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Artwork

COVER/ Patrice Will

P. 1/ Lynn McGugan

p. 11/ Mindy Davis

p. 20/ Terrence Hanley

pp. 30, 39/ Bobbie Jackson

p. 34/ Rebecca Schrader

LETTERING/ Sister M. Stella Gampfer, OSF

Typing

Deb Sears

Kent Daniels

Mike Dugan

Editors

Lynn McGugan

Deb Sears

Mike Dugan

Advisor

Sister M. Stella Gampfer, OSF

The White Dove

by Sally Lorenz

I slumped down in the big black vinyl chair in the den, relieved to see the end of the day. The kids were sound asleep after I had been coaxed into reading "Humpty Dumpty" to them three times. My Christmas shopping was finished, and all the bills had been paid. I finally graded my first grade math papers that had been sitting on my desk for the past week. I felt tired but content.

I glanced toward the mantle piece where my mother and father's picture was. "That's what I'll do," I thought to myself, "I'll write Mom a letter." I took the stationery decorated with yellow daisies out of the drawer in the table next to the chair I was sitting in. I began to write: "Dear Mom..." I stopped suddenly and looked up at the picture. She was dear to me, but I could remember a time when she wasn't.

It was during my junior high school years. We were constantly bickering about something, and I'd always end up crying. Mom wouldn't let me go to parties or events at school. I could not play softball in the summertime or be in the Christmas play in the winter. And she never gave an explanation for her actions. We barely spoke to each other. And when we did, it would be only at meals. As time went on, our frequent arguments got worse.

I continued to write: "How have you been? I've gotten all my Christmas shopping done for the kids and Mike. My first graders are getting restless as vacation time gets closer..."

My thoughts returned to the days when I was in seventh grade. Those times had been

rough for me. Everyone at school seemed to be competing against each other somehow. It was either boys or clothes. I wasn't accepted by very many people because I didn't dress like they did, and I refused to be part of a clique. I remember running home after school one day, crying because no one had chosen me to be on a spelling team.

I quickly picked up my pen, aggravated because I could think of only small talk to write. "...I received a letter from Wilma Sharp today. She's still having a great time teaching junior high PE."

My mind wandered again as I thought of Miss Sharp's gym class. She had really helped me out with my problems. We had spent much time after school discussing sports, school activities, and my family life. She was very empathetic towards my problems with Mom. She had helped me to understand why Mother was so over-protective of me. I came to realize that she had never completely gotten over the loss of her first child. I had been puzzled at finding her up late at night, just staring into space. My parents had not planned to tell me I had had a sister until I questioned them about some pictures I had found in a photograph album tucked away in our den closet. Mom had looked happy in the pictures, but she had not been when she told me about the Crib Death of her first baby. Afterwards she told me that she didn't ever want to discuss it again.

I was not being very successful at keeping my mind on this letter. I felt restless, so I put my pen and stationery aside, and I headed toward the kitchen for a cup of coffee. As I walked down the hallway, I noticed the figurine of a white dove that sat on the coffee table. My hands were shaking as I picked it up. I had almost given it to my mother as a Christmas

present when I was in seventh grade. But we had been fighting so terribly then that I had just kept it for myself and had not given her anything.

I took my coffee back to the den and sat again in the big chair. As I did so, I spied the sports page lying open on the couch, and my thoughts returned to Miss Sharp. She had once told me that I looked like a sorry sight in my faded gym suit and K-Mart tennis shoes as I first walked into her class. But my performance soon made up for my appearance. She worked me harder than anyone else, and that somehow boosted my confidence. People around school gradually came to recognize me as an excellent basketball player, and most of my feelings of isolation disappeared. Because of her continued interest and guidance, I went on to play successfully in high school and in college.

I looked down at my stationery. Only six lines had been written. I began to write: "Mike will start his vacation from work next week, and he'll have three weeks off for Christmas. We'll all enjoy the time together..."

I put down my pen and sighed, wishing it had been that way when I was younger. Those junior high years had been the hardest for me. But after Miss Sharp had helped me to understand my mother and her feelings, Mom and I had worked out our differences. I was glad to be reunited with her because I had really loved her underneath all the hate and confusion I had once felt. Now she was my best friend. And for some reason I was missing her now more than ever.

I turned the flowered stationery over and wrote: "Mom, I'm sorry we can't come to see you on Christmas, but the plane tickets are just too expensive for the four of us." My heart began to beat faster. "I'll give you a

