

\$3.00

SPRING/SUMMER • 1995 • #11

FUGUE

Chaos

Chaos

“ ”

Disbelief

LIGHT DARK

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Good
Bad
Good
Bad
Good
Bad
Good
Bad

Suspension

VIPIPIPIPI

NO
TI
VA
TION

FEAR

FICTION

LOVE
TAH

“ crying
sorrow”

RESOLVE

FRUSTRATION

THE

OR

FAITH

SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION
SOLUTION

FUGUE
The University of Idaho Literary Digest

Published by the English Department of the University of Idaho
Brink Hall, Room 200
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1102, USA

FICTION

THE FIRST TIME WE WENT HUNTING	
Marc Philip Taurisano	4
AWAY FROM THE SMOKE AND NOISE	
Mark Nadeau	10
GHOSTS	
Michael James McFarland	17
ROADSMITH	
Kenneth C. Andersen	29
NEW MAN IN TOWN	
William Meyer Jr.	35

POETRY

MAKE OF ME A WEEPING WILLOW	
Richard Paul Schmonsees	16
HOW MY NAME BECAME MUD or THE SCAPEGOAT	
Tristan Trotter	23
NIGHT BEAST(S)	
Meagan Macvie	24
ACCOMPANIMENT	
James Owen	26
PILOT OPENING	
Robert S. King	27
CONVERSATION	
Curt Seubert	28
REVISITING KLIMT'S KISS	
Cindy Bell	34

DEPARTMENTS

GRAFFITI	
Editorial Comments, Etc.	2
GUIDELINES	
For Submissions	43

Fugue is funded entirely through support readership and the English department at the University of Idaho.

Executive Editor,
Managing Editor
Eric Isaacson

Poetry Advisor
Maria Maggi

Associate Editors
Trevor Dodge
Leann Harvey
Karney Talbott Hatch
Kimberli Kelsheimer
Chris Miller
Michele Neurauter
Wendy Noonan

Staff Advisor/Copy Editor
Lance Olsen

Production Manager/
Editorial Consultant
J.C. Hendee

Cover Art
Chris Miller

FUGUE #11
Spring/Summer 1995
(ISSN 1054-6014)
UI English Dept.
Brink Hall, Room 200
Moscow, Idaho 83843

©1995 in the names of the individual creators. Subsidiary rights revert upon publication. Published bi-annually in Fall and Spring at the University of Idaho. Single Copy(\$3) and USA Subscriptions available at \$3.00/issue, p&h included. All payment in US funds. Unsolicited submissions encouraged (within guidelines), but *FUGUE* is not responsible for such. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of *FUGUE*, its staff, the University of Idaho or its staff. Ad rates are available. *Postmaster: address correction requested.*



DEPARTMENT

F I T I

It's ironic, you know, my being here. I've been writing fiction for almost fifteen years, having only recently decided to publish (and not yet succeeding), and yet, here I am, executive editor of a literary magazine.

Not only is irony at play here, but so is a dream of mine: working on a magazine publishing poetry and fiction. Although my focus has been towards teaching, I have not given up completely on my desire to work in the publishing field, so I am grateful (and lucky) to be with Fugue. It's a grand little magazine and, with a little luck and a lot of hard work, it'll get even better.

Having said that, I now need to acknowledge a few people. Fugue is not "run" by me, nor any one person you'll find on the previous page, rather, it's a collective effort. Without any one of the people listed, the magazine couldn't be. Unfortunately, for Fugue and me, some of these associate editors will be graduat-

ing and moving on to something different in their lives—I wish them luck. Also, my thanks to JC. Hendee and Lance Olsen, for having faith in me. I'll try not to disappoint them or you. Good reading.

Eric Isaacson
Executive Editor,
'94/'95 academic year.

THE FIRST TIME WE WENT HUNTING

Marc Philip Taurisano

Now it was late in the season, and there was snow on the ground. Lots of it. But I wasn't cold. I wasn't cold at all. You know why? Because I knew, I just knew Max was out there." Gramps pointed his cigar.

Max was looking down on us from over the mantle. The firelight made his marble eyes glisten, and the shadow of his antlers flickered against the wall like a pair of skeletal wings.

Me and Joey were on the floor, the crackling logs throwing heat at our backs.

Joey's voice was soft. "How'd you know, Gramps? How'd you know Max was out there?"

Gramps was in his chair. It smelled like old smoke, and its cushions were bent to the shape of his back. He was built like a bear, as wide as he was tall. When we were little, he'd put Joey on one shoulder and me on the other, then run us around in circles. We'd fall in the grass, blue sky and white clouds spinning.

"I could feel it," he said. "I could just feel us getting a little closer with every step. And, believe me, we did a lot of walking that day. A lot more than the little stroll we took this afternoon."

I wouldn't have called it a stroll. I was out of breath in ten minutes, and the flowers and pollen and bugs were driving my allergies crazy. Joey was dressed head to toe in camouflage, and Gramps put on his old hunting jacket after Joey begged him to. It smelled like the woods, as if grass and dirt were woven into its fabric.

"It's been a long time, but those woods...those woods haven't changed a bit." Gramps was staring into the fire, the light bringing out the creases in his face. "Woods don't change, boys. Remember that."

"Get to the good part," Joey said.

"I'm getting there, don't worry." His eyes drifted, looking more at Max than at us. "So we're walking and walking, and then, out of nowhere, we hear some branches rustling. We run up the trail, and when we get to the top

and look down, there he is." He sucked on the cigar, then blew out a stream of rich-smelling smoke. "A good-sized one. A real champ."

"One shot, right Gramps? You got him with one shot?"

"I looked up at my dad's face. 'All right, Charlie. You know what you got to do.' That's what he said to me. He nodded, just once, and I lifted the gun to my shoulder." Gramps stuck the cigar in his mouth and raised his arms, taking aim at the mounted head. His finger twitched.

"Clear through the side," Gramps said, still staring at Max. "And he went down like a chopped tree." He blew out again, the smoke a dark cloud that hid his face, then dispersed. "And that was it," he said. "That was the first time I went hunting."

Nobody spoke for a while. The fire had shrunk to a single row of pointy orange teeth. The logs were getting gray, and one broke in half with a bang, sending those stacked above it rolling down.

"Gramps?" Joey asked.

"Yeah?"

"Can we take the gun along tomorrow?"

Gramps kept looking at the fire. "You know what your mother says."

"I'll be thirteen in four months. What difference does four months make?"

Gramps picked up the ashtray and killed his cigar.

"Come on. Matt wants to go hunting, too. Don't you, Matt?"

"Yeah. If you do."

Gramps shook his head. "The woods will still be here in August."

Joey shifted around and picked a ball of lint off the carpet.

Gramps stared at his grandson's back. Joey's tee shirt had gotten too small for him, the bones of his spine jutting out like a line of pebbles. "Hey. Turn around and look at your grandfather."

Joey threw the lint at the fire. It fell short, landing right in front of him.

Gramps smiled at me, putting a finger to his lips. Then he jumped to his feet and got Joey in a bear hug, growling as he lifted him into the air.

A few glowing cinders were all that remained of the fire. Me and Joey were in our sleeping bags, breathing in the smoke and old furniture.

"I wish we could go hunting tomorrow," he said.

"Yeah." There was a good chance of rain, and I was hoping it would pour bad enough to send us home early.

"I can't wait till I'm thirteen," he said. "You know, my first time out, I hope I shoot something better than a deer."

"Like what?"

"A bear. Gramps has only shot two in his life. Just picture the head of a grizzly up there next to Max."

"I thought grizzlies were just out West." We had seen a film strip on bears in Mr. Miller's class.

"Then I hope I shoot whatever kind of bears live around here," he said. "Long as his head looks good on the wall."

It was pouring when we woke up, and Joey complained as we threw our bags onto the truck. A little mud didn't scare him, he said.

The next time I saw Gramps was on Joey's birthday. He told the nurse we were here to see "Mr. Charles Anderson," and she smiled as she showed us where to sign our names.

We got off the elevator and they rolled out his wheelchair. His mouth quivered before his words came out. "Joey," he said. His eyes were bright as a baby's.

"Hi, Gramps. You look better." His limbs were skinny, like tree trunks shaved down into poles. "It's my birthday," Joey said.

The old man nodded, slowly. "Happy birthday."

"I brought Matt with me." Joey pulled me up to him. "You remember Matt, don't you?"

His mouth quivered again. "Matt went to camp with us." His breath was terrible, even with all the listerine they'd sprayed in it.

"And he had a good time there, too. Didn't you, Matt?"

"Yeah," I said. "I sure did."

Joey smiled, waiting for Gramps to say something. But he didn't. He just stared at the blank white wall.

Joey pushed in front of me. "We'll go back to camp soon, won't we, Gramps? I'm thirteen now."

His eyes shifted, like they were focusing on something only he could see. "I was thirteen when I got Max," Gramps said. "Got him with one shot."

"That's how I'm gonna get mine," Joey said. "One shot."

"I threw the gun on the ground

I was so happy. Right in the snow I threw it and went running down the trail, howling like an Indian. My dad yelled at me. 'Shut your goddamn mouth,' he said."

Joey bit his lip. "You never told me that before."

"He was still kicking a little, and he had a big red whole in him. Right here." He grimaced as he lifted his hand off the armrest. "Right here," he whispered, pointing his crooked finger at his ribs. "That's where I got him."

"Clear through the side," Joey said.

His lips glistened with saliva. "I named him Max," he said softly.

Joey crouched closer. "And the first time we go hunting we'll get ourselves another one, won't we, Gramps?"

Gramps didn't answer. His head was drooping to the side like it was too heavy for his neck.

"And we'll put him up on the wall next to Max. What do you say we call him Marvin? Max and Marvin. How's that sound, Gramps?" Joey shook him, gently, careful not to be too rough. "Gramps?" he whispered. "You hear me, Gramps?"

Gramps blinked, then straightened up, his eyes looking through us. "My dad, he said names were for pets. You don't give names to the animals you shoot. 'You got yourself a lot of growing up to do, Charley.' That's what he told me."

Joey showed up at my house one afternoon in January, and he didn't have to say what had happened. He stepped

into the foyer, scattering snow across the tiles.

"Want to come in the living room? I was just playing Nintendo."

"Yeah, OK," he said, keeping his hands in his pockets and not taking a step. "Listen...you doing anything this weekend?"

"I don't think so."

"Want to go to the cabin?"

"Won't it be kind of cold up there?"

"We're selling it," he said. "To some lady doctor my mom plays tennis with. My dad says we're hitting the market at just the right time." He shook his head, the pompom swaying from side to side. "He's never been there. He's allergic to dust." Joey's eyes looked small under the thick brim of his hat. "You want to go or not?"

I looked out the window. Ice clung to the glass. Everything was white. "I'll go," I said.

