

FUGUE

Vol. 1, No.1 Fall/Winter 1990 \$3.00 USA



Lara Therese Mac Connell
Alisa Stoffel
Christi Rucker
Mark Perison
Judy Jack
Janet Carter
Mary Huett
J. P. McLaughlin
Trent Young
Tom Drake
Dwayne Rogge
Tasche Streib
J. C. Hendee
William Studebaker
Leah K. Castagne
Pamela J. Kuehne
Dan Meldazis
Paul Greenwood
Ron McFarland

Stories
Vignettes
Poetry
Commentary

Literary Digest of the Univ. of Idaho

BOOKS

BOUGHT · SOLD · TRADED

- ... **Out-of-Print Search Service** ...
- ... **1st Edition Collectables** ...
 - ... **Fiction** ...
 - ... **Non-Fiction** ...
 - ... **Children's** ...
 - ... **Reference** ...

**Meyer & Meyer
Bookseller**

**402 So. Main Street
Moscow, Idaho 83843
Ph. 208-882-3353**

**Hours:
Monday-Saturday, 10am-6pm**

[Meyer & Meyer is a retail outlet for FUGUE Digest]

Executive Editor
J.C. Hendee

Managing Editors
Lelloni Reed, Finance
Barb Hendee, Coordinator

Associate Editors
Mary Huett, Promotions
Christi Rucker, Liaison
Kris Breen, Advertising

Copy Editor, Advisor
Prof. Ron McFarland

FUGUE, Vol.1, No.1,
Fall/Winter 1991
(ISSN Pending)
copyright 1991
Fugue Press,
University of Idaho
Brink Hall, Rm. 200
Moscow, Idaho 83843

Published triannually at the end of Fall, Spring and Summer semesters at the Univ. of Idaho. Single copy \$3. Subscription by mail: \$9/year. All payment in US funds. All rights revert to contributors upon publication. Please send SASE for guidelines before submitting. FUGUE encourages unsolicited submissions, but is not responsible for such under any conditions. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of Fugue Press or its staff, the University or its staff. Display Advertising rates available on request. Display advertising rates are available upon request at magazine address.

"Why Read Small Press," J.P. McLaughlin, previously published in *Figment*, 1990. "So You Think..." J.C. Hendee, previously published in *Scavenger's NL*, 1989. Both works used by permission.

Cover art by
J. C. Hendee

STORIES

- THE CANDY BAR, *Pamela J. Kuehne* 4
A SUFFICIENT CAUSE,
William Studebaker 11
DANDELIONS, *Leah K. Castagne* 16
THE SNAIL AND THE GADFLY
Ron McFarland 44

VIGNETTES

- LOVE, *Trent Young* 8
DUST, *Tasche Streib* 15
A SATURDAY'S GAME, *Dan Meldazis* 19
THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS
Mary Huett 22
THE LAST PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSE
Ron McFarland 25
A MEETING IN TIME, *J. P. McLaughlin* ... 26

POETRY

- THE TAILOR'S SON, *Mark Perison* 9
HOLLY C.W., *Dwayne Rogge* 14
SINGULAR, *Mark Perison* 18
TENANTS WANTED—PETS PROVIDED
J. C. Hendee 20
CONSUMMATION, *Tom Drake* 24
FISHING WITH ERIC, *Janet Carter* 29
HALF A HOUSE, *Mark Perison* 30
LOVE RULE NO.3, *Tasche Streib* 35
INCIDENT AT THE SATELLITE SUB
Judy Jack 36
VIII, *Lara Therese Mac Connell* 37
WRAPPED UP, *Christi Rucker* 38
"HOLLOW CORRIDORS..."
Paul Greenwood 42
THE GODDESS OF SAX, *Alisa Stoffel* 46

NON-FICTION

- GRAFFITI, *Notes from the Staff* 2
JUNK MAIL, *Letters to FUGUE* 3
SO YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN REJECTED...
J. C. Hendee 31
WHY READ SMALL PRESS?
J. P. McLaughlin 39
GUIDELINES 48

Confussion.
Frustration.
Irritation.

You know, general annoying chaos, and such nonsense. Still, we did manage to get the first issue out: (Bravo to the Staff!) And with fingers crossed and breath held, we hope it will be the first of many to come.

I would like to thank MEYER & MEYER and BOOK-PEOPLE for their generous support in contracting advertising in a previously unseen publication. Your faith in *Fugue* is sincerely appreciated.

I truly hate long, boring editorials, so let me just run down a few details. Some of you might note a few differences in the content of the magazine versus the proposals listed in our guidelines.

There are several contributors with more than one piece of work in this issue. We simply didn't receive enough material suited to the magazine's present needs in order to stick to our original limit of one piece of work by an author per issue. We need to hear from more of you out there, and we need to hear from you more often!

Yes, there will be a next issue. (We didn't suffer all this for a one-shot deal, y'know.) I'm moving over to Production Manager and handing

GRAFFITI
NOTES FROM THE STAFF

the Exec. Ed. position over to Leiloni Reed. I hope everyone gives her, the editorial staff, and the magazine itself, as much support as possible. We're off to a slightly wobbly start, but things are already stabilizing. The next issue should be due out before the end of the Spring semester and should be a few leaps and bounds (or at least a staggering crawl) above and beyond what we've already accomplished.

—J. C. Hendee

With J.C.'s organization, my job has been pretty minimal this semester at *Fugue*, since we got things off the ground. I've learned a lot

by just watching the process and throwing in a few opinions here and there. I am looking forward to my new duties this coming issue as Executive Editor and hope to see interest and diversity of submissions increase from both students and staff. *Fugue* carries a lot of potential, and I hope to help see that potential taken to the limits.

—Leiloni Reed

We'll be looking to hear from a lot more writers and poets out there for the next issue. Reading for the Spring issue begins immediately, so get to work and submit something!

Notice something wrong with this page? Does it seem like a ridiculous use for a full sheet inside a magazine? Yea? Well, you're right. Who wants to see the letters department in your magazine filled with nothing but the mindless blatherings of an editor? Nobody. And there's only one way to fix it—write to us!

Send a postcard or a letter [not to mention an actual submission, eh]. Send it carved in granite for all I care—just send it! We want to hear your viewpoint.

Tell us what you liked, and what you didn't like, about the content, set-up, format, and other sundry details of the magazine. Not only will you be helping avoid the pointless misuse of a murdered tree, but you'll be aiding your fellow readers by keeping me out of this column. [You think I enjoy trying to think up something long-winded just to fill up this space? Think again, bud! I've still got to find a hole in the snow through which I can escape my apartment.] So write to us. Most of you pay thousands of dollars a year so you can write something for your instructors. Write to us; we won't charge you anything. Well, maybe three bucks, if you want to actually read it in the magazine.

—J.C. Hendee

JUNKMAIL LETTERS TO FUGUE

THE CANDY BAR

Pamela J. Kuehne

Footsteps echo in the hall. It is the only sound. Darkness creeps further and further down the hall in a rhythmic motion. Henry's shiny black shoes are making the sound that bounces off the plain gray walls and back into his ears. He is alone. He starts to walk in a pattern down the shiny tile floor, trying to make a song with his steps: right... right, left-left, right-left-left-left-right... left... left.

He finally reaches the big steel doors and pushes them open with just enough strength so that he can slide through them without letting them touch him. Henry slowly nears the candy machine, the only source of light in the otherwise penetrating darkness of the room. His breath is heavy, the trip down the hall had taken a lot out of him. But to get a candy bar, it was worth it, he thought.

He remembered his first days

there, when he wasn't allowed to make any trips by himself. And today, today was the first day he was allowed to, and knowing how candy was even more important to him than playing video games, it wouldn't be long before he'd be down there again. Henry revelled in this new found freedom. He was happy.

The nearer and nearer he came, the more he could hear the buzz of the light of the machine, mixing with the sound of his footsteps. And as the light showing on his freckled cheeks reflected in the glass, he realized that candy was not the only thing in the machine.

Everything came rushing back to him. He had forgotten while he was walking down the hall. But now he remembered, he remembered it all. He stared at the machine, unblinking for almost two whole minutes. His eyes started to water, so he

FALL/WINTER 1990

closed them, seeing only the warm light of darkness reflected off his lids. Henry opened his eyes and glanced through the available choices, noticing that there was a wide variety: Hershey's milk chocolate with almonds, Skittles, Almond Joy, his dead father's corroding body with pasty white flesh pressed against the glass, or various kinds of chips.

Henry tugged at his right earlobe and stretched his shoulders back until the blades almost met.

"...Never a Snickers bar when you need one," he said, and slammed his fist against the glass.

Henry had hit the machine as hard as he could, and it didn't even move, not at all. His dad's smiling face was pressed against the glass, and he could feel his eyes focused right on him. Henry could see the hole, neat and round in the right side of his father's head where the bullet had entered. Henry looked at the left side of his father's head. It wasn't there. Blood dripped. The brains that remained were hanging out. His dad smiled.

Henry laid his head against the glass with an intensity and pain bubbling up inside, as the strain in his face showed that he fought to keep it inside. The right side of his face was now touching the glass in the same spot that his dad's right hand was touching, on the other side. Henry kept repeating in his mind, "You can't touch me now, dad, you can't touch me now." Everything was still... the only sound was the buzz of the light in the machine.

Suddenly, Henry jolted back, away from the glass, and began pacing back and forth in front of the display. His back was tight, and he

could feel his head pounding. He looked into the machine from all angles when he paced, until finally, he stopped and enlarged his eyes with the amazement that indeed there was one Snickers bar left, only one. Henry smiled.

His dad's eyes, bugged and cold, stared right into his, and into the darkness. Henry stared back. It was one of the only times he was not afraid to face his dad. For five minutes, he stared into the cold, unfeeling face, neither of them moving, and Henry slowly, slowly fell into a trance, from the lulling music of the light. He felt the silence like a warm hug enveloping him with the protection of darkness.

Henry shook his head violently.

"No, no, I will get my candy bar, no matter what!"

Wriggling his hand deeper and deeper into his warm pocket, he chased the elusive coins until his fingers cornered them and finally felt the smooth metal. He clenched the coins with his commonly tight and clammy fist. He forcedly deposited them, one by one, into the machine, "clunk, clunk," until he had deposited them all.

"I will get my candy bar, dad," he said, holding back the tears that were welling up in his eyes. He sniffed, wiped his nose with his shirt sleeve, and started to push the buttons.

