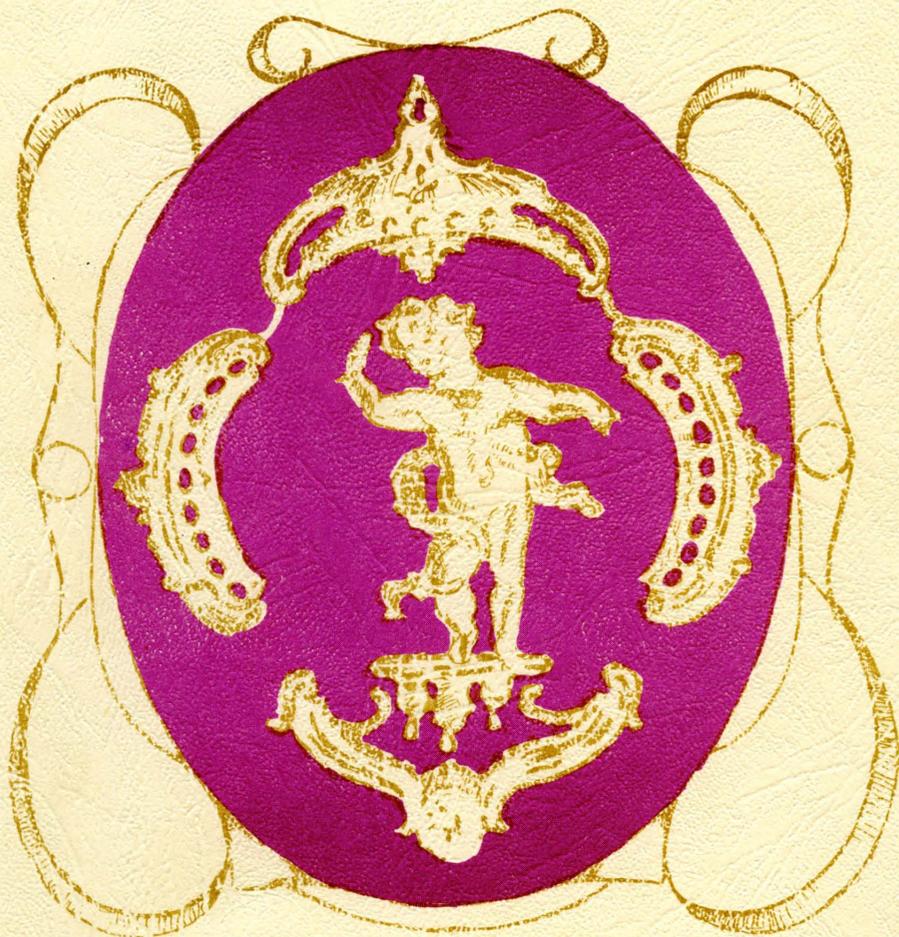


FIORETTI





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 *Fioretti* 

*Marian College*  
*Literary Anthology*



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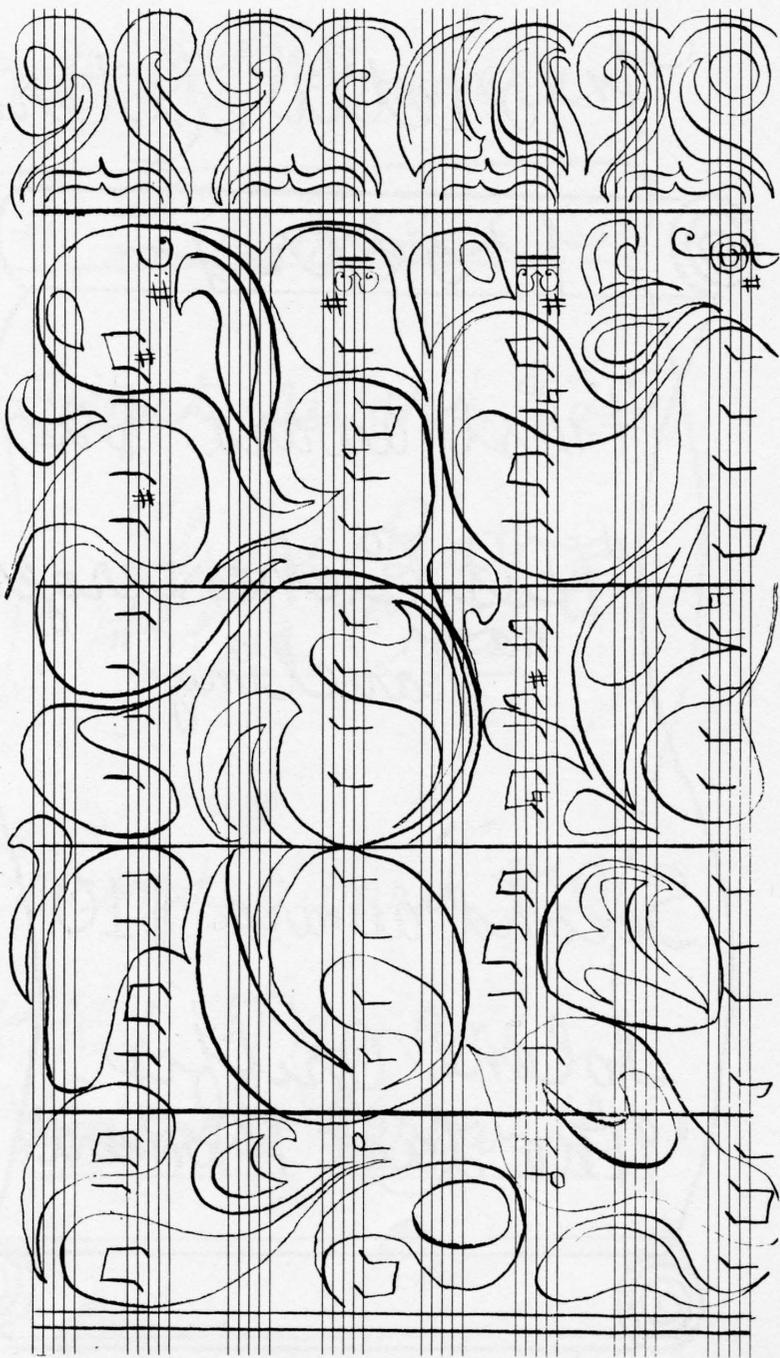
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*Special Thanks To*

