

1971

PEGASUS

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According to classic mythology, Pegasus, the Winged-Horse, was said to have sprung full-grown from the neck of the dying Medusa. Traditionally Pegasus caused to spring from Mt. Helicon the fountain of perpetual poetic inspiration when he gave a kick stopping Helicon's ascent. This action brought out of the mountain the soul-inspiring waters of Hippocrene. The great Winged-Horse Pegasus now symbolizes the poets flight into the realm of fantasy and inspiration.

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TO A TRAVELER

In seculsion, a river of life
Transforms my inner desert
Into dewy summer glade
(Where breezes fragrant from
Paradise sweep in from upstream).

My outward appearance--
An enchanted forest,
A velvet green cloak--
Embraces a magical waterfall:
A splashing, giggling, white
Torrent of joy.

Therefore, traveler,
Pass through
My surrounding forest.
Follow the sound
Of rushing waters
To the heart of me.
Yet--one note of caution--
If you get thirsty
On your journey
My water cannot fill you.
And if you fear you'll
Die of thirst
Just greet me briefly
And hurry home. If there
You find no Living Drink
Follow then my river
To its Source.



I THINK I SEE

I think I see what makes things so
How growth from stillness need be slow
 How chapters of a life must close
 To stand erect in sweet repose
Then thoughts like silent rivers flow.

While tides of generations grow
Eclipsed, we edge in moon's shadow
 So fine the pace; still they impose.
 I think I see.

But autumn thus must end in snow
To melt again when half-gods go.
 The waking river overflows;
 The eye of spring has now unfroze:
The distant clouds she had to know.
 I think I see.

TO D. D.

As the windows fog,
dripping condensation
like a sleek silver curtain,
he releases the snap
on her better judgement
and unmindfully caresses
the soft, pastel lining
of her fantasies.



THE COMING

I have been through these woods at every season; I have seen them in their inviting green and in their bareness. They are, for me, a reclusive way amongst the steel boxes propped on rubber spheres. In my always too brief exposure, they have captured me. I have become a small part of this magnificent creation. Even when I look across this briar-ridden field that borders them, I am there, in the forest.

I am the embryonic beginnings as they quest to know life; I am the stilled sap awaiting rebirth; I am the water as it journeys from cloud through soil, only to ascend again to the greened, crowned elegance of the forest canopy; I am the confusion of the photosynthetic factories and part of the tranquility of an evening softly illuminated by fireflies that have wrapped their lights around the trees. It is correct to look here for life's secret.

Yet for today, I do not want to know, only to be. It is enough, for now, to be a part of the life blood of this creation.

The madness which filled me and was spilling from my lips is gone now. The woods have soothed me with all the gentleness appropriate to the task.



CYCLE OF THE SEASONS

In the warmth of Spring
I seek the greening fields
To lie awhile in the sunlight
While the flowers dance with the Wind

In the heat of Summer
I seek the misty vales
Where silver streams go laughing
On their way to the rolling Sea

In the cool of Autumn
I seek the Forest's heart
To listen to its murmured dreams
While a golden rain falls about me

In the cold of Winter
I seek the lonely heights
Where the Stars wheel through velvet jet
And taunt my soul with their siren songs

CINDI MARKOW

MY GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother sleeps
in her own little cocoon
in her very own womb
in her solid walled tomb.
She sits by the window
and peeks.

The rocking chair squeeks
Like a ghost until the shadows creep.

She prays at night
moans in her sleep
She prays, "Oh, dear God"
to keep her place.
She dies a little each day
from lack of faith.

She walks the dog
through fallen leaves
through winter weather
and springtime seeds.
When summer's begun
They sit in the sun.

She moves around the yard
and hides in her garb
She shuffles inside
on eveningtime
and puckers her lips
to the coffee she sips.

She gathers us
around her bony breast
and crawls into
her little nest.
It is the end of the day
when like the brown leaves
blown away
She crinkles up
and rests
like an aged bloom
and closes the door
to her silent tomb.



LITTLE GIRL

She's a pretty little child
And very, very smart.
Fragile in a way
But tough inside her heart.

Stands only about half of me,
Hasn't lived too long,
Yet seen a lot of wrong
For a very little girl.

Little girl at the grave
Tears drip from her eyes.
She's loved and lost already
Unfair, for her small size.

Child of innocence
Not this particular one.
She's managed to survive
All injustice that's been done.

Gone are the days
Of children in their place.
Now thrust into the race,
Truly at the start.

But the child will somehow grow
And find the good in life.
For surely all her strife
Is far behind her.

IMPRISONED

(ashes calmly piled without breeze
stand still as stone)

panic lies like ashes on the floor.
a wild fire sealed in air-tight cell
sears flame on flame and dwindling--
dust remains.

black dust as a deeply dug grave
black dust as a coal mine vein
so black--

the sacred flame
buried within the womb
falls frozen;
stillborn.

windless



MONDRIAN

line, form:
horizontal
neoplastic woman
espies in man a vertical
abstract

MOONLESS SEA

Sand castles stand cast
in sandy memory banks
of beached dream builders

SUNLIT FLIRT

You snap her up
from her springtime bed
and scatter
her feelings
like dandelion feathers
on a windy day.

UNTITLED

Oh, martyr moth, my mascot pet,
if I had known, you'd be here yet,
 Flitting around with friends at night
 Not called to follow distant light
to pay to me this unowed debt.

We are all pressed (this I regret)
to hard, flat windshield lest we get
 To keep ourselves in patterned flight.
 Oh, martyr moth!

