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carroll quarterly
1988

ODYSSEY OF A WORD

Word, you lie in indolent indecision
and slide into confusion where you crouch
or bruise by twisted thought.
Nudged by night to day, day to night,
you stir in sweet solicitude from soul's ambition
to speak of things sublime, and stunned,
you seek the poet's lines to smoothe you
and enfold you in their eternal life.

Lydia Thiel

carroll quarterly

1988

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STARTING OVER

Walking up 96th Street, first day of work,
I pass some benches set at the lip
of the Park Avenue railroad tunnel,
where men sit and look down on things,
staring at what runs away from them
into a narrowing perspective, all
that runs toward them, only to vanish
beneath their feet.

As I stand with tie and briefcase,
something pulls at me and speaks my name,
asks me if I want a good time or just
to look, whispers that here they're both the same:
you start by drifting to some corner store
for coffee; you watch time
walk on newspaper's pages, days unpeeling,
played as at a window at the track.
Two men sit on benches. I could turn,
I think, and sit forever.

And I always did love trains. To have them
turn from points of light to sound,
go heaving past, and suck the air,
and leave a trembling after.

Two men sit on benches. I move
slowly, staring past them
at an intricate landscape:
East Harlem with shining rails.
As I climb Park Avenue, it tremors
from a train that will in seconds
burst into the scene behind me. I do not
look back.

Kip Zegers

VISITING FRIENDS IN TREMONT

Humped,
 Arched and cracked
 Double stitched yellow
 Down the middle
 Carnegie road
 Chameleon tongue snaps,
 Unwraps, stretches
 And catches a bridge
To the left
 Of the Terminal Tower.

On the left it lays.
 April slush storm remnants
 Remaining
 In black jello record grooves
 Spun by spinning
 Tire.
 Electronic,
 Tic tac toe winning Xs
 Red and green,
 Banner stretch above the road
 So that their victories
 May be seen
From blocks away.

To the left it reclines
 A couple streets away
 From the Art school
 The museums and
 Severence Hall
Snaking by the back doors
 Of University Hospitals
 The Playhouse
 And State sanctioned Academia
 All which comfortably
 Reside upon the reputation
 Of an ancient mathematician.

(Of course,
It's only on the left,
When your headed down
From the East,
Toward the lower rent districts
In this town.)

Michael Salinger

EVERY OTHER WINDOW

by

Michael Cocchiarale

I

There were 276 people at Van's wedding reception. Naturally Van was one of them — drinking, eating, dancing, and socializing with the grace and ingenuity of a born (and bored) conversationalist — but at the same time, he was curiously apart from them. He was battling recurring attacks of nervousness by rushing off to the bathroom to relax, to smoke, and to be alone. A constant turning and tightening in both his stomach and his head had been plaguing him since the beginning of what was supposed to be the greatest day of his life.

At 7 p.m., everyone sat down to a fine prime rib dinner. The orchestra began just moments afterward and soon became just another sound in the hall, like the sound of the voices or the sound of the knives and the forks and the plates. Van, seated at the main table with his parents, his best man and his date, his in-laws, and of course, his wife, ate quickly and nervously as if he were not aware that what he gulped was food. He felt the turning and the twisting in his body. His eyes were full of alcohol. He had to excuse himself in the middle of the meal, in the middle of a lengthy anecdote by his new father-in-law. He made his apologies and whispered in his wife's ear: "I'll be back, hold the fort. Tell your dad I couldn't stand his wit." Van smiled himself away from the table and to the bar for his fifth rum and coke. Already the turmoil in his body had subsided a great deal.

"Rum, ti-tum ti-bum," he said drumming his knuckles on the bar. He began to feel relaxed. "I'll have some coke and I'll have some rum!" He smiled at the bartender, swayed a bit, and then smiled again. The table, the oppression, was suddenly far behind him.

With drink in hand, Van made his way past tables that wished him congratulations, others that toasted him, and still others that ignored him, probably not knowing he was the groom.

He carefully descended the stairs which led to the wedding hall's unnecessarily secluded men's room. At the door he met an unidentifiable youth (a cousin?) who gave him a grave shake of his head before darting upstairs. Van went into the bathroom quickly, turned the corner of the short interior passageway, and found himself face to face with a large mirror dotted with tap water. He put his drink down on the edge of the middle sink. He smoked in front of the mirror awhile looking at his cleanly shaven chin and cheeks. Turning to the left and to the right, he looked at the mirror as if he expected some splendid change. Finally, he relaxed and sat on the edge of the sink, almost spilling his drink in the process. He smiled. His head felt heavily insulated. He thought reckless thoughts; in-

coherent mental blabber. Striking upon an idea of some intelligence, he said:

"I am married now." He slid off the sink and looked into the mirror. The statement he had made failed to arouse the emotion that Van expected it would. He felt the same, unchanged and he was disappointed. Was this the way he was supposed to feel or did he just need time for the reality of marriage to set in? Van did not know.

Van had waited, it seemed, his entire life for marriage. As he had often thought and had more often told his family, friends, and anyone else, he was destined for an eternal union with another. He felt special because he knew, looking at the popularity of divorce, that not everyone shared in his destiny. He was bold and confident and not afraid of the responsibility. He looked upon marriage as not only a great turning point in his life, but a significant stepping stone to a greater destiny of which he felt assured.

Van blew smoke at the mirror. The alcohol had put him in a somber, contemplative mood. One of his goals — his marriage — had been accomplished; that was true. For some reason, however, he did not feel as he thought he should. Looking hard into the mirror, he saw the youthfulness of his face through the clearing smoke. He was only 23. So much more was left to come to him. Maybe he was trying to rush his destiny. He rationalized that he probably was.

The bathroom door opened suddenly, and Van heard a mumbling and the shuffling of shoes. Van put his cigarette into the sink and picked up his rum and coke. From around the corner, his Uncle Harold appeared clutching a pill bottle and looking much older than his 55 years. His head looked as if it were a load too heavy for him to bear.

"Well look who it is," his uncle said forcing a smile. The dark crescents under his uncle's eyes worried the young man. "What the hell are you doing here huh?" Uncle Harold went to a sink and swallowed a few pills with a handful of water.

