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Exile Vol. V No. 1

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Denison University

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Denison University

William Bennett
Denison University

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Authors

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EXILE

WINTER 1959

The EXILE

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Denison University
Granville, Ohio

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.
—Ezra Pound

Contributors

ANDRÉ WINANDY, senior French and German major, who graduated from the Lycée de Garçons d'Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg, where he founded, edited and contributed to two student magazines, one literary, one critical, appears for the first time in *EXILE*. Editor DENNIS TRUDELL, junior, English major and treasurer of Franco-Calliopean society, contributes three poems to this issue. The story by JULIA SANTUCCI marks her first publication. She is a junior English major from Etna, New Hampshire, and is now in a writing seminar at Denison. LAURETTA MULLIKIN is a senior, majoring in literature. Two sophomore contributors are MARILYN RUFF, an English major from Clarendon Hills, Illinois, who is published for the first time, and CAROL ANN SCHREIER, who contributes her second poem to *EXILE*. WILLIAM BENNETT, who submitted the prize winning short story, a psychology major, is associate editor of the *Denisonian*. This appearance marks the first poetic publication of freshman CHRISTINE CONDIT who has won the second award in the *National Scholastic* essay contest and third place in the New York University short story contest. Editor JOSEPH ARNOLD is a senior history major who has previously appeared in *EXILE*.

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Any student of Denison may submit manuscripts of poems, short stories and essays to the editors or deposit them in the *EXILE* box in Doane Administration Building.

EDITORIAL

Most of the stories and poems were born of necessity, the ones who wrote them feeling compelled to come up with something to hand into class. There are other, perhaps more desirable approaches, but it can happen that what begins as an assignment somehow turns into something resembling a work of art. Many writers had to force themselves to make a beginning, having discovered that the celebrated brilliant flashes of inspiration apparently happened only to other people. But then as they worked on what was hardly even an idea at the start, shaping it into the stubborn and limited words, the writing began to be quite important to them. You cannot work really hard with anything unless it matters, and by now their creations mattered a good deal to these writers. They began to think that a reading by the professor, and a brief pencil-turn in his grade book weren't enough, weren't worthy of their efforts, that in some vague way things would never again be the same because of what they were doing. Some of them felt this way, and they hoped their manuscripts would be read to the class, and what would be written in the margins became more important to them than whatever grade the piece of writing would receive. Some of them still weren't satisfied, so they turned them in to be considered for publication. Then the few who had written the best poems and stories had to do the rewriting and face again the limitations of the same words. By this time the whole thing was way out of proportion; they were spending much more time and effort than they could afford on what, after all, only counted as one assignment.

All of the writing, then, represents some degree of sacrifice. All of it was done at the expense of doing something else, instead of going out on a date or going to a movie or drinking beer or watching television or sleeping or something. Why the sacrifices were made is not exactly clear, and would be difficult to verbalize if it were. It is what tells a person working late at night the excited lies about his work, how good it is and how it may change the very concept of writing. It is what causes him to lose all sense of perspective, to feel as William Faulkner when he said, "I like to think

of the world I created as being a kind of keystone in the universe; that, small as the keystone is, if it were taken away the universe itself would collapse."

The simplest and perhaps the only honest thing to say is that the ones who did the writing wanted to, whatever their individual reasons for wanting to might have been. That is the only way writing, or painting or anything in art gets done, because somebody wants to do it badly enough to sit down and do it. Professional writers are often criticized for being lazy, because they sit while they work and often will take years to produce a single book. They are not lazy, the good ones, and if they don't write as much as we think they should, it is because of what it sometimes costs them. We are right in speaking of an author's "work"—it is exactly that. And it is not something you do well once and then forget about. It is like getting up in the morning, doing the hard thing day after day, book after book.

Writing, being an art, is at its finest an effort to hold, to arrest life. Living is something that everybody participates in; anyone can stare, for example, at a scene which we call beautiful. However, it quickly fades, something replaces it and it is gone and we are left with blurred memories, nothing else. Beauty by definition is elusive. The writer, in trying to capture the scene into words, is claiming it as his. And if he writes well enough, if he works hard enough, he may feel a part ownership in what the rest of us could only marvel at. His hold on it is never complete, never very firm—for nobody writes that well, but nonetheless he can come close, and he leads the rest of us by the hand.

There is no end of things to be written about, and that is what this editorial really wants to say. No one who is awake can live for five minutes without discovering something worth holding for examination, worth capturing within the printed page. The stories and poems that follow deal with a number of different subjects: a little boy's innocence, a girl's discovery, a society's values. But there ought to be an even great variety here. Somebody ought to have written a play, or something humorous. Young men and women should be seeing things freshly, and they should be doing writing that sings of this. These people ought to be trying new things, and this means perhaps making fools of themselves. (Be a fool often, if that is what they will call it, or the chances are that you will be nothing.) They ought to be aware of their countless daily emotions, the stream of sensations reaching them, and they should feel a need

to in some way order and so master them. Writing is a way. A million books are waiting to be written, for the human experience has only begun to be understood, much less recorded. The editors of this magazine should be seeing more writing. We should have received so much good material that we would have been forced to make an issue twice this size.

Anyone writing about writing is in a sense wasting his time, for in the end the stories and poems still have to stand for themselves. It is never the ones who talk about a thing, for instance about a lack of originality, of freshness in a culture—it is not they who matter. For afterward it is learned that a few quiet ones were at work proving them wrong. Read, then, what some sensitive people have discovered and felt to be worth preserving.—D.T.

In this issue the editors of EXILE are proud to publish "The Other Side of Light" by William Bennett. This story has been awarded the semi-annual EXILE-Denison Bookstore Creative Writing Prize

Not A Care in the World

BY LAURETTA MULLIKIN

It was long after the conventional cocktail hour, but the couple in the booth nearest the piano were still drinking daiquiris. The girl had long, dark hair which seemed a perfect frame for her young, doll-like face. Her eyes were large and serious as she looked at the boy across the table. He had an athlete's build and a juvenile pink-and-whiteness; but, despite his blond crew-cut and youthful appearance, his expression indicated a depth and maturity which seemed beyond his years. They sat in an atmosphere of intensity. Their heads were close together, and though their conversation was too low to be overheard, it was evident that they were engrossed in each other and oblivious to anyone else.

"Funny," she said, "I've been dreading this for over a year, and now that it's happened I can't believe it. Let's have another drink; I can't have a crying jag here."

"I've always said, 'They don't take guys like me out of school . . . it can't happen to me,' and it never has—until now. I go for my physical Wednesday. We've put off getting married too long, and now it's too late."

"Why can't we? Why do we have to wait for the right time when there isn't any right time? I know I said I wouldn't want to, but suppose . . . I mean . . ."

"Yeah, I know," he replied gravely, "but I couldn't do that to you; no church wedding and all that. That's what every woman wants; you wouldn't feel married without it. And I'd be leaving you in such a short time. I might be away for God knows how long; might never come back."

"Oh, please let's not think about that now! I couldn't stand that whether we were married or not. Why can't we have what we can while there's still time?"

"Look, if we did get married now I don't have a damn thing. You know that. All I have is a few hundred from cashed-in war bonds. What would you do after I'm gone?"

"I don't know. I wish you weren't so rational about some things."

"But I'm thinking only of you," he said, giving her hand a squeeze. "For my part, I'd marry you this minute."

The waiter brought two new drinks and took away their empty glasses. He eyed the girl speculatively, wondering whether he should ask her age; she certainly didn't look twenty-one. But something about her expression and the atmosphere which surrounded them prevented his intrusion. He dumped the littered ash-tray onto his tray, polished it with a damp cloth, and walked back to the bar, where he exchanged disinterested small talk with the bartender.

Business was slow tonight; only that young couple in the circular booth and the middle-aged man and woman eating dinner at a table near the bar. The woman was wearing a corsage . . . a bottle of champagne decorated their table. The waiter looked at his watch. Hell, only eight-thirty; five more hours to go—five hours of taking orders and complaints, asking ages, wiping tables and maneuvering precariously balanced trays of glasses through the crowd, which would filter in about ten o'clock. And the worst part of it all—always standing. The boy in the booth signalled for two more. Must be nice to have that kind of money, he thought bitterly, and throw it away on liquor and women.

When the waiter brought their last drinks, the young couple toasted and then sat staring abstractly into their glasses. The girl gripped the stem of her glass tightly as if her whole future were contained in its depths, and suddenly drank the rest of it with a stiff, unbecoming motion. The boy looked at her sharply.

"Look, if you're game, I am. I want to do the best I can for you, but if you're serious . . . Will you marry me tonight?"

"Yes, I will," she replied decisively.

"You know what it's going to mean, and you won't be sorry?"

"No, I won't; I'd be sorry if I didn't."

