

Pegasus

1974

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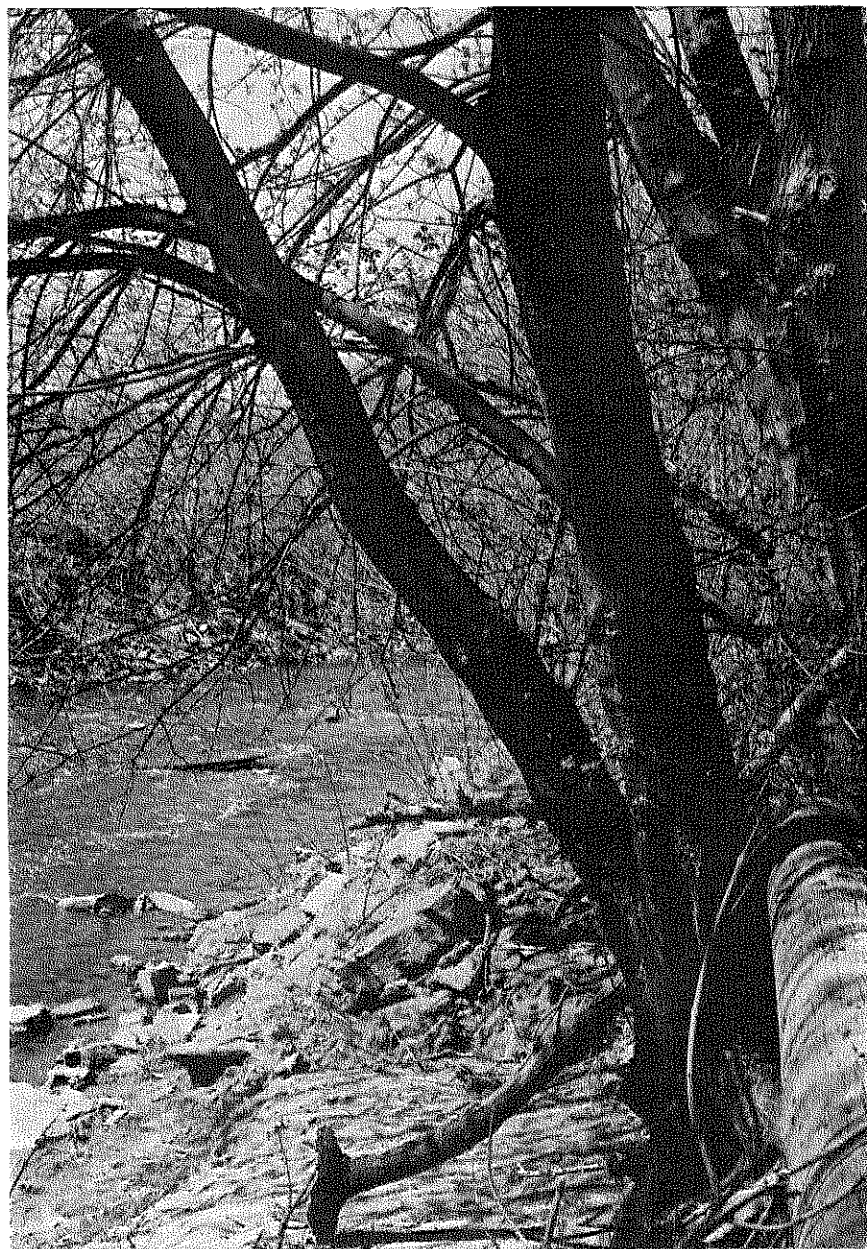
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SUZANNE MILLER



POEM BY THE BANKS

Flow river  
flow  
past the depth of day  
beyond the deep of night  
rock me, rock me  
at your pace  
move me, move me  
from this place-  
this small space  
through which you waltz  
by me  
by time  
by one more  
set of warm legs  
between the frozen banks.  
Carry me  
how far you go  
to where you go  
There I go too.  
Hold me  
However long you live  
until the path you weave  
is no more woven  
by your calm touch.  
Free my spirit  
as you are freed  
from narrow, littered streams.  
Help me laugh  
as you might laugh  
from source,  
through peaceful, country hills,  
down waterfalls of discontent,  
until at last  
the laughter breaks  
is choked  
is swallowed  
in the channels  
to the sea.

## FIREPLACE PORTRAITS

Faces  
lonely faces  
quiet faces  
melancholy baby faces  
searching  
seeking  
within walls  
asking for a hint  
of hope.  
Am I old?  
Are you young?  
My skin is weathered  
Yours is smooth.  
I've seen time  
as you have, too  
felt it  
deep  
felt the pain  
the years  
must keep  
must hold  
must build.  
Do I know you?  
Do you know me?  
Do you know me  
beyond this part  
I play  
beyond this face  
you see-  
Do you know me?  
Stand up with dignity.  
Bend your knees  
to touch the floor.  
Kneel with me  
before the hearth  
before the silence  
forever marks us  
Strangers.  
I don't know you.  
You don't know me.  
Now  
Let your eyes  
see the fire  
touch the warmth  
touch my soul.

See my face  
it melts before the heat  
exposes me  
exposes you  
in gentle colors  
flaming colors;  
paints our portraits  
as we are.  
(A fireplace canvas  
of I know you  
and you know me.)

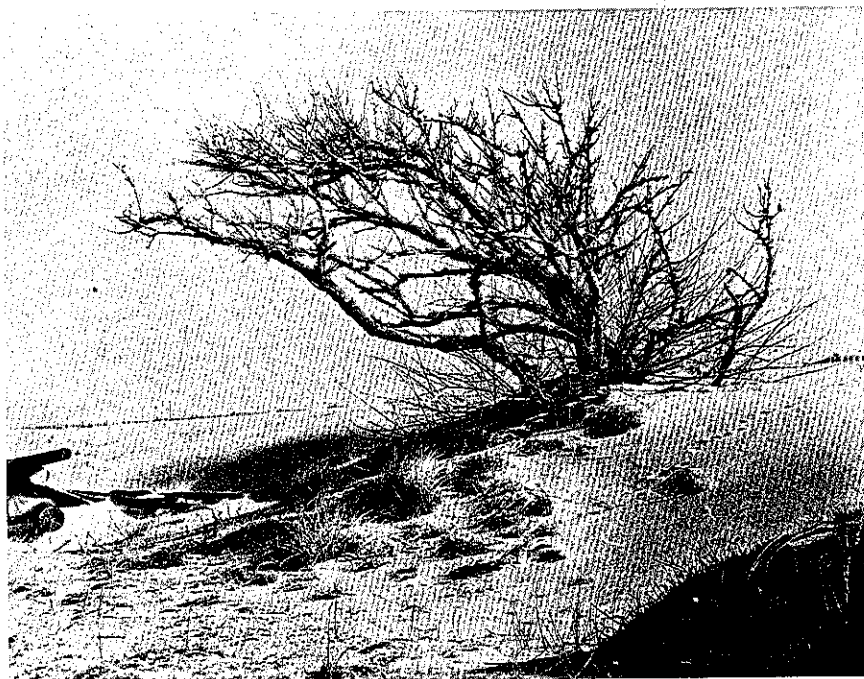


YOUR CHILDHOOD IN SAND

Yes, your childhood now a thing of sand  
Dried beyond tears by the golden light  
of her hair; brittle silence still  
as ashen manuscript - you turn her pages  
and dry words crumble in your mouth.  
Yes, your childhood now is hers  
And she has buried it in the sand.

Now in solitude to hear  
Your breath graze her dreams,  
Inwardly to touch  
The nakedness of her closed eyes -

Yes, your cup now a thing of cracks,  
It bleeds in your fingers.  
Still, you raise to your lips  
the clotted dreams  
And drink your childhood in sand.







### TO C.S.

One picture of you remains, these many years,  
A drunken, belligerent figure astride the stairs  
descending after storm-tossed sleep  
in your later years; You, who had clung  
bloody-handed to lifelines, roaring in our child's minds  
above typhoons in nameless tropic seas; You who had brought  
mysterious things from Zanzibar, and ventured  
far beyond the infinite lines that girdled  
our spinning globe; You made your way to us  
and died a human death, though we  
could no more bury you than forget  
the draw-stringed sea bags you filled in places  
few would see - and how you emptied them triumphantly  
on the glassy mahogany of the dining room table  
for all to see.



GRACE BONNER

THE CLOUDS

SWIRL UPON SWIRL  
FROM HEAVEN TO WHERE  
TO LIVE TO DIE  
I'LL TRY TO HIDE  
BEHIND THE CLOUDS  
ONE MORE DAY

BUT CLOUDS  
(THE DRIFTERS THEY ARE)  
OWE NO FIDELITY  
OR PROMISES AND NEVER  
COUNT THE DAYS

GOD GIVE US THIS DAY  
COMPLETE WITH CLOUDS  
THEY ARE THE ONLY THINGS  
THAT STAY AND STAY  
THEN GENTLY GO AWAY



## UNTITLED

To call it living  
Indicates a chosen life  
When the truth is  
I'm drifting  
In and out  
Like a letter  
Touching tables and chairs  
And people, sometimes  
Open and aware  
Of women and other men  
Who are drifting  
In and out  
Touching tables and chairs  
And people sometimes  
And sometimes not.

## A SHORT STORY

Love is a lazy affair  
A little earth  
But mostly air  
The patience  
The getting to know  
The time when  
I'll awaken you with kisses  
Don't depend on the clock  
The giving to  
The getting back  
Taking time  
To measure love's growth  
Or the lack  
If resentment and indifference  
Settle in  
I'll try to awaken you  
But if you can't  
Don't come looking for me  
It's ultimately your responsibility.

## THE RENAISSANCE MEN

The Renaissance men  
are hanging.  
Like creamy cherubs  
From ancestor clocks  
With human forms  
And emerald eyes  
Swaying with time  
Smiling for dear life

But that was an age  
Beyond the ages  
Found trembling by the door  
And what will be  
When they will be  
Crashing cherubs to the floor?



UNTITLED

There's nothing worse than  
hearing yourself saying:  
"I told you so."

My mind is a multi piece puzzle  
on the living room table  
put together with the picture side down  
done that way on purpose  
like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

In the twinkling of an eye  
life's hand of fate  
cold and waxy  
has come and swept it to the floor  
in one fell swoop  
as I stood and watched.

Like the cold eye of an Iguana  
not moving a muscle but just being...  
I stand in sorrow  
with eyes that can't look up  
with lips that will not smile.

And now I'm here again  
like the 8:43 to center city  
fitting the pieces  
one by one  
thankful that some haven't  
come loose  
from their intended partners  
cursing the ones that have  
cursing myself.

WHY I REALLY CALLED

I was lying on the beach today  
and the wind blew sand in my eyes.  
Tears came to flush it out  
but, it's funny...I was thinking of you  
at the same time.

I had a dream last night  
about a bird that flew through the sky.  
It was felled by a hunter and died.  
I watched it as it writhed on the ground  
with your head on its body.

And that's why I called you tonight.  
"Are you Okay?"

**YESTERDAYS (OR DAYDREAMS FROM THE QUILL  
COURTESY - LOWEST MAN IN A  
COUGH DROP FACTORY)**

If there be a place called home,  
let it be here,  
behind my eyes,  
for they have seen crazy yesterdays.  
From white snow drifts  
to windy autumn evenings  
lonely and chilling..  
Always willing to warm by the fire  
never saying no to hot chocolate  
with a marshmallow on top.

Let it be where I once put my  
icy wool mittens...  
on an old standing radiator,  
rusty in spots  
from drying little peoples gloves  
from the beginning of time  
while just stopping in for a bowl  
of hot tomato soup;  
So hot,  
makes your teeth hurt,  
so you put saltines in it  
to cool it down.

Let it be where you can always find  
a welcome eye...  
even if it is just the dog,  
whose been around so long  
it doesn't even know  
it's not part of the human race.  
Always there to wag and lick  
and show you somebody  
really needs you.

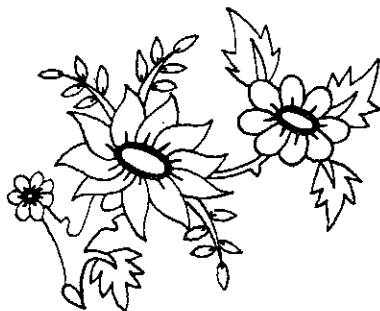
Let it be where someone yells in  
the morning...  
for socks and things,  
where old friends have come  
and gone...  
Where time was just another  
bowl of cream of wheat,  
and planning for tomorrow  
was just a used wrinkled brown  
lunch bag...  
carefully folded neatly in your  
back pocket for tomorrow's lunch.

If there be a place called home,  
let it be here...  
for I have seen it pass  
before I could blink or sigh  
here...  
behind my eyes.

## TO AMY (MY EIGHT YEAR OLD LÖVER)

Amy was a cloud I knew  
she floated softly through the sky,  
she never rained on anyone...  
except the thirsty trees and flowers.

Amy had a habit  
of smiling at the sun,  
she knew that he was lonely  
and wanted him to smile...  
The big hot sun  
hadn't time for  
fluffy little clouds,  
so away she flew,  
to rain in sorrow  
on the sunflowers  
in the meadow.



DAVE PATTERSON

### MELTING ICES

Predictable winter icicles  
Trickle away before me,  
Teasing the shy tears  
That wander warmly down  
My unaccustomed cheek.

I almost envy the ice  
Its plight, which, though  
Annihilation,  
Is yet an easy truth:

But it is you  
Who are my sun,  
And if I melt now  
Mutely before you,  
This isolated weeping may  
One day turn to tears  
Of clear articulation.