"I believe I'm sulking," Van said sipping his drink.

"Huh." His uncle leaned over, cleared his throat, and spit into the sink. "If you really want something to sulk about, get old."

"I was thinking about it." Van looked at his uncle and saw great sickness creeping up upon him. With horror, Van imagined this man on his deathbed. "Harry," he asked, "are you O.K.?"

"Yeah, I'm O.K. It's just that I get these goddam headaches that make me feel like there's a two ton weight in my head trying to get settled."

"Maybe you should go to the doctor."

"That's funny you should say that. I did go to the doctor not too long ago. I thought I had brain cancer or something — woke up with headaches every single morning. So I got head scans, came back a week later for some more, and then came back the following week for a little chat with the doctor. By this time, the agony of waiting made me want to wring his neck. I was scared. But he told me there was nothing wrong, that it

was all just stress and tension." His uncle smiled, but Van knew that he really did not want to. "So that's what is wrong with me." His uncle looked tired.

After a transitory pause, his uncle said, "So what's wrong with you? What are you doing moping around all of this porcelain?"

Van laughed at the image. "I don't know. I just wanted to be alone for awhile and think. I was also getting tired of being the constant center of attention."

Harold smiled at his nephew's vanity. "This is your big day. You should be up there having some fun and not doing so much thinking."

"I wish I could." He downed the rest of his drink. "I think my problem is that I expected that this day would change me and, so far at least, it hasn't. Do you know why that is? You're married. Were you changed on the day of your wedding? Are you changed now?"

His uncle's eyes darkened. Something in Van's question seemed to strike directly upon some nagging thought his uncle had. He was still, silent, and reflective suddenly. It made Van nervous.

"I just thought marriage would make me different immediately. Maybe I'm mistaken in it all."

Two voices suddenly crashed through the door, hopelessly drunk. Both Van and his uncle silently cursed their appearance. The two voices turned the corner and became two bodies dazed with alcohol. They greeted the other two without actually seeing them and then went over to the urinals to be loud.

Harold rubbed his temple again. "I need some air. What do you say we go for a little ride and I'll tell you what I know." He smiled sadly. "Maybe I can answer your question."

"Good idea," Van said. He thought vaguely about the wife he was about to temporarily abandon. He did not feel guilty because this was important. He must know the truth.

They left the bathroom and the wedding party behind.

II

They drove in silence without direction. In the passenger's seat, Van looked out at the general bleakness of the highway landscape made even more bleak by the patches of snow which attempted to cover it. Cars passed them, and Van watched them as they passed. Every other window, it seemed, had a dark, somber individual at the wheel much like his uncle. Van wondered what great secret of sadness the world held from him on this day.

Van looked at his uncle. His face had become harder and more bitter the further they drove. He half-pitied, half-feared the old man. As they

approached an exit ramp, Van found an occasion to smile. He thought of his wife wondering where the hell he was. It gave him great satisfaction to know that he would be missed, to know that he was important.

A sigh from his uncle interrupted the young man's thoughts.

"When you're young," his uncle started suddenly. "When you're young your life shoots up like a...like...I don't know, you supply the simile." The uncle smiled, conscious of his attempted wit.

Van relaxed seeing the hardness in his uncle's face soften a bit.

"You are the most important person in the world when you're growing up. You think you are singled out for some spectacular kind of destiny or something."

Van winced at the accuracy of that remark. However, he found solace in the fact that he was not like everyone else.

"You think you are somewhat different than the rest — God's special one."

Van re-convicted himself of his peculiar individuality.

"I was like that, at least, when growing up. I was destined for great things. I met a woman — your aunt — and I thought that she would be privileged enough to be with me when I attained these great things. At the same time, I thought how precious and miraculous marriage was, and, like you, I felt sure it would change me. In my narcissistic heart, I felt that most holy of sacraments would help me — are you ready for this — achieve the highest actualization of myself." He laughed a bit.

In the following silence, Van tried to absorb all he was saying. His words were accurate enough for Van. It seemed that his uncle was a lot like he was in his youth, but now, he seemed common. Van felt, on the other hand, that he would be somehow different and that he would be exempted from the banalities of life.

It was becoming dark. They were now on a country road lit by occasional streetlights. They were on a steady incline. His uncle used the bright headlights with respect to the traffic so it seemed as if he were continually flicking them on and off.

"I was quite an ass when I was young."

The implication embarrassed Van.

"Marriage turned out to be like the watershed event of my life." Van noticed that his uncle's face had completely hardened again. "I rose up and up. My life was directed towards marriage. It was an inevitable, fateful, joyous moment of my life. It was necessary for the attainment of greater things." He smiled sardonically. "It was like God's plan for me."

His uncle pulled off the road onto a large gravel clearing and parked by a guardrail at the edge of a cliff which overlooked the city. The cliff was a popular place among tourists, lovers, and dreamers. The two men got out of the car, closed their coats to the brisk evening wind, and looked down at the city.

"I married a beautiful woman, and everything was great for five years. And then, you know what?" He turned to Van and shook his head slightly. Van could tell his teeth were tight together. "We got old — or older at least. It wasn't the same. I felt that we were slipping and that life's highest point was somewhere in the past. She felt it as well. It eventually drove her out of the house to first the shopping malls, then to lunches with people who she didn't give a damn about, and then finally to work." He stopped, letting the self-hate build in his eyes. Van pitied him, but he could not identify with him.

"We began to hate each other. We were on edge all of the time, getting in each other's way and on each other's nerves. I yelled, she yelled. Just ask your cousin. She knew what it was like to grow up in a family where the parents could not come to grips with their own insignificance, and she got out."

The wind wore away the remaining softness in both of their faces. Van saw that tears were attempting to remain hidden in his uncle's eyes. He could tell that his uncle had waited (and had wanted) to tell this story for a long time. Again, Van pitied him and thought about his own life a little.

"I began to see and feel death. I began to get these headaches and the only way I could find relief was by drinking. After awhile, though, I started to hate the taste of alcohol. It began to give me even greater headaches. For awhile I was stubborn and kept on drinking. I was pretty funny sitting at the bar, wincing with every drink I took. Eventually, I gave it all up for pills — those uppers."