"I want you to be sure you're doing the right thing."

"I was never so sure of anything else in my life."

As a door swung open admitting several newcomers to the lounge, there was a snatch of a song from a party in the banquet room of the club. ". . . tomorrow may bring sorrow, So tonight let's all be gay . . ." The door shut and the voices stopped.

"Let's go," he said quickly. "Check, please."

The waiter handed him a long column of figures; he hadn't realized there'd been so many. He fumbled in his pocket and produced a sizable wad of bills; the waiter caught sight of tens and twenties. He found the right change and a very modest tip, looked again at the figures which seemed slightly blurred, and restored the rest of the money to his pocket. "Thank you, Sir," said the waiter grudgingly as he picked up their empty glasses.

"We can go right from here," the boy said quietly. "Every cent I own is in my pocket, and we might as well spend all of it. I can't think of a better way than to spend it on you." He looked at her tenderly, giving her arm a squeeze. She smiled back at him confidently.

The waiter looked after them sullenly. "You know," he said to the bartender, "it's them spoiled, rich kind are the stingy ones; wouldn't ya know it?" The bartender pulled down one side of his mouth and nodded wisely in the manner of all bartenders who have seen too much of life to be anything but cynical.

The middle-aged woman at the table smiled benignly at the girl as the young couple passed by them thinking back on her youth. She looked at the boy and then at her husband. What a nice-looking couple, she thought. How wonderful to be young and not have a care in the world.

Youth-Song

BY CHRISTINE CONDIT

sweet umbrella of the maple bloom
that foretells the leaf grow not old and away

you know sun you know wind and rain
I suppose you know more than man suspects

I too know much
I know love I know slight hate
I know desire I know ambition I once knew peace
and I think that my knowledge will last longer
than yours

bitter growing leaf i see you now!
you cannot fool me you are here and with you
comes maturity old age death
sweet umbrella of maple bloom do not leave me
i am so afraid of age of death
of anything that is not Youth



The Other Side of Light

BY WILLIAM BENNETT

Julie put down the book and stood up before the big front window, running her finger over the buff woodwork. She looked disdainfully at the teddy bear on the bed—its head cocked a little sideways, its glass-button eyes staring admonishingly at her.

"OK teddy," she whispered suddenly, "I'll tell you." And she laughed at the funny round face—half black and half yellow.

She leaned over the bear and giggled something in the big floppy ear, butting it comradishly on its yellow shoulder.

"That's right," she said with a musical lilt to her voice, "I'm going to do something really big, something to make everybody wise up—everybody's such a fool, teddy."

But the bear stuck tenaciously to the silly grin; the big eyes seemed to sparkle at the thought of what wondrous thing Julie might do.

"Oh, teddy," her voice changed, "It would be nice to stay here with you for always, it's so easy to be sweet and innocent, to be just what everyone wants, with you." The sound of her own voice frightened her for she was speaking loudly in the empty room.

But it was all wrong, somehow. The pale, placid room bored her as well as comforted her. And she could faintly hear her mother's singing downstairs. She grabbed the little bear.

"How do you do it," she said, "everything's the same to you; you in your two colors."

She laughed and wrote the word "phoney" with her lipstick in big scrawling letters over the all-white dressing table. She took a step back and the unchanging smile from the bear told her that he approved.

She chucked the little bear under the chin and said "goodby" to him, her attitude became intentionally melodramatic: "At least

you'll never care what they say about me, will you?"

She looked at him a little doubtfully, but the old smile of torn stitches and ragged wool reassured her, and she had to laugh as she pulled on her great baggy sweater.

"No excuses to a teddy bear," she murmured.

She had the usual hopeless feeling at the top of the stair. Certainly someone had told her mother something about the party at Hauser's, the scene in the school parking lot, or something. It was always something. But when she got down everything had the appearance of peace and quiet; her mother was simply sitting in the den staring out the window at the retreating fall day.

"Where are you going tonight, dear?" she asked automatically.

"Nowhere in particular," she answered.

She looked at her mother's tired eyes with the tiny pink streaks in the corners. Her mother was dressed very similarly to Julie except that her skirt was tighter. Too, they both had that same emerald-like withdrawn quality that somehow struck people as carriage or poise. Only the whiteness of her mother's eyes and her caked, mas-queish complexion gave any immediate notion as to their ages.

"I really wish you would stay home tonight, Julie," her mother said. "The Dolbeys are coming over, you know, Councilman Dolbey and his wife, and a few other people. I'm sure they would like to see you. I thought it was so sweet the way Martha stayed around with her date when we were over at the Bigalow's the other week. Just like one of the crowd."

"Mother, please . . ."

"Oh, of course they left after a little while."

Julie merely stared at the ceiling, her eyes blinking thoughtfully. Over and over again, she thought, every argument just a rehash of the last.

"But I've somewhere to go."

"Where—to meet Chuck?" she snapped as a lawyer might snap his piece de resistance at a jury. "Oh God help us."

"Why must you believe everything you hear," the words flew back at her mother. "I can't say it again . . . we're just friends. Friends—that's all." The words sputtered into existence and then trailed off into a lie. There was so much that needed to be said, and yet the appearance of her mother's horror gave her only a frantic desire to run, lash out and then run.

"Your father is quite upset with me about this whole thing and..."

"That's right, take it from both sides," Julie mimicked, "you beautiful martyr."

"Julie, why Julie."

"You bastard."

"Julie!" Her mother was frightened.

And here we go again, Julie thought, all over some word that wasn't really any different from any other word except that it was one of the few words that would rescue her for a few moments from her mother's tired voice. But it was typical, another sign, another symbol. Life had become just a conglomeration of plus and minus signs.

"Julie, you'll be sorry Julie. Why must you always destroy things. You know only you can . . . well, keep your father and I together. But you must turn this house into a turmoil or . . . or . . . something."

Julie said nothing; there was never anything to say. She looked momentarily into the empty eyes that leaped around the room fretfully in an uncertain attempt at control. It was the same look that in her childhood had constantly frightened Julie into behaving, with the threat of leaving forever, of walking out the front door, hat and coat in hand, and then returning to the house in condescension to the frightened screams of the child.

As they faced each other now the same consciousness welled up and Julie wanted suddenly to apologize.

"Oh there just isn't room, Mother," she said, interrupting her own thought with words, "not here among this Danish furniture and white coffee tables and rose upholstering and ash wood and . . ." The pitch of her voice rose steadily. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Father would understand, I know he would."

The whole thing was like a mad dream where for all her efforts she could only run in place, never getting anywhere because the whole dream was always against her.

"Oh please, don't just sit there ready to cry. It . . . it depresses me."

The fresh newness of the crinolines gave the faintest notion of her trembling. Her mother, like an old mannequin, was now standing firmly by the rose covered chair. They swayed in the lists like two emasculated knights ready to fight with all the meanness of modern conflict. Her mother's eyes were bright with astonishment.

"Good night, good night mother. No, we can't talk, we can't even look at each other." She turned on her small pointed heels and pinching the bridge of her nose with her fingers she ran out into

the hall.

"Wait Julie . . . wait."

But Julie was gone then, the sharp ring on the richly waxed hardwood in the hall and finally the slam of the front door was all that remained.

There was a great stillness in the fall night and traces of fires still glowed and smoldered in the gutters—a fine smoke rose from them, was caught on one side by a street light, and then faded off into the darkness. She stood for only a minute, her girlish face screwed up into a comical—a tragi-comical—expression, and then pushed on around the side of the house to her old car parked behind her father's and mother's in the driveway. The sparkle of the street light on the cars' new finish winked slyly at her as she climbed into her own. She pulled her skirts clumsily about her in the tiny front seat and backed out of the driveway with a grass-ripping rush, leaving a long ugly rut in the lawn. The shadow of her mother's face was in the front window.

The smell of smoldering leaves even hung to the inside of the car, but she didn't mind so much as it was remote and reminded her sweetly of something dying, something rising up to join the impersonal, elemental night sky.

"Damn you," she yelled automatically at a man driving slowly along the boulevard smoking a pipe. He took the pipe from his lips and started to call something back as her old car swung past him and raced on down the dark street, but realizing that it was only a young girl, he braked his automobile in surprise.

She could observe his empty face in the mirror and it sent her face into a frown, for she hated, and feared too, the disapproving set of his blurred features.

"Why do I keep going against a whole world of faces like that," she whispered into the mirror. But the car and the man only disappeared in the haze giving no answer, as if none had ever been expected.

The night slowly enveloped her as corner after corner fled by, filled with drug stores and gasoline stations and more of that false whiteness which makes a mockery of dark. She repeated some and some were new, as she wound in and out along the periphery of the city. The lights were first thick and bunched. All the corners seemed crowded with high schoolers after the usual football games or old men leaning back in old chairs or young couples waiting for a trolley.

