



Fioretti

Fioretti

a literary anthology

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Historical Note

The *Fioretti de S. Francesco d'Assisi*, Little Flowers of Saint Francis, is the name of a classic collection of popular legends about St. Francis and his early companions, as they appeared to the Italian people at the beginning of the 14th century. These historic tales recreate the early Franciscan spirit, instinct with poetry. The *Canticle of the Sun* by Saint Francis voices that spirit eloquently. The earliest known Italian version of the *Fioretti* ranks with the finest specimens of literary Tuscan.

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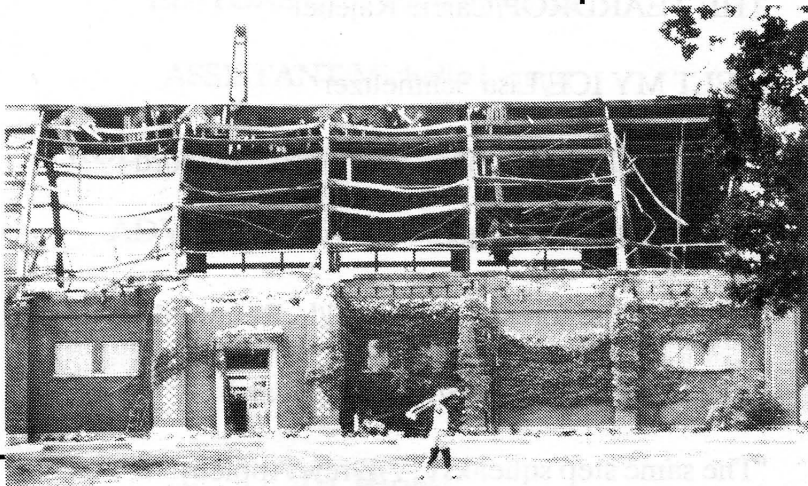


photo courtesy of Indianapolis Star

A MEMORIAL FOR AN OLD RED GYMNASIUM

Don Hack

Monday, 8-7-89. On this very cool day at Marian College, I learned the sad news that the old gymnasium at the school is going to be torn down. Now anyone that knows anything at all must realize that the side of this old building provided the best place ever for hitting a tennis ball. They also must know that this old construction, obviously designed for what took place on the inside, enabled me to perfect a tennis stroke both on the forehand and backhand that gave me pride. Admittedly, my practicing against this very old tired structure over a period of several years only brought me to the status of a mediocre tennis player; yet, I made no apologies because any onlooker observing me playing tennis with my consistent hitting, instantly knew I belonged on the court. I was not just an average tennis duffer but a genuine player. I was someone whom some of the better players would be willing to practice with until their regular opponent came on the scene.

So again this year after a good many years of not playing, I decided to pick up my trusty racquet and head for Marian College where I knew existed the best place in the world to hit a tennis ball. And I had a pretty good session for being so rusty, although admittedly I was not up to my former self. This is what made the old structure, built by Mr. Fisher about 1914, so ideal. It made one look good. It was so forgiving. Even with my erratic stroking, the huge brick wall threw the ball back. It never complained, flinched or refused to rise to the demand of bringing back that hairy covered rubber ball. Maybe not shot at me like a bullet that happened when hitting many years ago, but dribbled in my direction just the same. And the target was so wonderful, so big, that even in my wild shots, which alas have multiplied over the years, never failed to hit something. Or put

bluntly, even after a layoff of many years, I just could not miss the target of a huge slab of red bricks. Of course, I missed the ball all together a few times, but what can you expect? Even my wild upward bloopers, sailing high up the taller reaches of the ancient gym never reached the dangerous "point of no return." My worn out ball always came back--valid proof of being a tennis player.

But I sensed something wrong, a premonition. I looked around the other side of the old gym and saw ominously parked a huge unattended crane. Now a peaceful place like Marian College is not going to park such a dangerous-looking contraption for just no reason. I started observing and thinking. The doors of the gym were wide open, and the smell of death was everywhere, and I knew the terrible truth. There was going to be a killing and my wonderful backdrop was going to be the victim. Of course, I asked others and the "Grim Reaper" was confirmed.

Now I feel sad for the end of a personal era has come with a wrecking ball to tear down more than just a ball stop. Actually it knocks down forever, in a most crude and undignified manner, a dream I once held of being a great tennis player. Now I knew these were only dreams, but magic can happen and with such a wonderful thing to hit. With luck I had a chance of becoming the best of the mediocre players. And really, since the name of the game is winning, beating the not-so-good player isn't all that bad. But am I really feeling sad for myself? I don't think so. Surely, my tennis days are over. It must be the demise of the building itself that brings on my sorrow.

Yet why should I feel sorry? After all, it's just a case of a building being replaced by something better. And everyone is for progress. Or at least most -- the numbers are slipping -- still believe in the magical land of the holy shrine. Maybe I cry for the past. That's it. Here we find fading away just a little of the glory of a past highlighted by wealth and affluence but class all the same. Still, Marian College remains a pretty campus. All I

can hope for is that the past I have known will not be forgotten. Allow me to say goodbye to a red gymnasium with the "high up in the sky" curved coping that I grew to love. Oh, it made a wonderful target -- so wide and so tall.

THE TEARDROP

It swelled from within and I followed it.

*The teardrop
clung to her moistened lashes.*

*Then slowly releasing it's tender hold
it slid down the smoothness of her cheek.*

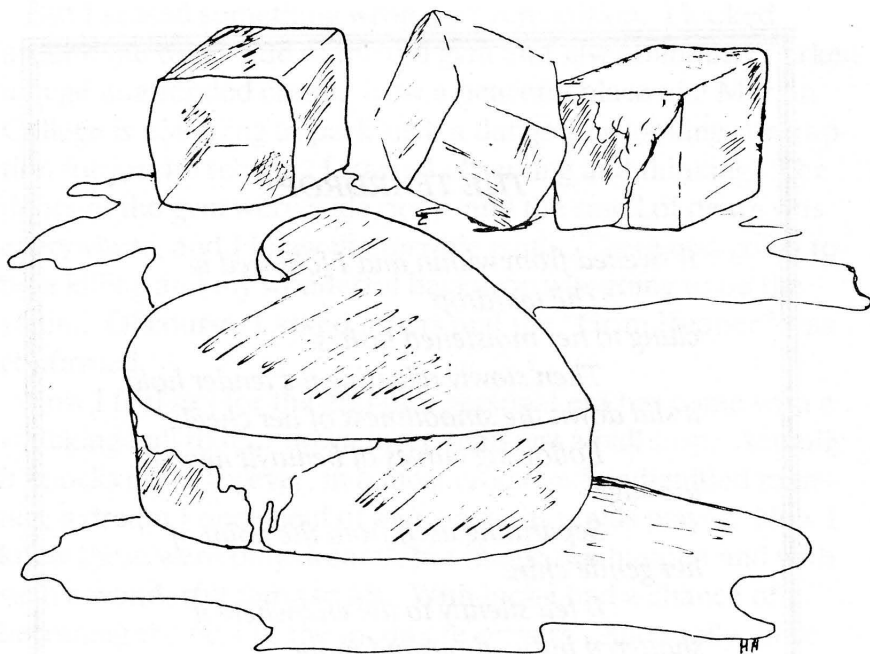
*Following curves of beauty it neared
the edge.*

*Separating itself from the point of
her gentle chin.*

*It fell silently to the end where it
shattered into a thousand more.*

Teardrops.