Van felt the familiar nervousness that seemed to be his today creeping over his body again. His stomach began to tighten and twist. What was he hearing? Did this make sense? Did it all somehow apply to him? Obviously it could not for he was different. Van began to notice the real presence of the wind and it annoyed him.

"I began to feel trapped. I was only 45 at the time and I felt trapped by the thought — no, not the thought — by the fact of my own death. Middle age crisis, right? I couldn't explain it to my wife because she was too busy coming and going and probably thinking about the same damn thing." He kicked some small rocks under the guardrail and over the cliff. Van watched him as if he were a stranger. He seemed so removed from everything around him.

"Finally, it occurred to me that I would somehow have to conquer death if I were to go on living sanely. That's when I began to seek out dead things — like squirrels on the side of the road — to lord over. Isn't that the funniest goddamn thing you've ever heard?"

It was funny, Van thought. It was so funny that he felt like dropping to his uncle's knees and crying the night away. His uncle was possessed with his own tragedy, and Van saw that it was of no use to say anything, to attempt to put forward another view. As Van listened, he wondered if there were even another point of view to be had.

"I used to thrive on wakes for awhile." He laughed with intense self-mockery. "I gave it up though. There's only so much lording over human death you can do before it becomes absurd. So, I concentrated exclusively on animal death and found my immortality there. Four or five generations of squirrels may die while I live. So I think about that fact standing next to those red smudges in the road, and realize how powerful I am. It is a great exercise for the terrified soul."

He stopped, and Van contemplated the city below. The warm, peaceful lights bothered him. He felt like laughing loudly at his uncle because he wanted him not to be so serious and so funny at the same time. Van was very confused. His stomach turned with vague fear.

"I'm going to wind up telling you everything about myself huh?" Uncle Harold's eyes brightened a little as he said that, but his face retained its hardness. Van pitied his uncle's long life of grief, and at the same time pitied his own future. Was he to be the same? Was he not, in fact, a little different? He felt that he was losing hope in himself. "Let's get in, it's getting cold," his uncle said.

They were driving through the darkness back into the city. Van battled the knots in his stomach and the vague pressure in his head. In the silence, his uncle's face collapsed into stone-like depression. Van realized now that this was his natural state. When he started to speak again, his words seemed not intended for anyone. They seemed to be spoken to the night or at least towards it. Van listened with growing numbness and dread.

"My wife came to me one night a few years ago with no makeup, no perfume, no clothes, nothing. I was sitting in the bed reading a magazine. When I looked up I saw her crying. There were no tears in her eyes but I saw her crying." His uncle gripped the steering wheel harder.

"She hesitated a second, came to me then, kissed me on the forehead, and quietly said: 'This is all I am.' She then left the room and I heard her going downstairs. I realized that she knew I hated her mainly for what I had become, and that was her way of apologizing. I was numb. I got up and found my legs barely had feeling. I stumbled to the mirror and looked at the dark circles under my eyes and my sagging belly. 'You are old' I said. I opened up my drawer, reached under my socks and took out the old .38 I kept there. I had suddenly decided to shoot myself because I was old, I was worthless, because I was living death. I wanted to have no more fear.

"Then I heard a door open downstairs, and I threw the gun across the room and knocked over our wedding picture we kept on the nightstand by our bed. Hearing her presence down there for just an instant made me realize that I would not kill myself, that I would never kill myself. That night I cried upstairs while she cried downstairs. I know — I listened for her and heard her.

"The next day, I saw that we had finally reached some kind of understanding of each other. I know that she saw the gun because I left it where I had thrown it, but she never said a word about it. She understood that I knew what I was, that I had told myself, 'this is all I am as well.'

"To this day we don't say much around the house. But, we know in our hearts what we would say — what we are is what we are. We cannot help it."

He stopped. Van knew the story was over, and he was relieved by the fact. He was troubled, however, by the nagging question of his own significance. Around him were the dark city streets. They were almost back to the wedding hall.

"So you see, marriage is like the watershed event of your life. You work up towards it, and you slide down from it. So in the end, you change a lot — to answer your question." His uncle had recovered some of his good humor. His story suddenly seemed like a horrible memory or a nightmare never forgotten.

"Enjoy it while you are on top. Try to make something of yourself. Don't wait for some force to make you, O.K.?"

"Thanks," Van said. He felt himself on the verge of seeing the world in a whole different light, but the light was not as bright as he had hoped. His uncle had succeeded in reducing Van to depression and to insignificance. Van thought it was cruel for his uncle to have done such a thing. So, he rebelled, in his mind, against all of his uncle's ideas and philosophies. He was sorry his uncle was living such a life, but what could he do about it? He had great things awaiting him. Van hated his uncle for his blind presumption that he too was headed in the same direction. Van knew he was someone important. He knew he was young. He thought of his new bride and of her thin hips and of her tight young skin. He thought of the curves of her youth. He thought of the fulfillment of his life and wondered how it would come about.

His uncle had gotten him to think, but he had not conquered Van with his dismal story. If he had held too many ideals in the past, fine. He would do away with some of them. Life was not a weary trudge. Van vowed not to let it become one.

As they pulled into the parking lot of the wedding hall, his uncle brightened. "Do you polka?" he said.

"I have never tried it. It looks dangerous."

"It is, but what the hell. Let's have a good time." His uncle smiled a smile of apology as they walked back into the party. Van realized that he had had no intention of ruining his big day. Van even saw hope in his uncle's eyes. If the hope was not for himself, at least it was for Van and for the optimism of youth.



CITIZEN

The incumbent flesh withers.
Its feathers plucked, the lame duck
body settles in its bed
of bones. That was my father,
say I (newly elected
to this old age). I held it
as it died (no longer my
father); I buried it; I
stand over it at fifty,
shoulders bulging from building
the woodpile. I have lost one
valuable friend and gained
one. The constitution works.

