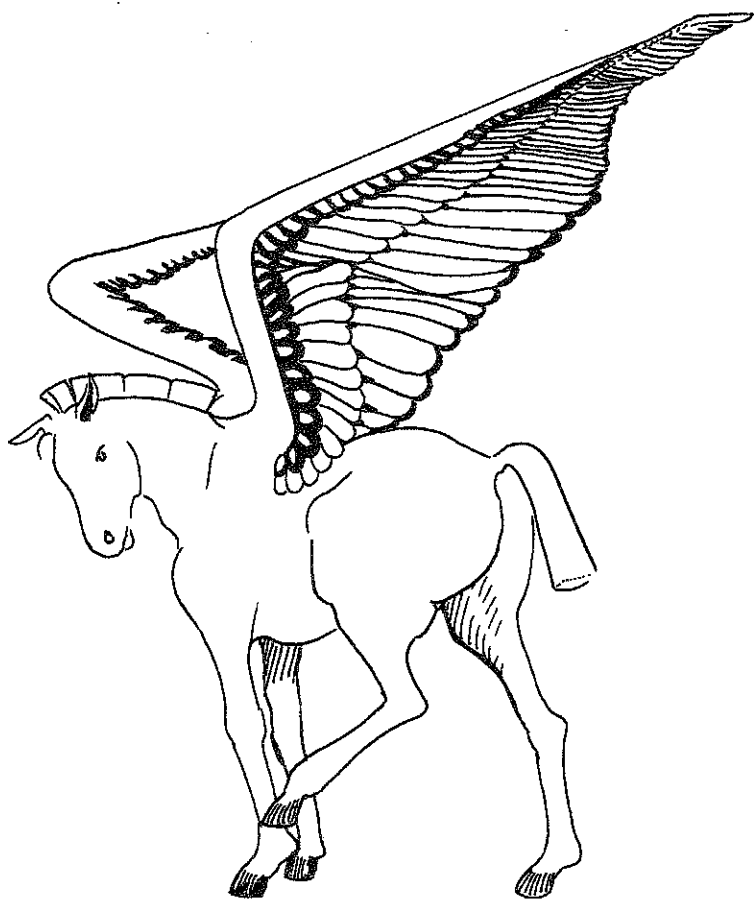
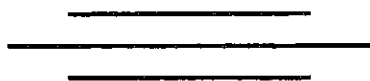


1974



PEGASUS

**TO CHRIS TAYLOR
IN GRATITUDE**



**WITHOUT YOUR CONSTANT
AND SELFLESS LABOR,
PEGASUS MIGHT HAVE
BECOME A VAGUE RUMOR.**

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Fall, 1974 Pegasus, Published at Delaware County Community College, Media, Pennsylvania 19063.

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TRAILER PARK NOSTALGIA

Our trailer admitted the wind,
which clattered the tin siding
and rattled the thick glass
of the jalousie windows in March;
Inside, you'd swear it was
going to lift off when gusts
howling like a tundra wolf
swept the hard ground.
The pulsating furnace, tinclad,
full of loud clickings,
blew a stream of warmth
through ducts at our feet.
Amorphous candles, littered desks,
someone's broken comb
abandoned in a corner -
This I recall here
staring at the silent woods
sealed out by four stories of
brickwall and thickly caulked
thermopane. Below,
captive trees craning
from brick wells
tug vainly at steel guys
like grounded planes;
They do not sway,
but shudder in the wind.
Hornets have hung a nest
beneath the massive lintel -
I tap at them on the glass
Feeling like a deep sea diver.
We miss not going out;
instead, we ply stairwells
sealed by firedoors,
and everywhere,
rectilinear walls,
freshly-struck joints
imbed themselves in the eye.
Ghosts on limewhite scaffolds
raise course after course;
you can still hear them
tamping blocks into place.

The trailer was ticky-tacky;
I'm not prepared for this.

WHILE WALKING

While walking together
Drifting between light and leaves
(the change being everywhere
 a failing warmth
 within and without,
 but warmth still
 and expectation)
I slipped into the landscape
It slipped into me
We pass and I realize that
Knowing is not accepting that
Too many things mean
 more than is easy
We embrace, but it
 is always for the last time.
There is no reason.
Winter is not allowed
But it IS
And I cannot stop myself
 from knowing.

TINY TRAGEDIES - SOMETIMES

To pick a daisy,
Roots and all,
Disregarding Spring;
To catch a lark,
To cage it,
Yet never hear it sing;
To crave a ketch,
To build it,
Yet never set its sail;
To plant a palm,
To prune it,
Yet let its fruit go stale;
To sow a stitch, sore needed,
And disregard the pin—
Are more of lust than loving
But somehow—not a sin.

SNOW REMOVAL

One winter day
I'd naught to do
But tread a snow-filled
Wood or two;
I'd note in meditation
The lack of hesitation
As if in obligation
Each field mouse took a station
And plowed a path
As best he could
Or thought he should.

(con't)

Meditating further,
As my head filled up with snow,
I counterpoised we men
With mice
As further on I'd go;
How hot our wrath,
Each aftermath,
We'd think it daft
To clear a path
Through fallen snow
And cheerful go . . . ,

How nice of mice -
But what of ice?

WHERE IT'S AT

Where forgotten flutes
Flout lost love songs,
Where madmen's minds
Mend rights and wrongs,
Where poets pawn
Their lyric belles
To pay their ways
From lyric hells,
Where dreams are cast
In gold-plate lead
To help the dreamers
Mourn their dead,
Where none so dead
Shall ever rise,
Where risings can't be fantasized,
Where drug injections normalize,
Where suicides are compromised,
Where policy bids otherwise
Risings are — HOSPITALIZED.
I'm where it's at — REALITY!
A "student" — they're so proud of me . . .
A patient who, through therapy,
Will "graduate" to normalcy,
Leaving plated dreams behind
To cast the world his leaded mind.
(I hope that eases yours?)



