

# fioretti



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## *Literary Anthology*

*Vol. 40*

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Marian College  
Library  
Indianapolis, Ind.

*Marian College  
Indianapolis, Indiana*

*This edition of Fioretti is dedicated  
to St. Francis of Assisi during this  
800th anniversary of his birth—*

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1-19-82- gift

For Friar Francis, father, mine.....  
(800 years young...)

Feeling, jubilant  
Jesus cartoon  
Generously God graced  
Gifted  
Seraph of assenting  
Will  
Willing, world-wanderer  
Peace-propelled  
Servant of servants  
Small  
Suppliant  
Souled  
"Soul-brother" mine  
Ever God AD and  
Ever  
Joy-Filled  
Triumphant, travelling  
trubadour  
Minor  
C... but leading in a  
Major key

Pied-POVEReddC-piper  
to those of us  
By you  
Inspired and fired  
to be hollowed  
Empty  
for father filling  
frolicking, following  
YOU  
throughout time  
and eternity  
Instruments of PEACE  
Harmonious  
doves of  
Gospel-good news  
GIVERS and GIVERS  
Open-handed  
Hearts lifting  
"DEUS MEUS ET OMNIA"  
Even and always  
"Francis - FREE"  
Oh, let us be....  
let us be....  
let us be .....

Jr. Francesca, of

# *A Season of Color*

*by Joyce Lane*

Everywhere you look, autumn is a season filled with many bright colors. With warm days and cold nights, nature has taken out her paints and brushes, and suddenly overnight everything has taken on a new, bright look.

The trees are one of the first artistic displays we notice. The distinctive three pointed leaves of the maple have taken on a different color for each tree. Some trees are now a light yellow with some of summer's green still remaining. While other trees radiantly show off bright reds and oranges, even others turn to a very deep red-purple. The dogwood tree, that in the spring was a symbol of new life, now quietly stands with its leaves of a light red and clusters of deep red berries, to help feed the birds through the winter. The towering, mighty oak's leaves have now turned to glossy tans and rich browns. Only the stately, lonesome pine tree holds steadfast to its green color, a symbol of everlasting life.

Not to be outdone by the trees, the flowers of autumn also have taken on new colors. The marigolds, that all summer put forth just a few blooms, now burst with a multitude of large, bright yellow and deep orange blooms. Even the smallest bloom has a touch of nature's brushes, proudly showing orange yellow blooms with deep purple stripes; they seem to be made of a rich velvet material. The true flower of autumn is the chrysanthemum, with plants the size of bushel baskets, mounds of golden yellow, pale lavender, burgandy red, even multicolored rusts skillfully displayed. As nights become colder, these blooms become more plentiful

with deeper, richer colors of nature's paints.

Take a good look at your backyard garden; nature has been at work here, too. The pumpkins, large and orange, are ready to be picked, just in time to make steaming pies or to have faces carved into them to become the halloween jack-o-laterns that will soon light the way for trick-or-treaters. The tall sunflowers, that not too long ago held their faces upward to follow the sun across the sky, now have their heads drooped toward the earth, heavily laden with grey and black striped seeds, that will soon become snacks for the family or winter food for the birds. If you are lucky, your crop of Indian corn will give you ears of deep red, while others will give you purple or yellow ears. If you are very fortunate, you will find an ear or two that holds all three colors like a chekerboard of color, all ready to be made into Thanksgiving Day centerpieces.

The farmer's fields, so richly green during the summer, also have had a touch of nature's brushes. The stalks of corn, that were so tender in the spring, now show a trio of colors: at the top the brown tassels wave in the soft cool breezes like an unruly head of hair, the leaves remain green, only to turn to a dull brown at the first sign of frost. Now look very closely; you may be able to see some of the shy golden yellow kernel peeking from the safety of their dull golden husk-covered ears. Soybeans, growing close to the earth with pale yellow leaves and fuzzy brown pods, are waiting to be harvested. A golden ocean of gentlewaves are the heads of the summer's wheat crop bowing their ripe heads to the cool autumn winds.