Alfred Cahen

observations from a daydream: #5

by

Patrick Ferencz

so i'm standin' around at this party when sleepy-eyed mcghee saunters up to me and asks me if i've seen the antichrist. i said i haven't but i could tell he didn't believe me 'cause he turned to face the crowd, pointed back at me, and screamed BALD KILLER, BALD KILLER, then nervously looked and leaped into this picasso paintin' and disappeared. already freaked out, i start to panic. i'm tremblin' and shakin' and tryin' to make excuses for dead bald people (which ain't my fault), when this oriental yodeler starts yodelin'. amidst the confusion i start to feel a combination of woody allen, allen ginsberg, james dean, billie holliday, and humphrey bogart. i'm ushered into an adjoinin' room occupied by a tattooed palm reader & some guy whistlin' in spanish.

"we're the coalition for the circus geeks of america, fightin' for a free society and we're also lookin' for the antichrist. ya seen 'im?" asks a cajun midget hidin' underneath the coffee table. "ya see, sleepy-eyed mcghee was a strikebreaker and we had to knock 'im outta the picture somehow — the picasso paintin' was the best way."

i told them that i haven't seen the antichrist but rumour had it that he was a porno queen vacationin' in the poconos (i remember bein' there once for a week or so celebratin' the new year with a portugese librarian — but that was last april and a different daydream altogether.)

i asked them if they needed me for anythin' else and they didn't so i split. headin' for the door, the senator revealed himself to me but i wasn't interested so he gave me ten bucks for a cab in exchange for my vote. i searched my pockets for it but i'm convinced that the circus geeks stole it, although i can't prove it. i told the senator i'd mail it to him.

i slipped into the cab and i started wonderin' what life inside a picasso paintin' would be like. i told the driver to make a left at the light. the way i figure it, life is real flat and...

(pause)

sometimes people don't think i'm paying attention to them. i'll admit that daydreams are distracting but, more often than not, they are more interesting. my daydreams are comparable to a second job: just like another job supplements an income so, too, does a daydream supplement a life. my daydreams often resonate of string quartets and, sometimes, subtly feel bebop in nature. in a word, i just feel 1949.

i suppose it's natural to dream of things that can't or won't happen — maybe that's why they're called dreams. the problem is that once in a while i can't control them and people can feel the lunacy radiating from my aura. oh well. usually, a noise reverberating of kettledrum snaps me to attention — and for a few seconds i'm trapped in the corridor of waking and sleeping banging on closed doors not knowing what's behind the door, dream or reality. mostly it's embarrassing. those are the times that are shared with those moments that you're caught practicing signing your autograph or writing WHAAAAATTT? on your favorite desk. try explaining that.

i think it's funny how we often admire other people's lives, whether they're fictional characters or not, but never admire ours as much. wouldn't it be weird if someone fantasized about being you? they'd probably do a better job at being you than you are. yah, we all have the key to someone else's lock but conveniently never remember the combination to our own. i guess it's safer that way; i mean who really wants to confront themselves? it's a scary thought like walking through an unfamiliar alley at night where every noise makes you jump. or walking into a party and seeing an ex-love. what else do you do but panic and make excuses?

well my professor is finished ranting and raving about the exam so i can move on to more interesting things.

(end of pause)

...semi one-dimensional. fat lady reclinin' on some awkward loveseat starts flirtin' with ya 'cause you're a newcomer or somethin'. maybe disfigured soldiers with big, pointy sticks start chasin' ya for flirtin' back with their casual giver-godess, fashion-plate lover, semi-nude reclinin' pig face lady. ya try runnin' away but you gotta run real slow and careful & watch your step all the time. mostly, ya gotta suck in your gut so you can squeeze by ridiculous objects posin' as people & furniture. i can feel the noise as deafening.

scream echoes off the canvas and form freaked-out colors in sid vicious fashion. haphazard. the cab driver parks & pollutes the air in front of my apartment. i try to tip him for his own good. i relate the incident to my mutt malcolm, who suggests that we astro-project back to the party so we can place our ears to the paintin' to listen for sleepy-eyed mcghee screamin' to get out. maybe i'd jump in and join him but i don't think i'd look too good with two eyes on one side of my face.

i wonder if life inside a picasso paintin' is any different than life outside of it. i ask malcolm and he just barks.

B.B.
For Maureen

The Ole Cat
still had his lyric flame.
I thought I was losing it
or he had lost it
when a light smooth
pomaded dude
came out and sang
the same mechanical song
fifty times,
But then I discovered the concert
was in three parts, not two,
And he came on
and lit his fire
with his fingers
and his soul
and we all
rocked home
Beyond
Beyond
Beyond,
Boogied Beyond
in Heart
and Flame
and Soul.

James Magner

THE PRISM

As palm leaves fan out, fluttering in a wind
that swoops down and charges through arborvitae,
excited olive rows and oleanders,
a patio prism mobile spins a rainbow
past wicker chairs, fast in a specter sweep
through French doors, along the floor of the den,
where the cat, gleam-quick, arches and paws
the wisp that circles the kitchen and out again.

Like orchid magic blown from white pollen,
bands of color, thrown from simple light
into a spectrum, array our common day
briefly, surely as varied Christ-traces
shine from cats aroused by dazzling prey,
from leaves, from graceful eyes and pleased faces.

Francis J. Smith, S.J.

IMPERIAL SUMMER

When unicorns cease to bloom
Out of suns in the summer sky
And all the dream ships have foundered in tempest winds
Never to return to derelict harbors and mourning maidens
When rosy-fingered dawn turns in pain from the morning blaze
And every human dream is made to sparkle
Like an icy tear in god's clouded heaven,
Then children may be found along roadsides
As they try to resurrect golden butterflies of summer
With watercolors and adhesive tape.

George Kanieski



I BRING NOT PEACE

Cardinal Newman wrote: "*Help me to spread
your fragrance everywhere I go.*"

I was sweating in the windowless room.
The little girl next to me was drawing
arrow pierced hearts. She handed me a blue crayon
and said, "I know how to share."
I colored a heart blue.
On the movie screen a slit-eyed missile,
oversaw us,
and in its shadow a man chewed gum
and lectured on the necessity of defense,
the power of the American military.
The mother of the little girl
leaned over to me and hissed:
"I hope you have a girl." I tried to smile.