Just then, the buttons started lighting up and flashing while from inside the machine his father called to him.

"Henry... fat boy, you don't need a candy bar, you can't have one, you can't have one fat boy, Henry, Henry, Henry..."

Henry ignored his father. He

made the selection with no hint of indecision in his movements, which started a whole series of noises and movements from within the machine. Henry watched unafraid as the coiled metal snake slithered its way towards him, nudging the one and only Snickers bar right to the end of the shelf... and it stopped just short of making the traditional plunge downward. His father had won, like he always did. He had won.

"No dad, I will get my candy bar, and you can't stop me," Henry said in desperation as he kicked the machine and felt his face grow warm.

The candy machine remained unmoved.

As he stared at his father, who was now smiling and laughing at him, he remembered what his mom always told him: "Honey, you should be glad you're not like your dad, you don't need to beat people up to feel like a man. You've got a strong mind, Henry." The thoughts raced through his mind as he felt the throbbing pain of his foot.

He remembered that day, two months ago. School, he hated it, but had to go. Fatso, they called him—fatso, fatso, Henry the Hippo! His mom knew, and tried to help. She knew that he loved candy bars. Candy soothed him.

As he approached the kitchen he saw his mom there, but it wasn't until he got all of the way into the kitchen that he saw his dad there. Henry ran into the kitchen and was about to grab his lunch when his dad

grabbed it.

His mom looked at Henry, scared, telling him to leave with her eyes. Henry stayed.

"What's this, a candy bar? I told you Margaret, this boy don't need candy."

"But Stan, one candy bar won't hurt him."

"Margaret, are you listening to me? Are you listening to me, Margaret?"

Henry stood there, knowing what would happen next, but afraid to move. He watched as his father repeated those words and pounded his mother's head into the counter-

top again and again and again until her blood stained the white tile. He remained unmoved.

All Henry remembered about what happened later that day was the blood, and his candy bar.

His father had his candy bar clenched in his bloodied hand when they found him. He had fallen asleep on the couch. Everyone assumed he shot himself... everyone assumed...

"But ever since then you've been with me, everywhere, haven't you dad? I hate you dad, I hate you!"

His eyes became red with strain as he tried to repress feelings that he considered weak, and that he promised himself he would never release again. He stared at his dead father's cold face, and he knew his father would always be there. In his sessions with the doctor, his father was there, in his room sitting in the corner and smiling, his father was there, in the lunch room, and always, al-

"Henry, I'll always
be with you,
Henry, always,
always, always."

ways, in the candy machine, his father would be there, he knew it.

Henry could feel the pressure building up in his head until he thought it was going to burst; it was another one of his headaches. He turned from the piercing eyes and slid down the glass until his butt hit the hard cold floor. He sat Indian-style and felt his backbone rolling against the smooth surface of the glass. His eyes were pried open with intensity and pain as he tried to relax, and he focused on a black spot on the dimly lit wall in front of him. Even fat boys can have determination, he thought, even fat boys can get what they want.

Henry decided that he would sit there in front of the machine all night if he had to, into the morning, until he got the Snickers bar that was rightfully his. The defiance in his bright blue eyes clashed with the red, and he closed them in an effort to soothe the on-going conflict. Although his back was turned to his father, he could still hear him.

"Henry, I'll always be with you, Henry, always, always, always."

Henry covered his ears. He started concentrating on the candy bar; he could almost taste the creamy milk chocolate. His father started shouting, and all Henry could think of was that he really needed a candy bar. He really needed one.

Bam! Henry's head hit the glass. Shocked to consciousness, Henry was awake in a groggy, misty state and didn't realize that he had fallen asleep. The sound of the light was loud and coarse, with a high-pitched buzzing sound that ground against his eardrum. The stale, closed-in air suffocated him like a

pillow over his mouth. He gasped for air, and getting some, he relaxed. He looked at his legs still folded beneath him, and it was a couple of minutes before he realized exactly where he was.

He breathed several hesitating jerky breaths of air. He watched as blood from his forehead dripped onto his hands. He watched each drop as it fell onto his hands... and was watching as he heard:

"Henry, Henry Johnson?"

"Leave me alone dad, leave me alone!"

"Henry, no it's me, Nurse Warren, Henry." He felt someone shaking him. "What on heaven's earth happened here... your head! Henry, you were supposed to have been back half an hour ago. Come on Henry, come with me." He felt someone pulling his arms.

Henry went limp, and he could feel someone trying to stand him up. He looked at his hands now covered with blood, and he saw, inside them, a Snickers bar.

"I got it, I got it!" he cheered as he decided to let whoever it was pick him up.

Nurse Warren picked Henry up and started to guide him to the doors. Henry staggered and turned toward the candy machine. He stared through the blood stained shards of glass; his father was gone. Henry knew he would be back, but for now he had won.

Henry leaned on the nurse, clutching the bloodied candy bar in his left hand as she guided him towards the big steel doors. He reached for the doors, and standing on his own, flung them open, safely making it through without letting them touch him. □

LOVE

Trent Young

She lay in bed, next to her old husband. Beneath their piles of blankets, his feet curled around her calves. She could count his individual breaths and his every toenail. Up above them, a bed slammed against the wall.

"Do you still love me?"

"Of course." He put down his paperback. "Of course I still love you. Go to sleep."

She tried to shut her eyes. Her hands were cold and numb from the arthritis. Years ago, she would've slipped those hands between the band of his jockey shorts and then between the crack of his legs, but not so now. Now she slid her palms into the pockets of her own flannel pajamas. She tried to shut her eyes, but she couldn't.

He lay on his stomach, the blankets piled over his mid-section. For a man of sixty-three, he still looked so young. His broad shoulders loomed out at the headboard. She took a handful of old blankets—her fingers ached—and pulled them over his shoulders.

"Go to sleep." He didn't even move from the book. "The kids are coming tomorrow and you'll be tired. GO to sleep."

"Okay."

Up above, the bed slammed again and a voice whined out; bed springs sang.

She traced a flower stem on the sheets next to his armpit. She watched as he read. Line. Line. Skip. Down. Down. Down. She would be sixty-five in seven days. She shut her eyes.

He turned and took off her glasses. The crinkled skin still had the freckle splotches he'd kissed so long ago. He folded the glasses and deposited them on the nightstand. She sighed in her half-sleep while he kissed her eyelids.

Her arms snaked around and clicked off the light. In the dark he saw faintly her warm turtle-blue eyes. She slipped her hand down into his boxers.

Up above, the man buckled his belt and the girl, holding the blankets with a thin wrist to her shoulder, sobbed into her pillows.

□

THE TAILOR'S SON

"Nineteen stitches," he proclaimed,
"In each and every button,
It is our standard,
It is our name."
His fat fingers danced impossibly upon
The coat before him.
"This you will learn."
The boy picked up his own coat,
The buttons torn off by stronger hands,
And sunk the needle through
And of nineteen, only the first drew blood,
A tiny drop of protest red, brushed away
And soon forgot.

With each year that passed,
His fingers learned the dance
And his mind learned a dance,
Of how to skip around thoughts of
Nineteen games unplayed
Nineteen walks untaken
Nineteen hands unheld.

Holding the coat before him he spoke aloud,
"I have learned the nineteen stitches,
I have learned the quality of
My own name."

At nineteen he stood before the coffin
And saw the sewn quality that he himself had made.
It was not bad, after all, to know this thing.

(continued...)

At thirty-eight he held a worn coat before him
In front of innocent eyes
"Nineteen stitches," he proclaimed,
"In each and every button,
It is our standard,
It is our name."
To which the meek voice replied, "But why?"
"It is not why, or how or what,
It is only so.
This you will learn."

At 57, his fingers danced the dance of nineteen
The standard was upheld
But the strength was gone
Crushed by an errant "Why?"
The last stroke through again drew blood
Without pain or notice.

In his box, in his suit,
He lay a dead and dignified man.
For each button on his coat,
There were only six stitches
Sewn in haste by thoughtless, danceless hands.
"And this," the young man said to his own son,
"This you will learn."

—Mark Perison

A SUFFICIENT CAUSE

William Studebaker

If you think about it, maybe you've killed somebody and don't even know it. At least, that's how it was with me and the Derringer brothers.

Since we killed Sooner Hopkins and his family, I haven't seen Joe nor Daryl. Maybe they haven't figured out what we did, but I have, and I can't stand myself no more. It's like my high school English teacher said about those guys in Capote's novel: "They just weren't good for each other. They didn't mean to kill the farmer and his family. But running around together like they did, things just got out of hand." I don't blame the Derringers or nothing, but I mean from now on to go on my own. If I can help it, I don't aim to kill nobody else, either.

I'm starting to think my folks were right. If I'd never started chewing tobacco and drinking beer, I'd've turned out to be an okay guy.

But being a sinner is the worst habit a man can get, and there isn't no real help, not even when you give your life over to Jimmy Bakker or somebody like that.

I'd been running around with Joe and Daryl whenever I got time off work. I worked for my Grand Dad at the nursing home. I kept up the grounds and helped out with the old folks. You'd think a guy like me would pick up on a few things, but I never seemed to. The old folks would tell me stories about their lives and all, but I never saw no message in them, not until I was a murderer anyway.

It was Friday night in January. Joe and Daryl stopped off and bought a case of beer before picking me up at the nursing home. I remember it was Coors because Joe said it was the only beer he could drink a case of and not puke himself into oblivion. It was cold out, and we all

sat in the front seat so the heater could blow on us. It didn't seem to matter much, since there was no back in the cab. When Joe and Daryl remodeled the car, it was summer, and they hadn't given much thought to winter. Heater or not, we could ride around only so long before we had to stop somewhere and get warm. That's why we stopped at the Last Chance Inn—that and because we were out of beer.

We were all nineteen, at least Joe and Daryl thought they were. I tried to explain, since they were half-brothers, they couldn't both be, but it never did any good. They just argued. Daryl said that they were born the same year and that made them the same age. Joe said that they wouldn't have been if Daryl hadn't been premature. It didn't make no difference anyhow, since you have to be twenty-one to drink in Givensville. But we were feeling pretty light-headed from drinking beer and breathing cold air, and we were not in no mood to have someone like Sooner Hopkins tell us what to do.