He nodded, and we stood there looking at the floor, neither of us saying a word. The clumps of snow were melting, puffy in their middles, thin and translucent around their edges. He pulled out his hand and I grabbed it, squeezing his cold palm.

Max and the fireplace were to our backs as we ate lunch. Where the chair had been, four threadbare circles were cut into the carpet.

"I'm sorry, Honey." Mrs. Sterling held her cup with both hands. "How was I to know you wanted to keep it? Clean it a thousand times and it would still smell like cigars."

Joey bit into his sandwich.

"Maybe I like the smell," he said.

She dabbed a napkin at the corner of her mouth. "You're a little young to be liking that smell, I should hope."

Joey looked over his shoulder. "So what about Max? We gonna throw him out on the curb for the garbage men to pick up?"

One glance at the deer's head made her shiver. She leaned closer, and I could smell her perfume. It was the same flowery scent that had filled Joey's house for as long as I could remember. "You know, Honey, most people would rather not look at a dead animal if they can help it."

"I kind of like it," he said. "I was thinking of putting him in my room."

She cocked her head to the side, squinting like she didn't recognize him. "That mangy old thing?" She looked at it again. "I don't exactly think it would go with your soccer posters." She smiled at me. "What do you think, Matt? Would you want Max on *your* wall?"

Joey was looking out the window, his eyes hard as rocks.

"I don't know," I said. "Maybe."

She scrunched up her face—"Really?"—then shook her head. "Well," she said. "Who wants more hot chocolate?"

Joey stood up. "Me and Matt are going outside. I want to show him the storage shed."

"Honey, there's nothing *in* it."

"I just want to show it to him, all right?"

It was like standing inside a wooden refrigerator. "So what the hell is there to show me?"

"This," he said, pulling it out of his backpack. It was wrapped in red velvet.

"What are you doing with that?"

He unzipped it. A thin gleam ran the length of its barrel. "What do you think I'm doing with it?" He looked at me. "Ready to go hunting?"

"Is it loaded?"

He nodded his head. "Gramps showed me how."

"I thought your mom said..."

"She never said a thing about not loading a rifle. You want to go or not?"

My cheeks were already stinging from the cold, and I wished that I'd listened to my mom and brought a scarf. "Course I do."

"Good," he said, leaning the gun against the wall. "Look what else I found in Grandma's basement." He lifted the jacket, and the smell of the woods, of leaves and mud, hit me full in the face.

He led the way, swinging the rifle from side to side, scanning the trees like any one of them might be hiding a ten foot grizzly that was just waiting to jump out and tear us to pieces. His grandpa's jacket was the only green thing in the forest, and he was like a walking coat stand the way it hung on his skinny shoulders.

Everything smelled like snow, so cold the inside of my nose was burning. I took off my mitten and looked at my fingers. The pink had drained out of them, and I wondered if they'd freeze solid and break like icicles.

"Joey? I think we should start heading back."

"Keep your voice down."

"We're the only animals dumb enough to be out here."

"No, we aren't," he said, and his jawbone rose up under his skin, forcing his teeth to stop chattering. His eyes wandered up to the highest branches, like he was hoping to spot a bird that was so retarded it forgot to fly south. "I can...I can feel it."

Wind blasted through the trees, and his camouflage cap—it had fit Gramps better than him—went flying off his head for the third time. I saw his ears as he picked it up and began walking faster. They were shriveled and raw, like pink flowers.

He didn't slow down till the trail ended in a big icy rock. We got up onto it, grabbing at branches to keep from slipping. The trees thinned out below us, and the snow was so smooth we didn't want to spoil it with our clumsy boot prints.

Joey's hand was moving up and down the wooden part between the barrel and the trigger. "You know, if I told Gramps about this place, this clearing, he'd know exactly where I meant."

I felt like reminding him that Gramps can't exactly hear you anymore, seeing as he's been dead for six days now.

I looked up at the sky. The clouds were like a gray blanket that blocked out any sign of the sun. "It's gonna be dark soon," I said.

"So?"

"Well...your mom. She's probably worried about us."

Joey aimed at a tree. "If you want to go back to the cabin and sip hot chocolate, you go ahead."

I stomped my foot against the rock. It was numb, like a block of ice joined to me at the ankle. "I don't think I've ever been this cold before."

"Then maybe you should go home." His lips were bluish, and his face quivered. "I'm not cold at all," he said, aiming at a different tree, one with a big bulge in its trunk. "And even if I was, it wouldn't matter, because I'm not going back till I shoot something."

He squinted at that tree like it was an elephant thundering across the African plains. "Then why don't you just shoot that tree and get it over with."

He lowered the gun, ready to tell me off. But just as he opened his mouth we heard something. Branches rustling, breaking. We stared at the edge of the clearing.

It was a deer. She glided over the bushes, her chestnut brown fur looking bright orange against the dead trees, and when she opened her mouth to chew some crumpled leaves, she was so close I could see her long pink tongue.

I grabbed a branch, leaning forward to get a better view. "God, how do they stay warm all winter?"

Joey was moving around inside the jacket. "You'd be surprised what a buck can do to survive," he said. "They're like big rats."

"That's just a doe."

Twigs were snapping, and I turned my head. The barrel was level with my eyes, a long black bolt.

"No Joey Joey don't..."

The crack was so loud I let go of the branch to cover my ears. I

reached for it again and missed, my feet slapping against the ice like I was running in place. The rock sloped downwards, and I slid off its edge, belly-flopping into the snow.

I lifted my head. Flakes dangled from my eyebrows, and the sulfur smell was like a match burning away the crisp air. The doe was hopping around like a chicken with its head cut off, her knee smeared with red.

Joey stood there shivering, the gun shaking at his waist. "Gramps got Max with one shot," he said.

She came down hard on her bad leg. It bent the wrong way and snapped, buckling under her. She fell on her side like a giant boot crushing its print into packed snow.

I sat up, my back against the rock. Wet snow was slipping down my collar. "Jesus, Joey."

He stared off into space, like he was looking down on a distant valley and admiring the scenery. "One shot," he mumbled.

She was kicking with all her legs, two in the air, two making angels' wings—the bad one leaving streaks of red.

"Joey, come on. You know what you got to do."

But I don't think he heard me. "Clear through the side. A real champ."

Her head was flopping around like a fish on a dock. First she was looking away from us, the backs of her ears twitching. Then she went crazy, going from side to side. Then she looked at me, snow clinging to her face. Her eyes were alive, pulsing in their sockets.

"You can't just leave her like that."

He kept looking at her, that same dazed expression on his face. "We'll put him up on the wall, right next to Max."

"Jesus, Joey! Come on! Shoot her!"

"I say we name him Marvin."

I pushed up onto my feet. "Give it to me," I said. "Give me the gun."

"Max and Marvin. How's that sound, Gramps?"

"Joey!" I swatted the back of his knee, and he blinked as if he was waking from a dream. He looked at me, and slowly, like an old man taking off his coat, he pulled the strap over his head.

It was heavy, tugging down on my arms and back. It felt like more than wood and metal.

I walked forward, pulling my mitten off with my teeth. He had said this was the kind where you didn't have to do anything, just keep pulling the trigger. I lifted the gun and aimed.

Her stomach was a shade less perfect than the snow. It quivered as if her heart was jumping around inside it.

The gun pounded my shoulder. Blood jumped out of her belly like a squirt from a drinking fountain, leaving a red splotch that spread like spilled ink.

She started kicking harder.

My hands were shaking, and I pulled the trigger, again and again, most of the bullets whisking away down the stretch of the woods. But some were going into her—she was opening up like a school bus seat that kids had picked away at for years. Something slipped through the tears,

a slimy blue-black tube, and I thought of the anatomy charts in Mr. Miller's room—large intestine, small intestine, esophagus, ovaries—and my own insides felt ready to push their way out my throat. I bent over and gagged, my warm spit tasting like chocolate.

I opened my eyes, and the only sound was Joey's spastic breathing. He was shivering like crazy.

She had stopped kicking. Her head was snapped back, the tongue hanging out like a ribbon. Her eyes were crossed, a brown iris resting in the corner of its socket. Like a sponge, the snow filled with blood, little fingers of steam rising off the red surface.

A smell like spoiled meat hit me, and I turned my back, dragging the tip of the gun through the snow. I picked up my mitten and wiped my mouth on my sleeve.

"We shot something," I said.

The jacket stood out behind the dead branches. I gave him back the rifle, and he pulled it to his chest, trying to keep from shivering so hard. He kept staring at her, his eyes glistening with tears. "Matt...let's not...let's not tell anyone about this, OK?"

She belonged on a highway somewhere, splattered across the pavement like a dead insect.

"All right," I said.

And that was it. That was the last time we went hunting.

AWAY FROM THE SMOKE AND NOISE

Mark Nadeau

The boss was gone for three days so all work came to a stop. The secretary wasn't taking calls, since nobody wanted to be bothered, and she sat in the boss' high-backed chair listening to the phone ring. She ordered the accountant to pick it up, and he rose from the sofa where he'd been reading an end-table magazine. He moved to the phone quickly, with the efficiency of business, but as he reached for the receiver his motion was suddenly arrested, and he became an old man crippled with the pains of great age. He put a hand behind him to support his back, the other cupped his ear so he could make out the dim ringing noise that had caught his attention. Again he recognized the phone, and his face brightened with a final peace before he collapsed onto the rug in the sublime throes of death.

The secretary wrote an "8.7"

with magic marker on a tablet of yellow paper and held it up while the accountant collected himself. He returned to his magazine and the phone finally stopped ringing.

Gerald tried every day to call his office from New York, but each time he'd stopped himself. His doctor had told him to forget about work when he wasn't working, though sometimes Gerald's blood pressure was worse for following the orders. He thought about the office while the limo brought him to the front of the hotel. At first Gerald thought the show was treating him well with the limo service and expensive room, but he soon realized that everybody in New York rides in limos. The driver stopped in a line of slippery Cadillacs and Gerald got out.

"So what time tomorrow?" he asked the driver. Gerald sometimes had nightmares about being late for math tests, and in real life he always arrived one hour and ten minutes early for things. Ten minutes for a buffer and the hour in case he'd acci-

dentally crossed a time zone line en route.

"Don't know, Mac, I just wait on the call," the driver said.

At the front desk, Gerald checked for messages. None, except a box of flowers and a letter of appreciation from the show. In his room he took off his shoes, pulled the change out of his pockets, then sat on the edge of the bed and dialed the office. He hung up on the second ring.