*(cont'd. on p. 8)*

Nature has been busy on the cold nights of autumn with the multitude of radiant colors on her artist's palate. These colors not only give us the beauty of warm autumn days; they serve as a reminder that the winter's cold icy winds will soon be here to make us long for the hot, muggy days of summer again.

~~~~~

## Disappearance

Where has my favorite season gone?  
Blown away in the wind—  
Where are the colors that covered  
my sky,  
Filling my eyes with joy?

Some, faded and fallen to  
who-knows-where,  
Leaving a sullen sky—  
Others, buried beneath the snow  
To warm and renew the earth—

Where has my favorite season gone?  
Away for awhile to rest,  
Making room for another's choice  
Glistening in nature's best—

S.M.P.L.

# Haiku

Autumn butterfly  
hesitates on a thistle,  
and is quickly gone —

Drew Appleby



# *Why Wait in Line ?*

*by Jerry Landis*

"The Grateful Dead are coming to Market Square Arena two weeks from today," announced the wife of my friend Jack.

"What's a Grateful Dead," someone asked.

"A rock group, silly--everyone's heard of them."

"Not me," one of the men replied.

The group, who had gathered to watch the World Series, were soon divided into two opposing positions. The women were for going to the concert, the men opposed. The men were gaining the upper hand, arguing that good seats were impossible to obtain without standing for hours in extremely long lines. And there were no volunteers in this group to make such a sacrifice. Now seemed the opportune moment to display my cunning and resourcefulness. Jumping to my feet, I boastfully proclaimed that standing in line was for "dummies," and that I would obtain the necessary tickets. And since Jack had expressed some skepticism concerning my skills, I would further his education in this matter with some "on-the-job training."

Calling Jack the evening before the tickets were to go on sale was a necessary beginning step for my master plan. "Look, Jack, I want you to take a pair of your scruffiest jeans along with a faded, torn shirt and throw them under your mattress. In the morning, don't shave or comb your hair, wear the clothes from under the mattress, and meet me at my house at seven o'clock. This is an hour and a half before the tickets go on sale...Oh, stop complaining, Jack, I'll see you in the morning."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Boy, Jack, do you look bad--I mean, just right. You drive. I'll explain the next step. I'll bet you are wondering about the way we're dressed. Well it's necessary to be identified as having been in line all night. We're accomplishing this by being unshaven and unkempt. By the way, Jack, stop at that donut shop in the next block. You're about to learn step two from the master. Here's the money, Jack, go buy a dozen donuts and six cups of coffee. I'd go, but I'm a little embarrassed at the way I look."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Park the car at least a block from the arena. We don't want to be seen just yet. This looks like a good spot. Jack, don't eat those donuts; we're going to need them."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Don't walk beyond the end of the building. There's a good reason for this. Let me just peek around the--wow, what a line! That line has to be five blocks long! Now let me take another quick look to verify my first findings.

"Okay, Jack, this is important. I want you to look around the corner and try not to be seen. Do you see the scruffy group? They extend about three hundred feet from the seller's window, and following them will be the better dressed group. Well, I know it's hard to tell one group from the other. It takes practice to reach my level of expertise. See the guy in the buckskin outfit, the one that looks like he was caught in the middle of a herd of stampeding elephants? Okay, now behind him is a gal in dark green slacks and a white turtle-neck sweater. The guy has been there all night. The gal, oh, she probably arrived around