THE MARTYRDOM OF JOAN THE MAID

Inquisitors!
My priest and prelate judges:
You say my Visions form
Contrary to your canons.
These Voices that I claim to hear
Are by contrivances construed
As my "imagination."
So mocking males of your
Selective consciences!
I am a witch and mad?
So be it!
For denying true voices
Deems me damned.

If I am guilty in your eyes
I pray you, holy jailers,
Who today have sunk my stake -
Who tomorrow brag to burn -
Crave not this night
To purge this witch by passion!
I dungeon-bound,
With defenses chained
And, however named, am yet
A maiden

Just these "imaginary" Voices
Still the trespass of my terrors.
You lie and say
You seek the truth!
Well then, my masters,
It's God's good truth you'll have!
Though I shall not sell my soul . . .
The warmth you meant to rape this eve
I would gladly prostitute
If it could compensate that lust
You'll consummate
Before the morrow's
Hosts and masses.

But no . . .
You must braze both flesh and flame!
I cannot barter off my pyre!
This most unwilling martyr's fame
Dawns -
By no fanatic saint's desire.
No! But . . .
By torches soaked in "vested" ire.

MY FATHER

I want to be like him. He walked
Slowly through days

Took his time inhaling draughts of
Firecracker earth

Stayed stretch-necked for hours
Studying galaxies

Appeared to be doing nothing

But accomplished avalanches
Accompanied Etnas
Lived Died Lives

MY LOVER

My lover is
Wise

He comes to me
As the sun slowly whispers
Coral sentences to the horizon

He comes to me
As the quieting morning mist
Soothes wounded night

He overwhelms me
With the goodness of his flesh
His mind

He is generous to my needs
He loves me beyond passion

My wise lover
Loves me in light

I WANT YOUR KISS

I want
Your kiss

Your
Summertime
Kiss

Your
Languid
Liquid
Lazy
Languorous
Month of July tasting
Mouthflesh on mine

I want
Your kiss

Your
Summerstrong
Summersun
Summersap
Summerberry
Summersweat
Ultrasultry
Summersmooth
Summerday
Summertime
Kiss
Summerlong

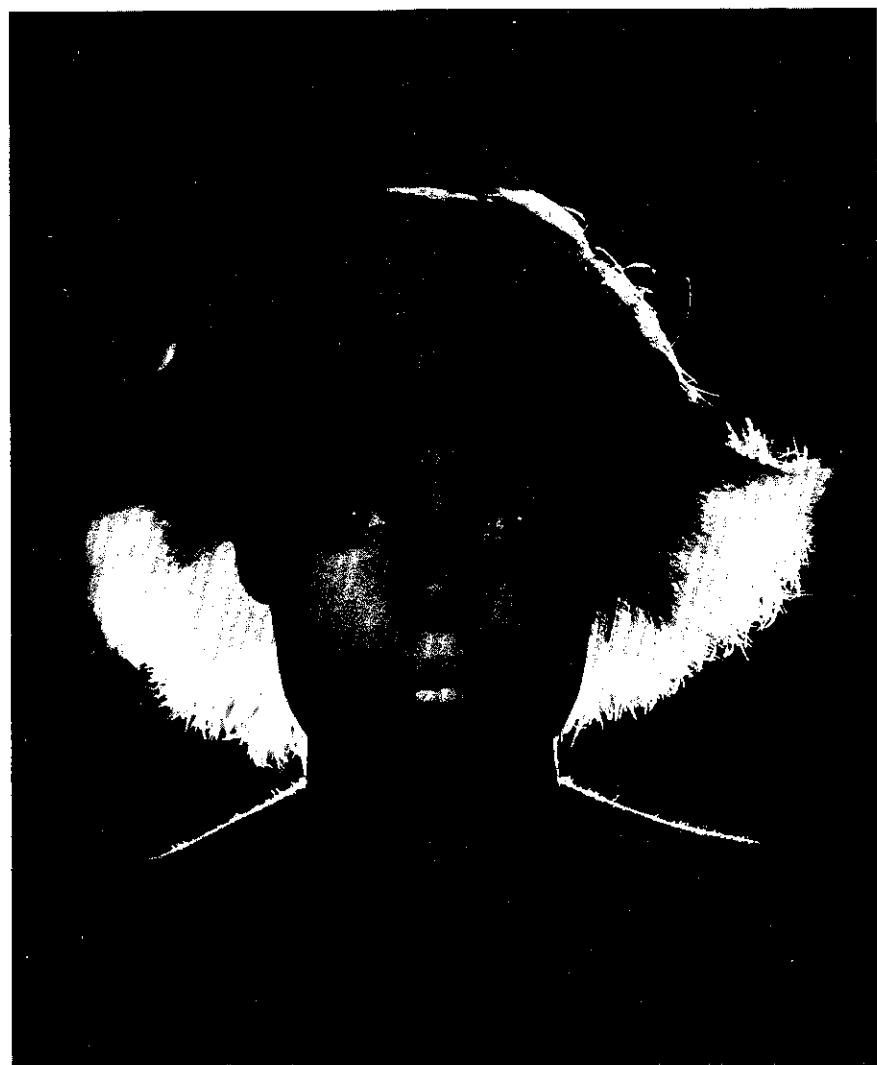
STILLNESS

As a swift flying redbird
Brightens December
The thought of you alerts me

As snow caresses the
Dismal winter landscape to
Stillness
The taste of your mouth
The texture of your flesh
The warming power of your
Complete embrace
Contents me







THE RAPE OF THE QUEEN

The cold blue gray eyes trace intently,
No, meticulously . . . her adolescent bounce.

 Dragging lazy poised footsteps
 through crisp Autumn leaves . . .
Crossing the street, the silent shadow
carefully follows, realizing that
the slightest interruption
may alter the spell
cast upon this road
a nightmare ago.

 Her skyward gaze
 lends more to her
 innocence, as she
 stumbles from one
 homeward daydream
 to the next, causing
 the muscles in her legs
 to press warmly
 against the faded
 blue jeaned poetry
 of the dusk's dark yawning.

His fingertips twitch in anticipation
as the gap between them closes slowly . . .
and even the gravel under foot becomes
a potential enemy . . .