I imagined the fire-tailed missile
separating our horizons
and making a new world. I felt ill
as the unborn within me somersaulted.
"You women don't understand,
it's a man's world.
As our beloved Lord Jesus said before he died,
I bring not peace but a sword."
"He is not dead," I said weakly.

I could feel my body
twitch and rise on its own,
look for an escape.
I know a body
has a life alone
that will fight
and leap and dance like a headless snake.
You can not stop it, only orchestrate.

I puked and gasped apologetically
and filled the air with the vile smell.
The audience of all women rose at once
and emptied into the open air.
A hand led me out.

And I remembered then
what I had forgotten
from the lost night of suicide,
how, in the midst of endless vomit,
a hand had grasped my own,
how I had rested in a deep other's sigh:
"Lord, have mercy." Was it a priest?
It spoke in Italian or Latin
in a language of alien relief,
and when I vomited one last time,
the bile scalding my throat,
I heard, "God teach her mercy."

Nathalie Manigault Andrews

THE MAN WHO DANCED FOR MAN

For Bernard Malamud and Jimmy

My son, who passed through
Bennington,
ended up towards evening
in a tavern
that I imagine
still resonates
with Roethke.
And there sat,
instead of The Dancing Bear,
a bald man with glasses
who said to my son,
"Dear Boy, I'm dry,
buy me a drink."
And Jimmy got up
and bought him a shot
and went to the wrong room
by mistake
and came out quick
and the bald man winked
and said, "Quicker than Bonaparte,
Boy!"

And evening became a woman,
and the dark her eyes,
and the trees her chorus,
and the place,
The Dancing Bear's.

The stars sang their silence
and God His Ground
and the birds their sleep,
and the old "Natural,"
"Assistant" of God's rye grace
to bumbling man,
got up
and, with arms above his head
before my child
who did not realize
Jacob's Angel,
danced a club-foot dervish,
shots for fuel,
upon the crumbling shuffleboard
of man
before the audience
of night's staring innocence.

James Magner



Lisa R. Kyle

THIS IS NOT A LOVE POEM

This poem has been long in the making,
Longer in the living.
It is not a love poem,
I tell myself.
Who is she to give sonnets breath,
Songs voice?
Her people speak
Only through cacophonies of silence,
Of wrongs unredressable, near unspeakable,
While innocence lies unannaled.
She told me
She'd been touched
By one she trusted
Long before any lover dared.
All knew, looked away.

But decay cannot hold her.
It seems years, though one,
Since she tumbled,
Lugging amp and Anvil road case,
Into my cinder-block basement —
Inauspicious audition,
Unfledged rock band.
Behind clothesline's
Levis and bloomers, long dry,
I mumbled into a microphone,
Stole sidelong glances.
Headphones snug, she bumped
With something like a colt's gangly grace
To her synthesizer's prerecorded thump.

Speak no sunsets, summer moons.
Hyperbole insults her bleeding, her dancing.

John Jesitus

THE STOOP IN FRONT OF IRV'S

Post midnight
Afternoon crash induced
Insomniac,
I take to the street
On the back of a K-9 Summertime
Steel grey,
Mug moist,
Impersonation of a breeze.

Black valve sick auto tap dancing
Adds punctuation
To roof top perched chicken cooped
Air conditioning acetelyne torch
Thermostatically controlled
On / Off
Clicking.

Window wedged
Whirring tin boxes
Drip
Opaque sidewalk crack seeking puddles.

Cars float at this time of night
This time of year.
Boom boom boom box
Pizza joint concert
Mogen David orange slides into
20/20 Night train visions.
Everyone, everything
Moves,
Just like night time. It is.

And I wonder,
What the guy on second shift
Is doing to my machine.

Michael Salinger



GOLF VIEW

"How are the children, Jeanne?"
she asks me stiffly,
as from a body long since left behind.
Somehow I've donned
the nurses' anesthetic armor
and stand deflecting her unconscious blows,
yet not the startling impact
of her misplaced perceptions, strangely mulled
by years of senseless stirring.

"I'm Sally," I remind her,
"not my mother."
Her subdued "oh" begins
a troubled silence.
So much of life she knows in stinging flashes.
So much of stashed reality still smolders.

"The staff here steals my jewelry
while I'm sleeping. Please hide this, Jeanne,"
she pleads, pressing
a plastic bag of earrings to my palm.
"They took my cashmere sweaters,
one by one. I can't find
anything of mine
left in this closet."

I stroke her dry hand, fidget,
and remark, "This really is
a pretty place, Grandmother."
My false voice chirps, "Your room
is such a cheery yellow. Look!
I can see birds there
just outside your window."

"Yes, Jeanne, you're right. There are
too many old birds here.
You've noticed too. God! Everyone
else here is so damned old.

Jack tells me this is Golf View Nursing Home.
Now tell me,
where's the course?
Where is it we tee off? Christ,
I even packed my lucky hat.
They took that too.
Jeanne, where's the goddamn golf!"

At cocktail time,
I wheel her down to smoke
her single sanctioned cigarette
out in the lobby.
She thinks that soon
she'll share a scotch with Jack,
not knowing that their last was sipped
three years ago
on his death's eve.

I kiss her
as I rise to leave.
She seizes my lapels and looks
clear-eyed into my face.
"I am not one of them," she snarls, then
"Where's the goddamn golf?"
she cries again.

Sally Bosley



Emmanuel Carreira

THE THOUGHT

by

Michael Cocchiarale

There were three people ahead of him in line.

(Breathe in. Breathe out. You have your order. You know what you want. Big Mac, Fries, soft drink. Soft drink? God which one? Why didn't I think of this at home? I did, I did. Pepsi — large Pepsi. Big Mac, Fries, and a large Pepsi. Oh — ketchup. Maybe three or four packets — I'll take what ever she gives me.)