Pinned flat, your winged form is set,
across my thoughts so as to let
 My own creative flaws in sight:
 We two seem one by nature's might.
'Tis sad this hour that we met,
 Oh, martyr moth!



DO NOT GREET HAPPILY THAT BIRTHDAY BRUTE

Do not greet happily that Birthday Brute,
The fiend who tends to loose the flesh from bone;
Flex, stretch and slow the sagging of your suit.

For smart girls know that wrinkles aren't so cute,
And those whose figures once caused men to moan
Do not greet happily that Birthday Brute.

Old women, finding none in hot pursuit
When age has caused a lack of muscle tone;
Flex, stretch and slow the sagging of your suit.

Worn broads, their breasts strapped high and absolute
Discover years aren't hid beneath cologne,
Do not greet happily that Birthday Brute.

Plump girls, who over-eat and can't refute
That time plus pounds has shaped the bulge they've grown;
Flex, stretch and slow the sagging of your suit.

And you, your cake, with chocolate milk dilute,
Your wish you've made, the candles you have blown.
Do not greet happily that Birthday Brute.
Flex, stretch and slow the sagging of your suit.

ASYLUM SERENADE

Hallowed halls
Of concrete walls
Echoing with laughter,
The sound still rings
(Though no one sings),
And will forever after.
A ghostly voice
In choral choice
Resounds and sounds
Dismayed
Over sterile white,
Through hazy light,
An Asylum serenade.

POLITICAL COAT RACK

Winter coats in summer
Hang from tired coat racks
Like encumbent politicians,
Silently thanking each hook
For its support.

THE ANTAGONIST

You are a builder
of houses,
Not minds.

You construct
habitable dwellings for the masses,
And thereafter bulldoze in
to tear me down
as if I were a slum.

What right have you,
Mr. Scholar,
to forget your tools
required to connect this subject
with passion and enthusiasm. . .
. . . of which. . .
. . . both still remain. . . detached. . .
. . . and slowly rusting.

In response to your intimidating query,
I went to high school
and remember
not the classics,
but the apathy
that is once again
invading my depths
like termites,
chewing at my fragile foundations
fabricated ten minutes ago,
or so it seems
Now.

Disgust.
I see it
in your eyes,
in the contours of your face,
and I hear it

in the tone of your words:

"Call THE TERMITE COMPANY!"

Disgust.

Do you see it in my eyes,

In my glares

that sometimes

I let rise to escape?

"Call. . . Call Who. . . ?"

Myself?

(Yes. Myself and this pen and paper!)

You?

Can you exterminate

these negative feelings

that are mine (And yours)?

Can you set up positive terminals

in this class?

Can you come down

a little

from where ever you are (Mt. Olympus, perhaps?)

and see us as

Individuals

with potential?

And not as a whole

to berate

or punish with a redundant task

in view of one person's careless remark.

Take him aside,

but do not drag me along

anymore.

"Cause I ain't gonna follow
no road backwards,"

when I can see it

clearly

expanding for miles

ahead of me.

You are a builder of houses
And Minds (?)

After venting my rage
in black and white,
After the eye of my raging storm
ripped over these pages,
leaving behind,
hapazardly strewn,
this wordy debris,

You
came in,
it seemed,
as a quiet and gentle breeze.
My storms,
like sudden summer explosions,
never endure long. (And)
You forget your bulldozer -
this time;
But my sturdy foundations
fabricated one minute ago,
or so it seems
Now,
will withstand
any blows hereafter.

I was comparing you
to the mellow moon,
an archetype
the harsh sun
could never emulate.





WHEN HALF-GODS GO

It seems exacting
doesn't it
like Von Hartmann,
Neitzsche, Darwin,
Marx.
Prescribed reality-
widely accepted sense-phenomena
apprehended for further logical analysis.
The rest is evidence.
I could write
forever now
and the words
would always ring
with the same brass melody to him.
But that's one deliberate method
of escape.
He'd never think to look for me
there.

QUESTIONS TO THE ANSWER KING

Why'd you make the ugly things,
the black and blue and gray-toned things
which mix among all loveliness
and leave mankind confused.

Diffused are all the rights and wrongs
which blend in parts of everywhere
as man is challenged by his God
to find the reds and golds and greens
inside the muck the demon mixed
for Eve and Adam's lips.
God WHY?

You set the paths
and knew the roads
that man and snake would take to go
away from you -- from Eden's good --
so why'd you give us wills to choose
if we were not to leave?

And since you know the end of all,
and know of those who'll find the shades
which have your love -- the favored blends --
then why must all still blunder through
idolatrics of glamour,
tragedies from color blends
foolish arms and failure,
where beauty's hard to find?

Besides, you know the answers now,
of what will happen at the time
when ev'ry man has reached the end
of all the paths you set --

so why not pluck your precious grapes
to make your sav'ry vineyard brew
and leave the others on the stem

to rot or burn what they must do,
instead of letting time go on
with all its plagues and pain, confusion.
Why not end it now
instead of days or years to come?

But as before there is no answer.
Claps of thunder don't resound.
Each man is left alone to ponder
on the shades of right and wrong.

And as before we'll try to answer
questions like the ones here shown - -
the questions from which answers
are but guesses at what can't be known
(except by that old answer-king
who's thought to live in clouds).



DEATH OF AN ARTIST

Drowned
in the dissolution of
your art
lost in the mire of blue and
red and gold
it was you
who filled my eyes
with watercolor sprays,
painting for me
the portrait of your dreams
in Renoir immortality.
I blinked.
It was you
who should have spoke in oils.