four-thirty or five, and I can tell they're not together. Well, Jack, I just can. You can trust experience and good judgment. Now, our next move is to walk confidently up to and behind Buffalo Bill. You hand him a cup of coffee, offer him some donuts, and begin some non-stop conversation about what a 'bummer' it is having to stand in line so long. You might throw a few, 'yea man's' and 'far out's' into the conversation. That always seems to help. The most difficult job will be handling the crowd behind our 'bison buddy' --an easy task for the master. Okay, let's go Jack. Stay close and remember--plenty of conversation.

"Well, hello, ladies, it certainly has been a long night. I'm glad my friend Buff here saved our place in line. Here, have some coffee and donuts. Jack, you're doing just fine--keep up the converstaion. Yes, ladies, I don't think I could have made it without my coffee. It was sure nice of Buff to save our spot. I hope these donuts are thanks enough. Dig in, these donuts are just what the doctor ordered.

Jack, don't grab my shoulder like that. That really hurts. Oh! You're not Jack! Okay, buster, I don't care if you are as big as Paul Bunyon and talk like Dick the Bruiser, you'd better put Jack down. You say you're going to do what if I don't get to the end of the line? Oh yeah?

"Jack! Jack, you coward! Wait for me!

"Jack, you should not have panicked. I had the situation in hand. Well, I don't care what he said. You know darn well he couldn't rip our faces off. Well, anyway, Jack, who needs this? I have a much better approach that always works.

"Jack! Jack! Wait up, Jack!"

## Nighthawk's Reason

The nighthawk wings her way around  
and wheels  
Modly through the skies then turns again.  
She dives, falls down to touch the field  
and reels.

When she puts back her wing—she laughs, inane  
It seems—the next to final moments passed.  
'Tis only then within a feather touch  
Of shrub and weed she stops her fall at last  
To climb again and soar with reason such  
As other birds. And thus, a question forms.  
What drives the twilight queen to mad display  
Of wild and thoughtless dance? Such chance?  
"What thorn

Has pierced her mind that she should play  
with death and life?" ask we who did not see  
The insect caught, the bug that lets her be.

D.S. Sears

# *Faulty Conclusions*

## *by Richard Peak*

It was four in the morning and Bill couldn't sleep. He had seen one of his friends steal some money out of his dad's wallet. The friend was Mike, and Mike's dad just happened to be Bill's father's boss.

When the sun rose, so did Bill. His bed resembled an explosion. His sheets twisted, his pillows were all over the bed, and his clothes were everywhere. His room mirrored his restless night.

As the morning grew into the noon hour, Steve, one of Bill's friends, appeared at the door. When Bill answered the door, Steve noticed a problem.

"What's wrong with you? You look as if you have not slept all night."

"No, I didn't."

Steve looked at Bill puzzled, "Can I help?"

"Go away, don't get involved," Bill snapped.

With determination in his voice, Steve jumped back at Bill, "I want to help, so tell me what's wrong."

Shattered by Steve's abrupt tone, he answered, "I saw someone steal money from my dad's wallet."

"Did you contact the police?"

"I've already thought of that, but I can't."

"Why not?"

"Because it was Mike."

Mike just happened to be Steve's brother.

Steve, shaken by what Bill said, added, "Now I know how you feel. But we must do something. My father would go berzerk if he found out. You know what he thinks of Mike."

"I guess the best thing is to confront Mike and tell him I saw him steal the money."

Steve agreed. Bill and Steve left together to confront Mike. They found Mike at home.

Steve called his brother, "Mike?"

He answered while coming down the stairs, "Yeah, what do you want?"

"We want to talk to you."

"About what?"

"It's about your being over at Bill's yesterday."

"Oh, hello, Bill. Did your mom get the flowers from your dad yet?"

"What flowers?"

"Yesterday, your dad asked me to go get twenty dollars out of his wallet, and then go to the flower shop and get your mom some Mother's Day flowers."

A puzzled look came over Bill's and Steve's faces.

"What's wrong with you two?"

"Oh, nothing really." Bill and Steve hurried out the front door.

"By the way, what did you guys want?"

A scream came from halfway down the road, "Never mind."

*Love . . . marriage  
is like a child learning  
to tie a shoe . . .  
— the two strings work  
together  
trying to form one secure knot  
