EXILE
Denison University’s
Literary Magazine

You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You who cannot know at firsthand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

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

Ezra Pound

Fall 1986
Editorial Board

Editors share equally all editorial decisions.

Debra Benko
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The Unfathomable

Who, swimming naked and alone
In some forgotten pond
Wants to open her eyes beneath the surface
To see the strange light her body casts?
To view her own familiar figure's
Angles askew, contorted in a yielding suspension,
Glowing in the green?
Frightened some stray bass
Might cross the dim boundary illumined
By skin-shine, who would guess
What swims beyond tender eye's range?
So let the struggling plant-life
Entangle my limbs, but
Keep me from asking who sends them.
Why touch where the roots are bound
To the muddy earth?
Busting the Fence

Billy’s Chevy pickup in the silver light of dusk,
Breaking free at 60 and shuddering through the
Dusty half-roads of Midwestern Acreage.
Raging against furrowed land. Bustling the fence.

Billy’s Chevy pickup with me, elbow out the
Window. Tobacco spit out on the landscape,
Miller bottles stashed low, then flung secretly,
Smashing on moving earth. Scarring the fields.

Billy’s Chevy pickup on black city pavement,
Straining hard against the Good Book, and looking for
The daughters of Sodom and Playboy,
Waiting on forbidden corners. Staining the Word.

Billy’s Chevy pickup, our only ticket to the
Wide eyed Promised Land; neon in the Ohio Night.
H2O

This single tear I let fall from my eye
Has travelled far across the vacant plains
In clouds that gathered, darkening the sky.
This single tear fell once in summer rains
Upon a woman, nude below the sur-
Face of the water where she swam. She wrung
It from her hair while singing, soft and pure.
It fell as perspiration from a young
Man’s brow, a home-sick sailor thinking of
The work he must complete before his shift
Is through, and how the ocean conquers love.
This tear, once crystallized within a drift
Of snow, has quenched a glowing cinder with
Its breath. It falls away, ignoring death.
The Women Below Me

The women below me are leaving.
I was so glad when they moved
into the apartment,
so glad it wasn't a man
or a family with noisy children.
I hoped we would share recipes
and coffee and the complaints
of bad days at work.
But they were private women.
Oh, I enjoyed seeing them
whenever I could.
They laughed so much together,
and their thoughts often overlapped
so that one could finish what the other
had begun to say.
They were good friends, good women.

But now the women below me are leaving.
One has just moved out.
Her sister picked her up.
I watched them pack the car
and I watched her hold her sister tightly
in the street below.
I thought I saw the sister
wipe a tear off the woman's face.
I don't know when the other woman
will leave, but I should think
she will miss her friend.
I know I shall miss the
soft sounds of their laughter
and their overlapping thoughts,
and I shall miss imagining what they are doing
in the quiet rooms beneath me.
Together, Bathing

I look at you now, a child
but five years old, silently
watching me bathe you.
I think of the girl
who birthed you five years ago.
She wanted to keep you,
wanted to bathe you as I am now,
wanted to protect you,
wanted to love you enough
to make you love her.

You watch me, wide-eyed,
wash first my arm, then your arm,
my breast, then your breast.
We are quiet, together, and naked
in the hot water.
I bathe with you every night
after I pick you up
from the daycare center.
You draw the bath,
undress in the corner,
and then wait for me
to come and cleanse you,
and do what she could not.
Big Scissors

With my big scissors
I trimmed away
the lining of the sky.
Infinity poured in!
White noise flooding my nose,
throat gurgling, I groped
for my big needle
and blue thread.
The Day Before

To see crows perched at tops of sycamores,
hear their throaty screeches,
circling, swooping

and then to go out at the hour
of morning when the world belongs to crows
and meet one on the grass, silent,

not scaring the crow half my size
but myself

was to know the day before

was to come home, ten miles away from Davis Besse,
after headlines about Kiev
and letters about my brother

to remember the ten-year-old who
clapped tight fists to his ears
when sirens sounded Fridays at twelve noon,
and shut his eyes to find a Ray Bradbury story
where people are shadows on a wall.

Now I see the fifteen-year-old taller
than I am and still growing,
lean and knob-shouldered.

Today I fear a different Siren he hears
more than the other,
the name of a girl who calls his number and shadows
of female forms under rapid eye movement

until I remember that in the rhyme the crow,
no, a blackbird, snipped off
the maid’s nose.
On Choctawhatchee Bay

I feel the storm before I see it,  
bay breeze stronger than before.  
The flashes of reflected sun on water  
whip up into whitecaps,  
the wind urges water to quicken.  
I have not seen this before.  
The blue bay reflects yellow as  
the clouds approach.  
A lone sailor, on a small craft,  
races across the wind for shore and safety  
to beat the rain, his red sail straining.  
I turn to windward,  
see your face  
in the storming clouds.
Contributor Notes

Amy Becker does other things.
Debra Benko is waiting for March 15!
Eliza Brown is a junior from Nashville. She is on her first semester of
photography at Denison.
Karen J. Hall is waiting.
C. E. McGinnis is the Editor-in-chief of The Denisonian and is therefore,
rarely poetic.
Jane Smith is a senior studio art major. Her favorite medium is engraving/printmaking.
Holly Trotter is a senior studio art and psychology major from Buffalo,
N.Y. She looks forward to her own art show next semester in Cleve-
land Hall.
Terri J. Wolf is a junior studio art major. Her solar print show recently
opened in Cleveland Hall.
William (Woody) Woodroof is a junior studio art major. His first solo
photography show opened in Cleveland Hall this fall.
David Zivan is a junior English major. He is already looking forward to
Spring Break.