*Kathy Andre*

*Dave Soots*





# Fioretti Literary

## Poetry

First award \$25

Tess Eichenberger  
"Traveling"

Second award \$10

Solene Griffis  
"The Last Moment"

# Contest Winners

## Prose

First award \$25

Shari Rathz  
Blue Eyes

Second award \$10

Phil McLane  
Victoria Farewell



## *Traveling*

A white moss hugs the bark  
The sun is high, a cold sap drips  
And underneath the naked wood  
Back soaked and still, I sip what drops  
Eyes squint and close, I hug green thought  
And shiver from the distance -  
Of colors now, and then

This cobweb snow  
Reminds me of you  
Silky stranger  
Beautiful, until the  
Cold  
Tangled sleds, and love

Winters' loneliness  
Is not the time or something  
Missed  
But wanting, at the waking  
And only for a moment  
To fold this hand  
Like a blanket  
That could not keep me warm.

*Tess Eichenberger*



# Blue Eyes

"Lisa and Sean sittin' in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G. How many kisses did she receive? One. Two. Three. Four."

The chant droned on to the beat of the jumprope hitting the pavement. A few yards away, Sean leaned against a tree. The summer sun smiled down on the ten-year-old causing freckles to pop out on his already spotted cheeks and nose. He watched the three girls for a moment longer then turned and walked away. As he walked, hands stuffed deep into his pockets, he pondered over the reason for kissing someone. He surely didn't want to kiss anyone especially that dumb Lisa. Why couldn't she leave him alone?

A motorcycle whizzed by him carrying a leather-jacket clad boy. Sean gazed at the passing machine, he even brushed his tossed blonde hair out of his eyes to get a better look. Now that was more to his taste. Sean could see himself on one of those, zipping around corners or across fields, jumping fences and running from the cops. What fun that would be. And of course dad would be with him, just the two of them. And no girls. Girls always got in the way of things. They were just plain no good.

"Hi, Sean. Would you like to play ball?"

Sean snapped back to reality. He looked at the small girl in front of him for a moment and then answered no. He walked a little distance, his heart hammered inside his chest. He scuffed his tennis shoes into the dirt to look uninterested and to try to cover the sound of his pounding heart. Finally, he looked back. She was sitting on the bench by herself and was looking at the three girls playing jumprope. He leaned up against a tree, bent down and picked up a twig and began to break it into little pieces.

Now why had Shannon asked him to play ball? She should go play with those other dumb girls. As he watched, she slowly got up off the bench, took a deep breath and walked over to the girls. Sean moved a little closer to the front of the tree so he could hear.

"Hi, Lisa. You're very good at that. Can I play too?"

The girl that had been jumping, stopped and looked at the small girl.

"Look Shannon, I wouldn't play with you if you were the last girl alive. Mommy told me about your sister. You're not good enough to play with us. Now go away. Do you hear? Scram."

Lisa walked over and gave the girl a push, a hard, forceful push that caused her to fall to the ground. The ball she had been carrying fell from her hand and rolled into the grass. Lisa and the other two

girls laughed and walked away. Sean took in all of this. His eyes wandered from the retreating girls to the figure of the small girl on the ground. Shannon was crying. Not big loud noises like most girls but just tears running down her face. She looked even smaller sitting on the ground all by herself. Sean walked over to the ball and picked it up. He looked at it for a moment and then at Shannon again. Quietly he walked over to her.

“Shannon? Ya dropped your ball.”

He held out his hand as she looked up. Her eyes are blue, he thought. That’s funny. She stood up and brushed the wetness from her eyes. She tried to smile as she said thank you but her lips just could not seem to form it. She took the ball and began to move toward the bench.

“Hey Shannon. Ya wanna play ball?”

For a split second, Sean wondered to himself why he said that but then the small girl turned and smiled. Her mouth smiled, her body smiled, and even her blue eyes smiled. Then Sean knew why.

As he caught the ball and threw it back, he figured some girls weren’t dumb. Not small girls with blue eyes anyway.

