

Spring 1978

## The Carroll Quarterly, Spring 1978

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carroll quarterly

spring 1978



## ANNIVERSARY

May day, no year begins  
for either calendar or season,  
but by now the spring is rising;  
the earth's soul moves upward  
to the substance of the trees,  
birds awake me before the light,  
and women flower in their fashion.  
I too cannot escape  
the motional madness of this tide;  
we have all gone insane  
with the gift and greening of spring,  
while it burns in its own consummation,  
filling days with tender savagery.

When I grow restless with the easy wind  
that entwines me in its paradox,  
I sit to stillness in the memorial garden,  
upon the immemorial stones.  
Here, rough-cut granite bears a silent edge  
to the hostile fronts of harsher seasons;  
it shows indifference to the time  
that chips and chafes the outer surface,  
wearing down by degrees;  
yet, beneath such superficial wear  
and facade of age,  
there is a deeper, unseen constancy;  
for the shape belies the substance, and  
as years sculpt down the edges, they refine  
the beauty of an image ever there,  
though never wholly born to eyes.

Vincent Casaregola

THE CARROLL QUARTERLY

SPRING 1978

The *Carroll Quarterly* is a literary magazine produced by an undergraduate staff, and written by the students, alumni and friends of John Carroll University. Manuscripts should be sent to the English Department.

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cover

John Taormina

Anniversary

Vincent Casaregola

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*F. William Hahn*

## THE RAIN BIRD

When I began to realize the world,  
I learned to know the call of an unnamed bird--  
even now, which one I do not know--  
which called before the rain, and hearing it  
I needed no barometer or forecast  
even on cloudless days, to expect the storm.

The call of the rain bird is forgotten,  
as I no longer listen for it,  
but somewhere he calls, and as before  
he needs no charts to know he is right.  
He cares not that I do not listen,  
but sometimes I think I might do well  
to listen again, and learn, and know.

*Mike Tripha*



SPASMS OF PAIN

I celebrate my birth  
in the labor pains  
of lonely selves  
struggling in spasms of pain.

I delight in the primordial rhythm  
in which my parents participated  
--myself created  
by heated bodies  
bowing in sacrificial love.

Remembering their laborings  
in sundered selfishness,  
I praise pleasures unearthed in  
righteous vows, committed flesh,  
lives intermingled by laws of love.

I, echoing Whitman,  
clap rejoicing that my life  
began in mysteries of power  
unknown to infinite imaginings.

Singing glory, I give gratitude  
to those early forces of light  
which filter out the darkness  
of my kindled soul.

*Marylin Mell*

## THE AFRICAN MOTHER

Speak to me, child of my heart,  
Speak to me with your eyes, your round laughing eyes,  
Wet and shining as Shingo's bull-calf.

Speak to me little one,  
Clutching my breast with your hand,  
So strong and firm for all its tenderness.  
It will be the hand of a warrior, my son,  
A hand that will gladden your father.  
See how eagerly it fastens on me:  
It pines already for a spear.  
O son, you will have a warrior's name and be "Osafohene"  
of men.

Your sons, and your son's sons, will remember you long  
After you have slipped into darkness.  
But I, I shall always remember your hand grasping me so.  
I shall recall how you perch in my arms,  
And look at me so, and so,  
And how your tiny hands played with my breast.  
And when they name you great warrior, then will my eyes  
be wet with remembering.

And how shall we name you, little warrior?

See, let us play at naming.

It will not be a name of despalis, for you are my  
first-born.

Not as Amadede's son is named will you be named.

Our gods will be kinder to you than theirs.

Shall you be named, like a child of ill-fortune, after  
the dung of cattle?

Not gullible are our gods, my child:

They wish you no ill.

They have washed your body and clothed it with beauty.

They have set a fire in your eyes.

And the little puckering ridges of your brows--

Are they not the seal of their finger-prints when they  
fashioned you?

They have given you beauty and strength, child of my heart,

And wisdom is already shining in your eyes,

And laughter.

So how shall we name you, little one?