and two beautiful  
individual bows.*

*L. Mc*

# *The Sparkle in His Eyes Tells It All —*

*by Cathy Tempest*

"Put that dog down!" she screams as he holds the small, humiliated poodle halfway suspended in air by his tail. The dog is dropped with a thud, and the hot dog being held in his left hand is immediately offered as in apology.

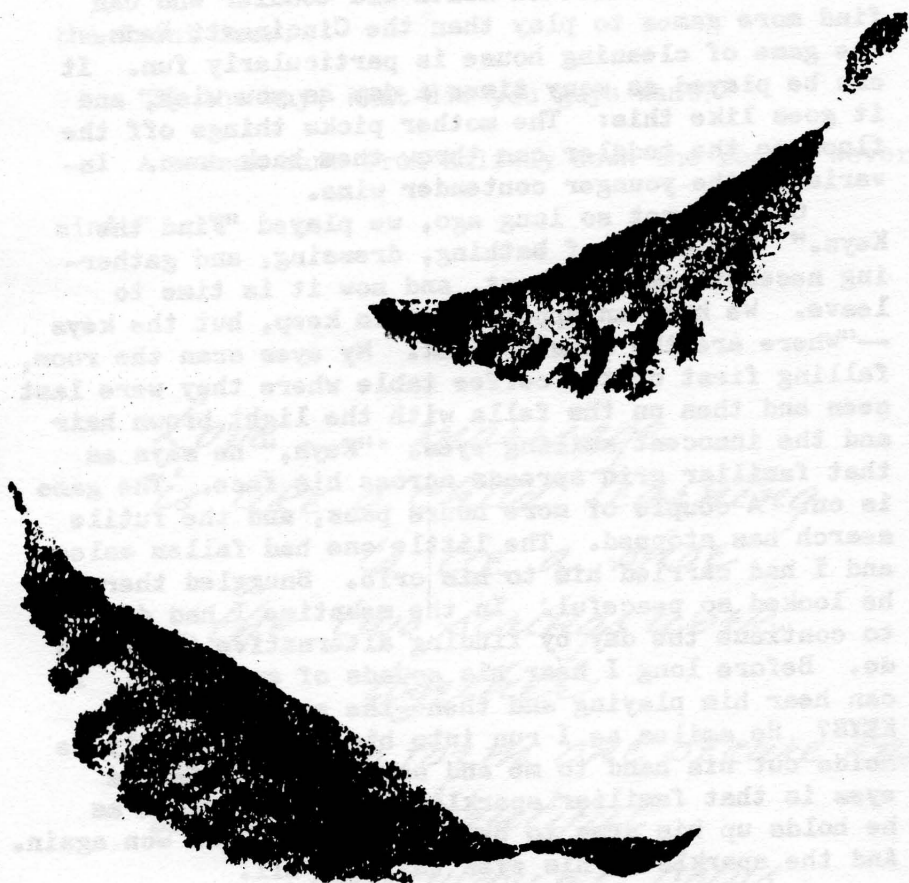
Three feet tall and thirty-one pounds of energy describes this nineteen-month-old toddler who can find more games to play than the Cincinnati Reds. The game of cleaning house is particularly fun. It can be played as many times a day as you wish, and it goes like this: The mother picks things off the floor so the toddler can throw them back down. Invariably the younger contender wins.

One day not so long ago, we played "Find the Keys." Two hours of bathing, dressing, and gathering necessities are spent, and now it is time to leave. We have an appointment to keep, but the keys -- "Where are the keys?" I ask. My eyes scan the room, falling first on the coffee table where they were last seen and then on the fella with the light brown hair and the innocent smiling eyes. "Keys," he says as that familiar grin spreads across his face. The game is on. A couple of more hours pass, and the futile search has stopped. The little one had fallen asleep, and I had carried him to his crib. Snuggled there, he looked so peaceful. In the meantime I had decided to continue the day by finding alternative things to do. Before long I hear his sounds of awakening. I can hear him playing and then--the rattle of keys. KEYS? He smiles as I run into his room. Proudly he holds out his hand to me and says, "Keys!" In his eyes is that familiar sparkle, and I smile back as he holds up his arms to be rewarded. He has won again. And the sparkle in his eyes tells it all.

# Haiku

From the highest branch  
a single leaf flutters down...  
autumn silence

Drew Appleby



# *Antics with a Child*

*by Lisa Abner*

With shirt sleeves rolled, teetering on a canary yellow kitchen stool, and having the time of his life, my fifteen-month-old son is helping me with the supper dishes. Using a paper thin cloth, he washes a Miracle Whip jar lid in the center of the sink with vigor. I wash a ten-inch gravy coated skillet in the extreme upper right hand corner. He slushes water and suds a foot down the counter. I try to catch them without twisting my back out. He is bursting with enthusiasm. I am merely smiling with astonishment. It never really registers until after I have started, but I do some comical, humiliating, and immature things to entertain my son.

Doing supper dishes usually takes me ten minutes; with Nicholas' expert assistance it takes twenty-five. That's not including changing his clothes, squeegeeing the window above the sink, and wringing out the cat. Is there a reason for this work generating scene? Yes, it's the grin and squeal that tell me "Thanks, mom, for letting me help."

Sitting at a stop light in ninety degree heat, with fifty degree icecream in the back seat, after spending thirty minutes dodging grocery carts, calculating unit prices, and removing jars of pickled cauliflower out of cookie covered hands, I wonder how do you tame a Tasmanian devil? Simple, you just sing the latest McDonald's commercial, rotate the steering wheel like you are turning ninety degree corners at one hundred miles per hour, and make faces like Bozo the clown. In the meantime you have tamed the devil, but the gentleman in the next car has popped two buttons on his vest!

*(cont'd. on p. 20)*

I've done it again, made a total fool out of myself for guess who's enjoyment? Why such ludicrous behavior? It's for that extra special squeeze when you uncage the devil from his car seat.

Have you ever picked through twenty balls to find one with stars on it, skipped down the street while neighbors do double takes, blown bubbles till your cheeks collapsed, or croaked like a frog? I have, and it wasn't in my childhood either. Why such regressive acts? It's for deep, big brown eyes on an angelic face that say, "Mommy, you're my best friend."

All the prenatal books never told me I would do these humorous, embarrassing, and childish acts. Even if they did, I know in my heart I would have done them anyway.