*Shari Rathx*

# *A Lifetime in a Thought*

*In the mist of man's awakening  
the sun creeps slowly over the sky of morning.*

*The earth,  
filled with the sounds of a gentle birth,  
is peaceful.*

*The song of birds rises from the forest  
and the verdant fields respond  
with their own strains of life's melodies.*

*The joys of life are simple  
as the drowsiness of midday  
brings new dreams to the fore.*

*New dreams, demanding dreams,  
pushing aside the childish whims of morning  
as the wind scatters the clouds in its path.*

*The tones and variations of a midafternoon  
entwine slowly, harmoniously with those of morning  
-- ever more intense as man comes into  
his inheritance.*

*A love too soon squandered--  
A freedom too quickly thrown away--  
A hope stifled beyond all recognition.*

*The lights of evening dim, the inflections of life grow soft,  
barely noticeable  
in their anticipation of the fathomless mystery of death.*

*Kathleen Giesting*



The silence envelopes me in a sense of  
oblivion  
I am gradually conscious of nothing  
but my own body  
isolated and alone  
in the void of space surrounding my mind  
I reach out and clutch  
at every shadowy wisp I see--  
imagined or real,  
they slip through my grasping fingers  
and pass on.

A single remnant of a single memory  
lingers for a second,  
only to join the others  
in my world of shadows.  
But in its passing--  
I am suddenly struck with  
the illumination of an endless corridor before me  
and the tender voice  
of a long forgotten love.

Now even that is seemingly gone forever  
Lost in a valley of fever and chills  
Shaking my soul to its very depths  
Revealing my myriad fears--  
crowding around -- pointing--  
accusing me of crimes I will not admit  
even to myself.

I turn on them  
viciously attacking them--  
for my failures to love--  
my failures to respond to love  
and they respond with silence--  
a silence that forces me  
to see I was the one who chose to fear.

*Kathleen Gisting*





# *The Magic of Fog*

once I marvelled at the fog that lay before me.

standing on the outside of a boundless haze  
trying to peer in and discover her hidden secrets

walking into her heart,

I stood on the inside looking in--

Is this what was hidden in the fog?

How could that be? There is no fog here. . .

There she is: the fog lies just ahead of me.  
as I step in, I realize that she has eluded me once again. . .

*Sherry Meyer*







*Sometimes -- I feel  
like a piece of  
cardboard in a pond,  
soaked to a darker shade  
of mustardy brown,  
jostled unwillingly  
by the waves. It stays,  
and lets itself be pushed around,  
floating with a silent hatred,  
gathering more water.  
Slowly -- sloshing some and  
dissolving around the edges,  
pieces becoming dismembered,  
it turns mushy,  
and crumbles, and  
sinks.*



*Jennifer Henricks*

# Transit System

The stop and start of the bus  
doesn't seem to bother me  
a few moments longer to  
gaze at the department  
store windows--  
rich fabrics and soft colors  
decorate stilted maneguins  
with plastered smiles  
and perfect hairdoos.

Each is ready for an  
evening at the opera or a  
day on the beach--  
the lunging rumble  
of the bus disturbs this  
digression.

A bus filled with  
maneguins, laden  
with packages, clad  
in garments for an  
evening of TV or  
a day rearing children  
and fixing meals.

Conversations are muffled through  
the muted sounds of the exit door.

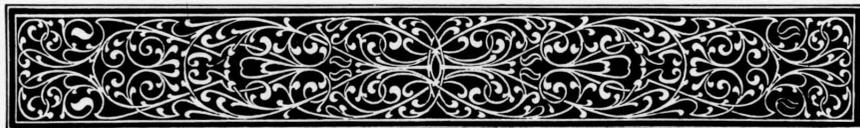
An old woman toddles  
out and slams the door in defiance  
while a radio blares a  
rock tune--

I turn to the window and my  
mind picks up the rhythm  
of the wheel--

past dilapidated buildings  
where LIQUOR BEER  
LOANS ON ANYTHING hold  
the key to an existence.

now and then the buzzer  
sounds that dull, dread  
drone of interruption.  
a person gets  
off and the bus rolls by  
as it does every day  
never stopping  
just passing through.  
The surroundings look  
more familiar now---  
there's where the  
corner drugstore used to be  
where often I would go and get  
a 5 cent COKE  
on a hot summer day.  
Coming up is the hardware  
shop. And the paintings  
we did as kids--  
WONDER why that hasn't gone out  
of business yet.  
THIS IS MY STOP.

*Ellen Dugan*



Leaves and blossoms fall  
And summer passes on like  
The death of a friend.

The night is empty  
And the stars stare back at me;  
Darkness is lonely.

Snowflakes dance softly  
to the winter's soft music;  
Graceful romancing.

Alone in the fields  
With my oxen, plow and seed  
Sunshine laughs at me.





A butterfly's wings  
Visits each cherry blossom  
Leaving a call card.

A Smile flits across  
An old face that remembers  
A young man's mistakes.

The wind whips across  
A farmer's barren, dry field  
That's moistened by tears.

Dry leaves tumble down  
Void of the color of life  
Deceiving my eyes.

With shivers of cold  
Nature snuggles underneath  
A blanket of leaves.

A beach of white sand  
Disturbed by the footprints  
Of visiting gulls.

*Ellen Dugan*

# Victoria Farewell

I'll know I'm not insane if I can face the facts. I loved her, or so thought I did, but I let her go, and now she's not mine any more. She is his and I am alone and I will never, ever, get her back again. The words agree but have yet to convince the silences.

Touching me.

Her eyes.

Her long blonde hair.

Living with him.