Carrie Rajchel



MELT MY ICE

*I think about all that you have given to me
And all that I have taken.
I used to give until I was drained out of blood and soul.
Now I lie to myself,
And I lie to you.
I hold hope, when none exists,
And I follow blindly.
I accept without questioning
And I answer without searching.
You have taught me better than that.
And now there is only cold water running
 through my veins,
And my heart is like a freezer that chills my soul.
And all I have to give to you
Is ice that cuts like glass
And leaves you to
Bleed warmth, that
Could never melt my ice.*

Lisa Schmeltzer



CATCH OF THE CAMPUS

Aimee Crawford

“You can all just kiss off into the air...”

Dave jumped a mile out of bed as his alarm clock's radio blasted the Violent Femmes in his ear, signaling 10 o'clock. He lay on the bed trying to recover, feeling his heart slowly stop pounding and his terror receding. He thought how unfortunate it was that this was the only way he could wake up, especially after a slightly rough night out with the boys. Struggling to clear his head, he tried to remember why he would be getting up so early on a Saturday. Then he remembered. Today was the first day of outdoor practice.

He stumbled to the bathroom and turned on the shower as hot as he could stand. As he groggily stretched his tall muscular frame beneath the steaming water, his mind was already racing ahead to the day's activity -- and back to last season. Dave had an outstanding year, winning the team's MVP trophy for the second year. But, typically, he was far more proud of his watch that said, “Michigan -- Big Ten Champs” from the past season. He knew they were capable of repeating the achievement this year, and he had to admit, he was hoping for a major league contract as the highlight of his senior year. He could hear it now: “Batting fourth and playing first base for the Oakland A's, from the University of Michigan -- Dave Simpson!”

But enough day dreaming -- his roommate, who also played ball, was anxious to get going.

“Hey, Simmer! Get your butt in gear!”

“Goodwin, are you in that big a hurry to start another season of bench warming?” Marty, the team's star outfielder and Dave's only real potential competition for MVP, just grinned good-naturedly. They had known each other since kindergarten, and they basically competed in everything until Marty

moved away in the 9th grade. When they were forced back together as roommates their freshman year, they somehow became inseparable.

Back in his room, Dave pulled on a Harvard sweatshirt and green sweats. He threw his gear into a bag -- his mitt, which was held together by prayers but was nonetheless clung to superstitiously by its owner; spikes with holes in each toe, joyfully tossed in; a battered rubber donut, once rumored to have belonged to Dave Parker; and a couple of batting gloves. Baseball was never meant to be practiced inside, and the team was ready to get outdoors.

He ran his fingers through his short, black hair and precisely positioned his navy blue cap with its gold "M" on his head at the correct jaunty angle. As Marty bellowed again, Dave snatched up his Wayfarers and favorite bat and raced for the door.

They pulled into the parking lot at the field with a few minutes to spare. The top of Dave's '68 Mustang convertible was down and his stereo was blasting the Dead Milkmen. As he climbed over the side and reached in the back for his equipment, he saw a blonde female making a bee-line for him. Since it was too late to hide, he squared his shoulders resolutely and tried not to look too irritated or apprehensive.

"Hi, Davy!" she chirped. He cringed -- her voice grated on his nerves, and she was the only person in the world who called him Davy -- well, except for his mom, and she was allowed.

"Hi, Melanie," he mumbled. There was a point in time when he would have called her "Mel," but since she started showing such a marked interest in him, and he was totally indifferent to her, he kindly tried not to encourage her in any way. The whole situation was a mess. Why was *he* the one the coach's daughter had to fall for? She was cute enough, but just a freshman in every sense of the word and a pest to all the guys on the team, always snooping around for information about where Dave was

and who he was with, so she could strategically "bump into" him. Seeing her everywhere was really beginning to make Dave nervous -- kind of spooky. He told all the guys not to tell her anything else, but somehow, she still found out. She was driving him up a tree.

"I can't believe you didn't notice my new haircut," she whined at him.

"Oh...um, real cute. Well, hey, gotta go. Practice is about to start and your dad's getting mad at me; I can tell from the looks I'm getting."

Actually, Coach Mason was beaming at them from the end of the dugout. "Well, Simpson, I think I'll have to watch you around my daughter -- I don't want her corrupted by you!" The coach laughed heartily as Dave forced a chuckle.

Opening day for the Wolverines -- the adrenaline was pumping as the team warmed up. The sun shone brightly, yet there was a slight breeze blowing toward left field, keeping things cool. Dave wore a gold turtleneck under his navy blue jersey with its gold "23." He did the splits a couple of times to loosen up. Feeling his muscles pull taut, and the sting of the ball in his glove as he stretched to catch the third baseman's sharp pass, he snuck a look over to the stands -- yep, there they were. He counted nine scouts from different teams -- all eyes intently fixed on him. No, wait -- ten. He swallowed a lump in his throat as he realized there was a scout from the A's -- only the best team in either league and Dave's favorite to boot -- sitting in the visitor's stands. Of course, there was a possibility the A's were there to see Calcalterra, Indiana's outstanding catcher. As Dave headed to the cage to take batting practice, he decided to take a detour by the drinking fountain, conveniently located near the visitor's bleachers, just to see what happened. Sure enough, as he casually strolled by, the man in the green and gold cap rose and moved to intercept him.

"Dave Simpson? Allen Callaway. Pleased to meet you."

"Pleased to meet you, sir." Dave struggled to keep his voice steady.

"Had yourself some pretty good numbers in fall ball. Think you can keep it up?"

"Thanks. I'm pretty sure I can. Never felt better."

"Great, great. How's school? You going to be graduating on time?"

"Oh, yeah. I'm coasting this semester."

"Well, I better let you go. I'll enjoy watching you play."