Its only rival being a quiet whisper of
wind through the slowly thinning tree tops,
revealing the evening's early moon.

 A seventh-grade reader
 tumbles to the ground . . .

The sound of wind rushes through the trees,
as the firm but gentle hand guides her,
terror stricken, out of view.

 Without resistance almost like paper
 the shreds of cloth gave way
 to the insistent frantic breather
 naked and gleaming,
 clumsy at first . . .

The moon rose in perfect harmony
with the pressing shadows,
as the hunted becomes the hunter.

 She, never forgiving for decades to pass,
 is freed to wage Punic wars,
 ravage Carthage,
 and
 completely humble all
 that come to stand before her.

GOOD TO BE IN YOU

Good to be in you.
Good, too,
to be near you.
To feel your shoulder touching mine
and know that all night we shall be side by side,
and in the morning
you will wake me with your gentle movements about the room.

Good to be in you.
Good, too, to be with you
To sit at the table and look into your eyes
and see feeling,
like wind over grass or water,
stir your sensitive face,
to exchange our families and our childhoods,
and know that our souls have kissed.

Dean Bratis

HOPE

The impulsive man seems to paramount the sea. His intelligence, wisdom and love have lost the helm. Passions are the potential victors. Passion's fleet is churning the ocean. At the point of completeness, we approach an enticing light.

Burning as brightly as a young man's faith; a belief in Man's innateness to rise above nature radiates. A trust is glowing that arouses the long lost innocence of childhood. A sigh of relief at the very thought of regression; panting at the sign of hope.

But wait, my light . . . it flickers.
A wave forces it to sizzle
and encompasses me with mediocrity.

IMPATIENCE

The once cleared air is again fogged with discontent and indecision. The answer is not in a procrastinating faith. But my impatience forces me to encounter an almost bottomless pit of conflicts and tensions.

E.J. Duffy

CONSIDER THE CRITTER

No cage fancy-fashioned
And gilt in the best
Can make a new burrow
Or warren or nest.
So if no hole in the sod
You'd choose to embrace -
Consider the critter
With a cage 'round its face.

DUST

Edward Clarke tilted his head skyward and looked at the Earth. It was about three-quarters full and he found himself staring into the Pacific Ocean. There were surprisingly few clouds over the visible portion of the water, and Clarke thought he could make out the western coastline of the United States, but he was not sure.

He switched his attention to the passing landscape just outside. The tractor-bus he was riding in was moving quite cautiously along the rugged terrain. Driving a moon-bus at night was tricky business, Clarke told himself, glad that he was a passenger, and that it paid to be careful. Though the bus had a seating capacity of six passengers, Clarke was alone, a situation he didn't mind at all. Oh, there was the driver, of course, but he didn't count. This was first class service all the way, or at least as first class as one could find on the moon.

As he looked out over the flat ground, Clarke found it hard to convince himself that he wasn't looking through tinted glass. The reflected light of the Earth caused the entire landscape to look as if someone had painted everything a dull, dark blue color. It didn't look real, Clarke thought, and had someone told him that the terrain was made of plastic, he would be half-tempted to believe it. There was nothing to see really, since they were traveling across the flatlands of Mare Imbrium, the Sea of Rains. The Apennine Mountain Range was just below the horizon and would soon be visible.

They had been riding for over three hours and Clarke was becoming mildly impatient. "How much time before we arrive at the Apennines?" he asked the driver, seated in front of him.

"About ten minutes," the driver replied, checking a group of small glowing panels to his right.

This trip must be boring to him, Clarke mused. He had driven this area many times before. Clarke studied the driver and saw that he was quick and confident at the controls. Phil Johnson was probably the most competent of any driver on the moon now, and he was certainly the most experienced, having lived on the moon for seven years now.

Clarke wondered how anyone could live on the moon for seven years without going completely insane, but everyone he had met at the moon base fifteen hours ago seemed normal enough, and many of them had been lunar citizens for as long as ten years!

Outside the window to his left a large ragged boulder passed, and a few seconds later another followed. They were getting close to the Apennine Mountains. Clarke stretched his neck and looked out. In the distance directly in front of them the jagged peaks of some of the larger mountains were slowly appearing above the horizon, about three miles away. He mindfully made his way to the back of the bus for a final inspection of his cameras and equipment. This photography pilgrimage was too costly and time consuming to be duplicated, so he had to be sure everything would be right the first time. Along with its numerous advantages, being a free-lance photographer also had its drawbacks, one being that all expenses and finances for the photography expedition had to come from his own pocket. It had been a good thing that he and Phil had been best friends or the cost of the trip would have been, as Clarke once joked, astronomical.

The tractor-bus slowed to a stop in a small clearing between several rugged looking rock hills. They had settled along the outer edge of the mountain range, and for Clarke's purposes, they were far enough into the range to get some exciting pictures. Clarke put on his helmet carefully and flipped up the sun visor. It would not be needed now, at night, although he knew that on the other side of the mountains the sun was already up. Dawn on the mountains of the moon! That is what he wanted to capture on film, and why he had taken the lengthy trip out here. Johnson also raised his sun visor, and Clarke could see the heavy black eyebrows and mustache of his friend's face rather clearly, although once outside it would be too dark to see inside the helmet.

The cabin was depressurized, the airlock opened, and the two men, each loaded with an armful of photographic equipment, stepped outside onto the powdery soil. Their boots made imprints perhaps an inch deep in the dust, and there would be no problem finding their way back.

"Which way?" Johnson asked.

"I don't know, Phil, we'll just have to look around for a while to find the most interesting looking formations and I'll get some pictures.

They began walking into the range, tall jagged mountains enclosing them on either side. "Any idea what you're looking for, Ed, or just the mountains in general?"

"Nothing particular, I don't think. But they have to be interesting compositions, something exciting to the average person back on earth. I have to sell these pictures, you know." If they were good enough, Clarke thought, there would be many magazines which would pay his price for the photographs.

"How much air have we got in these tanks, Phil?"