Are you your father's father, or his brother, or yet  
another?

Whose spirit is it that is in you, little warrior?

Whose spear-hand tightens round my breast?

Who lives in you and quickens to life, like last year's  
yam seed?

Are you silent, then?

But your eyes are glittering, glittering, and glowing  
like the eyes of a leopard in a thicket.

Well, let be.

At the day of the naming you will tell us.

Oh my child, now indeed I am mellow.

Now indeed I am a wife--

No more a bride, but a mother-of-one.

Be splendid and magnificent, child of desire.

Be proud as I am proud.

Be happy as I am happy.

Be loved as now I am loved.

Child, child, child, love I have had from my spark,

But now, only now, am I his wife and the mother of his  
manhood.

His soul is safe in your keeping, my child, and it was  
I, I, I who have made you.

Therefore am I loved.

Therefore am I happy.

Therefore am I a wife.

Therefore have I great honour.

*Bro. Charles de Graft, O.S.B.*

LONE TO THE WIND

My boy  
without a shirt  
appeared  
a pale bird  
at the kitchen window  
signalling his brother for food.  
I have sought him  
over the streets of my heart,  
my life skewered  
in his flight.  
How shall I resolve  
the leaves of summer green  
with his loneliness  
to the wind  
without a shirt?  
Where is he  
for whom my heart dies?

*James Magner*



*Anne Crowley*

THE CAFETERIA GARDEN AT  
THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

In view of a swallowing audience,  
the sunny fountain expels its spray  
to the courtyard's August cool.

On the garden slate seated close, alone,  
solarity kisses and strokes a girl's hair,  
rubs the stones, flecks the pool.

Behind the branches that ape jade,  
tables hide, plates scrape, ping, chink;  
icy glasses lift, fall, drool,  
and patrons wave stainless steel wands.

Inobtrusively they chew, while their  
day's treasure-quest ignores this jewel.

*Sheila Haney*

THE CRAZY LADY OF NINTH STREET

Ragged, wild and lean,  
with a slattern mane of coarse hair,  
The Crazy Lady of Ninth Street  
shuffles her scissorstep way  
along the gray concrete.

Now and then she accosts a cold form,  
Scribbles illegible wisdom on a scrap of torn paper  
And, grinning, bestows it  
on her unwitting benefactor.

Was the Crazy Lady  
of the dried-apple cheeks in clownish rouge circlets  
once a beauty?  
The drooping plastic orchids in her beaten felt bonnet  
Could be last vestiges of a lovely spring,  
belied by a withered winter image.

Once the Crazy Lady looked for God;  
Waltzed right into St. John's at high noon  
and called for Him.  
He wasn't at home; there were only staring people.  
Worse still, some men hush-hurried her to the door  
and later, rude God never returned the call.

But the Crazy Lady is cheerful;  
she knows more than the gray flannel idols  
or the click-heeled tarts  
who pass her daily in grim streams  
for she is a personal friend and confidante  
of the Archangel Gabriel  
and can laugh at the pigeons  
and rule the city,  
shuffling along in her scissorstep way.