"Thank you, sir."

As Dave got a drink and headed for the cage, he controlled the urge to leap into the air. After talking to so many scouts, he was sharp enough to know the A's were definitely interested in him. That the guy asked if Dave was graduating on time was a fantastic sign. He couldn't control his beaming smile as he was abruptly stopped by the coach.

"Simpson! Get out there to the field and hit some to the fielders!" he snapped as he abruptly walked off.

Dave slowly walked out to the outfield and picked up a bat. He was a bit confused. Marty shot him an odd look. Coach Mason usually had the second stringers bat for fielding practice, not the starters. Then he shook off his doubt -- it must just be nerves on his part because of the A's scout. Of course he was starting.

But later, in the dugout, his suspicion held true. When the coach read the starting line-up, Koons was batting fourth and Miller, a definite weak freshman who didn't have the experience to handle a team like Indiana, was playing first. Dave couldn't believe his ears, but he knew better than to question the coach. He thought, "Great, give the kid a chance, but why today, the first day the A's actually came to watch me?"

"Simpson, straighten up those bats!" the coach barked at him.

As Dave drooped dejectedly out of the dugout, he caught a glimpse of the A's scout looking wonderingly at him and hurriedly looked away -- right into the narrowed blue eyes and

malicious smile of Melanie Mason. Suddenly, it all clicked into place.

He had run into her at the library a couple of days before. She had been her usual air-headed, superficial self, babbling something about the rush dance coming up in a few weeks for the Tri-Delts, with whom she was rushing. Dave had never had much patience with sororities, and he was in the middle of a paper. On top of everything, he had a tremendous headache. He didn't mean to blow her off, but he suddenly realized that she had stopped talking and was looking at him expectantly.

"Pardon?" he asked politely.

"I said," she repeated impatiently, "doesn't that sound like fun?" and looked at him expectantly again.

Distracted, with no idea what she was taking about, he muttered, "Oh, yeah, Hey, gotta go," and walked off. He supposed it had seemed rude, but he honestly hadn't meant it that way. She just always bugged him at the most awkward times which was actually all the time where she was concerned.

She had called him the next night and asked him point-blank to take her.

"Come on, it'll really be fun and it'll get me off to the right start."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Oh, nothing. Well, will you?"

"I don't think so. Sorry."

"But why not?"

"I really hate sorority dances. They make me sick. Plus, there's an active walk-out at my frat that weekend."

"Oh, that's right. Phi Beta, aren't you?" she asked in a tone of voice that told him that she had done her homework on him which irritated him all the more.

"Yep." At this point, he was beginning to get mad. He had told her no and he meant it, and he didn't intend to argue about it -- not with a girl who got on his wires this bad.

"Well, you could ditch it if you wanted to, couldn't you?" she cajoled.

"No, I couldn't ditch it. I'm the president. Besides, I don't want to. It'll be fun."

"More fun than going to the dance with me?" she whined.

"Yes, believe it or not. I wasn't kidding when I said I didn't want to go, Melanie. I hate those things," he said firmly.

He tried to stay patient but blew his top when she said, "Fine! I thought you were a nice guy, but then you lead me on just to make me look stupid. You follow me around all the time and talk to me all the time and..."

"Look!" he burst in. "I do not, nor have I ever followed you around. You lay in wait for *me*. And as for talking to you, you're okay as a friend -- but leading you on? I know that's a crock because I have no desire to go out with you! Did you ever think I'm just being polite so as not to hurt your feelings?" He stopped, feeling a bit bad, but glad to have it out in the open. When she didn't say anything, he began to apologize.

"Look, Mel, I'm sorry I had to..."

"Shut up!" she screamed. "Don't you ever call me Mel again! The only reason I wanted you to go to that dance was to impress the girls. Not because of you. But you're too stuck on yourself to do it. Can't be seen with a lowly freshman. Well, I'll get even. Your image won't be worth anything after I get through with you." She slammed the phone down.

As Dave replaced the receiver, he felt oddly hurt. As annoying as Melanie was, he at least thought she liked him for himself and not because of his looks or status. He was well known on campus, that was for sure. The guys on the team had all teased him ever since several sororities had voted him "Catch of the Campus." It was kind or irritating in a way to have all the girls know him and come up to him before he had a chance to make a move. No one used the common openings: "What's your major?" or "Where are you from?" on him. No, it was always "You play baseball, don't you?" He didn't mind the notoriety

in the least, except he was never too sure why anyone liked him. But Melanie? He had known her all through high school, and he had believed she genuinely liked him. Well, at least now he didn't feel guilty about yelling at her. And, anyway, what could she really do to him?

Today, as he stood outside the dugout, sheepishly straightening bats as ten major league scouts looked on, the sickening realization of what she could do dawned on him with crystal clarity. For that one moment that he yelled at her, he had forgotten that she was the coach's only daughter. Or maybe he had given the coach too much credit by thinking the coach would see the truth and refuse to get involved. Obviously, he was sadly mistaken.

As the season began to get underway, Dave found himself riding the bench. His play was outstanding in practice, but the coach still refused to play him in a game. The whole team was suffering from the situation. Coach glared at him whenever Melanie was around, confirming his suspicions. Melanie continued to lurk around and smirk at him. He totally ignored her. Slowly the scouts trickled away once they realized that Dave wouldn't be playing. The day he noticed that Detroit wasn't even there, he decided that he had to do something. But what? He imagined his career slipping down the drain, followed by a few choice words for Melanie. As he walked out to his car with Marty, he mused that his uniform was more depressingly clean than it had ever been in his whole life. As usual, when he needed help, he turned to Marty.

"What do I do?"

"I've been waiting for you to ask me that," Marty grinned slowly.

"Since when has that stopped you?" Dave, in spite of himself, found himself grinning back.

"Well, you've got me out of much worse, so it's the least I can do, I guess. I've been thinking for you, and I have a solution, a

devious plot if I do say so myself.”

“Well? What is it?”

“Don’t you worry your pretty little head. Leave it all to me.”

Two days later at practice, Coach came up to Dave and said, “Dave, I owe you an apology. I judged you without giving you a chance to defend yourself. When Marty told me, I understood your actions completely. Thought you might like to know, you’ll be back on the roster for the next game. We need you anyway.”

Dave looked at the coach in wonderment, but before he had a chance to ask either the coach or Marty (why did he have a feeling that sly dog was involved somehow?) what was going on, practice started and Marty left immediately afterwards.