~~~~~

## *artist 6*

*fingers dance across the stage  
perspiring colors  
that perform masterpieces  
which sigh  
in metered breaths  
then fall  
musically  
into receptive wombs...*

*and the artist conceives*

*Rusty Clyma*

# Calling

An idea planted in childhood  
Buried deep in life  
Horking it's way through toil,  
Turmoil, joy and strife,  
Echoing from childhood to youth  
Voiced outside of self  
Surfacing over and over  
Growing awareness, itself.

How can the call be answered?  
Who can tell if it's heard?  
Who is doing the calling?  
Who is answering the word?

Questions return to the center—  
the being, the mind, the heart  
Seeking the spark that was planted  
deep within the dark.

Spark no longer tiny  
Bursts to consuming flame—  
Voice of God within the heart  
Answers with his own name.

SMPL



~ Sometimes music reveals  
a blossoming person...

~ Sometimes the bird  
is never heard...

L. Mc

# *Discovery* —

*by Cyndi Fox*

Since I was a very avid fan of old Saint Nick, finding out Santa Claus was nothing but a myth was probably one of the most traumatic experiences of my childhood. After all, believing in a jolly old man dressed in red with a pack on his back large enough to carry every little Susie's doll and every little Billy's train was just something that went along with Christmas.

One of the first major clues came along accidentally a couple of days following Christmas one year. I was involved in a two-on-one snowball fight with my two older brothers. After having snow stuffed in my snowsuit from head to toe and having my head dunked in the nearest snow drift numerous times, I managed to escape. Finding our garage to be the nearest place of refuge, I began searching for a place to hide. Needless to say, wherever I walked a little track of size three footprints followed me. Seeking out the corner of the garage where no human could fit, I maneuvered my way under and over all the paper wads, bows, and boxes

left over from Christmas morning. As I finally found a comfortable spot among the masses, I began thinking about what I had just wandered through. There sat the boxes from Bill's basketball, Jeff's coin set, and my prized Betsy Wetsy doll. Funny, I thought those tags were signed from Santa Claus.

That led me to remembering when I woke up in the middle of the night on Christmas Eve and found Mom and Dad under the sparkling tree busily involved in wrapping gifts. Their explanation that they were wrapping Santa's gifts for him satisfied me then, because the thought of Santa Claus wiggling his way down our chimney excited me to no end.

Being a normal, curious little kid, I must admit that I did partake in a little mischievous pre-Christmas peeking under beds and in the darkest corners of Mom and Dad's closet. I would leave the room ecstatic with joy at what I had to look forward to. Then when Christmas had come and gone, I would wonder what happened to the pretty teacup set that I had found at the "scene of the crime" before Christmas. But I just had

to shake it off, because I didn't want to let on to my  
my mom that her sweet little daughter had even thought  
about peeking.

