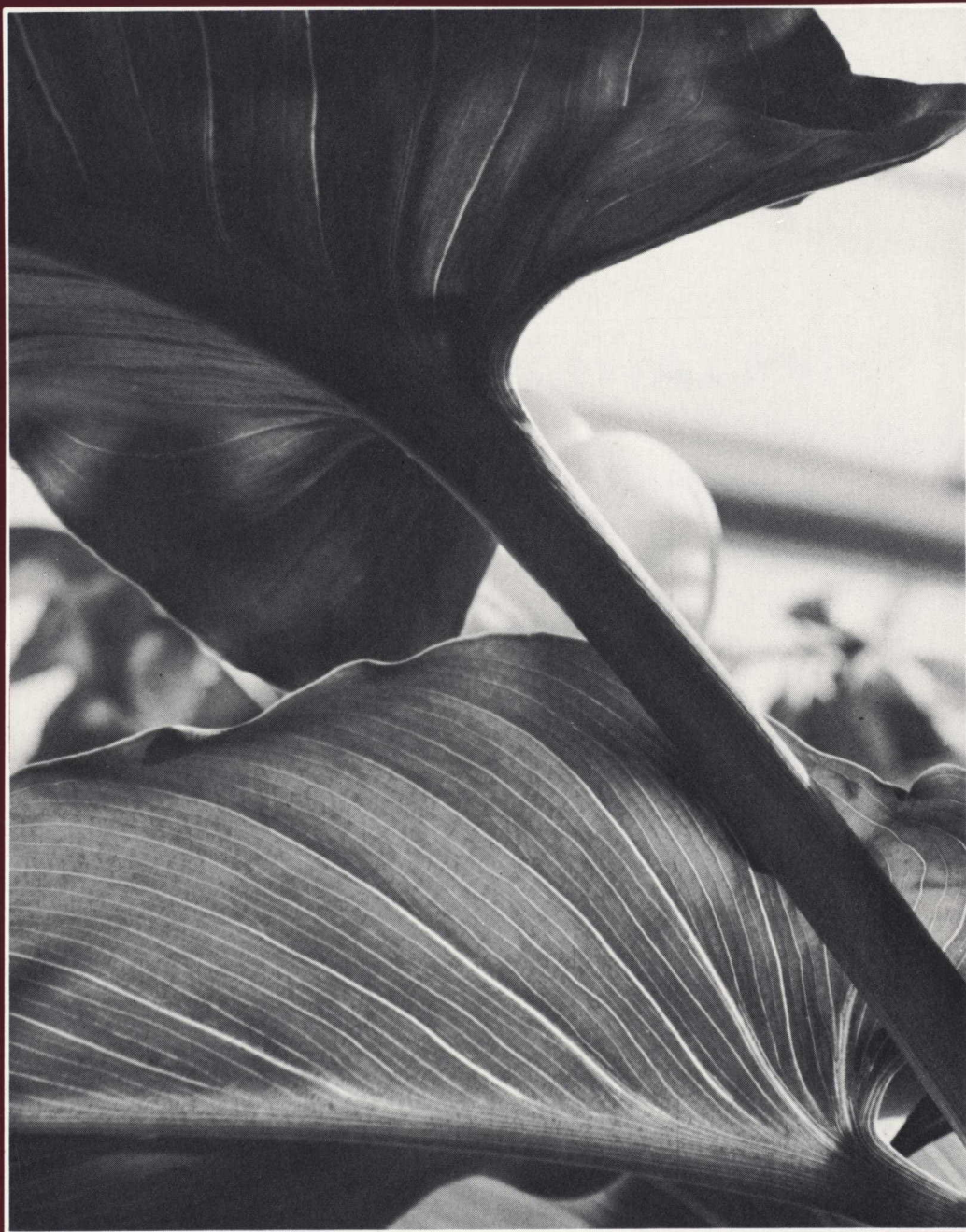


VOL. XXII NO. 1

FALL '89



# P E G A S U S

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# M A G A Z I N E

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# **PEGASUS MAGAZINE**

**Vol. XXII, No. 1**

**FALL 1989**

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Address all correspondence to The Editor, Pegasus Magazine, Delaware County Community College, Media, PA 19063. Material may be submitted throughout the year by any member of the college community.