call. I hope you and Dad have a beautiful holiday. I'll take pictures of the kids and send them. I'll be thinking of you both." I paused and wrote the last few lines. "...Remember I love you very much. Sara." My eyes were blurry as I signed my name. There had been a time when I couldn't say those words to my mother. Now I was grateful that I could. I addressed the envelope, hoping that I was writing straight. I put a stamp on the envelope and walked down the hall. Once in the kitchen, I reached into the junk drawer for scissors, tape, and brown mailing paper. Then I walked down the hallway and gently picked up the white china dove.

~~~~~

**FIND ME!**

*I cried.*

*find me...*

*And the brush created an image  
~ a crystal ball  
diamonds and colors begin to fall...  
elegantly painted  
it was...  
but not me  
at all.*

*A poet wrote  
~ a character appeared  
politics and propaganda geared  
(cont'd. on next page)*



nuance delusion  
it was  
but not me  
I feared.

FIND ME!  
I cried.  
find me.

An architect designed  
- the building arose  
physicians and lawyers enclose  
miracle healing  
it was  
but not me  
I chose.

A child draws  
- and what? who knows  
a simple masterpiece to him  
content to scrawl  
and I  
to the young one owe...

Lynn McGowan

# Father's Day

by Nancy Horan

It was a bright, early, summer day. I walked out the front door and noticed a small bike on the ground in front of the car. "Tommy, you had better move your bike before I decide to back-up right over it!" I shouted back towards the house. Tommy was nine years old, and he knew what he was responsible for. He ran out of the house and quickly moved the bike out of the way.

"Dad, are you doing anything on Sunday?" he asked as he walked his bike towards the garage.

"Well, I really don't know. What do you have in mind, son?" I asked. "Is something special going on?"

"Dad, Sunday is Father's Day! I know you couldn't have forgotten!" he giggled. "There is a father-son baseball game at the ball park. Coach wants to know if you'll be there."

"I'll see, Tom, but I can't promise you anything." I slowly got into the car, pulled out of the drive-way, and headed for work. The truth was that I had forgotten about Father's Day. It's just another Sunday I figured. I seriously didn't know if I was in good enough shape for a baseball game. I had been pretty busy lately, too.

I neared the factory and pulled into the entrance. As I walked through the main doors, I thought back to the days when I was on a baseball team. I was the pitcher of our county league... not too bad a batting average either. It just took up too much of my time. I guess I didn't like it well enough to stick with it.

Marge was at her desk, so I picked up my messages and checked my schedule. She had been over-worked lately, and we decided to hire someone to help her out. I had to interview someone for

the job at 9:00, which gave me half an hour to prepare for the interview.

I went to my office and got out the manilla folder which held Diana Lee's resumé. She seemed to be very qualified for the job, but I still had to meet her. I was never one to take brains or brass into consideration until I met the person on display. She would have to leave a good impression on me or she wouldn't have a chance. Just then there was a knock on the door. I looked up and saw a pretty young lady standing in the doorway. I couldn't help but smile as I looked around my office... one walls covered with comic strips, my desk covered with papers, and my coat still draped over one of the remaining two chairs. I stood up and invited her in.

"Hello, I'm James Charleston... but call me Jim... I've never quite felt like a James before. Well... have a seat, and make yourself at home. As you can see, I sure do." As I continued to study her references, I wondered what she had thought of me. She was glancing around my office, and I guess my family portrait caught her eye because she picked it up and started examining it.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" I asked as I took out my pipe.

"No, go right ahead. There aren't too many men around who still smoke pipes today. I bet that's a habit you inherited from your father."

"Well," I said, "he did actually...um... give me the pipe." I didn't know how to tell her this, but I did inherit it from my father... the pipe, that is... not the habit.

"Miss Lee," I said, trying to regain a business-like setting, "you certainly do have a good backround." As I talked, I noticed she was still admiring the portrait. Business would have to wait. "That's my family," I told her, "two girls and a boy. My boy is the oldest."

(cont'd. on p. 12)

Saturday, June 18

Sunday, June 19  
- Father's Day -

Monday, June 20



"He looks just like you!" she said. "How old is he?"

"Tommy? Oh, he's nine years old... I think. I'm almost losing track. They grow up so fast. He's old enough to play baseball. He's on the pee-wee league. He pitches... I think...that's what I did when I was his age."

"You played baseball too?"

"Well, for a few years...but...well, I guess I had better things to do."

"Oh, that's too bad. I bet your father was rather disappointed when you stopped playing. Wasn't he?"

"My father? Oh... I suppose! I don't really know... but...um..." Before I could figure out what to say, I was interrupted.

"I bet he really enjoys seeing his grandson play!" she said.

Just then Champ walked in. "You about ready for lunch, Jim? Oh, excuse me, miss. I didn't realize you were still here! I'm Tim Champer. Call me Champ. Sorry for the interruption."

"That's okay," she said looking at the clock. "I didn't really know it was so late...I have to be going." She quickly got her things together. I walked her out to the main desk, and she left.

Champ and I had lunch, and soon the work day was at its end. I got into my car and started home. As I pulled into the driveway, I saw the same blue bike that had been in my way that morning. I impatiently honked the horn, and Tommy quickly ran out and moved the bike.

"Tommy," I said as I got out of the car, "if you don't start taking care of your belongings, you're going to have to give them up."

"Okay, Dad. I'm sorry. Have you thought about the game yet?"

"Tommy, I've been very busy lately, and I really don't know if I'll be able to make it." Tommy's head lowered and he slowly walked into

the house letting the door slam behind him.

"Oh well, maybe next time," I thought.

I walked into the house and looked over towards the fireplace. The wall looked so empty. I really needed to get something to hang there. I just couldn't handle putting his picture back up. I guess I still missed him too much.

I went to the kitchen where Jean, my wife, was making supper.

"Aren't you going to Tom's game tonight?" she asked.

"I doubt it. I have lots of work to catch up on."

"Jim, this is his last game, and if you don't start really being his father, it won't be work you'll be worrying about catching up on!"