*Cecilia Kelly*

## MANITOBA PRAIRIE FIRE

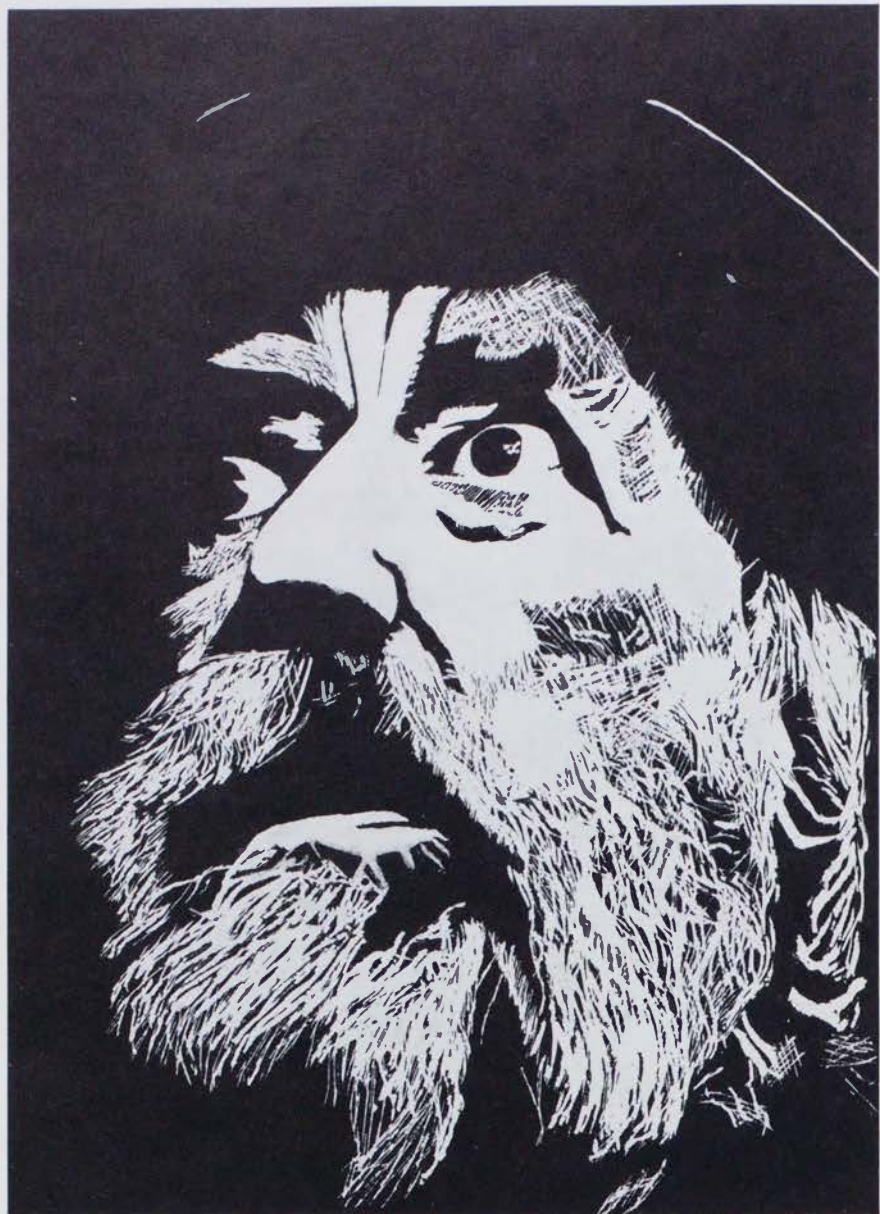
The funk-smell of the marsh embraces the land,  
Sequestered geese honk amid reeds.  
As shallow, greenish backwash bears  
Frail ripples of skittish water striders,  
Beneath all, the black leech burrows  
Into whorling sand-gloom.

At land's end, wheat siezes the ground,  
A vast pale glow beneath the northern moon.  
In faint, moist piercings, a brush fire  
Flickers through the night shroud,  
Tinging farmhouse and gaunt windmill.

The thin man looks long at the fire, the burning of chaff.  
Senseless of mosquitoes which sink upon him,  
He pulls out his bandana, wipes his hands.  
Lank-strided and lonely mad, he cuts through stubble  
In quest of his hearth.

*John P. Obrecht*





*Victoria McCauley*

## SOLITARY GUEST

BY  
CHRIS JOHNSTON

As he stood at the top of the stairs rubbing his sleepless eyes, the proprietor of the Rearing House Tavern was startled by the shape of a man standing below him. The lean figure continued to look out the front picture window viewing the town while the yawning tavern keeper trudged down the steps sizing up the new guest from behind. He readily discerned the man was of some affluence from the fine cut of his brown waistcoat and trousers that covered the tops of his dark, smooth-leathered shoes. His black hair was now outlined by the bright sun on its morning rise outside, which caused the keeper to glance away toward the coat-tree by the front door. There he saw a light brown hat hanging solidly from one of the upper pegs and a black bag stationed on the floor beneath it.