Besides, Sooner was a newcomer. He moved to Givensville last spring, bought the Last Chance, and kept pretty much to himself. His wife and kids always stayed bunched up whenever they went somewhere. They acted like they were scared of their own footsteps. I heard tell that Sooner beat them if they talked to people. He claimed the world was full of sin and didn't want folks contaminating his family.

I, also, heard that Sooner was a Rajneeshie, and he'd got married just to fool folks. Mack Jones said that he'd been around a lot of

Rajneeshie in the Marines, and if he'd ever seen a Rajneeshie, it was Sooner Hopkins. With all the sin and Rajneeshie business, nobody drank at the Last Chance much anymore. Even old man Waters, who just about supported the place all by himself, quit. He said that Sooner Hopkins had eyes like peeled grapes, and if Sooner was a dog, he'd knock him in the head just for looking so damn weird. We when Sooner asked Daryl for an I.D., he didn't have no idea the mistake he was making.

"Give us a couple Coors apiece," said Daryl.

Sooner put eight nail-less fingers on the bar and curled his thumbs underneath, sort of gripping it the way I'd seen men clasp planks down at the sawmill. He looked at us and said, "I'll have to see some I.D."

Daryl turned to Joe and me and said, "You got any I.D.?"

"Nope," we said.

"We ain't got no I.D.," said Daryl. "What would a little Rajneesh pecker-head like you want I.D. for?"

"I can't serve you boys without I.D.," said Sooner as if he hadn't heard Daryl. "Looks like you'll have to be goin'."

"We ain't goin', shit-face," said Daryl. "We want a couple beers, and I don't mean any of that horse piss you sell out of your taps. We want Coors, and if you don't get 'em, I'll have to get 'em for ya."

"You just get the hell out of here if you know what's good for ya," said Sooner.

Just like that, Daryl reached over the bar and grabbed Sooner by the shirt and pulled him up on the counter top, shook him real hard,

and shoved him back. Sooner flew off the bar and fell against the coolers, and like a bunk of lumber, thumped against the floor. Daryl walked around behind the bar, got us each a beer, and came back and stood beside us.

"Let's listen to a little music," said Daryl.

We walked over to the jukebox and started reading the labels. I was about to offer up a quarter when Sooner fired a pistol over our heads. We all hit the floor. When I looked up, Sooner was coming around the end of the bar.

"You little bastards want trouble? I'll give you trouble," said Sooner. "Now, get up."

We stood up. I looked at Daryl. He didn't seem scared at all. I figured we'd had it. Everyone in Givensville was saying that this Sooner Hopkins was out of his flippin' gourd, and it wouldn't be long before someone would have to show him which end of a cow gets up first. But I figured we weren't going to be the ones.

"Look here, you little Rajneesh asshole," said Daryl, "let's go outside and settle this fair."

"To hell with you," said Sooner. "You just get out, or I won't miss next time."

"Come on, Daryl," said Joe. "Let's go." He reached out and grabbed Daryl by the arm and gave him a pull. Daryl shook him loose.

"Listen, Sooner, you ain't seen the last of us," said Daryl.

We turned and walked out. We were pulling out of the parking lot when we heard a shot. Joe stepped on the gas, and we tore off, up the highway.

"Jesus," said Daryl. "That guy's

a wacko. I think he'd kill us."

I was too stunned to say anything. A bullet had passed between Joe and me and gone right through the firewall.

"Stop! Joe. Let's go get 'em," said Daryl.

Joe slowed down, but he didn't stop.

"Let's let it go, Daryl," I said. "He's got a gun. Let's just stay away."

Joe sped up. When we pulled on to Main Street, Givensville was about empty. We drove around for a while and listened to the radio, but we never said another word. It was after midnight, and I was getting cold again, so I asked Joe to take me home. He drove out to the nursing home and let me off.

"See ya, Sterling," said Daryl.

"See ya," I said. Joe just sat there, thumping the steering wheel with his thumbs.

My radio alarm went off at six o'clock. Six was when the local radio station came on the air. I liked to lie in bed for a while before I got up, and as I lay there, I'd listened to the announcer tell me what a great day it was going to be. There was always a little music, then the announcer's cheery voice singing the praises of some local store, then a news and weather spot. I liked to get up after I knew what the weather was going to be.

But instead of his cheery voice, I heard him announce soberly, "Last night at the Last Chance Inn, Sooner Hopkins allegedly put a blanket over his wife and daughter and shot them each twice in the head. Then he put the pistol barrel in his mouth and took his own life."

That was it. That was all I heard.

FUGUE, Vol. 1, No.1

I lay there in the twilight, feeling my head throb. At first, I wanted to get up and go and turn myself in. But when I got up, I puked a little and heaved a lot, a lot of nothing but bad breath that burned the inside of my nose. I guess Coors affected me dif-

ferently than it did Joe. So, I went back to bed. I didn't wake up again until around eight. I staggered out, too late for breakfast. I just went about my chores. All day I thought about turning myself in. But I never did. □

HOLLY C.W.

Murmur to my heart a sleepy ash of song
Softly wrestle my heart to the floor
Like a lily in the rain

Shriek angrily at the gale
Which chews my soul away
Kill the monster
What tries to lunge between us.
A huge dragon of anger and pain

The stroke of your pen
Writes a letter to my heart
It makes me hunger for your sweet caress.

Loudly proclaim our love unto the world.
And feed me life
As soup from a bowl.

—Dwayne Rogge

DUST

Tasche Streib

I'll be hanged," said the man. "Or maybe shot. Surely not burned nor beaten to death." He scuffed his feet in the dirt, causing a small cloud to rise around his knees. A large, dirt-black toe showed through a hole in the shoe leather. "Probably hanging. A stiff ol' rope an' a dirty flour sack."

One shoe was missing a heel, so he bobbed up and down as he walked. A hound bayed off in the distance. "Jus' like squashin' watermelons. That's how it'll be for them, Jus' like squashin' watermelons."

His felt hat rested on the back of his head, like the way it would hang on a hat rack. A little bead of sweat escaped from under his hat. It trailed down over his face, paused, then continued on. Holding at the edge of his jaw, the bead stretched, trembled, then fell into the dust, engulfed by the powder.

A crow cawed overhead, circling, flapping, and then flying on. The man's shirt was tattered and tough, patched with unmatching denims and clumsy stitches. A thin rope served as a belt, holding up a pair of dust colored pants. They were frayed on the ends, for he stepped on them often while walking.

"Prob'ly shot," he said, walking into the distance. His dust had settled. □

DANDELIONS

Leah K. Castagne

Them neighbor kids must be selling stuff again. They always is a selling something or other. Seems like to me, anyway. First, there was them books that you could get through the school. They wanted me to buy some. I said no. I don't like to read too much.

Anyway, then they up and decide to sell tickets to go to this carnival thing over at the gymnasium. The older kid talked, and it sounded like kind of a silly affair. They had all these games and stuff like that. You know, the kind of games where you stick a fishing pole behind a board and a prize gets pinned on. I guess the whole deal was for the kids mostly, and I never had none of them. Not really.

Course, then there was that time they came around, and they was wearing bright blue shirts with the yellow ties around their necks. That bigger kid asked me if I would

please like to buy a candy bar for the Cub Scouts of America. I just said no. I don't like no candy bars.

Then, them two tried to sell tickets for some dance that was going on over at the fire station. They just came right on up, smart as you please, and every time after, banging on the door; they would just stand there and wait for me. They still always think I'm a going to buy something I guess. I said no about the tickets to that dance, too. But it did kind of get me to thinking again about how things was.

Before that one day. It was September 3rd, just like today is. Me and Johnny had got ourselves married, and we was living up in the woods. Johnny was a logger of sorts. Anyway, I had got pregnant, and we was real happy about the whole idea of having a baby and all that goes along with it. I felt fine most of the whole time, and me and Johnny

would sit around the stove at night just talking about how it would be. We'd laugh and tease and argue about if it was a girl or a boy. Johnny wanted a little girl so bad he could taste it. He'd twirl my hair around his finger and say she'd be just like me. But I wanted a little boy. A blue-eyed one that had curls and a face that was dirty all the time 'cause he'd always be a getting into things.

Anyway, one morning, just after Johnny had left for the woods, I started feeling the pains and all. Johnny was back that day on account of a horse got stuck in the mud. Course, he'd picked me a handful of dandelions to make up for it, but I guess for him that wasn't near enough. By the time he got there, and we got the old pick-up started, I was pretty well into it. The drive to the main camp always took about two hours, but that's where the doctor was.

Well, we was still about twenty miles away, and that baby decided to be born. Out he came, and I got my wish all right. Thing was, his head had just never grown shut in the middle. It was just open and so was his eyes, and they was blue. That's the only time I seen them though, 'cause that's all there was. That baby never made a sound. Once Johnny cut the cord he didn't even try to breathe—he just was dead.

Johnny and me had stopped of course, and I had laid down on the front seat. Johnny was so nice with me, until he saw that dead baby. He never said a word neither. Just took the little naked boy from me, wrapped him in an old towel, and headed around to the back of the pick-up. I guess he put the boy in an old tool box from back there, 'cause

last thing I saw was he had the boy, the box, and a shovel, and was headed into the woods. It had started to rain, not a lot of rain, just the kind that makes you wish it would make up its mind. I never will forget how Johnny looked, carrying off my dead baby boy in that drizzle.

And I never did like the rain after that.

I guess things was different then. Johnny took to staying out late with the other loggers, drinking and such. One cold day he went out to fetch some wedges, and Johnny never did come back.

I waited for nigh on to three months before I got myself over to Coos Bay and started work in a cannery. Course, I had no experience, so they stuck me on the low end of the job. All day, I was bent over pulling cans out of the hopper. When I stood up thirty years was gone by. My shakes had got worse by this time, so the boss-man let me go.

But here them two must be again, banging on my door since the doorbell still don't work. I sure do wish they'd just leave me to my rocking. I try to not pay a mind to the racket, 'cause then maybe they'll think I'm not around—course, they know I'm always here. I stop going back and forth and get on up. It's a bit chilly so I wrap the sides of my sweater a bit tighter and get across the room, and I smell the rain before I even get the door open.

There on the step stands the little one. Guess that bigger kid stayed home. I stand there, and I don't say a word. I just stand there with the screen door open and wait for him to talk so I can say no and go back to my chair. But in that one hand of his he's got a bunch of

FUGUE, Vol. 1, No.1

dandelions, and he holds them out to me. I start a shaking my head "no," until I hears what it is he's saying.

"Ma'am, these are for you."