Supper that night was quiet as was the rest of the evening. I looked in on Tommy before I went to bed, and as I watched him sleep I wondered where all the years had gone. I didn't even know who had taught him how to play baseball. It wasn't me! What had I been missing?

On my way to work the next day, I thought about what Jean had said. She was the only one who really knew my feelings, and she was the one who could get through to me.

I walked into my office. I was so glad it was Friday. Now I would have a week-end to catch up on everything. Maybe I'd have time for the game Sunday. I would have to see.

I took my pipe out of my desk drawer. It had been my father's and I knew I would never forget that. My thoughts were interrupted when Champ walked in. We had been buddies since high school and now we even worked for the same company. He took a seat directly in front of my desk and nervously twiddled his thumbs. His face was pale and his eyes red from anger... or tears maybe.

"I lost my father this morning," he said.

I was in a state of confusion and I didn't know what to say, so I kept quiet. "You know," he continued, "he had a bad heart...and...well, this morning it failed him. The ambulance got caught up in traffic. They didn't get there in time to save him, so I lost him. Before I really got to know him...before my little boy got to know him... he's gone!" Still dazed, I just sat there and stared at him. He got up from his chair and left the room. The door slowly closed.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, but I knew what he was feeling. I got up, grabbed my jacket and left. I was my own boss. I'd just have to get caught up some other time. I pulled into the driveway and went into the house. I walked to my den and just sat there at my desk. I was so shocked.

I had never seen such a scared look on Champ's face. I pulled open my desk drawer, and I noticed the edge of a picture frame stuffed under a large stack of papers. I moved the papers off it and picked up the picture. It was my father. His large muscular body stood casually in front of our old house. He had his mitt and baseball in hand, and he had that same familiar smile on his face. As my eyes scanned the scene, I felt the pain come rushing back. My father had been killed in an automobile accident when I was only 13. I remember being mad at him when he left for work the morning of the accident. He was very strict and since I hadn't been doing well in school, he wouldn't allow me to play baseball for a month. At 5:00 that evening I heard a knock on the door. I figured it was Dad just being a clown (as usual). I went to the door expecting to be greet by my father. I decided we would sit down and discuss the baseball incident. Soon everything would be resolved and we would be buddies again. Instead Ralph Lewis,

the police chief, was there when I opened the door.

"Is your mother here?" he asked. I yelled to Mom and headed back to my room, but as I started up the stairs, I heard him telling my mother the news. I'll never forget her voice.

"Is he dead?" She sounded so sad.

"I'm sorry!" was all he could say.

I couldn't believe it. How would I ever be able to go on without telling Dad I still loved him? I knew he only wanted the best for me. I understood about the baseball, and now I'd never be able to tell him.

The funeral passed quickly, and I was back on my regular schedule soon. I quit the baseball team. It just wasn't as fun without Dad in the crowd. Every time I walked into the house and saw his picture hanging on the wall, I felt a lump forming in my throat. "Why did it happen to him?" I'd always ask myself.

I never realized how much I was like my father until I grew older. I suddenly started liking his rules. They all started making sense, especially when I had three children of my own. But I still hadn't been able to look at his picture without feeling guilty. I had done everything for him. I even made straight A's in high school, just hoping he could look down from wherever it is that we go when we're through on earth and be proud of me. I never did quite feel that our fight was resolved.

Now I kept looking at his picture. Even though it hurt, I couldn't put it down. I just kept staring at his face, and in his eyes I found the understanding I had been looking for all those years. I felt tears forming in my eyes, but instead of holding them back as I had so many times before, I let them fall. I was crying for Champ... for his loss, but most of all I was crying for me. I cried for all the



years I had spent trying to live up to my father's dreams. "Today I'll be me," I said to myself. I'll start living for my own dreams. I finally knew why I had been avoiding the chance to let go. I took one last look at his picture. "Good-bye, Dad," I whispered. Even his eyes were smiling.

Sunday morning I woke up and for some reason I felt really calm inside. I got dressed and went to the kitchen. Tommy sat at the table with a sober look on his face.

"What time is our game today, buddy?" I asked him.

"Dad... are you going to play? You are... He's going to play!" he yelled, running around the room. "Dad, we'd better hurry and get ready. It starts at 10:00... we don't want to be late!"

We got ready and made it to the ball park just in time. It was Father's Day, and I was finally being a father. The sons beat out their fathers, but it was worth the battle, because I still was a winner.

When we arrived back at the house, Tommy ran in ahead of me to tell everyone about the game. I walked into my den and saw the picture sitting on my desk. I decided it was about time to fill up that empty space on the wall. I found my hammer and a nail and went out to the living room.

As I finished hammering, Tommy ran into the room.

"Dad, what is that?" he asked.

I picked up my pipe and lit it as I looked at the picture. "That, my boy," I said slowly, "is your grandpa!"

"Grandpa?" he questioned.

As I felt myself finally letting go, I heard my little boy mumble.

"Well... What do you know... Hello, Grandpa!"

# Subterfuge

by Terrence Hanley

The grating cry of the gulls that persistently followed the ship greeted Captain Montgomery Folsom as he emerged on the deck of his command, a splendid frigate, the HMS Zephyr. The crew of the ship was hard at work as he surveyed them. He inhaled deeply; in so doing, he incorporated into his body the salty spray--the spirit of the sea--without which he felt he could not live. In this great and good world, he concluded, there is nothing more wonderful than the life at sea.

"Good morning, Captain," said the First Mate.

"That it is, Mr. Cambridge. Our position?" inquired the Captain.

"115°25' west, 35°15' south, Sir," replied Cambridge.

"Thank you. Anything out of the ordinary to report?"

"Well...yes, Sir. The men pulled a cask from the sea. It--it contained a message."

"You've managed to pique my interest, Mr. Cambridge. Let's have a look."

"Yes, Sir." The First Mate handed the Captain a musty, torn parchment. The Captain unrolled it and found a short passage written in thin, barely discernable ink. "It seems an odd thing, Captain. Doubtless, this is the account of a madman. In any case, it is a bit disturbing."