"Two hours in our backpacks," Johnson replied, "with a thirty minute emergency supply in case of some breakdown. How long do you plan to be out here?"



"Not sure, but two hours should be plenty" Clarke stopped abruptly. "Look at that." He pointed to a large particularly distorted section of broken rock and rubble, with the edge of the sun just peering over the corrugated crag.

"I have to get a couple of shots of that," Clarke said. "I'm at a bad angle, though; too low." He glanced around quickly, and only a few yards in front of him noticed a small ledge sharply jutting out from a tall cliff. "Phil, is it possible to climb that ledge, the small one?"

"It'll be tricky, but it can be done. Getting your equipment up there could be a problem though, but in this light atmosphere, it would be fairly safe for me to throw the stuff up to you."

"I don't particularly like that idea" Clarke said, patting his camera affectionately "But I guess that is the best way to do it. Let's get started."

With some difficulty Clarke cautiously ascended the steep, rough slope. When he reached the top, he signaled for Johnson to throw several pieces of equipment up to him. He managed to miss the tripod, no easy feat in itself, and he had to wait until it stopped floating upward and drifted slowly down to him.

"These are going to be some great photos," Clarke said as he made some last minute adjustments and began eagerly snapping pictures.

"They'd better be," Phil said, looking up at Clarke "or you may not be able to pay rocket fare back to earth, friend."

"They'll be good," Clarke said, looking into his viewfinder. "They'll be—" He stopped short as a piece of the ledge broke off from under his left foot and slid down the side of the cliff. He recovered in time to regain his balance and keep from slipping, but as he looked down at the tumbling boulder, he saw that it was headed for Johnson who could not dodge it in time. The rock silently hit Johnson in the back and he crumbled onto the ground.

"Phil! Phil, can you hear me? Are you okay, Phil?" There was no movement from the silent figure below. Clarke's voice became shrill. "Can you hear me, Phil? Answer me, answer me!"

The space-suited figure lying in the dust began to stir. Clarke drew a deep breath. Johnson slowly and painfully stood up and tilted his head toward Clarke.

"Phil, say something." There was a long silence. There wasn't enough light for Clarke to see anything in the dark space-helmet of the figure below.

"Phil, answer me!" Clarke stared at the silent figure. It seemed to be motioning with its hands, very slightly. The realization suddenly hit Clarke . . . **He is talking!** "Phil, I can't hear you! Your communications system must have been damaged when you were hit!" A small red light was glowing on Johnson's chest panel. Clarke knew that meant Johnson's emergency oxygen system was on.

"Phil, you're being supplied with emergency air. Your oxygen pack must have also been damaged. You can't stay here, you've got to go back and get a replacement. Can you understand me?"

Receiving the message but unable to reply, Johnson signaled a positive response with his hand and began to walk back towards the bus. Clarke watched him until he became hidden by a large rock formation, then hesitantly returned to his camera work.

An hour passed. Having gotten all the pictures he wanted, Clarke was sitting on the ledge. Johnson still had not returned. He has a right to be angry, Clarke thought, but there's no way I can carry all this equipment back myself.

He pondered the situation some more, then decided to go after his friend. He descended the small, vertical cliff slowly, and shuffled back towards the moon-bus, retracing his footsteps. The sun was slowly creeping over the mountains, but without an atmosphere to diffuse the light, there was still a sharp division between day and night, although the shadows were becoming perceptively shorter. When he neared the clearing, Clarke flipped down his sun visor to protect his eyes from the glare, since the shadows had already moved away from the bus. The portions of the area which were bathed in the weak blue light of the earth became completely black to him, but with the tractor-bus in clear view only fifty yards in front of him, there would be no danger in walking through the deep shadows.

As he silently moved toward the bus in the darkness, Clarke did not realize that he was passing a lunar dust-bowl to the left of him, and he never saw the helmet of Phil Johnson lying on top of it, Johnson's now-dead eyes staring out in terror, the victim of lunar quicksand . . .





TO RANDY

I walked up on the hillside
And was welcomed by some friends.
They were havin' a good time,
But I wanted it to end.

I laid down on my blanket
And looked up at the sky.
It seemed like things were being rushed,
My days were flyin' by.

I looked around and saw a man,
A guitar case by his side.
I could tell he was like me
With something heavy on his mind.

I got up and walked towards him.
I smiled and said hello.
I asked if he'd play for me,
He said he didn't know.

So I walked down to the fountain,
And had myself a drink.
As I started back up on the hill,
I heard that sad man sing.

I sat right down to listen.
His eyes grew big and bright.
He sang some Bobby Dylan,
"Don't think twice, it's alright."

We talked a bit and a laughed a bit.
The minutes went too fast.
We talked about our futures,
And we talked about our pasts.

Then he smiled at me in his quiet style,
And told me he'd be on his way.
He said, "See ya later, Suze," and I thought to myself . . .
He was my Bobby Dylan for a day.

HOWARD AND THE THUGS

i'm flying in mongoose heaven,
where roaches are climbing cloud walls.
now i see howard, covered with v-8 juice,
in a nest where everything crawls.

i noticed he had a tattoo on his chest,
of a pencil erasing itself.
oh me, oh my, how i love to fly
where all mongooses are blessed.

howard is hairy, but a very nice dude.
he likes to sing fine melodies.
he sings of life in mongoose heaven,
of lightning, thugs, and dead pine trees.

howard came to mongoose heaven
at the very young age of six.
he had been in a fight with some warlocks,
who beat him with words just for kicks.

i'm flying in mongoose heaven,
where the roaches are climbing cloud walls.
howard's gone home, oh me, oh my,
to play with his mail-order cat claws.



MOUNTAIN TOWN

Country folk, maybe fifty,
Walkin' 'round town.
Gossipin' women runnin' their mouths,
Proud to be mothers and
Farmers' wives.
Younguns pickin' berries
So their mamas
Can bake fresh pies
Good enough to please
Ol' Man Mountain himself.
Menfolk out workin'
In their fields.
Teens hot roddin'
Up and down Main Street.
Mountain town
Smells of sweet corn,
Wheat, and pretty girls.
Country folk,
Free from the world,
Livin' in a peaceful
Mountain Town.