She imagined them staring at her and drove straight through one traffic light to avoid the greasy, inquisitive eyes of a group huddled around an open magazine stand. Other places the lights were thinner and the avenues of homes like her own rushed past half obscured by a considerate night. At first nothing was new, rather everything was old, the difference in the type of streets was practically indiscernable, only perhaps the light became a little dimmer as the corners rolled by.

Soon though the houses were getting closer together and while the lights were still the same distance apart they were from some other decade and were yellow, leaving long stretches unilluminated in the front line of the building. The big neon tubes of the boulevards were gone now and these lights were only single bulbs looking under their round metal shades, like so many Chinese coolies.

It was hours and almost all her gasoline before she decided to go. Even then she wasn't sure she was going until she saw the sign focus out of the single brick wall and string of light that was the horizon of the street. "Beer-Wine" the sign said. The name of the proprietor was missing, only the big letter "S" remained of his name. She recognized it immediately for the fact that it was set off from the other stores and buildings. Too, she could see the bare bulbs strung in the garden in back. The front was calm and peaceful: only one old Negro reclined on the bench in front. He sat there dark, just touched by the light from the red and blue sign, slowly buttoning and unbuttoning his pin-striped vest. He spat in the other direction as she came uncertainly along the sidewalk having left the car in a side street.

"H'lo," he said heavily, "whe's yo' friends."

"Oh, they're probably coming, I was just going to meet some one alone." Her voice sounded far off to her, like she was listening to it just as the old man was—his fuzzy chin and golden grin turned up to her with a great expression, an expression he probably wasn't even aware of, or needed to be aware of.

"You all a funny group." His voice was so thick that she could barely untangle the words from the guttural undertones.

"Yes, I know," she said, and patted him on the arm.

And suddenly the darkness and the far off jangle of cheap music seemed to suck her into the bar through the high oak doors; past the coolness of the middle passage and then another pair of swinging doors; and she was inside. The bar was exceedingly cheap. The floors

were rough and the several breaks in the flooring were uncertainly reinforced with metal, while the tables were merely old kitchen furniture—square and plain. The bar itself was dull and cried out for paint. The stools were nondescript; some covered in green, some in red, and some were not covered at all. Too, some were ripped and seeped stuffing, long globs hanging down from the torn bottoms. The room was warm and sweaty. The dark skins began to exude slowly from the walls and the sounds of low throaty conversations, dark and African, gave to the whole scene an almost indefinable rhythm. The only lights in the room were the two blueish white tubes over the mirror. The warm voices and the clink of bottles made her feel better, although it was still not quite right being alone, lacking the easy humor of her friends.

"Hello Miss," the rich voice called out from behind the bar, the big yellow eyes emitting a light of their own, "how's you be?"

"Is Chuck here?"

"Chuck who?" He went on wiping out a glass with his big soft hands. The pinkish nails caught the underground light. His lips moved very slowly; but then again there was no hurry, none at all.

"You know, Chuck."

"Chuck, nows le'me see is he one of your friends?"

"Chuck Bronson."

"Oh, Chuckie, yes, but . . . uh, but he's a colored boy."

The soft vowels just sort of slipped out over the worn planks of the bar.

"Yes, I know," she said, and she felt silly, almost naked, standing there in her four crinolines and fluffy sweater.

"You's a strange bunch all right. Oh I guess he's in the back dere. You be careful now Miss, I don't want no trouble."

But then he smiled at her big and golden putting the glass down between them, and they both laughed. The old negro's voice rolling and falling like deep, disturbed water.

"Thank you," she said finally, "thank you."

"Why tha's all right, right in back there," he said, the voice rolling again like water.

She turned around suddenly and went on toward the back of the rude store. Passing the dark whispering wall she heard some one singing a hollow rock-and-roll tune under his breath. Men and women's voices hung together in a humid constriction drawing up into one soft vowel that was both despair and happiness; and al-

though she could not see one white face in the crowd, no one stared at her. The bright eyed conversations went right on, and she suddenly had an urge to lean over and touch the healthy bodies on either side of her; to touch the bodies and kiss the shiny faces. She suddenly felt secretive and alone; and the Jonah story of descent into understanding was on the edge of her heated mind. It was almost better without the protection—the well-meant barricades of her friends, who despite their cynicism and ribaldry, still instinctively sheltered her.

The garden in back was almost empty and the tables were strung out over the bare grassless ground while the motley of bulbs collected small entourage of insects. A straw hatted trio was sitting up on a low podium at one end of the room, but they merely looked at their instruments while their dark fingers beat out the rhythm of a tune from the juke box, whose bubbly front gave off the only real light in the strange arena. One couple danced, while another made love by the decrepit fence. She stood leaning slightly forward trying to see what other figures hid behind the vines that blanketed the people at the tables. Again when the juke box stopped the same rich voices—low and semi-musical—crept up her body to her ear.

Then a hand touched her arm and she turned around to see Chuck. His features took on a dark golden tint in the strange discolored light. He was a handsome mulatto and even his tense sobriety couldn't crush the black sparkle of his eyes.

"Hello," he said, "I didn't think you would come."

"No, why not?" she asked foolishly, and was immediately sorry.

"Well, I know the others but then you . . . well . . . things like this just don't happen. This is like something out of a novel. And even then . . ."

He was speaking stiltedly with a formality which was unfamiliar.

"Say, let's sit down," she said.

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"That's all right. Why were you standing up there?"

"Just waiting for you."

"I know, silly," she smiled.

They sat and talked for an hour or more, while the expressionless combo played intermittently. He talked in gasps and bursts; his politeness and care in speaking made her laugh several times, but after his darting looks of anger and dismay she was sorry. She tried to explain to him but gave up before his resolution to be completely cavalier. The band was louder even than the juke box, and in

this their playing was reassuring, as it muffled speech and seemed to isolate the couple in their own dark world behind the vines; related to the world only by the distant murmur of waterous words. After a while they danced and while they were dancing his dark eyes never left her own. They wound round and round to the coarse music; each body slowly finding the other out. Things seemed a long way from St. John's Blvd. His breath was loamy and sweet on her ear. The truth of the matter was somehow amazingly clear, differences were as foreign as the flickering glow of the high apartment windows high above the vines and the fence, the radio tower off across the shallow buildings of the town's basin area.

"Is it only because you're different," she asked.

His animal eyes intimated yes, but he said merely: "Am I so different? Am I really so much different, now?"

She could only answer, "No, no." His intensity had overcome her and the truth was impossible to explain. There was no easy retreat, no rationale.

They danced over and over again, and still said very little. She only watched his wool shirt flop hopelessly behind the rhythm of his quick body. And before she knew it, it had begun. The tiny bulbs and the black strong faces of the band, her own night injected body, his shirt, the glistening gold neck that moved his head slowly back and forth began to reach her sense of reality and pull her inward and upward to the dark secrets that she had been on the verge of for weeks. The trumpet blazed from her eyes to the back of her head and the call wailed in the night over, about, around his soft Negroid voice—polite, mysterious and above all dark.

"Come on, let's go, please," he said when the band was finally packing up their instruments. "There'll be some place that we can go."

"OK, please," she mimicked him happily. "I guess we can always pull the dashboard up about our knees."

It recalled a half forgotten line of poetry to them both, and they laughed, as the barest trace of dawn filtered into the sky over the apartments in the distance. It gave a hint of lightness to his hand resting on her shoulder.

But as they rushed out of the silent bar into the battered streets of dark town and headed toward her car, they passed several young white men waiting on the corner for the next bus—the last relay in their cross town journey to a drawing board or draperies counter.

Those modern Ulysses in their white collars and grey suits seemed like so many zoo-fed penguins loose in a fog bound morning. She looked into their astonished, white-repressed faces and suddenly—it was quite a new feeling—had to laugh.

One of the men started to speak, but she cut him off.

"Man," she said, and she really hated the hip talk but it was a good touch, "don't sweat it; don't sweat it, man."

The silence as they swept by was monumental.

And suddenly a word came into her mind. "Prism," she whispered, and liking its sound she pulled his face down to hers and said it round and circlish into his ear. "You know," she said, "that's what the world is, a prism. We're just broken like so many silly colors into little camps of self-consciousness. Christ, Chuck, we're just different sides of the same light." She said it short and hurriedly as if she were afraid she would forget it.

He turned and pressed her to his strong thinness and for the moment the chalk-line faces of the forlorn group on the corner were erased by a rush of mist and wonder.

The Tide Sweeps Sand

BY KIP SCHREIER

The tide sweeps sand
in soft toe-tickling ripples
clear and cold
until the evening sea
reclaims its own.
The silken seaweeds cling
to naked ankles
with a shivering caress
then slip and slither
back
into the ocean world
and leave thin squiggle-tracings on the shore.