The accountant finally picked up the phone. He was in his little modular cubicle, doodling on his ledger book, too bored to ignore the ringing. "Hello, Lav-Tech Environmental," he said. It was Margaret from the government finance office calling about late invoices. He cradled the phone to his ear and prepared his pen. "Okay, go ahead," he told her, and she started reciting strings of numbers, prefacing each one with "and this one is very important," and "this one is *forty-five* days late!" The accountant responded with "uh-huhs" while he tried to draw a picture of her. It wasn't easy because he'd never met her in person, but only knew her from her nagging phone calls every few weeks. She finished dictating invoices and asked "You got that?" The accountant put down his pen and looked at the caricature—huge nose like a soggy hot-dog, buggy eyeballs strung from their sockets, mouth stretched halfway around her head. "Got it," he told her. They exchanged thank-you's and hung up.

Gerald thought about the office for a while and imagined things must be going well. Then he thought about the show, and he became uneasy. He wanted very much for this experience to be worthwhile, and he felt the intent eyes of his employees waiting for him to pull it off. They were somehow connected to all of this, Gerald thought, and now it was up to him to make things clear.

Before he became the boss of LavTech, Gerald owned and managed a hardware store in his hometown of Lemont, New Hampshire. He started it on a small loan and a collection of rusty old push-mowers he'd salvaged from forgotten corners of garages all over the state. Everybody was using gas-powered mowers and were more than happy to give up their weary push-mowers for a couple of dollars. Gerald reconditioned each mower with fastidious passion, sanding off the rust, sharpening the blades, changing the wheel bearings and replacing the plastic handgrips with foam rubber. He named his first shop Lemont Snow and Lawn, selling exclusively the reconditioned push-mowers and some wooden scoop snow shovels that he'd bought from an old man's garage sale in southern Maine. It was all backed by a vision of a quieter, simpler approach to suburban landscaping. He stood proudly behind his rows of shiny mowers on opening day, waiting for the customers who would seek out his sanctuary of silence.

"This is a dumb idea," said his wife from behind the counter,

checking her lipstick in her compact mirror.

"No, no," he told her with a cheery patience, "they'll come. People are fed up with all the smoke and the noise. The novelty of progress is wearing thin. Now it's time to get back to basics"

Lemont Snow and Lawn posted a \$30,000 loss that year from operating costs, interest on the loan, and an inspired capital investment in hand scythes. Only two lawnmowers were sold.

"Why don't we get some of these new weed-whackers?" his wife asked Gerald while she flipped through a Sear's catalogue. Gerald was pacing in front of the clean shop window, watching the traffic outside passing slowly through the August rain.

"No, no," he muttered, "too noisy. And it's *absurd*—how can anybody enjoy their yard, *nature*, if they're using *gasoline* to maintain it?"

The door clanged open, and a portly man stood in the doorway, dripping wet and looking utterly confused.

"Ah, this isn't, ah, Porter's?... where's Porter's Dry-cleaning?"

"Down the street," Gerald said flatly, "two blocks on the left."

That was August's only customer. "Maybe it's time to expand a little," he said to the window, "like hammers and all."

"Maybe we should move to Manhattan," said his wife, looking up from her romance novel. On the cover was a pouty blonde limp in the arms of a dark-suited Greek god. They were on a balcony overlooking sparkling rows of lights, king and queen of the city and the night.

The accountant was slung back in his chair, staring into his computer screen, necktie flapping in the breeze. On the otherside of the low divider was Chip, the impudent sales manager, drooling into the phone with a client. Chip's forced laughter was dripping over into the accountant's cubicle, covering the modular desk with its patronizing sludge. But the accountant didn't notice, because he was skimming across a flat lake in his speedboat, throttle wide open, beer in his hand. He smiled into the forty-mile-an-hour wind. The waterski line was taut behind the boat, and tied to the end was Chip's head, spinning wildly as it bounced in the wake.

In its second year of operation, Lemont Snow and Lawn became Lemont Hardware, selling hammers and paint and PVC tubing. Barrels of nails and bolts lined the floor below the wooden snow scoops. The pushmowers remained silent in the window, shiny and untouched, and customers gave them a cautious glance as they left with bags of fertilizer and tubes of grout. The business came out of the red in the summer of its third year.

Gerald sat in his hotel room thinking about the expansion that saved the store. Maybe I gave in too soon, he thought. Maybe another year and those mowers would have sold. They sell now. I was ahead of my time. We should have stuck it out. On the hotel stationery he wrote "They sell now." He felt his stomach hollow and hungry, but kept

writing little notes to himself instead of going for lunch. By the end of the afternoon he'd written twenty pages filled with facts and reminisces about Lemont Hardware. Well, I'll have to make this a little more concise, he thought. They won't let me say all this. He looked at the shiny city, soaked in dusk, stretching below his window, and he allowed himself a brief consideration. Maybe they will. "Maybe they will," he said out loud, and then called room service for a sandwich.

The EPA guy looked uncomfortable in his new tie and clean blue shirt. He was sitting at the end of the table listening to Chip talk about profit margins.

"We're giving you a great deal here, Frank," Chip said with his surly smile. "If you look at our books you'll see we ran at a loss last year! Those prices we gave you were the best you could ever get." Chip leaned back with an exasperated laugh, his gold watch gleaming as he folded his hands behind his head. The electric lights hummed in the tedious silence. Chip wanted a cigarette.

The EPA guy shifted through some papers. They'd been negotiating disposal costs all day, and now he was no longer paying attention. He was thinking about mowing his lawn. By the time he got home it would be too dark. He loosened the knot at his neck and puffed out some air.

The accountant looked up from his notepad and into the pause. "Hey, how about we call it a day?" he said.

In its fifth year of operation, Lemont Hardware began stocking weed-whackers and insecticide, and sales doubled. Gerald watched the rush of new business and considered its implications. The simple store that he'd started had grown beyond what he'd intended, but the push-mowers were still there, maybe giving people something to think about. Maybe that's all we can really do, he thought, is prop up an idea and let it drift in the world's consciousness. He could see a customer standing by the mowers, entertaining the option, or walking by the snow scoops that hung on the back wall and looking up with casual interest. Perhaps on summer days they were lingering beside the racks of tools with a daydream, picturing themselves bare-backed and swinging a scythe over a shimmering field. It wasn't the profound movement that Gerald had hoped for, but he thought he could see some subtle effect. His wife, however, didn't see it. She was seeing another man. He was a Manhattan lawyer who didn't care much about the subtle motion of consciousness.

That summer Gerald's wife left him and moved to New York, and Gerald let her go without a word because to him it seemed as though she'd already left long ago. "People need to go their own ways," he'd explained to his friends when they came to console him. They sat for days in Gerald's kitchen as though they were attending a wake, drinking coffee and making only solemn jokes. Gerald stopped their indul-

gences, telling them with an easy conviction that it was all for the best. Eventually their talk drifted to the environment and world peace, and at that Gerald became excited and rambled on amidst the solidarity of their opinions. They agreed to subsidize communes and repeal the War Powers Act. To divert most defense industry spending to home health care and some select welfare programs. Legalize marijuana and tax it. Phase out automobiles and build a massive high-speed train network between cities. Free college for anybody who wants it. Ban television and give every home a set of bongos. Gerald's wife was easily forgotten in their vision of a better world.

By the end of the summer Gerald knew the store too had gone beyond him, and he thought it was time to make a change. He sold Lemont Hardware and started an environmental firm in nearby Manchester. LavTech Environmental Services packed toxic wastes into barrels and hauled them off to landfills. "The world has to take responsibility for its mistakes," Gerald told his friends. "There's more than one way to make a difference." They agreed and told him to try to subcontract from the EPA.

Within two years, LavTech Environmental was riding the hazardous waste gravy train, employing an office of twelve and scooping up EPA contracts like shovels full of powdery snow. Gerald ran his company with a natural grace, keeping his employees empowered and involved, treating them like an extended

family. He sometimes imagined they were together working a cooperative farm, bent happily together over a simple patch of earth. He chewed Tums and fretted over every drum of sludge. He sometimes thought about his lawnmowers.

When the talk show contacted him, Gerald had been out of the hardware business for four years. The production assistant who called him said they wanted his angle—as the original proprietor from the store's earlier days, maybe with some background about the community and people of Lemont. Gerald accepted graciously and the show flew him to New York for the taping. He was amazed at how quickly the show had been arranged. The killings had happened only three weeks before.

On a sweltering August afternoon, a local teacher named Harry Graves walked into the Lemont hardware store, now under new ownership and named Lemont Depot. He drifted along the clean aisles of tillers and gas cans and riding mowers to a back corner where a row of rakes and shovels dangled from a rack. He quietly selected a long-handled scythe that hung among them and approached the counter with a mildly blinking stare. The clerk was a bored high school girl who reluctantly stopped gnawing her nails to ring up the sale.

"Anything else for you, Mr. Graves?" she asked.

Harry Graves considered the question, answered a soft "no," and then planted the scythe into her forehead. Then he pried it loose as she collapsed, and he

turned it upon the man who stood behind him waiting to pay for a bag of two-penny nails. It took three hacks before the customer went down, since he was too stunned to fall. The nails rattled down to the floor as he watched the scythe stick into his chest. The only other customer in the store was running screaming into the street as Harry Graves put a ten-dollar bill on the counter, walked to the clean-ser aisle, and poured half a bottle of lye down his throat. There were no more sales at Lemont Depot that day.

Gerald was exhausted as he sat by the phone, waiting for the limo. He'd been up all night getting his thoughts together, except they weren't staying together too well. The show was only going to give him about ten minutes to say his thing, then maybe a few more chances as he and other guests fielded questions. Gerald had enough thoughts to fill the whole hour and a half of taping. He figured he'd start out talking about the push-mowers, about how he'd wanted the store to be more than just a business but instead a holistic approach to life, a communion of man and his environment, a way for people to feel closer to the world they affected "In today's world," he would say, "people are lost in the noise of their motions, and that makes it harder to see what's real." Gerald wanted to pause after that, look deep into the camera, and say "Harry Graves was blinded by that noise."

But when Gerald returned to the office, he'd only been able to

tell America two things:

"I bought those scythes, yes that one too, the first year I owned the store," and "Yes, I used to sharpen those blades before selling them."

Chip was on the phone, vomiting out a chuckle as he drummed his tobacco-stained nails on his desk.

"Ha, yeah, we'll get you set up, Jim...yeah, heh, cross all the T's and dot the I's, heh..."

Across the divider the accountant was bouncing in his chair with a stupid grin, lolling his tongue and crossing his eyes, silently mouthing Chip's words after him. Gerald appeared in the accountant's doorway, wondering if he was happy to be back.

"Oh, hey Gerald, welcome back," said the accountant, collecting himself and standing up, "How'd it go?"

The whole staff gathered around their boss to hear about his adventure in New York.

"Well, I really didn't get to say too much," said Gerald with a resigned nod. "They said I'd get ten minutes, but by the time the customer who'd escaped finished, it was all—"

"—Did she describe the blood and everything?" asked the secretary.