A LESSON

I stopped by my broker's yesterday
My stock was down, Do I have to pay?
He shook his head once, Then said yes
The company's broke, The world's in a mess.

I stopped by my church one rainy day
The priest was there, Should I pray?
He shook his head once, Then said yes
The poor are starving, The world's in a mess.

The world goes spinning, Turning around
The grass is blue, The air is brown
Fields of green seldom show
Flowers and trees seldom grow
Air pollution everywhere
Life just seems too much to bear.

I stopped a little boy down the street
He said he could run, He couldn't be beat!
I shook my head once, Then said yes
He dropped his crutches, And tried his best.

Now and then I think of him
That little boy's future, So dim
I shake my head once, Then say yes
That boy's gonna make it, He's trying his best.

He taught me a lesson, Taught us all
Never give up, Life's no ball
Take what you have to, Change the rest
And always remember, To try your Best!

“DON’T KNOW WHY, I DON’T CARE”

Couldn't get to sleep last night
Don't know why, I Don't care
At two A.M. I took off right,
Don't know why, Don't know where

Headed down ninety-five
Just my Ford and me
Feelin' good, Feelin' high
Higher than the tallest tree.

No radio in my old Ford
To keep me company
So I just sang, Not feeling bored
Just my Ford and me

I sang of love and loneliness,
Only things I really knew
You know the songs I speak about,
I'm sure you've sung them too.

Still can't get to sleep today
Don't know why, I don't care
Just try to find a better way
Don't know how, Don't know where.

JOHNNIE THEY WERE WRONG

People who laughed at him,
They cry as he goes by
Wasn't he a nice boy
Too bad that he died.

They say he was a dreamer
I say what's wrong with that
If it wasn't for the dreamers, Lord
Our world would still be flat

His name was Johnnie Mitchell
He was a friend of mine
He grew up hoping the world would change
And not leave him behind

All he ever wished for
Was someone to hold his hand
He wanted a girl to believe in him
A girl to understand

You see Johnnie wasn't very big,
Or very brave, or very strong,
He was just a boy in a world of his own,
Another voice on the end of a phone,
A boy, they said, who didn't belong,
Johnnie, they were wrong

ONE MORE TIME

One more time down the bay
Before we store our boat away
Please old engines behave nicely
A swim today would be too icy

One more time into port
For another boating sport
"Happy Hour" filled with cheer
We make plans for cruises next year

One more time a final look
At dockside's favorite little nook
Boating seasons goes so fast
Winter time just lasts and lasts

Meg Helander

I FEEL PAIN

I feel pain deep inside me
like a tight fist . . .
around the insides of me,
a dull pain is torturing me,
I close my eyes and try to bear it,
and think of all whom I have hurt,
Now I pray for their forgiveness—

I open my eyes because of wetness
and find the room I'm lying in
gray and blurred
I try to call out, but my faint noise
arouses no suspicion
My body lay in anguish as to what
is happening
One more finger closed around me,
as I realize
God is taking me home.

IT WAS LATE

It was late one night I went walking,
I saw a child, the child was crying,
He was hurt and lying there in the street —
I didn't bother stopping
It was late that night—

I saw a beggar that night, he was walking,
His clothes were ragged,
He was dirty and bearded, hallucinating with drugs,
That poor wretched beggar was praying now,
I didn't bother stopping
It was late that night—

It was late that night I found myself
 cold and aching,
 my head pounded so dizzy.
I just couldn't think.
I fell to the ground and screamed out,
But nobody stopped,
It was late that night.

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO

A long long time ago, I was so
in love with him—
Never could anything change my
heart . . .
Not even when he left me in the dark

He took the hand of another fair woman
Praised her for those lovely ways
bowed down to her
as in the plays . . .
held here dear
to this very day.
A long time ago, or maybe it was just
a moment back
I found him to be just a passing beau,
who had captured my breath
for just a length of time.

THE SNOWFLAKE

Conceived in the womb of the heavens,
An individual is born
Structurally unique from others of its own kind.
Disturbed by an occasional puff from Old Man
 Winter's cheeks,
This symmetrical bit of Nature's handiwork comes
 to rest harmoniously with its comrades.

Presently unforeseen forces work towards Pandemonium
 and destruction
A blazing globe, with its needle-like rays, pierces
 the innermost network of this snip of
 grandmother's lace tablecloth.
The once-contained individuality is now but a speck of
 glistening moisture.

Uniting with droplets of like destiny,
The wanderer begins its pilgrimage
 down familiar pathways to the origin
 of life itself—the sea.
To be taken up and cast again,
This time, only remotely resembling that mortal
 of a previous journey.

VIETNAM 7 JAN 71 1630 HRS

Forty wounded!
Where?
Up near Loc Ninh
Fire support base Wade
But the war is over.

Five more units of blood
Who knows what the Medevacs will disgorge
Anticipation, a tinge of fear
Will we be up to the test?
But the war is over.

Here they come! Litterbearers!
Three litters, four PA's
Get that one with the head injury in here quick!
Is he GI or ARVN?
But the war is over.

A slashed nose, shrapnel
Broken femur, open tibial fracture
His lungs are filling!
Get an X-ray on this one
But the war is over.

Just a slash over the eye
The bullet entered through the hard palate
It's lodged in his neck
He's damned lucky
But the war is over.

Call in a super urgent
Medevac or Dust-Off?
Dust-Off will take too long
He's a 50-50 critical
But the war is over.