Dave hung up the phone, glowing from head to toe. The A’s wanted him at their spring training camp. With his speed and bat, he was almost guaranteed a place in their hard-hitting lineup. Anyway, this was his shot, and that’s what mattered. He tried to shake the clouds out of his head in order to concentrate on the last two weeks of school and the active walk-out.

“Hey, Mart! Let’s head out.”

“Um...” Marty walked out of the bathroom, dressed in a black blazer and grey flannel trousers. “I’m not going to make it.”

“What?” He suddenly realized what his friend had done for him. He had been so busy and excited with his born-again baseball career that he hadn’t even bothered to find out how Marty had accomplished his devious plot. “Okay, ‘fess up,” he demanded.

“Well, I just told Coach that of course you wouldn’t go after Mel when I was interested in her.” Marty fingered his collar sheepishly as the red flooded to his face.

“YOU are interested in her?”

“Well, she is kinda cute. So it’s for real -- not that much of a chore.”

"How'd you get her to go along with it?" Dave marvelled at his friend's persuasive powers.

"Easy. I just mentioned a fact that both of you seemed to have forgotten." Marty volunteered no further information and headed for the door. Dave leapt from his chair to tackle him, crazy with curiosity.

"Goodwin! Spill it! What was it, that we both forgot?"

Marty's slow smile spread across his face as he opened the door and prepared his parting shot. "Why, I simply informed her what you were too dippy to remember -- the Tri-Delts voted *me* 'Catch of the Campus'."

R.I.P.

*We touch again
with naked nerves
and crumble from the pain.
The erie glow of love disintegrated
looms beneath my feet,
and together we rest
in pieces.*

Regina M. Garza

*I listen to the forest's music,
an animal symphony, the
sound of the wild,*

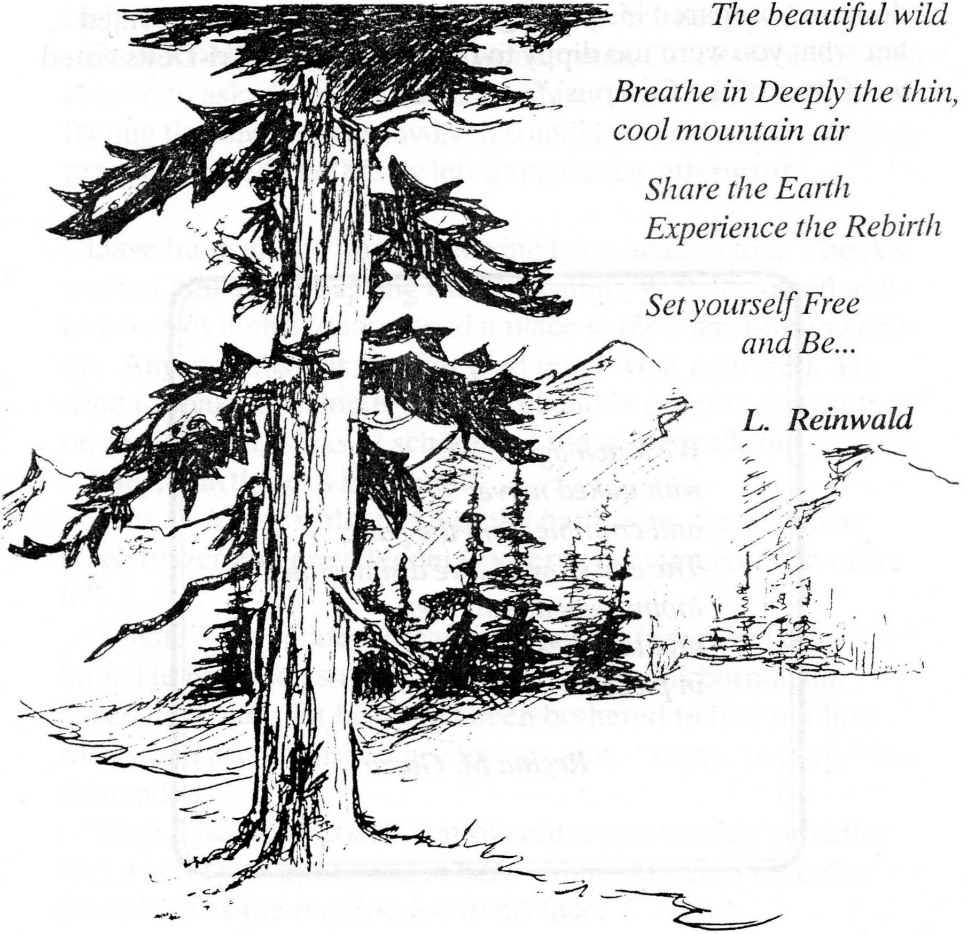
The beautiful wild

*Breathe in Deeply the thin,
cool mountain air*

*Share the Earth
Experience the Rebirth*

*Set yourself Free
and Be...*

L. Reinwald



THE EVILS OF TIME

Kerry P. Dearth

"Come on! You've gotta get outta here! There's not much time!" I screamed at the coffee shop man.

"Hey now. Settle down, son," he said in a calm tone that reflected his old fashioned ways. He slipped me a cup of coffee and moved closer. He rested his elbows on the counter and scratched his wrinkled forehead. "Now what's gotten a hold of you that makes you fret so?"

My fingers trembled as I picked up the coffee cup and took a sip. I looked at the old man. His eyes were kind but weary. How could I make him understand? Him -- a man who had spent his childhood on the Depression and had grown up during the "Forties" and the "Fabulous Fifties." Him -- a man who had matured to the values of "Leave it to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best." Him -- a man who knew the warmth of a family, the bonds of friendship and the spirit of individualism. Him -- a simple coffee shop owner in probably the last coffee shop in America. But, it's the year 2009, and things are different now.

For some odd reason I had taken time to watch the sun rise on that fateful summer morning. From my luxurious office, high above the college grounds, I watched it shed its light on the city. I was in charge of student relations then, albeit my job had become worthless as I received fewer and fewer visits from the students.

I remember the sun was more red than usual, which perhaps foretold the danger that lay ahead. As I looked outside, super-trams, filled with students, began to enter the campus. The trams blasted students to school from their living quarters, located just outside of Indianapolis, in minutes.

Yes, colleges sure had changed over the years, thanks to the creation of the "monster," that is, the "Superversity" -- a

gigantic structure of rising towers and domed buildings bisected by tram tunnels. No longer did teenagers choose their college; instead, they were relegated to their respected state superversity. Seven hundred thousand students attended Indiana Superversity.