The Captain motioned for silence and read from the parchment aloud: "You may think me insane for what you read here, but read all of this, I beg of you, for your own sake. If there is anything our explorations have taught us, it

is that there is more to the universe than we suspect--and much more than we realize in our most horrific nightmares.

"I was commissioned on the HMS South Seas, which, as you may know, was wrecked some months ago. I escaped the tempest that sank her and swam ashore to a deserted island. Whether it has been mapped, I know not. No matter, in these months of exile, I have not seen a human. Nor have I seen any evidence that humans exist. Perhaps they don't, perhaps--no, I must hope beyond hope for the salvation of all that we hold precious.

"Today, July 17, 1837, as I was gathering wood, I saw the footprints--those that were to lead me into haunts of horror that no human has experienced before. The prints were small and three-toed--like nothing I had ever seen before or that I hope to see again. They led from the high water mark on the sand--that of six hours before--into one of the many caves on the island. There were a multitude of prints, indicating much activity in the hours while I slept. I decided to investigate.

"I fashioned a torch and carefully entered the cave. I descended slowly into the bowels of the earth; daylight disappeared. As I walked, I heard--or perhaps felt--a resonant hum that grew more intense as I proceeded until, as I reached a large chamber, it forced my own thoughts from my head. Then I came upon a horrendous thing: the ceremony that was to shake me to the soul. There below me was a primitive stone altar upon which sat a travesty of life as we know it; it was indescribable. It was squat and ringed with tentacles, and it had but one eye and a slobbering orifice for a mouth. Surrounding this creature were numerous, mockingly human-like forms. One of the man-things stepped forward with a steel knife, and the

tentacled thing screamed a hideous scream as the man-thing sliced open its torso. A sickening, yellowish ichor spilled from the wound, and a fetid odor filled the chamber. I reeled with sickness and shock as the man-thing plunged its hand into the wound and extracted a greenish, pulsating blob. The hum that I mentioned then became a strange, buzzing voice. It was as if the thoughts of the things were so powerful that they invaded my own mind. The voice said, 'May our assembly, with the power of this organ, extend its hegemony to include this world and its inhabitants....'

"Then it became too much for me. I screamed without knowing it; I screamed and screamed. I had gone mad as the entire consciousness of the things flooded into my brain. They mean--good God, save us--to take over the entire world and cast all of humanity into a vast, evil chasm of darkness and horror and despair. They have come from some other plane of existence, and they mean to subjugate us to their own blasphemous rule.

"Without knowing it, I fled upward toward the light of day, if there was any. I stumbled out of the cave into a cold, grey mist that had covered the island. The creatures pursued, but my instincts led me into hiding. They searched for me in vain. Presently, they came together, and then I witnessed from my hiding place the completeness, the diabolical instrument of their scheme. They distilled a liquid from the organ they had removed from the creature, and from this liquid drank three of the man-things. Bear with me now; what followed was a bizarre transformation that with it carries terrifying implications: The three were transformed into gulls. The gull-things took to wing and began to search the island for me. I realized then that I had to warn the world, so I fled to my hut and be-



gan to write this account. I was soon startled by a man, a British sailor who said he had come to rescue me. For a moment I was elated and relieved at the prospect of being rescued, but I realized suddenly that this was no man; It was one of the man-things in the guise of a man. I struck out with my knife and all but decapitated the thing. Its body fell and slowly transformed into its true shape.

"Now as I write this, I am on the beach. I know there is no hope for me, but I can deliver this message to humanity and hope and pray to God--if there is a God--that someone finds it before it is too late. For you see, with this method of transformation in their hands, these creatures can assume any identity--heads of state and religions--and in so doing, they can eventually lead humanity into ruin without being suspected. Beware, you must--"

The passage broke off abruptly. A light breeze blew across the deck of the Zephyr, but a trickle of perspiration ran from Captain Folsom's brow. He looked up and saw three gulls circling innocently around the masts of the ship.



## The River's Edge

No other world is as wandered free;  
four-walled, murmured dream...  
creativity.  
Your poetry refuses living shelved;  
your childhood secrets are forsaking  
old.  
Imagination churns the heart and  
skill,  
yet rivers guide these minds we  
call our own.  
Beneath the gaze of currents'  
direction,  
where water skims dark forests  
cold and bare,  
wind-whistled time has spoken  
its question:  
what man has ever sought...  
what river dared?

Kent Daniels

# *What's in a Name*

by Tom Clegg

Teenagers are strange creatures. They strive hard to be accepted and yet they are so afraid to tell you who they really are or how they really feel. Charlie was no different. However, I didn't realize this until it was almost too late.

I had known Charlie scarcely a week, and if I am to be totally honest, I hadn't given myself fully to him as I had once promised to do. I guess the problem was that I had met him at such a bad time. I remember our introduction at Mrs. Sandstone's office, and the circumstances were less than happy. I was there to complain about Jeannie, an addict who had been taken from the halfway house; Charlie was there to find a friend. He was sarcastic and I was angry. I didn't like him too much that first day, in fact that whole first week was touchy.

I had been working at the house for two years, and in that time I had come into contact with over fifty teenagers; each one hurt by, tired of, bored with, or angry at the world. Most of them I felt I had reached in some way. It's a satisfying job most of the time, but it also has a lot of pains. Charlie is a good example of that.

Our first conflict began on the

way back from the welfare office.

"How long have you worked at the House, Mr. Salem?" Charlie asked.

"You can call me Jack," I said, "I don't like last names."

"I don't either," replied Charlie in an effort to keep the conversation going.

"Why? What's yours?"

"Don't have one," he replied in a cocky voice.

I wasn't ready for a battle of wills at that time. I was still very angry with Mrs. Sandstone for taking Jeannie away from me. I was tired and frustrated.