GEORGE T. SPILLANE

### ENGLISH LIT: TUESDAY, THURSDAY, 8:00 A.M.

like shipwrecked flashlights  
eyes of darkness open, then close  
on the quietly prowling mist  
slinking through the murky blackness,  
raking its twisting fingers  
through stark, scaly poles  
which poke holes in the blackboard sky.

another sliver of light precedes  
the whine of a sleepy starter  
exploding in an angry roar  
as shivering cylinders  
suck in their first morning drag,  
clear their throats,  
wrack the goose-necked exhaust  
with consumptive coughs until,  
warmed awake,  
they clatter contentedly.

sharp spears of light pierce the icy cloud  
creeping along the moist marble ribbons of  
glazed asphalt  
and sketch spectral shadows  
on the stretched black canvass  
of hill-clouds silhouetted  
against the starless slate-gray sky.

layers of light

sprinkle talcum onto stone,  
catch lumps of crusted snow cringing at the curb, and  
startle trees, stretching limbs  
to see above the black mantle of sleep.  
I suddenly am made aware  
of my raucous disturbance of  
this profoundly simple Night  
and of my primitive attempts to  
bring just a spark to  
the dark disinterest,  
to puncture the gray hills  
and brocade them with color.

## JUDY

some special souls

still

clutch rag dolls  
in the night  
dream of purple bananas and orange sand  
and silver ships sailing a blue-gold sea;  
imagine elephants and giraffes in clouds,  
float atop grassblade carpets  
and  
stare, enchanted by a puppet show in the park

such special souls

must

mask the world-hurts behind  
a soft smile -- not unaware, not blind  
to ugliness and pain --  
hum an enchanted tune  
trying to flood them away  
with an inland river of arid tears

those special souls

alone

feel the pain of the world's wanderers  
know how eyes that smile can



cushion the pounding of a captured thought  
and  
dull the memory of how the head hurts when it is drowning;  
and so they must  
clutch ragdoll lifesmiles  
in the purple night

## TOM

a gentle man, he  
eases  
his clay-covered body into a stiff-backed chair  
takes  
a Camel-coffee break  
("Really," he says and one can sense  
armies of red ants  
scurrying  
through the gray furrows of his brain  
backpacking  
thoughts ten times their sizes  
camping  
beneath a leaf screen  
wrinkled red  
from too many setting suns)  
fondles  
his Martin -- dues well paid --  
listens  
to the human excellence of two handed Chet  
closes  
the inward eyes  
imagines  
the orgasmic surge of Pure Excellence  
cries smiles  
for all our children  
for all the dreams undreamed or, dreamed, forgotten  
for all the empty spirits sighing into empty bottles  
hums and  
gently, reverently  
flat picks  
his soul



FROM: ANGEL  
TO: JOHN  
SUBJECT: MODIFICATION OF YOUR PROPOSAL 18

An angel in a mighty voice will cry:  
"The great shall fall, for crouching in her soul  
are demons; spirits, foul with the dung of men,  
evaporate in the swoosh of flailing wings  
unleashed by squawking, green coprophagous prey.  
Because the nations drank the wrath of all  
her immorality and kings of men  
and earth rejoiced in fornicating her  
and by her wanton power, merchants clink  
their gold – for this, she goes. Never shall  
her greatness swell except as a carcass decayed."

From heaven the voice will come again: "Go out  
from her, my people; stay, and share her sins.  
Her sins have reached the heavens. Render her  
as she has rendered. Give her double for  
her works, and in her cup that she has mixed,  
for her mix double. For as much as she  
has glorified herself and given in  
to wantoness, so much shall agony  
be given her – for she shall burn in fire.  
Those fornicating kings will weep for her,

and they shall cry, 'The strong has fallen! What  
has sped your judgment?' Merchants, too, will weep,  
for who will buy their merchandise. No gold  
nor silver, marble, brass, fine flour, oil  
nor horses, chariots, slaves nor souls of men.  
The fruit, desired of souls, is now from you  
departed, perished, nevermore for men.  
And everyone who sails to a place shall cry  
and cast the dust upon his head for thoughts  
of ships and wealth that now will never be."

And taking up a stone, the angel will cast  
it down into the sea and say: "With this,  
the great will fall and never rise again.  
Musicians, trumpets, harps and flutes shall not  
be heard again. No craft nor craftsmen shall  
there be. No light of lamp will shine in you.  
No voice of bride and groom – because your men  
of greatness, merchants, proved by sorcery  
that every nation could be led astray.  
In her the blood of prophets will be found."

So there you are; fill in the place yourself.  
Most any place will do, for given Hell  
As model, man is able, by himself,  
With angel's work to improvise quite well.

## THE ARTIST VIEWS THE MASTER

Pompous in death you lie, so gravely cold --  
a stranger now. Was it your will to set  
your ring on the other hand to catch the light?  
Who thought to hide that other finger ringed  
with blue nudeness? Think! Your image may  
be soiled. A shaven-clean gentleman's face  
to the last. What's this? What rage you lavished on  
the final barber. Did you feel that nick  
which oozed no blood? Such minute care you had!  
What senseless groundling cut those bristles that  
quivered at me from yawning nostrils? Who  
combed down those eye brows which you used to comb  
against the grain to catch the tyrant's look?

You'll never be the same. Those eyes will never  
liquify a phrase or glaze the awe  
of tyros. Now, what marble visions have  
they frozen on? And this! Who gave you a smile?  
What jackal creased that fixed joke on your face?  
Such artistry! A lushly carpeted, bronze  
casketed freight for six euphoric friends--  
or willed you eight? And flowers? "Loyal Friend"  
I didn't know you owned one. Heirs as well!  
A meretricious flower show will keep  
them true to you. I wonder if their myth  
about your death-- your dying with no chance  
to fight for life -- is true? No matter, death  
receives a quitter best. But no! I can  
hardly be true and call you this; no man  
could call you quitter. You could never quit.  
So if you didn't fight for life, you fought  
against death. Oh, for this I envied you.  
Yes! Envied! Smile! Wax on, it's your last.  
But so unnatural. Never did I see  
you smile before. You're only natural  
now in your silence. How I hated you  
for silence! Others damned me, then they praised.  
Throughout it all from you, nothing, and still  
nothing. Where else was I to go except  
within myself? In anger, how I wrenched  
the worms of discontent from out of these  
my living bowels! With these hands I squeezed  
the coprophagus flies whose sticky legs  
clung to my brain. And I did it! I. Yes smile,

for I alone could spite you with my skill!  
But recognition brought me not one word.  
You must have known I could not cut you off.  
And now? Now do you know no other praise  
would do but yours? I couldn't ladle out  
a fermenting self! But death has cut me off.  
And yes, your lips, waxed for eternity,  
will never tell. You know; I know you know!  
But now I'm damned to living quiet years.  
Your silence now is nothing. What revenge  
have I, except upon your corpse, and what  
hot spur is a silence which is willed by death?

### SOLILOQUY

He fingers his identity  
in a plastic shark's tooth, thonged  
coldly about his Ghost-pale  
throat; and he laughs at Hamlet.  
She keeps from madness by hissing, "a daisy"--  
sotto voce; outside, spring hums.  
He holds his stutter tightly pressed  
between acid lips, "oh feel ya!"  
She hides her thoughts behind Klee eyes  
and wonders what wantonness is.  
He pares his nails with a church-key  
and flicks the shards at his chap-fallen pal.  
She shades her eyelids to "deep-water,"  
blue as the stains of her venom'd ball-point.  
He rocks in his chair plotting revenge  
against the High Dean of Knowledge.  
And they all fear what's to be.

Daily dread has been poured upon them  
like honey, set in a poisoned cup.  
And the bees drone on and on  
with knowledge clinging in sweet pearls  
to college-combed minds. With measured  
murmurings they swarm into the lesions  
of urban flowers and gum them forever  
with irrelevancies. The rest is silence.



SOMEONE SAID IT THIS WAY

When you were young  
your father put the jupon on,  
placed you in a medieval room  
then watched your soul arise.

It appeared to him  
about the corners,  
through tight silk too,  
and the iris of your eyes.

(Someone once said the pupils dilate  
when you think of it as more than just a feeling.)

About your skin,  
you had your own hangnail  
and at fourteen,  
blond pubic hair  
germinating.  
you began to secrete the aroma,  
dream of the whole corolla,  
exuding everywhere.  
Your father wondered,  
what the skull capacity?  
It was swarming.

\*

We flew,  
he saw the curly tips  
of our aerial roots  
and he was a wall scarred.  
He said you were gloating over a cup  
of the city's hellish wine,

(we were all cultivated on a vine  
in a wild arbour of confusion.)

Where is this pattern  
of girls coming out  
in their bright, flowered dresses?  
Where is this primrose path  
he speaks of?

\*

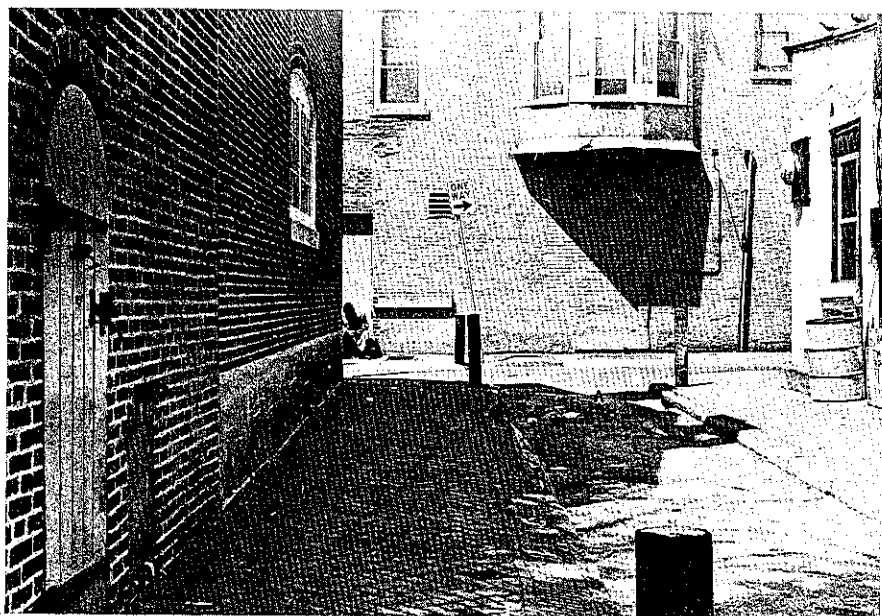
We glibly glide,  
we smile.  
The sepals are wings  
and flapping they sing  
billing and cooing songs.  
He sees us now.  
We are lying beside cool streams  
and you the explosive fruit  
are scattering seeds.

## ON SOUTH STREET TOO LATE

The old man swung his umbrella high,  
jumped  
and crashing his feet  
squarely into the puddle...  
he made the pigeons fly.  
He chased them,  
booed them,  
then took last swigs from  
a top shelf wine.  
It's been anguishing,  
cramps in the stomach,  
he rubbed his eyes  
with the cuff of his coat,  
he was crying stubborn tears  
and he muttered and cursed  
low words.  
He threw the bottle to the curb...  
quick glances,  
stares he didn't need,  
the explosion,  
the pairing off to sides,  
the preparation of an aisle,  
shattering hunks  
splintering slivers  
He raised his fists and cried,  
stares...  
he spit to the ground  
and began sparring with the air.

\*

A fat mamma  
 leaned out the window  
 hollering down to her husband,  
 screamed at the children in short sleeves in the street,  
 the dirty retreats of pigeons.



## THE BICYCLE ACCIDENT

It was summer, moist and balmy at that  
earliest  
time in the morning  
The long hill,  
you took it in the highest gear  
and the shiny, spoked wheel  
revolved as light.  
Oh the speed, it was thrilling!  
The feel of fluid air rushing your face...  
it's like a high dive.  
A narrow street to cross over,  
the iridescent green station wagon  
and a dark faceless face.

("Oh no!")

The push,  
the wild, uncontrollable wheel,  
still a flash of light,  
reeled on thin tires, and  
fine gravel.

The crash  
against the cinderblock wall,  
the fall, the pounding,  
then the scratching of a bare arm  
abrasing the grainy concrete.  
Blackness

("I must be asleep, I must look dead  
lying here like this. My eyes are closed,  
but I know what I look like.  
I think I'm hurt.")

No stars, just a misty,  
overall greyness.  
A slight sense of touch,  
no pain yet,  
but an awareness of presence.  
Voices.  
There were two,  
the sound of feet  
grinding the gravel.

("They must be wearing hard shoes.")

A slight breeze  
brings a grain of sand to your face,

("I'm lying in the empty lot!")

A hand on your forehead...  
"The tires must have slipped on the stones."  
"No,  
I saw the whole thing. She was riding  
very fast down the hill, crossing over  
that small street, and a car turned  
that very second, hit the back fender  
and the bike went out of control.  
She smashed right into the wall."

("Is he the face?")

"Yeah, the bastard took off  
down the road. No time to get the license."  
"The bastard!"

("The bastard!")

You can almost see their faces...



("No, my eyes are closed,"

in greyness, surrounded by black.

("I think there is a street light to the left.")

The ambulance sounds

("I must be hurt!")

Like a boomerang whirring  
around and around in your ear.  
It's nearing sound  
pierces the air like a sharp razor,  
then stops. Doors banging,  
The pounding sounds of feet on the cushioned gravel...

("They must be wearing sneakers.")

and voices.  
You must be broken...

("or just folding up my body limp...")

because they lift you with such ease  
on to the stretcher.

("It has wheels.")