1865

BY DENNIS TRUDELL

The sound of footfalls late at night—
 Passing late in the summer night,
 Was strange no longer to the hills—
 Not even the backroads of the hills,
 Not that particular summer.

And one there was who heard them all—
 She lay and waited, hearing all,
 At first the hoof-sounds passing—
 Now the hollow foot-sounds passing,
 Now were the tired ones.

Sometimes the footfalls slower came—
 Shuffling as they slowly came,
 Then she recalled the other sounds—
 They had been the young, the eager sounds,
 And going the other way.

Metaphysics

BY JOSEPH ARNOLD

Kilroy was here!
 Oh he was, was he?
 Oh yes, we can say he was indeed here.
 He was where?
 Here, of course.
 Well, where is here?
 Aw go to hell!
 Where?
 Etc.

Petit Aquarium

BY ANDRE WINANDY

J'ai un tout petit aquarium chez moi
 Un aquarium avec des poissons
 Ce matin il y avait une chose étrange
 Mes poissons chantaient
 Ils chantaient
 Et l'eau chant gai et mélodieux
 Faisait trembler les eaux
 Je me suis arrêté un instant
 Et j'ai écouté
 Alors
 Alors quelque chose de doux
 Quelque chose de merveilleux m'est arrivé
 J'ai pleuré
 Et dans le soleil qui rêvait
 Mes poissons chantaient . . .

One Summer Morning

BY MARILYN RUFF

It was one of those beautiful early mornings in Northern Michigan that one seems to be able to find only on a vacation. The small lake, encompassed by leaning verdure, was only a pinpoint on any map; only a dot labeled Clearwater about 50 miles north of Traverse City. But to the vacationing families, it was a luxurious little pinpoint, a small paradise for the lazy summer months. Many of these summer people owned their own cottages and some had taken the trouble to winterize them and now lived in Clearwater for the entire year, surviving the snow storms and enjoying the beauty of the lake during the winter too. The Andrews were such people, for they had lived here for sixteen years, ever since the children had grown up and left home and Mr. Andrews had retired. His wife stood on the porch of the house now, with her dressing robe drawn tightly around her ample figure, for it was cool and damp this early in the morning. She hardly ever got up so soon, for her husband slept late and she had no need to, but today she had been awakened by the sun streaming across her wrinkled eyes through the blind she had forgotten to draw the night before. And now she stood, shivering, on the shaded, screened-in porch and watched the small boats, occupied by hopeful fishermen, drift around the lake.

A little boy, with the sun shining brightly through his blond hair, attracted her attention by skipping along the dock which extended almost 100 feet out into the calm lake. His small feet, clad in dirty, torn, navy-blue sneakers, hit each board with a resounding thud, so that small sparkling ripples circled out from the supporting posts.

A smile crossed Mrs. Andrews' pale, round face when she noticed the boy cavorting along the pier which belonged to the house next door. He reminded her of her own son, Gordon, when he had been young. When she was reminiscing like this, an unguarded look

occupied her sometimes sarcastic eyes, and for a glimpse of it, any observer would generously have disregarded the small, rubber curlers into which her greyish-brown hair was twisted, the crumpled robe she wore, and the bland look of her moon-shaped face when her features weren't defined with cosmetics.

She watched with closer attention as the child's footsteps ceased and he stopped at the end of the dock. He raised his arm to shade his eyes and peered out over the lake at the boats. In a second, his arm came down and with both hands joined together, megaphone-style, he placed them to his mouth and yelled across the water, "Dad! Da-ad! DADDY!" The heads of most of the occupants of the boats turned toward him, but there was no answer. Mrs. Andrews grimaced to herself, thinking of her sleeping husband, but she laughed inwardly at the rage she imagined the fishers to have for this bellowing little boy who had shattered their calm and perhaps their luck. The boy was gesturing now and waving wildly. A small, limp, grey object was clutched in his hand. When he noticed an uncomfortable, feeble little motion in return from his father, he called again, but still no verbal answer. However, from the disapproving shakes of his father's head he could tell that he was supposed to be quiet. Slowly he turned around and with his head lowered, he started to return to the house, scuffing his toes across the boards, so that it was easy to see how his shoes came to be so torn and dirty. He was wearing a brightly clean tee shirt, however, its red and yellow stripes blazing across his narrow chest. And his pair of khaki pants, cut off at bermuda length, were clean and pressed in a sharp crease above skinny, well tanned calves. Even his short, blond crew-cut had just been brushed up in front, for tell-tale drops of water still remained glistening, on his forehead. It was obvious that he had dressed himself and left without the regular inspection by his mother. His shirt was untidily tucked in and the front of his shorts wasn't zipped clear up. Nevertheless, he did look quite presentable, considering the fact that his eight year old countenance was usually far from clean.

At this moment he halted his slow pace along the dock and scrutinized the greyish object he had so recently wanted to show his father. It was probably some type of small animal, Mrs. Andrews imagined, from her knowledge of the interests of small boys. He held it in one cupped hand and poked at it with the index finger of the other. The pout on his mouth necessarily passed when his freckled

nose wrinkled up and he dropped the object to the dock, wiping his hands distastefully on his shorts along either side of his snake thin hips. Curiosity prevailed and soon he squatted in that impossible child's position: head down between knees, shoulders hunched, and seat nearly touching the ground, probing the object gingerly with his forefinger.

At this point, Mrs. Andrews drew a deep breath of the rapidly warming morning air and turned to go inside the shady, cool house and begin the day with her usual cups of coffee. Before she had completely turned around, though, she felt a soft pressure against the backs of her legs. Startled, she turned to see Fritz looking up into her face with his tail anxiously wagging a signal to be let out. "Why, Fritz, good morning," she said pleasantly, almost as if she had been talking to a person. "Jimmy's beat you out this morning," she went on as she reached up and, unlocking the screen door, pushed it open an inch or so by leaning over the blackish-brown back of the big German Shepherd. The weight of the door was taken out of her hand as he forced it wide with his body and ran across the lawn, oblivious as a child to that inevitable slam which would result. She checked the slamming of the door with extended fingertips and again reached up and locked it mechanically, turning immediately now to the indescribable temptation of the coffee which beckoned her.

The dog, plowing through the deep grass, luxurious with dew, wagged his tail frantically and a soft whine, beginning in his throat, issued joyfully when he neared the dock on which the boy squatted. Soon, his nails clicked on the wooden boards and his heavy, but graceful body made the whole dock vibrate with each step. The little boy saw him coming out of the corner of his eye, but pretended still to be studiously intent upon his examination. The dog approached and unceremoniously stuck his inquisitive, wet nose over the boy's leg to study the creature on the dock too. This upset the delicate balance of the boy's position and he sprawled backwards on his seat, helpless against the dog's rough tongue which droolingly caressed his face. As the boy clambered to his feet, Fritz was pushed rudely away and sternly admonished by a whack on the back before he attained the child's good graces again. Then the boy took the dog's head between his hands, aimed his nose to within one inch of the grey object, and hissed the sharp command, "Sic 'em, Fritz!" Fritz obediently picked the object up in his mouth and the two walked off the dock, the boy's hand resting possessively on the dark,

almost bristly back of the dog.

With the official beginning of morning came the sound of a whirring boat engine and its preliminary put-put's as it took its first turn around the lake. From then on, activity flowed, warmed by the ever increasing power of the rising sun. The boy and the dog were behind the house, near a crude little unpainted building called a tool house, with their heads together in silence. Before them was a small mound marked by an amateurish cross. It was at this that the boy stared and the dog patiently gazed until a suitable period of time has elapsed. Then the boy rose, wiped his grimy hands on his quickly blackening shorts and responded to the wagging of the dog's tail by racing with him across the grass to the back door of the house.

The smells and noises from within announced that it was breakfast time. He knew his mother wouldn't want Fritz inside, so he gently told the dog to wait for him. With questioning eyes, the dog yielded to the rough treatment of having his stiff front legs pulled out from under him and his rear end pushed crudely down. He adjusted his reclining position as the boy ran inside. Here the day was completely changed and the child's expression changed too, to suit the cool, dark interior. His walk slowed as he heard his mother call to him from the kitchen, and as he approached, he replaced his eager look with one of wonderment to indicate that this was the first he had heard about the breakfast which was now drawing to a close without him. He clambered up onto his chair, but instead of being greeted by the expected reproofs for being late, he received merely a distracted nod from his mother. She was intent on his father's description of the morning's catch and was already planning to serve the fish to tonight's company.

Remembering the early morning brought a glow of delight to the boy's eyes. His father was finally in a position to have related to him those important things which he had unsuccessfully attempted to communicate from the dock. "Daddy, guess what I found this morning? A dead mouse floating in the water! And I could see his eyes, 'cause they were open, but he was so stiff I couldn't even bend his legs very well. Fritz and I buried him."