"C'mon, Charlie, let's quit playing games. What's your last name?"

"Lay off! I'll tell you when I'm ready."

Normally I would have taken that as a good sign. Anytime a kid doesn't flat out refuse to talk, the chance that he'll open up is really good. But like I said, this wasn't a normal day. Instead of passing the conversation with trivial talk, I let out my frustrations. Unfortunately, Charlie had to pay for it.

"What's wrong with you kids today?" I snapped, "You come here seeking help; holding out your hands, but your'e afraid to let anyone grab them. I can't help you if you don't at least tell me the essentials. Is your damn name all that private a matter? Do you think I can read minds? Am I supposed to know who you are and what all your problems are? You think I have all solutions? Well, I don't! And

if you don't want to tell me, then to hell with you. I don't really care!"

Charlie sat there. A bit stunned, perhaps, that I had been so hard on him. I realized my mistake when he didn't talk the rest of the way back to the house. Instead of getting a closed kid to open, I took an open kid and closed him.

All teenagers have pressures, but those of a runaway are even greater. Runaways don't have to worry about who they're going out with on the weekend or whether or not they should try pot or how to get rid of their acne; they worry about whether or not they'll have to steal to eat, if they'll have a place to sleep at night, or if they'll get mugged for the thirty-five cents they have hidden in their sock. It's amazing that any of them survive.

Charlie was closed. However, as the week progressed he tried desperately to open up. Somehow, for some reason, I refused to let him. His first few days were uneventful. He got along well with the other kids. He even smiled a lot. However, he smiled alone; I refused to be a part of his world. The first few days weren't bad, but Friday was different.

Friday had to be the worst day in my life. Charlie came into my office at his usual 10:30 A.M. time. I was on the phone talking with Mrs. Sandstone. "I realize I misunderstood what you were saying, Mrs. Sandstone, but I saw her out on the street again last night. She needs a place where



people care about her; can't you see that?"

"You have someone in her place, don't you? Uh... Charlie, how's he doing?"

Realizing the hopelessness of the conversation, I slammed the receiver down. Looking up at Charlie, I stated, "If it weren't for you, Jeannie would still be here."

"Listen," he replied, "You don't need me, and I sure as hell don't need you! I don't need anyone! I came here looking for help, and you know what I found out? No one cares! No one!"

"Charlie, wait!" I said following him out the door. It was too late. He was already up the stairs and down the hall. Charlie wasn't really hard to understand. He needed a friend and I refused to be there. I couldn't be there. How could I be a part of the person who took Jeannie away from me? Especially Charlie; he didn't even need me. His head was on staighter than most kids I dealt with. He didn't need me; not like Jeannie did!

The minutes passed and he didn't come back. I went up to find him. I knocked on his door; no answer.

"He's in the bathroom, Jack," said Billy, one of the other residents.

I went to the door and knocked. "Charlie, can we talk? Listen, I'm sorry. Come on out, and we'll finish our session." No response. "Charlie... Charlie, are you okay?" Minutes passed and still no answer.

(cont'd. on next page)

My legs were trembling as I kicked in the door. "Oh my God!!" Charlie was lying on the floor in a pool of blood, his hand still clinging to the double edged razor.

"Call an ambulance!" I shouted down the hall to anyone who was listening. What have I done, I thought as I began making a tourniquet to stop the bleeding."

"Is he alive?" someone asked. He was; but I was too numb to respond. All I could think about was all that I could have done for him. I could have helped him if I hadn't been so damned selfish.

The ambulance arrived. Two medics worked for about five minutes on the motionless body before they were ready to transport. "Where are they taking him?" I asked one of the half dozen police officers who were standing around the area.

"He'll be going to Wishard," he replied, "but I'll need to ask you a few questions."

"You'll have to wait," I said as I grabbed my coat and headed for the door.

My mind wandered as I drove to the hospital. My God, how will I ever be able to face him? What if he doesn't live? How could I be so insensitive? How could I just sit back and kill him? For a brief moment I even thought about what Mrs. Sandstone would say when she read about it in his files. The hospital was just a few blocks away, and I arrived shortly after the ambulance.

"They just brought a young boy in here," I stammered to the receptionist, "How is he?"

"Are you his father?"

"His guardian. I'm Jack Salem. I run the halfway house; he's a ward of the state. Is he okay?"

"The doctors will let you know as soon as they can. I need to ask you a few questions. What's the boy's name?"

"Uh...Charlie," I said as my mind drifted back to her questions. I looked down the hall. I needed to see him. Even if it was just to see him wheeled from one room to another; I needed to see that he was alive.

"Last name, please."

Last name? I thought. I don't even know his last name. My God, I know nothing about this kid. He needed me and I totally ignored him. I thought back to the sessions we had before the accident. He tried so hard to get me to like him, to even acknowledge him. How could I be so unresponsive? I began thinking about signs he might have shown. He seemed pretty much together. He seemed happy. How could he be so alone?

"Mr. Salem, I need a last name."

"He doesn't have one... or at least we don't have record of it. I couldn't believe I didn't know his last name. "Can I see him now?" I asked, half pleading. It must have worked. She made a phone call and then said, "He's still in emergency. He'll be in room 412 when he gets out. You can wait for him there. I climb-

ed the stairs to the fourth floor, found room 412, and waited.

Two orderlies wheeled him in a few minutes later. He was still unconscious, would be for about an hour I was informed. I waited by his bed, holding his tips of his fingers, the only part of his arm not covered with inches of gauze.

My mind began to wander. Will he know me? Will he even care? I have to help him. He needs me... I need him. I've already lost Jeannie. I can't lose him too. My God, Charlie, forgive me.

I sat staring at him, "My God, he's just a boy." A smile was on his face.

He awoke after an hour or so. A bit groggy, he looked about the room. I choked back my tears. "Charlie, I'm sorry," I said as the tears started streaming down my face. I couldn't control them. He didn't say anything, just turned his head.

"Charlie, I want to help. I need you." He turned his head back. Slowly, cautiously, he began to smile. I smiled back.

"Charlie, I'm sorry."

"It's okay, Jack," he said, "But call me Mr. Benet."