I keep on shaking my head, but then, all sudden like, that sun comes through a break in the clouds, and that whole porch is light, and so is that kid. My head stops a shaking somehow, and I just keep looking. That kid's hair is all jumbled up and

damp from being out in the wet. He has them red cheeks and everything about him is grubby, like he'd gotten into a bunch of mischief that day.

I can tell that I've just been standing there looking at him for way too long. He just stands there, too, and he don't say anything. So I put out my hand to take them dandelions. I 'm not sure, but I guess it's me that says thanks. □

SINGULAR

Disembodied my night-soul soars
free from the concrete echo trap
that is a nineteen-eighties day.
Released from unfulfilled fantasy
and broken fruitless literature
I roam endless planes of pure white
and black mathematic.

Singular I am the universe.

You cannot meet me there, man or woman,
mother or unknown lover.

You are left behind in Jack-in-the-Box
commercials and sad bovine bar rooms.

Stuck masturbating Macy-dreams
that wake you whispering ignorant.

Soaring I do not think of you,
my speed is clean and unburdened by forced
compassion. I leave you behind tear
less, heart
less, friend
less and sightless in the ecstasy that is my loneliness.

Singular I am the universe.

—Mark Perison

A SATURDAY'S GAME

Dan Meldazis

Chill winds swept the rough green turf.
Fifteen men gathered together anxious and nervous in the afternoon sun.

Staring at each other with excited eyes, feeling a oneness with themselves, taking refuge in the sameness of the jerseys.

Loyalty. Friendship. Support.

These feelings bond them together before the coming assault.

They know the pain, the exhaustion that they will feel.

Hands tear at them, the shod feet that bring blood with their touch.

The look of hate in their opponent's eyes.

All will be endured for the glory of victory.

The mystic virtue that comes with scoring a try.

People will pound your back and say you are a hero, a champion.

Then they will get you drunk and soak you with beer.

And you will revel in it all and hope that it comes again. □

TENANTS WANTED—
PETS PROVIDED

Hell on earth—
An apartment on the east side.
Such a shame, though,
No one really knows it's there...
More's the pity

It's full of all the conveniences
You've ever dreamed
In your precious nightmares.

And the price—
It may seem a little stiff,
But it's a trifle
For what you're getting
Into.

And the carpet—
Beyond belief.
Take your shoes off and feel it
Against your bare flesh.
Deep, durable pile
You can get lost in.
You'll never worry about those dark,
Congealing stains.

And the kitchen—
Hell never had a kitchen like this:
Massive convection oven,
Mobile microwave,
Top-of-the-line slicers and dicers.
A freezer so big
You can wait out the
Second coming.

And the halls—
Long halls...
Plenty of room to stretch your legs.
Getting there is half the fun
—who knows what you'll find along the way.

And the social aspect—
With a place like this,
You're never alone... guaranteed.

Yes, it's a spacious place,
With rooms to breathe
—as much as the can.
A wonderful place...
Just a little slice of
Heaven.
It's almost... perfect.

Almost... a minor problem...
More an annoyance, really.
Seems someone's already living there.
Not a problem... no, not really.
Why, he could be gone any day now,
Only...
We can't seem to find him.

Just a finger or toe now and then.
Something for the Pets to play with.

Oh yes, pets are included.
But don't worry... about feeding...
They'll fend for themselves just fine.

—J. C. Hendee

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

Mary Huett

Fhe Esoteric Order of Agnostic and Atheistic Free-thinkers met on the twenty-sixth day of May, a day for which they could find no religious or superstitious significance what-so-ever. Organizer Godis D. Ead declared that, being an association of free-thinkers, the order would not have a formal political organization, presidents and such being the creation of conservative fundamentalists. He then appointed Ima S. Lave to take minutes. The meeting was short and concise, focusing on the group's primary objective, the eradication of the aforementioned fundamentalist facists. Members discussed the religion problem, concluding that all such persons are remnants of archaic times; therefore, as befits artifacts, these persons should be safely stored in museum warehouses, to be occasionally displayed as part of an ancient cultures exhibit. They voted to postpone a decision as to whether to use the artifacts as models for wax reproduction or to simply stuff said artifacts. (Embalming, with its religious origins, was discarded as a possible choice.) The vote will take place after a feasibility study has been duly prepared, bound, and suitably advertised. It was unanimously decided that an overabundance of fundamentalists existed and that extermination of the surplus should proceed in a timely manner. The meeting adjourned to the rousing cheer, "Death to the intolerant fundamentalist heathens."

On the same evening the Fundamentalist Soul-Saving Creationists met. (An event which they felt imbued the day with a certain mystical relevance.) President Them Essiah called the meeting to order with a lengthy prayer praising domesticated wives and large bank accounts. (Preferably Swiss, Oh Lord.) The group discussed the threat posed by the E.O.A.A.F. to traditional wife beatings and racial harassment. Concluding that members of such groups were destroying the country's moral fiber, calls were made for donations to the cause. Several boxes of oat bran were collected. Those present pledged to eradicate members of the E.O.A.A.F., thereby eliminating the criminal and homosexual elements so abundant in the modern world. All promised to offer their victims redemption before delivering the final blow, a la the *auto-de-fe*. The women were then invited into the meeting area so that cookies and punch (spiked) should be served. They were allowed to wear shoes while serving, due to the special nature of the gathering. The meeting ended with the rousing call, "Death to the commie gay devil-worshipping heathens."

The apathetic society did not meet on this or any other night. Rather, its members enjoyed a delightful evening of violent and/or sexually explicit television and/or reading materials, with several opting for a rousing game or twelve on the [registered home video game deleted]. Some even participated in higher pursuits, such as mastering the art of killing flies at twenty feet with a small rubber band. Members did not bother to realize, that by failing to select a team in the aforementioned extermination activities, they faced certain death, or at least harassment. As apathy is nearly always accompanied by criticism and fatalism, this is not surprising. Most stayed home, preferring to undergo visual hypnotism to exercising their rights, because, as their rousing cry goes, "I don't know what the issues are."

And the whales sang on. □

CONSUMMATION

A million years ago
We were children.
You took my hand,
Kissed my lips,
And pulled me forward.

We consumed each other
In every way we could imagine.

Now we are consumed.

And love sleeps at our feet
In a bed of her own;
Waking hungry at night
Crying
To be fed.

You say we haven't changed.

But I've held your hand,
Knowing the terror in your eyes
When you could hardly breathe,
And watched with fascination
As life wrought itself
From between your legs;
Gasping for air.

And I don't think
We are children
Anymore.

—Tom Drake

spiritual moment. Got it?"

"Got it."

"Then all of a sudden you take a sharp curve and slam into something solid, hit the brakes after the fact, after it doesn't matter whether you hit them any more or not."

"Gosh," I said.

"When the dust settles, you get out to see what you've killed. In the headlights you see the body of a duck. Feathers and blood everywhere. Chunks of meat stuck on the bumper. Clots of meat stuck on the tires. You of course feel shitty.

"But it's not as easy as that. It's not as simple. Cuz at the same time you feel relieved. You feel good. It could have been worse. It could've been a dog or a kid or something. Fuck. Shit happens. You know? It's just a *duck*. Time to move on. Time to hit the road.

"So you stand there looking at what you've done, feeling bad but not that bad. Only then you hear this noise. At first you can't place it. It's like it's coming to you from another reality. Off the coast of Bermuda, somewhere within the Mayan ruins, from the sacrificial slab in the middle of Stonehenge. This chirping and squeaking. You raise your head and have a look around.

"And then you see it: all these baby ducks, confused, skittering around what's left of their mother. Maybe six or eight of them. They don't know which way to go. They don't know what they're supposed to do. They just chirp and squeak and shit.

"Jesus,' you think. '*Fuck*.' It occurs to you *they're* all going to die now too and it's your fault. You're not responsible for

one death. You're not responsible for two. You're responsible for seven, eight, maybe more. Who knows?

"You feel lousy. You think: 'God, I must really suck. I must really be a fucking moronic child killer.' You imagine all these little ducks or ducklets or whatever the hell you call them starving, wandering around aimlessly for days in the wilderness while they die these slow horrible deaths. Little stomachs shrinking. Little tongues drooping out. Little eyeballs turning into raisins.

"Then this idea hits you.

"You go around to the trunk of your car and hunt in your tool kit until you find your ball-peen hammer.

"You walk back around your car and get down on your hands and knees and start bashing the baby ducks in the heads.

"They cheep when you hit them. Sometimes you miss. Sometimes you almost miss. But they die pretty quick.

"You still feel bad, only you're also thinking this has to be done and you're the only one to do it and so you're also feeling sort of proud of yourself for taking control of this mess you've created. That sense of order you had a while ago comes back. Your nerves start buzzing again. Maybe you even get into your work a little. It could be worse, you think. This kind of thing could always be a hell of a lot worse.

"Only then you hear it.

"That roar that comes up on you before you even know it. *Va-rooom!* You raise your head. In a fan of gravel a car fish-tails around the same curve you

did and bolts by, catching you in its headlights. In that split second you see all the windows are rolled down. The family inside. Mom, short gray hair, thick tortoise shell glasses, mouth open in horror. Pop, big ears like LBJ, balding, black-rimmed spectacles, bearing down on the wheel to rush his clan away from you.

"A-and you see the three kids leaning out, little Artie and Bobby and Sally, faces slack with disorientation, watching you work.

"A-and just for a nanosecond the camera pulls back a-and you see yourself there, crawling around on your hands and knees at night, in the dust, on a deserted road, ball peen hammer raised above your head, killing baby ducks. Yeah."

Al stopped.

I blinked, waiting for more.

Al popped the last bite of his

burger into his mouth, licked his slick fingers, chomped away in silence.

Gradually he became aware of me again, that pale thin guy with the wide-open eyes and thin blond beard and wire-rimmed glasses and the McQuik Clown Cup filled with McQuik Clown Cola. He returned to this dimension. He grinned at me.

Then he broke into laughter.

The laugh became a cough, the cough became a hack, the hack became a sort of wet hiccup. And soon Al was examining what he'd brought up into the paper napkin in his fist.

"And that, Murph, is your creative expression business," he said, still short of breath, inspecting his find. "It's a fucking great trip, buddy. Best hobby in the world. Everyone, everyone on the whole fucking planet, should have such a frigging neat job." ○

AIR WE BREATHE

i am the element
 you seek
 i elude detection
 for i am not
 fire that burns
 nor water that drowns
 nor earth that shakes and trembles
 and transforms your corpse back into itself
 i pass silently through you
 giving life
 just as easily as you would take it.