"I'm sorry if you've been waiting long, sir," he offered toward the man's back as he stopped on the last stair, "but I've been tending my ill father and haven't gotten much sleep lately. I didn't hear you come in. I wasn't really expecting anyone. You're the first guest we-- I've had in weeks. I guess I don't even hear the stagecoach anymore," he added sadly, almost to himself.

The guest had turned on the keeper's first words to face him and now extended a gloved hand which he had held clasped before him. The young tavern keeper acknowledged the gesture and shook hands with the man whose face was now encircled by the sun's presence glaring through the shadeless window. This caused the keeper's weary eyes to squint and frequently look away. Against his palm he felt the soft skin of the man's glove, probably from some exotic animal, he thought. Both men remained unsmiling but stood relaxed: the one from exhaustion, the other by nature.

"Did you come in on the 10:40 coach?" But before the guest could reply, "Were you planning to stay long?" the tavern keeper politely inquired, almost as if a past reflex of formality stirred him to do so.

"No, I am only stopping for a short rest," the man

answered, "I must soon be on my way."

Struck by a new realization the keeper spouted: "Oh, you must pardon my improper manners once again. My name is Thomas Aberly. And may I ask, what is yours--" but he was prevented from finishing by a short, loud scream of a man, emanating from some upstairs quarters.

Hurriedly he continued, attempting to ignore the sudden shriek that had pierced him so many times of late and now caused him to shudder.

"What would bring a man like you to our little town, sir?" he was able to force out noticing the guest had cast a quick glance toward the stairway at the sound.

"I am a traveling agent for an international import and export firm and am at the present, on a trip crossing America. I am responsible for finding where there is need for export and--"

He too was interrupted by the painful howl from above. Though this time it was much longer in duration. Stepping out of the dusty beams of sunlight, the stranger moved toward the door. The confused and shocked keeper was at first unable to speak, but when the man bent over to pick up his bag, he managed a few words out of fear and desperation:

"Please-- don't leave, you could go in the back room where it's much quieter and I'll fix something for you to eat -- rest -- I haven't spoken with someone for so long..." dejected, his words faded away.

The solemn stranger paid no heed to the keeper's frantic pleading. Instead, he picked up his bag and turned toward the stairs. For the first time, the young keeper could see the man's face clearly and out of the sun's influence. He decided the man was middle-aged, weathered, but very healthy. Motioning with a weakly raised hand toward the dark case now dangling in the stranger's grasp, Aberly asked:

"Do you have some medical training?"

The man momentarily ceased his ascent up the stairs and answered firmly:

"None, but in my travels I have dealt with many hospitals and medical organizations and in doing so, have often confronted ailing people. I will look in on your father if only to try and comfort him with a new face and a kindly visit."

Such words were unexpected by Aberly of a man so

distinguished in appearance and character. Still shaken by all that had happened, he watched the man glide up the steps undaunted by the intermittent cries and anguished moaning of the sickly father. He mumbled something about preparing food as the stranger disappeared into the upstairs hallway.

A short time afterwards, while busily dusting off a table and setting two dining places, Abery was distracted from his work by a prolonged silence. He had not experienced a similar quiet for over a month. He was glad to have a guest's company, but was now rather curious about the man's method of calming the incurable suffering of his father. For a pounding instant, he feared that his father was finally dead, though the stranger had stayed upstairs for nearly an hour without informing him of any such news. Perhaps he had taken one of the many, long empty rooms to rest for awhile. It was the longest period of time Abery had spent away from his dying father's bedside, but it was also the first time he had felt any peace about him. Guiltily, he began moving toward the stairway in a swift gait. Just as he placed his hand on the round oak railing, the guest emerged from the stillness above.

"There is no need to disturb him, Thomas, he is resting comfortably and desperately requires to sleep," diagnosed the stately gentleman.

Abery stared at the approaching grey-gloved hand as it coursed over the simple designs carved in the railing; covering, then revealing each as it passed over them. The other hand was tucked neatly into a coatpocket where it seemed to belong like a handkerchief or some other accessory.