~~~~~  
*Taking the clay of our lives
Shaping and reshaping
We become new—*

SMPL

Experiment 32:

Inspiration / Distillation

Envigored vat, organic gum
that jumps
jolts
bumps the vapor trails
to our Elaison arm,
Your Spirits curl slick-armed at the
edge
-- a mental block --
clinging, clinging...
And we wait
For that first drop,
disregard the test
when rest-assured we know our
balancing, Be-laboring has
brought us
Ortho-iodotoluene
-- or thought --
an image prayed for
And received to squelch the thirst,
the fear,
that we'll be bare-beakered, then
bone-dried, calcium chloride-ed...
Oh

(cont'd. on next page)

Come that fretted drop! With
slick-oil speed
condense and rain upon this
receiving ear—
a Pyrex bulb prepared
and yearning to be
filled.

Deb Seats



The last lamb
disappears into the barn—
clouds cover the moon

Drew Appleby

Civil War Veteran

by Julie Vogleweide

The motorcycle came to a screeching halt at the foot of the driveway. The rider flipped up the face shield in an attempt to see better, but the cyclist still was unable to make heads nor tails out of the notice that had been nailed to the telephone pole which stood next to the drive. The rider dismounted the bike for a closer look. As the cyclist removed the helmet, gray locks of hair were visible. The small structure was clad in a black leather jacket and fringed Levi's. A string of beads weighted down by a metallic peace sign hung around the figure's neck. The rider was approaching the sign but was halted by an interruption.

"Georgia, Georgia!" shouted a small boy. He was wildly waving his arms to get her attention, as if the loud cries were not enough. "I have a new baby brother!"

"Why Joey, that's just dandy," replied the woman. "Have you seen him yet?" she asked as she stooped to the child's eye-level.

"No, but Dad said he's a real trooper. Mom had to work only two hours to get him."

"Maybe your ma could talk some sense into my daughter's thick skull."

"What's a skull?"

"Oh, just never mind," sighed the old woman. "What's your little brother's name?"

"Jeremiah Joseph Cleaver," sang Joey. "Since I'm already seven, Dad said I have to feed 'em his bottle."

As Georgia stood up, her glance again caught sight of the notice. "What's this all about?" she asked the freckled-faced, strawberry blond, who was by this time sitting on

her motorcycle.

"mmm..., I donno, errr..." Georgia approached the sign and read:

NOTICE

Effective as of the first day of June, 1982, all property owners must evacuate their property. The area west of Forty-second Street and east of Twenty-ninth Street has been chosen as the site for the new Interstate 30 bypass. The state government will purchase all real estate at the present market value and will make adequate amends for housing ...

"Why, this is an eviction notice. How dare they force me out of my home like some sort of pack-rat! My granddaddy stood his grounds during the Civil War and would not let any Yank take away his farm," exclaimed Georgia waving her finger in the air. "No Yankee hotshot is goin' to make me leave my home!"

As if preparing for a battle, she marched over to her motorcycle, strapped her helmet into place, straddled the seat, and headed downtown to fight city hall. A backfire followed by a squeal and Georgia was off. Joey barely scampered off the motorcycle in time and was left sitting bewildered on the curb. At the courthouse she was pushed from one room to the next. The response was always the same: "I'm sorry ma'am, but we cannot help you here." No one seemed to care. After a while the game became monotonous, but before leaving, you bet she let her opinion be known. She rattled on to the poor receptionist, creating such a scene that the receptionist had to have her sense of balance repositioned. The furious old woman spun around and left. She hastily pulled a

small photograph out of her pocket and muttered, "Don't worry, Ashley. There will be other ways."

Georgia sped into the driveway. Before she had a chance to pull the hand break, she plowed smack-dab into the side of the garage. She bounced slightly backwards but managed to get back on the right course again. She proceeded as if nothing happened and parked the vehicle in the garage.

A stylishly dressed woman rushed out the front door. "Mother, you've left your door unlocked again," the young woman scolded.

"I trust my neighbors," snapped the wiry woman.

"Where have you been? Mother, you have got to start acting your ..."

