice for the morrow till our meeting.
Reluctantly I walk across the green.
Names of Smith, Jones, Roberts, and mine, are seen.
NEW YEAR

by Sue Linville

Time's haste increases as maturity approaches
Maybe Einstein could explain the distortion
Why yesterday has leaped back ten years
And how we, members of
A generation conceived
From Hiroshima's mutated womb
And Sputnik's wayward glance
Have survived to toast another new decade
With a chilled glass of sweet red wine

I wonder how you and I dare to love
And share in these turbulent years
Where identities are lost in cancerous fadism
And partnerships fracture
From green ambiguity
With Jupiter in our living rooms
And warheads in our wheat fields
People stay drunk with the present
In fear that the future may never be achieved

Maybe it's the cement that binds the soul
And strengthens the inherited frailties
That gives us the impermeable free will
To acquire enough independence
To depend on each other
And reject apathetic war cries
As our dreams touch the heavens
We stick one foot into the future
And push so that the door doesn't close
Twilight Colored Request  

by John Downing  

Let me love you in rain--  
While the rain turns your hair to mist,  
And moistens the soft light on your cheek.  

Let me love you  
In this great beauty of Spring silver  
That falls on you and me.  

Let me love you in this downpour of rich, raw silver  
That makes a prayer of your eyes--  
Threads the kisses on your lips.  

March, 1941  

High Key Portrait  

by John Downing  

After hearing them talk  
Across the smoky table,  
After listening to dull words  
Mixed with stale light;  
The smell of ashes and grease;  
The thought of you  
Was like a vast wind blowing,  
Blowing across wide plains...  
Like sterile mountain places  
Soaked through and through with sun.  

November, 1941
by Pam Chermansky

Count Basie, you’re right tonight.
Sweet sweet ear candy
Blue and jazz me
Pazazz me to the clouds.

A WATCHED PHONE NEVER TOLLS

by Barbara Savage

Damn Alexander G. Bell;
I hope he’s on the switchboard in hell.

Someone should have rung his chime
Before he had the time
To come up with that silent noisemaker,
Hope builder, Dream breaker.

by Pam Chermansky

Even vinegar
is sweet
when sipped with
thoughts of you
Kevin-Kisses

by Sharla Bodary

Four-year-old-
-Kevin-kisses

Leave a
breeze-cooled-wet-spot

Which
(if I carefully don't wipe it)
I can feel hours after
as a tight spot on my cheek

When I smile.

by Pam Chermansky

the lifeguard of humanity is Laughter,

for without her,
we would all drown in our tears.

love

by Renee Licavoli

love eludes words
yet speaks
  in tones of sighs
  and notes of laughter
The Kid on the Big Brass Bed

by Harold A. Holmes

A young married couple that my wife Myrt and I had known ever since they came into the world bought a new home. We were invited to the house warming. The ladies huddled in the living room. The men went on tour of the home. We would meet in the family room later.

All went well with the inspection until we reached the master bedroom. I suppose the decor was in perfect harmony. But I could see nothing but the beautiful big brass bed that, for me, removed all of the happiness from the occasion.

My mind slipped back to that tragic night of 1919, the night Mom and Daddy Jim had their last verbal battle. It terminated when Daddy Jim walked out of the house, never to return. I cannot say they separated. They had not been together for as long as I can remember.

When Daddy Jim came home from work, he would cook the supper, wash the dishes, and then go into the living room to read until it was time to retire.

Mom worked in a private family. When she returned home, she would tarry briefly in the living room, then go upstairs and spend the evening. Holidays and birthdays were great. They were the only times we were together as a family.

The cause, or context, of the battle we will let be. I mention the battle because I have often wondered how two people that found so much in each other to dislike ever came together long enough for me to come into the world. I arrived at the conclusion that theirs was a deep love that had gone sour. Instead of striving to re-sweeten it, they had let it settle into their bowels and ferment. The decaying love spread throughout their bodies, reached their brains, and filled the brains beyond their capacity. They were spewing the venom of a rotted love upon one another. Hate is Love with its horns sticking out.