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## The Rising In The East

We wake by the need  
to see light.  
The rising in the East,  
a yellowness.  
a golden apple resting  
in a bed of atmosphere.  
Witness the flowers,  
the patterns of clouds,  
the tree limbs that mesh above us  
like an awning,  
the moss colonizing the root.  
Between these granules of sand—  
these molecules of air,  
carbon dioxide  
with its power  
to hold its electrons close  
to the nucleus heart,  
ever silent.  
Catch the last beams -  
the stale rays of a departing sun.  
Breathing deep,  
rise and fall,  
we sleep under the ubiquitous eye  
of the moon.

*Alicia Clarke*

## Meaning

Creeping through  
Bitter breath  
Pungent words  
Gaining depth

Spiral  
Downward  
in my ear  
collide & crash  
& disappear

*Michelle Ingeno*



*Peter Farrell*

## The Ritual

They go to feed the birds.  
She, hunched against the twilight chill,  
Hands curved about her chaliced tea, in homely crockery,  
And he, two score and four, surrendering to gravity and grave,  
Strides wearily  
To fill the cups where robin sups,  
And grackle hoarsely offers grace,  
And greedy sparrow fills the space  
Tween mourning dove and wren.  
They flutter-fall from weathered bough  
Like feathered leaves that skip and bow  
And skitter on the ground.  
He sees tomorrows now with shortened sight,  
And she, tasting bitter tea and tears, looks just ahead  
To lonely years, and solitary flight.

*Mary Theresa Aber*



## Loss

Exquisite pain owns me.  
Crystalizes my soul with frigid fingers,  
Chars my mind with white hot flame,  
Yet I feel nothing.  
(Flag draped wooden box)  
I do not know this place.  
Alien landscape assaults my senses,  
The flag's colors skewer my eyes,  
Red, white, and blue needles.

A cassock clad scarecrow  
Mutters about duty, honor, country.  
The words seem an obscenity.  
It is too cold here; I want to leave.  
Insistent white-gloved hands restrain me.  
Seven rifles roar-once, twice, again.  
The noise numbs my ears.  
Damp earth swallows the wooden box,  
A demented conjurer's trick.

Oh Christ! I remember now,  
My boy is in the box.  
See how precisely the uniform-clad  
Strangers fold the flag.  
It becomes unspeakable.  
Now my crystal soul shatters,  
The flames consume my mind.  
They present the flag to me.  
It is not enough!

*Terry McCanney*

## A 'Higgledy-Piggledy'

Unctuate, punctuate,  
Ellen, the editor;  
scanning my grammar for  
gender and case.

When I suggest that it  
varies with region, she  
diagrammatically  
shows me my place.

