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Authors
John Marshall, Cynthia Lanning Hahn, Eloise Haveman, Melissa Simmons, Chris Gjessing, Lisa Minacci, Bob McLaughlin, Betsy Bates, Ann Leopard, Lindy Davies, and Ellen Cox
The live man, out of lands and prisons,
shakes the dry pods,
probes for old wills and friendships, and the big locust-casques
Bend to the tawdry table,
Lift up their spoons to mouths, put forks in cutlets,
And make sound like the sound of voices.

— Ezra Pound
editors: Chris Gjessing and Lindy Davies

prose:
Friend
  John Marshall
Visiting Relatives
  Cynthia Lanning Hahn
The Mud Lane
  Eloise Haveman
The Petrification of a Wild Sweet William Blossom
  Melissa Simmons

art:
Three views of Granville
  Scott Tryon (front cover)
untitled photos by
  Bogart
  Jerry Brown
Landscape
  Scott Tryon
Submissive Defiance
  Bogart
Three things that Remain
  Jerry Brown
back cover
  Lindy Davies

poetry:
A Photographer Documents Her Death
  Chris Gjessing
three Haiku
  Eloise Haveman
Morning
  Melissa Simmons
Granite Travel
  Lisa Minacci
did you year?
  Bob McLaughlin
David
  Betsy Bates
Le Cafe de l'Univers
  Ann Leopard
untitled
  John Marshall
The Last Ramona Poem (fat chance)
  Lindy Davies
Mother Told Me not to Play Next Door
  Ellen Cox
Poems of the Inconsequentials
  Eloise Haveman
Two

Hands clasped together we walk the golden pathway, neither knowing what lies ahead, goals and simple hopes pulling us forward. The path narrows in the distance; blackness lies at path's end. Black for ends, or black for beginnings? The beauty of the trees around us beckons, humming songs of warmth and quiet. We stop, but only for a short while.

Three

I was sitting in my room, staring at the decorations on the walls, remembering the origin of each one. The one I remember best is from you. I tried to write a poem about it, but only came up with two lines. Here they are, anyway:

Rising sun, bursting golden gleaming
breaking across night sky . . . . . .

Four

Mei-tai had scarcely been gone a week, yet Chuan knew she would not return. She had seen the golden vision, just as her grandmother had predicted — and it drew her, demanded her. Its desire was tenfold that of Chuan's love — but its love was not jealous, as Chuan knew. What Chuan did not know was that the vision was golden only to his eyes. He, too, had seen it, but only Mei-tai was able to perceive its truth. In truth it was long and narrow, and, very often, lonely: it was a path of constant compromise. If he had seen
this, he would not have understood why Mei-tai had accepted its demands. He would not have seen it at all.

Five

"I can't understand you sometimes."
"What do you mean?"
"I mean, this thing about possessions and personal space."
"You're being paternalistic again."
"Ad hominem attack — a logical fallacy."
"And condescending too. Look, just shutup for a while, OK?"
"No, I want to talk about it — now."
"We don't have anything to talk about."
"I want you to have this, too."
"But isn't one of your favorites?"
"No — well, I can't get it back, anyway."
"Thanks. I'll remember this place — alot of times here — mostly good ones."
"We won't remember the bad ones."
"What bad ones?"
"Silly."
"Yeah — this was a good place to be in, when I was here."
"Part of it was yours too, you know."

Six

Two things could happen. One, it will be displayed for a lifetime, even if I only look at it once or twice a year. Or, it will be taken down, as the gold fades, and stored in undusted attics.
Shirts on the line,
flopping their arms, embrace
in this April wind.

Watching the receding wave,
swiftly and suddenly I
move back as though on wings.

The thisles
are question marks this morning
facing autumn’s sun.

Should I submit a few Haiku
Verses for Exile?
Eloise Haveman
Visiting Relatives

Cynthia Lanning Hahn

Morning

Melissa Simmons

Shadows yawn.
I inhale
my first breath
of moist coolness.

Veins surge, like
a river of warmed snow
carrying me
to the window's glass.

The glimpse
of a pastel dream
teases me
with feather moods.