"Have you made some refreshments for us? We can both use it, I'm sure. Something to drink at least, then I will be leaving." These words cracked like a sharp clap through the air and awoke Abery from his dreaming concentration.

"Leaving -- Oh! Yes, of course. Please come this way. You're probably half-starved for some lunch. It's practically half-past noon" he observed while showing the guest to the lone table he had prepared.

It stood out quite noticeably in the midst of several tables long unmoved by customers' frothing mugs and covered with dust unmoved by the breath of friendly conversation among visitors. The freshly spread table now held the man's delicate gloves removed for the first time that morning, still warm from their long service. Casually looking around him at the uncustomarily empty tavern, the stranger addressed Abery who was cautiously loading a silver tray with food

and dining ware from a maple sideboard close by:

"You mentioned that you have had no guests for several weeks. I did not see many other places comparable to this elegant establishment in the town when I arrived. Why do they stay away?"

"If only they possessed your patience and kindness, sir, they would not...At first, when regular customers learned of my father's disease, they were leery of coming here and frequented our tavern less each week. But there were still many from out of town who would stay knowing nothing of his condition, or even that he was here. Then his dreadful wailing began. How could I convince anyone to put up with that in a boarding tavern?" he concluded as he sat down at the table and poured from a pewter pitcher. The silvery fluid gleamed as it splashed in the guest's crystal goblet which he held as he then asked:

"But why don't you put your father in a hospital or a home?" "We did. But they said his illness was fatal and they could do nothing for him. I couldn't see leaving him in one of those God-forsaken homes either. All alone..."

"You have no relatives elsewhere who could care for him?"

"No, we are too far from our family back East. He would not survive the journey...You see, when I finished school several years ago, he and I came here with my mother and I put my business training to work with his financial backing. He retired and used money he had saved from his job. Though we were successful, my mother never could reconcile leaving her entire family so far away. So when father became ill, the strain was too much for her, fearing she would be left out here alone with her husband soon to die. She moved back home. She wrote me the other day...said she was returning, but...it's just that I've never had to face death before. Our family is so small that most of the older members died when I was an infant. I don't know if I can handle the whole situation. What does one say to a dying person, especially one in such pain? My father...What did you tell him? You soothed him rather effectively...Does one speak of God? I don't know..." he trailed off.

"You can. I have a somewhat strong religious background myself and many feel that religious discussion with a dying person is favorable because it might calm them. But unlike you, I have experienced much death and have been close to many dying. I can tell you the first death you encounter is difficult because it is new to you, but all of them are equally trying when you are close to the person, and as hard to understand if you are not."

Again the pair heard the low moaning from upstairs but there were no violent cries this time. The guest halted Abery as he started for the stairs:

"Wait. Let me look in on him first, then you must go to him alone."

The anxious taverner nervously paced the confines of the stairwell landing for a few endless minutes until the stranger called for him. He ran to his father's room and saw the dark guest brush the grey hair out of the elderly patient's barely opened eyes. Then walking to the foot of the bed, he stooped to remove his bag that lay enshrouded by feverously tossed quilts. A different sense of death occupied him as he stood watching, uncertain of himself but knowing that whatever he might say, he would let come to him more naturally, as any words between a father and son should. The passing stranger left them alone to the stillness of the room broken momentarily by the closing door.

Warm tears pushed to his eyes as he tread down the stairs once more in time to see his guest by the door. Only this time he was just going out with hat and bag in proper place.

"It must be almost time for the 1:30 coach," he said to himself, thinking now in a more controlled manner.

He guessed that it was relief more than anything he felt since his father, after a lengthy and intolerable illness, had died peacefully. Soon his business and life would resume their normal, though irrevocably changed, pattern. But now he must see off this strange man who had aided him at such a crucial time.