—Teresa A. French

LAST BATH

We had to pull her out
and down by her front paws,
tugging her, inch by inch,
from the rafters, catching
her rear as she cleared
the beams. She had climbed up,
away from the other cats,
in search of something,
maybe seclusion. Two
weeks had passed when we
finally got her down,
her belly dirty white,
sagging from lack, her orange
back a muddy brown. She
didn't struggle as we
lowered her, into the warm
washtub water. We lathered
her legs, then the rest, running
our hands over the body,
feeling the loss. She never
clawed or growled—just stood, shaking,
looking down. We wrapped her
in towels, laid her
on the sofa to rest.

—Jim Wackett

STILL LIFE WITH ICE CREAM CONE

Kiel Stuart

It all started with the huge metal ice cream cone.

Or so Freddie Sebastian thought. He was pretty sure the metal ice cream cone was both root and focus of his restless discontent. The Night of the Cone didn't amount to much at the time, but you could always be wrong about that sort of thing, without the proper perspective of time and distance and other things.

Time, distance and proper perspective were sorely lacking when the incident took place:

Freddie was playing the heel that June night in Michigan, slated to clash with rising babyface Robin Hood.

He always felt playing the heel made it easier to be cheered instead of booed. You ended up with a face-full of beer or a chili dog in your hair, either way.

"Hey," said Robin Hood (whose real name was Elmer Glutz, and who came from Midland, Texas), "What has three teeth and an IQ of fifty?"

Freddie didn't bother to answer because he knew, from longstanding experience, that Robin Hood really wanted to

shout the punchline, which he did in short order:

"The front row at a wrestling match!" crowed Robin Hood, rocking at his own witticism.

Freddie eased a mask onto his head. He wore a mask because he could play in the same arena (which in this case was a high school gym) next month as a hero if he so wished. Though he hated the thing, which made it hard to see and harder to breathe, he liked the secret, mysterious aspect of being the masked and hated Libyan Crusher. It was the physical reality of the mask that fell short of his expectations.

Funny. Freddie remembered putting two chairs together as a kid, draping a blanket over them and huddling underneath, listening to the television or Christmas music. Even now, whenever he hummed the old TV commercial tunes ("See the Yoo-Ess-Ay in your Shev-Ro-Lay"), he saw the grotto light made by that green wool blanket draped on those chairs.

Now Robin Hood tapped his shoulder. "Full house," he said.

Freddie translated into real-

ity: about a third of the seats were empty. He got up and flexed. "Let's go."

They made their entrance and Freddie got his baptism by chili dog, and the match nearly ended when Robin Hood blew up at the 5-minute mark, but Freddie managed to maneuver Robin so that he appeared to administer the Libyan a clothesline for the three-count.

It was Freddie's opinion that Robin Hood could drop a good fifteen pounds of ballast and do some more roadwork once in a while. But Freddie also had a policy of not getting into deep philosophical battles with roomies.

Back at the motel, Robin Hood began to rhapsodize about Blubber Boy McKay, who had left the bush leagues behind and could be seen almost weekly on one television wrestling show or another. Now *there* was someone who got himself fulfilled, that Blubber Boy.

Freddie listened for a while and was suddenly struck by a vision of his English lit professor, back at Billy Joe Ed University.

"Boy," Professor O'Hara used to say, "every living thing suffers from a burning esthetic hunger that must be fed."

Freddie lay blinking over the motel room vista for an entire two minutes. He was flooded with strange restless resolve.

Robin Hood was still going on about Blubber Boy. And Freddie suddenly knew that there lay his key to fulfillment.

That night, Freddie drove to a nearby Frosty Treet stand. It was dark, devoid of any light except the pale echo from a nearby

street lamp. Freddie quickly mounted the Frosty Treet roof and tore loose the big metal ice cream cone that was the Frosty Treet trademark. It was a pretty size, all right—almost his height, as he cradled it, finding it easy enough after years of football and powerlifting.

He lashed the icon to his car with some nylon rope and dove back to the motel.

Robin Hood was blowing vigorous zees at the ceiling. Freddie watched him turn red and go dark, in the rhythm of the motel sign, then went to bed himself. He could hardly wait. He had a plan. And this plan was going to work when the authorities showed up.

Dawn broke, and he was awakened by a knock at the door. He glanced over at Robin Hood and grinned; it would take a whole lot more than *that* to pry Robin Hood out of his bourbon-basted sleep.

Freddie pulled on his old B.J.E.U. sweatshirt and padded to the door.

This was his moment. He could almost taste it, the publicity, the headlines screaming from every newsstand, the attention. Freddie looked down at the dark-blue motel carpeting and inhaled the mouldy atmosphere, always the same from town to town. He bit his lip, not to give away his sense of triumph. He looked the cop straight in the face, no flinching, and spoke his line.

"So? Let it melt!"

They made him put it back. No jail, no story in the papers, no fame. They didn't even arrest him. No fulfillment this time.

He thought wistfully of the

time Blubber Boy had punched out a police dog and spent two days in jail. Robin Hood still had all the clippings. Blubber Boy's notoriety was an art form in itself.

It was then that Freddie had another revelation. Maybe his own stunt hadn't been outlandish enough to merit publicity. That was Point One, and he'd take care of it next time. As for Point Two:

Freddie decided that painting was art. Of that much, he was certain. Since he couldn't paint, he figured he ought to get himself a girlfriend who could.

One day, when they were playing a converted skating rink on Long Island, Freddie (to Robin Hood's enormous amusement) called out over the heads of the women crowding the backstage corridor. "Is there a painter in the house?"

There was. Her name was Melinda.

Freddie was hoping Melinda could show him the way to esthetic fulfillment. Actually, when she wasn't busy painting her seascapes and sea gulls, Melinda much preferred hearing about the escapades of Blubber Boy and Robin Hood to discussing Art Forms with Freddie.

But Freddie persisted. One day Melinda had a gallery opening (a very complex situation, which Freddie gathered was part of her divorce settlement from the gallery's director), and consented to going first with Freddie to the Metropolitan Museum, where Freddie understood they all had all kinds of art. Who knew what could happen in an atmosphere like that?

So she took him around. "Da

Vinci is overrated," said Melinda. Freddie frowned at the painting, a mysterious shadowy affair. Freddie knew of one Da Vinci painting (besides the Mona Lisa, of course), a Virgin and Child scene which featured the same greenish hues of the light under his old wool blanket. He liked that one.

But this painting here wasn't signed, 'Da Vinci.' The plaque said it was a Rembrandt (even Freddie knew who *that* was). Melinda probably knew some really esoteric and complicated link between Da Vinci and Rembrandt, like the fact that they both painted religious subjects, but he couldn't ask because she was already running on ahead.

She lit again on one of the special exhibits. Freddie had her at his side one minute, and she was gone the next. He looked for her, his gaze brushed past a medium-sized painting against a blue wall, went back, and wouldn't go anywhere else.

Freddie stood transfixed.

It was a picture by Mattias Stoner, the plaque said, and Freddie had no idea who *that* was.

The Wise Men and Mary were bending over the Christ Child, light streaming up into their faces.

Freddie looked and looked and looked. He had no sense of time passing.

He wasn't sure how long Melinda had been standing in the next room, but he could just see her, waving fiercely at him.

They probably should be getting along to "The New Wave Gallery Experience." And Melinda was beginning to resemble a windmill.

As they left the painting and walked towards her, Freddie passed near a group of people. They were huddled around a glass display unit. He stopped, catching his breath.

Those people were fanned out in a configuration just like the Stoner painting, light blooming on their reverent faces in the exact same way.

Melinda marched up to him and grabbed his wrist. Freddie let his breath go with a sigh.

Those people, he thought, as Melinda pulled him along, those people making art and getting fulfilled right where they stood, not knowing it, no one to tell them that they looked like that painting with Mary and The Wise Men adoring the Christ Child.

They arrived at "The New Wave Gallery Experience" without much incident. The gallery people were still setting up, the little Estonian woman racing around depositing baskets of cheese crackers on window ledges, chairs and tables. The resident poet mulled punch and lined up bottles of white wine.

Katya, part-time owner of the place, saw them and came across the room, loose camouflage pants flapping over her skinny frame. Freddie had observed that Katya and Melinda had a fairly odd way of making conversation. Still, maybe Katya could do something about enlightening Freddie. Freddie was hopeful.

He took a fistful of cheese crackers and smiled politely at Katya. "I think it's great the way art can bring so many people from such different backgrounds together."

Katya raised an eyebrow.

Melinda pried her hand loose from his and rounded on Katya. "And it isn't *good*," she said vigorously, "that we can meet on this common ground, without playing on each other's prejudices."

Freddie thought yearningly how certain people could take the littlest thing and make it into an art form. Maybe some were better at getting their esthetic hunger fed than others.

"True," said Katya, raising her glass of white wine to Melinda. "For instance, I'd not *dream* of saying anything negative about your suburban value systems."

"Wonderful," said Melinda. "And I'd never even *think* of calling you and all your friends spoiled, pretentious husband-stealers."

"Yes, yes," chuckled Katya. "And do you know, darling, that not once would I be so much as *tempted* to refer to someone like you as a fat stupid coddled cow?"

Freddie frowned. Although it sounded more like the overture to a brawl, he wondered if he was witnessing the birth of a new art form instead. It made him feel insecure, because he certainly wasn't well-versed in all this *avant-garde* stuff. Still, Professor had said you needed to be uncomfortable to further your own inner growth. Maybe this would count.

"And I would never even *utter* that you and your rotten cronies should be shipped to Alcatraz with the lid slammed shut!"

"No more than I would *consider* saying anything hurtful about your pedestrian, cliched, dated and amateurish paintings," smiled Katya. "Oh, dear,

please excuse my clumsiness. I surely didn't mean to spill any wine over your very nice and tastefully coordinated grey and burgundy pants outfit. From K-Mart, is it?"

Freddie smiled until his cheeks went into a spasm. "Art is really great, isn't it?" He felt like he had to say *something*. He didn't feel like saying anything. He felt instead like lighting a shuck out of there. What Melinda and Katya were doing would main event on any wrestling card.