My mind sighs
after untangling threads
linking faces, voices and rooms,
dwelling on a reticent knot,
seeking the poise
of a mobile.

Strength,
gathered from lax limbs,
the silence and darkness
of dried cups and a still pen
prime me
as with a long drawing of breath
before I dive
to embrace my reflection.

The glow of an eastern diety
nourishes me
with the still lines
of a plum blossom.

The shared warmth
of our rising bodies
like plums, now
malleable and ripe,
make me morning's
oldest lover.
were pressed tightly against each other again. Isabel stood and slept until it was time to leave, but she knew by the way her eyes met her mother's. They were narrowed and her lips corduroy. She wanted to snuggle into a tiny circle on her lap, but someone watching her and glanced around the room. Her cheeks, then left her. She continued holding the plate in her every other Sunday outfit. Isabel loved to touch its soft satisfaction and the hands patted her head, pinched her lumps of flesh known as Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Clara. Her sitting primly on a couch between the two well dressed men wearing its soft. Isabel was given a plate and asked, "What is this for?" "It's your pudding," said Aunt Clara. "You must have something to eat, Isabel." She took the plate and stared at the food. She felt through the rings. The chairs and couches had been pushed against the wall. The thick wooden legs of the table protruded through the rings. Her mother was watching her that she wasn't allowed. She scanned the room for her father. He was perched at the edge of the other couch balancing his plate on top of his knees. He took turns nodding back and forth at his plate and at the woman next to him. She kept readjusting her sitting position, pulling her dress down over her knees, and leaning closer, then further away from Isabel's father as she giggled her way through the conversation.

Soon the arms of the woman ushered her into another room. It was dark, and a faint smell of sickness mingled with the cigar smoke. People sat in the over-stuffed furniture. The chairs and couches had been pushed against the stained wallpaper. A half eaten display of silver bowls of puddings, platters of cold cuts and old pictured china plates lined with fancy Italian pastries was spread across a lace table cloth. The thick wooden legs of the table protruded from beneath the white lace. Isabel was given a plate and two pairs of hands were quickly transporting spoonfuls of assorted foods onto it. She held the plate straight armed and watched the pile grow. Finally, the plate was loaded to their satisfaction and the hands patted her head, pinched her cheeks, then left her. She continued holding the plate in front of her as she looked for a place to sit. Her mother was sitting primly on a couch between the two well dressed men wearing its soft. Isabel was given a plate and asked, "What is this for?" "It's your pudding," said Aunt Clara. "You must have something to eat, Isabel." She took the plate and stared at the food. She felt through the rings. The chairs and couches had been pushed against the wall. The thick wooden legs of the table protruded through the rings. Her mother was watching her that she wasn't allowed. She scanned the room for her father. He was perched at the edge of the other couch balancing his plate on top of his knees. He took turns nodding back and forth at his plate and at the woman next to him. She kept readjusting her sitting position, pulling her dress down over her knees, and leaning closer, then further away from Isabel's father as she giggled her way through the conversation.

Uncle Wilbur began calling something in Isabel's direction. She stared unbelievingly at him. His arms were stretched out and his palms, facing upwards, kept opening and closing like a huge baby calling for his mother to pick him up. She tightened her grip on her plate and tried to ignore him. The rest of the room seemed undisturbed by him as they continued their chewing and chattering. Then, Isabel's youngest sister pranced past her and into Uncle Wilbur's immense open-armed embrace. His white cotton shirt sleeves enclosed her green-pinafored body like the giant clam she had seen in a Walt Disney movie. Isabel sat down cross-legged where she stood in front of the table. She set the plate on the floor and stared at the food. She felt someone watching her and glanced around the room. Her eyes met her mother's. They were narrowed and her lips were pressed tightly against each other again. Isabel stood

**entrance, and it was her turn. The three women pulled her into their cluster of reaching arms. It was like being eaten or at least tasted by an octopus. They petted and stroked her hair, pinched her cheeks, kissed her forehead, encircled her wrists with their fingers, frowned, smiled, hugged and cooed her. Isabel waited. She stood perfectly straight and at the woman next to him. She kept readjusting her sitting position, pulling her dress down over her knees, and leaning closer, then further away from Isabel's father as she giggled her way through the conversation.**
Her palms were pressed flat against the cloth of the chair. Isabel was amazed at the strength left in Nana Dear’s hands. Her mother complained that she already had arthritis in her fingers.