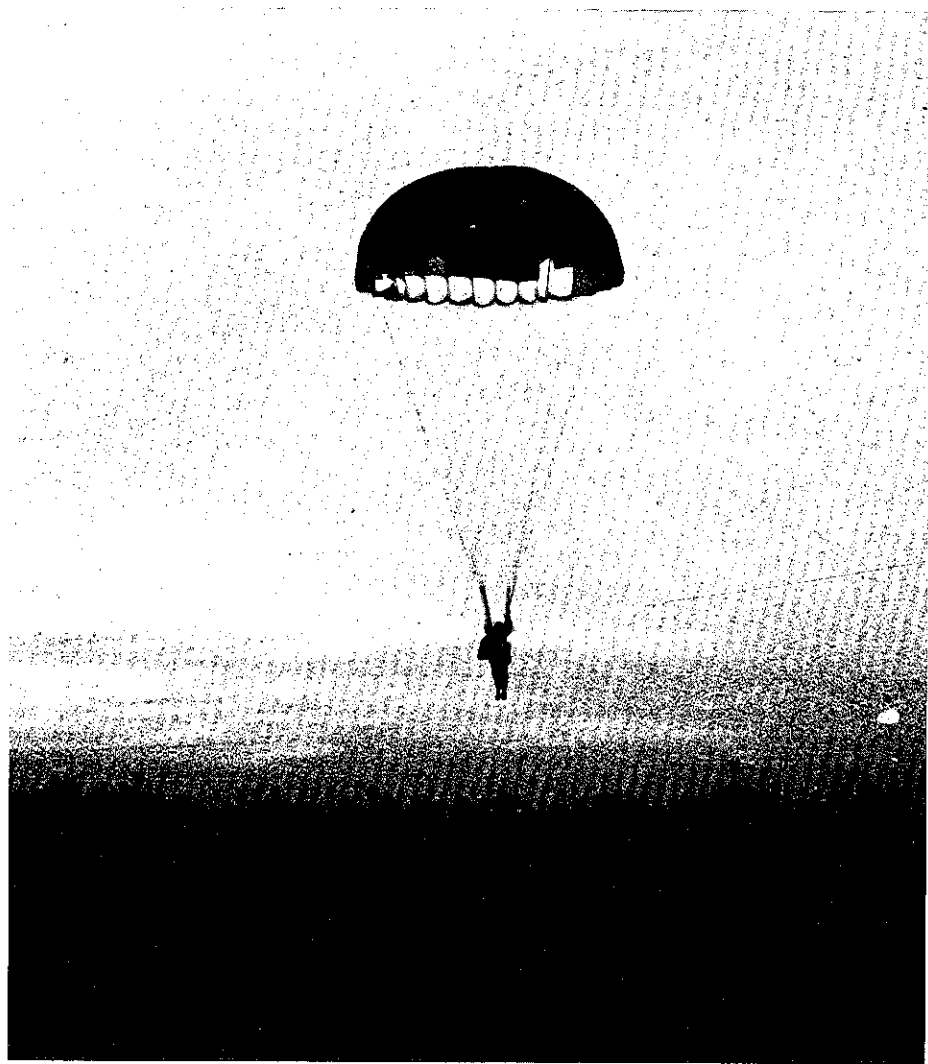
VIETNAM (Cont.)

This one's DOA
Bled to death
What! A leg wound and he's dead?
This shit's gotta stop
But the war is over.

Some of his brains are on his T-shirt
Is he GI or ARVN?
A look of relief
Just a gook, a dink
But the war is over.

Get a body bag
Gather his personal effects
But he's clutching his wedding band
Then leave him like that
But the war is over.

FELLOW AMERICANS
I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THIS ABOUT THE CONFLICT
OVER DEATHS ARE AT AN ALL TIME LOW
VIETNAMIZATION IS WORKING
THE WAR IS OVER.



THE EMPTY SUMMER HOUSE

I picked
a petal-less flower
from a barren field
and placed it
in the deserted vase.
No light enhances
its colorless hue
No love breathes life
into the emptiness.





MORT: SONGWRITING DRUGGIST

He thinks of those wonderful yesterdays
of Sal and Maurie and Jim
of memories we all once lived

He lives in a world of prescribed deceptions
in a world of deceptive prescriptions
dispensing medicinal reality and

He writes of tomorrow's songs
songs that men have
not yet learned to face

Songs that reach out
and let the sun creep through
the murky oppressiveness of routine
and comb the rain with green fingers
and gentle lyrics

Songs that feel
the glow of a golden fireball
just
out
of
reach

LYNDELL SUNDAY MORNING

I took a walk this still morning still asleep—
the slightest of breeze left by night's leaving
 lulled the drowsy elm
 and carried the soft scent of dogwood
 and lilac
 through the gently stirring silver maple
 leaves—
the Sun opened its golden eye—saw my lone steps
 yawned once—then saw the love in my hair,
 face, fingers, smile
 heard my soul song and
 smiled the morning awake.

I have a right to this day:
the grass fresh dew soaks my shoe
becomes a part of me,
 and is mine
the ringnecked pheasant scurries across my path
his dowdy mate at his tail stops, looks, and
 dashes off—and they are mine
the dandelions, the red maple, the forsythia,
the screeching cat bird,
the morning cardinal singing his scarlet song,
 —and their glory is mine . . .
earned, paid for, arrived at through a
tortuous maze of self search
now all there . . .
to share with all
who love a Sunday morning
smiled awake by the Sun . . .

HARD ROCK

He stared straight ahead, his hands gripping the steering wheel stiffly as he drove along the Turnpike. He tried to remember the details of what had just happened, but couldn't. Beads of perspiration dripped through his eyebrows into his eyes, continuing to roll in tiny rivulets down his cheeks. Impatiently, he dabbed at his eyes trying to clear his clouded vision and mind. It was then that he saw her.

She was standing alongside the road thumbing a ride. The bright colored beads, contrasting against her white, tight jersey, flashed like tiny pebbles in the sun as he drove past. He braked and pulled over to the shoulder. He waited, making no sign to her. He watched her in the rear-view mirror. She hesitated a moment, then clutching her soft cloth shoulder bag ran toward the car. Her long, flowered skirt billowed between and behind her brown bared legs. Her sandaled feet skimmed the highway. Vaguely, he felt a low, pulsating throb begin somewhere deep down inside his brain. It was a familiar feeling.

"Hi, name's Tina," she said brightly.

"Barry," he nodded.