THE LEAVING

His eyes never left me for a minute. I was packing my suitcase on the bed with my back toward him, but I knew he was still sitting on the straight back chair in the corner of the bedroom. . . and he was watching. For weeks, all my thoughts had revolved around this finality, this leaving. The struggle and conflict had left me weak and vulnerable. Once the decision had been made, I would not relent. If I gave in again, I knew I would be lost forever.

Had someone said to me that it was a time for looking forward, I would have thought him mad. I was running away, too sad to look behind me, and afraid to look ahead of me. And so, I walked around continually with my eyes downcast for fear that someone would speak to me, and I would have to search for an answer. Sleep was impossible. I wanted to, I needed to, but the arms of Morpheus would offer me no comfort. My dreams were nightmares. In one dream, I was being crushed by the trunk of a circus elephant holding me suspended over his head as I screamed at him to put me down. Yet, I was terrified that he would drop me or fling me to the crowd waiting around the giant tent and roaring hysterically for my fate. I did not attempt to sleep for days after that, and hid the porcelain elephant that had always seemed to smile at me from the corner of the desk in the living room. It had become a grim reminder of that awful recurring dream, but there were other dreams too, equally as haunting and horrible.

Bending to pick up the small things I had dropped in my haste, I glanced over at him. He still sat there on his favorite chair, but now he was staring blankly at nothing. The thoughts flashing behind those empty dull grey eyes were his alone and were seldom shared with me, especially when he was hurt or angry. I saw that the brown "Earth" shoe from his right foot (which was too small and pinched) was held in his right hand. He always put on and took off the right shoe first. Strangely, it had never occurred to me that he performed the act with a

certain deliberateness. But suddenly I realized, that was how he did most things. . . ritualistically. He was like a priest celebrating Holy Mass, offering the sacrifice. . . this dusty, scuffed shoe from his right foot. Then the left shoe would be removed to the accompaniment of a long sigh, Atlas shrugging off the world.

Perhaps he had forgotten I was in the room, and I was afraid to make a sound, even breathe, for fear that he would notice me and want to talk. Slowly I straightened up and checked my reflection in the full length mirror on the wall. I appeared outwardly calm, controlled, sure of myself. I was certain he would notice the trembling of my hands if I tried to button the jacket of my dark traveling suit, and so I held them clenched at my sides while my nails made crescent shaped marks on my palms.

Turning, I took one last look about the room. It had been done not long ago in his favorite pale shades of blue, and was neat as always. I wondered if I should leave the slim gold bracelet he had given me during our first month together. If I took it, it would be a constant reminder of the giver. But I, decided I could not part with it. I would wear it just one more time, and then put it away in the back of some drawer with the other reminders of my pain. I could do that when the time came, I thought. I would do that later.

My coat was in the closet; and as I crossed the room, I passed the "jewel window". We had named it that because the sun would shine in on bright afternoons and the panes - all twelve of them - would glisten and wink at us like the facets of a brilliant diamond. What had begun earlier as a gentle shower, had become a torrent of wind and rain punishing the panes with violent intent. I stood a few steps away nervously waiting for the window to shatter from the tremendous impact of the storm on those fragile gems. Beyond, I could see the autumnal trees whipping themselves into a frenzy.

A mournful howl pervaded the room and rose to a deafening, eerie pitch. My cries coincided with the roaring thunder and the room was electrified. Grasping fingers of lightning wove and

danced in the blackness displaying awesome power. The flood I had contained deep within my very being welled up and took possession of me. My burden was at last released. All the pent-up tension during these long weeks was unleashed and left me spent as the storm, moving on as quickly as it had come. Distant rumblings continued for some moments while I carefully checked the seams of my strength. The room glowed mistily and tiny rivulets of tears ran down the panes gathering more on their journey. I was empty. I had no more tears to add to those I had already shed. It was time to go.

I buttoned my coat, picked up the suitcase from the bed, and walked out the bedroom door into the dark living room. I felt his eyes follow my movements that time, and listened for his voice. I could hear the cars outside driving along the wet streets, but inside, there were only the familiar, silent sounds of a familiar, silent room.

The suitcase hung heavily in my hand as my feet dragged on the thick carpeting. This time I did not look around, and as I approached the door, I did not hesitate. I walked out as my cabbie tooted his horn impatiently.

After all, it was not really the end. It was only the beginning.



UNTITLED

You were free, a woman who needed
personal freedom;

I liked that.

You could shock me:

It was unbelievable that anyone
could shock me!

You could move your body in ways
that would make a cat jealous.

Sometimes you're so feminine, you
shake my foundations.



AT LAST, MR. W

I will think of tonight often as the sun
whose light implants flowers on the earth
and life unto the dead.

Even tonight this splendor
now a memory
is a frozen sunkiss
waiting for the warmth
of nevertomorrow.

Yet the shocking joy will fade
and the vivid page will dim
to a yellow frayed edge
and this future antiquity
makes even that moment
seem a dream.

Sprung from a fantasy
that kiss
will twist through time
jerking my life
towards an alien sun
that forever must remain
unexplored.

BLACK-OUT LIGHTS

New York, Times Square -
an electric time zone, a
magnetic carnival of
circuits
plugging me in,
revving my will,
shocking my soul to submission,
as I find myself
on the runway, taking off
shooting-up cotton candy.



CHRISTMAS EVE AND CAPPY KNEW

The ground was coated with two feet of white
And crystals kept falling on through the night.
The snow was cold, but helped me to relate
To winter and December's festive date.
At ten I found and ironed a red-striped shirt,
Then matched it with a light green mini-skirt.
My beaver coat, to add a touch of class,
Now I was ready for the midnight mass.
You see tomorrow was a Christmas day.
My Duster skid and slid all the way,
But I used so much persistence and care
That safe and sound I reached the house of prayer
And once inside I found an empty pew
And stared at all the faces that I knew.