Aroused dirt settled in the dry road about the large wheels of the coach, with shadows tossed beneath it by the sun, above but slightly to Abery's back. He was at once stunned by the sight before him. He had never seen such a magnificent coach. Gold trim lined the pitch-black gloss of the lower half of the vehicle. Thin red lines wound about the golden-hubbed and silver-spoked wheels with a novel, heavy spring suspension system. His eyes carried up toward the upper half which was coated by a dim grey paint. The sound of the neighing horses in a stationary prance swept his attention forward where he saw a rather grim-looking driver securing the guest's bag to the roof rack behind his seat. The stranger himself had handed the luggage up to the driver and now walked toward Abery drawing his gloves from his pocket.

"Must you leave so soon?" the tavern keeper sadly asked.

"Yes, I'm afraid my job is endless," the man resignedly replied as he tilted his hat forward to keep the sun from his eyes and simultaneously thrusting a long shadow across the side of his face.

"Very well then, thank you for all your advice. Have a safe trip," Abery said through a half-smile and put out his hand once more.

The man did not take it until he finished tugging his gloves on in a satisfactory manner.

"That must be a new coach, I've never seen anything like it," Abery idly mentioned still in awe of the apparition before him.

"Perhaps not. Maybe it is only new to your eyes," the guest perceived.

"It's been so long since one stopped here -- but there is still no one on the coach. How fortunate you are to travel alone in such luxury," Abery said.

"Yes, how fortunate I am," the stranger echoed. Indeed, many people don't like new things. I would say few people wanted to travel on that coach just yet. But it is important for me in my job to keep up with the times," he added, as if enlightened to some fact Abery was not.

"Well, again, I can't thank you enough. If you ever come by this way again, you're welcome to stay here with my compliments."

"Thank you, I'm certain I will," he said patting the young man's upper arm. The two men separated and turned toward their respective destinations. After taking a few steps toward the tavern entrance, Abery spun swiftly around:

"In all the confusion today, I never did get your name--" passed from his lips before he realized the stranger had climbed inside the coach and latched the door upon which the spotless window mirrored the face of the mid-day sun with its boastful radiance glimmering in the glass. Abery just shrugged as he happened to glimpse the coachman, who quickly looked away from him. The pale driver touched his hat and gave a brief command to the team beneath him, which clamorously started up and drew the grand carriage away in their ornately gilded harnesses. Amazed by all that had happened, Abery stood motionless while the coach disappeared into a western storm of dust.

Turning back to his tavern and the solemn task before him, he heard the increasing sound of approaching hooves

pounding the road. Instinctively, he first turned to the west, thinking the man was returning for something he had forgotten. But the corner of his eye caught sight of rising dust from the east. Soon, an old splintered coach full of people jostling one another inside drove up to his tavern. Astonished, he pulled his watch from his vest pocket and exclaimed the correct time out loud:

"One-thirty -- exactly!"





*Mary Ann Nook*

PIANO

softly, most softly  
comes the rain in single drops  
like notes from singular keys  
touched by the slender grace  
of fingers weaving textured song;

come to me in soft tones,  
in muted shades, and subtle words that play,  
like feminine fingers on responsive keys,  
a music of caress that soothes the mind,  
resolving angry paradox into a dance.

*Vincent Casaregola*

## AN ETCHING

Short breaths grew shorter.  
Mechanical movements of blood  
pumped in frenetic bursts  
of a straining life.  
Caught in the austere clutches  
of a fatal coma,  
roped from life  
by the intravenous labyrinth  
of tangling tubes,  
husband abandoned wife,  
two sons and two daughters.  
He left without preparation,  
paged by the tinny voice  
of a stern destiny.  
He should have liked  
to dawdle a while longer,  
to close a few windows  
in the drafty corners  
of his last assured hours,  
to pry open a few doors  
rusted by dampness, misuse,  
or from being violently  
kicked shut.  
He should have liked  
to mumble final words  
to those he was deserting  
--but the pain  
splintered these hopes.  
The chips dissolved  
unsaid, unknown, uncertain  
in his repose of lifeless flesh.  
Unfinished, he departed.  
The stranded mourners gathered  
memories and trinkets  
to ease them in their sorrow.  
Etched within  
their nagging emptiness  
tottered a solace  
of love purified by death.