*Jay Arnold*

## Impressions

endless beating of rain  
on the roof  
lulls us to sleep

wings outspread  
the jay lands  
on the pine bough

light strikes  
upon the stream  
turning it to silver

bare, spindly branches  
sway gently against  
a dull gray sky

*Linda del Duca*

## With Child

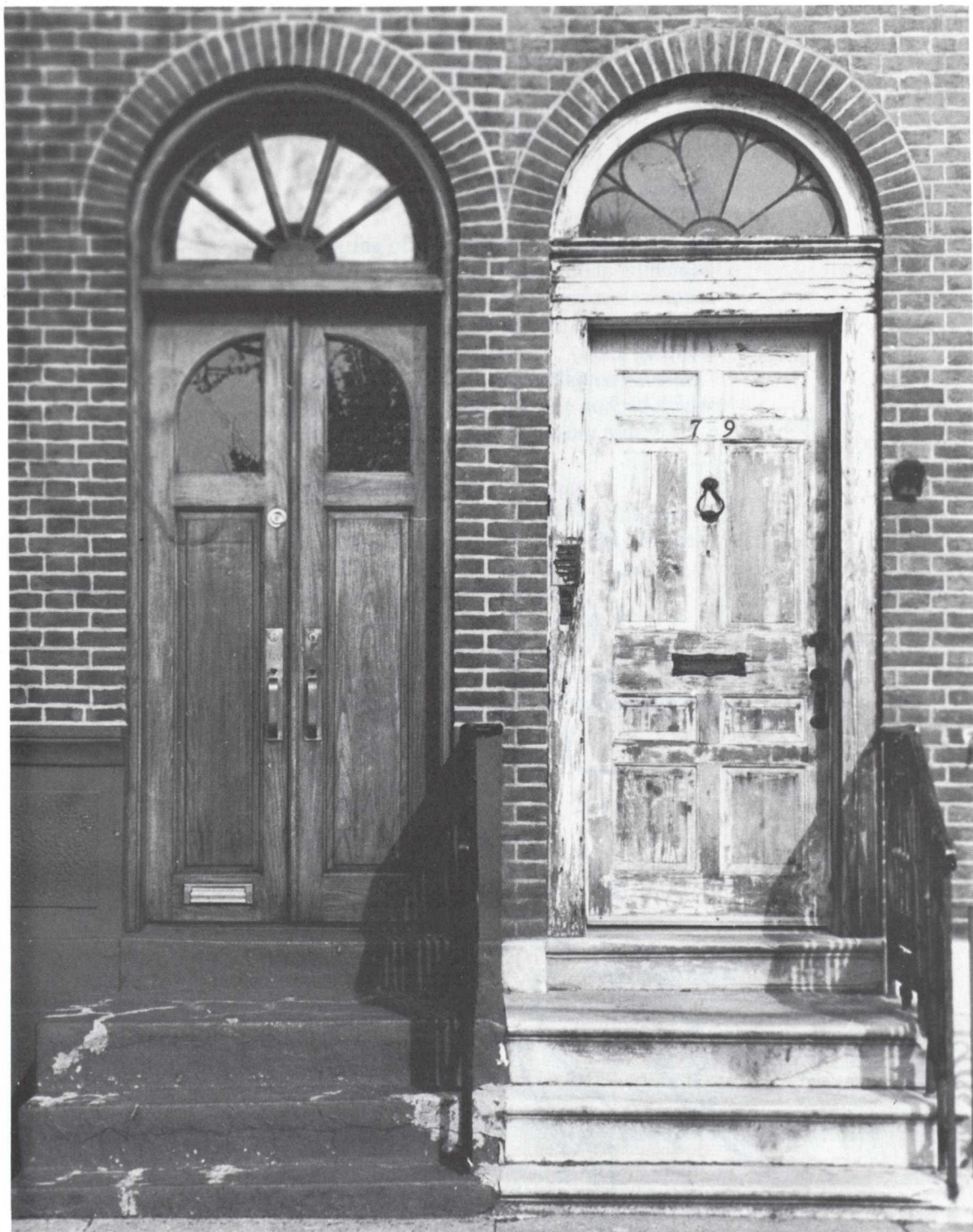
I walk, I wobble  
in my rotundity  
I'm pregnant  
quickenings  
as each step slows  
with my burden  
becoming more him  
less me  
each growing phase  
brings further lessons  
in responsibility  
now my body and blood  
later all of me  
succumb to the conundrum;  
with child

*Gloria Beam*



*Debbie Collins*





*Maria Zaharias*



## On Writing

*Wandering thru monolithic vegetation  
(Verbosity)*

Seeking  
not only the end  
but  
beginning and middle  
tentative strokes  
sifting thru the mental morass of a lifetime  
Building gently  
-Thoughts-  
which beckon and whisper  
-use me-

*Karen E. Johns*



## Untitled

I feel something coming on.

Shearing off my blackened shroud  
Turning my shadow silver  
I feel some presence coming on

Hovering entity swirls  
Steam caresses his touchable translucence  
And the steam is his  
I feel something coming on.