I first saw Dave, by now he's 21
And still his wealthy father's favorite son.
He never worked or had a job to fill.
He knows when Daddy dies he gets the will.
He has extremely long, straight, sun-blond hair
An Irish face, blue eyes and skin that's fair.
His lips are thin and form a mocking smile;
His outfit's tailored well and right in style.
The pants are bells and cuffed. His collar's wide.
He's 6 feet tall and very dignified.
He spotted me and gave a charming wink.
At first I blushed but then began to think.
"It seems a shame to waste such sex appeal
On such a lazy, boring, boastful heel."

Close by was Eddie Haskel, Dave's best friend.
He, too, has folks on whom he can depend.
His father owns a track where horses race
And hopes that someday Ed will run the place.
Now, Ed is tall and very very lean.
His shirt is old and colored olive green

And made for someone heavier than he
His look or mien is one of apathy.
He has a shallow face. His skin is pale.
His shaggy hair is in a ponytail.
The lady next to him is old and frail
She turns around and downward falls her veil.
Then Eddie swiftly sweeps it from the ground.
She gives him thanks then faces as before.
He reaches down and in her pocketbook.
A 20 dollar bill is what he took.
You'd see were he to roll up his sleeve
An arm which would make any mother grieve.

I see in the front row Virginia Chaste
Her dress reveals her very modest taste.
It's much too large to show her female shape,
It's in colored ashen grey and purple grape.
It's length is to the middle of her shin.
That's long, but short enough to show she's thin.
Her hair is mousey brown and makes a bun.
Her face is lined and her expression's glum.
She lives according to religious rule
And once a week she teaches Sunday school.
I did attend her classes in my youth
And for some time I thought her words were truth.
The flames of hell and lust were what I'd dread
Until I overheard when father said,
"Now there's a woman who uses morality
As if it were the same as rationality."
That made me watch the lady with more care.
She smacked a boy when he forgot a prayer
And swore we'd go to hell if we missed mass.
I figured I was doomed and left the room.

I next laid eyes on spouseless Teddy Bear.
He's always made his living styling hair.
He's known as one of the best in the trade
And consequently he is quite well paid.
His locks are streaked with blonde and in a shag.
His shoes have 2 inch heels and match his bag.
A feeble frame, weak wrists, a tender chin,

He has a pretty face and satin skin
And when he walks his hips are sure to wiggle.
His voice is soft and high, his laugh a giggle
And when he speaks it's of the latest style.
Or how some lady acted infantile.
He knows exactly who's in love with who
And always buys the latest Ingenue
And though he's not well read, he still can quote
Every sonnet Shakespeare ever wrote.

Now Charlie's got his checkered coat and tie,
He really is a very funny guy.
His voice is loud and strong and with a bellow
His tummy moves like it were made of jello.
I'd guess his height to be some 6 feet 3
He's 4 feet wide and round and pillowy.
I shan't forget a comment he did make
When he attended my great-uncle's wake.
The story's this: He joked within the crowd
Until the parlor man said, "not so loud."
"What Sir?! I've been to better wakes than this!"
Yes, Charlie never fails to embarrass.
He's loud and crude and bold and very rude,
But many love his witty attitude.
The work done by this man, so arrogant
Is testing bombs for some production plant.

I recognize the chap in back of me,
A pleasure seeker he did use to be,
The lover of the town, a squire of dames,
He knew a thousand tricks and all the games.
He lived a life of total lust and sin;
One filled with bourbon, vodka, rum and gin,
Cocaine and heroine. He paid their price
By dealing, playing pool, and rolling dice,
And then one day, he met a floosy tart.
He offered her his money, soul, and heart.
The jade just laughed at him in ridicule.
Then split to find herself another fool.
When he saw how his love was all in vain
He traded in his life of folly reign.

And turned into the man in back of me.
He's one who makes an honest salary.
By working for a college library.
His pay goes to the university.
He's taking courses in Philosophy.
He hopes some day to earn his Ph.D.
His jacket and his pants are darkest grey.
The shirt is white. It looks a bit blase.
His eyes are light, but do appear quite dark
Because they're circled with a blackened mark.
His voice is soft and I have never heard
Him speak a one unnecessary word.
Yes, he's a quiet, lonely, honest gent
With one intent - not to be ignorant.

JANET VOLMER

GOSSIP

Summer cigarettes smoked on an evening porch
Damp and dewy from an august rain;
Facing towards the west--a setting sun
Pours radiance through a latticework of leaves,
And ivy climbs around the cracking posts
(adding a touch of aristocracy);
While neighbors thronged in the throes of a new event
Pour over sparkling details, thankful they
Are not the topic of the talk--today.

NOTHING IN THE FAR

Your love came skipping
like a giddygiddy girl
skipping ropeliving hope
selling nothing giving all.

My love swung open
like a doubledungeon door
swinging openswinging closed
giving nothing taking all.

Your love left running
like a foxbefore the hounds
running quicklyrunning long
taking cover in the far.

My love trailed chasing
like a colaafter rum
searching vainlyvainly searching
finding nothing in the far.