*Marylin Mell*

EVERYMAN'S EDITORIAL

Death, stop not my pen,  
Till it touch  
My brother's heart.  
Let me chart the wounds  
On life's mad flood  
To ease the path of those who follow.

Yet shall I beg or bargain  
With the deaf bitter master  
Or sell my soul for time?  
I ask no favors but battle,  
Daring darkness to test my flame,  
Forfeit the outcome for the struggle.

Let us run the race to the end,  
Doubt not who is stronger,  
But even the weak may leave words.  
All must fall and all will crumble,  
Come let us go down kicking,  
For Death must earn his pay.

*Gregory J.W. Urwin*

MONROE COUNTY 4:00 A.M.

Rising from the snow plain  
The river town gains size, breadth, momentum:  
A texture of brooding significance beneath  
    yellowing arc-lights;  
Target-shot roadsigns and cracked neon  
Impotently beckon the road-weary.

Along slick-sheeted asphalt  
Whirling auto tires leave the town  
    in nocturnal wake.  
Theirs is the quest for distance,  
    horizon rather than hearth.

Another driver lights a cigarette,  
Rattles over culvert and track grading,  
Oblivious to the pale face, barely perceptible  
Through curtain lace and window mist,  
Which gazes upon the highway.

*John P. Obrecht*



Winter  
Scene

John Gaeckle 1/18/99

John Gaeckle

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Navy flannel brushes the thighs,  
ochre vinyl suction the knees  
of sixty-two eighth-grade souls  
inanimate in oaken rows.

Sixty-two, I am counting;  
Jesus' falls and the  
sporadic Stabat Mater  
fail to somber fidgety fingers.

Statues do not own our eyes,  
their place is somewhere in the sky.

Focus pans Veronica's veil  
lifts to a bat, belfry convict  
circumventing the ceiling, confused:  
Escape is his sin.

Black Lucifer, lofting,  
flaunts his winged cape over beanie heads,  
disconcerts the journeyman  
re-enacting in brocade.

The flying rodent owns our eyes--  
his place was somewhere in the sky.

(While I swallow mystic incense  
desire to burn tallow, desire  
to meld with stained stucco light  
--a damp rag on a fevered face.

Colored windows own my eye--  
my mind is somewhere in the sky.)

Service-halter altar boy  
wields a candle quench;  
he smites in covetous fervor  
the animal's frenzied prayer.

Mock Devotion Be Gone.

He falls.

From pews we rise,  
file out to somewhere in the sky.

*Sheila Haney*

ELEGY FOR MY AUNT, SISTER MARY ST. CECILIA, O.L.C.  
BORN: APRIL 27, 1894; PROFESSED: OCTOBER 13, 1913  
DIED: DECEMBER 26, 1975

As a child  
she came here  
when wagon wheels  
instead of engines  
moved on Old 40 to the West,  
but the uncloaked trees  
and winking signs now  
stand outside  
this reality  
that began in the hush  
of 1911  
and ended the night after Christmas '75.  
The scroll of her vows  
still in her hand,  
she looked like  
a child once again  
in a bassinet  
with wheels  
and ribbons.  
Who's to say that her mythology  
was not the noblest  
of the uproads to peace?  
--that we shall not meet  
at some lyric intersection  
beyond the masters  
of light or blood?

With cordial in some lounge,  
with music  
fomenting my aspirations  
--in the turmoil of the night,  
I salute her.