He holds me down with only  
His glittering day-glow night-raping eyes  
Holding me still with his forceful exhales  
I feel something coming on  
Clawing into my extremities  
Raking his teeth onto my spine  
I feel something coming on  
A stain of blackened leather hide  
He lightning-to-life piece of the midnight side  
Of angels, of demons, in me  
In no one but the eyes,  
In no one but the dark,  
In no one but the heat,  
His heat, forcing mine  
I feel something coming on

-and I like it a lot.

*Rena Sherwood*

## God at the Ritz Five

I met God in a movie theatre.

He was leaning back in the seat  
His feet propped up on the row before Him.

And I asked Him,  
"What are you doing here?"

"I'm watching this movie."  
"Well, why?" I asked.  
"Because I made it." He said.  
"You *made* it?" I gasped.  
"Of course I did," He said.

Well, that was a rather arrogant thing to say,  
I thought.  
"Excuse me?" He said.  
While I blushed, He smiled.  
"You don't believe me," He said.  
"No, I don't," I replied.

"Take a look at the actors up there,"  
He said, sweeping His hand along the illumination,  
"Well, I made them.  
And the words they're saying-  
I made their authors.  
And where and how they are moving-  
I made the director.  
And how we can see it all now-  
I made the technicians.  
And I made those who made the technology.

"And the music swirling in the background-  
What do you call it now?-  
'Incidental soundtrack'?  
I made that musician,  
Because without the music  
We couldn't relive the movie."

I stayed very quiet,  
Wanting to cover my emotions,  
But they kept tumbling over me.

'If all He says is true,' I thought,  
And I had the assurance it was,  
'Then there's no such thing as an artist,  
Or the individual,  
Or human creativity.

'And I, in my arrogance, who insist myself a writer  
Am merely nothing but yet another tool  
Another in the personality playpen  
Of the only creative One there is-  
Because the talents and the ideas are His.'

And He laughed  
And shook my knee playfully.  
"Yes," He said, "maybe the ideas are Mine  
That I put into your heads,  
But it's up to you  
To actually do something with them.

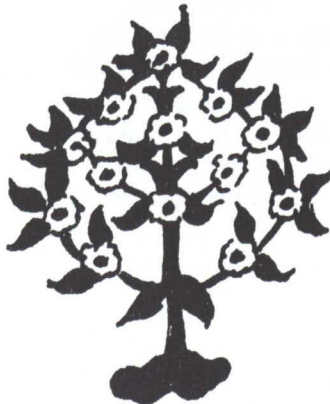
"Oh, yeah, I like it when you use your heads,  
'Cause that's where My ideas are.  
But I like it best when you also use your hearts  
'Cause that's where your own power is.  
And that's a power so strong-"  
Here I heard His voice lower to a breezy whisper  
"-That I don't want to even try to touch it."

And I asked Him,  
"Do I have that power, too?"  
I could even see His eyes in the dark  
As he said, "Yeah."

And I asked Him,  
"Did You make that power?"  
He chewed on His popcorn a while,  
Then chuckled, "It probably came from the music."

*Rena Sherwood*

*-Summer of 1988*



## Red Spot

Prancing gallantly, galloping gracefully,  
Paint-splattered fur, big, innocent eyes,  
Forever searching for the ripened fruit.  
A nomad of Mother Nature.  
Moving from forest to forest,  
Off in the distance, hearing the inevitable shouts of death,  
Gleaming and bright-eyed.  
Racing from danger—hoping, praying.  
Nothing is heard—only the thumping of the heart.  
Nothing is heard—only the hunter's victorious cry.  
Only silence is heard in the forest.

*Kelly Hammerschmidt*

## Vanishing Soul

'I don't love you anymore.'  
    Whirling words unceasingly  
    echoing round randomly.  
'I don't love you anymore.'  
                                'love you'  
'I don't  
    anymore.'  
  
These words not known before,  
    taking with them children,  
    clouding over dreaming.  
These words not know before.  
                                not known  
These words  
    before.  
  
Lost are all the faces  
the places, embraces of  
    a time forever  
Gone is all the laughing  
the hoping, the caring for  
    a life together  
Ended is affection  
attention, recollection  
    of two forever.