Her sister was still laughing at Uncle Wilbur’s smoke rings, which bothered Isabel. She wanted to touch the slightly transparent skin of Nana Dear’s hand, but instead she stood watching the eyes that were focused up at her. Then, the hollows of the woman’s cheeks moved upwards, forcing more wrinkles around the glassiness of her staring eyes. The hand fell limp and still. Isabel reached forward and finally touched its pale blueness.

Lisa Minneci

Gravite Travel

glowed a brilliant blue and her pale, freckled fingers were stretched out straight and shivering. Her palms were pressed flat against the cloth of the chair. Isabel was amazed at the strength left in Nana Dear’s hands. Her mother complained that she already had arthritis in her fingers.

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did you hear?  
since i let you hear,  
it's been a long time,  
and, you know,  
and so am i.  
and so are you  
so, he's coming home.

in our hearts  
is what we hold dear  
that the measure of our lives  
that's got to remember  
that's got to learn  
and it's only we  
but life is kinder.

that's burned so fierce and joyful  
it's been a sad time  
and by God, it's a sad thing  
of simple innocence  
whose eyes would glow  
with the courage  
which little child  
will you see, i remember

Bob McLaughlin

He's coming home again.  

Into the garden,  
such as shaded me  
this feeling  
it seems i can recall  
(always partials)  
always partials  
you know, when it comes  
to thinking  
you know, when it comes  
to dance again,  
and maybe see  
and maybe see  
get out the kiddle,  
set those kettles to boiling,  
pull wide the shutters,  
throw open the windows.

It's true,  
but yes, oh yes, oh yes,  
since he's been gone,  
it's been a long time  
yes, i know.
The Mud Lane

by Eloise Haveman

There was the sound of high heels clicking along the uneven brick walk.

For a moment Flora paid no attention, but anyone could have told that the sound troubled her.

Her wild brush of hair stood up disordered as Medusa locks and her small but muscular black arms struggled with the clothesline. Her children watched as in their own yard she attached her means of livelihood to a clothesline — the shirts and underwear of the genteel world.

The clicking heels drew nearer.

Wilene was passying by.

Wilene was young, as young as Flora. But Flora already had the wrinkles of age and Wilene was smooth and yellow, skinned, with cool tyranny in her full lips and a tint of red in her hair. Her crystal glass ear-rings swung as she walked, and her flouncing orange-and-white shirt revealed slim, shapely legs.

Flora hesitated. Then she called out, "That's tinted up red!"

But Wilene's step quickened. "You mine yo own business, woman!"

"Who's that tellin' me?"

Wilene paused. Flora was leaning toward her, over the fence.

"I'm tellin' you. You try for every man in this part of town, but you ain't gettin' my husban'. You leave my husban' 'lone. I'm warnin' you . . . Today."

Across the mud gray street a screen opened. Then another. Neighbors stepping on creaking porches, leaned over dirty window ledges.

Wilene moved away.

With sudden flame Flora unclicked the gate and ran after her shaking a fist.

"Trash, that's what you are! Trash! I'm the mother of four an' you best leave my husban' alone. I'm tellin' you!"

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"Trash, that's what you are! Trash! I'm the mother of four an' you best leave my husban' alone. I'm tellin' you!"
"Why you lock th' door, with a man around?"

"You heard that woman! You think I gonna have my shabby sofa.

Burt tried to speak, and pointed at his heart.

"Go on, get outta my house!

Wilene's coiling softness suddenly vanished.