*James Magner*

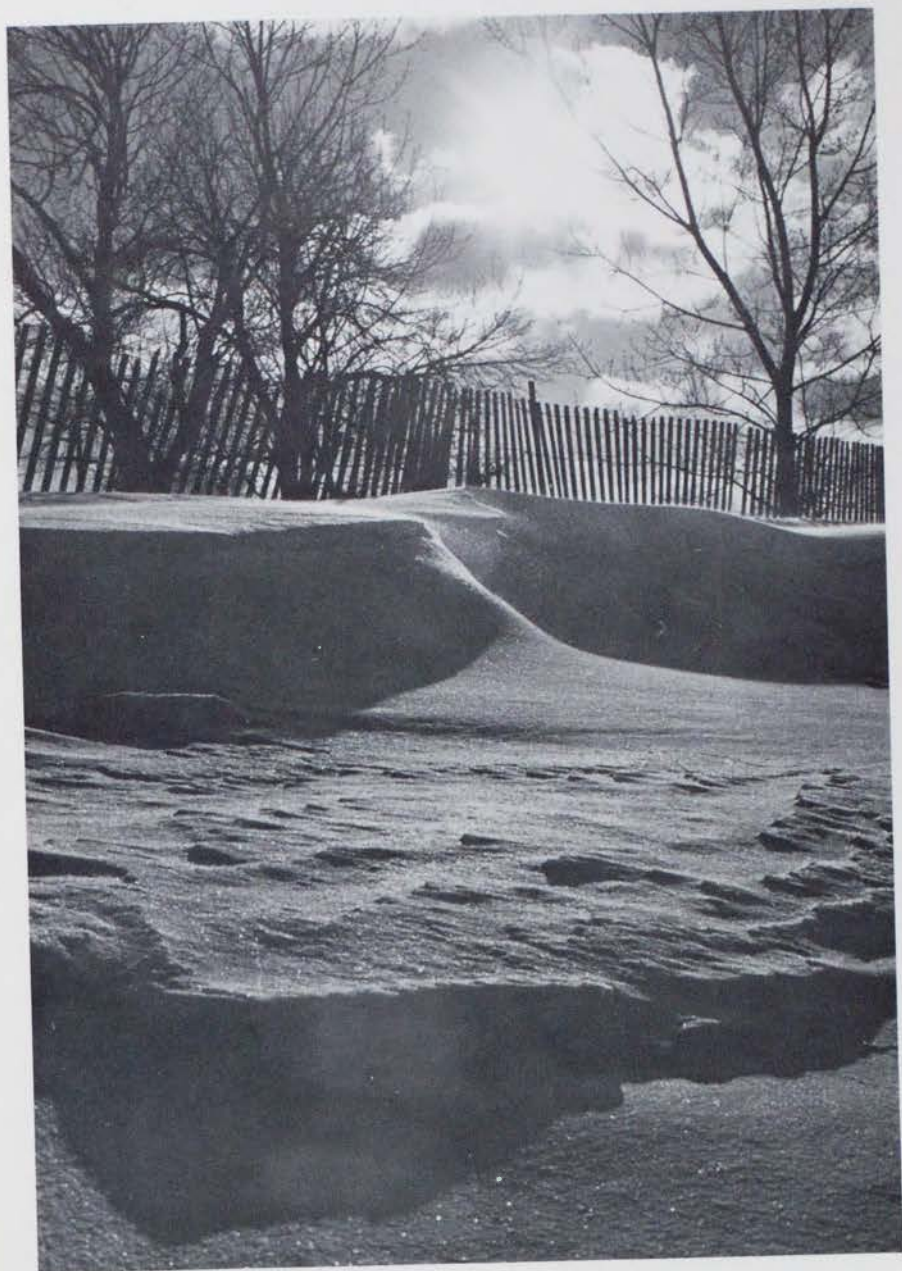


## BEYOND THE STARS

I should, some say, renounce belief  
in signs, be loosed from sacred legends,  
censor myths that fall to haunt  
the haze of smoky autumn nights,  
shamefully mum analogies  
that leap from sunsets, dawns,  
sea-songs, shadowed lanes in spring  
to pleasures far beyond the stars.

But I have seen a darkened radiance  
that sears beeches stilled in snow  
and heard seraphic chords in fountains.  
I have traced the rays of killdeer,  
scanned giraffe that move like fern,  
and, stricken by chromatic turns of dusk,  
blessed azalean winds that spell  
pleasures far beyond the stars.

*Francis J. Smith*



*John Kozicki*

editor

*Laurie Ewert*

staff

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