Later in the car, as Freddie brushed cracker crumbs out of his hair and Melinda tried to wring out her jacket, he made an attempt to explain about the metal ice cream cone. Maybe she could let him know what he did wrong, so next time it would come out the way he wanted it to and he'd get his share of notoriety, which would lead to a sense of fulfillment. He was sure of it.

Instead, she threw the jacket at him and told him to have it cleaned and send it back to her. Then she stormed out of the car and out of his life.

Freddie reluctantly decided that maybe art was not for him. It was back to Yoo-Ess-Ay, in his Shev-Ro-Lay with Robin Hood, playing every small town wrestling hall they could hire into.

Freddie decided to concentrate on his work rate and nothing else.

One particular afternoon, his work rate was taking place somewhere in Ohio.

This time, as the masked Libyan, he was going to win from Robin Hood. They agreed to work

in close, with a lot of armbars and wristlocks, and save the flying cross body-blocks and such for the end of the match, when Robin would likely blow up anyway, and where it could generate the most heat for the least effort.

So they danced this around for a while, then Robin Hood reached out and smacked Freddie's masked face. The 50-IQ-three-teeth fans in the first row bellowed their approval.

It went exactly as planned. Robin blew up at the 6-minute, 30-second mark, and the evil Libyan dropped an atomic elbow across his throat for a three-second count.

Freddie swaggered around the ring, dodging paper cups, popcorn, and a Frisbee that someone with a sense of humor (indicating an IQ of more than 50) had seen fit to toss into the ring. He threw it back, and the crowd snarled like a chorus of angry mother cats.

Ring security had to cover him like a human blanket on the way back to the dressing rooms.

He and Robin showered and dressed double-time, because they had another gig that night across the state.

It was Robin Hood's turn to drive, and Freddie leaned his head against the window, determined to catch some sleep or die trying (which, given Robin's driving, was a better than even chance).

But before he got his eyes shut something whizzed towards Freddie's field of vision.

"Hold it!" he barked. "Stop the car. Here!"

Robin obligingly screeched into the Frosty Treet parking lot.

Freddie said a few terse words.

"Are you nuts?" said Robin. "Stealing that giant metal ice cream cone? In broad daylight? With that crowd? Are you nuts?" Robin reiterated. But all the time he was laughing so hard he could barely sit up at the wheel. "Well, that'll land you in the papers, boy. If not in jail!"

Freddie got out. The sun was setting, one of those scenes where the rays fanned out cosmically from their cloud cover. He quickly scaled the Frosty Treet building and walked across to the ice cream cone. He glanced down at the open-mouthed on-lookers following his trail, some elbowing one another, pointing to him. He heard his sneaks go 'thwap' against the roof as he got closer to his icon. This was it. This time, he had it right. He wrapped his arms around the ice cream cone and tensed to rip it loose.

But then a fading light struck him.

At that instant, he knew for

certain that he, Freddie Sebastian, looked exactly like Mary and The Wise Men in the Stoner painting. That the light on their faces was the same light on his face now.

He let go of the ice cream cone and just stood for a time, letting the light caress him.

Then he climbed down, with a growing sensation of warmth in his chest that didn't go away.

The crowd stepped aside, almost respectfully.

He got back in the car. "Just go," Freddie said.

"What about the ice cream cone?" Robin scratched a beefy forearm.

He smiled, real slow. "Don't need it any more."

Robin went, leaving enough rubber to form a decent-sized spare tire.

Freddie rolled the window open, putting his head out like a contented puppy. He let his eyes drift shut, feeling the warm, warm wind mess his hair around as they sailed through Ohio. ○

DISCOVER KINKO'S

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Fax Service | ✓ Stationery |
| ✓ Binding | ✓ Transparencies |
| ✓ Laser Typesetting | ✓ Laminating |
| ✓ Mac Computer Rental | ✓ Full Color Copies |

Copies as low as 3¢!

kinko's
the copy center

608 S. Main, Moscow • (208) 882-3066

OPEN TILL MIDNIGHT 7 DAYS A WEEK

LEARNING TO LESSEN THE PAIN

Biking home from Hugo's
grocery, I shift my duffelbag (strapped
over my right shoulder), keep it from hitting
my leg. My left hand holds
the plastic sack—eggs, sour cream, bread—
books in the duffelbag. A mile ride, I hang
the plastic straps over
the handlebars, keep them in place with
my fingers. Less pain this way.
Before, in Milwaukee, I walked
with groceries, clasping hands
under the bag—the weight
evenly spread. Further back,
cross-country, coach would say,
“Let your arms hang loose.” First
funeral, my mother said, “Walk up,
look, then walk away.” I came back
quick. Now, legs tight, shoulder
sore, I stretch as I pedal. This
is everything—learning
to lessen the pain.

—Jim Wackett

TEMPTATION

I stuck him with a fork.
I kept sticking him.
I liked the way his eyes changed
from grey to blue to green.

I tore out of the caul,
but it grew back.
Webbed my fingers,
third to last.

I kissed him in my sleep.
In my dreams walls fell down,
brick crumbled. Seawater
trashed our hotel.

He threw off my timing like chains.
Holes appeared in my backbone.
Pearls erupted from my mouth—
beer had a voice and it called me.

Rank dry earth is left to me.
My head would never say.
Before he tore my throat out
I'd concealed the fork.
I have it still.

—Denise Dumars

THE WIZARD'S BEQUEST

Brian Skinner

Knowing what a quick temper the old man had, no one dared to come within a mile of his section of the woods. The old man laid claim now to nearly the entire forest, from the lowliest, most delicate morel to the loftiest, sturdiest oak. He had started out with no more property to his name than the two plots of earth beneath his feet. Both the old man's reputation for crankiness and vindictiveness, and the pranks and transformations wrought by his thorough wizardry, put a dread into the folk, and they avoided even the old man's shadow. And what his magic did not enable him, the old man made up in humble cleverness. For as people declared they were not setting foot within a mile of his shadow, he took advantage of their day's-end weariness and the lengthening shadows to cast his claims a little further in their direction. Thus, little by little, leaf by twig, did he devour all the eastern half of the forest but for the narrow band of spindly trees encircling the town.

"A person's got to have some elbow-room to think," he told

them. "You keep blocking my light, and that clouds a person's thoughts and curdles his disposition."

"That," they muttered, "has about turned him to a hard and bitter cheddar by now."

So it was not happily but merely dutifully that Gileac left the east gate and stepped into the forest to seek out the old man. Gileac was selected from among the other young men for his intelligence and his strength. Not, it was thought, that these qualities would aid him to prevail upon the old man of the forest. But these qualities annoyed his comrades and his elders alike, for they preferred careful plodding to the flashes of insight and quick snap of muscle that were more Gileac's method. They thought to sacrifice his wits and prowess so that, even should he not win the old man's assistance with their problem, at least Gileac would be out of their way, ending the lesser problem of the two.

Gileac's was the mischance of the draw—so it was made to appear. But as his parents had seen the strongest or the

brightest young men of the village one by one either fail to return or else return as some hideous man-beast, they urged him not to heed the council's demand. The lots should be drawn for all to see. He should refuse if they failed to draw them again, and openly.

But Gileac knew that however they would arrange it, the draw would always favor—or rather disfavor—him, and it was useless to insist on fairness. If not this time, then the next would he be chosen. But also, beyond all that, Gileac was filled with a curiosity about the old man—a curiosity informed of intelligence but heedless of consequence, for he had confidence in his strength. And there was not such a young man at any time anywhere whose parents could persuade to abide.

Gileac set forth with a day's portion of bread and small dried fish. If he did not secure the old man's confidence and be asked to his table, a ration for his return would be of no avail but to burden his back and deprive his family. But Gileac's steadiness trembled a bit when he saw young Matthei at the last patch of farm before the dark wall of the woods. The old man had lately turned him into a wereboar—half-man, half-swine—who was thus transformed whenever a full plate should appear, as it did many times daily. Gileac recalled Matthei's raving and quaking, that the old man had turned him into a boar. Even when they had brought him a glass to look at himself he could not settle down, for he lived in fear of the moment when the transformation

would take place. His nerves were continually plucked and sorely played upon, so that the once-lean youth began to console himself with food, and then with more food to console himself over his changing aspect. By fretting about the spell he had succeeded in bringing about the transformation. And now that was all the stout Matthei—face as round as his plate—ever saw fit to discuss with anyone. Gileac wondered whether the old man had not meant instead that the spell of metamorphosis would turn him into a bore. The old man had accomplished both. A very thorough wizard indeed.

Gileac was not very deep into the woods when the old man startled him by coming suddenly round a tree.

"Look here," he growled, "do I come tramping in your house and tracking muddy feet all about everywhere? Do I? Answer me that."

Gileac's power of speech left him for a moment. The wizened old wizard had a face as tough and furrowed as tree-bark. His dark eyes appeared as deep swirling knots, his nose as a gnarl or bulbous burl, and his cracked lips as the fissure and scars of some long-ago wound of the woodsman's axe. In his flowing beard and mane of time-whitened hair, many birds had nested, entwining the grass and twigs with the coarse strands.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Who? Who? a small owl asked.

Gileac could only laugh at the sudden appearance of the

scowling bird from beneath the folds of the old man's beard. Gileac had a difficult time making out the old man's speech, for his voice was dry and crackling, sounding in the higher tones like the rustling of leaves or the whisper of wind and in the deeper register like the creaking and groaning of a massive trunk in a stiffer wind.

The old man repeated his question, and now two owls chimed in. Gileac laughed again.

"You do not take yourself very seriously young man, not the plight you are in."

"I try not to," Gileac said.

"Good. Glad to hear it," the old man said. "Now, answer the question. Who are you?"

The owls were now a chorus of three.

"I wonder," Gileac paused, "whether each time I evade an answer another owl might not crop up in your beard. Is that possible?"

"I ask the questions around here," the old man's voice snapped. "Tell me who you are."

"Who who who who," came the cacophony.

"My name is Gileac," he said.

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" the old man grouched.

"I wanted to see what would happen," Gileac smiled. "But I saw no good purpose in having you infested with owls, and so I answered. Now, if I may ask your name."

"To know the name of a thing is to have power over it," the old man said. "That is the power Adam had over the beasts of the garden."

A red squirrel peered out of one of the pockets of the old man's shabby robe. From the air

the wizard plucked a ripened nut, though it was only the springtime, and dropped it into the pocket. The squirrel descended after it.

Gileac had gotten distracted, and that was perhaps the man's purpose.