The Superversity was entirely solar powered. To accommodate this energy source, changes were made. Terms ran from March to October. Students attended school from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Afterwards, they returned to their fraternity or sorority houses which had changed drastically as well. These living quarters served as workplaces for the students, mini-factories, if you will. There was the Alpha Omega License Plate Fraternity, the Tri Beta Auto Plant and Micro Chip Delta Sorority, just to name a few. Students were required to work from 4:30 to 9:00 p.m. The work paid for the students' tuition. The schedule was demanding, but it was the only way we could keep up with the Japanese.

Each term was equivalent to two years in the old college system. There was no lunch period; instead, students purchased food from the many vending machines that lined the "people movers." People movers were moving walkways that enabled students to get to class more quickly. Students purchased food while the walkways whisked them to class.

The classroom had changed as well. Gone were the old-fashioned schoolhouse classrooms with wooden desks. Gigantic cinemas had taken their place. More than five-thousand students could fill each cinema. They watched giant movie screens and were taught by computer teachers. Each class lasted two and one half hours.

There were no tests. They were not necessary. The student merely absorbed the instructions of the computer. The use of hypnosis and subliminal messages aided this technique. There was no homework either.

At precisely 3:45 p.m. each day, the computer administered a brain scan to all students to insure they had properly received

the regulated knowledge for the day. Slow learners received an extra zap of knowledge from the computer teacher.

There was no time for social mixing, no individualism. I could see it coming, but who could I turn to? Nobody understood anymore. I was leaving the office when it happened. Don't ask me how, but it happened. Something went wrong during the brain scan. The computer had given its final lesson. All of a sudden, thousands of students poured out of the classrooms and jammed the walkways. Wild-eyed and determined, they destroyed everything in their path. Horrified, I sprinted through the front doors. They totally demolished the Superversity, the creature that had created them.

And so I sat there in that old coffee shop, sipping coffee with an old man.

"They're coming," I said.

"Who's coming, son?" he asked

"The children. No, they're not children anymore. They've changed. They're machines. You've gotta get outta here!"

"Whoa! Slow down there. What do you mean, the children? The children always loved my shop. Machines? Now what's gotten into you? You look like you've seen the devil."

Funny, I thought, maybe I had. Time is the devil's collaborator. What was I thinking? I can't save this old man or his old cafe. Time would eventually win out. Everything changes. Why?

"Thanks, Pops," I said as I tossed him a buck for the coffee. As I walked away, the old man began to sing a familiar tune that stopped me in my tracks.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
Auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne.
We'll take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

And surely I'll pay mine.
And we'll take a cup of kindness yet
For auld lang.

And pulled the daisies fine.
But we've wandered many a weary foot
Since auld lang syne.

*The same step squeaks
As I climb the staircase
To my childhood room*

Drew Appleby

• As I climb the staircase •
• To my childhood room •
• •
• •

* * * * *

• • • • •

FOR THE LOVE OF AUDREY

Shelly Leman

The art building had always held some aura of mystery to Clark. The dingy gray exterior probably inspired students to create something beautiful or at least interesting to look at just to alleviate the grimness. The smell of oil paint, plaster dust, wet clay and miscellaneous cleaners and chemicals lingered from all of the past artists' endeavors. A radio played any time anyone was working on a project. Depending on the person, the music varied from classical to the latest *nouveau rage*. As Clark and Audrey contemplated her work, strains of Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of the Faun" filled the room.

"The proportions look so exact," Clark said after scrutinizing Audrey's latest piece of work. The sculpture was a two foot statuette of a woman in a flowing gown draped sensuously over her body. The hair was molded in cascading curls that looked as though they would move at the slightest touch rather than captured in the stillness of clay. The features of her face were delicate and exotic; only the hands and feet were unfinished.

"Spoken like a true math major," Audrey sighed and then laughed at the brown-eyed giant who made the room shrink with his broad shoulders.

"What is the assignment?"

"We had to take an emotion and portray it with some artistic medium without the use of letters or numbers," Audrey explained. "So I decided to take 'love' and portray it as Aphrodite."

"Hmm, seems to me that there should be more to love than a beautiful face and sensuous body."

"Clark, is there really any such thing as love? Isn't a physical attraction and pleasant personality the most anyone can realistically hope for?"

"Audrey..."

"Whoa, Clark. Please don't lecture me now. I'm sorry, but I need to be going."

"Wait a minute, I just wanted to ask if you'd like to come to the house for supper with the family tonight," Clark offered.

"Oh... yes... but... that would have been wonderful, but I have a previous date. Please tell them all that I said 'Hello,'" said Audrey. More quietly she added, "It's been awhile since we've talked and spent some time together, hasn't it?"

"Yes, and I miss that, but I think I feel something rather serious in the air, Aud. This is the first time that a man has lasted more than a couple of weeks. What's going on?"

"I don't know yet. He's older and cultured and so attractive. I think he finds me interesting, but he's rather reserved. Our teacher-student relationship places us in an awkward position; but if it weren't for accounting, we would have never met to begin with."

Almost as suprised as Clark by her unusually open confession, Audrey stripped off her clay-spattered smock and covered her artwork with a wet cloth before gathering her belongings and waving to Clark as she left the art building.

Back in her dorm room, Audrey laid out the dress she intended to wear. It was a present that her mother had sent from France. The midnight blue silk was a more mature style than she normally wore but would flatter her already lovely figure. It was ideal for dinner with Alex.

Our first "date," thought Audrey. Who would have ever thought we would even be on speaking terms after our first encounter?

Audrey had been skipping her accounting class, having no interest in the subject and no sympathy for the overdue pregnancy of her instructor. She did not even realize that Ms.

Groves had taken her maternity leave until she received a telephone call from the new instructor requesting "Miss Mendenhall's" presence in his office.

Mr. Alex Dawson had been somewhat of a surprise. He was tall, slender and handsome with straight black hair combed neatly off his forehead, and eyes that were the same steel blue as Audrey's. In his baritone voice Mr. Dawson began questioning and then reprimanding Audrey for her lack of motivation, making her feel like a naughty two year old instead of her full twenty-one years of age. He accused her of being apathetic and frivolous with her education. Although Audrey realized that his criticisms were well-founded concerning his class, she still resented his attitude when all she usually received was adoring looks from the other males she encountered. Her fiery red hair and clear, almost transparent complexion often made her the center of appreciative male stares.

After the lecture was over, Audrey took a deep breath, and in a slightly acid tone asked, "What do you want me to do about it?"

Taken by surprise for a moment, Alex Dawson murmured to himself, "Maybe I misjudged her." Shaking his head as if to clear his mind, Mr. Dawson pulled out the grade book and together they proceeded to map out a plan to get Audrey to at least pass accounting and possibly even pull her grade up to a "B."