It was lunchtime. Styrofoam boxes moved with great speed, bouncing from hand to hand to serving tray. In line, people stood nervously, impatiently, as if something free were being given away. All four registers were open, with their teenage girls taking orders and straining to keep a pleasant smile while thinking about their boyfriends, their hair, their selves. The manager was out, standing over the girls at one moment and at the next helping by wrapping a cheeseburger or two and saying loud enough for the customers to hear: "Keep it moving."

The man ahead of Ferret glanced at his watch and mumbled. He was dressed in a boring, dark blue suit. Ferret noticed that he had a stain in the back.

(I'm glad he's ahead of me. He's in a hurry. That young man and young lady in front of him should really let him go ahead of them. I bet he only wants a coffee or something like that.)

The elderly woman at the front of the line received her order and slowly shuffled away from the counter as if she were reluctant to do so. The young couple stepped up to give their order. The girl at the register took a quick breath and smiled again. The manager was standing behind her now. Ferret saw him for the first time.

(Looks familiar.) The manager was of no great height yet he seemed to tower over the young girl. His eyes burned with contempt. He seemed occupied with something else but at the same time, he seemed overly aware of what was going on.

Ferret looked up at him, hands in pockets. He played with quarters. (I hope no one's watching me. They are. They are. I can feel it. Why? I can't order now. I'm too upset. I should leave. God, that manager reminds me of someone. If he looks at me once in the eyes I'll know. I hope he doesn't though. I hate to be looked at as if I were on exhibition or something.)

The manager's eyes met Ferret's for a split second. Ferret smiled dumbly as he always did when someone looked at him. He did not know what else to do.

(My brother. I can't think about him though. My God, I'm next in line. I wish this man in the suit wouldn't move. I wish I could stay behind him forever. My brother. I can't think about him now. I have to order. What was I going to get? Why does he remind me of my brother? It's in his eyes. They have the same eyes. He has the same look my brother had on that day. Only my brother had a gun in his mouth. What was that doing there. I told him to get it out and stop playing around.

— I'm not playing around

— I'm not playing around

— I'm not playing around

That room was so dark then. He wouldn't let me turn any lights on.

— I want to die.

I was scared. I stood there. I could only hear his voice and that was so distant. I couldn't say anything. He just kept on talking.

— I'm so tired Ferret. So tired of waking up. So tired of scheduling activities just to fill time. So tired of looking forward to things and then being bored by them.

It's hell being bored.

Oh God, it's so black now. My head hurts. There's something floating in it. I'm dying.

— I hate myself too Ferret. I always hated myself. I could not stand myself in gradeschool. I loathed myself in high school. Playing on that goddamn football team, getting that cheerleader — what's her name? Tina — getting her pregnant. That was covered up pretty well though. Mom and dad never found out about it. They liked me only because they didn't know me. And college. I never learned to hate myself better than there. We had a lot of parties. I mean a lot. I never told you that me and Alan — you remember Alan. We went up to the lake completely drunk and he fell in. I sat there and laughed while he drowned. That's what really happened. Then I graduated from college with honors and mom and dad were proud and I was despairing, thinking how worthless it all was. But I faked the smiles for all the pictures. I smiled so hard for the shot of me and grandma — the one where I'm handing her the diploma. I never hated so many people as I did on that day. My job now. Worthless. My life. Nothing. Everyday something heavier and heavier is weighing down on me. It's so hard just to get out of bed. And you always looked up to me. . .

I'm going to faint. Think about food. God I have to make an order soon and I can't even see the young girl.

— You know Ferret, people are going to miss me. I know they are. There's the boss' secretary I've been screwing around with lately. Mom and dad too. You will miss me. But you will get over me. You're strong Ferret. I wish I could see you now. You're so silent. I hope I didn't upset you too much with the truth.

He did it. Oh it's so loud. I can hear the blood. I can still hear the blood. I can't look at you. I never want to look at you again. Get out. Get away. The insides of my eyelids are bleeding. I'm going to die. I can taste steel in my mouth. It is sweet. It tastes so sweet.

"May I take your order."

Ferret stood there at the counter and opened his eyes. He panicked. (Oh God Oh God Oh God — order. Big Mac. Yes, yes, yes — Big Mac. What else? My head. Something is inside it. Fries — good, good. Big Mac and...and...and...)

"May I take your order please."

"FRIES," he yelled pounding his fists onto the counter. He immediately stumbled back, bumping the man behind him.

The manager appeared from nowhere. "Sir, are you alright?"

(Blood — I told you I never wanted to see you again. I can still hear the blood.)

Ferret gave a little cry and fell to the tiled floor. People screamed, stared, glanced, or kept eating. The manager launched himself over the counter as if he had been practicing it for quite sometime.

"Get away," Ferret hissed at him. He crawled quickly and managed to get to his feet.

(The gun shot is so loud. The blood is so loud.)

The man in the blue suit, who had placed himself at a back table, got up to see what was going on. Ferret saw him.

(The man. The man. I need a place to hide forever. A quiet place.)

Ferret ran like a little child away from the manager and he hid behind the man in the blue suit, grabbing tightly at the inside vest. When the man flung Ferret off in disgust, he fell to the ground and quickly scrambled up like a wild animal and darted into the restroom. And he did not come out until the police came.

Bargypsy next to me
leaned over his mug
and slurred.
Then I heard
the spittle of knowledge
drip off his chin
and puddle on the bar.
I watched the pool of
frothy blather
form phrases. As I read
the thoughts, they slid
down the bar until
the drool dropped
out of sight.
The barkeep wiped up the rest.
Somehow, something
profound was lost — and
I had another whisky,
then slipped out

incomplete.

Patrick Ferencz

portrait of a waitress

her essence
careens between tables
under groaning electric fans
although tipping trays
she smiles and
perhaps it is courtesy
that gives her smalltalk
a certain styled grace
her outstretched arm
poises elegant fingers
as if in contemplation
only the grimy cleaning boy
notices the hesitation
in her voice

George Kanieski



EYES

by

James Magner

Aunt Babe, bent and dying among the hibiscus in Florida, had sent the picture. A light unsurpassable. The face slightly shaded by the bonnet of the twenties. The body swept with a long fur robe-like coat that covered her then and him within her. The light of the face, the light of the eyes. The vital, modest swerving of the garments about her bigness, the radiant expectancy. He knew that he was within her because Babe had said in her letter, "She was carrying you close to her heart."