The entire family turned to the bright-eyed little boy with dismay in their own eyes. But the father was the first to speak, and in an annoyed tone he sharply said, "Just a minute, Jimmy, it's not polite to interrupt like that. Your mother and I are trying to figure

something out. Now, how many did you say will be coming, dear?" His parents went on with their discussion, but noting this remonstrance, his sister, who had writhed at the description of the dead mouse, giggled behind her hand and mockingly poked him under the table. He started in his chair and the convulsiveness of the movement sloshed milk over the side of the glass which slipped from his grasp and crashed to the floor. Sensing his danger, like a small animal, he leapt up from the family circle and dashed to the door, still clutching a piece of toast in his hand and chewing furiously on the Shredded Wheat in his mouth. Even after the door had slammed, he could hear his mother's furious lamenting about his clumsiness. He knew the utter defeat she felt, but didn't for a moment recognize the kinship in their feelings.

Again his pout returned and he scuffed along, this time in the grass, with Fritz morosely walking unrecognized at his side. The sun was even higher now and the day was warm enough already for him to shed his uncomfortable, milk-wet shirt. He left it lying in the grass to be bleached dry by the hot rays which seemed to warm his own irritability and encourage and nourish the wretchedness inside him, promising it an equal rising with the sun.

After he had fled from the kitchen, his mother cleaned up the pools of milk from the table, the chair and the floor, thinking, and accurately, to herself that this was going to be a hectic day. Already the humidity had distributed little drops of perspiration across her upper lip and forehead and out loud she said to no one in particular, "It's going to be a real scorcher." Her daughter, who was anxiously helping her, trying to recompense for her so-far unnoticed part in the accident, nodded agreement.

The rest of that morning, everyone went about their doings as unobtrusively as possible, for the sun, which had dawned so brightly, had waylaid any pleasant hopes and disclosed its disagreeable nature early, leaving the members of the family happy only as long as they were able to keep out of each other's way. The sultry heat continued to increase, for the day had not yet reached its height, and all understood the danger of breaking unexpectedly into another's unguarded solitude—all except the small boy.

In late morning, his mother sat on the porch reading yesterday's paper. Mrs. Andrews, who had come to chat a few minutes earlier, had understood the common feeling in that house this morning, and after a few remarks about the unquestionable beauty of the lake

under the torpid sun, she too lapsed into silence and into the rhythm of the knitting she was doing. A comment or two sufficed to keep the bond of understanding strong between the two women as they sat enduring the heat.

Now, nearly at noon, the dread promise of suffocation having almost been reached, the boy, who had forgotten his previous grudge against his mother, stole up behind her and ran his fingers along her shoulder and down her arm, making her start from her listless reverie. "What can I do, Ma?" he whined and his hand trailed maddeningly up and down her already hot and itchy arm. "There isn't anything to do here." With annoyance, she brushed away his complaining hand and told him to go out and play with Fritz. He lagged dejectedly into the house, his childish mind not comprehending that the heat which affected him also produced annoyance in his mother. Fritz plodded resignedly behind him, nails clicking on the linoleum floor. With disgust, his mother watched the huge animal follow him into the house, then amended her thoughts quickly when Mrs. Andrews mentioned wistfully the memories recalled to her by the sight of Jimmy and Fritz together.

The thought slipped over her, and without bothering to reflect upon all the implied sentiment of her neighbor's words, she let herself become enveloped by the fearful lethargy which had, before her son's interruption, surrounded her. A few minutes later, when she heard the door slam, she was aware only of the plaid blur of a bathing suit as Jimmy's slight form emerged from the house. She and Mrs. Andrews both vaguely noted with surprise the new enthusiasm apparent in him as he sped toward the lake, the faithful dog always following.

He really was more excited now, for even though there were none of the conventional, habitual things to do, he had recalled some clams which he had seen gleaming through the clear water on the bottom of the lake. They would make good decorations for the grave he had so carefully dug and in which he had seemed to bury his most pleasant dreams of the day ahead. When he reached the lake, after passing the screen of tall pine trees which partially hid it from the house, he stepped gingerly out onto the rocks that ran along the shore and then into the shockingly cold water. Wading around in ankle deep water, he urged Fritz who stood on the dock to come in. When the dog didn't respond, he became absorbed with the stones and small shells that glittered under the bright surface. He

walked further out into the lake, but always near the dock, keeping his eyes focused on the bottom. The dog followed his progress first with his eyes, then walked along the dock too, satisfying the boy's insistences to come in by paying the minutest attention to his every motion. By now, though, the sun was at its fiercest height and caused the dog's tongue to hang out and his dark coat to be almost burning to the touch.

The boy advanced ever further into the shallow lake, beyond the end of the dock. When the dog had followed him to the extreme end, he stood and seemingly strained to watch him as he ducked under the water every now and then to retrieve a shiny shell. Fritz's ears were pricked forward and the hair on his back was standing on end as he tensely watched the boy abandon his shell search. In the water that by now came almost to his chin, he gave up his careful, methodical explorations. With childish impulsiveness he suddenly started diving and splashing around, waving his arms and laughing as the drops of water sprayed above his head and glimmered in the noonday sun, to which he was now impervious.

A low growl had started in the dog's throat as he stood on the blistering hot boards and an element of fear seemed to engulf him as he watched the boy flounder playfully. Soon it seemed he could either control himself no longer, or the sun had scorched the boards to such an extent that he could no longer endure their fire beneath his tender feet, for he flung himself into the water and began to swim desperately toward the splashing boy. His matted hair and dark body appeared suddenly, startlingly, to Jimmy through curtains of water. Then the pleased young voice victoriously shouted, "Fritz!" But the hairy mass was now upon him and not playfully; it was blinding him, forcing him under the water. Above him, the bubbles appeared as clear, bright marbles floating along the surface, which one had to work tremendously hard to attain. When he finally did gain the surface, choking, he tried to free himself from the heavy animal, but felt a groping claw being dragged down his back with as much panic at he expressed with his own failing arms. The terror at this moment reached into his throat which loyalty and disbelief had until now kept closed and he opened his mouth and screamed and shouted in wild alarm.

To the women on the porch, in their mid-day torpor, the shouts seemed insignificant at first. But that faint uneasiness which had been rising all morning with the sun and had until now manifested

itself in trivial irritations, came to a head with the sense of this final misadventure of the morning. They were both on their feet now, and out and across the lawn. Now their feet trampled down the dock, shaking it violently and making a small, thunderous roar.

His mother was the first to reach the end where so recently the dog had been undecidedly perched. Fully dressed, but thinking only of Jimmy under the weight of the huge dog, she flung her arms forward spasmodically, half running, half swimming toward the struggling pair. With no more concern for the dog who had seemed so vicious, than a slight shove to get him out of the way, she leaned down in the water and picked up the limp body of her son. His hair was now too wet for the sun to shine through. Holding him high in her arms, she stumbled back to the dock where the elder woman was sobbing and wringing her hands. Oblivious to all else, his mother laid him gently down on a forgotten towel to protect his back from the sun's heat, hidden maliciously in the wooden planks. She leaned over him desolately and shivered in her wet clothes in spite of the heat. Her voice babbled continuously, frenziedly, and cold fear usurped the place of the previous hot anger.