Because the business department's budget did not stretch far enough to include tutors for students, Alex Dawson volunteered his time to help Audrey catch up on all of the work she had missed. They met for one or two hours on Tuesday and Thursday nights after class to introduce Audrey to all of the information she had already missed. Although these meetings were awkward at first, they both became more comfortable and even found some common interests to smooth over their rough start. Both held a special liking for Mozart's flute quartets and both had lived in France for part of their childhood.

“When my parents were divorced, Mother moved back home to Nice with her family, and I stayed with her until I was thirteen,” Alex explained. “I found the country to be a rich mixture of old and new, and some of the countryside was absolutely spectacular.”

“I only remember a little of what the country was like because I was five years old when we moved to France and eight when we left.” Audrey smiled as she reminisced, “I had a German nanny who wasn’t at all fond of the French. She was always bustling around clucking her tongue because my parents were away at some business meeting or formal gathering in another country, and she was responsible for trying to educate and entertain me in a country full of uppity, nasal-sounding French,” Audrey laughed.

“What happened to your nanny?” Alex asked.

“She went back to her Germany when I was old enough to be placed in boarding schools,” Audrey explained. “We still correspond, though. I don’t think Dorothy ever approved of the way I was shipped around from country to country, but she was never in a position to say as much.”

“That sounds rather sad,” Alex commented.

“I managed,” Audrey replied as she began shuffling her ledgers and other various accounting worksheets into a neat pile. “Are we finished with this for the evening?”

Alex and Audrey’s friendship developed further with each tutoring session. She found herself striving to make him laugh, and going out of her way to win his approval. She was also conscious of the way they refrained from touching each other. This spoke almost as loudly of their awareness of each other as if they had purposely held hands. Realizing that she would soon be caught up with the rest of the accounting class and that tutoring sessions would become superfluous, Audrey invited Alex out for dinner to express her appreciation for all of his help, and because she knew she didn’t want their time together to end.

On her way to meet Alex at a tiny Italian restaurant, Audrey felt a pang of remorse for the evening she was missing with Clark's family. Their big ranch-style home was only a fifteen-minute drive from campus, and was always full of light and noise. Clark had two younger sisters and a set of twin brothers who were the delight and frustration of his father, large and strong with brown, sun-bleached hair and a warm kind smile.

Spotting Alex's black Volvo, all thoughts of regret were banished from Audrey's mind.

At 11:30 that evening, Clark was sitting out on the porch petting one of the newborn puppies that were the latest addition to the family. Without raising an eyebrow or even questioning Audrey's presence at that late hour of the evening when she'd already refused his invitation, Clark moved to one side of the porch swing to make room for her. Disregarding the silk of her dress, Clark dumped the puppy in Audrey's lap to offer her comfort. After two aborted tries, Audrey's usually husky voice spoke in a strangled cry, "He's... he's... he's married."

Groaning in empathy with his friend's pain, Clark stretched out a powerful arm and pulled Audrey's head onto his shoulder to let her cry the first tears he'd seen in the three years he'd known her.

"So this is where you are," Clark exclaimed the next morning as he poked his head into the doorway of the room in which Audrey had been sculpting.

As Audrey turned to greet her friend, Clark gasped in horror, "Oh my, Aud, what did you do to Aphrodite?"

"Worked out some frustration," she replied with a grim smile.

What had been the beautiful statuette was now a lump of freshly kneaded clay.

"What did you do that for?" Clark asked, still incredulous.

"Kneading the clay works out all of the air bubbles;" and depicting 'love' as Aphrodite was a farce that I just couldn't carry out," Audrey said. "Here, Clark, sit down and pose for me and I'll sculpt your bust."

Glancing down at his muscular chest, Clark's expression spoke volumes of the embarrassed confusion he was feeling.

Accurately reading Clark's face, Audrey erupted into unexpected peals of laughter. Finally catching her breath, Audrey said, "Relax, a bust is only the head and shoulders."

Looking a little sheepish, Clark made himself comfortable on the stool across from Audrey's work bench.

Taking the time to really study Clark closely, Audrey was struck by the realization that he was actually very handsome. As her nimble fingers pushed and reshaped the clay, she could almost feel Clark's face under her fingertips. His square jaw and firm mouth would quickly take shape, but as she worked Audrey wondered if she would be able to capture the essence of Clark that made him so...

"I'm planning to drop accounting," Audrey announced, putting a halt to her runaway thoughts.

"Okay," Clark shrugged, not offering any resistance, "but you will have to face him eventually."

Changing the subject, Clark asked, "Will I have to sit here until you're finished? I have class at 11 o'clock."

"No, you can go, but I'll probably need you so sit a few more times to be sure I have a good likeness," Audrey replied.

"Thanks for coming by. You'll definitely do more justice to the clay than Aphrodite did."

"Gee, thanks, I think," Clark laughed as he left to join his physics class.

Audrey's legs shook, and she felt decidedly ill entering BA 220. But now class was about to end, and most of her homework had been correct. She and Alex had managed to avoid eye contact, and she did feel relieved that the initial encounter was over. It still hurt to watch him move and listen to the voice that had been such a real part of her daydreams, but in time, some of the loneliness would pass. It usually did.

Gathering her belongings to leave, Audrey dreaded the lonely evening ahead. She usually enjoyed having a room to herself, but tonight it didn't appeal in the least.

Glancing up to dodge the other students in the hall, Audrey's face broke into a smile of quiet joy as she spotted Clark leaning comfortably against the wall waiting for her.

Strong, patient, kind, understanding, she thought to herself - Maybe Clark was a much better representative of 'love' than Aphrodite could ever hope to be, Audrey surmised.

Feeling content and definitely happy, Audrey carefully tucked her hand in the crook of Clark's arm as together they strolled out of the building.