In the front room of the house, inpenetrable to Flora's

Toward the end of the lane was one lighted house where

Dump was filled with cans and gaping automobile parts, and a

finger reaching into the neglected countryside. At one end a

mud lane, where the houses were sparsely set and the back

yards had chicken coops. Down the lane the houses were

shacks now without any light. Farther on Flora reached the

glass of the window, a tiny light in the

Flora stood clutching the things she had brought.

the blinds were drawn. Wilene's house.

battered oil can and she was trying to light a match. She

could not see the two persons behind the blind, but she was

From the room where the children were asleep came the

sound of a cough. Tara had been coughing. It wasn't getting

another hoarse cough. Flora leaned down quickly to feel her

The devil look at you, girl. You good lookin'.

"Ain't nobody 'round here."

"There's your wife," murmured Wilene subtly, "Better go speak t' her!"

Burt started. "She'll speak, soon enough," he said.

"I ain't 'fraid her!" countered Wilene.

"Come back here!" hissed Burt.

But Wilene strode to the gate.

"A locust hit the air with a rattling exclamation, and a

chilly breeze cut the stillness of the street.

"If you come to disturb choir practice," with your rantin' an talkin'," shouted Wilene, "you just go back home."

"I came for my husband!"

"Why you want to disturb Miz Mongrove's meetin'?"

Miz Mongrove was hurrying toward them.

"I don't want no two women fightin' in my yard," she cried.

"Flora Williams, you eitha come in, peaceable, or take yo husban' home."

The young people listened, and then the night hummed with voices. 'She neglects her children to come make trouble! 'No, but I wouldn't leave my husban' neither — with Wilene.'

Flora's head was in turmoil. She had a hatpin. It was stuck like a sword in the knot of her belt.

"Why you lock door with a man around?"

But last night he grabbed her arm, shivered slightly.

Go outta my house!

in the front room of the house, inpenetrable to Flora's

Flora stood clutching the things she had brought.

The blinds were drawn. Wilene's house.

Green sky.

in the distance a fringe of factory stacks rose against a pale

damp was thick with soot and hanging a qualmy, suffocating haze. A distant whistle echoed into the neglected atmosphere, and a

shutters squeaking in the breeze, the neighboring houses were

down the things she had gathered, turned and went back,

"What is it, girl?"

"I thought I heard somethin'."

Flora leaned down quickly to feel her back and raise her arms over her head as she gave

in the street outside. There was a car.

At that moment, in the street outside, there was a car.

a moment with her head poised, as though

high, tense cry that, to Wilene's ears, sounded supernatural.

Another voice coughed. From beyond the door to the children's room she went

quietly opening the door to the children's room. She went

down the things she had gathered, turned and went back, blinking

bust of a country. Tara, looking confused, I guess, getting

needed

Tara raised her hand to it, "you better run away, woman."

The air was full again of protesting cries around her.

"She worse'n Crazy Maude. " 'She is.'

Wilene turned, ran to Burt, hung on his arm.

Miz Mongrove was pushing Flora toward the gate.

"Go home t' you children, Flora Williams," Miz Mongrove said.

For a long moment Flora stood like a piece of the earth. But then, slowly, she turned and went toward the gate. All she felt was their watching her, as she went down the street and turned the corner near her house.

Silent and burning she shoved open the door, and went upstairs. Tara was sitting up in bed, terrified of the night.

"Turn at light off, girl!"

"Mama! I had a dream. I dreamt' —"

"Shut up!" cried Flora savagely.

An insect outside bungled through the air.

"Shut . . . up!" Flora's words crumpled and she put her head on her arms, and cried into the hotness of the evening.

In the middle of the night she awakened with a start. She was alone, and she thought of the mud lane going to Wilene's house. She got out of bed. She gathered what she
“You really care for me, don’ you?” flared Burt. “Sendin’ me out t’ cope with a woman like that. She’ll send ‘at firebran’ in my face —”

Wilene tore at his arm with her nails, and pulled him toward the door.

Outside someone screamed, “She puttin’ oil on her paper. She gonna set it on fire!”

Burt went to the doorway slowly, and opened it.

“Flora!” he said, “Here I am. what you want?”

“You come back home!”

Suddenly the silence was broken not by voices but by the shrillness of a siren a block or two away, closing in on them, piercing the air and moaning to a stop as a car turned into the opening of the lane, and drew up near the crowd. Two policemen got out of the car.