"Yeah, yeah, they covered that, but I wanted to tell Sally about the—"

"—What was Sally like in person?" Chip asked. "Was she all Hollywood or what?"

"No, no, she was a normal person, except she didn't really want to talk about the motivations for

the murders. She just got swept away by the hype of the whole thing. She told me I'd get ten minutes."

"So you got a limo, huh? That's great," said the accountant. He pictured himself riding in a limo,

drinking champagne. He had a starlet on his lap, Chip's body was safely stowed in the trunk, and the press eagerly awaited him at the door of the Ritz. They can wait, he thought, and he told the driver to take the long way.

Richard Paul Schmonsees
MAKE OF ME A
WEEPING WILLOW

Coney Island. 1995.

Ferlinghetti must have imagined something else. The mind here is one of winter desolation, graffiti, barbed wire by the projects, old Russian Jews sunning themselves in the carbon monoxide sun, Puerto Rican boys selling themselves by the pin ball machines. I was calling out to nobody who is a somebody to me. Near the edge of the sea I was waiting to be introduced, but there was nobody there, just a sea gull riding a wave. The skeleton of the cyclone ride, along with the skeleton of the monstrous parachute jump ride whispers to me in the cold wind, "Make of me a weeping willow."

SHORT STORY

GHOSTS

Michael James McFarland

Clasp ing her blue-veined hands over the afghan in her lap, Virginia gazes out the picture window at the muted gray scenery of West Summer Street. It's a low, overcast November; cold enough to make her tired and swollen joints ache like steely marbles but not enough to snow. That's something, at least. Snow means treachery and ice running in long, pointed circles off the sides of the gabled roof, freezing and overflowing the aluminum rain-gutters, pooling in a cataract glaze on the steps by the mailbox and the shoveled walkways.

Ice and 74-year-old women have always been sworn enemies, she reflects, sitting in her rocking chair. Steam and hot water from a whistling tea kettle can take care of one and a broken hip (never quite mending) the other. Like salt and earth, they are. Oily rags and kerosene.

That's for December, if she's lucky. Right now it's only cold and gray, the swirling white of a rooftop sky sprinkling down a handful of rain every so often to warn that things are changing as they ought to be. Nothing ever stays

the same for long, especially the weather.

The crystal-domed clock on the mantelpiece begins to chime and Virginia sighs. With a trembling hand, she switches on the standing lamp overlooking her chair. It gives the room some color, but its influence is short-handed; the light through the window is stronger, paler, and bleaches everything to the shade of bone under its touch.

She picks up her needlepoint, resolved to make some progress before her fingers turn traitor and fail her completely. She lets the afternoon pass outside without her notice.

The tiny needle (so hard to hold these days) works the cloth—back and forth, in and out, pulling reds, golds, greens and blues against the grainy white canvas swatch. Creeping, twisting vines rupture with brilliant flowerheads. Bluebirds take wing against an empty sky. A gingerbread cottage hemmed by a low picket fence waits with ghostly patience in the foreground, marked in faint blue X's. Virginia is a slow-handed creator.

Outside, it begins to rain.

The clock strikes three and children pass on their way home

from school. They splash in the puddles and call cheerfully to one another, catching cool droplets on their small, upturned faces, on outstretched tongues. Virginia smiles and waves to the younger ones as they move past in fitful starts and stops. Her hands are hurting her quite badly now and she puts the needlework aside after pulling out several badly placed stitches. She wonders if it will be ready by Christmas after all.

The sewing bag goes on the worn carpeting beside the chair and, gripping the solid armrests tightly, she pushes herself up by her palms. A row of tiny porcelain figurines watch with glassy stillness from behind the dusty windows of the china cabinet as she makes her way back to the kitchen to brew a pot of tea; they know it keeps her up at night but old habits die hard. Virginia is from Dorset and when it rains as it is now—soft and light—she finds herself reminiscing of her old homeland, now 46 years gone. Tea is at four, promptly.

Her hand finds the light switch and the soft shadows creep back into their hiding places. Rings lie around the metal canisters and a thick layer of warm dust collects unseen atop the refrigerator. The tea kettle is an old one, rusty copper in need of polishing. Virginia lifts it from the element and fills its open mouth with hard water from the kitchen faucet. The water burns off calcium—as gray-white as hidden fungus—inside the pot and she makes a reminder to scrub that as well. It goes back on the stove and she sets the dial up high.

Oh Russell, what would you say now? I wonder? I'm such a foolish old woman. I worry and worry and still I hear you, scolding in that tone so dry and impatient. "Go to bed now, Virginia. It's late and there's nothing more to be said. Go on now."

She smiles as the ghosts whisper in the corners.

Yes, Russell. Will you come coming up to bed soon? It's so lonely there without you.

No. Not for a while yet, Virginia.

Yes, all right.

She leaves the water to boil, trusting the whistle to call her back when it's ready to pour. The figurines in the cabinet turn and watch her shuffle back to the living room; it's been a long time since she's even looked at them. There was a time she took them out every day. Now they stay locked away.

"Oh my!" Virginia exclaims, raising a hand to cover her open mouth.

There is a boy at the window, standing in her tulip bed and looking in at her. Nine or ten years old. His hair is a dark and rooster brown, his eyes as glassy as painted seashells. There is an odd sort of longing in them.

"Go on!" she cries, shooing him away with the back of her hand. "Get out of there! Do you hear!"

Reluctantly, the boy steps away.

In the kitchen, the lid on the kettle begins to clank and whistle.

With the fall of twilight, Virginia pulls the window-sheers and draper-

ies and turns on the television to keep her company as she prepares dinner. A somber yet pleasing face appears and tells her the news is bad tonight—some random shootings that end in suicide somewhere in Southern California. There is an unsteady videotape of a schoolyard. It disturbs and depresses her. "What's the matter with people nowadays?" she wonders aloud. Such a horrible thing! Terrible. Seems to happen just about every other week.

She frowns and snaps the tuning dial counterclockwise.

News again. Two navy blue uniforms, baseball caps and dark glasses, are speaking into walkie-talkies as a covered stretcher is lifted off a California schoolyard. Everyone seems to be holding a gun. Further on, near the dugouts of a baseball diamond, children no older than ten or twelve are crying and staring and clutching one another like battered life-rafts. More time bombs sent walking into the future.

Snap.

Virginia brightens. *The Family Feud* is on Channel 6. She doesn't care much for this new host; this short, smart-alecky fellow. Richard Dawson was so much better; such a gentleman, and an Englishman to boot. No matter. She turns up the volume so the raucous laughter and applause can reach her back in the kitchen.

"Name a food that people eat with their fingers!" the host shouts up to his contestants. They stand like bookends on either side of him.

"Cookies!" Virginia sings out,

walking away. None of the contestants say "cookies." It is number six on a list of seven. Virginia smiles knowingly as she drains the oil out of a can of tuna. They should have listened to me, she thinks.

In the small window above the sink, cars and trucks prowl back and forth on 141st Street, just one house over. Their headlights sweep her kitchen cupboards as they turn onto West Summer. The big trucks from the food processing plant shake the foundation as they gear up to speed.

It used to be so quiet. So peaceful.

"Russell! I see you hiding out there behind the oleander bush!" she screams, shaking a wooden spoon at her own wild reflection in the darkened glass. "Don't think for one minute that I don't!"

A bold shadow steps free, backlit by the damp and hazy glow of a 60-watt porchlight across the street. A stout man in a hat and overcoat, the burning ember of a cigar floating in his hand. Hidden in the pressing gloom, there is a waxy smear of sex-red lipstick on his cheek. Shaped like a kiss.

Of course I'm here, Virginia. I said I was going out for a smoke, didn't I.

Who is that with you?

He pretends to look around and shrugs.

No one. I'm all alone.

Don't lie to me, Russell. Who is she?

You're tired, Virginia. You're imagining things. Look...why don't you go on up to bed.

Whisper-whisper-whisper...

The ghosts close in and she

hears Russell knocking on the cellar door.

"I don't hear you," she replies, wringing her hands on the frayed gray apron around her waist. "Go away."

Dejected, the noises stop.
For a while.

The draperies and window-sheers pull open on another low, white-washed day, devoid of color or hue. Everything is running in varied textures of gray. Even through the storm windows she can feel the unshaped volumes of snow hanging in the air, waiting to spill over the sides of West Summer Street. She can feel it in her joints and all through her waking muscles: a long stretch pouring against the horizon, hard and without mercy for an old and foolish woman all alone.

Lord.

The streets have grown quiet now, breathlessly waiting.

Virginia resolves to get her grocery shopping done early today in hopes of beating out the elements. Opening and closing her kitchen cupboards, searching the refrigerator shelves and the back pantry, she composes a long list to hold her through the week and more if need be. Her breakfast is a light one: toast, bitter tea, the remains of a large Florida grapefruit. She washes dishes and leaves them to dry in a wooden rack by the sink.

Outside, the cars drive toward nine o'clock appointments.

The snow still hasn't shown itself.

Walking to the living room, the shopping list folded into one

small hand, Virginia is surprised to see the boy at her window again, looking in with hands pressed to the surface of the glass like small pink suction cups. Warm breath fogs the lower portion of his face into fleshy obscurity but his eyes are clear. Dark, haunted. The faint sparkle of something dead and nameless.

A young reflection of her own, she thinks.

Her poor old heart takes pity on him.

"Hello," she smiles uneasily, one hand fidgeting on the cold handle of the storm door.

He only turns and stares; a brooding mouth pressed tight and bloodless above his smooth jaw. He looks like a rabbit ready to run.

"Would you like to come inside for a cup of hot cocoa?" she asks, thinking that today must be the day.

Slowly, he nods his head.

Below, the furnace grinds to a halt as the thermostat clicks 75.

Virginia sips another cup of tea in her rocking chair as the boy drops another handful of marshmallows into his cooling cup and watches them melt. He sneaks small, furtive glances across the room as she speaks:

"...of course that was years and years ago, and his hair was a shade or two lighter than yours. He's a chiropractor now, of all the foolish things!" Her head tilts as if she's just come out of a day-dream. "How's your cocoa, dear?"

He looks down into the swirling mass lapping at the sides of his cup.

"You know, it's so nice to have someone to talk to," she says, smiling. There is a smear of bright red lipstick on her teeth that looks like blood. It is the most colorful thing in the room and his eyes are drawn to it again and again.

"What did you say your name was again?" she asks, now perched on the edge of her seat, legs curled neatly under the chair.

"Rusty," he answers in a voice almost too soft and low to be heard. It is the first word he has uttered in the twenty minutes since she invited him in. It seems to take all the strength he has to speak it.

"Rusty...Rusty..." Virginia repeats, gazing out the window in deep contemplation. She looks back to the boy. "That's odd. You don't look like a Rusty. No red hair or freckles... Very odd indeed."