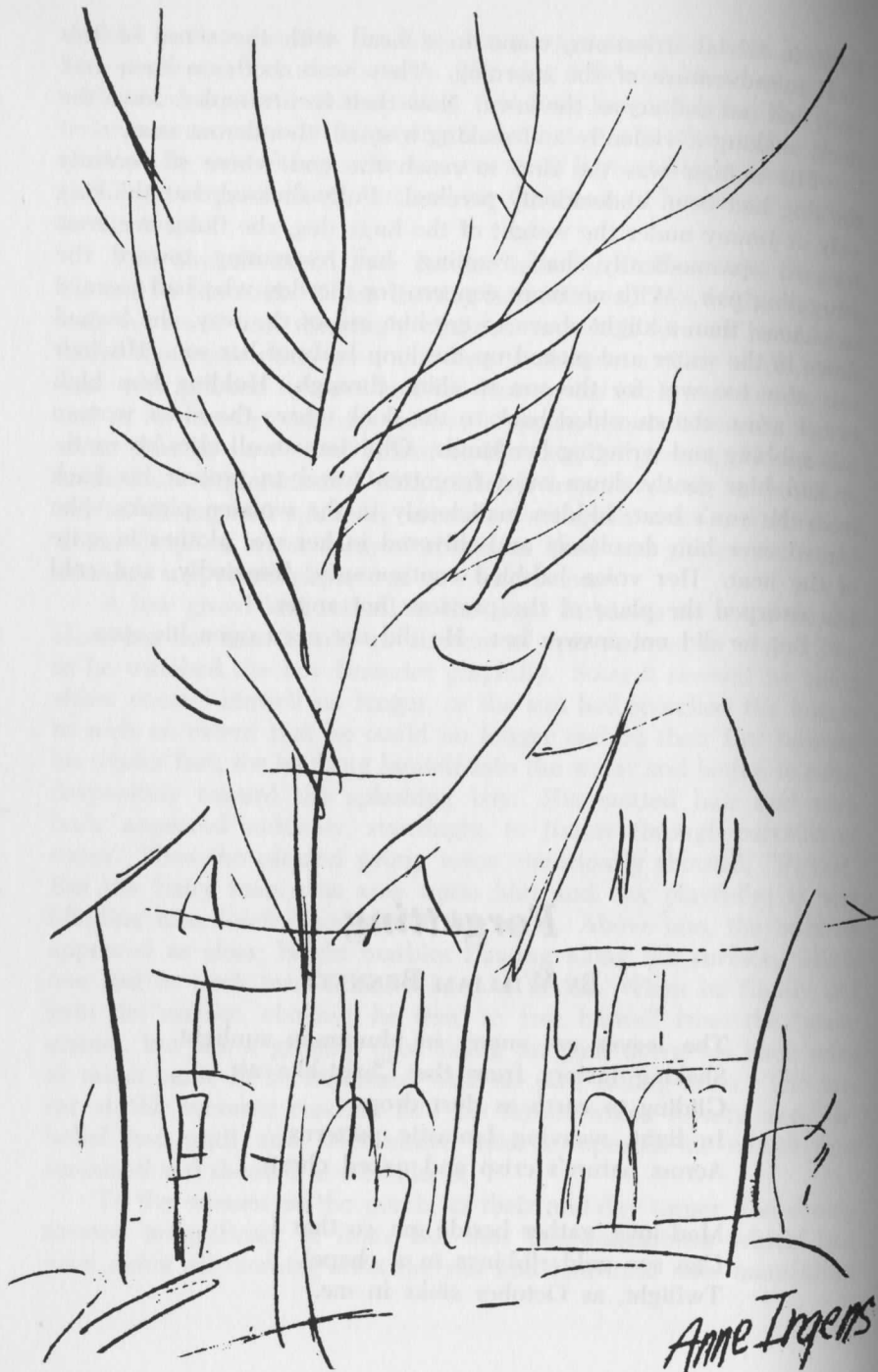
But he did not answer her. He did not even open his eyes.

Forgetting

BY WILLIAM BENNETT

The leaves are sunny in aluminum sunlight,
Shaking history from the Christ-like air,
Gliding to earth as dust drops
In light, weaving fantastic patterns
Across nature's crisp and naked chest;

Mad love, gather beside me, so that I
Can see gold ribbings in a chapel
Twilight, as October sinks in me.



November Morning

BY JOSEPH ARNOLD

Then cry the cock of the morning winds
and steal the light from stars afire
Blunt their burning blue-white wink
and spill gray dawn from the eastern rim

Turn the grinding engines over
and open doors to the misty morning
The scolding hags will rattle cans
and fog their way on dew drenched streets

Yes, raise the dust of yesterday's work
and plan the pattern of this dingy day

Curse and fumble—struggle, fall
Winter is the end of all

Technicolor Days

BY DENNIS TRUDELL

Age ten, in close boy-dream communion with destiny,
Knew for sure I'd be different when I grew up—
(no everyday nine-to-five indoors and dull,
Different and somehow great, with:
Barefeet and summer vacation and adventure and explore,
Raft on the river, Huck Finn around the bend and beyond,
upstream sky high and far,
Along the sidewalk, through the backyards, over fences,
and in the classroom—"deportment unsatisfactory."
Fast, running and calling, laughing and running,
to the ballfield Saturday mornings,
Somewhere to go, running and shouting and two on a bike,
nine on a side.
Popsicle sunshine and hurryup and running,
and all the time boy-dream knowing—
So easy adventure and greatness, just take it;
and why can't grownups see how easy, I must be special.
And golly, hurryup you slowpokes, gonna be famous,
Huck Finn and write a book.
And oh, boy, so much, so much . . .
And played the boy-games and wore out bluejeans,
and thought I'd be different when I grew up.

Kiddie Cocktails

BY JULIA SANTUCCI

"Miss, oh Miss—where's the hostess, where is Edna?" The waitress rearranged her nylon apron and stepped from the silverware stand, only to dodge back, as the large woman spread her fleshy arms and swooped down the expanse of gray and white tiles. As she pushed between the round yellow tables, the hind foot of her silver mink trailed lightly behind her, knocking a napkin over here, and pulling a fork askew there. Approaching the hostess with a feline smoothness, she took an extra supply of air into her cheeks, and pounced. "EDNA!"

Edna, with a dozen menus under her arm, turned from checking through the paper-bound engagement book.

"Oh yes, Miz' Levy—the arrangements for your party are all right—did you notice the lovely spot we gave you, and don't the flowers look nice? The girls are polishing the glasses now, gave you some lovely girls, real nice—sure to be a fine party—my, you look good tonight—new hairdo?" Edna had placed her arm on the woman's shoulder and the furs were not rising and falling so fast anymore. It was professional etiquette not to interrupt, though such control defied most laws of human endurance. But suddenly the mink leaped into the air, as Mrs. Levy broke Edna's grip.

"Edna, what a stupid thing to do. Why did you put my table next to Sadie's? I will not allow it! Please have it removed at once—over there, down here, somewhere! Whose table is this?" She flung her bracelets toward the door. "Why can't I be here? Edna, you know Sadie makes my parties look cheap." She was pouting now. "And I just won't take it anymore. Besides, I'm very disappointed in my flowers. You'd think, for the money . . . oh, well, you can't get anything done right these days."

Edna murmured caressingly during the whole speech. "Yes,

Miz' Levy, certainly Miz' Levy, I understand, ma'am—we'll see what we can do. Now you just go keep Mr. Levy company—I'll take care of everything."

The last bit of orange sun was coming over the golf course through the glass of the dining-room walls. A piece of crystal on the table captured a rainbow of the deepest shades which played from rim to rim. The mink's toenail shattered the glass as Mrs. Levy swung in preparation for a haughty exit. The sun lay in tiny pieces all over the linen cloth.

"Oops," said Mrs. Levy, looking down. "So sorry, Edna." And she swept off towards the bar. "Oh, I forgot." She turned back. "Ed is bringing his son to show off, so have a high chair fixed."

Edna slammed the menus on the table.

"Now, for the luvvypete, wouldn't you think she'd show a little appreciation." Glancing down at the broken glass, she yelled in a high trilled voice, "Oh, Tony, Tony deah. Come ovah and clean this up like a good boy."

Tony, in his faded blue working suit, came silently from a doorway. He was nearing his sixty-fifth birthday, but he swore he'd never retire. His moustache rose thickly from his upper lip, and his pinkish face was always stamped with a smile of greeting, even when he was saying good-bye.

"Edna?" His voice rose an octave in the one word. "Are you wanting old Tony? Ees a light burning out? Here, I got you a brand new one." He unsheathed a large bulb from its cardboard cover. "Ja, ja, here we are—now tell me, where ees thees light, plees?"

"No, no Tony. All the lights are fine. You just fixed them again this morning. No Tony, just collect this broken glass."

"Ah, yes, yes, such a shame." The big eyes became dark with tragedy, as he gently laid the light bulb on the chair. His hands spread out above the table in a gesture of comprehension. "I will clean, Edna. Such careless people."

Edna retrieved her menus and clicked up to the opposite corner of the room. Her hair, plastered with wave set, stayed stiff in spite of her gait.

"Miz' Levy's table's got to be moved. Sorry. How about down there?"

A couple of bus boys dragged the massive furniture away, and several waitresses pulled chairs in the same direction.

"Now, let's see about Sadie. Musha, deah, come heah." Marcia,

hardly the "Miss" that Mrs. Levy had taken her for, lumbered over to Edna. A hefty woman of some 180 pounds, she walked like a wound-up penguin. Now she took a Napoleon-like stance as her deep voice rose to satisfy the hostess.

"Yes, Edna," she said in a humble tone that was dramatically at odds with her position.

"Is everything all right for the pahty, now—silver checked, glasses polished, chairs straight, napkins folded? Sadie will be right in. Now, look here." Edna grabbed at a piece of felt that protruded from under the table cloth. "What's this dangling for, Mr. Baxon's diaper? Musha, now fix it up. Anna, come help her." The appointed waitress came magnetically. "Oh, gracious, here comes Sadie. For heaven's sake, hurry!"