Sudden laughter came from the porch door where Wilene had appeared. “See what you get, woman, meddlin’ in people’s affairs?” She came down the steps and shook her fist. “This woman gonna set my house on fire!”

Burt glanced at Wilene. The expression on his face was masked. He did not look at Flora. One of the officers was approaching.

Burt’s voice rose suddenly, hoarse and uncertain, but everyone listened because it seemed as though he was making a speech.

“That’s Flora,” he was saying, and he pointed to his wife. “Flora is my only wife.” Now his voice grew stronger. He did not look at Wilene. “Flora”, he argued, “she wasn’t doin’ nothin’. We havin’ street cel’bratin’. Flora she lightin’ up a bonfire.”

The little crowd suddenly took the cue. They took up the argument murmuring, “That’s right!” “Flora she gonna light bonfire.” “She th’ mother of four an’ those children need her back.”

Shaking their heads the officers took notes before they left.

From the porches and yards they all watched the patrol cars as it wound out of sight down the lane.

The door slammed at Wilene’s house as Burt and Flora went back down the mud lane.
DAVID

Betsy Bates

Your flight aloft
leaves me
to pull the seat forward,
adjust the rear-view mirror
   (which slips)
to drive back.
The pussywillow patch where we stopped
    yesterday
is now an
exploded beige confusion
of seeds
and tumbleweeds.

The signs
that reminded you of
fishing lures
still promise storm doors
beer and
firewood-cheap

but the
whitewashed fruitstand has been boarded up,
probably by the
sweating woman
anticipating
winter.
Sand settles in my glass of tea—
crusted around the edges where my hand
gritty from waves filled with sand, the sea:

Whipped-surf pounds the beaches and pushes sand—
fragmenting shells and corals
that lived there, but die, sifted land:

Wind pulls sand-grains from higher dry shoals—
shifting them in patterns of ripples
banking against tall beach grass, in rows:

Rising from sand a crab scuttles—
indirectly seeking pools passing
to drink between the stones, he tipples:

The water is a cube of glass—
motionless and cold, beneath which brown
sand lies, in sunlight shimmering brass:

Disturbed, it rises and mixes round—
settling back slowly, sand
is crusted on the edge of my glass, a frown.
The Last Ramona Poem (fat chance)

Lindy Davies

So I got My head in the sand?
Maybe I am just writing soppy prepoems, Pops
but you just give me some sand, you got plenty
give me a dune to burrow my head down in
make it fine, dry, and completely
opaque, OK?

instead of planning
about a home TV car job and wifekids
I keep harping sandily about
the suicidal wastefulness
all over
(what's more I spend all my free time
thinking about this fictional chick named
Ramona)

you can see the waste, right here in this building.
look at that big hole in the middle of the stairwell
— conspicuous waste of coalheated space

well

I tell ya
college is irrelevant
learning to love is fulltime, and
it's not the wasted space that wastes me:

it's the wondering about sitting up here
on this al you mini yum rail and pushing
myself off
in a sitting position
four flights hitting on my back or maybe
spinning and catching my
neck
curtains
or paralysis
curt in sore poor alley sis

... funny thing,

if I did
then out of all my school years
one act would stick
foremost in my consciousness

what has all this to do with a girl
In concentration camps
also strangely what the human spirit can suffer.
There is no way to understand. We must not ask. It is
just the way it is. Existence. Things are,
it is all the same for the animal world and for us

The Preacher said

"Are you alive?"
I said

"God give you resignation."
He said (I thought it was because of the war.
I love to distress people in my mind.
But I answered in my mind —
What is our place?" I asked and they were silent.
To fill into our place
I put into their place — that is it.
I love to be spiritual (we admire that)
and to have ideals (we love that)
but to fit into our place — that is well.

I said (It's)
They said
"We must look upon it
as they look upon it. It is Reality.

There is a chronological age,
There is no ideals.
There are no ghosts.
Giving up hope they are ghosts.

In cloistered runways between stark buildings
and people surrounding me in corridors
upon a dirty street. No tree. No tree. No tree.
A two by four place with a window looking out

What is our place?"
I asked and they were silent.

"You take your place," they said.
"Well, I am still alive!"