"Well, if you will not tell me your name, I shall invent one, and that may serve me nearly as well," he said. "I'll call you *Schleppfuss*."

"Why would you give me such a preposterous name?" the old man asked.

"To get a firm grip on you," Gileac said.

"Do you think me in league with the Evil One?" the wizard asked.

"People say that you are," Gileac told him.

"And what do you say?" the old man asked. Another squirrel, a larger gray one, rounded his shoulder for a hand-out of its own.

Gileac smiled. "I think that if you are in alliance with the Devil, you are very awkward in the details," he said. "How should the avowed enemy of mankind show other than squashing contempt for the more lowly-stationed creatures than Man? And yet these are fond of you, and you are kindly disposed to them. No, I think the people are mistaken. And yet, there are those well-witnessed transformations into baser aspects. That seems an evil thing to work upon the once-promising young men of our village."

"I have merely shown them the truth about themselves," the old man said. "And where I come from, the truth is held to

be a good thing, and the more precious for its rarity."

"And where do you come from?" Gileac asked.

"Come, I shall show you," the old man said, turning aside and leading onward, deeper into the forest. At the spot where he had stood were the splinters of nutshells that his entourage had cracked open. As they walked, a trail of seeds and kernels and shells was left behind.

They arrived at the old man's hovel: a hut of thatch with uncovered windows and a tilting chimney-pot that looked poised to fall at any moment. The hut stood in a section of woods so dense and so overgrown with moss that scarcely more than a few brief flashes of sunlight ever entered his abode. Gray and green mold covered everything, and in the places where this fungal growth had dried out, the slightest movement caused a fog of mold-dust to permeate the air and settle over the few sticks of wobbly furniture the old man had to make easier his life. Gileac was soon beside himself with sneezing.

The old man offered Gileac a ladle of water drawn from a huge covered jar and led him outside to the fresh air.

Gileac balked at the proffered water, even though the dust had made him as thirsty as a fish hauled onto the sandy shore.

"You are thinking this is some potion," the old man smiled at him. "Indeed it is. Water is the potion of life. Drink."

Gileac was still uneasy about what the ladle might contain, but his throat required refreshment lest he choke to death from the

rasping notes of dust. It was the coolest, sweetest spring water he had ever sampled in his life, as soothing to the tongue and throat as honey and as quenching of his burning thirst as a sweetmelon just up from the cellar. It was as cool as just-melted snow from the first rivulets of the springtime.

"That is the most excellent water on God's earth," Gileac admitted.

"I've not yet seen that entire ball," the old man said, "so it would be a presumption for me to accept your compliment, but yes, it is indeed very good water."

"Good?" Gileac said. "It is phenomenal."

"Help yourself," the old man said, and Gileac did so—several times. Then he set down his pack and confronted the old wizard.

"I do not wish to be rude, for you have been most hospitable," he said, "but I must know from which power you derive your magic before I may feel at ease to consult you."

"Magic?" the old man laughed.

"Yes," Gileac said. "Especially those transformations you worked on the young men of our village. Some of them were my mates. Matthei for instance, is a boar and a bore, though I suspect that may be caused more by his fraying nerves. But what about Philon and Ruschor—the crane and the frog-man now?"

"Oh, them," the old man fingered his beard. "Well, you see, certain people remind me of various creatures. After all, I am more in the company of these than I am among people. Their aspects merely suggested some

creature to me and I told them what I saw. That one fellow had quite a long neck, you know, and a nose which any bird would have been proud to call its beak. And the other young man, well, he was constantly unnerved—and unnerving—startled by the slightest snapping twig or rustling of the leaves. He would jump a foot in the air and come down a yard away. 'What's that? What's that?' he would say, like a frog croaking its favorite phrase. And his nervous leaping! How could I not think him a frog-man?"

Gileac laughed. "Yes, but it's gotten worse," he said, "for Ruschor thinks you've hexed him. His own shadow causes him to jump now. And his parents can no longer keep him in the house. The slightest rattle of a cup sets him leaping and he is continually knocking holes in the thatch with his head. He sleeps now in the barn on a bed of moss and, I think, that must dye his skin a greenish color. He resembles a frog more each morning than the day before."

"And the crane?" the old man asked.

"Well, it is true," Gileac said. "Philon did resemble some great, gangling bird even before he set foot in these woods. But that, too, has grown worse. He anticipates the moment you will appear suddenly before him to complete the transformation. At every opportunity he has, he is leaning over a pan of water, or over the water-trough, or over the edge of the pond to see whether you have yet completed your spell. When his chores are done, Philon is to be found fretting at the pond, stepping among

the spindles of cattail, craning his neck over the still water to see himself. We expect to see him come home one day with a squirming fish in his mouth, if only because he fell headlong into the pond."

Gileac laughed again, but he thought this rather callous of himself, to see his friends thus hexed and find it amusing. His laughter broke off sharply, like a snapped branch.

"Would you say that was magic," the old man asked, "to merely see what was already there to be noticed?"

"Well, I suppose not. No, I guess not," Gileac admitted. "But why would you frighten people in this way, till they fear your very shadow and think you a most evil wizard?"

"To keep them away from the woods," the old man said.

"But why?" Gileac asked. "Do you not have enough of the forest and lakes and fields to call your own?"

"I have nothing," the old man said. "But it is not for my own self that I do this. It is for the children."

"The children?" Gileac asked.

"Yes, I am saving these precious things that there will yet be an inheritance for them."

Gileac still looked puzzled, and the old man invited him to sit down on an old bucket near where he set about a fire for the evening meal. The old man used a flintstone and dried moss and a bundle of kindling he gathered in the lap of his robe. His was a very humble wizardry if it was any at all.

"You see," the old man began again, "these woods were not

always so lofty as you see them now, nor the fields so verdant, nor the lake so crystalline in these parts. They were not so when my family left here because they could not find food or clear water. I remained behind, a youth even younger than yourself, to see whether I might repair what had been ruined. I had lived among these forests and fields all my young years and I knew a little something of the ways of nature. This is my 'magic'. To those who do not take time to study the ways of nature, understanding is held to be magic. Yes, truly, nature is a marvelous magic, but I am not the Wizard."

"But the children you mentioned," Gileac said. "Whose children?"

"All children," the old man said. "Children unborn for ages yet to come and forever. The people of your village make their netting even finer, hauling ashore even the smallest of fish, and yet they wonder why, with each passing year, their catch is smaller and smaller in number as well. They plant every year the same crops over and over, because these fetch good prices at the market, yet every year there are fewer stalls and smaller produce. They sweep the forest floors for every leaf and twig for their fires and do not see that this dead stuff is the food of the forest. They gather the eggs of the wild birds to eat and then are puzzled that the hunters return with their bags empty. Do you understand what is happening here?"

Gileac thought for a moment and then nodded, slowly and sadly.

"And do you see why I must

protect these things, even if the people are irritated with me?"

"Yes," Gileac said. "I have wondered about these things myself, but the council always shouts such ideas into the floor. They do not see further than their noses."

"That far?" the old man chuckled. "These must be more enlightened times than when I was a youth."

They had a good laugh together, filling their lungs with the sweet, piny air and the rising aroma of the roasting pheasant the old man had set over the fire.

"Well, the light fails of a sudden in these precincts, doesn't it, Gileac?" the old man remarked. "Come, before our supper is ready. Would you like to know how I see *you*?"

"I am curious indeed," Gileac said. "But I do not know whether such curiosity is a mark of much wisdom."

"Nonsense," the old man said. "Do you fear to know yourself?"

Gileac did not reply, but got up from the rickety bucket and followed the old man. The wizard stopped first at his hut to gather the paraphernalia of his trade. He wore now a less-tattered robe with stars and phasing moons imprinted on it, and a lofty hat with a golden acorn at its crest. They walked just along a narrow deer-trail that led away from the hovel and came to a small clearing of meadow. A shaft of sunlight still gleamed there, and the tall grass looked as golden as harvest wheat.

The old wizard told Gileac where to stand and then went over to one of the thickest oaks

at the edge of the clearing where there was a large squarish object draped over with a piece of deer-skin. The wizard removed the skin and revealed a large looking-glass of polished metal.

"A magic mirror?"

"All mirrors are magic, my boy," the wizard said. "They are compelled to tell only the truth."

Then the wizard took up his own position off to one side and told Gileac to step forward until his could see clearly his own image—who he truly was.

Gileac's heart thumped in his breast with each advancing step like a quickening, deep drumbeat. He scarcely knew what he expected to see, but did not feel it would be an image he could not bear to behold.

Then, abruptly with a single step, the leaf-reflecting green of the looking-glass showed the earthy color of human flesh—surrounded by a mane of white hair and whiskers! Gileac turned quickly around toward the wizard.

"It's you!" he said.

"Is it, my boy?" the wizard replied.

Gileac could not be sure. If he advanced more closely to have a better look, the image moved out of the mirrored metal and only leaves and branches were reflected. The wizard had doffed his bizarre hat when Gileac had turned abruptly to face him, but facing the mirror again Gileac saw the hat press down on the wisps of hair. He turned around again and then back to the looking-glass. Again and again Gileac did this until, at last, the old man dropped the hat in the tall grass and could not stoop quickly enough to

retrieve it. His bellowing laughter echoed in the clearing and the sparrows were suddenly shaken from their branches by the unexpected noise. There was a flurry of commotion in the air and then they settled back again, disappearing among the leaves.

Gileac laughed too, but then quickly grew serious again. He and the old man headed back to the fire and their supper, and they ate in silence. As the embers turned slowly to cinders, the old man finally spoke.

"Even 'wizards' are mortal," he said. "It is part of the rule of nature that things must change and that death makes room for new birth. You are my replacement, Gileac. I feel this as strongly as if nature herself had decreed it. The custodian has grown feeble, I'm afraid."

Gileac looked up and saw the embers glowing in the old man's eyes. "But why me?" he asked.

"Because these things need preserving—for the children," the old man said. "And because you are the one. Of the twenty young men to invade this sanctuary, you were the only one not to trample and tear and ruin things as you passed into these woods. I spied you early on and followed at a distance. I watched you. And when we met—do you know that you were the only one of these young men not to jump out of his skin when those silly birds got into my beard? You laughed. That's when I knew with certainty. Laughter is the music of a kind heart. And you deduced, easily, that if I were in the employ of the Enemy of Man how should I manage gentleness with those entrusted to Man? You are the one, Gileac. May the

children rely on you to guard their inheritance, to protect their legacy?"