Probably the last straw at giving away Santa's  
true identity came on Christmas morning. I looked on  
the table to the spot where I had left warm, home-baked  
cookies for Santa and carrots for his reindeer. The  
plate lay there empty and crumb-laden. Next to it was  
a note. This note was written especially to me. I  
was filled with admiration for Santa Claus and vowed  
that I would never throw that note away. I found it  
amazing that he knew the names of all the children in  
the world. Wasn't it funny, though, that Santa's  
writing looked just like Mom's?

~~~~~  
*Arrival, 1981*

*Pelting against my face  
Bouncing on the grass  
Melting at the touch  
—first snowfall*

*SMPL*

I have dreamt of princesses,  
seen myself in palaces,  
I've envisioned fantasies  
of caterpillars and Alices.  
I have had my fantasies  
to save me from realities  
I have had my far-out dreams  
to help relieve a world that seems  
far harder to believe  
than any fairy tale,  
it's better to find reprieve  
than continually impale  
myself on misfortunes unending,  
on sharp reality unbending,  
it's much better to fantasize  
than see always with my eyes.

Jim Elliott

# *A Renewed Trust*

*by Janet Padgett*

One evening in the not so warm month of February, a well-dressed young man walked down Talbot Street. The street was not an inviting one, with boarded up homes and yards cluttered with bits of ancient machinery and rubbish. The young man gave no indication of being aware of the surroundings. In his hand he held a small piece of paper, worn from being held and refolded several times. He walked up to a large apartment house on the corner. Stopping in front of the gate, he looked up at the second-story as if questioning the address. He looked at the paper nodding to himself. He opened the gate, walked up to the porch and knocked at one of the four doors. From within the apartment, a woman's voice called out, "Just a minute. Who is it?" the woman asked. "Bill," the young man returned. "Do I know you?" Stunned, Bill retorted, "I'm your brother; of course you know me!" The door opened to a small crack. "Bill, I...I wasn't expecting you, I..."

"Come on, Sis, let me in." Now annoyed, he pushed the door open and entered the hall. The woman stood away from him, still as a morning after a storm. Bill looked at her, his eyes stopping at the swelling of her waist. Their eyes met. The agony in hers spoke more than words. She turned away from him and walked into the kitchen. He followed her, not knowing what to say.

"Why didn't you call?" she cried. "What ever happened to calling?"

He stopped in the doorway wishing he had called, wishing he knew what to say. He looked over at her, pleading with his eyes only to be answered by the tears that were falling into the half empty coffee cup before her. Then in a whisper the young man spoke, "Sis, listen to me. I've got the money to get you home."

The woman looked toward him, blankly staring at his face. She spoke in a low voice, "Prove it."

From his hand, Bill took the worn paper and placed it before her on the table; only then did her eyes shine without the glitter of mistrust. New tears fell, but these were tears of joy.

# Sympathia

What shall I say?

The sounds of sobs and  
storm command me  
to your side

but reaching there...

What now?

There eloquence and goodly  
words made home, an  
empty, gaping,  
gasping hole  
erupts

And I am stirred. I stay,  
too deeply stirred to turn  
away, but utterly at loss,  
betrayed by tongue and word.

It's then my hand takes hold,  
a ginger branch  
bending down to reach  
and touching,  
heal...

D. Sears

"Almost suicide"

my heart pumped still,  
while i piled the dust  
on window sills.

finding curves  
in straight, turbid panes;  
no lines of light

— Almost suicide

Sweet sixteen

but i couldn't fight  
the mud and the winter  
swallowing me tight.

a mucky muck melting my mind  
droplets of pain