*Doors open ahead of me
Yet I hesitate,
Afraid of what I might find.
Too late I realize I've tempted fate,
As another door slams behind.*

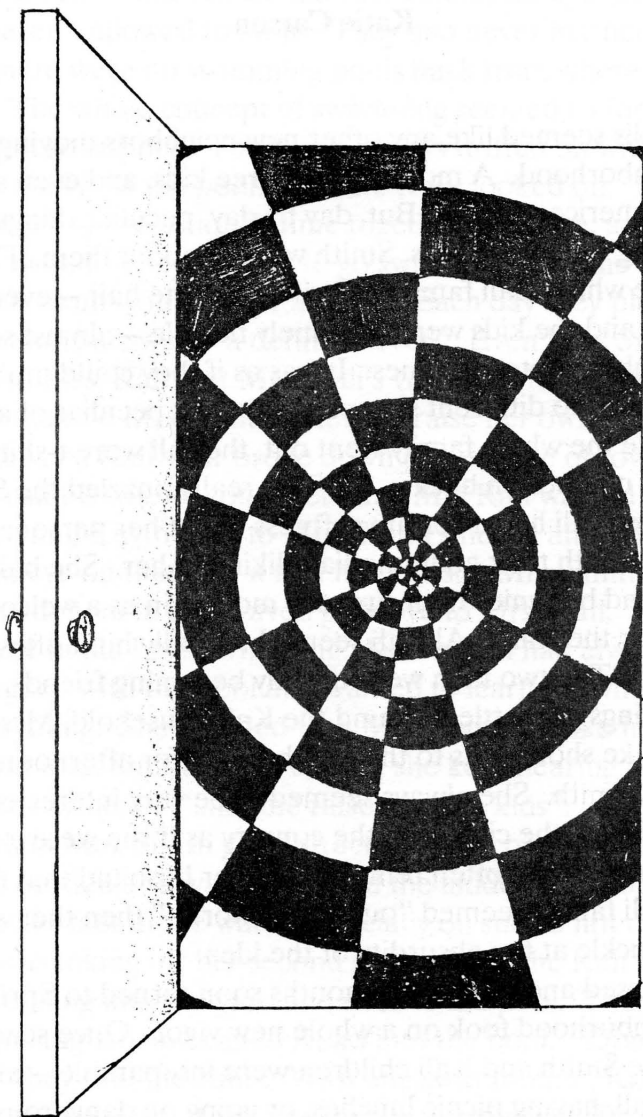
*Too many doors beckoning me
I'm afraid to choose,
Afraid to step forward;
To stay where I am,
Afraid of what I might lose.*

*Blindly, I rush ahead,
Not taking time to decide.
Running, running, faster yet
And afraid of what I might find.*

*Suddenly, I stop and think;
What if I hit a brick wall?
I stop, opening my eyes to see,
And then I start to fall.*

*Dark voices laugh shrilly at me,
They are all around.
"You fool!" they shout, laughingly,
"You fool!" and yet, triumphantly,
Wicked glances gleam at me.
Now I can finally see
Through doubt I'd lost it all.*

Mary Weinzapfel



THE NEW NEIGHBORS

Katie Carson

The Kalis seemed like any other new neighbors moving into the neighborhood. A mom, a dad, three kids, and even a dog -- the all-American family. But, day by day, peculiar things started happening that made Mrs. Smith wonder about them. For one thing, the whole Kali family had silvery, white hair -- even the children, and the kids were extremely flexible -- almost seeming to be double-jointed at times. It was as if they could mold themselves into different shapes. But, most peculiar of all, every time the whole family went out, they all wore t-shirts with the same number on back -- 19. This really puzzled the Smiths.

Still, Mrs. Kali had a certain softness about her personality, and Mrs. Smith took an immediate liking to her. She baked cookies and brownies their first day moving in as a welcoming gesture for the Kalis. Al Kali seemed to really hit it off with Mr. Smith too. The two men were quickly becoming friends.

Once things got settled around the Kali household, Mrs. Kali would make short visits to the Smith house for afternoon tea with Mrs. Smith. She always seemed to be very interested in the neighborhood, the city, even the country as if she were a foreigner. Mrs. Smith often remarked to her husband that the whole Kali family seemed "out of this world;" then the two would chuckle at the absurdity of the idea.

Time passed and the winter months soon turned to Spring. The neighborhood took on a whole new vigor. Once school ended, the Smith and Kali children were inseparable -- always playing ball, having picnic lunches, or going on dangerous adventures in the woods. The two women had never seen their children so happy. But, the happiest day of all was when Mr. Smith uncovered the inground pool for the summer dives into the refreshing water. This had always been their favorite

summer activity as they were like fish in the water.

The Kali kids didn't share the excitement, though, because they weren't allowed to swim. They had never learned to swim since there were no swimming pools back from where they came. The whole concept of swimming seemed so foreign to them, yet so curious. The summer days drifted on with the Smiths always in the pool while the Kalis looked on. The children didn't spend as much time together anymore, and the Kali kids grew sad. They wanted to go swimming with the Smiths, but their mom would never allow it. Each day they pleaded, but got the same answer -- a definite "NO!" Even Mrs. Smith tried to talk to Mrs. Kali, but Mrs. Kali's voice would get harsh, and she always told Mrs. Smith to let her raise her own kids.

One day, Al Kali's car broke down just outside of town, and he had to call his wife to come get him. Mrs. Kali walked Karen, Katrina, and Kevin over to Mrs. Smith's house and asked her to keep an eye on them for a half hour or so. Mrs. Smith gladly welcomed them in and waved goodbye to Mrs. Kali. The Smith kids were in the back swimming. Karen Kali had always been so intrigued with the pool and wanted to learn to swim more than anything. She pleaded with Mrs. Smith to take her into the pool, but Mrs. Smith had to say no; she kept hearing Mrs. Kali's words in her head: "...let me raise my own kids".

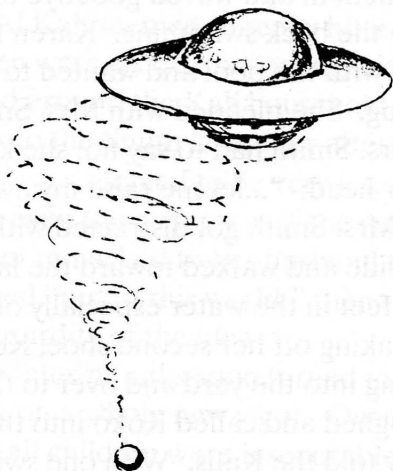
But when Mrs. Smith got distracted with a phone call, Karen slipped outside and walked toward the ladder. She longed just to soak her feet in the water especially on such a hot day. Just as she was taking off her second shoe, Koko, the Kali's dog, came running into the yard and over to the pool. The Smith children laughed and called Koko into the pool. "Dogs like the water," they told the Kalis. With one swift motion, Koko leaped off the edge of the pool and was airborne. Then, it happened.

As soon as the Kali's pet hit the water, something terrible happened. A loud fizzing sound brought Mrs. Smith racing out of the house. Koko began to flame as he turned into a little

silver ball that raced around the pool. It was as if some sort of violent reaction was taking place. The summer day suddenly got hotter as enormous heat was given off from the reaction of Koko + water. Or was it Koko + water?

The Kalis returned a few minutes later, only to find that their dog was gone - completely gone. A tear fell from Al Kali's eye as he hugged his wife and said, "At least it wasn't one of the children. We knew there would be dangers here on Earth."