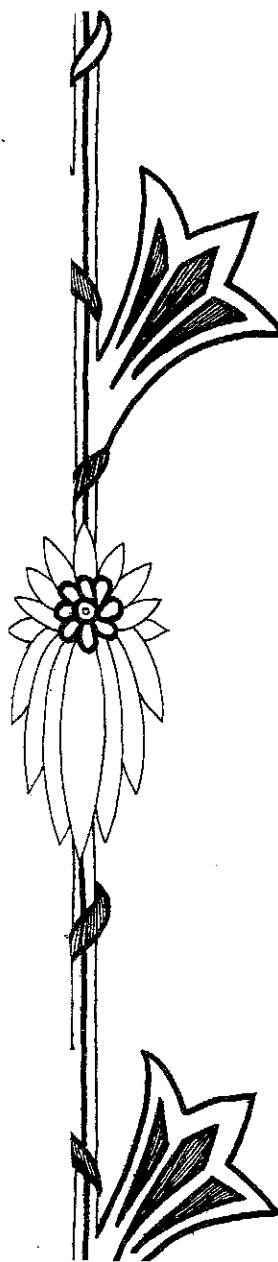
You feel their hands.  
A slight jerk,  
And the ambulance sounds.  
Like a boomerang whirring  
Around and around in your ear,  
the parting sound pierces the air  
like a sharp razor.

## THE TERRARIUM EYE

There were minds of my own generation,  
angry, desperate, lost,  
crying for directions only the dead can give,  
reaching for that signpost hand pointing  
upward to the sky,  
but they had no wings to fly,  
they'd led uncertain lives.  
Now,  
I hear their echoings

and they are found and fed  
 the sophistries and the prophecies  
 of the gurus and the poets  
 the soothsayers and the prophets  
 at concerts with madmen dancing on the stage.  
 They fall upon me,  
 like boulders from the sky,  
 they cry  
 rapture and sweet bliss  
 for this baptismal of their spirits.  
 I can hear them,  
 out of the din of the open city,  
 here,  
 enclosed among the shade and damp and dew,  
 I hear them,  
 I do not want to say goodbye.  
 I think sometimes I fly,  
 but my eyes ache....  
 these voices call me from all sides,  
 like faulty florescent lighting they ache.  
 They rush me,  
 make this decision  
 and my heart pulsates,  
 I feel faint,  
 the Z's in a T.V. test pattern all over my screen,  
 the words I choose to answer them trembling  
 out of a loose fitting jaw,  
 these minds of my own generation  
 and I cannot feel it.  
 My senses unaware?  
 This blurring vision, hearing, tasting, touching....  
 it's mountain misery in bloom!  
 A muffled sense of creativity  
 in all of this shadowy darkness,  
 among this rust and blue stone,  
 a flower in bloom?  
 But oh,  
 it smells of narcissus  
 and I am alone.  
 Should I but listen to these voices,  
 some I've never heard before  
 and some I recognize,  
 would I feel privileged to know  
 some whole glorious story?  
 have attained a knowledge  
 of a higher world than this  
 sanctuary of rust and slate blue stone?  
 Here I sit alone,  
 upon this moss  
 and lichen covered tree,  
 in a cool, pebbled shade,  
 where birds and things fly agile across the sky,  
 my fern friends, adiantum and foxglove,  
 my animals,  
 say hello....  
 but don't throw your stones at this glass eye,  
 it's very fragile.

## A STILL LIFE PORTRAIT OF CRAZY EUDORA



Edna at 60 was the head, the great tactician.  
Father was dead, and humming Eudora at 64  
grew high the bamboo, ferns thick with brown  
spores for the pigeons that flew over the  
tall, tracery iron fence, the dark foliage.  
Eudora fed them,  
in winter a dish of finger broken bread,  
in summer a bowl of seed.  
Edna wore the stern face  
when she spied these backyard scenes.  
She was the fat, unglittering lodestar  
of their father's house,  
she had stored his strengths,  
they smelled of camphor when she  
brought them out,  
she had practiced his restraints  
and maintained the air of velvet,  
thick and dark.  
It was a dreamy house,  
the thin-glassed lamps  
she brought the match to,  
keeping the wicks low,  
the vision dim.  
In the evening  
dim mists were dreamy,  
a prophecy impending,  
while the grandfather clock  
ticked time  
and the metronome of measured words.  
But, there was a stability,  
an immutability in the oak balusters on the stairs,  
shiny, waxed, clawfooted chairs, deep-seated  
and clinging to roses in the rug.  
Above,  
the eternal enigma of a sepia and tan man,  
scowling and leaning on a stick,  
now a fetish and a seer  
from a lily decked  
monumental marble mantelpiece.  
When Eudora found him,  
he was the old white stick  
leaning against the chair.  
He was crumpled as a dry leaf  
and the strength seemed lost for good.  
Hard father was gone  
before she envisaged the sensibility of Edna.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
That summer a sickness came  
and there was nothing Eudora could do  
no doctor grew fever root to heal  
Edna's whooping, wheezing and screaming,

the black salve was stinking  
and those ugly sores on her skin!  
Eudora brought the willoware and tea to the room,  
darkening, the floating forest dense curtains  
and the sick, fetid air.  
She tried to smile,  
began telling Edna of the blond child  
who had come so near the fence  
to see the feeding of the birds,  
but Edna raved wildly,  
her hard, stern face  
was fleshy  
and convulsed from side to side,  
clinging and fisted  
around Eudora's wrists  
she cried loud...  
with her fat tears  
and bleary eyed vision,  
begged for prayers.  
(Say to God I've been good to you,  
I've taken care of you since  
father died, tell Him how you need me!)

Edna's nails were long  
and pinching.  
(It's this sickness, this weakness,  
I'm losing my strength! Go...  
Go now... Haven't I lived a  
week of Sundays?)

The pregnant pigeon  
of the secret store room  
cooed,  
fluttered her wings  
on a dusty, wicker porch swing,  
and not like any sea raging,  
thumb twitched,  
then gently relaxed.

In the morning there was lightning,  
the rain's wild monsoon on the streets  
was like fast dancers doing the jigs of their own liquidation.  
Eudora's eyes were circled and red,  
she had lain tossing and twisting  
in the heavy hot air,  
the clammy bed,  
the moon in the room  
had made it too bright to sleep,  
she could not eat.  
Eudora shut the door,  
they would take Edna today...  
for the first night in her life  
she would be alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

The morning was cool.  
A misty steam rose  
from the hot grounds  
of little lined squares of neighborhood.

It would all be over immediately,  
this no loss of time was written neatly  
in Edna's will.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Priest sings: Kyrie Elyison  
the black robe swings  
and his arms are raised:  
(And let perpetual light shine upon her...)  
the priest with his low, warbling words  
was wordless to Eudora,  
the coughing of a pallbearer  
echoed throughout the room.  
(So, He has never forgiven me...  
the very first time and I choke  
Him to the floor.

The Sister screamed, the children Ahhhhhhhhhed,  
and oh, the strangling fear, the spirit unfilled,  
the humility.)

Father would never bring her after that,  
she would make no penance.

(What could a blind man see?)

She was afraid and wondering  
if a child commits the mortal sin 1 X

by yodeling the loud noises that abound in empty churches,  
should one know better at ten?

(It was so glorious when I was the fire and brimstone  
while all of the people were eating in kitchens,  
the echoes resounded  
off high rococo walls.)

Eudora wonders,

(Is it really sacrilegious

to steal into the church when you're thirsty,  
(it was so hot that day)

drink the holy water from the silver spigot  
and never confess the sin?)

Her face was blinking  
as she knelt before bright,  
dull votives:

(How do you cast dead wishes?)

The church was lonely,  
the corners shadows, and the faces along  
the Calvary Way were wretched with pain.

Edna as a girl would sing

...Et antiquum documentum

Novo cedat ritui;  
praestet fides supplementum  
sensuum defectui....

And the outcast clown  
found no rope to swing...

Sanctuary!

\*\*\*\*\*

The rain never ceases.  
The black limosine creeps slowly  
through the city streets  
and it's no parade.

Just a single vase of white lilies  
 propped against the mahogany box  
 and two cars with low lights.  
 The priest consoles Eudora,  
 patting her hand and smiling dryly:  
 (the parish takes care of it's own.)  
 The sky is grey and black  
 umbrellas wrestle with the wet wind.  
 The priest delivers his low,  
 warbling sounds quickly,  
 sprinkles the dust,  
 (and dust you shall return...  
   damn mud, he said,)  
 muttering low words under his breath.  
 Eudora drops the slow rose,  
 the men lower the straps and say  
 "let's get out of here."  
 They drive slowly through  
 rain slick'd city streets  
 and it's no parade.

\*\*\*\*\*

The night sky is clear.  
 The luminous glimmer of the full moon  
 on blue-grey slate rooftops  
 is like the shimmering snow.  
 Eudora goes into the empty church,  
 darkening,  
 dreamy,  
 a light mist seemed rolling  
 about the dim chandeliers,  
 caressing Cherubim and Seraphim  
 and all of the frescoes.

YODEL AY HE WHOoooooooooooooooooooo

her sounds bellowing,  
 bouncing,  
 resounding.

HELLOoooo GODddddddddddddddddddddd  
 IT'S MEeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

The lady is stately,  
 her white hair is noble  
 tinted slightly lilac in color,  
 her cheeks pink,  
 glazed azure eyes.  
 It seemed a moment:  
 the heaving  
 then the sighing,  
 and the brittle blur breaks.

\*\*\*\*\*

Outside,  
 a gentle breeze flapped her full peacock blue dress.  
 (The predominance of Aquarius has passed,)  
 the sky was dark and clear  
 and an unnatural lauding and squawking  
 of birds was heard.

Suddenly!  
The wind rushed through  
the wide churchyard quickly  
and the pigeons  
long lazily lying  
on the round, rosette sill,  
flew with speedy wings  
out from their coo-cooing nests.  
They flew still-winged around her head,  
then one grey bird  
picked some purple straw  
from her Panama hat  
and she smiled at the surprise.  
It was 8:30, and the moon  
was so haloed,  
that for a moment it would seem  
the shutter-second glance  
had captured a light and shadow dance  
on  
still  
silvery wings.

\*

## UNTITLED

There is a buzzing, busy life  
in the armpit of Christ.  
Workers, drones, a Queen,  
their royal jelly,  
their wierd sex.  
This must mean something.

*E. J. DUFFY*

## PLIGHT OF THE MIGHTY

I sat  
Half-smiling  
At my fate-  
Stung by a bee  
Too small  
to hate.

## ITE, MISSA EST!

In Advent I took myself to church  
and lit the voltives of the side altar  
so to pray before the main.  
The sanctuary lamp hung in promised hearing  
but not in verdict or reply -  
I did not dare remain -  
but before the morning's early mass  
my weighty soul returned me,  
with trembling fingers, to my task.  
Each quarter's worth of hope  
echoed through a box of brass inscribed "donations,"  
and ciphered "I.H.S..." I knelt again to ask,  
and sketched my sins and grace  
in English and in Latin upon the marble tracings  
of the cold communion rail -  
this with the crucifix of my rosary.  
Staring through the haze of vapored eyes and wax  
I sought some evidence to hail  
as savior to my plea -  
from the eversteady flames - steeppling  
on the spires of the hallowed tapers.  
Neither they, the plaster saints or alabaster virgin  
wavered in their heavengaze. None mediated  
with their tongues of fire  
with their holy eyes.  
And He, glued to His cross of hollowed plywood  
in transubstanciated death,  
gave up no ghost to me, commended me no spirit.  
"Hear me!" I whispered - but His head was sunken -  
His wooden ears were one  
With His gnarled wooden shoulders.  
"Listen!" I said -  
but He would not reply.  
No Voice spoke through His timber.  
"Hear me!" I wept - and unlatched the frigid gate  
so to prostrate-cry  
before the steps that rose to meet Him.  
No one answered save an echo  
In a choir's moan.  
I stood to seek Him at His feet...  
to drop my tears upon the altar cloth  
to warm the altar stone.  
"Listen!" I begged -  
and the choir in Gregorian chanted "listen,"  
but He responded not.  
I shrank from so sore a sanctuary and,  
tripping on the sanctus bells,  
I passed again the gate where corpses rot  
Waiting just a benediction.  
I fled down the side aisle and,



at the sixth Station-of-the-Cross  
I fell - to rise and find my answer on the fifth.  
"Fewer Simons make for fewer Golgothas."  
I thought to bless myself in a Sign-of-Loss -  
and thanks - but the vestibule fount was dry -  
save for the change from my donation.

## THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS

I work with what I have  
Of wits and wax  
Fashioning my feathered wings  
That lash upon my flesh.  
I am no fool!  
Indeed I sense the sun's  
Sure consequence  
May melt the tallow  
Of my pinions  
And I might fall...  
But shall not fail - I shall not cry  
For I'd have flown - and I will fly.

Easily I could wait and justify  
Some predicted overcast,  
But my down would go to dust -  
My wax would fret not flex.  
While this heart still courses  
Rich molten humors  
Into and through its capillaries -  
I shall lash my winged spirit,  
Here upon my youth,  
So to lash my truth upon the sky...  
And let it ply.

Yonder promontory lofts my launch.  
Be I better bound there -

Chained - to daily have my spirit plucked  
By Promethean predators,  
Or shall I chance a plummet?  
Yonder clefted chasm gapes my grave.  
Shall I through daily dying wait it  
With but the tears and tares  
Of aged Job to fill its patient hallow?  
I'll fill these wings instead...  
I'll test my answers with this try  
And leave my worms to question why.



## AFTERGLOW

She smiled the smile of sunsets.  
Her hair cascaded  
In gently bedding saffron,  
Soft - like translucent showers  
Draped before an amber afternoon.

It fell upon my warming shoulders  
Freshing my face in drizzles,  
Tantalizing this thirsty ground,  
Parched in passing  
The blond drain of day.

Apricot clouds - seared by her love  
For but a breath of breeze -  
Remain forever mine upon her fading brow.  
She smiles. And, though my knowledge  
Makes me sad, I smile back.