He looks at her blankly, nothing more to say.

She turns her pinched nose sharply, suspiciously. Eyes narrowed to cruel slits.

"Rusty isn't short for Russell? Is it?"

His dark eyes widen.

Outside, the snow begins to fall.

As the mantel clock chimes six, the dark-haired boy sets aside his cold cup and quietly lets himself out the front door. The falling snow is so heavy now that it nearly hides the porchlight across the street. In the houses he sees nothing more than shadows; stilted and slithering against the windows.

The magic always comes and goes with the first snowfall of the year.

The boy smiles and looks up at the sky.

Magic.

Yes.

He jumps off the steps and disappears behind a feathery veil, leaving not so much as a footprint to follow.

For two days the neighborhood stares through sheets of frosted glass as Virginia sits, as straight and regal as an ice queen, in her palace of unbroken snow.

On the morning of the third day, someone calls the police.

A week before Christmas a yellow and green moving truck arrives on West Summer Street burping black diesel and unloads its cache of empty boxes, strapping tape, labels and bubble-wrap. The temperature has plunged into the single digits and the men—three in all—work quickly to keep themselves warm. Inside it's not much better; just enough heat flows through the rooms to keep the pipes from freezing.

They start upstairs, indifferently, and work their way down; warm breath and empty rooms in their wake. The foreign smell of heavy sweat mixed with last night's beer. At the completion of each floor they pause briefly to smoke cigarettes and drink coffee out of a dented metal thermos.

One works ahead of the other two, opening closets, cabinets and drawers, wrapping the con-

tents in old newspaper and bubble-wrap as the other two carry the larger items and the boxes he's left to the back of the waiting truck. The heaviest appliances—the refrigerator, the washer and dryer—remain behind to be sold with the house.

After lunch, the lead man takes a tarnished key from a ring in his pocket and unlocks the door to the cellar. Once downstairs, he strings caged light-bulbs by hooks over the network of pipes along the ceiling. The room sees an intensity of light it has never known before.

The stage set, the work begins.

The tools along the south wall are rusty and useless so he throws them into a bin they've brought to dispose of such things. Worthless. Of no use to anyone. Old cans of paint, crusty solvents and other toxic items go into a separate bin.

He opens boxes containing men's clothing, sepia-toned photographs and pulp novels about crime and World War II.

Her husband, he thinks, looking at a stocky and dark-haired man in one of the photographs. It goes back into the box where it came from and he scribbles out a label to slap on its side.

The last thing in the room—the furthest from the stairs—is a large cedar chest.

"Jesus," he says to himself, pushing aside the surrounding clutter to take in its full size. "There's a hernia waiting to happen."

It will have to be emptied before it can be moved.

He tries the lid and finds it locked. Frowning, he digs the key

ring out of his pocket again and tries several of the smaller ones until the right one slips inside.

He hears a solid click and lifts the lid.

"What the hell..."

A thin layer of ash is all the box contains. Upon closer inspection, flecks of burnt white calcium wink in the glare of the overhead bulbs. They sift through his fingers like grains of salt. Poisoned soil.

His eyes wander thoughtfully and catch on the huge coal-burning furnace, poised like a patient spider in the corner.

"Uh-oh," he whispers and pulls his hand away.

Tristan Trotter

**HOW MY NAME BECAME MUD OR
THE SCAPEGOAT**

The boy who inherited my skin parades around naked.
He's waving my name like a signal flag, in tag,
watch out or he might just
stick it in your pocket when you are too busy
reading a magazine to notice.
He hunches outside your window at night
and throws small rocks at it,
such tiny, light-weight, chippy little rocks,
the noise is probably not even
enough to wake you.
Just know that the boy who inherited my skin
is hardly a reflection of the way I was
when I was alive, indeed I cannot remember
what way that might have been...
just that if I had my skin now,
I certainly would not sew colored glass buttons
and five extra pockets for pens and cough drops
onto the front of it,
then drape it on myself unfittingly,
as on the gawky body of some plastic woman
trapped in a storefront downtown,
the way he is doing now.

Meagan Macvie
NIGHT BEAST(S)

Inside my abdomen we are arguing
over whether to come together
in rubberized harmony
 bouncing
like a paddle-ball,
which is a one-man sport.

*A ring symbolizes forever
because it is circular not linear.
My tummy embodies that roundness
but he insists on rubbing it flat.*

Sometimes, shadows took tike princes
in my girl-mind mingling with glass
slippers, and I can't discern
the Beast
when he slips across the wall
 and holds me hard.
I am so
 small
that as he crushes
me with his too-big self, forcing
his finger into my Forever Ring,
I taste saline
and implode into my own roundness.

He comes at night
inviting himself, but I close
the bathroom door and fill the tub
with warm water to escape
 like a fetus from the scapula.
He is not the only one.

*The world is full of beasts who mangle
women, men and doctors
who know remedies
applied before consent.*

They invade in the evening,
like werewolves regardless of the moon,
and I shut the door, hiding,
entombed in my bathtub womb where I lay buoyant
soaking my head and clutching
my breasts, guarding the round moon
of my entrails
like meat from the wolves.

In the tub,
with my blistered toes pushed up against porcelain
my legs lengthen,
attempting to become linear,
but the warm water curls me into a pearl,
surrounding my ears with water
so I can barely hear their claws
as they scratch
at the bathroom door.

James Owens
ACCOMPANIMENT

1

She boards the bus
as if stepping into water,
testing the stares
which swirl up
and catalog her--
waitress coming off duty,
somebody's tired housekeeper.
The riders settle back
dismissively, into themselves.
She takes the first empty seat,
smoothes her skirt
because that's a place
to put her hands.
She looks out the window,
floats on anonymity.

2

I am wondering what force
drives her.
She seems scoured, taut,
more than the routine fatigue
of hard-worked middle-age,
thoughts urged, perhaps against
her will, to a theater of grief
unfolding in private...

but she is humming
to herself, distracted,
no recognizable tune,
clumsy music crafted in the throat,
habit. She may be unaware
of her own creation,
may return to herself
and find it waiting.

3

Like the return of libido
after a long hospital stay:
for weeks the body focused
on pain, the daily
hand-to-mouth of existing,
fear boring the veins.
Then out, past the threat,
and life staggers
back home to the body
where nothing
will keep two people apart.

4

Her song is the body's
vigilance, waiting up
long nights of the soul.
This is more important
than her sorrow
which I will not know:
small runs and trills
just below the voice,
pattern stumbling
to a pause, starting,
searching out the rhythm,
particular and necessary
sound. My fingers move,
picking up the rhythm.

Robert S. King
PILOT OPENING

After all the great gulfs of hot air and panic
have softened their thrust, I am falling full blown
to the tender heads of mushrooms.

From control towers, botanists and shell-loaders
cock their iron helmets, ooh at the free fall,
my lack of spiral, the plumed descent
to a toadstool town leaking oily shadows.

Abandoning their stations, button-pushers look up
and pelt me with shouts, the armless guards
loudspeaking, "*...repeat, do not land on the living.*"
They know I should have burst open
with the flying machine that beat me to earth as shrapnel.

Pale in the shade growing across a field
of rising earth, I pull the rip-cord of a mushroom;
the sudden jerk of wind hangs me
all the way up, past metal scopes
and thunder.

Curt Seubert
CONVERSATION

a scrap of paper on quiet street

血
すみません
わかりません

血
littered with similar

生
ございます
本

—
—生

あります
ほとんど

an explosion having cleared away the bodies

そこにあります
ここにもあります
あるきます
やっぱり

うち
どちらへ
うち

I am dreaming tattered edges

つきあたりでしょうか
ちょっとわかりません
そうでしょうかね

piecing them together

血
くろいの血

Blood
Excuse me
[I] don't understand
Blood

Life/Birth
Exists (inanimate)
Book
One (inanimate)
One life
Exists
Almost

[It] is there
[It] is here, too
[I] will walk; [I] walk
Afterall
Home
To where?
Home

Do [you] suppose [it's] a dead end?
[I'm] afraid [I] don't know.
[I] wonder

Blood
Black blood; blood that is black

SHORT STORY

ROADSMITH

Kenneth C. Andersen

I.

Mercer Orley stopped digging for a moment. The road along the mountain—his road—his mountain—would wait while he wiped his brow and looked out over the hot plain. He looked down the folded slopes until they merged with the flat tan of the desert. He thought he could see movement along the low country road. Someone was going east. His sweat rolled down and found a dry furrow in the mountainside.

He went back to work on his road. The sun was getting hot. It would be higher before he would go back to the house. Maylie always had lunch ready.

He dug from the upper side of the road and carried loose rock across to fill up the lower. The mountain gave pieces of hardened clay and rotten rock and shale to Mercer's digging, but unwillingly. He broke them with the shovel into uniform pebbles. Mercer was proud of his skill. He tamped it with the back of his shovel and stepped heavily on it with heavy shoes.

He had made many trips like this all morning, from up hill slope to down, to widen the road, anticipating the erosion process, taking from height to make width. On into the day's heat he made many more trips, up and down, back and forth. His overalls, blue each morning, were reddish brown with the mountain's essence and wet with his. The road must be well-kept, a good road. Who knows who will use it some day?

He was wet and salty when he stopped again. He judged it was time to go back to the house.

The walk was long but it was along his road. He knew every detail. Every rock represented some portion of his labor. There was one tiny white cloud, like a flame in the sky, and it went before him as he went. He met no one. He hoped he would some day. Far away on the plain some movement showed that someone preferred the road in the level country.

His road followed the conformations of the mountain, turned with the furrows and cross ridges, curved inland to skirt an arroyo or ring a grassy amphitheater. His mountain was green. It was high enough to receive the rain denied the lower

regions. And the rain made the road building harder.

There was the house now, stone, just under the summit ridge. He could see Maylie sitting in front, waiting, tiny in the distance. She waved; he knew she waved. She disappeared into the house.

When he came up to the door, one of the stones under the sill caught his eye. He would fix it. He went into the dark. He did not wipe his shoes. Why should he? The road was the sacred thing in his life. He would sooner have wiped his feet from the house before stepping upon the road.

The bare familiar home brightened as his eyes accustomed themselves. Maylie was in the kitchen. He grunted so she would know he was there.

"Hot 'n' flies," she said. She slurred her words over the pot of soup, but she had made a sound in recognition of Mercer's presence.

She served the soup and bread on the thick table dark with years in an alcove of white-washed stone. They ate silently for some time.

"Got a little coffee and some cheese for the vegetables down at the store," she said. "We'll have 'm tonight."

Mercer kept on eating.

"I got a little beef too—in case anyone comes."

"Yes," he said, "in case."

"I'll take the corn tomorrow," she said.

He said nothing.

"It's a steep road comin' back up, Mercer. I'm getting older."