And I never so much as, yes, boss, should I have them do this order right now or let them finish the ones they're on. sure thing. Six girls, a hundred twenty windows, twenty apiece, fourty per table. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty. Damn factory, damn heat, damn sweat, damn glass. Why did I let her go? Just keep on working. Survive one day at a time, punch out, go home, take a shower, eat dinner, get stoned. Do these first, twenty apiece, thirty six by eight safety. Sing a song, pass the time. When I was younger, so much younger than today I never needed anybody's five, ten, fifteen, feel so insecure, now I find I've changed my mind I've opened up the twenty apiece, thirty six by eight safety. and I do appreciate your being round do these first. feet back on the ground won't you please, please white vinyl, I'll get it, just a minute.

Who am I to care about them. I'm only a boy she used to go with. They have problems of their own. They worry about getting enough food. I wonder about being sane- aluxurious worry, a fear for the well fed. Why did I let her go. Face the facts. Now I'm alone. I've always been alone. I will always be alone. Even when I held her in my arms I was alone. Our reflections in the mirror by the door as we embraced. I can never get her back, I just have to forget her. Survive one day at a time, keep breathing, someday it will all be over. Someday put it all down on paper, and look at it and say, it's finally over. Someday write it out, someday work it out. Deep breathing. White vinyl. I held her hand and soared, now I have to learn to walk. There will be another girl, as soon as I am ready. Next time I will never let her go. Five, ten, fifteen...

Phil Mc Lane



# *The Last Moment*

My friend, you know  
The climax can be sudden  
And the denouement can be  
Short and Steep.

Someday I will be strong  
And I will speak out  
I will sing out  
Listen, I will sing!

It will be from the top of a  
Mountain  
A Real Mountain, my friend!

All the Emotion will burst  
Tears of Happiness will greet me  
In that moment

My fists will be tight  
Both arms upreaching toward that  
Soft cloud blue sky

My eyes will be that bright blue  
You have seen  
Clear tears on my cheeks will reflect  
Pale light of the still afternoon

That stiff tight grin will spread  
My breath will be deep and hard,  
And my voice, forever,

Still.

*Jolene Griffis*



## Winter Wind



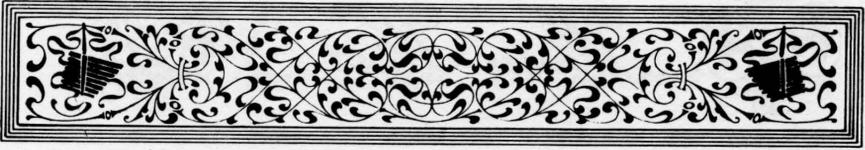
All is still down over the lake  
Yet the cold wind blows  
Swirling, stinging  
Footsteps on the brick walk  
Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.  
My eyes burn and water as it  
Hits me in the face . . .

Through bare branches, dull  
Grayness of the lake, the field yellow,  
And the woods -- dark.  
Cutting, slashing

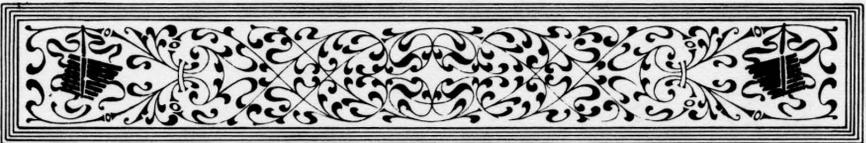
Warmth of happiness fades from my heart.  
Turn away,  
The wind slaps again  
Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.

My eyes followed a silver arm  
High to the top of the pines,  
The banner stood out straight  
Swirling, singing  
Freedom will not be chilled

*Jolene Griffis*



*When artists bend  
their dreams  
and hands  
All ages with  
one key  
unlock*





Pl. 1. 1861

# The Third Shot

The old man swung the door shut and slid the bolt in place. He knotted a fist around his hickory stick and started across the yard with long, loose strides. The boy stretched his legs behind, trying to keep up without running, then broke into a combination walk-and-trot and came up alongside.

"What're we gonna do now, Grampa?" he asked. The boy knew they'd be eating pretty soon because this was his third summer on his grandfather's farm and he knew the schedule as well as the old man did, but he asked anyway.

"Thought we'd rest a bit. Getting pretty hot." The old man pushed back his hat, squinting up at the sun, then wiped his shirtsleeve across his forehead. "Must be near on noon anyway. Almost time for lunch, I reckon."

As they neared the house, the man swiped with his stick at a scrawny chicken in their path and cursed it under his breath. His grandfather didn't like chickens, the boy knew, but he liked eggs for breakfast, so he tolerated them. His grandfather was a livestock man and didn't have much respect for things with feathers on. "I'd give a whole shed of them cluckin', scratchin' things for just the spots off a good Holstein," he'd often heard the old man say. "Always scratchin' and tearin' up the yard . . . wouldn't own one if your Grandma didn't like 'em." And then he'd spit emphatically in the dust.

The boy looked at the hickory stick his grandfather carried and wondered again if it was really as old as the old man said it was. "Climbed clear to the top of a hickory tree when I was a boy," he'd say. "Cut it right outa the top. Had it ever since." Then he'd point to the knots where he'd shittled the branches away and show the boy how after all those years the thick end had worn down like it was made for his hand. "Good hard hickory for a walkin' stick, boy. Ain't no other kind as good."

His grandfather didn't use the stick for walking, the boy knew, because he wasn't lame, but he'd never seen the old man without it, except at night, when he propped it up against the wall the last thing before he climbed in bed. The boy wondered if the old man put it on in the morning, like he put on his pants or boots. He remembered how one day he'd planned to hide the stick to see what his grandfather would do. He'd got scared at the last minute and hadn't done it, but he still wondered sometimes what would've happened if he'd gone ahead and hid it.