We lose ourselves amid a bed of hillside.  
Above a spread of treetops, shadows gather.  
My love, flaming in her passion's freedom,  
Flickers slowly in the valley -  
Dying swiftly on the crest.

My sadness kindles as she passes.  
In her vermillion climax -  
She kisses the hillside peak -  
Lingering to mingle her drowsy lashes  
With the ashen treetops...

THE SUN HAS SET.

## ENDINGS

I fear that;  
Someday  
The "Bye!"  
We say at parting  
Must be prefixed  
With the one syllable  
That so wrongly  
Makes it final,  
And we shall  
Lifetime wonder  
Why we - beforehand -  
Couldn't find  
A better use  
for "Good."

## UN-COMMON KNOWLEDGE

A rap of careless hammer  
On an acorn  
Soft and new  
Will crack a shell  
So tiny  
And break it - swift -  
In two.

A rap with that same hammer  
On an acorn grown to oak  
Will swiftly learn  
That aging  
Defends against the stroke.  
Tiny hammers... poke.

## WAKING

Come smiling dawn!  
Light me in my bed!  
Sneak into my icy room -  
Raise you rosy head!  
Play your teasing shadows  
On my rumpled pillow case,  
And shine a subtle smile upon  
This dusky dreaming face.

Blur not in shyness or in test  
Behind the fickle clouds,  
But bed-warm me to rising -  
Singe off my midnight shrouds!  
Spill your sparkles in my eyes  
And on their lids ray-write  
That I might know at waking  
How well we faired the night.

## ANOTHER WAY HOME

Sometimes I feel the drain of day  
Monotonize my life away.  
Rebelling then  
As best I may,  
I leave from work  
Another way.

## SAFETY

It's as if  
You hold in your hand  
A golden iridescent bubble  
That is yourself.  
You've blown inside  
All your treasures  
And you fear  
That, if you separate  
Your fingers  
It will be carried away  
Or be pricked,  
And all your treasures  
And all yourself  
Shall rent asunder.  
Never do you say  
"I trust you, here,  
help me hold this."  
One may only peek  
And - if in peeking  
They seem to covet -  
No more may they see.  
As time passes  
It encrusts the bubble  
With grime -  
Blown through the chinks  
Of your fingers -  
On the breath  
Of a score of voyeurs.  
No more is the bubble golden -  
Tarnished rather.  
No more is it iridescent -  
Rather - clouded.  
No more do they seek to see  
What treasures it contains.  
Finally, the fragile orb collapses,  
Smothering your once coveted treasure  
In that sticky gauze  
That once was...  
Safety?

## FISHERFOLK PRAYER

Throw not Thy night's kind eye -  
Too soon - into the sea at West  
For by it do I sail - uncharted -  
Swift upon my quest.  
Without Thy beacon upon my path  
What invitations shine?  
What other buoys o'er the sea  
Shall my sextant fine?

Thy sea is dark!  
Lord hold Thy light on high!  
Let not Thy moon befaller  
Til' Thy sun bedays the sky.  
For on Thy ocean do I - sounding -  
Sail amid the mist  
So through this cruise  
Should bow brunt bruise  
Let lesser be my list.

*JOE PIORKOWSKI*

## TRIBUTE TO THE PAST

As my eyelids grow heavy'  
This foggy night,  
I pray the spirits return me  
To innocence and appreciation  
To timelessness and simplicity  
For, a lack of perspective  
Seems to be the best one.  
Spring air was so sweet  
On initial tasting  
And in Hardy Boy books  
The "good guys" always won.  
And thumbsucking  
Once offered me such security.  
'Blind' obedience was easier,  
And kisses were more meaningful,  
And peacefully rebelling voices seemed more sincere  
Than cold, harsh, threatening growls.  
Why have crossing brooks

And curious bicycle rides  
Been surpassed by  
Cheap thrills in bars  
And endless wandering in cars?  
    I treasure you, Past.  
But have you nothing to teach me  
Beyond the fact that you are over.  
I know now that  
I am living the Past of the future,  
But I find it difficult to believe  
That I will ever find driving cars  
As meaningful as  
Throwing snowballs at them.

Beyond the fact that you are over.  
I know now that  
I am living the Past of the future,  
But I find it difficult to believe  
That I will ever find driving cars  
As meaningful as  
Throwing snowballs at them.

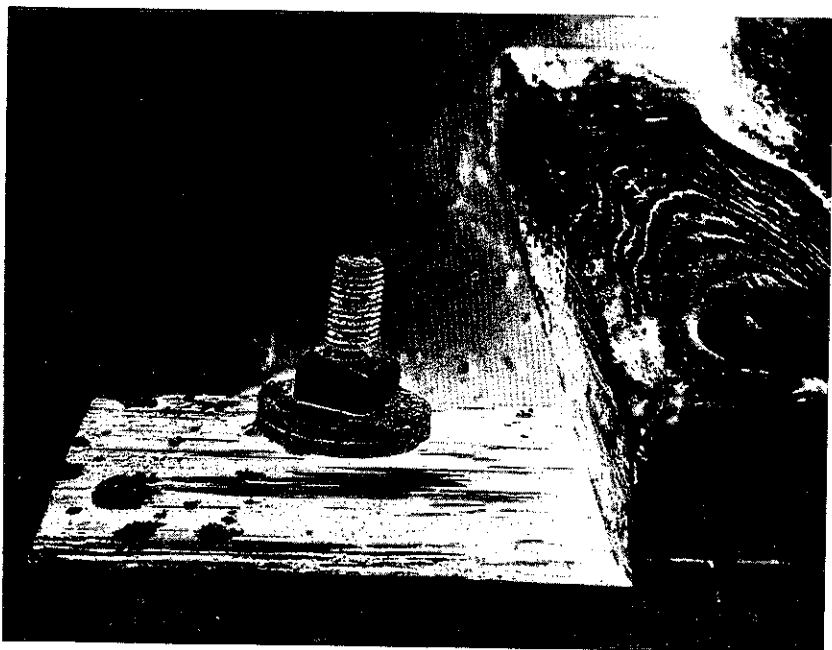
## FULFILLMENT AT FRIENDLY'S

The clanging of cups,  
The taste of hot coffee  
A side glance at a waitress  
    reaching for the top shelf.  
The smell of burning cigarettes  
    and lots of onion rings,  
Does it spell happiness  
For so many on this Friday night?  
Do they yearn for peace?  
What do they share but isolation  
And dirty looks?  
Why am I here?...  
Oh, uh... I just came in for a cup of coffee.

## TO GREAT GRANDPA

What wisdom must a man possess  
After having lived ninety-eight years,  
Yet still carry on with a vitality  
Unknown to many youth.

How can I feel experienced  
Having worked only one day  
To the years you have labored churning coal?  
Is it your strong Aquarian nature  
That inaugurated and maintained  
Your passionate desire to live life to the fullest?  
Has your merry Irish heritage  
Kept you from being overcome by depression?  
You are as loyal to the Lord  
As a pup greeting his master at the driveway  
When he returns from a tranquil stroll on a misty evening.  
Is there truth in the doctor's words  
That you are soon to leave this world in its bondage?  
Old man, you will always live on  
At least in me, as an idol.  
Life, indeed, must offer precious gifts  
For you to have treasured it so dearly.  
How both one's skin and one's soul  
May remain so untarnished  
From the filth civilization spits forth,  
I will never comprehend.  
Many times your words have given  
Me strength and security  
It is now with tears in my eyes,  
That I say to you those same words.  
"Goodbye.  
Good Luck.  
And May God Bless You."







HIS FAMILIAR

And the Gypsy knew your time  
    was more than measured.  
Since Yuletide, you endured  
    'til Springtime's eve  
    with lifelight blazing  
    in your eyes.  
And the final ride began  
    with sunshine singing on the radio  
Lightly petting your past-tense fur,  
    but your eyes outshined them both.

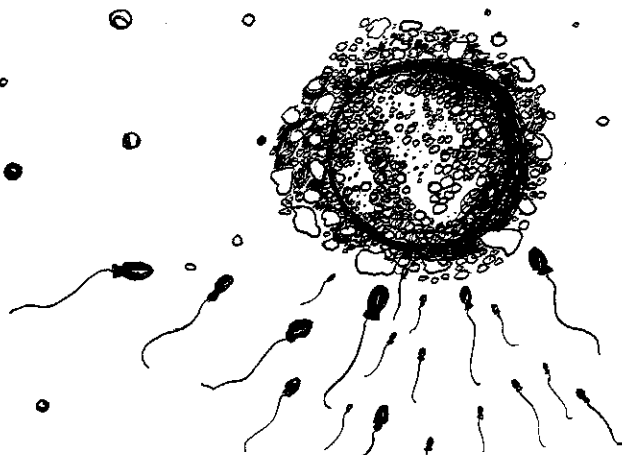
And what better way to leave  
    than with a room full of lovers  
    . . . being held by a Gypsy,  
        purring -  
feeling your two, final heartbeats  
in hand  
seeing those Springtime greens  
that saw all friends and phases pass,  
wax to gray-glazed moonstones  
before the Gypsy's tear  
wearied sight.

And reciting ancient incantations  
    your body was blessed  
    to be offered to the fires  
And the Gypsy closed that final door  
leaving . . .  
before the cold stillness  
claimed your remains.



## SPERM SPEED

mark  
I  
clear x  
up  
seven  
up  
seven  
zero  
divide  
two  
five  
decimal point  
four  
multiply  
six  
zero  
divide  
set exp  
eight  
multiply  
clear x  
search  
I  
STOP  
END PROGRAM



# SONGS OF INNOCENCE





LISA GETZ, age ten

### THE MAN FROM BBAARROO

There was a man from Bbaarroo  
Who always chewed on bamboo  
He took a big chunk,  
Fell down with a thunk,  
And was thumped by a kangaroo.

### THE MAN FROM FRANCE

There was a man from France  
Who always did a dance  
One day he flew  
Into a stew,  
And that's how  
He learned to prance.

### GOOEY STEWY

There was a man from France  
Who met the man from Bbaarroo  
One taught the other to dance  
The other taught the one to chew  
They made a stew  
Made out of Bamboo  
They threw in a shoe  
To make it blue  
And fed it to animals in the zoo  
They all turned to goo  
Because of the stew  
The man from France  
And the man from Bbaarroo  
Had made from bamboo.

### THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

The birds and the bees  
Fly over the seas  
They always flee when they  
See a cup of tea because  
They'll be free.

## MAD MOLLY MEG

Mad Molly Meg  
Whose head is shaped like an egg  
Whose neck is like a peg  
Has a body like a keg  
With one extra leg.  
She met Greg who wears green  
On the scene of his keen dream.  
He gets mean and blows his steam  
When he gets creamed by the other team.

## THERE WAS A SCARED FLOWER

There was a scared flower  
Who had no power  
He took a shower  
For an hour  
Because he smelled so sour  
His name was Howard  
And he was a coward.

*CHARLES BIRK, age ten*

## I HAD A SHOE

I had a shoe that talked.  
The shoe talked about my  
smelly sock.  
I had a sock that talked  
about my smelly feet. I had a  
foot that talked. He talked  
about my smelly vains. I  
had some vains that talked, and he  
said I do not have to  
smell anything.

## BEAR, HARE, BARE, FARE, FLARE, SCARE

There once was a Bear who  
had some hair and he walked around  
Bare and he said that it is not  
fair. So he shot a flare in the  
air and became the scare.

## LANDS, FIELDS, YARDS

If you go across the lands,  
If you go across the fields,  
If you go across the yards,  
And if you look across the lands,  
and the fields, and the  
yards you will find a little flower.



## BAD LUCK

If you look in the sky  
You will see a bird fly.  
If the bird does not see you  
You will have bad luck.

## IN THE SEA

In the Sea you will find  
a whale, in the whale  
you will find a boat, in the  
boat you will find a lamp,  
in the lamp you will find  
a wick, on the wick you  
will find a flame.

## BUMBLE BEE

If you look in the tree you  
will see a hive, in the hive  
Is a bee, the bee's name is  
Bumble bee. The little bee  
Collected honey from little flowers.

## IN THE SKY

In the sky I see a  
plane in the plane I  
see a chain on the chain  
I see a grain on the grain  
I see an ant on the ant  
I see a plant on the plant  
I see an aunt.

## CLOUDS

Clouds are white. Skies are  
blue. The ground is green  
But wherever I go there  
is dog pooh.



ALAN BIRK, *age nine*

### LILLY, BILLY, HILLY, FILLY

There once was a lily flower.  
It had a name the name was  
Billy. I lived on a hilly hill.  
The name of the hill was Filly.

### QUICK MA GRAW

Some things are small, some are tall  
But the worst of all is the quick  
ma graw.

### FARM

"Does a farm do harm or garm?"  
"But sir, what's garm?"  
"I don't know, I made it up."  
"What about this, Does a farm sarm or marm?"  
"Gosh, I don't ever think I could  
ever think of that!"

### DING-A-LING

Once there was a thing,  
That loved to go ding-a-ling.  
The ding-a-ling means ring.  
The ring means sing.  
The sing means song.  
The song means ding-a-ling.



# THE BUNKBED BUS

PAUL BIRK

Sleeping on a hot, hot, summer night has never been an easy thing to do. Even the sun has trouble falling asleep. He always stays up long past his bedtime and he won't go away until the stars and the moon come to chase him. The stars say to the sun, "go over and wake up the other side of the world you, bum, you." But the sun just yawns a little bit and huge, red, sun rays fill the sky. "Get out of here," the moon screams," can't you see I'm trying to get some sleep?" Only then does the sun obey, and, pulling a tiny cloud blanket over his sunbeams, he sinks deep into the western sky.