"Not bad," she thought, "not bad at all." Tina noted his healthy, tanned face, his dark, curly hair, and was slightly surprised at the intensity of the green eyes turned so seriously toward her. "Mind if I put on the AC?" she asked, reaching across him to flip on the air conditioning. "Or is it broken? You're sweating."

"It's OK," he replied, looking at her again. He saw her pert, heart-shaped face, long brown hair and soft brown eyes. "She's too young," he thought. Suddenly, he smiled. Maybe this was what he needed—a new car, a new girl, a new life—another chance.

"Headed for the rock concert?" Tina asked as she turned on the radio.

"Yep," he answered, "if I don't get lost on the way."

Tina flipped the push buttons on the car radio from one station to another until a loud blast of music filled the car. The beat of the music and the beat in Barry's head increased in tempo. His hands gripped the steering wheel harder, his knuckles whitening with the tension.

"Lower it!" he ordered suddenly.

"OK, OK," she said good-naturedly, "you sound just like my old man! Turn off Exit 10—after the next two exits. Are you really going to the concert in Fairfield?"

"Sure. Say, how about something to eat first?"

"I've got some lunch, here in my bag, and I'll share it with you," Tina said smiling. "There's a roadside rest and picnic area up ahead, a sign back there said."

"Good!" Barry pulled off the main highway into the rest area. He brought the car to a halt and Tina jumped out. Barry sat there for a moment or two. Then with some conscious effort, he let go of the steering wheel. He stared at his hands, flexing his fingers open and shut a few times. He glanced at Tina, already at a picnic table under the shading trees, spreading out her sandwiches wrapped neatly in waxed paper.

"Cute," he thought, "but so young, so much to learn, and not nearly enough time." He took a deep sigh. "Damn! I wish my head would let up! Maybe if I ate something . . ."

"Built good," thought Tina as Barry walked toward her.

"Built good," thought Barry as he walked toward Tina.

As he took a sandwich from her, Tina's hand lingered lightly in Barry's, almost like the caress of an eyelash against a soft cheek. Barry ate in silence as he listened to Tina's light patter. She reminded him of a butterfly flitting from one flower or rock to another. He thought about that for a while.

"Do you like rocks?" Barry asked unexpectedly.

"Rock music? Yes, of course, don't you?"

"Yes, I like rock music, but I mean rock rocks. Did you ever think that rocks were like people?"

"No."

"There are three main kinds of rocks," he began seriously, "igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic."

"Are you a school teacher?"

Barry laughed, but continued, "Igneous rocks come from way deep down in the earth, where it's red hot—igneous, like ignite. Then there's the sedimentary kind, like the sediment that is left on the bank of a river after it overflows. And then there are the metamorphic rocks that change from what they were . . . to something different." His voice trailed off. "People are like that, too," he said harshly. "You burn inside, deep down, then the dirty sediment of life spills all over you, and when you can't stand any more, you just explode into somebody else."

"I guess I want to be somebody else," Tina remarked. "That's why I left. I just couldn't stand it any more—the routine, the sameness day after day—Dullsville! I want to really live a little," she declared passionately.

Barry frowned as another car drove into the picnic area. Three or four children tumbled out of the car. "We'll talk some more, later. Let's take a little walk." Barry reached for Tina's hand as they walked along the trees bordering the rest area. "Look, here's a sedimentary rock. See all the different colors making it up. This one has been through a lot. If you held it up to the sun, it looks like it has pure gold in it. Now, this one's heavier, and hasn't been through as much. No two are alike.

Look at that one over there. And that one, behind that tree."

The young couple with the children smiled at each other as Tina and Barry disappeared into the small woods bordering the rest area.

Tina became interested in spite of herself as Barry talked. He continued to find different specimens which he handed to her. Tina stuffed them into her shoulder bag that was now bulging. "Here, that's getting heavy, let me carry that," Barry said, reaching for the bag. His hand slipped under the strap, he felt the warmth of her body as he slid the bag down over her arm and his knuckles gently brushed her breast.

"Hey, it's getting on," Tina, suddenly aware, realized. "Let's go!"

"I'll race you to the car, Tina. Loser buys supper."

Tina's tinkling laugh rang out. "You've just challenged Marshall High's best track star."

Barry grinned. "I'll even give you a handicap."

Tina's tiny feet flew over the ground ahead of Barry. She had barely begun to run when a flying stone scraped her arm. She hesitated briefly, looking back. Another stone caught her in the middle of the back. And then she saw his face! Awful fear stabbed through her. As the stones kept coming, Tina ran for her life.

"Oh, dear God! Which way did we come?" Panic confused her. Her hand went to the back of her head as another stone stung her. She felt the warm blood sticky her fingers. She began to scream. "Help! Help!" If only those other people would hear. "Barry, No! No! Stop!" Her sandal caught on the root of a tree. She stumbled and fell, rolling over. Before Tina could gain her balance, Barry was upon her, his knee pressing hard against her chest.

As Tina had run, the tempo of the beat in Barry's head had stepped up as he had given chase to the moving target. The beat had spread through his whole body, faster and faster. A red mist flashed before his eyes. An explosion was rocking his body until it was stronger and greater than himself. He lifted the shoulder bag high over her head.

"Please, Barry, please don't," Tina pleaded. She raised her hands toward him, struggling. Barry paused for just a second, then he swung the bag of stones against her hands and crashed it on her upturned face. There was a sound like the sole of a shoe popping a cockroach on a hard, bare floor.

Barry ran then. He had felt the excitement of the stalk, the elation of the hunter, and the ecstasy of the kill. His head was clear, the sun and air were warm on his face. The familiar throbbing devil was appeased—again.

He stood beside the highway thumbing a ride. "I'll ride into Fairfield, pick up another car, and be on my way," he decided.

The red VW screeched to a stop, and Barry walked toward the little car.

"Hi, name's Barry, what's your's?"

"Mary," she replied, smiling. "Hop in!"