I place no blame on either of my parents. If parting brought them happiness, that was the thing to do. However, though I place no blame, I do say without fear of contradiction that neither Mom nor Daddy Jim gave a thought (or a damn) about the kid upstairs, crying his heart out, lying across a beautiful big brass bed.
THE OLD WOMAN AT THE WINDOW

by *Victoria Stewart*

The old woman stands at her window
staring out; beyond my youthful perception.
Her mind wanders off to some distant time.
I gaze on, wondering at her serenity.

She brings her wrinkled and dry hand
To the top of her forehead, gently touching it,
Then allowing her hand to drop across to rest upon
Her heart.

She stands there another blissful moment
Anticipating a soft, spoken reply.
She then turns around and leaves the window.
Silently hoping, I wonder if she received an answer.

I look at her graying hair,
And then at her diminishing smile.
I look at her empty arms—longing to hold?

I, being young,
Wonder what goes on in the mind of the old.
I search her eyes for the answer.
I find a hidden secret, her mind is worn.

I see her later return to the window.
She stands there in solemn silence.
I stand there quietly, hoping for a clue.
I glance into her eyes, sad but peaceful.

She raises her hand to her forehead,
It then falls to her bosom.
Once again she draws it across her breast,
resting it above her heart.
SACRILEGE

by Sheryl Ann Harvey

Why are you angry, bitter,
"A Doubting Thomas"?
Are we not both children of faith
In God,
America,
and all man-kind?
Patriots.
With pride we enlisted in the military.
We wanted to serve our country.
To preserve honor,
And freedom.
The glory of America.
I am sorry little brother
That Viet Nam happened then.
Sorry that you were only
A seventeen-year-old Marine,
And frustrated
That I, as a woman in the Army,
Could not go instead--
or at least,
with you.
I can understand your frustration.
Fighting, with friends dying,
In a war that wasn’t a war.
I too learned of politics,
And bureaucratic whitewash.
And games that generals play
With little toy soldiers
On topographic maps.
And of propagandism.
And manipulated press.
And of mindless powers
That sent little toy soldiers
To be killed by real bullets.
But,
Why are you angry, bitter,
"A Doubting Thomas"?
Are we not both children of faith
In God,
America,
and all man-kind?
Patriots.
With pride...
Dichotomy

by Victor Gober

She was my mother’s best friend, and she made us laugh.
A short, cheerful Italian lady with a brightly flowered blouse
and somber slacks.
Red lipstick smeared on her lips like a clown’s crooked smile.
The gaiety of her despair.

Barely five feet tall, her feet could just reach the gas pedal
on her Chrysler New Yorker.
Her head could only be seen through the steering wheel.
Barely in control
Always in accidents
But that did not seem to faze her.

She was the boldest person I ever saw.
Never knocked on your front door, just walked right in.
Always asked how you were doing.
She could make the most mundane event seem hilarious.
Make you laugh until you side hurt.

The many mornings in which I slept until ten, I would
hear my mother’s roaring laughter, and I knew she was here.
“If only we could get her on TV,” my mother constantly said.
Yes, she would make the Bob Hopes, the Johnny Carsons
seem so phony
so bland.
There was something to her jokes
some truth
something behind her act
some pain in those smiling eyes.

This short, cheerful Italian lady just barely past fifty
had leukemia
and diabetes.
Her husband just had open heart surgery.
And she broke her hip and was in traction for six weeks.

So a couple of months after she got out of traction.
After her daughter went to work,
And her husband was elsewhere,
she shut her garage door,
started her car,
and crawled underneath it.
When her daughter called, my mother answered the phone. I will never forget my mother’s face at that moment. First, a look of puzzlement. Then suddenly, a scream of disbelief, and angst on my mother’s face.

Laughter, such an integral part of our lives. It belongs in all passages of life. Proud laughter after your son takes his first step. Mischievous laughter of a shared secret of lovers. Reassuring laughter after a close brush with death. Warm laughter of the reminiscing of good times past with friends.