It was on just such a steamy, hot, evening last summer that Terry, Peter and Binky Liretz could not get cool enough to fall asleep. The temperature was at least ninety degrees even though the lazy sun had set hours ago. It was as if the night was a giant oven the world had been dropped into. The air seemed thick and heavy and no breeze was blowing to make things comfortable. The trees were not rustling like they usually do on windy nights and all the plants and flowers drooped and looked very thirsty. A nice sprinkling, shower would have been fine just then but the clouds in the sky were way too wispy and scattered to hold any rain.

The three children were in their attic bedroom, lying in their splendid triple decker bunk bed. Terry had the top bunk, Peter had the middle one and Binky was on the bottom.

Terry was a small, slim girl going on seven. She had soft, blue, kitten shaped eyes and she kept her blond hair in pony-tails. Terry had loads of freckles too, in a patch that spread across her nose and cheeks.

Pete was a husky, five year old with light brown hair. He had long eyelashes around his deep, brown eyes that fluttered like bird wings whenever he blinked.

Binky, whose real name was Vincent, was three years old. He was nothing more than a pudgy ball wrapped up in a diaper. His eyes were blue like Terry's and his baby hair was a shiney, silky brown.

Binky, Peter and Terry were the youngest of the large Liretz family. There were two more sisters, six more brothers plus their mom and dad. The three children slept up in the attic since all those people completely filled the downstairs of their tiny house. Besides Pete, Terry and Binky were the only ones in the entire family small enough to stand up straight where the attic roof slanted. Taller people would have to hunch over if they went too close to either side of the room.

The bunk bed itself had to be in the middle of the room. It simply wouldn't fit anyplace else. But ah!, it was a marvelous bunk with wonderful wavy head boards made from oak. It had a rope ladder on it instead of a wooden one and a guardrail on each side of the two upper bunks so anyone sleeping in them wouldn't roll out.

Terry had the top bunk because she was the oldest. She liked being up so high since she was right under the roof beam and rafters. The roof beam was as long as the attic and the rafters attached to the side of it slanted down towards the floor.

Terry loved sleeping with this pretty wood over her head. She could easily reach out and touch it, or even draw pictures on it with her crayons.

Terry also liked the top bunk because she could throw things like her old socks down on Peter. She always had a big supply of them stuffed into a shopping bag on her bunk. Sometimes Pete would try to toss the socks back up at her but when he leaned out of bed to throw them, Terry always clobbered him with one of her pillows. Terry was "Queen of the Beam".

Pete would have liked the middle bunk if it wasn't for Terry and her silly socks. She buried him alive many times. When Pete couldn't stand these avalanches any longer, he would lay on his back, put his feet up on Terry's mattress and bounce her around a bit. This didn't get Terry too angry though. It felt like she was being rocked to sleep. Whenever she thought Pete was going to stop shaking her she would simply drop more socks on him and purposely get him mad again. She would keep this up til she dozed off, then poor Pete would finally quit and just lay there with sore legs and a bed full of socks.

Binky didn't like sleeping underneath his brother and sister in the least. He was afraid their tumbling and bouncing would make the top two beds cave in on him. When it really got bad and Pete's bed spring was sagging in and Terry's bunk started to tilt, Binky would scream, "They're going to crash, they're going to crash!"

Then Pete would say "Eeee yah!", and Terry would yell "Yikes," and all three of them would jump out and huddle together in the corner til the bunk settled down.

Afterwards, Terry would feel guilty about frightening Binky and say "I'm sorry Binky, I won't do it again."

"I'm sorry too," Pete would tell him, "Let's go back to bed."

"Nooo!", Bink would say "I don't want to be squished." Terry would always try to calm him by saying "Oh don't be such a nervous rabbit, Binky, bunk beds are pretty safe

nowadays." Then she would drag him off to bed.

But on this certain night there was no bunk swaying and hardly any sock chucking. It was too hot for the children to do anything except lay in bed like blobs. The only window in the attic was opened wide and there were a few bugs banging and buzzing in between the panes. A mosquito had snuck in through a hole in the screen and he hummed in Terry's ear. Terry chased him away a few times but he kept on coming back. "You're hopeless mosquito," she said to him at last. Then she twisted about in her bed, trying all sorts of weird positions to get comfortable in the sticky air.

Pete wished he had some cool spaces left on his sheet but he had used them all up. He was moaning softly as he listened to a bird chirp in a far off tree. He thought the bird must be too hot to sleep too. He could also hear the crickets singing but they were always awake, creaking the whole night long.

Binky was lying on his stomach staring out the window at the stars and the fireflies. He loved to see lights in the dark. Especially the full moon which was shining so brightly that night.

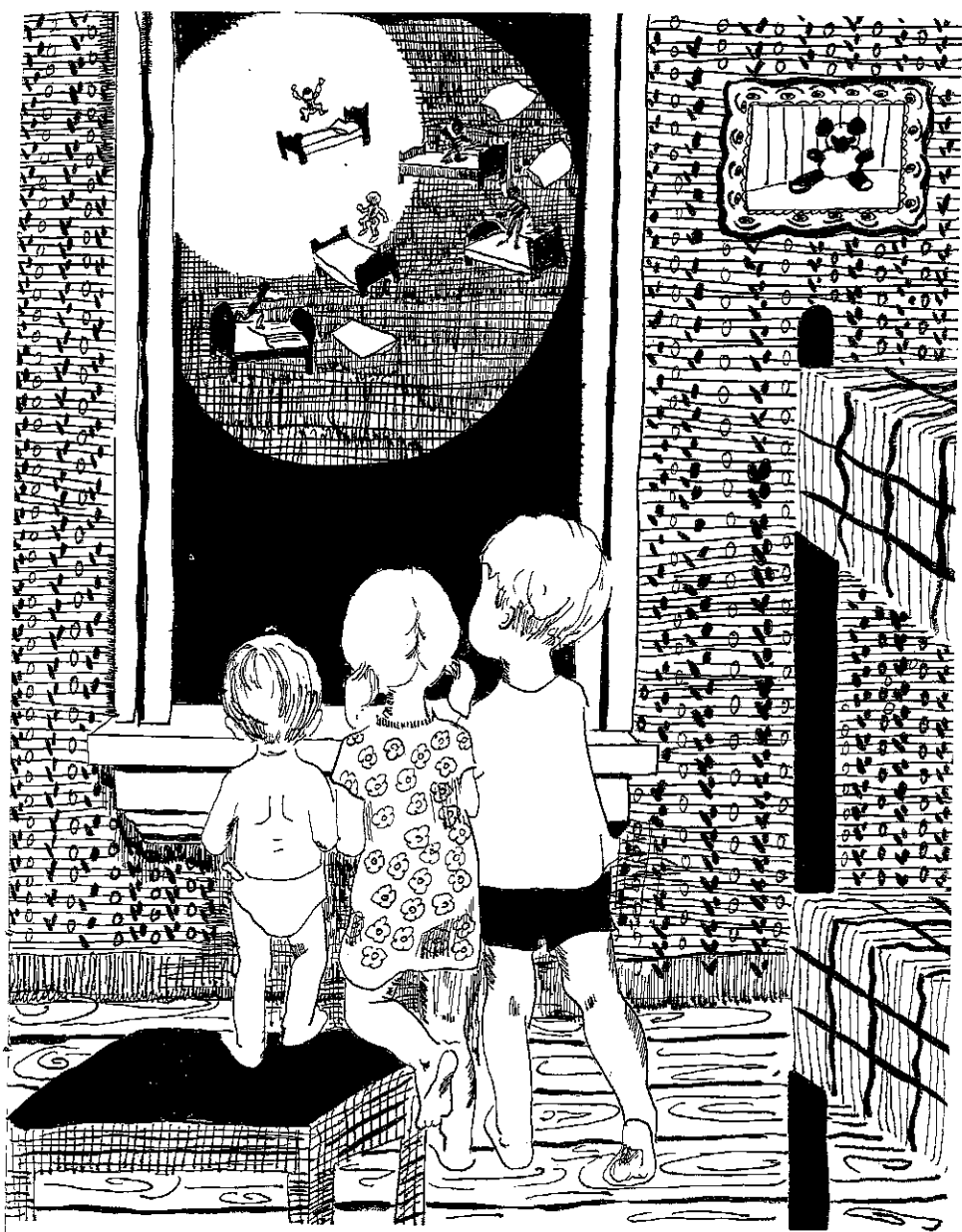
Binky's eyes needed rest so he rubbed them and closed them. Terry stopped wiggling around and Pete quit groaning. All three children were still and silent and each hoped some chilly night air would blow in through the open window to put them all to sleep.

But instead of wind something else was drifting into the warm room the way a soft breeze will. It was a faint sound from the sky above. The children couldn't tell who, or what, was making it for at first it seemed farther away than the bird Peter had listened to. Then, as the noise grew louder, it puzzled the children and they sat up, wondering.

It was tender and airy, like a gentle lullaby. It was smooth, round, bursting, and cheerful, echoing everywhere. It was like . . . "Laughing! That's what it is!" cried Peter aloud as he hopped down from his bed curious to know where this ever joyful sound was coming from. He ran up to the window, pressed his face against the screen and peered out.

"Terry, Binky," he shouted, "Quick come see!" His brother and sister bounded out of bed. Terry was so excited she didn't even use the ladder and almost landed on Binky as she plunged down. They dashed across the room to see what Pete was pointing at.

What the three saw through the window made Terry swoon away. Pete could hardly find words to say, and Binky knew it was something beautiful.



There, up in the sky, were a thousand, zillion beds floating by like clouds. It looked like a fantastic parade. There were children in every bed and every child was laughing. Some were having pillow fights as they flew along. Many were playing tag, leaping from bed to bed to escape the one who was it. Others had just finished midnight cracker snacks and were brushing the crumbs from their soft sheets. A few more were singing and playing harmonicas as their friends danced in partners. And always there was laughing, clear and crisp and delicate.

Pete called up to them "Hey you guys in the sky, come for us!" But they were so busy playing, no one heard Peter's shout. Then Binky, Terry and Pete all screamed at once "Hey you guys in the sky!"

A girl in a low flying bed saw them and zoomed down to their window.

"Hi," she said "My name is Lisa."

"Hiya" said Terry then she introduced Pete, Binky, and herself.

"Pleased to meet you," Lisa said as she made a quick curtsy. She had blond hair too, but it was lighter than Terry's. Lisa looked about ten years old and she wore a white nightgown.

"Tell us how to make our bed fly," Pete asked her.

"Okay," Lisa said, "but first we have to figure a way to get the bed outside."

"How?", said Terry, "the window is too small."

"I have an idea", replied Lisa.

"Christopher!", she yelled to someone passing by, "Christopher! Come down for a minute."

"He's my brother," she said turning to the children.

A boy of about eleven shot down from above and pulled up next to Lisa. He had dark, black hair, brown eyes and was a bit chubby.

"Hello," he said after Lisa introduced him.

"He has an old bed with claw feet," Lisa explained. "He'll take the roof off."

The children were amazed. "What will my dad say?", Peter said.

"Think he'd get mad?" Lisa asked.

Then Terry spoke up, "He won't even know. He had a rough day on his junk collector job and he fell asleep at the dinner table. My older brothers carried him to bed a long time ago."

"That's good," said Lisa, "then he won't hear a thing."

She looked at Chris and said, "You'd better get started."

"I'll have you out in a jiffy," Chris told them as he flew to the roof.

Terry, Pete and Binky heard him land overhead. He hollered down, "I'm hooking the claws in now."

Lisa said, "It's hard work taking a roof off, you know."

"He'd better not lose it," Bink warned her.

"Don't worry about a thing," Lisa replied, "He'll put it back."

Yeah, you little nervous rabbit," added Terry.

"I'm all set," Chris said at last.

"You got the okay!" Lisa shouted up to him.

Then there was a high, sharp squeak as Chrisy started to raise the roof. "Cut out the racket," Lisa said, "you want to wake up the rest of their family."

"That's alright Lisa," Terry told her, "They'll just think me and Pete are fooling around again."

Christopher began once more. He seemed to be having some trouble removing the roof and he called down, "This is a good roof you got here. They don't make them like this these days."

Binky, Terry, and Pete laughed because that's what their father always said about every part of the house.

Then there was a loud, ear stinging POP!, and the roof and Chrisy went zinging up into the air.

"Splendid," cried Lisa, doing a little dance in their bed.

"Look at all the stars," exclaimed Binky, as he saw them from the roofless attic. Peter said, "Look at Christopher, he's almost next to the stars!"

This was true. Christopher had pulled so hard on the roof, the force was still sending him up and up and up.

"Will he ever come down?", Peter asked Lisa.

"Oh sure," she said.

"That's good because I like him," Pete told her.

"Now I'll make **your** bed fly!" said Lisa, eagerly.

She flew over the attic wall and landed in front of the bunk. Next, she tied a sheet between the back of her bed and the bottom bunk. "I'm going to give you a tow," she said.

The children quickly climbed into their beds. Pete looked into the sky as he went up the ladder and said, "I think Chris is coming back with the roof now."

"We'd better get out of here before he puts it back on" Lisa told them. "Are you ready?"

"Yes!" all three said at once.

"Hang onto your headboards then and fasten your sheet belts!"

"Do we need a count down?" Pete asked.

"Course we do" answered Terry. "What kind of a take off would this be without one?"

"I'll do it," Binky cried anxious to be of help.

"You can't even count past three yet," Pete said. "I'm going to do it," and he began counting, "ONE, TWO, THREE."

"Hold it, hold it, hold it!" shouted Terry, "You're going the wrong way. Don't you even remember how the space ships do it? They start backwards at ten, nine, eight and so forth and so on!"

"Oh, that's right," Pete exclaimed. But before he had a chance to correct himself Lisa's bed lifted off the floor and pointed skyward, ready for the launch.

"Wait for the count down!" Pete yelled. But there was no time.