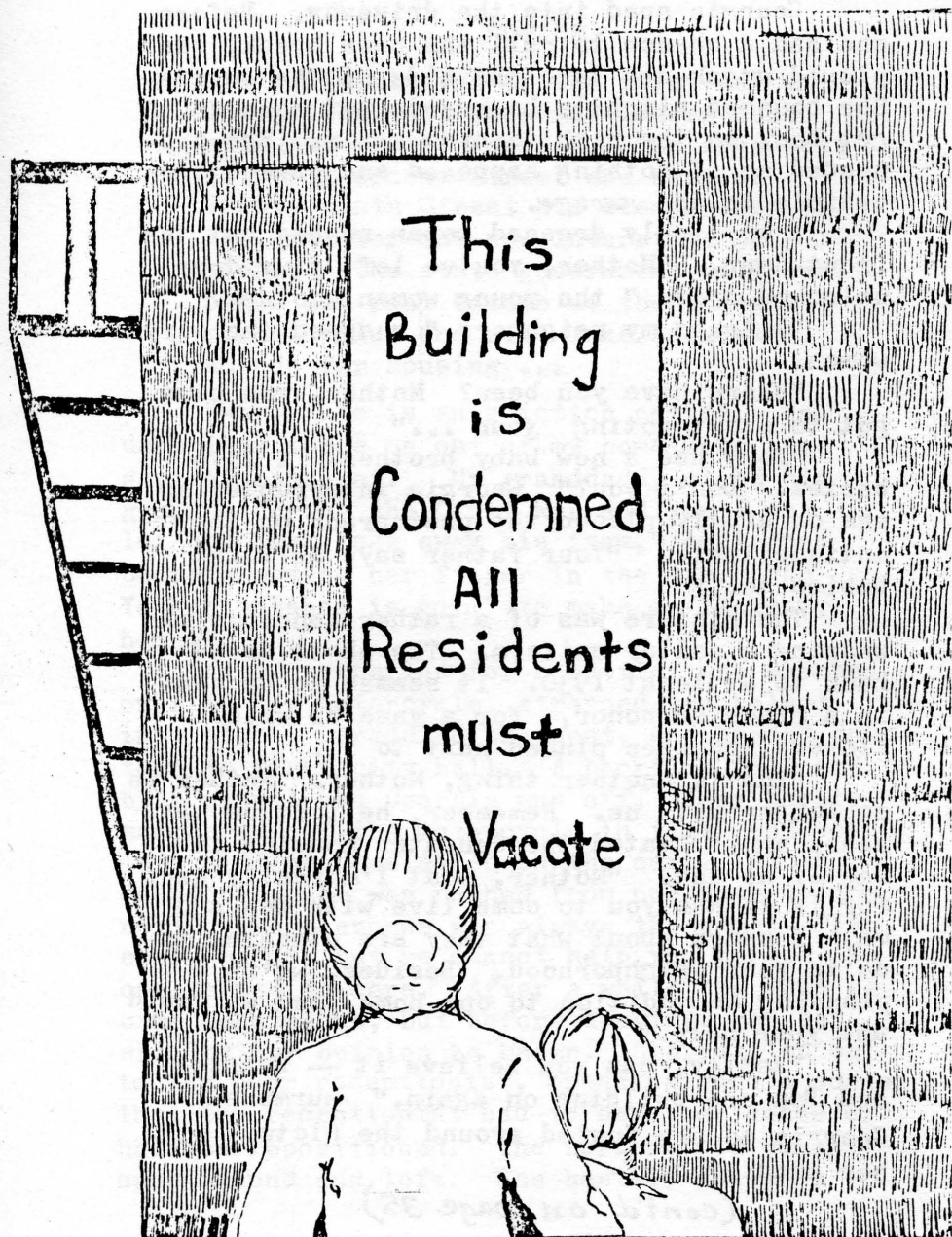
"Joey has a new baby brother. I love babies. Don't you?" Georgia interrupted as she carefully placed the photograph on the antique table. "Your father says he liked babies too."

The picture was of a rather handsome man wearing a sailor uniform. The photo dated back to at least 1930. It seemed to be set in a place of honor, for a vase of wild flowers had been placed next to it.

"That's another thing, Mother. Father is no longer with us. Remember, he left us ten years ago," stated the daughter knowing it was of no use. "Mother, what I'm really here for is to ask you to come live with Don and me. I heard about what they are planning to do to your neighborhood. Besides, we're planning an addition to our home, and we could use your help."

"Ashley, can you believe it -- Scarlet and Don are building on again," murmured Georgia as she dusted around the picture with her handkerchief.

(cont'd. on page 35)



"Oh, Mother, I'll talk to you some other time when you're willing to listen." Scarlet fumbled through her purse for the car keys. "I'll be back," she called as she unlocked the door to her Mercedes.

"No hurry," snickered the petite woman waving from the porch.

A few days passed with the talk of the neighborhood buzzing of the upcoming crisis. The highway was to invade in only months. The highway meant that most of the homes would be flattened by that monster, the bulldozer, and replaced by several high-rise apartment complexes which were to accomodate the homeless. The families of the neighborhood gathered in the park pavilion to discuss a plan of action. A petition was sent from home to home, but Georgia would not sign it. She refused to write her name next to any "darky." When Georgia and her husband moved to the North years ago, during the depression in search of employment, only white folk had lived in the neighborhood. Now only a few white families remained. The stubborn old woman refused to cooperate and was determined to do things single-handedly.

Her first plan of attack brewed in her mind, but she would need Joey's help. The plot entailed barricading the entrance of their street. Georgia's garage contained just the things they would need. Between the two of them, they dragged a conglomeration of miscellaneous items to the street's entrance: a legless couch, three tattered chairs, four wooden crates, a bicycle without handlebars, a tricycle minus one wheel, and several two-by-fours. The old photograph of Ashley placed next to a Confederate flag added the final stability to the fortress. The construction workers looked on in disbelief at the crazy

pair armed with brooms as they manned their fort. After a few short conversations on the CB, the men left only to crumble a neighboring block.