Ellen Haveman

Mother Told Me Not To Play Next Door

Ellen Cox

He enjoys running stoplights
Red means "take" to him
See a woman in red, take her
See a red stoplight and take the next red car
Roll over it bend it fold it flatten the driver in red
Smile a red smile at the sight of blood
Dripping onto the grey pavement

His brother pushes people off the top
Of the National Bank in Charleston
If you stand on the sidewalk in front on Sunday
Sometimes you can see them fall
One afternoon he broke his record
And created a pile 22 bodies strong

His younger sister races horses
Across the tracks at the Detroit Motor Speedway
The near-misses excite her the most
So far she's only lost three thoroughbreds
And from that she's learned to always ride females
I said
The human spirit is
also capable of depth.
Of longings for a
silver stream that
glistens and reflects
The Sun.

Heaven and Hell
Are here
On Earth.
To us they come as our creation.
They are in your palm.
They are in my hands.
Thunder it
Thunder it
Thunder it.
In your palm, in my hands
the tingling ecstacies
the sohs, the shrieks
the seeing of an arch across the sky
... pastel
... quiescent.
The Petrifaction of a Wild Sweet William Blossom

by Melissa Simmons

I.

Hannah sat at the kitchen table with two thick ceramic bowls and a bucket of strawberries on the floor beside her. Her fingers and thumbs were black from days of twisting stems and sorting the berries, the soft ones to be jugged, the firmer ones eaten with sugar and cream or on top of corn bread. She gathered the stems into a heap with the side of her palm and took a long breath, swelling with the scent. Even after a half an hour she was not immune to their smell. Two bangs, a grating sound and a third bang brought Hannah’s eyes to the pile of kindling beside the cold iron stove. Samuel stood, legs apart, feet turned slightly out and holding a piece of wood as a man holds a cane, with one hand over the other. The diaper fastened around his narrow hips sagged at his crotch almost to his knees and was dusted with fragments of bark and ash. Hannah made little effort to deny a smile as she swung her legs to the chair’s side.

“Samuel, look at yourself.” She rested her thin arm on the top rung of the chair. “You just be careful now. If you get a splinter, you won’t be very pleased.”

Samuel pounded the stick, his smile tensing into a contortion that reddened his face and threatened tears. He sat suddenly, not having allowed for the weight of the stick. Hannah knew that the delayed outburst was more from surprise than from a sore bottom. She walked quickly to him, wiping red juice on her apron. She picked him up under the arms and arched her back to hold him, swirling to the right and left until he was calm. She touched his cheek, wanting to feel the new hard edges emerging from smooth gums. His forehead, still gathered in pleats at the crest of his nose was short, unlike Job’s or her own. From his round blue eyes about to blink a tear, she knew to continue swaying from side to side.

She slid her hand beneath his jersey and undershirt, stroking the moist heat of his back and side. How many days would he fuss, turning his head from cereal, even rippled with honey and berries, or squirm as she dressed him, rolling onto his stomach and grasping the rug to crawl away? She
"I see them." Hannah addressed the mirror, a pitcher of milk and one of cookies look. It’s snatching cookies. They’re right on the rail. She called after him, "Could you bring his pants and socks, too? I’m getting cookies."

"I’m going to eat back to the left as if his hair ever submitted to a brush. Hannah continued to walk, rubbing the back with her thumb until he closed his eyes. She hoisted him up and looked at his eyes with long lashes she almost envied. As he put his head on her shoulder she felt the line of his nose and warm cheek on her neck.