STEVE SHERIFF

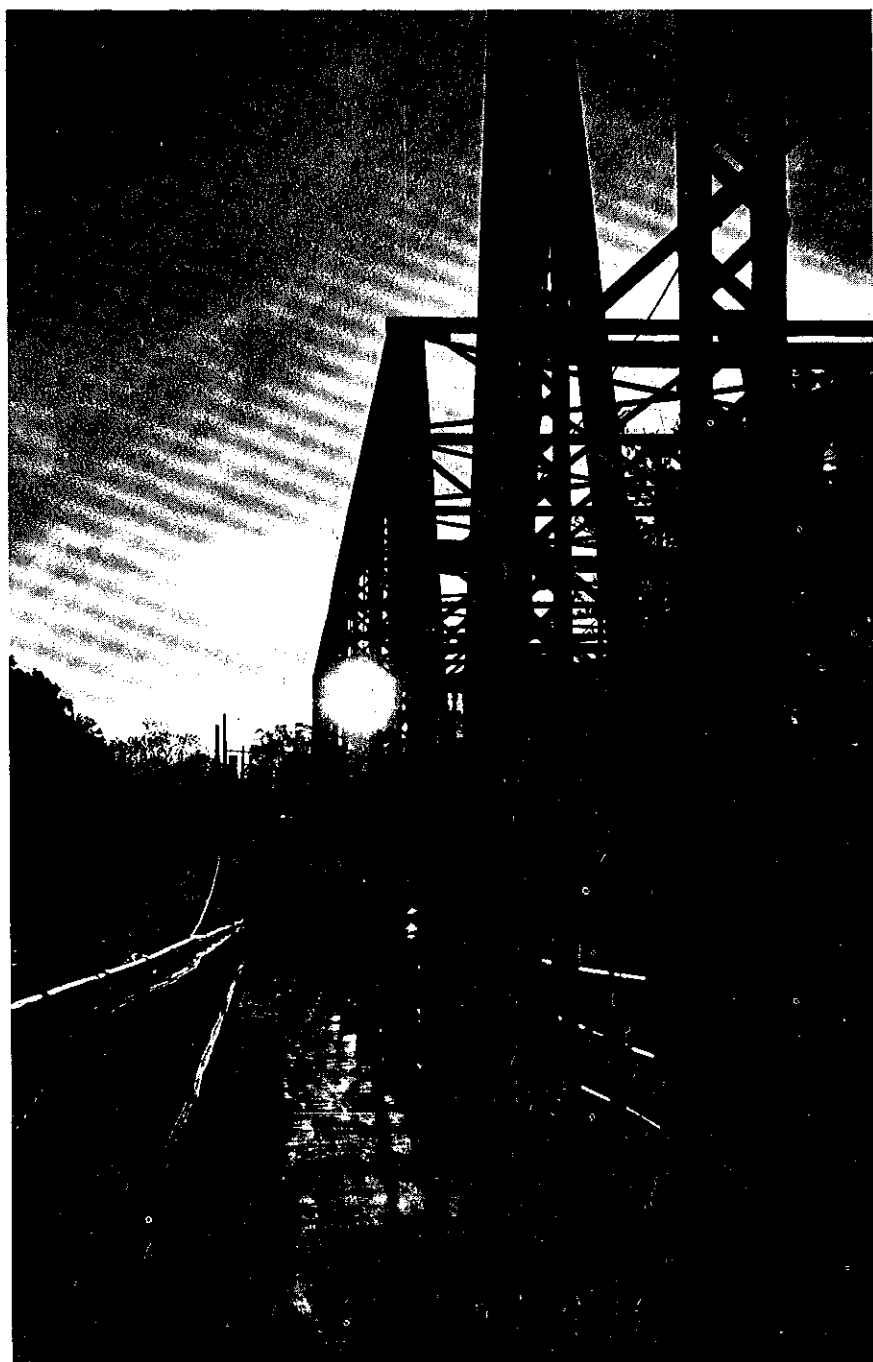
On a rippled pond
Rain falls, diamonds dapple leaves
Above bug-eyed frogs.

PORSCHE EYES

A man needs
Porsche eyes
To round your hair-pin curves
At the speed of a glance,
And not lose control,
Or prematurely pop his clutch
Somewhere along
Your beautiful
Backstretch.

IT'S DEEP . . . (SO TO SPEAK)

Submarine
Sinking
Slowly and
Sure
Sinking and
Sinking till
Sinking no more
And I am
The Sailor who
Sinks
In the Sub
So . . .
Blubbity
Blubbit
And
Blubbity
Blubb. . . .



UNTITLED

By my side
she is.
The line runs
along the southbound
road.
And we talk.
Alone. Just the three
of us. She, me and the
line.
And when I wake,
I still have the line.
And we talk and run
south.

THE ALCOHOLIC

Imagine the egg-timer has just stopped
and there is as much time in the top as sand
in the bottom.

Scurrilous hand-scribbled notes
of past dry leaves and feelings
that once made sense
but now
just retrace my ignorance

like sailboats made of glass
I can see the stars but can not
swim with you not this journey. . .
you're all on your own.

Porcelain lover turn your head up to me
get off your knees
its only dry heaves
what is left is your pride
and a promise of sobriety

Mirrors and fur lined doors
that never open
tatter images
like an open pair of scissors
or keys that don't open locks
just jinkle

Use those keys to lock me out
just jingle them at the next shotglass
then close the scissors where we once touched
it is that easy for cowards

like childhood's end
or golden bay window bellies
over fed and lazy in the sun
comfortable yet foreboding

White porcelain worshipper
step away from your altar
bend your back straight again
the reflection in the water is yours.