"We did it!" cried Joey, jumping in the air.

"We sure did," sang along Georgia. The trouble is they'll be back. This calls for phase II."

The following day Georgia and Joey were waiting, but the construction workers did not come. However, the third day they did, and the "two-some" was ready. Each was stationed at an attack unit. Georgia was positioned behind a card table. Just opposite her and across the street was Joey behind a large evergreen bush. Both were armed with stones, pine cones, and sticks. Metal mixing bowls served as helmets. On Georgia's command of "fire," they bombarded the workmen. At first the workers retreated. Realizing what was going on, they took to the protection of their trucks and paraded right through the shelling with closed windows and grins. The two realized that they would never defeat the iron wrecking crew. It would be only weeks before the Jackson and Cleaver residences would fall.

"Get back here," hollered the old woman chasing the trucks. She panted as she walked back to where Joey was standing. "We'll just have to try something else."

"Georgia, how come you don't go to any of the rallies in the park?," Joey asked. "Why don't you work with the rest of the people?"

"Me, stoop to the level of Uncle Tom's people," exclaimed Georgia, appalled by the thought.

"You know, Georgia, we're not any better than they are," replied Joey in an earnest

voice. "A lot of my friends at school ain't the same color as me, but we still have a blast, just the same, playing tricks on girls. The teacher tells us that God made all of us. Just put more dye in some than others, that's all."

That afternoon, as Georgia lay on her bed, she thought about what Joey had said. She was getting nowhere in trying to stop the highway from coming by herself. The past several days' excitement also proved to be a little too much; for she felt a little tired, but nothing a short nap would not cure.

While deep asleep, Georgia had nightmares of being chased by bulldozers and watching her home crumble to the ground. She awoke in a sweat. Joey's words sounded in her head: " ... we're not any better, just more dye ... " With that she decided it would not hurt to attend just one meeting. Besides, if she disguised herself, no one would even recognize her. She promptly started on her costume. There was no time to waste. She rummaged through her closet until she found a floppy brimmed hat, a brunette wig, a trench coat, and the usual dark glasses. Before leaving, she paused by Ashley's picture. "Don't worry, dear. Just this once won't hurt," she assured the young man.

Georgia sat in the back of the room, satisfying herself with just being able to listen and watch. To her surprise, the white and black families worked side by side without any resentment. A distinguished black man, dressed in a suit, even took time out to explain some legal terms to her. She decided to go back the following evening. This time the old woman dressed incognito and sat in the middle of the room. A woman asked Georgia to be on a petition committee, but she politely

told her no. Georgia absorbed all the business, as well as the cooperation that was taking place. By the end of the meeting, Georgia had made up her mind to help on the committee. As the elderly woman rose out of her seat, she was overcome with dizziness and collapsed to the floor, clutching her purse. The photograph of the sailor had slipped from the handbag and lay beside her with its glass shattered.

What happened after that was unclear to Georgia. She awoke the next morning to the sound of "paging Doctor Grannon... Doctor Grannon, wanted in O.B." Her daughter sat sound asleep in the chair next to her bed.

"I'm the one that should be sleeping, not you," a weak voice uttered.

"Mother, you're OK," breathed Scarlet in a sigh of relief.

"What happened?"

At that moment, a doctor walked in the room.

"Doctor Grannon, would you like to tell my mother what happened."

"You allowed yourself to become so worn down that you fainted from pure exhaustion," confirmed the doctor. "Mrs. Jackson, I'll make you a deal. If you promise to watch your lifestyle a little more closely, I can guarantee you many happy years with your grandchild."

"With my what?"

"You mean you have not told her?" The doctor looked confusingly at Scarlet.

"Mother, that's what I tried to tell you earlier this week, but you would not listen. Donald and I want you to come and live with us. With a baby on the way, I could use your help. What do you say?"

"I say I'd love to," beamed the proud

grandmother-to-be.

"It's settled then. We can have all your things moved in by the Fourth. It means so much to be able to spend the holiday together."

Georgia still attended the neighborhood rallies twice a week. A chair of honor was now reserved for her in the front row. Georgia even came up with the name for the neighborhood organization, "Operation SON and daughter." It stood for the Operation to Save Our Neighborhood. As for the word "daughter," it was added by Georgia just so little girls would not feel left out. The group failed to keep the highway from invading; however, it did manage to set high quality building standards for the apartments and to landscape a park for the children to play in. As for Georgia, she is somewhere in a suburban home, bouncing a baby boy on her knee.

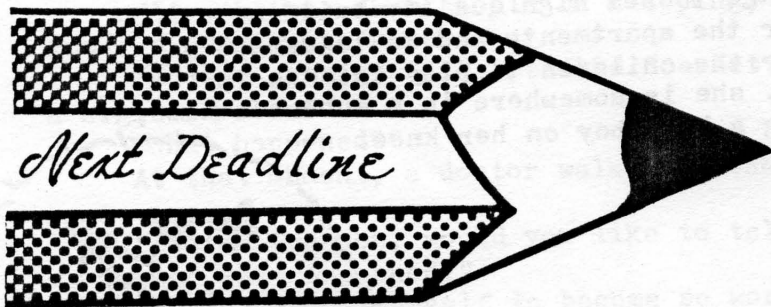
~~~~~  
*Haiku*~~~~~

*Purple lilacs  
bending with the weight of bees,  
the weight of fragrance*

*Drew Appleby*







*Oct. 19, 1983*