"Sleepy Samuel." She hummed, carrying him to the rocker crib in the living room. Samuel grabbed her hair and pouted drowsily as she laid him down. She loosened his bangs back to the left as if his hair ever submitted to a comb. The door latch clicked open with a sharp metallic sound. The bucket was empty. Hannah waved flies from the two large wash basins sitting on the bathroom counter. She worked gradually over the wood until the larger table stood without its covers. The stove was already loaded, leaving only the task of lighting and nurturing a flame, poking the slim sticks and blowing them to sparks. She set the mason jars in a cast iron pot, covering them with water, and put it on the stove. Looking over the shelves of jars, squat paper sacks and small boxes, she found chunks and paraffin and the crock of coarse beet sugar. She grabbed a long handled spoon from the wall and went to the berries. She poured sugar over them, flipping her wrist to make a snake-like trail across the larger table. She worked gradually over the wood until the whole surface was darkened with wetness. The strawberry stains would take many washings before camouflaging in the whole surface. She poured sugar over them, flipping her wrist to make a snake-like trail across the larger table. She worked gradually over the wood until the whole surface was darkened with wetness. The strawberry stains would take many washings before camouflaging in the whole surface.
and held his fork ready for use. Hannah fed Samuel and the next moment before looking up. "No, it isn't. Once in a while I chew each thoroughly as he rested his wrist on the table and held his fork ready for use. Hannah fed Samuel and

Samuel into her lap. Job ate with large methodical bites, chucking each thoroughly as he rested his wrist on the table and held his fork ready for use. Hannah fed Samuel and

"Mm. If we get sun tomorrow and the next day... The ground is just so damn waterlogged and the grain needs sun, not more rain; that's certain... I've got to get that fence down soon. It'll probably take another two days or so what with the milking and all."

"You'll still have a little free time Sunday won't you? The women will be doing quite a bit of baking for the coffee after the service. You heard about it, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"I don't know what to make; I guess something with strawberries. They never last long enough to tire of them."

"I don't know. It depends on how the work goes. I'm not going to have the cows in that small pasture any longer than I have to. You'll go anyway I suppose; so what does it matter?"

"You don't want me to go to church?"

"I didn't say that and don't hand me your piety. You can pray and read the scriptures right here. You know that's not the only reason you go."

Hannah pressed her lips against Samuel's head for a moment before looking up. "No, it isn't. Once in a while I
had left in a roll on the floor.

"Hannah, I think he’s even hotter now."

She felt his face, his neck. “Do you think doctor Moser would come now? He’s been fussing and everything but the fever only started today. I, I kept thinking he would cool down. She knelt down on one knee, holding Job for balance and stroked the nap of Samuel’s neck.

“Here, take him. I’ll go now. Moser will come.” Job went to the kitchen. Hannah listen to him put on his shoes as she rocked Samuel on her chest. He rested his head heavily by her neck but squirmed with restlessness.

Job came to the threshold, putting one hand on the edge of each wall. “I wish you told me before that he’s had this fever all day. I’ll be back.” The turned and walked out, his steps pounding the floor as quickly as the pounding rushed up from Hannah’s chest to her head.

Samual wimpered at the slam of the door. She walked with him until he was quiet. She felt his drool and wrapped her arms to support his legs more closely to her. What was said at dinner ran through her mind seeming as painfully senseless as bringing in the wash when heaps of gathered barley lay in the fields at the breaking of a thunder storm. Other children become feverish while they teethe; but the thought failed to keep tears from traveling down her cheek, dispersing in the sweat of Samuel’s scalp.

Samuel was no longer restless but kept one arm firmly around her neck, his fist gripping her dress. She sat down, laid him in her lap and wiped his face with the back side of her apron. Samuel watched her, not pouting or smiling; but calmly looking up at her. She rocked as her voice quivered in a whispered song.

“If you were a flower
And I were a shower
Or even the dripping wet dew
I’d go to your bower
To seek you, my flower,
And there wash your wee face for you.

Let’s play you’re a flower,
That I’ve caught in a shower
Or gathered a bowl full of dew,
That here in your bower
I’ve found you, my flower,
And now wash your wee face for you.”

When Job and Doctor Moser entered, Hannah continued rocking. She heard the kitchen door, steps and muted voices. Job appeared in the doorway, anchored there by Hannah’s austere glare as she held Samuel, still warm in her arms.

The field climped sharply up from the creek then lolled in plateaus of bleached corn stalks. It stretched onward enveloping an island of young trees and underbrush covering and surrounding a small knoll, a protrusion in the level ground. Low leaning stones among the pricker bushes
The editors wish to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of Exile.

Submissions are now being accepted for the Spring '79 issue. When given a voice, use it!