— Almost suicide

you're young and you're free  
into a life ahead,  
but my only liberty  
could be in a casket locked dead  
as I reached for stars  
with the drapes drawn shut  
and hoped for a blade  
and the courage to cut

until I cleaned the glass  
it was almost suicide.

C. Cousino

# *The Housekeepers*

*by Michelle Bourn*

A housekeeper may be interpreted in different ways by different people, but three basic types of housekeepers prevail. These are the happy, the horrendous, and the haphazard housekeeper.

The happy housekeeper is a person who takes her job extremely seriously and she takes great pride in the job that she performs. She can spend hours polishing the silver that's never used, dusting every book on the shelves, and arranging underwear and socks into neat little piles. You will seldom see water spots on her bathroom mirror, or dirty clothes half hanging out of her clothes hamper. This housekeeper can see a hair on the carpet at twenty paces, and she can always find the lids to her Tupperware bowls. Background noises from the television, made by the "soaps," may be heard but only over the whine of the vacuum cleaner, complete with all the attachments. Only when the commercials for "extra strength Comet," and "all temperature Cheer" flash on the screen, do you hear the vacuum's roar silenced, as the happy housekeeper glues her eyes to the set. Her home is a shrine and a place

**where** only the most perfect of inhabitants may reside without difficulty.

The other extreme is the horrendous housekeeper. This person cleans house only when mother comes to visit, which hopefully isn't often. Dishes are washed only when every eating utensil is dirty and all paper plates have been used. Beds are never made, and closets are opened at your own risk. For any number of reasons, housekeeping is not a priority for these people. Their drawers are a jumble of mismatched socks, and the cap for the toothpaste is always missing. However, similar to the happy housekeeper, this home is also an extreme and may be completely uninhabitable for some people.

The third and final category is the haphazard housekeeper. These people are the average and more well-adjusted of the three. Whereas, housekeeping plays an important role in daily living, it is not an all consuming chore, nor is it a non-existent one. Closets aren't always orderly, and floors may not shine like glass, but seldom do dishes and laundry go undone. Dust may be found on chair legs, and the oven may need to be

*The Housekeeper*  
cleaned; but these chores will be done in time, for this housekeeper knows that life consists of more than just cleaning.

A livable and comfortable home is found here, and the daily cleaning may only be a "lick and a promise," but a normal family life still prevails.

---

Oh Master  
If I could come  
and speak my woes to  
You  
they'd crawl away within  
the breath that put them  
there ...

The tiny gasps of steam  
that keep the  
mountain  
still.

D. Sears

## Day

The day put on its royal radiance,  
Its flowing robes of saturated blue,  
Its sparse ermine collar of downy cloud,  
And settled its crown upon its head.

It marched from the East. It exiled  
darkness,  
Blew out the stars, made Moon  
bow in respect.

Its majesty rolled across the byways  
Claiming every kingdom for its own.

We felt its approach, were rendered  
helpless  
By its hopeful promises of freedom.  
We fell into step as children  
Being led by music of the piper.

It flirted. It taunted and teased.  
But too soon, as if bored, it  
dismissed us.

Jeannie Carson

## artist 9

even before he began  
as he faced the canvas  
he knew it well  
he loved it

his excitement poured its passion  
calmly into his hands  
and it flowed through his brush  
as he touched the canvas

his heart beat rapidly, as he, man,  
had his chance at creation  
the canvas his void  
the paint his love

so he finishes  