Oh the passage, oh the memory of more recent times, of her perched, eighty-four pounds, a spindly bird upon a brocade couch. And then her asphyxia, alone, and heart arrest. But then the radiance. The eyes. The vital, light-filled smile, as if the flesh were filled with more than Renoir, much more than any brush could reproduce. And he was convinced, somehow, that this life endured past all decrepitude. He could not write of it. Could not utter it.

But it was there in the picture and its effect in him; more than effect. There was perdurance. Continuance. Her happiness gave him the inward color of the flaming azalea that he had sent Maureen in the hospital; the grace of living flesh in flower, in mother. The continuance. Now. The eyes. Whose were the eyes that burned their life beneath the slight shade of the audacious bonnet? Not the shape, but the life. Not only mother, but someone else. And then he realized. Maureen, his daughter, as she sat cross-legged upon the bed, with light's bright torrent from the north upon her, on the top floor of a hospital called Mt. Sinai. It was the same life. The same light. Of the present and the lost. Lost yet present. Utterly lost; utterly present.

EARLY TUTORIAL

It was a Charley Chan nightmare
of eyes that squinted evil,
yellow smelling dens
where chinks in quilted gowns
lurked behind mustaches
drooping like fangs,
men with wrinkled faces
and long, curved fingernails,
who hid behind hedges, windy nights,
in our neighborhood in Lorain

till my father coaxed me, hunched
like a kitten pondering peril,
to meet the man with laughing eyes
who ran the Hand Laundry
on Eight Street, next to Sohio,
his wife, who lulled me with pillowy arms,
and kids, who smelled like white candy.

Francis J. Smith, S.J.

There's a hole in my pillow
where my dreams d
r
i
p
into a bucket
and I can S P L A S H them
on my wall —
so when I can't sleep
I can peel one off and
paste it to my forehead.
My bucket is spilling over...
hand me a mop.

Patrick Ferencz

THE NIGHT WE BOOGIED LATE
WITH DAVID *

*For My Children and The Lake Effect ***

The Night we boogied late
with David
at the drums,
the neighborhood of Hart ***
reclaimed its Heart
and The Tavern lost its walls,
the sky its ceiling,
and Colleen, Maureen and Greg
and the Ole Man too
boogied into stars,
danced into Dance
with the children of The World.
The Night we boogied late
with The Lake Effect
in Light,
The World lost its mask
and gained its face
known before the split
of night and day.
It was the night
resonant of One Body,
beyond all this and that
the night the blessed child
of Man
forgot himself
in Music
and The Beat sent out
from Primordial Heart
to that Euclid outpost
of The World.

* *The author's youngest son.*

** *The musical group in which David is drummer.*

*** *The neighborhood in which Hart Crane grew up.*

James Magner

AFTER MIDNIGHT DREAMS

by

George Kanieski

My sister and I were walking up the street. Nothing was unusual in this except that I did not remember having a sister. But I made no protest. The summer sun cut the late afternoon and shone in radiance upon cascades of hair on her shoulders. I did not feel like straining the moment with questions and decided instead to accept that she was in fact my sister.

It seems strange that I did not know my sister's name, although many possibilities came to mind as we walked along: Phoebe, Julia, Cindy, and even Arcadia. I neither remember speaking to her nor addressing her in any way. An unspoken understanding existed between us to the effect that she had many names and there was no need to call her by any single one. In my mind I elected to think of her as Cindy, and that is how I have remembered her.

As we neared the end of the street, time passed away like gasoline on hot pavement. I realized we were no longer walking together in silent contentment. She stood alone amidst a noisy crowd of people who had appeared with the twilight. From a distance I watched in the growing darkness. I could not distinguish among the crowd; it seemed to be composed of both everyone and no one at once. The crowd was a faceless enigma, and I felt a smoldering hatred of it.

Time drove on again. The sky was thick with the night. The crowd had disappeared. I was left alone with a pain that could not let go of itself. Cold clouds drew back the staring stars.

I was home. The fabric of place and moment took on a dull, leaden cast. Had I been mistaken? This problem was not so easy as others. My mind was hazed with a feeling of uncertain loss.

But soon this was replaced by a void absence of feeling. I would never see Cindy again.

Someone approached me. I stammered in question my growing fear. A pause and then the answer: Dead.

I understood that there had been an auto accident. Cindy, among others, had been badly hurt. Surgery proved useless. And then darkness took all.

The void in my feelings completed itself. In sudden fits of rage I battered the walls with my fists and smashed mirrors and table lamps. But it soon became a play I acted out. I was an extra between scenes. Finally, numbed by cold indifference, I gave up looking for some emotion where none could sooth.

Morning came. I was wearing a suit and riding in our family car. I contemplated my solitary loss.

Our car stopped in the middle of the deserted main road in front of our Church. A black limousine pulled up at a sharp angle ahead of us. I realized that such was the position of a former auto accident I had been involved in. As now, I had been seated in the back seat.

As we got out of our car, a chauffeur came to open the rear door of the limousine. A woman I did not know stepped out of the long black car and stared at me without moving. She began to cry; her eyes became red and makeup blotched. She looked away for a moment and then came briskly to where I stood. The woman said she worked at the emergency clinic and had treated Cindy when she was first brought in. She too could not stop the darkness. Yet I felt no anger. What was the need for anger when all other emotions failed?

After the woman had finished talking, I sensed the time passing away and knew that we should leave. I thanked her for doing what she could, which was nothing.

We were driving away, but to where I did not know. I entertained the growing suspicion in my mind that Cindy had not really died, but that we had only been separated. I realized we would never see each other again, regardless of what had estranged us.