A week later, the Kalis said goodbye to their friends, the Smith's, and headed for the woods. Deep inside the thickest region was their space vehicle, the "IA," that would take them back home to Potassia.



UNTIL DEATH

*In the morning we watched the sunrise
in its glorious awakening
hand holding hand
lip touching lip
mind crossing mind
words only echoing feelings*

*By the afternoon we were talking
about the day's events
the fun encountered
the tears shed
the laughter uncontrolled
we becoming weak
our love only stronger*

*In the evening we were tired
we rested by each other
"I love you" for the last time that day
"goodnight" for the last time
a kiss and a hug
and then we slept.*

Dallice Hesselgrave

LOVING THE FIRST MORE DEEPLY

Stacey Nicholas

A gust of frigid wintery wind blustered in, disrupting the even warmth of the reception room as I rushed through the outer office into the news room. Putting it simply--up to this point had been hell. Actually, it had started last night as I sat in the city hall waiting for the city council to reach a quorum so it could begin its meeting. At 12:30 a.m., I typed in the final period on my 900 words that, in effect, said that the meeting did not officially happen because not enough people showed up.

The constant humming of the presses and the stale cigarettes and strong coffee permeated the news room. No one noticed that my jeans, sweater, oxford, and loafers, were almost too casual for business hours. And almost no one noticed I was nearly an hour late.

"Hey kid! Whaddaya think, the daily news waits for you to get your fanny out of bed. Well, this is hot off the press--IT DOESN'T." The comments went from loud to louder as the greying city editor stood in his office doorway. Handing me a handful of papers, he continued. "Cut the horsecrap and give me six paragraphs and not six pages. No city council is worth that much!"

Angry thoughts raced through my pounding head.--I wish that he would quit calling me "kid." I'm twenty-six years old. I've been employed here for five years and I'm NOT a kid. That six pages came from my heart and soul; why not just murder me?--Somewhat meekly I responded, "Sure Chief."

Pouring a cup of strong black coffee I grabbed the mail from my mail shelf. Two notes from Barry in sports.--I really must confirm our date for Saturday.--an interoffice memo about parking spaces, and a letter from the *Plainsmen*; the college newspaper that by giving me a chance probably put me where I

am today.--I wonder what they want?--The mail fell into the "IN" tray on my desk.

Sitting at the terminal, I began hacking and chopping at the six page story. Very slowly, painstakingly slowly, six paragraphs emerged from the screen of text.

"KID! Get down to city hall, NOW! Reports say that the mayor and the mayor-elect are going at it again. See if you can get a comment on the merit pay for firemen. Take Hollenback for shots." Having presented his decree, he turned on his heel and headed back to his office.

"Come on Hollenback, you heard him. We can take my jeep." I said as I ran toward the door. Joan Hollenback followed me with her camera bag slung over her shoulder. I liked Joan because she was down to earth and had a great eye for shots.

On the way to the city building she asked, "Why do you think they keep this up? The elections are over, surely this is nonsense."

"Well," I began slowly, "For you and me it's settled, but for them it's not. Ole' Bob Glenn has been mayor for the past sixteen years. Mike Sella's victory shocked him. Sella, being so sweet and wonderful. Can't help but rub it in."

"Yeah, he sure is sweet and wonderful." Sarcasm filled her voice. "After he won, he tried to tell me how to shoot the victory shot. What do you think happened this time?"

"Sella and his decorators were probably in the mayor's office for redecorating. Glenn no doubt felt crowded out before his time."

As we pulled into the parking lot at city hall, Joan justly summed up the situation. "Sounds like Sella needs a P.R. man. The next mayor may do the same to him. No elected official can gain anything by acting like a spoiled child."

The situation inside the city building turned the grey day even darker. A tense silence engulfed us as we climbed the steps to the mayor's office. Tammy, the mayor's secretary, looked up

from her typewriter as we entered.

"Hey Tam. How's it cookin'?" Tam and I had been friends since before I began covering city hall. Although deathly loyal to Glenn, I could count on her to help me out or at least give me some motherly advice. "I hear Sella and Glenn had another run-in this morning."

"Sorry honey, this time it's no comment," she said looking over her half-frame glasses and shaking her head.

Her affectionate, but cold reply told me that something was definitely up. "Come on Tammy, you can count on me to be fair, you know that."

"I know that, but I must also follow orders. And before you ask, the mayor is not seeing anyone today." Softening her harsh tone she smiled, "I'm really sorry, honey, but it's my job." Her pleading blue eyes told me that the situation was tough on her too. Pushing wouldn't get me anywhere.

"Thanks anyway Tam. Don't worry I can find it out. See ya after Sunday Mass for brunch."

We left the office and headed for the nearest pay phone. Perhaps Sella's people would fill me in. While I called them, Joan searched the other offices for a lead. We regrouped in half an hour; from the look on her face I could tell that I wasn't the only one to strike out.

The chief was standing outside his office when we returned. "Well, what's the story?" he inquired.

"Nothing," I replied. "When we got there everyone was a polite 'no comment.' Sella's people were tight too. Even the secretaries were unusually silent. Couldn't get a nibble."

"Let it ride. Sooner or later someone's going to slip. Keep an ear open. Get an editorial by five." Having issued more decrees, he told Tim to meet him in the office and he vanished.

I grabbed another cup of coffee and a sandwich before sitting down to write an editorial. The digital clock on my desk read three-twenty four, I was plagued with writer's cramp. Having toyed with city and national politics, the mayor\mayor-elect

conflict, and the need for a strong press, I could still not formulate anything. Maybe my lack of sleep was catching up with me.

I reached for the growing pile in my “IN” tray; a break would do me good. Gently, I picked up the letter from the *Plainsmen*. They were inviting me to their annual banquet as the keynote speaker.

Memories that I had thought were long forgotten flooded my mind creating a rainbow of emotions. Count Basie's tunes from my first assignment filled my inner ears. My body warmed while remembering standing in the huge office window as the life-giving Alabama sun filled me to the very dark corners of my soul. We'd spend our nights like old reporters down at Rusty's Oyster Bar drinking beer and talking shop. Those were the days. Sure our editor, Thom Botsford, could be just as grouchy as my current editor, but we loved writing. In our idealism the money didn't matter. Only writing mattered--the lead, the ink, the deadline. We were going to change the world all at once.

Suddenly, it hit me. Yes, the idealism is missing now. Our idealism made that first love virgin pure. Putting the letter aside, I turned on the terminal and began:

THE FIRST LOVE IS THE DEEPEST

The newspaper office was in the basement...