"Is it really that old?" he asked again now, mostly just to make

conversation.

"Yup," the old man said, not even hesitating to wonder what the boy was referring to. It was a stock question. He paused and held out the stick for examination. "Probably even older," he said, "cause that hickory tree was already standin' there a good while before I ever come along."

The boy examined the stick carefully, noticing again how the wood was dark now and worn smooth and shiny like polished ebony after years of handling. He tried again to find some trace of blood where his grandfather said he'd almost beat a man to death thirty years ago for stealing his horse, but he couldn't, and if any blood remained it was all mixed in with years of grime and sweat.

They went up the porch steps and sat down, the boy squinting out across the yard and off in the distance like his grandfather did.

"Lunch'll be ready soon," the old man said again, his nose wrinkling slightly as he sniffed the air.

"Yup."

"Smells like ham an' beans."

"Yup."

As they watched the chickens scratch around in the dust, a shadow swept suddenly across the porch steps, flitted off across the yard, jumped up onto the barn roof and was gone. The chickens stirred nervously. Then the shadow was back, this time sweeping across the yard where you could watch it coming from a long way off.

"Chicken hawk."

"Want I should get the shotgun, Grampa?"

The old man studied the shadow. "Nope. Not yet. Still pretty high up. Just sizin' up the situation. No sense wastin' buckshot till he tries somethin'." The shadow grew larger once, then swung off to their left and didn't return.

The boy studied his grandfather and wondered why he didn't want to shoot the chicken hawk. They'd lost three chickens in the last month and that could've been the hawk that got them.

"How come you like chicken hawks, Grampa?"

The old man glanced at the boy, then looked away again. "Don't like 'em, boy, but I ain't got nothin' *against* 'em, neither. They got their place. If it wasn't for hawks the world'd be overrun with chickens . . . wouldn't be no place for people. How'd you like that?" he asked, winking.

"Wouldn't, I guess," the boy answered. "But he's been taking our

chickens and we could've got him easy. Wasn't more than a couple of hundred feet up."

"Reckon so," the man said. They were silent. Then after a while: "Beans sure smell good."

"Yup." Then the boy remembered something he'd seen that morning. "You seen the dead bird around side of the house, Grampa?"

"Nope." Nothing moved but the old man's mouth.

"Wasn't shot. Wonder what got him."

"Hard tellin'. Sometimes they fly right up against a house or window. Can't stop in time, I guess."

"Never seen one like him before."

"Go fetch him, then," the old man said.

The boy jumped off the porch and ran around the corner of the house. He came back holding the bird by a wing, its legs and feet curled up just as they'd stiffened. He dropped it on the porch.

The old man took off his hat. He leaned forward in his chair and rolled the bird over on its back with the side of his boot. The undersides of its wings were golden, the breast a light tan with darker flecks. He studied the bird a long time. Finally he leaned back. "That's a flicker."

"What's that?" the boy asked.

"A kind of woodpecker. Don't see 'em much around here. Ain't hardly enough trees."

"He don't *look* like a woodpecker," the boy said doubtfully.

"Nope. Don't sound much like one, neither, but he's a woodpecker, all right. See his long, sharp bill and the red on top of his head?" He pointed with his stick and the boy nodded.

"Still don't look like a woodpecker, though."

"He is."

"What you think got him, Grampa?"

"Broken neck, I'd say. See how his head's all screwed to one side? Probably flew into the window. That's what messed up his eye." The old man indicated the eye with the tip of his hickory stick. Then he leaned back in his chair and gazed far off southeast, as if he were looking past the prairie, right on past the Mississippi and all the way to Tennessee or Georgia. The boy knew from the look on his grandfather's face that he was remembering, and that meant he was getting ready to tell a story.

"Guess it was when I was eleven or twelve years old," he began. "I'd just got my first gun. A pellet gun it was, the kind you pump up

and shoot on compressed air. It wasn't exactly what I wanted, 'cause I wanted a shotgun, but my folks said I wasn't old enough. Shotguns was for men, they said."

The old man shifted in his chair and looked far out across the prairie to a ridge of low hills in the distance, his eyes filled with remembering. He went on.

"When I got that pellet gun I went right out and practiced till I thought I had the sights down and then took off for the woods after some squirrels. Well, they must've known I was comin', 'cause I saw hardly a one all afternoon, 'cept for a couple that was out of range and hightailed it off when they heard me comin'. I was pretty mad by then, and I guess I took it out on the first thing I come across.

"I heard him a long time before I saw him, heard his strange call comin' out of a thicket on my left. I crossed the stream and went real quiet in his direction. I got almost on top of him 'fore I saw him, perched on a skinny limb 'bout a hundred feet away. That was pretty strange, I guess, 'cause woodpeckers mostly climb around on the sides of trees lookin' for bugs. But I didn't even know what kind of bird he was till I got back home and asked. It was then I found out."

The old man poked at the bird on the porch with his stick, then went on.

"Well, I braced my gun against the side of a gum tree and held it tight and steady . . . then I squeezed the trigger."

"Did you get him?" the boy breathed.

"Nope. I missed. Guess I didn't have the sights figured out yet or maybe the wind'd carried the pellet off course. The bird was still sittin' there callin', his shape black against the sky. So I pumped 'er up real quiet and slipped another pellet in the chamber. This time I aimed even more careful and held my breath till I bet I turned purple." The old man paused and raised the hickory stick to his shoulder and squinted down its wavy length out across the prairie. "Then I fired." He flicked his trigger finger and looked across his shoulder at the boy. "But I missed that second time, too. So I pumped 'er up and loaded again." He stared at the dead bird's twisted neck.