Tony touched Edna's arm, pointing to the light directly above Sadie's table. "Shall I change, huh?" He noted her look of impatience, and his smile reached another half inch toward his right ear. "Ja, ja, I know is not burned yet, but maybe do that before party's over. Everything nice for party, eh?" He patted the yellow tablecloth tenderly.

"No, Tony. The light's all right. Go." With her left hand she pushed him back, and with her right she almost curtsied before Sadie. Marcia's foot was in the way, and Edna tripped instead. She caught her balance against the table and laughed. But her eyes cursed clumsy Marcia, as she sang:

"Sadie, good evening. Isn't it a perfect Saturday night? Now we have everything all fixed up for you. Miz' Levy will be down at the other end of the room—do hope you don't mind. She won't bother you. Musha will be your waitress. Musha, come take Sadie's bags. Aren't the flowers lovely, my deah? Yes, they go so well with the yellow cloth."

Sadie handed her armful of packages to Marcia, and placed her fingers on Edna's shoulders.

"Edna, darling, it's just lovely. The flowers are a little high, though, dear, don't you think. And why did he give me pink candles? You do have some more, don't you? Thank God. Mahsha, darling, fix the chocolates like a good girl, three plates should be enough for only ten people."

Sadie had rearranged the dining room. Edna was clicking to the store room for candles, Marcia was sampling a chocolate, and Sadie herself was reaching thin bare arms into a grass-woven shopping bag.

Her white chiffon dress hid her slimness, and swung from gather to gather, while her casual hairdo told a simple tale of current taste. If one did not look critically, the face was young. But Sadie's eyes were beginning to sink backwards, pulling the inelastic skin with them, and leaving sharp cheekbones to prove their years. As she moved from one side of the table to the other, she held her elbows bent in preparation for some imaginative activity—for Sadie never really touched things.

She glanced at the placecards in her hand. Small, white-sheen rectangles, they had her initials embossed in silver—S.I.B. The figures were almost intertwined to obscurity, but the "S" separated itself sufficiently to give a leading clue to the other figures. Beneath this grand seal, rather incongruously, were names of the guests in tiny blue ink script. This was Sadie's own touch.

Now she gracefully jerked herself from place to place, distributing these tiny symbols of herself appropriately, informing each guest of his position in relation to her. Man, woman, man, woman, man, woman—impeccably correct, impeccably memorized. Mrs. Crown must not sit next to Dirk Walters. They always argued about his nephew's school, which was Princeton. Marian Lipsey must not be anywhere Duke Sacter, for she always challenged his engagement to the Calhoun child. So Sadie went, sifting old quarrels, establishing new ones, and pretending oblivion to both.

"Mahsha, dahling, come here sweet. There's a water spot on that fork, and we wouldn't want that, would we? Now, we have the candy, and the nuts—oh yes, sweetheart, do be a dahling and bring me some cigarettes."

"Yas'm," growled Marcia. "What kind, ma'am? Everything?"

"Three packs of filters, and three of the regular, deah. But none of those fancy French things. They are vile."

Marcia lumbered off on her errand, twirling her side-towel around her left wrist. Sadie beat out the rhythm to a tune on her lips. The enamel nails of her fingers looked like a skillful butcher had dropped the meat cleaver across the ends of those long, knuckled fingers. Indeed, Sadie's face bore some hint of such a tragedy. At least with her mouth covered thus.

"Aren't these better, deah?" Edna rushed up with a pair of bilious yellow candles, dropped her menus, and twisted the new decorations into their silver sockets.

But Sadie was rushing to the door, to greet a grey-suited figure.

The eyes of everyone in the room turned. Only Tony remained gazing at the chandelier.

"T.J., T.J. Please come dahling. The table is over here, flowers terrible, so disappointed, oh sweetheart, please come help itty bitty me." Her whining soprano echoed as if the large room were empty. No one moved, until the silence became so obvious that all strove to remedy it, and spontaneously resumed their preparation with an ungodly clatter.

T.J. was Sadie's husband. His name was Thaddeus Jensen Baxon, and Sadie had alienated his mother by desecrating the regal tone. But blazoned out before the largest law establishment in the city was the ultimate victory of motherhood: a sedately lettered sign bearing the weight of Dirkson Walters and Thaddeus Jensen Baxon, Attorneys at Law.

There were two remarkable things about T.J. One was his massive frame, and the other was his knobby nose. In fact, the latter must have been highly desirable to nature, for the rest of his face seemed to be drawn to this blotchy center. His thick mouth obviously was a detriment to facile breathing, for a regular wheeze was most audible. And his eyes, in their eagerness to cuddle up to the spread nostrils, quite outdid each other, and might in some eternity be promised the glory of the Cyclops. T.J. was an established personage, and succeeded with his cases. Sadie succeeded with his money.

Staring down at his fluttering wife, he grunted, and enveloped her arm with his puffy fingers. She stepped to block his path, placed her hands caressingly on his cheeks and gave him a very thorough, very wet kiss.

"Oh, dahling, I do love you so much," she trilled.

T.J. grunted.

"Oh, for God's sake. Give her a mattress to make her happy," muttered Marcia.

"Hmph," breathed Tony, standing by with a vacant stare.

Edna hissed, "Musha, shut up."

"Yas'm," and Marcia stole another chocolate. "Can I see a . . ."
Her full mouth overcame her. "Can I see a menu."

Edna took one off the pile.

"Now be sure you remember we have cottage-fried potatoes."

"Yas'm," said Marcia, forgetting it. She pushed past Tony to the kitchen. Tips would run high tonight.

II

Mrs. Levy's guests, destined to the far end of the dining room, entered from right behind Sadie's table, and lingered to gaze and slap backs. Mrs. Levy, watching the ice around the crabmeat appetizer trickle to form puddles of colored water, cursed the fate which had allowed the two parties to occur simultaneously. Her open mouth carried it off well. Her closed fists did not. In a passion to excel, she ordered two bottles of imported champagne. She was damned if her guests would be underprivileged.

"Isn't it unfortunate about Sadie's flowers," she purred to the man beside her, forgetting the state of her own.

Sadie reigned. At the point where her flower arrangement reached undue height, the circle parted, Dirk Walters and Marian Lipsey being obliged to lean sideways in their chairs.

"Oh, yes, she is such a darling girl. Dresses marvelously. Dating your nephew, Dirk? How interesting. He is a junior at Princeton. Have another drink, Miz Lipsey. Mahcia, Mahcia, deah, another round of drinks." Sadie turned to her company. "The steak is marvelous here—I do recommend it. Hasn't Miz' Levy got a poor shade of red on—and that mink. It is three seasons old, and beginning to look so. Poor woman, her party looks quite unhappy. We'll have to go down to cheer them up later. And whose is that precious itty bitty baby? My, my, what a sweetums." Sadie's voice came low and husky.

"Mahcia dear, get some champagne. The best you have. I see Miz' Levy's got some." She turned to the table. "I want you to have the very best, for you are our friends." She reached up and splashed her pink lips on her husband's cheek. "Right, dahling?" T.J. grunted.

Mrs. Levy shed her mink, which fell to the floor. The baby was patting his mashed potato. The cherry from his last kiddie cocktail was imbedded in the white mush. Mrs. Levy had a successful party after all. The women giggled, the man grinned, and more drinks were in order—also, another round for baby who had assumed the role of mascot.

"Yup, she said that right in front of his face—right in front of his goddam face . . ."

"He teed off like a pro, but, ohgod what a swing."

The noise of Mrs. Levy's guests was annoying Tony. He was circling the room, looking at the ceiling. The baby burped.

"What dat?"

"No one, dearie."

"Dat, Mommie, who dat: Daddy, who dat?"

Tony stopped to pat the gold curls, but resumed his pacing as he felt the sudden silence. Cute kid, he thought.

"Dat man, Mommie, dat man gonna fix 'em?"

"Eat your potato, darling." Baby continued to follow Tony's rounds. Round and round and round and round.

"Man gonna' fix 'em," he murmured.

III

Sadie's table was melting in their wine, and wine mixed with party behavior left a talkative slush. Edna, page-boy erect, wandered past to check the exact amount of conversation against the amount of time the party had been in progress, and the amount of business from the bar. The menus had made red lines on her freckled arm. The tension had made gray lines on her rouged face.

"Musha, empty the ashtrays."

"Yas'm," said Marcia, "but I just did."

"Well, it don't look it."

"Yas'm."

Dirk Walters was doodling on the placecard, outlining the swirling monogram. Marcia jarred his hand as she reached for the black ashtray.

"Look," he snickered to Marian Lipsey. The S.I.B. had been changed to S.O.B. "Ha, ha." The joke passed around the table. Sadie did not laugh.

"Don't you think," she said, pulling the wandering strands together with her emphatic soprano, "don't you think that only people with high I.Q.'s should be mated. I mean, you know, intelligent people with intelligent people. I often thought how lucky our son is to have two such perfectly-matched parents."