"ONE, TWO, THREE, WEEEEEEEEEE!", Binky shrieked, and Lisa zipped the beds out of the bedroom and into the wide, starry sky.

The children screamed with pleasure. All three felt as if they had grabbed the tail of a shooting star or like they were on some flying carpet of olden times. The wind rushed at their faces, blowing their hair back and making it hard for them to take breaths. The air flowed into Terry's flowered night gown and puffed it up. Pete felt instantly cool and sweet all over and Binky, who had just a diaper on, snuggled under his blanket, sighing with delight.

Being in flight made their spirits tingle. It was such a joy to glide over all the trees and houses they usually walked under. From their beds the children could see the entire neighborhood and they thought about how lovely it was to be with the moon and clouds and stars, instead of burning in bed in the warm, stuffy attic. These were grand thoughts and soon the children began to laugh.

Chris returned and put the roof back on. When he was finished he caught up to them and said to Lisa, "Untie the sheet, they have enough speed to fly on their own now." So she and Binky undid the knots and set the bunk bed freely floating across the sky.

"How do you steer this thing!" Pete screamed, suddenly very worried.

"Oh it's easy," said Chris flying alongside the bunk. "If you lean to the right, you turn right. If you lean to the left, you'll turn left. If you wish to dive, just bend forwards and to bring it up again, bend backwards."



"Oh!" said Terry surprised, "that's simple enough."

"You have to learn to do all that together though," Lisa cautioned her, "because if you lean left and Pete goes right and Binky bends forward, the bed will pull itself apart. Bunkbeds are the toughest things to fly."

"Okay," said Pete, "we'll practice then. Terry will tell us which way since she can see best from up top."

"That's an idea," exclaimed Terry, "Let's go."

So they began turning, diving, curving and swooping above the neighborhood. "Watch out for that chimney," Lisa yelled once when they came too close to a house.

The children were having a marvelous time and they learned to fly together quite well. When they seemed to be able to handle the bunkbed by themselves Lisa and Chris pulled up along each side of the bunk. "We'd better catch up to the other kids before they get too far ahead," Chris told them.

"We'll have to go speeding fast," Pete said, then they all raced after the children in the distance.

At last they caught up to the crowd of children. Never before had Terry, Pete or Binky seen so many beds at once, and all of them in the most unlikely place a bed would ever be. There were plain old single beds and wide double beds. There were fold out sofa beds, tiny cradles, a few sleeping bags and even some hospital beds with patients on them.

"If it takes one bed to put another in the sky, Terry asked Lisa, "How did the first bed get started?"

"Well," said Lisa in a perplexed way, "most of the beds were started by the Golden Flower Lady or the Ancient Poet."

"Who the heck are they," Terry said.

"They're the Queen and King of dreams and poetry."

"Oh," said Terry, not quite understanding.

Lisa went on talking, "You see every night the Golden Flower Lady flies over all the world's children to see if they're sleeping and dreaming, and the Ancient Poet appears to all the poets to make sure they are writing poetry. But if the children aren't able to sleep, the poets can't write any poems."

"Why? Are the kids too noisy?" Binky asked her.

"No," she said, "but when the kids are uncomfortable the poets are very miserable and can't do a thing. So to keep them writing the Golden Flower Lady and the Ancient Poet must find ways to help the children sleep. Tonight they made the beds fly to cool us off and make us drowsy."

"How come she never found us before when we couldn't sleep?" Pete asked her.

"She probably didn't think to look in the attic for you," Lisa explained.

"Tell us how the other beds get up in the air?" Terry asked Chris and Lisa.

Then Chris told her. "The Ancient Poet or the Golden Flower Lady come and tap a dandelion wish on your bedroom window. When the white fuzzy part scatters your bed and you become ghost-like and slip straight through the wall. Once you're outside you change back to yourself and fly away."

"But how do you get in again?", said Pete.

"While you soar along," continued Christopher making wild motions with his hands, "the Golden Flower Lady watches you til the breezy air makes you doze. After you're asleep the bed turns round and starts back home but before it leaves the Golden Flower Lady ties another dandelion wish to your bedpost. Then as the bed touches your window, the wish explodes once more and you pass through the wall again, just like a spook."

"I'm too young to be a spook," Binky said fearfully.

"You're too young to be a little nervous rabbit too," Terry replied, "Don't you even know once you're inside you get human again?"

"Where's the Lady now?" Binky asked.

"She's down on earth gathering more wishes. She'll be up soon" Lisa told him.

"Is that her there in that balloon?" said Pete pointing towards one end of the throng of beds.

"The Golden Lady doesn't need a balloon," Lisa replied. Then she peered into the darkness and caught a glimpse of the balloon before it hid behind a cloud. "Something's sneaky about that balloon," she said.

"There it is again," Binky shouted as the balloon reappeared, only to dip into another cloud.

"HMMMMMM," hummed Chris, "what do you think it's trying to do?" "I can't say," answered Lisa, "but we'll know once the balloon has no more clouds to hide behind."

Everyone else saw it too, as it slipped from puffy cloud to puffy cloud. There was no laughing or playing now, only whispers between the children wondering what the balloon was up to.

Then it emerged from the clouds and the children had a full view of it.

The balloon was large and red with a fringe of white streamers along the top and bottom. All around the center of it were strange bug-like designs. Also, a square basket hung underneath the balloon itself for the pilot.

Meanwhile the balloon drew nearer. It was close enough to the children for them to see who was steering it, but the basket seemed empty.

Terry spoke aloud. "A balloon with no pilot"?

Everyone scratched their heads and crinkled their faces at each other as if to say "What's with this thing?"

The balloon was speedily approaching. In moments it would either fly over the children or . . .

Suddenly a head popped over the rim of the basket. Lisa shivered and stared with wide open eyes and seemed terrified.

"It's the Bed Bug Hag!" she screamed jumping up and down and hanging onto her hair. "The Bed Bug Hag! The Bed Bug Hag!"

Everybody was petrified. The awful Hag had been cringing in the basket of her balloon all along. Now she stood up straight, waved her arms and snorted a snooting laugh, "he, ha, ha, he, he ho, ha."

The hag was so skinny she looked like a starving skeleton. She had a big nose and a mouth that was running out of teeth. Her hair frizzed up every which way and she had large, bleary tea bag eyes. She screeched at the children, "I'm going to keep all of you bouncing brats awake forever!"

"How's she going to do that?" Pete asked Lisa with fright in his voice.

"She's going to take bed bugs and drop them all over us!" Lisa hurriedly explained to him. "She attacked us before but the Golden Flower Lady always stopped her." "We'll itch to pieces."

Then Chris began shouting, "Hide under your blankets, quick!" But it was too late, the Bed Bug Hag was already bugging the beds. She had taken a whole load of the tiny, pinching insects and spread them over the nearest children. They scratched and swated and yelped but they could not get rid of the bugs or the stings.

"How do you like that you Pajama Pilots" said the hag as she continued to pour bugs out of her soaring, red balloon. "Beautiful, beautiful bugs, bugs, bugs," she cried as she flung them into the air.

Soon the hag came to where Chrisy, Lisa and Terry, Pete and Binky lay quaking in fear under their covers. Terry peaked out and glimpsed the horrid hag. All around she could see the little children sobbing and wriggling as they turned red and sore from itching. "I shouldn't be scared of any old hag in a flying bag!" said Terry as she threw her blankets off.

Chris had also peeped out and he shouted to Terry, "Duck back under before she dumps a whole box of bugs on you." But she did not listen.

Terry stood straight up so the mean bug queen could see her and shook her fists crying "You nasty thing you."

When the hag heard Terry she said, "So you want to be a fresh article do you"? and Terry stuck out her tongue and said "Take your creepy bugs and fly to the moon".

The Bed Bug Hag was flustered by Terry's remarks. She churned angrily around in her basket screaming, "You little wise girly, I'll fix you good". But before the hag could act, Terry reached into her trusty sock bag and pulled out the oldest one. She threw it at the hag and it landed right on her nose!

"EW! EW! EW!" The hag screamed, "get it off, I can't stand it, EW! It's stuck" While the hag was yelling and teetering around the basket, Terry flew the bunk bed to the top of the red balloon. Then she took her kitten pin from her night shirt and jabbed it into the balloon. The air hissed out and the balloon twirled away.

"I'll get you back someday" said the hag as she parachuted out of her descending balloon. "I'll put so many bugs in your bed you'll think you're sleeping on an ant hill".

Terry simply laughed and sat down with her feet dangling over the side of her bed. She knew it would be quite a long time til the hag raged again for her parachute had tangled in a tree.

Then all the children gathered around the bunk-bed to thank Terry. She made a thousand friends that night, and was invited to visit each one of them. Binky climbed to her bunk, his eyes ringed with tear stains, and hugged her. Pete sat next to the two of them, and Chris and Lisa sailing by in their own beds, smiled with relief.

Soon there was more excitement among the children. Someone had spotted the Golden Flower Lady skipping across the sky. Terry, Pete and Binky caught sight of her as she neared the children. She flew with no ballon or bed or even wings and seemed to be tiptoeing through the sky as if in a magic trance.

In a moment the Golden Flower Lady reached the center of the crowd of children and hovered above them. She was wrapped in a long, grass green robe that rippled in the wind. The robe had a golden hood shaped like flower petals and this shaded her face from view. Also, there was a pouch on the Golden Flower Lady's side that brimmed with freshly picked dandelion wishes. Though they could not see her, everyone knew she must be wonderful.



Lisa told the story of the hag to the Golden Flower Lady and introduced Terry. The Lady thanked Terry and said, "I'll grant you one wish." Terry peered deep into the darkness of the Golden Lady's hood and thought about how she, Pete and Binky always wanted a kitten. Terry held her kitten pin out to the Golden Flower Lady and said, "Please make this come to life."

"Alright," said the Lady. Then she took it in her hands and rubbed it. The kitten was alive instantly. It was a calico cat, soft, beautiful, and sleepy eyed. "What will you name it?" asked the Golden Flower Lady. "Kola," said Terry. "That's a pretty name," Lisa replied.

With the hag gone and The Golden Flower Lady flying over them, the children moved on. They began to play and sing once more and the laughing returned to the sky.

Terry, Pete and Binky did flips with the bunk. Lisa used her bed for a trampoline and Chris just floated along in his, enjoying the view and the laughter of his friends.

Many of the children were very tired and they began to doze off. As they dipped into deep slumber, their beds would turn and head for home. The Golden Flower Lady would dash after them to tie a dandilion wish to the bed post. This kept her very busy since someone dozed off almost every minute.

Lisa watched her rush about, tying here and tying there, and said to Chrissy who was flying next to her "Boy, look at all those kids going back". Christopher rolled over in his bed and yawned. Lisa caught it and asked him "Are you falling asleep?" But Chris only mumbled something and dreamily fluffed his pillow up. A few seconds later, his bed spun around, and he was gone before Lisa even had a chance to say goodbye. Pete, Terry, and Binky flew to her. "Where'd Chrissy go?" asked Pete.

Lisa stretched and yawned as she answered, "He fell asleep and went to our house".

"Oh" said Pete as he glanced around. Many more beds were following Chrissy, and the Golden Flower Lady hurriedly placed a dandilion wish on each one. But she could hardly keep up with them all, everyone was falling asleep so suddenly.

Lisa slouched against her head board. She wanted to stay awake to be with Terry, Pete and Binky but sleep was so tempting. As those all around were drowsing, Terry pleaded with Lisa, "Oh, Lisa don't go to sleep and leave us by ourselves." But Lisa's head was so fogged with weariness she could barely understand what Terry was saying. Lisa's eye-

lids creeped closed as her body went limp. She slid down the headboard, far into her blanket, and rested there, dreaming. "Lisa, Lisa . . .," Binky moaned, disappointed. Her bed then turned around and drifted off after the others.

The beds were going in so many different directions, the three children didn't know which ones to follow. Worse yet, they didn't even know the way home. They had lost sight of the Golden Flower Lady too, as she flew about with dandelions for everyone's bed . . . except theirs. They were still wide awake. They could float along and wait to fall asleep so the bed would go home by itself, but they had no dandelion wish!

Soon Binky, Terry and Pete were alone in the starry night, flying on and on, under the light of the full moon. Terry snuggled her kitten in her arms and staring at the vast sky said, "We're lost guys."

"What can we do?" Pete asked hopelessly.

Then they saw the nuttiest thing! In the distance there was an old man sitting on a stool that was flying behind a flying desk. He had long white hair and a dangling white beard.

The desk and the stool were spinning dizzily through the air together but this didn't bother the man in the least. He was writing something, very fast and with an old fashioned feather pen. As quickly as he finished a page, it would blow off the the whirling desk and float away behind him. A most odd scene.

The three children were too enthused by the sight of this character to notice that they were about to collide with him. The old man, who wasn't paying much attention to where he was going either, looked up for a moment and saw the bunkbed, three grinning faces and a tiny kitten heading straight for him. His mouth and eyes sprung full open from shock and he clasped his arms around his head.

Pete suddenly realized what was going to happen and he yelled, "Pull up you guys!, pull up." But it was too late.

There was a big "THU-CHUMP!", as the bunk and desk crashed. The old man was knocked from his seat and into the air by the jolt and he landed in Terry's bunk, beard and all. Pete was thrown to the rear of his bed while Binky bounced between the middle and top bunks like a basketball.

"We're most sorry," said Terry as she helped the man sit up.

"I'm the one who's awful sorry," said the old man kindly.

"Ohhhhhh my head," he groaned.

"Ohhhhh my head too," Terry cried, for the two had bumped heads during the accident.

Binky and Pete climbed to Terry's bunk rather dazed from the smash up. "These are my brothers, Binky and Peter," said Terry introducing them, "and this is our kitten Kola."

"How do you do?", the old man said. "We'd better see if there is any damage to your bed or my desk."