Gileac was uncertain and wavering until the old man had uttered the last remark. Phrased thusly, he could not do other than accept—gladly and in earnest.

"But how shall I learn all these things?" he asked.

"There is yet a little time before I return to my cradle beneath the trees," the old man said, chuckling. "And you will find nature a most competent instructor if you but watch and listen. Now, let us get some sleep."

"But we have not even discussed the problem the council sent me here about," Gileac said. "I cannot abandon my kinspeople."

"Nor do I expect you to," the old man said. "But we shall find the solution easier to come by after the refreshment of sleep."

Gileac agree, though somewhat anxiously.

Neither of them could abide sleeping in the musty hovel, and so slept in the open, gathering blankets of boughs and drawing warmth in beholding the crystal embers of sky.

When Gileac awoke, the small fire had been renewed, and there was a bowl of grain and honey set beside him. After breaking their fast the old man cautioned him to follow quietly and showed him where a doe and her fawns had nestled down.

On their way back to the hut, Gileac told the old man about the hordes of slithering slugs that were devouring the village crops, leaf and fruit alike. They feared to poison those

disgusting, shell-less snails because the poison would enter food-crops as well.

"Poison is never a good idea," the old man said. "It's best to give these creatures what they like best—only so much of it that they will split their seams."

"Sacrifice the crops?" Gileac asked.

"Only one," the old man said. "To spare the others. Tell me, do the villagers make ale?"

"In abundance," Gileac said. "that is their one consolation in the midst of so much trouble these past years."

"Good," the man smirked. "Tell them to make more. All the malt and hops they have in store."

Gileac looked puzzled, but the old man proceeded with his explanation.

"Then have them gather together all their glass and vitreous vessels—bowls jars, jugs—whatever they have. These they are to bury in the earth where the snails are devouring their plants. Bury them just below the rims. Then they are to fill each vessel no more than half with ale. This must be poured out and renewed when it becomes diluted with rain-water or otherwise full.

"Full?" Gileac questioned.

"Yes," the old man smiled. "Full of these shell-less snails, till not another one could squeeze into the bowl," he said.

"I do not understand," Gileac said.

"Well, you see the ale is the favorite drink of these slugs," the old man explained. "Perhaps it is the yeast or something else to do with the fermented grains, but if you supply them with a plenty of

ale, they will leave the crops alone. They wander into the bowls to take long draughts of their delight, but the slippery sides of the glass vessels prevent them from ever climbing out again. They think they have stumbled into paradise, but have only slid into Hell, damned by their own excessive thirst for the ale—a lesson you townspeople might heed."

"Yes," Gileac said, laughing. "But it is so simple."

"There is instruction in that as well," the old man said. "But come. You must help them make these preparations."

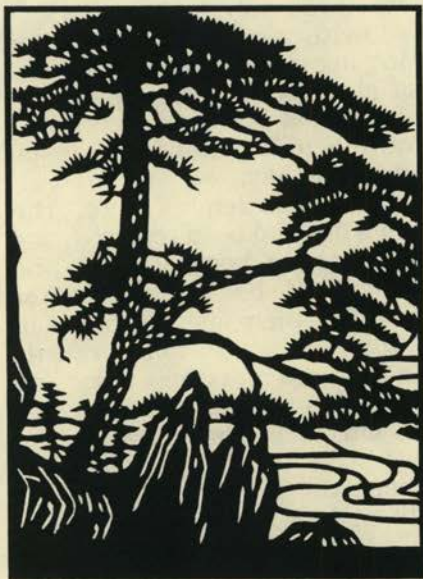
The old man replenished Gileac's food sack and saw him into the woods a little ways. At parting he gave Gileac his starry robe and cap, and they laughed over what the villagers would think upon first beholding the new wizard. "The beard of age will come with time," the old man smiled again. "I need it yet to keep warm in the winter of my years."

Gileac promised to return once the infestation was on the wane. He knew that the villagers would at first mistrust him in his new aspect. Yet he could not wait to tell them that the cure was to make plenty of ale—and then to offer every drop to the snails as if a sacrifice meant to appease the snail-gods! They would curse him and the old wizard as their tankards dried up. The council would be forced to make decisions with unclouded heads. But at harvest, the curses would turn to blessings, for Gileac had no doubt that the old man's remedy would prove effective.

On his trek homeward, Gileac contemplated "lifting the

spell" on certain of his former mates. perhaps they could be of service if made to understand the finely-threaded web of nature and learn to undo the tangles they had wrought in its fabric. Gileac intended to remain a villager and a forest-dweller both, and he would need allies. If they could not abandon their ways of misuse and ruination, he would have to reinstate the spell, but he thought it worth an attempt. As he passed his friend Matthei—who marvelled to see him return unscathed—Gileac told him the curse could be lifted from him if he merely broke his plate. Matthei grunted his thanks, and Gileac continued into the village.

The men and women drew back with caution—fear even—but the children were delighted, and they swirled and eddied among the stars and moons of his robe. Gileac could not wait to tell them of the presents being passed on to the future for them.



THE TARGET OF SMALL TOWN GOSSIP

My name is on the tip of every tongue;
unblinking eyes dissect me as I walk,
and what I've done is permanently done.

Stumbling beneath the weight of every one,
the small town gathers in to sneer and balk;
my name is on the tip of every tongue.

Sweat beads and drips like tears beneath the sun,
in two blind burning eyes, one mouth like chalk;
and what I've done is permanently done.

These legs go numb, forgetting how to run;
a shrieking in my mind borne of their talk.
My name is on the tip of every tongue.

The pounding of my heart has just become
a memory that weights me like a rock;
and what I've done is permanently done.

No future in my thinking, there is none;
the past clings desperately as they stalk.
My name is on the tip of every tongue,
and what I've done is permanently done.

—Kellie Jo Risk

I AM PART OF YOU, YOU ARE PART OF ME

When you cry,
your tears fall on the soil

and some evaporate to become the rain
I drink

and some are drunk by roots of plants
I eat

and some journey into the earth
where they will be the wells
my grandchildren drink from.

—Teresa A. French

***University of Idaho
Bookstore. . .***

***. . .not just textbooks
anymore.***

Books: 885-7038

Fugue is a digest of multi-genre fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. Issues are published at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters at the University of Idaho. Each issue contains vignettes, poetry, stories and commentary chosen to satisfy a wide variety of tastes in literary entertainment. The magazine is staffed entirely by English majors presently attending the University and is funded by the ASUI, the English Dept., and advertising by local merchants. A single issue of *Fugue* is only \$3.00 retail, US funds.

Submissions: Use a cover sheet with the following information on it (*no exceptions*): name, address, phone number, *word count* (fiction) or *line count* (poetry), title. Do not put your name on the manuscript. Manuscripts must be typed with one-inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, with title and page number in the upper right corner of each page. Include a #10 SASE with your submission for a response. Make a copy of the manuscript for yourself—the manuscript will not be returned. Submissions should be delivered to: *FUGUE* c/o University of Idaho, English Dept., Brink Hall Rm. 200, Moscow, Idaho 83843. Response time is 12 weeks. No simultaneous, reprint or disk submissions.

Editorial Process: Each submission is read by several staff members who critique it, then pass it on to the managing and executive editors for final decisions. All readings are done "blind." Staff readers will not be aware of the identity of the creator. *FUGUE* is looking for a wide range of genres—Mainstream, Experimental, Fantasy, Mystery/Suspense, Metafiction, Historical, Science Fiction, Magical Realism, Horror, Fantasy, Western, Cultural, Speculative, etc. *Fugue* is a showcase for all types of *entertaining* literature.

GUIDELINES

FOR SUBMISSIONS TO FUGUE

Based upon the overall critique of the staff, material will be chosen for the upcoming issue. In some cases, we may contact a contributor for a re-write, clarification of text, or notification of necessary editorial changes.

Stories: These must be complete and concluded, with good characterization and plotting. You must make the reader *feel* without resorting to standard cliché tricks. Endings should have a foundation in the plot and not simply pop out of nowhere. Experimental formats are acceptable, but we do not cater to an elite readership—the story must be comprehensible and enjoyable for anyone. Average word count is 3000 words, but we consider any length up to 7000. Book excerpts, chapters, and serializations will not be considered. Payment: \$10-\$20 according to length.

Novelettes: Any story with a length of 7500 words or more. We are twice as critical in this category of literature. The length must be justified by superior content. Payment: \$30.

Vignettes: Many of today's published short-short stories are actually vignettes—stylishly rendered scenes/events that emphasize imagery and impression over plot. This type of work is sometimes referred to as "sudden fiction." A mood of "endlessness"—scene carries forward/backward beyond the text—should be maintained. This is perhaps the most difficult type of fiction to write and still maintain as engaging for the reader. Maximum word count is approximately 1000 words. Payment: \$5.

Poems: The modern standard is "free verse," but we would like to see a wide range of other forms as

well. We consider all premise and non-premise themes without restriction, from the serious to the utterly whimsical. Payment: \$2-\$5 depending on length and content.

Non-fiction: We are looking for well-constructed commentary, articles, essays, reviews, etc., written in a comprehensible style aimed at the public, not at literary peers. All articles, essays, and commentary must relate to *contemporary* works, authors, or issues relating to the writing business, or to a generally well-known, widely read work of literature. The maximum word count is 1000 words, but longer works may be considered if exceptional. Payment: \$5.

Fugue Staff Submissions: The staff is allowed to submit work for publication in the magazine. Such submissions will be read "blind," as for any submission, with readers chosen by the executive editor. No special consideration will be given to any submission by a staff member of *Fugue*.

Final Note: If you have further questions, write to: Exec. Ed., FUGUE, University of Idaho, English Dept., Brink Hall, Rm. 200, Moscow, Idaho 83843. Include a #10 SASE for response. All queries will be answered within two weeks.

If necessary, for resolving a problem or answering a question not covered herein, you may contact the Executive or Managing Editor locally by phone. Do not call us about the status of your submission—no information concerning the status of any submission will be distributed under any circumstances, except via your SASE after the submission has been fully reviewed by the staff.

BOOKPEOPLE

512 S. MAIN, MOSCOW, ID. 83843

Phone 208-882-8201

"Between the Theatres
in downtown Moscow"

HOURS:

Mon.-Sat. 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Sundays 10:00 Am to 5:00 PM

*Stop in anytime and
enjoy the atmosphere!*