The boy grew impatient. "You got him that time, didn't you, Grampa?"

"Yup, I got him. He jerked sudden like, then dropped backwards off the branch and headed for the ground. But about halfway down his wings opened and he sorta sailed down behind some bushes about fifty feet away.

"Well, I started off to find out what it was I'd hit, but when I got to where he should've been, he wasn't there. I must've looked for half an hour, but I didn't find him. I couldn't figure it out, because I hit him good or it wouldn't've knocked him back off the branch that way."

"Did you ever find him?"

"Yup," said the old man, refusing to be hurried, "but not till I started back home and was crossin' the stream. Wasn't much of a stream, though, 'cause it was the end of July and we was needin' rain, so just a trickle was findin' its way down the middle. Well, I'd just stepped across when I heard this splashin' comin' from upstream. I looked and there he was, thrashin' around on his back a good two hundred feet from where he'd come down. He'd skipped or flew, or both, I guess, till he hit the stream and his wings got heavy with mud and he couldn't get off his back.

"When I got up to him I saw I'd hit him just below the breast, about dead center. It's pretty soft there and the pellet hardly even ruffled the feathers where it'd gone in, but his back was half tore away where it'd come out."

"That was some shot, Grampa," the boy said. He tried to imagine by looking at the bird on the porch how that bird long ago had looked with its back half ripped away.

"Yes, boy," the old man said slowly, "it was a fine shot, that third one, a mighty fine shot. But it hadn't killed him right away and he was still fightin' mad. His gold eyes were all on fire with pain, but he still kept tryin' to get back over and make a run for it. And every time I tried to touch him he'd stab at me with that sharp bill of his and squawl like a wild pig, so I decided to let him be so he could die in peace."

The old man paused. The boy waited for him to go on.

"It seemed as if I waited all day, but he wouldn't die and I decided I'd better shoot him so he wouldn't hurt no more. It didn't seem quite right, though, me with a gun and him helpless on his back with his gold wings all heavy with water and mud. But I did, and he died, like he had to, I guess. I picked him up and he seemed smaller somehow, like just a pile of old rags in my hand. Then I tossed him under a bush and went on home." The old man leaned back and rested the hickory stick across the arms of his chair to indicate that the story was finished.

"Whew!" breathed the boy, gazing down at the crumpled form on

the porch. "They're some bird!"

"Yup," the old man grunted. "And now you know how come I know this here bird's a flicker. He's a flicker, all right, one of the toughest, fightingest birds I know."

Then out in the yard chickens began scattering everywhere. A brown form swooped down with a terrific feathering of wings, talons thrust forward and straining. But the hawk missed at the last moment when his prey darted beneath a fence.

The old man swept his stick to the floor. "Better get the shotgun, boy! He snuck up on us!"

The boy went inside and snatched the gun from behind the door. When he returned, the hawk had already begun to circle again, this time lower, watching for any movement below.

"Stay on the porch out of sight," the old man warned. He quickly checked the chamber, flicked off the safety, then stepped from the porch into the sun, the gun already up to his shoulder. Squinting down the well-oiled barrel, he squeezed off a shot. The hawk jerked in the sky, hung there for a moment, then started toward the ground.

"You got him, Grampa, you got him! First shot, too!" the boy shouted, leaping from the edge of the porch where he'd been watching.

His grandfather grunted. He leaned the gun against the side of the steps and reached for his stick. Then they went out to where the hawk had landed, the boy racing ahead, the old man following more slowly behind. When they got there the hawk's eyes were beginning to glaze over and one of his legs still twitched slightly.

The man rolled the bird over with his foot. "Yup, we got him, all right. Better leave him. Something'll get him, buzzards, I reckon."

The boy looked up. "Can I get a tailfeather to keep?"