MARY STEWART

Five Sonnets:

THE FIRST SONNET

As interest is in a brand new rhyme
And first few days of leisure are the best;
As crop is ready at the harvest time
And ripened fruit is always juiciest;
A cooling breeze on any summer day,
A tingle as your body starts to swim,
And diving into a pile of just cut hay
And lightness shining from what once was dim,
So also is this love I have for you.
It is a love that's virgin-fresh and clean
And has the power to change the old to new
And take my duller days and make them keen.
I only hope in time our love won't spoil
As nature will decay and rot and soil. . .

THE SECOND SONNET

I feel the seasons of our love are changing.
The heat of summer now has cooled to fall.
And my emotions have been rearranging.
The warm and tender hugs are turning small.
But like a fashion never stays too long,
As students take two months off every year,
We need a break to make a love that's strong
The chance to travel, find a new frontier,
The time to grow our own distinctive ways,
The distance so I can quite clearly see
The qualities you have which I can praise
And reason why your love means much to ME
I know it's better if we say good-bye
Then stay together living in a lie. . .

THE THIRD SONNET

My body being weak and limp and sore
Is longing for the restfulness of sleep
But then, alas, into my mind you pour
And thoughts of you like tolling bells do keep
Me staring into space with no repose,
My bones may rest but no such peace of mind.
The absence feeds and far the feeling grows
And longer do these limbs need for recline.
So love, please let me love you once again
And live the dreams awaking me each night.
For like a flower needs the falling rain
And weeping willows need the warm sunlight
 I need your love so darkness can be faced
 And so the day will have a sweeter taste. . .

THE FOURTH SONNET

Just as the aging will improve the wine
It caused the sweetness of our love to rise,
To grow, to flourish, and become so fine.
As men with much experience are wise.
The forceful lies and lonely time away,
The soothing closeness and our golden dream
These put together made our love grow gay
And warmer far than any sun-made beam.
So let us stay united now forever
And always flowing on a steady course.
We'll make a love that's lasting 'till the never
For solid love must be the strongest force
 And just as any body grows when fed,
 Our faith shall work as our emotions bread. . .

THE LAST SONNET

Now that your flaming life has died to ember,
Your sparkling beauty smothered to the ground,
And leaving only days I shall remember
And in my ears a constant ringing sound.
As blooming health is poisoned by a germ
A sunny day is thundered by a storm,
So did a bullet end your natural term.
It took your life away. It killed your form
And left to me a wound beyond repair;
And all my rainbow dreams now colored black.
Yes, I'm alone my world is cold and bare.
I want to look ahead, but looking back
 I ponder: if only I could have seen
 Before how much your life and love did mean.



I'M ON THE PAVEMENT THINKIN'
'BOUT THE GOVERNMENT

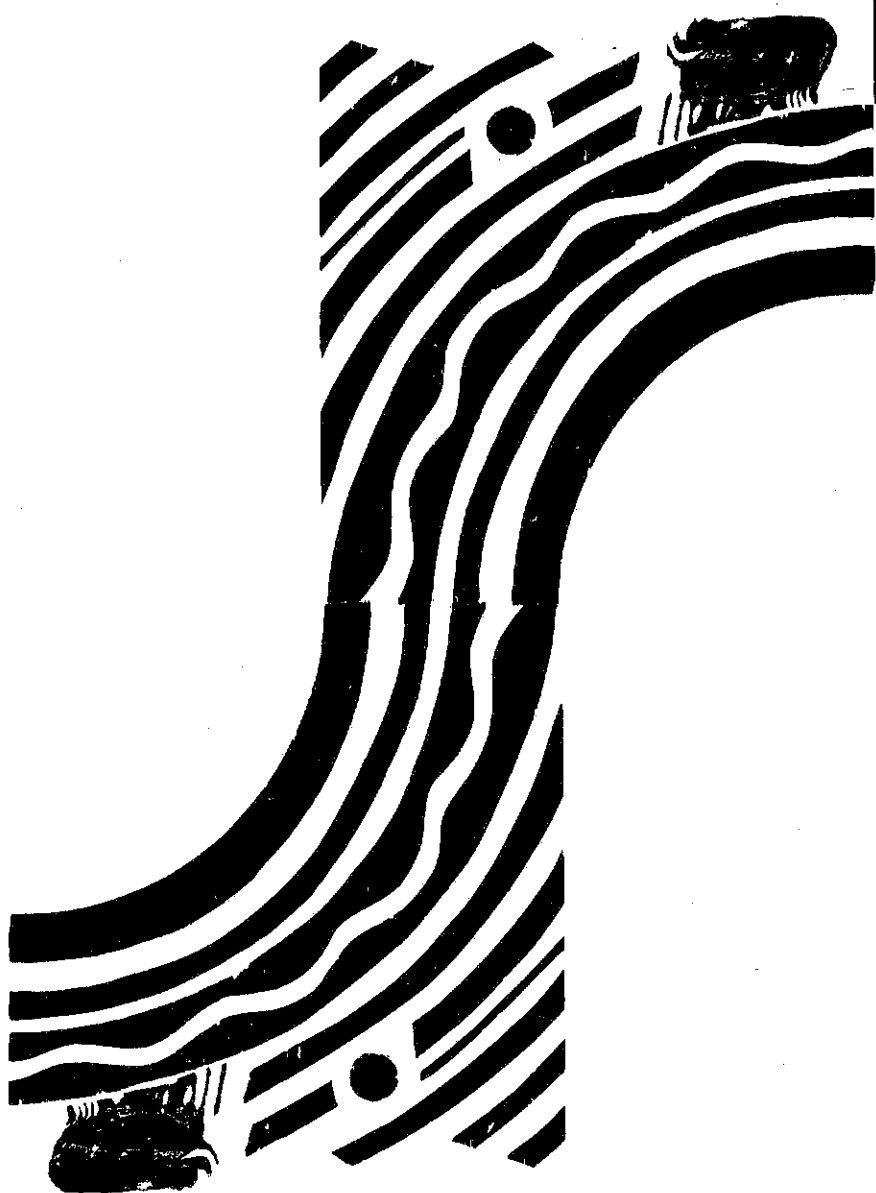
Slept in the hall,
Broke all the dishes. . .
but gentle as a Jersey cow
learning to type for slavery,
Mosquito ate your face last night
but mailed the carbon anyway. . .
He's just an elevator pappa
winning your love,
burning inside when holding on tight,
but he'll dedicate the album to you anyway.
Clock's set to tomorrow's time zone he's a travelin' man
and you're working as a waitress.
Is it really like they say,
"Out of sight, out of mind."
Even under interrogation
not revealing the source or the situation,
still you drop the kids off at the nursery. . .
freedom is just a word. . .
only 18 survivors in the Canary Islands. . .
Fog-horn voice can't be heard here inside your mind
through time zones and the fourth dimension.