It was the general concensus that this should be the case. If only Hitler hadn't been such a failure, his good points might have survived, said T.J. jovially. A real shame. Only Dirk Walters disagreed.

"Mahcia, bring Mr. Walters another martini. His is gone." Sadie pushed the unfortunate placecard into the ashtray, at the same moment lifting her half-burned cigarette from the grooved rim. After inhaling daintily she blew the smoke out in a precise line, and in replacing the cigarette, she touched its fiery tip to the white card. Dirk's joke burned harmlessly to ashes. The candles had been blown

out long ago—their heat had been uncomfortable. Now the only light came from the glass-bound chandelier.

But eyes were turned from the spectacle of flame to one of action. The baby had escaped and was following Tony around in circles, laughing, playing, pulling at his blue cotton trousers.

"Wha chu doin'? You gonna' fix 'em?"

"Ja, ja," said Tony. "You watch. I'm gonna fix 'em. Wait here." Without breaking pace he headed for the door.

"Here, itty bitty diddums. Come to Sadie. What a precious little boy." She clutched him in her lap, ignoring his struggles to descend, glaring at him through steeled eyes. He began to whimper.

"All right, go then. Unfriendly brat, isn't he? Parents do spoil kids nowadays. Our baby was never like that!" She brushed her dress of his bits of mashed potato.

Tony had re-entered the room, trailing a large ladder, and the child rushed to him.

Edna strode from the side of the hall, distrust overcoming her carefully ordered features.

"What are you doing? You are more stupid than I thought."

Tony squinted and pointed a stubby finger to a spot directly above Sadie's centerpiece.

"See that light? Ees going to burn away. I must replace eet. Eet ees my job." He finished triumphantly.

Putting the ladder on the floor, he tiptoed up to Sadie.

"Madame, a light will burn out pleease. I must fix 'em. You will have to be kind and move." He gave her chair a slight tug.

"Well, did you ever," breathed Sadie. She addressed the group. "You'll have to excuse him—he is not . . . well, you know." She flicked her cigarette. "Dirk, can I come and sit next to you?" She giggled. "Everyone else is too drunk. Such a lovely party." Dirk dragged Sadie's chair around next to his. They both sat watching the old man as he spread the aluminum legs of the ladder, secured the catch, and began to climb. The baby stood clinging to the lowest rung, his head hung back to watch the dusty shoes as they moved.

"Up, up," said baby.

"Ja," beamed Tony from above. "Up, up."

From the other table, Mrs. Levy's guests had been looking.

"What is he doing," squealed Mrs. Levy. "Did a light burn out over Sadie's table? How awful!" She smiled. "The baby is enjoying himself anyway." Tony was still climbing, shaking the ladder as

he mounted each crossbar to make sure of its sturdiness.

"Oh, Ed, the baby is trying to climb the ladder." It was Sadie who had noticed it first, but it was Mrs. Levy who spoke. She had been watching Sadie.

T.J. grunted.

"Ed, go get your brat, for God's sake," laughed Mrs. Levy. Daddy Ed caught his hand on the tablecloth as he pushed his chair back, and his steak knife clattered to the floor.

"Goddam," he muttered. "Gimme that goddam kid." He swung off towards the ladder, as his wife's voice flew after him.

"Honey, be careful with teensy weensy." Ed moved faster.

"C'mon buster," Ed growled at the child.

"No, Daddy, no." The child balanced precariously on his stomach over the first rung.

"Aw," said T.J. "Leave him be. He's having his fun, too."

"Listen, whose son is he? Mine, ain't he? Well, mind yer own stinkin' party." Ed slipped on a piece of asparagus.

"Goddam." He grabbed his offspring and tucked the boy under his left arm.

T.J.'s face was getting blotchy, and his nose was the brightest blotch of all.

"Call my party lousy, huh? Well, kid, you just see who's boss."

"Oh, honey, leave him be." Sadie was enjoying herself.

"Yeah?" said T.J. "I'll mind him." He jerked himself out of the chair and that was when it happened.

No one really heard anything. It was the sight of the blue-overalled man stretched out under the toppled ladder and the champagne trickling down over his shoes. The light bulb lay unbroken within his opened hand. The silence was what was terrible. And T.J. standing there rubbing his shoulder.

Sadie began to scream, and Mrs. Levy came running, the two united in their excitement.

"Ed, are you O.K.?" asked Mrs. Levy. She had not seen it happen. She had been untwining her mink from the chair legs.

"Yeah," said Ed, "but it ain't his fault." He pointed at T.J., who was filling a water glass with champagne.

Edna arrived.

"Oh dear, I'm so sorry, Sadie darling. I told Tony to keep away."

"Well, you should have locked him up," screamed Sadie. "Look, he ruined two parties with his assinine behavior. And he's probably

dead, though I do hope not. People take the damndest times to die. That's what I told Mom when Dad died. I was in Paris and had to come home."

"We'll get it all cleaned up," purred Edna. "Does the baby want another kiddie cocktail? Sure, he does." She stroked his curls with a firm hand.

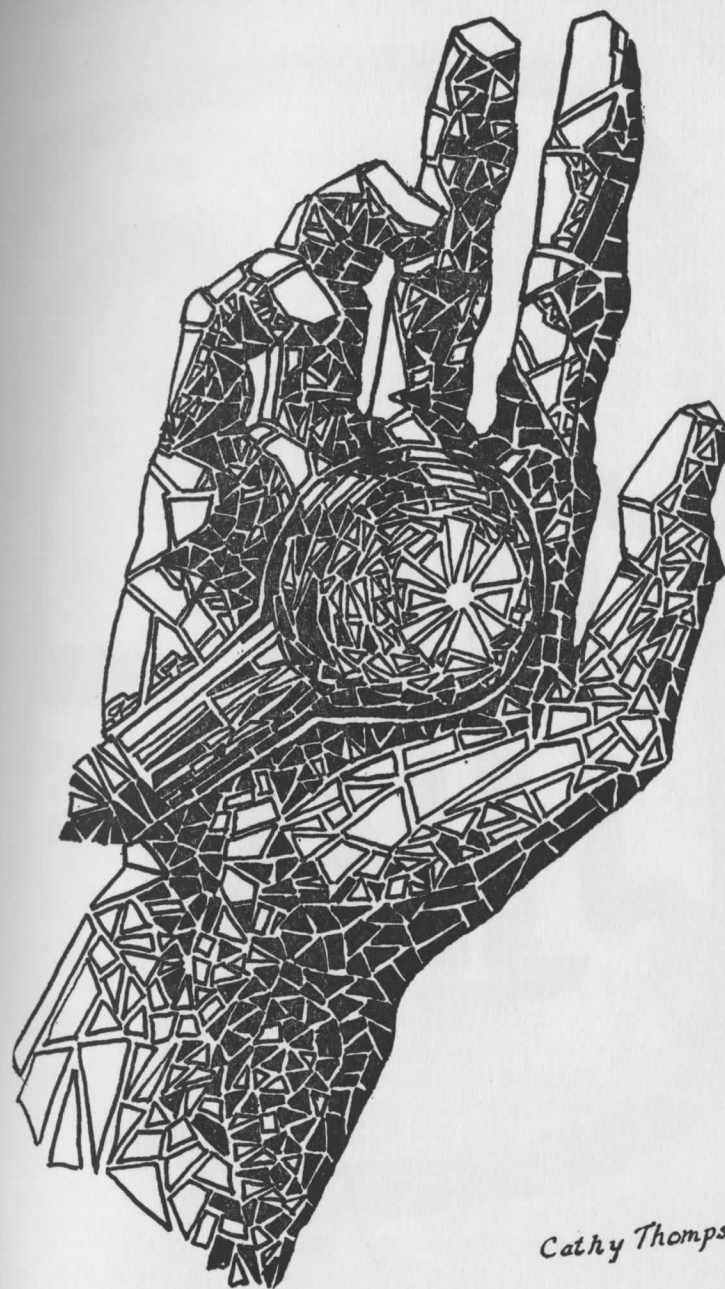
"He fix 'em," said baby, watching the motionless Tony. "He fix 'em."

San Joaquin Valley

BY DENNIS TRUDELL

Across a long land,
At the end of a scheme dreamed in shade
Is my place, is a soft meadow's green
And a sky lifted high, painted blue.
Outdoors there is a morning air,
Caressing the day and wakening a soul
In the boy in the scenes of my dream.

There's a stir in the field
And another inside—things are growing,
Ripening in meadow and me.
It waits over the hills, beyond reaches at sunset,
This green growing place by the sea.
Then dark, and I dream and often I seem
To feel the night-winds urge Go,
Go now. Cross the long land.



Cathy Thompson