The four of them peered over the headboard. The desk was missing a leg and the front was pushed in a bit. There was nothing wrong with the bunk except a large scrape. The man said happily, "All that can easily be repaired," and they sat down again.

Then Pete asked him, "You're not the Bed Bug Hag's father, are you?" The old man seemed stunned, and he answered, "No, do I look that shaggy?" Pete nodded.

"I suppose you're right," said the old man with a chuckle, "I've been so busy writing these past hundred years I haven't had time for a change of clothes or a shave."

"I like you as you are," Terry told him, "just get your itchy beard off my leg."

"Pardon me, Terry," said the man slightly embarrassed. Then he coiled up his beard, which was about eight yards long and set it down. Then Kola began to play with it as if it were a ball of yarn.

"Stop that you crazy kitten," said Pete, shaking a finger at Kola.

"Oh, that's alright, Pete," the man replied, "She's only combing it for me."

"You forgot to tell us your name," Terry reminded the man.

"Then straightway I shall", spoke the man in a polite tone. "I am the Ancient Poet, here to serve you in any way possible."

The children sighed with joy as he spoke those words. "Help us fall asleep so we can go back home," Terry pleaded, "We want to play with our new friends tomorrow."

The Ancient Poet tapped his fingers on his chin and asked, "So you're tired of flying, eh?"

"Extremely," exclaimed Pete.

"I know what I can do to make you sleep," the Ancient Poet said, "I'll read you a poem I was writing." Then he jumped down on his desk. "Now where did it go?" he said to himself.



"What a funny man," the children thought, "doesn't he know his poem flew away?"

"I seemed to have misplaced it," he told them. "No matter, I'll simply compose a fresh one. But, of course, I must tuck you in first. It's traditional you know."

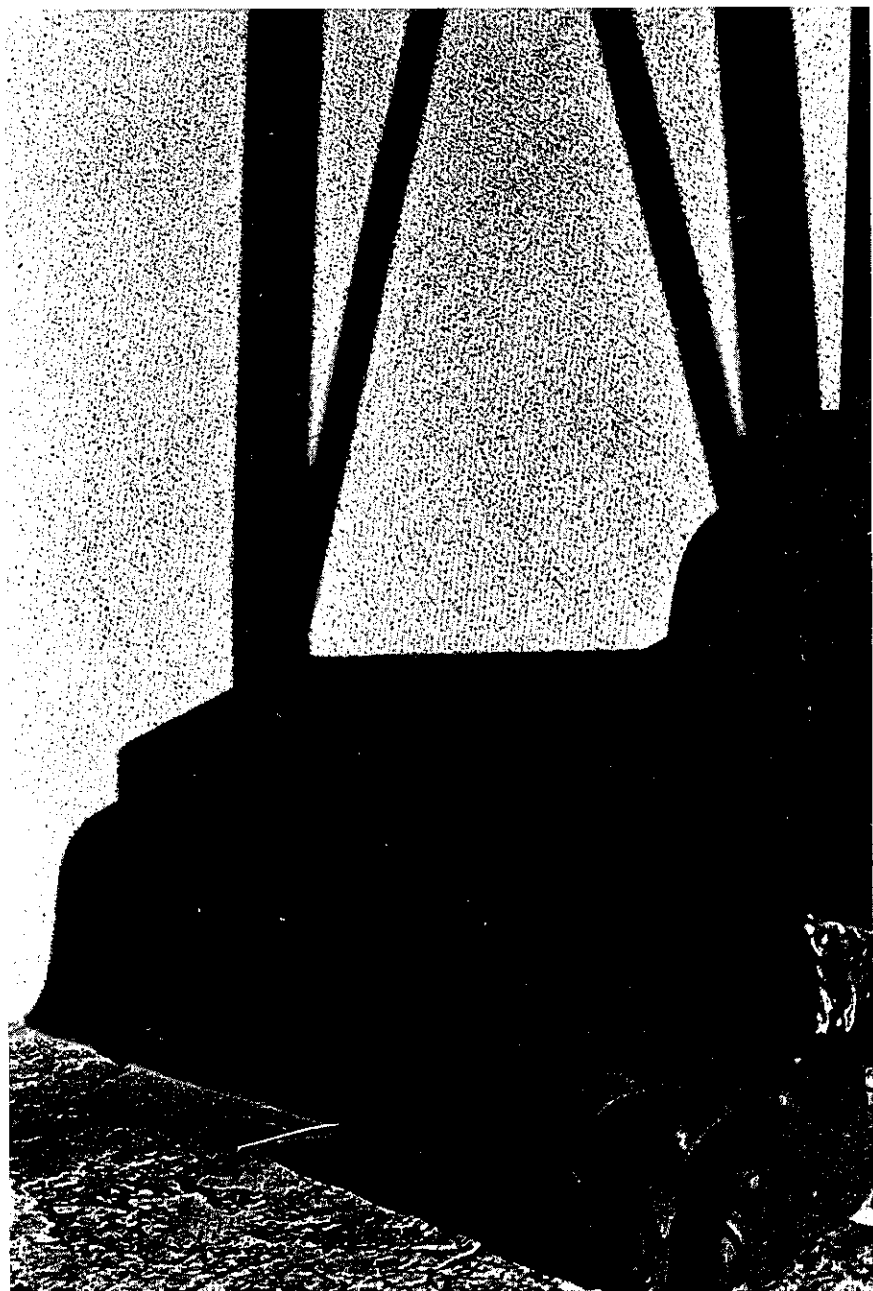
So Terry, Binky and Peter laid in their beds as the Ancient Poet smoothed the blankets over them and tucked them in tight. When he was through, he asked them, "Are you ready?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Here you go then," and he began, "I title this, The Sleep Sonnet."

*"Look to the sky for your friends  
When the dark evening trembles in.  
Listen to their song the wind sends  
From above, calling you to again  
Climb those silver, midnight stairs  
That lead past the stars and moon  
To a place of quiet, dreamy cares.  
Tiptoe to the window of your room,  
Join your voice to that breezy rhapsody  
And wait as your friends sail down.  
They will lift you up, speaking gently  
Of a wonder that holds you spellbound...  
They say you can sleep tonight if you just  
Wander and soar awhile in your bunkbed bus."*

As he uttered the last line of the poem, the children fell into the deep slumber they yearned for. The Ancient Poet gazed on the children lying in their bunks and said, "What beautiful and wonderful sleepers children are." Then, he took a dandelion wish from his pocket, and tied it to the bunkbed.



# A MAN AND A WOMAN

MARY YOUNG

The sprawling motel complex was lit with a thousand shining globes, but the bar inside was crowded and dark. Red candles flickered on the tables while a soft spotlight accented the form of a young girl playing a guitar. Her music was lost to the deep tones of men's laughter and the rush of waitresses serving drinks.

A woman came to the door and, pausing for a moment, made her way to a table in the center of the room. She walked quickly, her head tilted forward, her shoulders bent downward towards her chest. Men's eyes followed her for a moment then turned away. Other women in the room took note of her dress and figure and dismissed her from their mind. Although her breasts were full and her hips well curved under a dark knit dress, the slender women felt secure in their velvet suits and silk blouses as they measured the age of the red and blue knit dress by its looseness in the sleeves and the sagging in the back.

"I'm sorry I'm late," Elaine apologized as Tom pushed his chair back and rose to meet her. There was a hint of anxiety in her low, gentle voice.

"It's all right, Elaine, we understand. How about a drink?" Tom said, not caring why she was late as long as she was there.

"I had some trouble getting the kids to bed."

"Peter, get Elaine a drink," Tom ordered, ignoring Elaine's explanation. "What would you like? A screwdriver okay?"

Tom pulled a chair from another table to give Elaine a seat and then introduced her to his friends. There were three of them, Peter, Howard, and Angelo. After saying a quick hello to their guest, the men resumed their conversation. Elaine sat quietly, her bright eyes staring straight ahead as she listened. She offered only a small nod or slight smile in appreciation of their small talk. She didn't tell them about herself. Tom, of course, had filled them in before she arrived, and she was glad they wouldn't question her. She could have offered nothing but a common story of husband walking out, three small boys to raise.

Elaine sipped her drink slowly. Soon Peter responded to her quietness and explained that he and Howard and Angelo were visiting the city overnight on business. Pleased to have someone listening to him, Peter told Elaine how much they all liked being with Tom. He was a friendly guy, always showed them a good time, and also picked up the tab. While he was

speaking, the others got up from the table and left the room. Peter was alone with Elaine. He was surprised to find he was nervous and looked around the room as though searching for company. He could see his friends in the lobby discussing Elaine.

"I really had a rough trip down here from New York. Traffic seemed to be extra heavy," Peter said, fingering his tie to make sure it was straight.

Elaine sat and listened to him chatter.

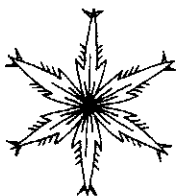
"And to top it off, I didn't sleep at all last night." Peter felt foolish and silenced his idle voice. Looking at Elaine he noticed the pleasantness of her face. Her features were delicate surrounded by long brown hair. Her skin glowed pink in the candlelight. When he saw her breasts he looked away. He knew he would never see more of her though he wanted to see her, be close to her. But he had sat with her too long, felt the warmth of her, and lost the distance he had to have if he was going to pay the thirty dollars Tom had said she cost.

Peter spent only a few more minutes with Elaine. The other men, having decided who was going to have Elaine first, returned from the lobby, Tom leading the way through the maze of people, Howard behind him, barely concealing a smug smile of success, and Angelo, agreeably accepting his place at the end of the line. The decision had been made in Howard's favor. Peter saw, as Howard slipped his fingers around Elaine's arm. Without meeting Peter's eyes, Elaine took her half-finished drink and allowed herself to be escorted, protectively, out of the bar to a room upstairs.

Tom glanced at Peter and sensed his mood. "Pete, the girl needs the dough. She's a nice girl, but it's no big deal."

"I know that, Tom," Peter said, lowering his eyes and reaching for a cigarette. "She is a nice girl, but not for me, not tonight."

"What do you mean not for you, Pete?" said Angelo, laughing incredulously. "I like her well enough! C'mon, let's have another drink. I need it. I'm the anchor man."



# THE RESURRECTION

CHARLES FLEISCHMANN

If I said that a spirit appeared to me, most of you would reply, "Sure it did." Can they? If I asked this question, I know some of you will recite the Lady of Fatima story, while others will be quite sarcastic. I'm not sure who appeared to me, but if you read this story, I will try to convince you that it really did happen.

When I was a little boy living in Scranton, I was really dependent on my Mom for everything. I well remember my Mom the first six and a half years of my life. She was born in Rome and, like most Italian Moms, she had qualities of being a Mom unlike those of other nationalities. Today, when I see my brothers and cousins, I know that I would be like them if my Mom was alive. My brothers are kings, but still nothing more than little boys at heart.

At the age of four I was stricken with polio. I wore braces until the age of six, which limited my activity, but in those days my Mom did everything for me anyway including taking naps with me after lunch. You name it she did it for me.

"You no need walka 'round," she would say, and sat me on a blanket on the floor in a corner of the kitchen. She occupied my time quite a bit, but nevertheless, lonely days they were.

On my sixth birthday, just before I was freed from the braces in 1961, my Mom took an old piece of fur from a jacket, and a piece of red and white polkadotted cloth from an apron, and sewed a small teddy bear together for me. She told me always to keep it in memory of her. The bear, quite an unusual looking thing, was stuffed with foam from an old pillow; it had a furry back and polkadot front. It was seated with its arms and legs opened, as if to hug me. The first day I had it, my dog took it from me and chewed off the round, furry tail. We never found out what he did with it; he probably ate it. A few days later, the little black nose disappeared into the stomach of the dog. After that, the dog never touched the little bear again because Mom hollered at the dog.

Whatever I did, the bear was there too. It was my security and my happiness. I really loved that bear, and probably still do today.

In those days my father wasn't pleased at the way I was being brought up. My doing things independently and being disciplined were his ideas for raising a son. He used to complain that my Mom liked me more than him. He was a heavy drinker and at times it caused problems.

On August 8, 1961, Dad came in about eight o'clock, just before I went to bed. He had been drinking so bad that he was in a rage. I was upstairs when my Mom went down to quiet him. Later, she returned holding her side. She put me to bed and called for my Dad to help her because she was in pain. He came upstairs and sat in a chair in the bedroom and said, "Get the brat to help you." With these words he fell asleep. Mom sent me to get the lady next door. When we returned, Mom was asleep on the bed. Naturally, I was told everything was alright. On August 9, 1961, Mom died. This was truly a tragic day because the entire structure of my little world collapsed with her death. All my relatives gathered during the next few days to pay their respects at the funeral. The viewing was a typical Italian one — everyone crying, candles burning, and a priest chanting.

Toward the closing of the viewing, I sat with my Aunt Marion and Uncle Charlie, from Lester. I told Aunt Marion that I wanted my Mom to remember me, and asked if putting my teddy bear in with her would help her remember. "Yes," she said, handing the bear, upside down, to her husband Charlie. "Look at the cute bear Lucy sewed for the boy!" "Yes, yes, so it is — quite unusual," he replied removing his pipe from his mouth. "You're a brave lad to sacrifice such a valuable item."

Then as if released by some mysterious force, a few hot ashes fell from his pipe, landing on the seat and stomach of the bear, burning a small hole in each spot before they could be snuffed out. Only my father, Aunt Marion and Uncle Charlie, and the elder and younger morticians were present when Aunt Marion and I walked over and placed the small teddy bear in the coffin. Then all four of us left the building for home; only the morticians remained.