That night I dreamed of a vast wall encircling a large excavated area, of which only the upper edge could be seen. Although many people had looked out over the center, none had dared to look down into it — the peaceful eye of oblivion. A scaffolding meshed with the wall. It made a platform, a kind of shelf, upon which we all stood shoulder to shoulder. We only dared to move occasionally, since anyone who did inevitably found himself some place further down the line among unfamiliar faces. An aerial observer would have seen us as the tops of medicine vials or bottles, except that we were unlabelled. We thought we were at a high elevation; at least, we all experienced something like acrophobia. Occasionally, I ventured out and moved across the scaffolding. It was as if I walked a crack in the floor and clutched a sandy wall for guidance. I looked for faces to discover who comprised this nameless apparition of WE. I sensed I must work quickly. Even now, time was declining. I feared we stood upon a volcano rim or a bottomless kiln of some sort. An instant later we might be ionized, burnt to cinders, reduced to primal dust. I pushed my way onward thinking that if the moment came the scaffolding might collapse, the center void might dissolve in fire, but the vast encircling wall — this smooth and dangerous shell — would remain. I glanced upward at the hanging sky. Then I slowed my pace, stopped, and let my eyes drift down along the mesh of the opposite side. Still farther down. I tried to remember. Down. A name and shortly another came back to me like shadows in a candlelit passage. Yet I dared my gaze to drop. Down. But one name especially apart from all others. I wanted to cry out. And then darkness took all.



Emmanuel Carreira

A HOLIDAY NIGHT

I felt fresh breeze
of normality
on my night venture
through Piety Hill.
Ice and lights and
construction marred the grey sky.
Green markers blazed past.
Reading Glenhurst,
Westwood and Shangri-la.
Each buffer fell
sign by sign.
While my heart raced.

An engine hummed into the unreal.
Cottage after cottage lit
with stress filled lights.
I thought of you constantly.

Bernard Chapin

GRANDMA'S KITCHEN

Brighter isn't always better.
Shadows add dimension.

Infra blue droplets drip,
Midnight steel drum dropping
In an aquatic back beating
Calypsoid cadence,
Onto a Cometized stainless sink
Stealing the silence
From within
the perimeters
Of Grandma's kitchen.

Gelatine

Lies bottom shelf setting
Within
A seventeen year old coloring book
Picture wrapped
Refrigerator.

Lemon-Lime,

Green transluced
Controlled coagulation
In a seashell shaped copper colored
Mold.

A semi-solid dessert,
Containing suspended fruit.

Michael Salinger



THE IMPOTENT MIDWIFE

A wet May,
and the woods bring forth morels.
Even as I walk,
I feel the growing,
the quiet urging, spongy
at the forest base,
beneath the brash roots writhing.

In mossy privacy,
the childbirth scent of yet another
fecund springtime flowers
amid the moist uncurling
of young leaves.

And I, the impotent midwife, kneel
to heap the rich morels
into a braided grapevine basket.

Sally Bosley

FUJI

"Cat" mews for liver on the cellar stair.
In my small world in this profane West,
the sun sets between thermometer and violet
in the bottom left pane of a kitchen window.
A copper moon, the kettle bounces on its frail heat axis.
August 31 reads: "Michael — climb Fuji."
I know, but do not know,
how days meet across continents,
how time flows east for it to be tomorrow
in Hiroshima: your journey begun.
Points far enough apart
never reconcile in time, perhaps,
yet now is there as well as here
where the moon bubbles, hisses out of orbit.
I discover you compact in my mind as a postcard,
beyond newsprint, coffee,
huddled at the crater's edge,
knees to chin, feet tucked in rocks,
in an absolute dark hugging yourself
against any contact less primitive than ash, stars,
a world's first view of sun.

David M. LaGuardia



contributors

Nathalie Andrews: she's a Mom.

Ben B. Berkey is a senior citizen who worked for the Cleveland Press and the Cleveland Plain Dealer. He is a World War II veteran, and is presently a freelance writer.

Sally Bosley received her M.A. in English from John Carroll, has taught at Laurel School and is the mother of a family.

Alfred Cahen is a poet, playwright, painter, and person. He also teaches in the Continuing Education program of Western Reserve College.

Fr. Emmanuel Carreira, a professor of physics at John Carroll University, captures the beauty of the earth and heavens through photography.

Bernard Chapin is a freshman at John Carroll seeking a history and English double major. He enjoys writing plays and poems and will someday form a new style of writing called Depressionism.

Jennifer A. Coatney is a secretary at John Carroll, and the only member of the Quarterly staff who really likes Walt Whitman. You may or may not recognize her, depending on her present hair color.

Michael Cocchiarale underlines and highlights even when he's reading for pleasure.

Ed Dillon is a photographer who has done numerous one man shows.

Kyle Engler is on the Eternal Quest for Flair, Style, Beauty, and Funky Stuff that Stands Out.

Patrick Ferencz, according to John Lennon, "could have been a fisherman, but he can't because he's a genius."

John Jesitus: Finishing an M.A. in English, self-proclaimed rock and roll sex god of the nineties, John Jesitus hopes to find a day job then quit it to tour with his band, *Ties That Bind*.

Larry Joyner is a photographer with East Ohio Gas and local night clubs.

George Kanieski used to be a violinist, currently works as a bus-boy and listens to rock music, and still cannot write in rhyme or meter, although it doesn't bother him as much as it used to.

Bonnie J. Kinkopf has received awards from the May Show, the JCC Show, and the FAVA Show.

Lisa R. Kyle is a senior photography major at Ohio University.

David M. LaGuardia is a professor of English at John Carroll.

James Magner, Jr. is a professor of English at John Carroll and is the author of numerous books of poetry. In 1981, Dr. Magner was named Ohio Poet of the Year.

Michael Salinger is a machinist and a conservationist living in Cleveland Hts.

Francis J. Smith, S.J. is a professor of English at John Carroll.

Lydia Thiel received a B.A. in English and Italian from Lake Erie College and has studied in Florence, Italy. She is working toward an M.A. in English at John Carroll and would like to pursue a Ph.D. in English and/or Italian.

Kip Zegers, The Beaudry Award Winner from the class of 1965, teaches English to high school students in Manhattan. He has published several books of poetry, including *Collected Poems* in 1986.

A SHORT POEM

The rampage of words:
The irony
The alarm
Of cancer's creativity.
I can write the image
The phrase
The thought
But never the poem.

Michael Cocchiarale