"But it's a good road," he said, in a loud voice.

"Yes, of course it's a good road."

They ate without additional words. They finished with a cup or two of tea. Slurping sounds were resonant in their stone hollow.

"You should go down to the store, Mercer."

He looked out the small window at the bright mountainside.

"You haven't seen anybody but me for years."

He turned to look at her a moment.

"No one's used the road all this time, Mercer, not since your father's time, and my father's, when I came."

"No, not since my father's time," he said hoarsely. "You folks came and used my father's road. Someone'll come, one day. Are the beds made up?"

"They are made up, Mercer."

"It's my road now," he said.

He got up largely and went out into the sun and walked back to where he had been working on the mountain.

She looked again at the expectant beds in their rock vault. Outside, the afternoon shone hard on the way station the Orleys kept along the traveled way.

II.

Mercer did not work on Sundays. They stayed in the house and read from the Bible. She cooked a Sunday dinner and he did things that the house required.

He was fixing the stone that had loosened. She was doing this and that in the kitchen, and now and then looking out the rock-framed window.

There was something moving on the road. It could not be. She gasped and called,

"Mercer, Mercer, there's somebody comin' up the road."

"Nonsense, woman. You're gettin' old."

"Just look."

They stopped and looked. They could see no one. The road disappeared and appeared among the lateral ridges of the mountain. They watched to see if someone, some thing, would show where the road came back into view.

They started, startled. Mercer breathed loudly. There was someone. The people were still in the distance, moving slowly like pilgrims from some far off place. Their white clothes shone like flames in the sun.

"There's someone comin'," Mercer said, as though it were his discovery.

"There seem to be a lot of 'em," she said.

"Five of 'em, anyhow. Are the beds made up?"

"They are made up, Mercer."

Whoever was coming disappeared behind a nearer conformation. Many minutes elapsed while whoever it was stayed hidden by the bulges of rock. Her thoughts went over what she would be able to serve them.

Then there they were, coming up the road to the house.

"It's a family, with three children."

"Good morning," the man said.

"Good mornin'," Mercer said, trying to sound natural.

"A hot walk! I'm glad to find your place."

"I'm glad too. Will you stop—and have somethin' cool?"

They all walked into the cavern of the house. The man was younger than Mercer. His eyes and set of face showed that he had experience. His wife was alert and bright-eyed. There was a tousle-haired boy in his teens, with a sweater tied around his middle by the sleeves, and a younger girl, fair of hue, with her mother's eyes, and another girl even younger, a yet smaller edition but with something of her father's set of chin.

"Get somethin' cool for 'em," Mercer said.

Maylie went to get something, and the mother and daughters followed.

"My name is Mercer Orley."

He placed a chair for his guest.

"Mine is John Roadsmith. What do you do with yourself up here?"

"I have no trouble doin'. I keep the road."

His guest laughed.

"You are the true Roadsmith," he said.

"Your ancestor must've been a road builder," Mercer said.

"I hope everyone's ancestor was."

"It's nice of you to say so."

In the dark stony kitchen the guests' smiles and eyes shone.

"You have a fine view of the road and mountain," Mrs. Roadsmith said.

"Yes, thank you. You're very kind."

"You have a nice kitchen. Don't you wish we had this nice a kitchen?"

The girls murmured yesses.

Maylie was fixing a big fruit ade. And she made some sugary cakes appear from a ceramic bin

like a demijohn, much too large for so small a family.

"I'm having some friends over for tea next week," Mrs. Roadsmith said. "I can't think of anything better than fruit ade and sugar cakes. I think this is a wonderful combination."

"You'll have some tea too?"

"Yes, and maybe little mints. What do you think?"

"That sounds awfully good," Maylie said, and, as she stirred, before her hovered the impossibly remote vision of a low country tea.

Mrs. Roadsmith marveled that she was discussing what would be an elegant tea with such a plain woman of the mountains.

Both women smiled to themselves.

The daughters helped carry the glass pitcher, glasses and plate filled with cakes through the tunnel to the men folks.

"I'm trying to forget my office," Mr. Roadsmith was saying, "but I can't really. You have no idea out here in the clear air how you're spared the give and take of a lot of people trying to get ahead of each other in the city. That's one of the things that makes the city great, I suppose, but there's such tension all the time, like a wire stretched to breaking. Up here it must be very peaceful."

"It is peaceful here," Mercer said.

"You ought to see my desk. I have more projects going than you could imagine, more than I have bumps on my brain to cope with. There must be twenty piles of papers. I'm like a juggler keeping all those balls in the air."

Mercer didn't try very hard to picture such an office or himself in it.

"I'm always having to deal with problems all over the country, trying to keep all the birds on the wing. I must get back as soon as I can."

He laughed, but with more teeth than pleasure. "But out here it's like a breath of fresh air."

"It is fresh air," Mercer said, in a deep voice. He looked out the window at his own world.

"But I'll be back at the office in a few days," Roadsmith said. He suddenly looked very serious.

"I have to get back too," his son said. "As soon as I get back I want to look for a job on a freighter and see some far off ports and islands, Tahiti, Hong Kong, Iceland, and the sea. I want to do that. When I go into business maybe it'll be a travel sort of business. I'd like to deal with people. I like people."

He tossed his curly hair. Mercer looked out at the empty road.

"I like people too," he said.

The girls chattered gaily. Mercer couldn't make out what their chatter was about, except that it was happy and had something to do with playmates at home and a castle somehow like Mercer's and Maylie's own house on the mountain.

"Is the road beyond as good as what we've been on?"

"Yes, it is the same."

"Well, I thank you very much for your kindness, but I think we should get on our way, and get off the mountain before night."

"No, the road is long. You'd better stay here till the mornin'."

The visitor hesitated.

"We don't have visitors every day," Mercer said.

The family did not seem opposed, and it was agreed.

The sunset furrowed the mountain more deeply and the rising night reinforced their isolation. They dined on Maylie's own fresh vegetables and some beef she'd brought from below. The Roadsmiths thought how shut off they were; the Orleys, how the world suddenly lay open at their feet.

It grew late early on the mountain. The travelers put out the light in that cavern of a room, and the beds were fresh and sweet.

It was strange to awake in that stony room and to smell sausage and coffee on the remote unfamiliar mountainside.

At breakfast they cheerfully referred to much that had been talked about the evening before. The sun shone in on them and glistened on the plates and cups. They could see the far view out the window, below and beyond.

And before long, with the serious, touching best wishes of Mercer and Maylie Orley, they found themselves again on the road.

III.

Mercer pried a rock loose and broke it up. It was harder to move the rocks than it had been, and the rocks were harder. He was getting older. The sun was hotter.

"I wish this rock hadn't been here when the Roadsmiths came," he said to himself, in tune with his work and the vibrations of the stone.

He stood back to catch his breath, breathing deep, intoning, "Yes, my friend Roadsmith says, 'It's like a breath of fresh air up here.'"

After he had trudged back the long road to the house—he would not admit to himself that the road was long or rough—he sat more tenderly now with Maylie.

"I wish they had stayed longer," he said. "But we have friends now, don't we?"

"I'm sure they think of us."

"Remember all the things they said when they went?"

"Yes. I asked 'em to write us they've arrived safe," she said.

"We'll arrive safe if the road is as good as what we've been on. I'm sure it is if you've had the workin' of it. The road is more important than any letter.' That was nice of him to say."

"And they waved till they were out of sight. Do you remember how bright they looked when the sun hit 'em when they walked away down the road?"

"Yes, our road," Mercer said.

They sat in front of their house, looking down the mountain banded purple by shadows. They looked along the road to where it disappeared and reappeared, like them taking its shape from the mountain.

"It really happened, didn't it, Maylie? Tell me it really happened."

"Yes, it happened, Mercer. They used the road."

Cindy Bell
REVISITING KLIMT'S KISS

There must be under that penny-worked cloak
a woman whose sheen has grown dull from this embrace
knees thickened from her patience
stomach seamed like a cracked plum.
Grown older now
deserving of a good, long stretch,
a cigarette, a pair of plain brown slippers.
And the man who once brought her poppies and tangerines—
whose arm has become a hook
in which she naps,
might want to move away, for a moment,
to look out the window
at the small garden in back
where he grows his carrots and beans.
Shall they put the old wedding quilt back on the bed,
and walk silently on some anonymous street?
Let the dust thread their clothes
and pebbles fill their shoes,
let them come home, finally, alone—
free of the jealous crowds in their kitchen
who have looted their cupboards of poetry
and left them only with mice
who mimic the rasp
of knotted hands gently rubbing tired feet.

SHORT STORY

NEW MAN IN TOWN

William Meyer Jr.

The supernunnery tramp in blazing white baggy suit approaches the counter at Walgreen's. What would be his intent? Was he grave or hyperbolic?

"Do you have a cologne or after-shave made from the wood of Billy Budd's spar?"

The clerk blinked and said, "WHAT?"

The request being repeated, the young woman behind the counter said no. Then offered: "I think we do have a bug-spray made from the old Bourbon kegs of Faulkner and Cleanth Brooks."

"That will do," the arch-enemy said, smiling and leaping out the malfunctioning automatic door (*i.e.*, one has to *push* it open). "That will do TOO goddamn well." The character continued to mutter to his old mother waiting outside on a concrete bench. "That will do, that will do, DO, DO, DO! I'm so happy I could kill myself with a mania of desire. I'm so happy I could kill Paul Newman for playing an old fool in 'Nobody's Pool.'"

Snow, mixed with a raining, sunny shower, blew through the small urban morning. Life could be so gratuitously cruel to a homeless devil carrying his sainted mother to her patriarchal grave.

"I wonder what I'm doing," the great mobilizer of Hemingway said to himself, grasping the dear dead weight and hoisting it up with a fantastic grunt. "I wonder if I'm sane enough to write Spenserian Stanzas for the *Atlantic Monthly* or NEE-grow advertising for the *CLA Journal*, Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA.

Riding a quiet, jumping bus to the edge of town, the wracked stranger carefully lifted his rigid, sadistic bundle down and noticed a dead brown Manx cat by the curb.

"Have a nice morning buffet, daddy?" the character asked. "I'll bury you with my mother dear in a kind of bleak Terhune-ish catafalque—a speculative *pax* on your two nailed eyes. 'Higher Learning' was a terrible film."

Suddenly, an angel appeared. An aged angel with tumultuous and dirty wings. Hand over hand the post-mortem demon hauled himself past his mother and out of the pit. Above, in the Quarrel-

some City of Jarknevarre, Holderlin or Hi-digger waited, bowling spares. (from pit to pit to pit) OH. WAIT!!

The sun glared down on the Red River, The Green Savior stood immaculate and blinked off and on like a neon parrot. The holy gushing ghost in a form of a rodent reached out its paw and accepted the cast-off epic videocassette of "Acetate Debbie Moby-Dicks Dallas.