## Stillness

Sitting in the dark  
the wind whispers through the curtains.  
White lace,  
starting to yellow.  
The darkness whitens them,  
even through tears.  
Someone outside yells and laughs.  
It's not fair.  
We tried so hard,  
not enough, just not enough.  
The phone never rings;  
your smile is gone.  
It's so cold.  
I close the window,  
the whispers fade,  
as the curtains come  
to an eerie standstill.  
I'm still alone,  
and I'm still cold.

*Elizabeth Melwert*

## Divinity

Human (of course)  
observers think  
that the porpoise is  
second only to  
Man  
in intelligence.

What, then, does  
the porpoise  
(dwelling in the sea  
soaring in air)  
think is god?

*Dessa Ewing*

## January Snow

Oh, January snow is soiled snow  
Like secondary sins that stain the soul  
Once innocence has fled.

Yes, January snow is sadly gray  
As if a gleaner winnowing the day  
Finds no good deeds, and fewer kind intentions,  
Then

gifts

us

with

the

chaff.

Still, January snow will thrill the heart  
Of those who find delight in less-than-white  
And meaning yet in meanness.

*Mary Theresa Aber*

## Spring Song

Ah, April! Alchemists's delight!  
Whose gilt gifts grace the poor man's sod,  
Whose silk-skeined signature is sewn  
Within each bloom and bursting pod.

Whose aves sung by nested choirs  
And murmured vespers as day's done  
Bind man to nature in life's dance,  
The *pas de deux* from sun to sun.

Fair April weds man's soul to God  
And glorifies the meanest clod,  
And gentles with her loving tears  
The hardest heart forged by man's fears.

Ah, April! Furrowed fields and giddy lambs,  
Strutting sires and docile dams,  
Wild goose keening, primroses preening,  
Earth yearning, returning, to life!

*Mary Theresa Aber*



## Past Shadows

The dirt and gravel road which leads home  
Is dark now.  
Yet I walk down it, knowing what I'll find.  
Shadows brush gently against my face, tormenting me.  
Taunting me.  
Light is scarce, between the trees it flirts about,  
Hand in hand with the shadows of lost girlfriends and  
Failing exam scores.  
As I walk the shadows fall back further.  
The light of toy soldiers and Little League baseball  
Increases.  
Soon the sparkle in the eyes of innocence returns,  
Welcoming me back into the pure light, which has blasted  
Away the darkness of maturity.  
I see the light of Saturday morning cartoons and Sesame  
Street.  
I know where the path leads, and yet I turn around  
To face the shadows hiding behind the trees.  
I must face them along with the light as I hurry back  
The way I came.  
The road, this way is uncertain, and I am lost,  
Yet it is the only one.  
I wander past shadows of failure and strife,  
The light of friends and graduation slowing weaving  
In and out, hinting at the way.

*Chris Mancini*



## Base Metal

Who was I that my father never knew?

What an anvil is life  
on which one is flattened,  
maimed, with certain form  
and shaped to the pounding  
rhythms of life's blows?

Being delivered  
from my mother's red hot forge  
to be slapped  
upon the block of steel  
as malleable metal  
to be a counterfeit  
of my parents wrought  
through words as hammers  
shaping carbon steel.

My reflection in the sun  
causes me to wonder  
whether I'm to serve  
as sword or gate  
to further some cause  
or perhaps to hold  
together as a chain  
the burden of the world's weight.

As my parents' alloy  
bound and belched from love  
when I was young and warm  
being malleable was enough  
to be smitten by their  
dreams and fears  
hammered sharp as cold steel.

Yet if any silver or gold  
was poured into my soul  
then my shape will never  
strong with hardness break  
but ever bend anew  
as pressure wears me.