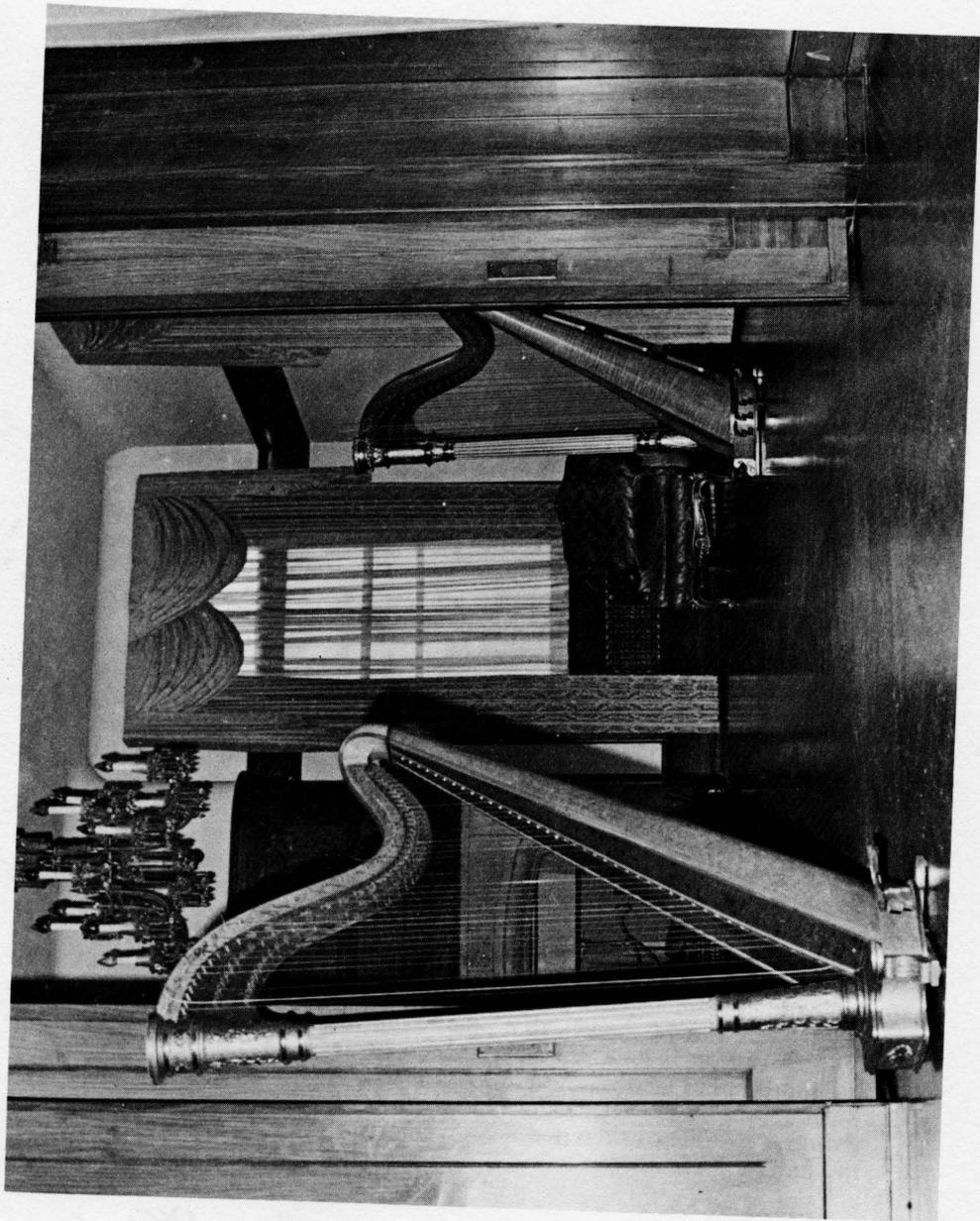
"Reckon so," the old man said, already starting back toward the house. He picked up the shotgun and waited on the steps as the boy returned with the tailfeather.

"Boy," said the old man quietly, pointing out toward the hawk with the gun, "that one out there was necessary. This one here," he said, indicating the bird on the porch, "was too, I guess. But that one back when I was a boy . . . well, that one was different. Remember that."

"Sure, Grampa."

The old man studied the boy, not sure. "Then c'mon inside and wash up before we eat. Better get rid of this here woodpecker first, though." He turned then and went inside, leaving the boy to stroke the hawk's tailfeather.

*Joseph Kempf*





# *The Hurry*



This is the hurry: we are mortal.  
And we know it. Wood strives for tree  
But not for greatness. Trees die  
But cannot conceive of moldering logs.  
Insentient stones wrenched by boys  
From native soil and flung to sky  
Will never strain for greater height.

But man shapes the wood, heaps stone  
To monuments that stand against  
The fading light, the withered leaf.  
Who knows to what greatness stone  
Would rise if rocks could die?

*Joseph Kempf*



*Progress In Regard To  
Nothingness*

*Onward, to the brink of an option of do or die.  
Forward, in such a way as to see but not seek.  
On and on, methodically tramping through fields uncut.  
On toward that brink, only to find a dream come true.  
So Science Plods on.*

*Worse than the fall of the angels,  
Worse than the peculiar abandonment of truth,  
Worse, even than that thing man himself,  
is the thought of the eventual sterility of his soul.*

*As yet, there remains an ounce of existence,  
and still may be found an unsoiled breeze.  
But these are fewer to be found, easier to malign.  
So let us forget, and sing in the new Kingdom of God.*

*Bob Morse*

# *An Excerpt*

Once upon a time, there lived a happy young shepherd who loved his flock and tended it very carefully. But one day the youngest lamb, the shepherd boy's pride and joy, became quite ill. The boy tried everything he could think of to save the lamb, but the poor creature was beyond the realization of the joys of life and thought no more of it. The lad pleaded for the lamb to show some desire to live—just any sign of a will to survive. The little shepherd boy wept, as he still does today, hoping for the lamb to see his love and respond, with happiness to life.

(author's note- I, too, hope the lamb survives. After all, the lamb is each and every one of us. What end would there be for the world, or even just the little shepherd boy, if the lamb is too insensitive to try? I hate to think of it! Oh well, we'll know the end when we see how the lamb reacts.)

*from*

*The* *Book* *Of* *Life*

*Pam Murray*



I can't help it.  
when I think of  
you and how it was  
I smile  
the soft silly smile  
that takes whole minutes  
to go away.

I can't help it.  
when I remember  
certain things you said  
a tiny burst of hope  
holds my breath  
that you really meant  
the way it was.

I can't help it.  
when I think of  
you and how it was  
fear  
catches me  
that you won't  
happen again.

I can't help it.  
the soft silly smile  
that takes whole minutes  
to go away  
comes back to me  
always and finally  
when I think of  
you and how it was.