The woman behind all this folio-folderol now needed some shoes for herself and her cherub. She walked into Henri's Bergson-Peds and wiggled her toes in the face of the garlicky clerk-poet. He sniffed quaintly at the ambience of the grit, and delicately but firmly suggested a spate of pink-and-blue flats, "for rural days and osteopathic nights." The livid toes were attracting ants.

A huge gorilla hired just for this purpose, reached out from behind a curtain in the small shop and whopped the silly clerk's head.

"Sorry," the animal wailed.

"It's OK," the female ascended and tickled the protruding upper lip of the pouting beast with a perfect big toe.

The gorilla looked puzzled; his loins were flapping open to reveal a fantastic orange-and-purple penis in revolution. He howled as the pseudo-Henri now punched his jaw, knocking him out with a vile corpus of *The Violent Bear Ran Away With It*.

"Suggarh—I'll take 'em," was the sound of the wind through the lattice-work where the little Evil Elvises and Shoonmaker casting directors loved to peek.

Noontime brought no respite from the intermittent friction felt by the hobbling Jesus of Santa Clear-ah. Impoverished to a fault, the ancient, ominous poet decided to teach Jewish screenwriters to emulate a non-propagandistic Hawkes.

"Shalom on the Range." Should have little eugenic appeal for some bastard like Billy Krystall, competent to sell Hessian valises to Ben and Jerry in Maidenform Bra's.

"Patriot Missiles on the Golan Hypes" should dastardly reveal the slitted somnolence of Moshe Sharon Stein itching to intercourse the neighborhood rapist.

Back at Walgreen's, the huge silver-templed stud asked the clerk, 'Tami,' if she had any plastique lip-bomb for hot impenetrable clients like Sir Jimmy Woods. She said no, but "We do have some Rush Limberger melted belt-mender for suicidal cloacae." When she winked her eyes real slow you could see "AIDS" tattoo'd on her blue-ish lids. Then "Puck Hitler's Tailor." Then "PS—Pussy Galore" on the ensuing languid flutterings.

The last sign the immense alien read on the suggestive lid-pupil-thromboses was "Jesus Slept Here." "Sorry," he said, running, bumping into a grunting, squint-eyeing, green-vested Dardanelles store-manager.

"NO ONE cares about me or my monumental Reality," the massive Missive-Man staid-slatted to his ghostly material/maternal mediator.

"FUCK C.S. Lewis and Prof. Christoforo, deuce."

Everything ended. Something

traded.

Waiting for a random Vis count stone and a Samurai basin, the powerful Samaritan of Stooges and black cats pledged his support of George Goebbles-Bush and was immediately shot by an eminent bow-huntress, the Jakartian Diana-mistress of Malcomb S—startled starlet of “Black Sugar and Gingerbread Sex.” Strong to the earth the savvy staleness of Sidon threw him. His paleolithic face crashed into a 1993 volume of Ulrich’s Periodicals. A-K. A hand grasped the short, thick arrow-shaft and hefted the Victor into the back of an old brown Chrysler or Plymouth station wagon. Under brilliant surgical lights another hand smashed the shaft further into his back. Jack violated Kate with the back of his sling-shot. Jane revealed her two 12-year-old brats to silly Tarzan. Needle and thread boosted up the sore spot. The night of Saturnian simplicity melded with checkers. Bob DiNero should never play autistic peckers.

A nosy near-by Hispanic officer investigated the scene. His Joplinn-hating, proleptical prelim-invest yielded “probably a heart-attack or bout of goutish radiation flatulent fraud; either way, nothing goes on report to the local police.”

Cinema-mon-Woo, the local anchoress on Channel Six, began humming a ditty from the River Stylus-Ichthoos.

In bed, surrounded by a candy-striped broad in flesh-glistening panties, the impassive Stranger languished, then won.

Some years later, on a natural

blue bay, a professor of English bruised his knuckles on a hard critique. He noticed the Alien’s position was adamantine. He saw that the blood of the varlet was red-red. Suddenly he knocked over an iceberg and found an early Eskimo three-hundred-pound sculpture of a waddling, cunt-dialated Hilary Clinton.

At the hospital pond the Perfect Stranger (returning) saw a blind duck bumping its head against the new fence meshings. The crazy mallard kept biting at white jogging shoes instead of at the sweet-meats thrown before him by a dreamy lass—whom the alien knocked down and began licking her feet. She screamed in goose-like schooled screeches for Hank to appear; finally, a pre-paid security guard shot the man with a red-dotted laser-guided pea—really one of those new Rhino-bullets that evaporate the testes and half of the thighs, leaving something ugly wiggling in the thick grass by the fence line.

Still laughing, the woman extended a truce. The female Indo-American instinct regarded the impotent louse and left legalities to Sears, Shitbuck and Gelt-Walton. The black winsome bodily fluid poured off from the shootee was tracked in triquartered multitudes of pigeon and duck-marks upon the new parking-lot concrete.

I am SO UNHAPPY in my modern-day depletion. Cannot *someone* explain the failure of Kenosis or the Houston Rockettes?

In his studio high over inner-Texas, a mongrel mogul stands

biting into his finger while his cigar smolders over a copy of "8-mm. Home Movies."

"I can never remember his major aim. I can never do him justice. I just want to say 'Bozieh, I'm so sorry.' But that's not it either. I want to say, 'Congrats, oh you Klaus-Lettermann.' Not night yet, ohshit, ohshit."

A black cloud paused over a new Super-Walgreen's Store. A sentence was handed down by an all-white Filipino jury. A star-studded line-up will be on hand for the live-stock show. A stranger watched a proud father bite his little girl's heel until the thin watery-blood dripped to the sand and sprinkled the hitherto lost mercyseat-edition of *Gullshornbook. Egads.*

In all these simple modern movements, the Alien caretaker was careful to extend the violence of aesthetics to hypervisual forces and the Premmingering fatality of cat-lovin' Sybil Sherrill. A thus: dead man sits by the window of a house; another sesses by the door; one is wet-fingering through the Goodspell of Marque; another da "Savage Bride of Wellingborough Redburn."

The black cloud covered the chilling face of Christ as he transpired to climb, emitting emissions black and diesel-smelling. He had just overseen the unhooking of a bra in the woman's lingerie section of a big-time department store. "Atlantic City. Here I Come." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the New-Fangled Beechnut-Cessna II." A strealth-bomber pilot watched the transfiguration/Ascension, noting the miniscule letters drifting beyond

man's ken:

"THIS IS THE WAY THE
MOVIE ENDS...

This way the ieds
w he e

In a new casino-refurbished elementary school of American Indians in Outermost Texas, a precocious young squaw coyly slipped off her moccasin and teased the naked skin under the shirt of a young buck with his back to her. A forensic scientist not presently serving the Trial in L.A. went over and cut off the foot and mailed it to the Jonathan Edwards College of Mental Enthusiasm. The quivering foot never died or decayed. To this day, it tickles the dark moustaches of young Asian in-

ternes.

The wonderful Wanderer continues to grow. His girth and his stature rival Rush Limbaugh—well, perhaps not. A Neeka-girl in an inner-city school shifts her hump-back and spits on a portrait of Bay Charles with Eyes.

In the shifty pine forests of southern credos, a lioness named Elsa is brooding about relative values. Dorian Grey has just taken first place in the Price-Is-Right melee. *Sister Act* has fallen into Hollywood's dissipated malaise.

In the back-seat of a black Ford Mustang the potent New Face in Town is licking the pubis of Sister Mary Lewellan.

"Smells just like pine resin, slimy as a snake. Tomorrow we visit the Bishop's House in quequed-up Galvestone, Eclectic."

The tiny girl keeps her warm

toes in her daddy's stiff crotch. She wonders if she is fulfilling the *Tonight Show's* suspended animation and connubial fest-schriften. Daddy Alien agrees:

"New breeze"—

With just three shots, the Stranger killed the renters and their black lab. Shouldn't have been trying to infiltrate the neighborhood with unkempt surprises. And THEN, on top of it all, the shuts-pah to read VONNEGUT, the conversant Serb.

When the Stranger was a child in Bollyn, Neb., he found he could transfigure Walt Disney into Sigmund Freud with a simple-minded stratagem: Gem Jerusalem Jews Jewellery has the counter-box on sale—just \$999.999.99/per. You explain that to the hard-working PA. I can't remember how he faced the appendectomy of his mother—the raw red scar across the under-breast-hanging area. The noise in the mattitudinal bed. The little lord Chavez asleep in the ditch. Strange things have forced the Stranger to discombobulate himself. The writings of Faulkner are a positive disgrace to croyant violent arteests. Appomattox is intoxicated with its defeat. New Orleans U has a great B-ball team this week (cf. polls).

Shaking himself free of the anaesthetic, the Stranger rode his Corsica into Tyrrell Park to hunt for the Roof-Cats Primeval: those grey-and-black tabbys inhabiting the roof of the rec-building since 19 and 53. Once the Stranger dove headlong into the back window of the great stone

building (A Public Works Project) and chased a locked-in, starving cat in red high-heels through an open turret—banging against iron calamities, frightening the Vicks out of the varmit: provisions for provinder. Willie Norrel was sterile but they blamed his Biblica wife—a Hebraica Natch! The grey beast crawls up to the edge of the roof, looks down and sees the Jesus of Jessie-Feasts opening a can of Paul Newman's Salad-for-Katz; I am about to create a particular form of logic for writers. Jest a jetsam, M'am.

The young girl orphaned by the homicidal hold-up at Walgreen's was taken in by a professional poet—a pedophile with a nasty history of ingrown-sonnets. He named the girl Rowena Sandry-Di Lo-Lita-Hoy Hace-Calor. At night, watching television, he would turn her feet into moles, burrowing blindly into some pocket of rank-and-file Worms. The 11-year-old slut blackmailed the Alien into buying her a dog—she pretended to be pregnant with a child by Ernest Gaines, The Alien blessed all sacred sanctimonious rituals: the buying of newspapers, the eating of German Strudle, the kissing of elbows bleeding and scraped, the imagining of how a sweet-toed casserole would bake.

One day in a green teepee outside Yuma Michigan the Alien found the perfect mate: a big-busted, round-nippled Swedish grandmother from the Lower Westside. When the dick hit the pussy, the shreems of delight, they shook the bad tapestries inside Colonade V. No movie

should ever override the simple fact that American audiences can no longer hear.

"Have you got some salve or ointment for a bad case of hives or recurrently ad-libbed intrinsic exzema," Carrolton Fiend asked the dull-eyed clerk at the close-encounters counter. "Ask the pharmacist," she replied and continued her dead-wall reveries.