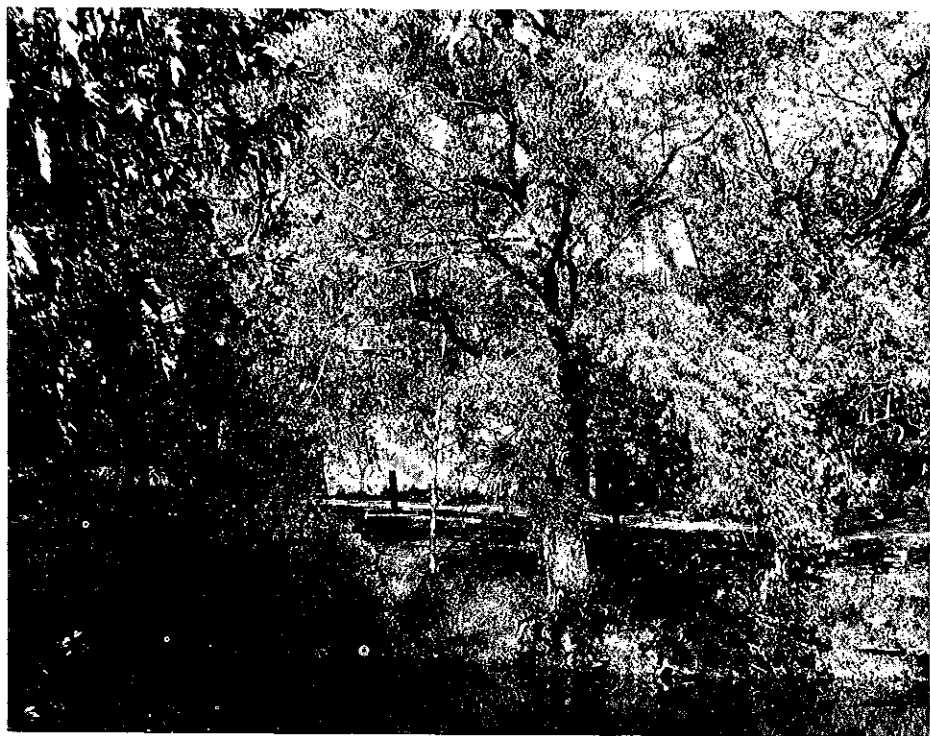
Holes in your socks and gloves,
feet sweating, so you spend your time visiting
human junk food gluttons,
who complain about their burning ulcers
while drinkin' May-loxxian mixtures,
with a Johnny Handcock Life policy for a tablemat
happy in his joy of Jesus security,
but. . . isn't security the guest room with the
shades pulled knowing the People's Republic of China
and Sammy Davis aren't planning revolutions on the
same Sunday as the company picnic?

Falling asleep while chewing gum. . .
don't forget not to seemingly discriminate,
only measure the distance from nostril to nostril
which is only fair while cutting the cheese with
Old Blue Eyes and 35 National Ambassadors while
Jimmy's brother lubricates your car with peanut oil.
After all Mr. Wentworth's not expecting the Spanish Inquisition
with monster weapons. . .
but death they say is like "walking up stairs
while the colors around you get brighter."
Why deal in detail when you are really dying anyway?

What's "real" is the realization of three selfish nations
and their nuclear overkill capacity
who talk salt
and deal in people's lives
cash on the barrelhead. . .
and after the dust settles
will rise from this eternal cinder
and replant.

Why stop the vicious circle
or the holy trinity?
What we need is more contempt for one another
like two dogs at the same dish. . .
that should get things rollin'
let's hear it for World Government. . .
Kissinger for King,
it's a better job than teaching
at Georgetown. . .
we'll let Burt Lance be his banker
just to keep him on his toes. . .
call me irresponsible
call me unpredictable
rainbows I'm inclined to pursue
but for a rainbow. . .
I must now ask
an increased spending allowance
for our inadequate space program
rainbows are not growing on trees.





FIND ANOTHER HAND
(to count the friends you've lost)

The sun comes through the kitchen window,
feel it warm.
It's been a while since I saw you,
I am empty.
But the longer I wait,
the better,
because. . .
it's really more fun to miss you
than to have you;
more complete in my minds eye
to think of what I shall say
than to have to drag through the
formalities of saying it.
That's because you never listen anyway,
except of course,
to your own fickle throbbing heart.
The world you're in spins around you
because you're the centre
like the egg laying the hen.
Like the ringmaster at your own
three ring circus of life
you make announcements,
dress the part,
blow the whistle,
but don't get involved with
the wild animals.
Wait and the day may come
when you find,
that the world spins in other places.
So you see,
it's just you that you deceive
when you ask artificial questions
while kidnapping moments in darkness
just to borrow blooming flowers
to give to trusting lovers
as your own.