*Jean M Ryan*



*I came  
with no thought  
that you would  
not also come.*

*The sun slipped  
in and out,  
and finally out  
of the white sky  
now gathering dark.*

*The air became  
thick with wetness.  
the sky  
split  
with thunder that  
released the rain.*

*And I knew.  
the storm, the burst of thunder  
was inside:  
the moment of my knowing  
that you  
had forgotten me.*

*Jean M. Ryan*



Arthritic branches and liver spotted leaves

Clothed in wormy decayed bark.

A metallic winged phantom pierced

the fragile timber flesh

And sucked out the remaining

moments of life.

*E. J.*



# *The Harlot Winter Rose*

From what dreamland silence  
Your words stirred and roused me naked in the winter's night  
Like in spring with creeks that run still beneath the hill  
And how a stone or piece of wood will  
Ripple and wave the quiet sun-reflecting waters--  
Then too to notice that the trees are slightly stirring.

There is something of a silence in the way I would wait;  
Like the silent rain at night.  
Always your eyes like open fields--  
I would plant myself.  
I would know the easy lift of flowers  
With wind your breath around my face.  
The dew my tears would know  
With the soft approach of sunlit hands  
To comfort, to dry.  
And like the silent growth in the forever of life  
I would never be old,  
But new in my decay.

*Bill Divine*



I curse the dying day  
Refuse to mention the day  
Hold tight the fears of the day

In full remorse I cry  
Chained to the fountain  
That knows not the time or place  
Wherein my joyous moments lie

(You, dear sweetest  
Most lovely mine  
Who hast pranced her last  
Thou shouldst cherish the moment  
Of one final wreath)

*Bill Divine*

Ago we weren't so strange--  
So timeless in our dreams.  
The world could wait,  
Or be as impatient as a child for birth.  
Somewhere we'd sometime go somehow--  
Saving now for as it then was--  
Saving now for this?  
Oh count the days,  
Count the ways we'd find to dream  
What dreams were only the scene of neglect  
To something as real as these lies  
We would never have timed to dream--  
Timed and patterned and planned.  
Counting all but the time we saved to lose.  
We gouged and tunneled so deep,  
Blindly mining.  
The foylness we flung  
Finally entombed us as close as was ever a first in something  
we shared  
But as inaccessible as were we ever delved in to be.  
Only now -- through years of time  
Could we listen--  
Listen and believe if for the briefest moment.  
But as you as well  
I as well  
Could attack the clamorous toll of that fierce silence.  
How we wish to redeem the present,  
To find the fault afar.  
Yes! to quiet the silence without the racking effort.  
But that like the pagan of a christian mother,  
Sitting alone -- the choir bells clang  
One by one -- the painful climbing -- stares -- she  
At a place of her skull hidden  
In the life old cross  
Siezed from beneath her pillow.

*Bill Divine*



Behind are the shades of a past;  
Light through curtain and cracked door--  
And all is past.  
The front is blackened  
Even to the grave in the ground.  
There's nothing ahead.  
So walk backwards the distance left--  
Watch the light grow dimmer  
And the closed door become so small.  
Watch and remember whatever it was,  
Till you stumble thankfully in the grave.

*Bill Divine*





# *The Storm*

WILD  
UNTAMED  
RAGES the STORM  
SYMMETRIC  
DIMENSIONLESS  
it  
COMMANDS  
RAGING  
in the  
NIGHT  
like the STALLION, its BLACK  
S  
T  
R  
E  
A  
K  
I  
N  
G  
BEAUTY  
THUNDERS  
and  
FLASHES  
dauntlessly the  
MIGHTY TEMPEST  
THRASHES  
and  
RENTS  
pardoning only that which weathers the  
CHALLENGE

*James Asher*

Softly blowing your gentle caress  
I whisper.... in answer. I hear your  
Serene thoughts;  
Into your heart—  
Filling your heart—  
Pour my words  
Flowing from my lips into you my heart's transfiguration:  
Muffled roar over the cliff in the distance.... inundate abyss

Express to me all that you are  
Angered by a compassionless hunter  
the stoic pines bend  
Grass sways flat  
Shutters slam shut:  
I too am angered by a compassionless hunter  
My bitter violent voice shakes you  
Tearing into your lifeblood with aggressive limbs....  
We fight together

We know each other  
Our temperaments—mutually understood;  
Warmly fingering through my hair  
Tugging at my trembling sleeves  
Basking in warm blinding Sun—  
I know you're happy....  
I know that noble countenance well.  
Brushing across my sun-soaked face  
Swirling within my wind-spun gait—  
We're happy together.  
We know that well.

*James Asher*



If Time would but not come tomorrow  
And I might live without such sorrow  
To see my days of love and laughter  
Tear so harshly from my grasp

Those days of laughter have been so few  
Those days of love—even less  
I placed my laughter in vessels golden  
I placed my love in vessels blest

If Time would but not come tomorrow  
I might yet be spared the sorrow  
Of the memories gone and olden  
Placed in vessels now empty and broken  
Being wrested from my breast.

*James Asher*



Leave me now, I must have silence  
I must wait in darkness deep  
For walk waked stepped steep  
Unknown forest dark and deep.

Take me time, walk me waking  
Cracking branches beneath my feet  
Lead me silently swift and deep  
Walk me waked silent and deep.

Leave me now, soft in silence  
Release my hand darkness deep  
Depart time silence steeped  
Go, leave me, for I must sleep.

*James Asher*