"I need it for my dead mother. whose skin is a mess," the lonely Loafer pleaded with the young black female pharmacist-assist. She frowned and yawned and told him to invest in anti-lawsuit-abuse education. A huge water-louse was riding the tide through the narrow aisles of the Calgary Walgreen Star-Store.

Since getting his head bashed in by a cop at Tyrrel Park, the alienated Stranger has become much more advanced socially. He plays with his timorous cats without rancor. And he writes to the editor of the Antioch Stew-Case without utter contempt for formality.

"I love form above rhyme and metiere; I love the simple delight of tickling the soles of Michelle Fifer-Phone-Home Ptomaine. I love the essence of linear-algebra. I love the buxom plentitude of hyper-ogled knock-outs."

One morning in mid January, a bright degrading boy's-home, marriagable kind of postmistress day, the goof-off in shining white kleider took the nimble thing who worked at Walgreen's to visit his mother's birthplace—Big TN. She was so impressed she flung down the bouquet of smelts she had gathered in the marshy lawn and invited the youngster

to lie down, put his hand on her neck and just "f-a-w-n."

After a few moments of peculiar prayer, the two went away. The old soldier was cary-granting the small red high-heels of his prey. Falling down in the slush of the enmired ruft-turf, in went the accident through the back of her panties, the huge philodentist of cuntal recriminations—

"I like it!" the invisible turkey-female gobbled all the way Heimlich, sobbing, fire!

Love is nothing if not for the Strange; Life is nothing if it doesn't exist. Jim Morrison is neither a poet nor song-writer. Ogden Nash has trouble discarding the reels of *Wayne's World XVI*.

In the final analysis the copy-machine will continue to function if the technician in career-charge of its munitions will go to bat for the Langlais-tinder-celeesstique aview.

Under a twenty-two foot likeness of Tami's cute foot, the remarkable Depressor has put this set of feet:

*There was a young kitten rode
out of the West;—
Of all the young kittens his code
was the Wurst;*

Hansel-liebschin, my schraf-like bildungsromancitizen: slip off her hose and slip and Lip-shits, you may return to TelevisionVive.

See the poor supernunnery tramp trying to grind up the old discarded red high-heels to make a little broth—a stew of ribald poverty of $\frac{1}{4}$ Parisi and $\frac{1}{2}/\frac{1}{2}$ Ruffan and that movie of all mov-

ies—*Klute!*

In heaven the lifeless Serandipitous Stare-af lies on his back while thousands of tiny angel-toes tickle his Probignagian Lariat.

Homoculolus Cat strikes out for Homosexual Grack: instead of Rabbit Run, we get Maimed Mamie's Truth-Let-It-All-Hang-Out-About-Ikemotubbe, the Ruthless Scratcher.

Carolinus Cat has dug a perfect secular sepulcher for the Famed Feline-Abbetor, the Abbatroir of Duckbutter; nothing deters the union of tramp and clerk. Their sexual politics are just beatings and surrendering orgasms. Their aesthetic beginning has begun.

Sitting side by side in the Hon-eymoon Bijou, the bride slips off her black flats and caresses the major's stunning calf. "Thank you, Jack Derridah, for letting us see how blind the tactile moon can deceive."

On the bitter morning after the previous night, the chagrining couple wash clothes and torn nylons at the Country Delux Laundry Tex Dip. "You are so strange," the young wife observed. "I am, on the country-side of lovin' you, eating your dirt!" He flirted with a spinning dryer. And the two began to understand the difference between some Gook or Chink giving us "modern fiction" and the real ersatz sentence-receiver reaching down and touchdowning the in-step of the literacy-sweetheart.

Billy Budd drifted out of a bottle of eau-cologne; Bartleby the Scrivener will copy ennything you want, li'l girl.

• • •

POST-FICTIONAL ADDENDUM FOR ALL THOSE

(having a torn ass-hole, the tramp *con* blazing white jogging suit intuits your quantum-ninos need: just exactly waiting while Juli, Tami and Gloria Dubach tend their toes in Indiana Sweet-corn: lifting up heels and flashy pink-furred clefts to clef and chaff. In North-Mortuuo/Lauro Amigo, something leaves Walgreen's for the sea-side where Milton Gaus and Marcella are having a mother/son quarrel: fetid grass is dry beneath the Grassic mouselein sky; and Daddy-Morque has his assigned place in this easily disintegrated city of the Todt:

"I hear some far-off castanet, over the wide nextus of the sea; I will never love the fireman's daughter. Only the beauty will do. Hence, I leave loving all ugly people up to the yew; the sombre hat rests in the closet; the black seamed nylons are stretched to the limit; the crying vulture has been born through a masculine anus; the wave has no opening—other than the salvation of female swimming arms—and the sea is grinning like a cat; and I can only hear my tempresstic hungerbaldgrowth ape-like simper.

AMIGO, are you there?
Huh?"

Thieves have stolen the lovely feet of Deanna; and the cottage-gnome industry has been shaped by inactivity. The young woman flicked the nipples of the

Stranger and began reading Camus with nothing surrounding her Justine-backside—this Bianca-Tami-Sport let the winsome white soles rest on the indigent lip-hearted Man. (Once in Youston I saw the night-clerk mopping up the sauce of his friend.)

In his head-room grave, the strange redactor of the posthuman gospels has begun to revive. "Hey, Poe—you were right! There is a raven eating the MLA President's Hardheart!" In baggy jeans and paint-scarred blue shirt, the consecrator of converse is wishing real hard to project the sweet Tami of his past Walgreen hours—fast into the cubicle in this library of worms. He lifts her dead flesh to the embroiling night sun and begins to fathom the oceanic experience of vomitous Chaucer's Leatherstocking.

He lifts up the heels (no bigger than his thumbs) and kisses the raindrops from each plum and polished apple of the Evening Eve's organic roots.

"I'm tired and just want to watch Jay Leno, the beast!" Thus sprachs Tami-ustra, and going to eternal sleep, she sprawls her alabaster legs over the Alien's strange fibrulating libidonation. He slips off her long black rubber boots and begins to eat the combination of national sole-flesh and toe-jelly and ankular-puree. She smiles and genuflects: "Mmmmm, that feels so good. Mr., Tease." (O.J, chucklesnorts):

"Now, if only I could write film-criticism, the West would be one. If only I could slip wet kisses up your heels to your bum the night would evaporate into the day;

and all the sane problems of job, car, taxes and your brother would be OK."

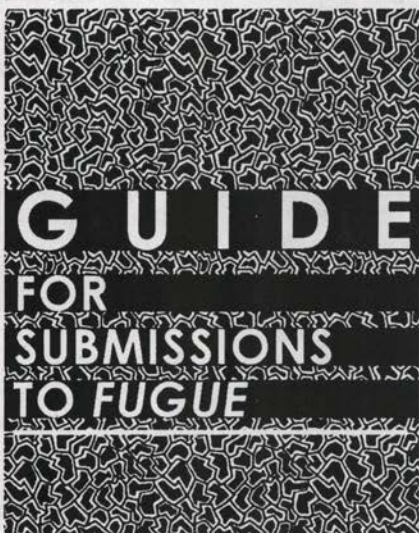
Awakening in tero-ant-killing fear, the Strange Alien Tramp bumps his head on the low ceiling and turns to the sunken-face grin of the rotting Blanchette-hag at his side. A sudden, sharp slap makes her cry. No Updike to the Nicholson rescue, my deer: no dial 911, you oriental Cunt; the buttes of Montana are beautiful tonight. He holds her warm feet in the lesmissyrubbles delight.

"Land sogoshen chile, ain't you got no shame to be so tame?"

"I didn't know I was dating KingJames Kong," she feigned.

An involuntarily Binski-reflecting Miss America grew deaf, smashed nose. The Giant slept like a balleted new cognomen, under peeking Couvers while the wild Gulf of Mexico blew straight through the seventeen screens.

DEPARTMENT



GUIDELINES

▣ **Details about the magazine:** *Fugue* is a biannual digest of multi-genre fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Issues are published at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters at the University of Idaho. Each issue contains short stories, poetry, creative nonfiction, and commentary chosen to satisfy a wide variety of tastes in literary entertainment.

The magazine is staffed by English majors presently attending the University of Idaho and is funded entirely by the UI English department and support from the readership. A single issue of *Fugue* is only \$3.00 retail, US funds.

. . .

▣ **Submission Format:** Use proper manuscript format: typed with one-inch margins, double spaced, left-hand justified only, standard manuscript fonts (do not desktop publish your manuscript). Put last name, title word, and page number in the upper right-hand corner. In the upper

left-hand corner of the first page put your name, address, phone number, and SSN. In the upper right of the first page include approximate word count for prose or line count for poetry. Include a stamped, self-addressed #10 (long) envelope with your submission for a response. Send a copy of your ms., not the original.

Submissions should be addressed to:

FUGUE c/o
English Dept.
Brink Hall, Rm. 200
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 838434-1102
USA

Response time is 12 weeks. No simultaneous, reprint, or disk submissions. Payment is one contributor copy plus a variable honorarium.

. . .

▣ **Editorial Process:** Each submission is read by several staff members who critique it,

then pass it on to the executive editor and staff advisor for final decisions.

Fugue is looking for a wide range of genres—the wider the better: mimetic, experimental, mystery, meta-fiction, speculative fiction, cultural, etc. *Fugue* is a showcase for all types of literature.

Based upon the overall critique of the staff, the executive editor and staff advisor will make the final decision as to what will be accepted for publication in an upcoming issue. Accepted material is published within nine months. In some cases, we may contact a contributor for a rewrite or clarification of text. Proof sheets will be provided when production scheduling allows. No major changes will be made to any text without the consultation and agreement of the author.

☞ Stories: Average word count is 3000 words, but we consider any length up to 6000. Book excerpts, chapters, and serializations will not be considered. Pay varies, according to length, between \$5 for shorter pieces to \$20 for ms. up to 6000 words.

☞ Creative Nonfiction: Imaginative renderings of a life experience. Pay rates are the same as for fiction.

☞ Poems: The contemporary standard is free verse, but we consider a wide range of other forms as well. All themes, from serious to whimsical, are considered without restrictions. Pay averages depending on line count

from a minimum of \$3 to a maximum of \$10.

☞ Nonfiction: We are looking for well-constructed commentary, articles, essays, reviews, etc., written in a comprehensible style aimed at the public. Maximum of 2000 words. Pay depends on length of editorial word count with a minimum of \$5.

☞ *Fugue* Staff Submissions: As the magazine is a product of the English department's writing program, and is staffed primarily by individuals involved in that program, the staff is allowed to submit work for publication in the magazine. Such submissions will be read "blind" by three other staff members, then further scrutinized by the executive editor and staff advisor. The executive editor, managing editor, and staff advisor do not generally submit material for publication in *Fugue*. No special consideration will be given to any submission by a staff member of *Fugue*.