and cries with joy  
until the temptation comes again  
perhaps a world better

because he knows  
in his heart of hearts  
he must try again and again  
to express the Artist within

who knows well the joy of first creation

Rusty Clyma

# The Colt

by Katherine Knapp

"It's time, it's time," Christine heard her father's excited voice tell her as he shook her out of her sleep. She awoke at once, knowing instantly what he meant.

"I'm coming," she whispered as she leaped out of bed and her father went hurriedly back down the stairs and out to the barn. Christine quickly put on a pair of overalls, a flannel shirt, and boots, and tiptoed out of her room and down the stairs, hoping she wouldn't wake her baby brother and mother.

Opening the kitchen door, Christine stepped outside into the crisp fall night, gently closing the door behind her. About to burst with anticipation, she bolted for the barn, leaving the night behind in her great eagerness to see the miracle about to take place. Christine reached the barn door as she gulped great breaths of the cool country air. She shivered, cold, yet too excited to worry about it. Her heart trembled as she gently slid the big wooden door open slightly and slipped through. The big barn was warm and cozy as it always seemed to Christine, who would have been perfectly content to be there 24 hours a day. Christine took a deep breath, savoring the sweet smells of hay, oats, corn, horses and leather. She thrived on these smells and the other sights and sounds within the barn.

Calmed down a bit, Christine moved quietly down towards the end of the barn where a small light burned; it was here that her coal-black mare Ebony was about to give birth. As Christine walked past the many stalls, the horses' heads turned to greet her, and soft nickers met her ears.

Reaching the stall with which she was most familiar, Christine observed the scene before her. Ebony lay sweating heavily on the deep bed of straw, her glistening black body straining to give birth to

the life within her. Christine's father knelt at Ebony's side, caressing her and gently encouraging her. Christine moved slowly over to Ebony's head and knelt by her beautiful mare. She stroked the strong velvety neck and mane while whispering softly to her. The mare's eyes were mirrors through which Christine saw Ebony's humble acceptance of the pain she was experiencing. Yet also there was a sense of peace and relief in her eyes. Christine's heart beat wildly as Ebony's body heaved greatly and the mare screamed. Then slowly she quieted, and the exhausted, dark, wet body relaxed.

Seeing her father motion for her, Christine crawled around to the back of the mare. The beautiful miracle had arrived! At Ebony's feet lay a precious, wet black foal, almost identical to its mother. It had two white socks on its back legs and a white blaze down its face. Christine couldn't help but smile and giggle as it attempted to stand on its wobbly new legs but toppled over, falling into the straw.

Ebony, finding new strength, lifted herself slowly from the straw, shook herself and whinnied to her new foal. She then proceeded to clean him off vigorously. The colt once again attempted to stand, and Christine squealed in delight as he made it without falling and then nudged his mother and found her milk. Ebony nickered contentedly, seeming to say it had been worth all the pain. Father and daughter stood in awe at the miracle before them, cherishing the beauty and warmth of the mare and colt.

Later as Christine walked back to the house, warm and glowing with joy, she saw the stars twinkling; they too seemed to share her joy. Fallen leaves rustled, a hoot owl called in the distance, and a gentle wind carried a quiet "Thank you" from Christine to the Giver of all miracles.





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# Haiku

The last gardener,  
his slender shadow blending  
into the furrow—

Drew Appleby