This short, cheerful Italian lady had the gift to make people laugh. Yet, had so much pain in her life that she had to take her own life. Happy face, sad face. Joy, and pain. Maybe that is part of the answer. Comic/tragic. Inseparably bound.
HA I K U

by Rex Thomas

Peace is so fleeting.  
The dove’s song fades slowly out,  
Please, sing it for me.

by Stephen H. Ward

The silent winds blow,  
Ice swamps the freezing hillsides.  
Tanks burn in the night.

by Colleen Lupe

The ocean ebbing  
The tide pulling in and out  
It quiets my soul

by Ted Pawcio

Terns float on pillows  
Turning past people places--  
Heaven in the skies

by Karen J. Wendt

I know what they are  
But sometimes I just can’t think,  
I need one more line.

by Karen J. Wendt

The budding crocus  
brings early hope for summer,  
Winter into Spring.
by Mary Ann Lowry

A great clock chiming
Sounds throughout the universe--
Rheumatism hurts.

by Elaine M. Rogers

Pansies pert 'n bright
Pressing colorful faces
Against the sunlight.

by Gail Hedden

The slick shiny streets
glistening drops in the sun
after a spring rain.

by Renee Licavoli

Meadowsweet blossoms
Abloom 'midst a scented wood
Casting crimson hues.

by Mary T. Brizzi

A small naked boy
thrashing the icy water:
sterling silver laugh.

by Vickie Peace

I bought a balloon
It was a bright red balloon
I let it go - Bye
My head aches, and a gnawing hunger stings
My gut, as though I hadn't eaten lunch,
But been compelled to witness feasting kings
Who gorged themselves on turkey legs and punch:
"Tis not because of nature-given bliss,
But only due to joy to wander free--
That thou, a turkey, tender, fat and young,
Do widen my abyss.

Make emptier my stomach-cavity,
Mocking me with disdain in gobble-tongue.

O, for a turkey dinner! piping hot,
Fresh from the oven, tempting to the sight,
Tasting of yams (with others in the pot),
Peas, and cranberry sauce, a glass of Sprite!
O for a baker to bake me chocolate chips,
To bake me cakes--like Grandma's chocolate cakes,
With filling frosting, moist and fresh outside;
To hold it to my lips,
That I might make the noise a person makes
Who on the wings of pure Elysian bliss does ride:

Ride out of here, to never know again
What thou upon a farm hast never known,
The cruelty, the hunger, and the sin
Here where the famished fight for every bone;
Where I must shake a few last beaded drops
Of orange Kool-Aid from my empty glass;
Or cherry soda pops,
Where not a solitary day does pass
But that I drool like some unhappy sinner.

Ride out of here! for I will leave this place,
Unaided by caffeine or cyclamate,
But now by fasting--drifting into space
(Though I could eat if Mama fixed a plate):
I'm going--I'm going! tender is the ham,
And simmers golden dressing in the pan,
Crispy and hot-delicious to the taste;
However, where I am
There isn't even a solitary can
Of pork and beans or Hunt's Tomato Paste.

I cannot smell what odors are wafting by,
Nor what roast duck is stewing in its juice,
But, near starvation, guess each apple pie,
Each crepe suzette--each dish of chocolate mousse
Which fairly cries, "I yearn to be consumed!
I long to be devoured with a will,
To have my substance seen, selected, chewed,
My inner meat exhumed,
My captor coddled till he's had his fill,
Emits a happy belch, his strength renewed."
Gardening, I loosen husk from corn. Some ears
I've known such joy to labour at this job,
Extracting from the earth these greenish leaves,
To have for supper sweet corn on the cob!
Now more than ever do I ache to fast,
To force the golden kernels to remain,
While thou art strutting haughtily about--
And shameless, moving past!
Still wouldst thou strut, and I have ears in vain--
From such a satisfying feast left out.

O thou wast born for death, infernal Bird!
I yearn to take an axe to thy red neck!
To sever off thy head without a word,
Before thy beak can sound another peck!
Perchance the very peck that tempted men
Who slaved in days gone by for scraps of meat,
That made their vacant, growling stomachs ache,
That made them yearn within
For something tasty, something good to eat,
...Perhaps a thick prime rib or sirloin steak.

Sirloin! the very word is like a bull
To force me back into my famished state!
Fondue! I would that I were fed and full,
Had emptied happily my o'erstuffed plate.
Fondue! a stew! thy flesh and feather pale
Out of this era, to another place,
Well out of reach, and so is ruined my wish...
A deep sigh I exhale.
Was this a dream? 'Twas here, before my face!
Oh heck, forget it! Where's the tuna fish?
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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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