Soon after Mom's death, my father and I moved to Philadelphia at the request of Aunt Marion, who hoped to keep an eye on the womanless lives of both of us. Dad increased his drinking from one quart of wine a day to almost half a gallon a day. As he drank, his mind warped and his body decayed. Half his time was spent out of the house. I don't know what he did or where he went; he was gone days at a time. When he was home, he would knock me around the house and rage about. He never really knew what he was saying, except he swore the law would never force him to put me in a home or turn me over to Aunt Marion, who opened a court case against him because of his treatment of me. "You're my little target practice and that you'll stay until I kick," was his final statement. And that's the way it stayed until July 14, 1963, when drinking caught up with him.

Those were the toughest days of my life so far, but days I'll never trade for anything. Surely I wish never to live them again, but those days were the days I reaped the rewards of being a man, despite being only a boy. I learned to help, feed, and care for myself. I really became independent. I learned to do things for myself and how to think. I'd roam the city streets many times just to see and learn from people. I would never have learned those things as rapidly as I did if Mom was alive; besides, I didn't have to — she would always have fed me and cared for me. And surely my father wasn't going to show me anything. So it was up to me to help myself and I did.

After my father was buried on the seventeenth of July, my Aunt Marion and Uncle Charlie with their six children decided to visit Scranton. They told me I was to go with them to relax before I was placed in a home in Media upon returning. They told me not to worry because they were going to open a new case in court to obtain me as their son. Uncle Fred who was quite a wealthy man, but wifeless, was their only opposition. On July 24th, we arrived at my old home in the Hyde Park section of Scranton. The house which hadn't changed in two years, was at the time owned by my Aunt Anna and Uncle John.

No sooner had we enter the house, when my Uncle Fred, who also lived in Lester, arrived in Scranton, as expected. He was accompanied by a man named Hans, who was his business advisor and a practicing psychiatrist.

It was Uncle Fred's wish that he "view the new wealthy member of the Fleischmann clan." It was said then and still is today, "that Uncle Freddy wanted money, not sonny."

That night the weather abruptly changed. Thundering skies and sheets of rain swept the city as we prepared for bed. I slept by myself in my old room. I felt funny, kind of eerie-like, as the past events flipped rapidly through my head.

Over and over again my mind screamed for help. I was cracking up and only some real security could calm me down. "Security . . . security," was a second cry in my head. I'll probably never in my life concentrate on something as much as I hoped for what those two words meant.

Suddenly, a flashing light, so bright it could blind you, caused me to raise my head from the pillow and focus upon the chair, where my mother sat with me before her death. She was standing there — from out of nowhere . . . A lady, who was dressed in white. She was shining brightly. I couldn't see her face clearly and she spoke not a word.

At first I thought it was a dream, but I was awake. Then I thought it a joke, but the lady appeared to have a polka-

dotted, white and red teddy bear under her arm. "Surely the joker went out of his way to obtain that rare item," I said to myself. Suddenly I realized only one bear of that kind existed and it wasn't supposed to be floating around. I was too scared to move, but I stared at the face of the lady more closely and felt that she was trying to communicate with me. Although I heard no words from her lips, my mind seemed to have a variety of interpretations of what she was communicating by just standing there.

"I'm an alligator, I'm a mama — papa coming to you . I'm a space invader, but I'll be a rock and rolled bitch for you. So keep your mouth shut. You're squawking like a pink monkey-bird and I'm rattling up my brains for the words. Keep your 'lectric eye on me babe, or put your ray gun to my head or press your space face next to mine, love, and freak out in a moon age daydream. Oh, yeah!"

My mind seemed to respond with these words: "Don't fake it baby, lay the real thing on me, because the Church of God is such a holy place to be. Let me know you really care, make me jump into the air."

I don't remember another thing. The next morning promised a very sunny and warm summer day. Resting easily in a daze, I quickly jumped up when I realized I had the teddy bear under my arm. I observed it closely; it was the one that was supposed to be in the coffin.

"A dream it wasn't!" my mind responded.

At the breakfast table, I told everyone what happened. Everybody started talking about the dreams they had that night. Nobody shook when I said my happenings weren't a dream. I suppose they thought kids have big imaginations.

After breakfast, I went into the living room. My rich uncle approached me and said "Charlie, my boy, there comes a time in a man's life when he must help someone he loves a great deal. Now, I really love you a lot, and last night, I knew you felt terrible so I thought . . . "While completing his story, he smiled. He repeated everything about last night that I told everyone at breakfast, except he dramatized his reasons for doing such a thing. Just as I was ready to believe him outright, one curious notion surfaced. "Uncle Freddy," I said, "how did you get my teddy bear? I don't remember you being at my Mom's viewing two years ago. Besides, if you really cared, why did you wait so long to give me him back when I could have used him for all that time?"

Looking at me in a puzzled manner, he said, "The bear?"

"Yeah, how did you get him?" I said.

"Explain to me what you mean, Charlie, I don't seem to understand you," he said. Then I told him about the night of



the viewing. He listened carefully but his facial expression told me that he knew nothing about the teddy bear.

His lie was so obvious, I decided to really embarrass him by asking if it was true that he only really wanted to adopt me for the money my parents left me. I explained to him that everyone was telling me this.

Before he had a chance to redeem himself, his friend, the psychiatrist, entered the room. Apparently, the psychiatrist had overheard our conversation. He immediately tried to help Uncle Fred by presenting another theory to explain the night before. His theory, like Uncle Fred's joke theory, dwelled on the assumption that the event never really happened. He said that I had been so emotionally mixed up by the events of the past few years that my mind painted a hallucinatory dream world so it could escape and relax. "All the conditions are truly present for such a thing to happen," was his final statement before I started up to repulse his idea. "But what about my teddy bear; where did he come from?" I asked.

Just then, Aunt Marion and Uncle Charlie entered the room. Aunt Marion immediately snapped, "Leave the boy alone."

"Oh, Mrs. Fleischmann, but the boy must learn to face the truth or forever live in false security," was the dramatic reply of the psychiatrist. "The boy is obviously afraid of living without his mother, which is to be expected," said the psychiatrist. Then he continued, "The bear didn't exist. It is in the coffin where you placed it two years before."

"No, it isn't," I said, "it is in my bedroom." Laughing aloud, he requested I go get it. The psychiatrist looked quite surprised when I returned with the bear.

"Well, Uncle Freddy said he gave it to you last night," was the psychiatrist's reaction to the stuffed animal. "So I did," replied Uncle Fred.

It seemed like they combined the two theories to attack me since individually I crippled them. But before they gained any steam to plow me under, I argued back, "No, no, Uncle Freddy didn't know anything about the bear, besides a lady gave it to me." "Ok then, Uncle Freddy got Aunt Marion to do his dirty work," said the psychiatrist, who hoped to continue to pressure me into giving up my idea of last night being a real happening. However, his last statement cost him the battle, for no sooner did he finish it when Aunt Marion cried out "I did not!" "How dare you fill the boy's head with those lies." She then asked to see the bear and described how her sister had sewn together a bear with the same features. She

recalled how the teddy bear in the coffin and this one looked identical. Looking at Uncle Fred, she said, "Some joke, bone-head." Then I said to Uncle Charlie, who came to observe the bear, "Remember you were smoking your pipe and burnt my bear before we gave it to Mom?" "Yes, I do," he said.

And with these words he flipped the bear upside down. Aunt Marion and Uncle Charlie looked at the bear with solemn awe.

In a quieter tone, Aunt Marion explained what had happened the night of the viewing: "Only we three, Charlie's father, and the morticians were there to witness it," she said as she finished. "This is most interesting," said the psychiatrist, abstractly examining the bear. Then Uncle Freddy, who always seems to get his ideas from everyone else said, "Oh Marion, just tell the boy you did it for me and quit acting." Clenching her two fists in Uncle Freddy's face she yelled, "I will not lie to the boy, you obnoxious creature!" Looking at the frightened face of Uncle Freddy, the psychiatrist said, "Her reactions are too realistic to be an act." "Umph, besides she was with me all last night," said Uncle Charlie in a quiet voice. The conversation broke up—Uncle Freddy stomped out of the room, behind him went the psychiatrist. Aunt Marion answered a ringing telephone and Uncle Charlie lit his pipe before beginning the newspaper. I left for outside with the teddy bear. The broken argument, and the bear, would be dead issues for the next two years.

Shortly after I returned to Lester, I was placed in a home in Media, while Uncle Freddy and Aunt Marion battled for me in court. Uncle Freddy, although wifeless, won custody in September of 1965, probably because he had more money to put into his case. Despite my dislike for him, I went to live with him. Soon after moving in, I tried to talk of the teddy bear. Uncle Freddy said that the night was bad, so he thought it was a nice time to play a trick on me knowing that my mind was disturbed by the recent events. Then he said that morticians don't leave "excessive trash" in coffins. He forbade me to speak of the incident again, which angered me so much that I made a promise to myself to discover the truth of that night.

In 1967 Aunt Marion reopened the court case to obtain me as her son. Her case was based on the fact that Uncle Fred was wifeless, therefore he was unable to raise me properly. Because of my desire to live with Aunt Marion I decided to help her by giving her case some backbone. I began causing some trouble around town by breaking windows and disturbing the peace. Aunt Marion finally won the case in 1969, when I was fourteen. She could succeed in the discipline department where Uncle Freddy had failed.

72 The first night in my new home, I explained to Aunt Marion

and Uncle Charlie that I had been deliberately causing trouble so Uncle Fred would lose the case and that I would cause no more. I reopened the bear story with them. I brought out the bear and told them how I had to hide it when I lived with Uncle Fred. I told them that I believed the mind can paint scenes like the lady, who appeared that night, however, I wanted to know where the bear came from. If I could prove the bear wasn't removed from the coffin, then the lady really did appear. The only way to do that was to find the morticians, so we planned to visit Scranton the following summer.

Despite our plans, we never got to Scranton until the completion of my junior year in high school. Fate seemed to hold us back. The summer of 1970, when we planned to go, Aunt Marion fell ill with tuberculosis which resulted in an operation on the side of her neck and confinement to indoors for the summer. She is well and fully recovered today, but Uncle Charlie died in June of 1971, which cancelled our trip the second summer.

The existence of the bear proved that the theories of the night being a joke and mind game were false. However, my alliance with the bear now seemed to falter. Only the theory of the night being a real event could be true and I feared this since it lacked clarity and final proof.

Finally in the summer of 1972 we got to Scranton only to find Peter DeSalvo & Son, Funeral Services, out of business. With the help of city officials, we learned where to locate Tony DeSalvo, the younger mortician.

Arriving at Tony's home, he told us that his father, Peter, who was the elder mortician had died in 1962, and he had closed the place within six months of his father's death. He expressed a dislike for funeral sadness and said he was relieved when he closed the business. "Living in a dead world for three years was truly nerve-wracking, for I remember every viewing and sad face all too well," he said.

"Then you do remember those days," I asked.

"Yes, very well, why do you ask?"

I then told him everything about the viewing and the appearance of the lady. When I was finished he looked at me and said, "Life and death play many strange games, I know, I've lived in both worlds. As for the night of your mother's viewing, I remember it well. After everyone left, only Pop and I were in the building. As I went to hang by suit jacket in the other room, I heard my Dad close and lock the coffin. I don't know if he removed the bear, but I do know that when I mentioned how sad you were to lose your mother and the strain it would be on you, Pop said, "The boy will become a man with loving memories of his mother and the mother will sleep many a good year with that small bear.'"

He stood momentarily looking down at the floor and in a

coherent mumble said, "Is there anything else?" I asked him if morticians remove objects from coffins and he said only by the people's request and none was made the night of my mother's viewing. "Pop had no reason to remove it and nobody was there for him to give it to anyway," said Tony. "I just can't see any way that bear was removed from the coffin except by God's will. That lady you saw, no matter who she was, had to be sent by God to comfort you many years ago."

We soon left Tony's home and, in a few days, the city. Surely the mortician's words supported the idea that the events were real that night and surely an icing was put on the cake, but a cherry is lacking. That is, faith in God I have, but I still need a total answer. The question is then — how to continue? It was suggested that my Mom's coffin be dug up and reopened. That would give me my final answer, but I'm vigorously opposed to the idea of arousing someone from the grave in such a manner. Contact a spirit yes, but a body no. Besides seeing my mother like that would probably disrupt my mind as it would anyone's. Besides the bear is here, not in the coffin, so why open it to find a bear which is already above the ground. I'm quite sure the body won't tell us anything in the line of words.

So between the summer of 1972 and this summer coming up, I've been meddling with all branches of the occult sciences, philosophy, psychology and most important, rediscovering my own religion. The purpose of these studies is to prepare me for the reconstruction of that night, which with the help of my family, will begin this summer. We hope to be able to study all the possibilities in order to get an answer.

A psychologist, Dr. Casey, who is studying my case, is going to accompany us and help reconstruct the events. My Aunt Angie, who is a philosophy major, owns the home where I lived when I was a boy. She is very enthused and is beginning to get everything ready now. Uncle Freddy is going to come at our request. His sarcastic attitude will help solidify the theory and the final results. We hope he brings a few more unbelievers with him. A balance between we who believe and those who do not will prove we're making a tough test for the theory.

Tony DeSalvo was contacted and he is very happy to help us get started. Father Cassidy, of St. Lucy Roman Catholic Church, of Scranton, will attend to add the views of the Church. A letter has been sent to Dr. Leo Matero to attend the reconstruction. Dr. Matero is a professor at the Academy of Mystic Arts. He has a degree in almost every field of the occult sciences.

So with a priest, philosopher, psychologist, occult professor, believers and unbelievers, we hope to put that cherry on

the cake. As of now, I'm confident, but cautious — hopeful, but ready for an upset — open minded, but suppressive toward any other theory but this one. I'm praying for answers, but also seeking them. I'm keeping the faith with God, but truly demanding an answer. So look out unproven proposition, because here we come.