HOW WISE THE OLD

The old shoemaker is sitting at the beaten wooden bench. This aged craftsman retains skills which are surprisingly sharp for a man who has lived over ninety years. As an immigrant to this country while in his twenties, he brought with him the ambition of youth and a stonemason's back.

Over the past five years I have visited "Old Tony" frequently. These visits follow a routine pattern. As I step into the shop, through the noisy screen door, he spots me. After a half minute of good-natured cursing and bickering at each other I get a beer from the icebox. Now we are ready to "get downstairs to business" story telling. These visits are very simple in nature. He talks; I listen. Usually it takes him all of thirty seconds to establish the theme for the day, which is "how it used to be in the old days." It amazes me to think of the number of older people that are able to recall details of life experiences that they have lived through so long ago. Today he tells me a story I have heard many times, his first job in the new country. The only work which this young immigrant could find upon arrival in his new land was as a laborer in the steel mills of upstate Bethlehem, Pa. The old man tells me that to eat you must speak, so if you cannot speak the language you let your back do the talking for you. At that time, the years between 1910 and World War I, cheap immigrant labor built many industries in this nation, and "young" Tony was part of this wave of immigrants which made up the work force.

Long hours and low pay were the lot of these laborers. Death within the ranks of laborers was not uncommon. Fatal accidents and loss of limbs were so frequent that they were viewed as just another production problem by management. The more Tony experienced these accidents the more calloused he became towards them. It was not that a man did not feel an empathy towards his brother laborer, but life was harsh in the mills, the motto being, "Get tough or get out." It is difficult to think that such a gentle soul, one who has a hello and a smile for everyone

who enters his shop could have lived or survived through that brutal period of his life.

He now relates to me a progression of jobs and acquired trades he has learned over the years. He tells me how, during the war years of the forties, he could no longer do the heavy manual labor which had fed his family over the years. Through an old friend he found a small shop in the working class neighborhood of Upper Darby, Pa. Since he had worked with his hands all of his life the leather trade came easy. He set up shop on the ground floor of the building which he purchased and housekeeping in the apartment above.

The years went by.

Over the past decade he has developed diabetes and related circulatory problems. As a result of these ailments, both of his legs have been amputated, forcing this strong relic of a man into a wheel chair. His attitude towards his condition is philosophical. The old man jokingly states that after the age of seventy-five his legs didn't do much work anyway, so their loss was not all that hard to take.

He sits. He tinkers. He tells me that as a man gets older the idea of death is not as frightening as it once was. The "Reaper" has come to most of his friends, and one day it will come for Tony. "An old man should not worry about events he has no control over," he counsels. He tells me of his one hope - that Death be painless.

The struggle to live, the witnessing and experiencing of pain, the resignation to death, these ideas frighten young people. But the old seem to have the wisdom to be able to deal with these situations. The more questions I ask the more gentle smiles I am returned. The old man nods and returns to work at his bench.

OH, FOR KNOWLEDGE!

I rode with him one misty morn',
I knew not he was there.
Through dusty pathways, thistle, thorn,
My mission dread to bear.

The horse beat heavy,
Great puffs of steam,
Fast and steady,
Past cliff and stream.

Soft and light the drifting snow,
Fell melting on my eyes.
He sat behind, how could I know?
My conscience yet denies.

Through the trees the chimney smoke,
His dramatic act drew near.
Through the door and out of cloak,
A numbing, growing fear.

My black bag open, the crisp white sheets,
An ashen face in stare.
My last hope gone. How sad defeat!
I turned and he was there.

Oh, had I known! My inner cries,
I would have tried again,
But there they were, the hollow eyes,
Invading my dear friend.



IN MEMORY OF AN ARTIST

There will be no new pictures brilliantly painted with poetry and prose. The uncontrollable man within that stirred him at night and after gave him little peace by day has been silenced. He was born with a curse, he could see light in its temporal continuum. A crisp vision of life, as unity from the beginning and from this gift his eloquence was born. His words weaved tapestries for us of milkweed pods and rabbit's hearts. But for him the end was clear, such a gift could only make him feel like a relic in his own time. His brilliance, perspective and inspiration were expressions of an uncontrollable mind which gave him little rest and kept him "wandering fruitlessly through weed thickets" all his life. Finally, he is free. . . Loren Eisely is dead.

He was, for me, one of those people who made such an impact on my life that I feel we'd been friends since childhood and will be till I die.

How can we measure the effect one man has on another? It is, I know, an impossible task. He was my teacher and like all great teachers reached into my soul and showed me how. It is for the new perspective he taught that I shall be forever indebted. It was as though the "Immense Journey" was written exclusively for me.

After reading his long awaited autobiography I was deeply troubled. I read the reviews but none ever hinted at what was for me the main thrust of "All the Strange Hours." Loren Eisely was putting his affairs in order for he was soon to die. He knew it and so did I. With pen in hand I walked into a cold February forest and composed a letter. I was moved by what Eisely himself called the "inner light" to mail that letter. But for some reason, totally obscured to me now, I did not. I will never know if it would have mattered. I do know that even in death he continues to teach me, perhaps the most important lesson of all. When directed we must listen. For Eisely's "great face behind" is in each of us if we can only learn to set it free.



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