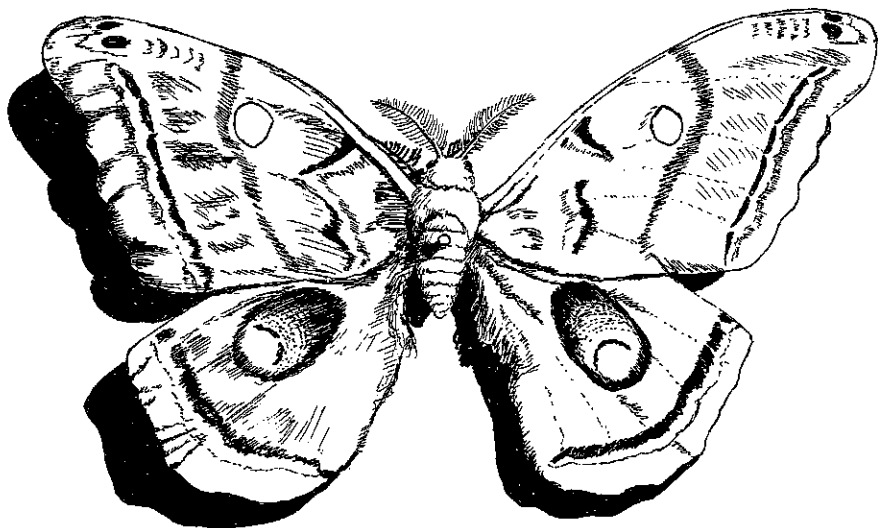
A low persistent throb began to beat in Barry's brain.



A GRAY SPOTTED MOTH

A grey spotted moth died in my tea
the poor lemoned squirt.

As I sit here writing,
services will be held 10 P.M. tonight
at the white outdoor lamp
in the garden by the
pond so that all
of his family and friends and
those that do not even care
may come and dance in merriment,
anyway, until daybreak carries
them off onto other affairs.



THE GAME

I'm sure you can imagine,
It's simple as can be.
The place is Piccadilly,
The players he and she.

She whispers, "Will it hurt?"
"Of course not," answers he.
"It's a very simple process,
You can rely on me."

She says, "I'm rather frightened,
I've never done this before."
He started to convince her,
It would hurt no more.

It's getting rather painful.
The tears came to her eyes.
It's getting rather painful.
It must be quite a size.

"Now calm yourself my dear,"
His face it had no sin.
"Now open slightly wider,
So I may get further in

Suddenly with a jump.
She gave a little shout.
It's all over now,
Thank God, he pulled it out.

Now if you read this carefully,
He's a dentist you will find.
It's not what you are thinking,
It's just your dirty mind!

I AM LIVING

I am living
In the dazzle
Of a winter day

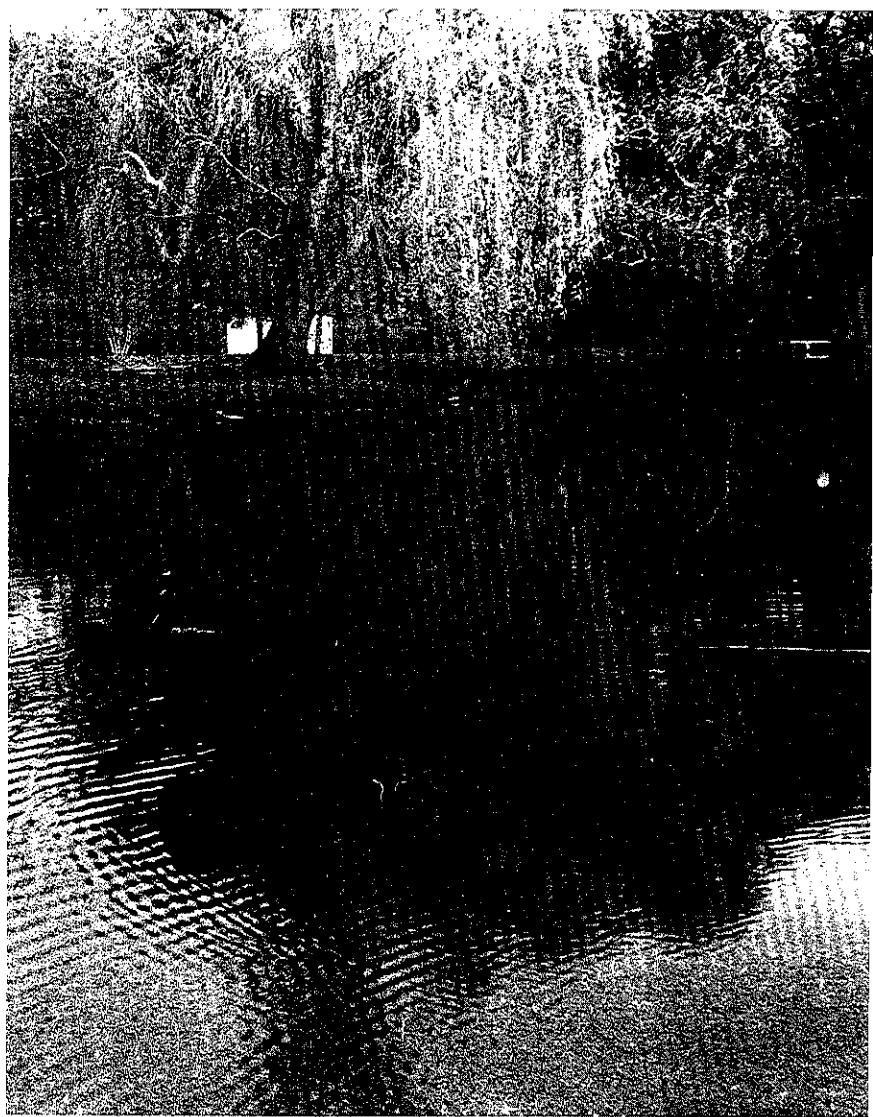
New-fallen ice
Has platinum-dipped the trees

And given ground the
Glory that belongs to
Undiscovered pearls

And air is spangled

As in the aftermath of
Love's mirth







Special appreciation to the entire Instructional Media Staff. We also wish to thank Stephen Starcheski and Roger McCabe for their time and patience.