*Neal Spector*

## On Listening

petals open to the sun  
then wilt from beauty gone  
in death arrives the dawn  
simple song of harmony

*Neal Spector*

## Haiku Verses

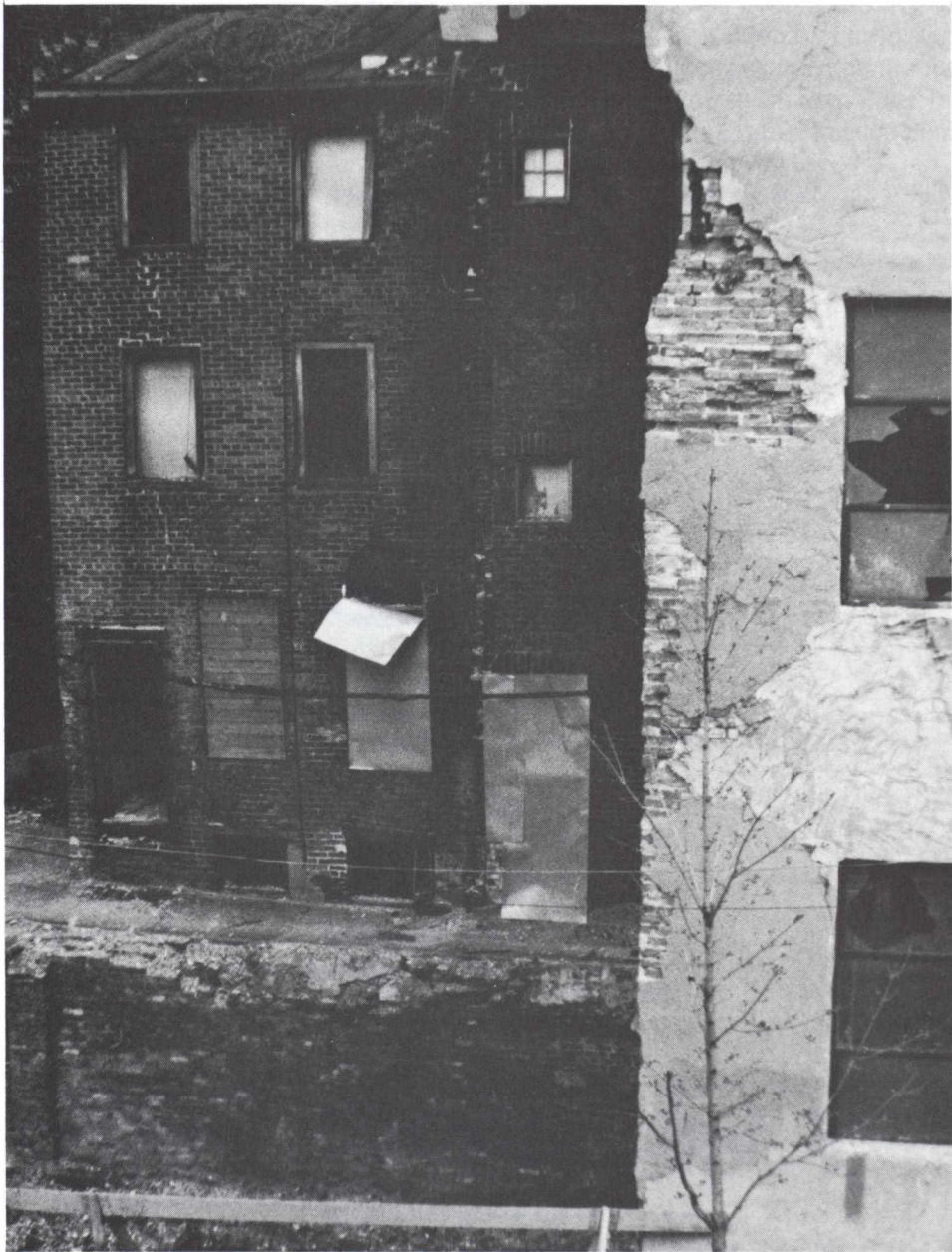
Sun and oceans meet  
Merging miracles beyond  
Peaceful forever

Rice paddies appear  
Plains of water set them free  
Harvest time is near

Shiny black hair crowns  
Circling a face so sweet  
Dark eyes deep as pools

See Pagodas stand  
As layered tents with ruffles  
On a hillside green

*Eleanore S. Labik*

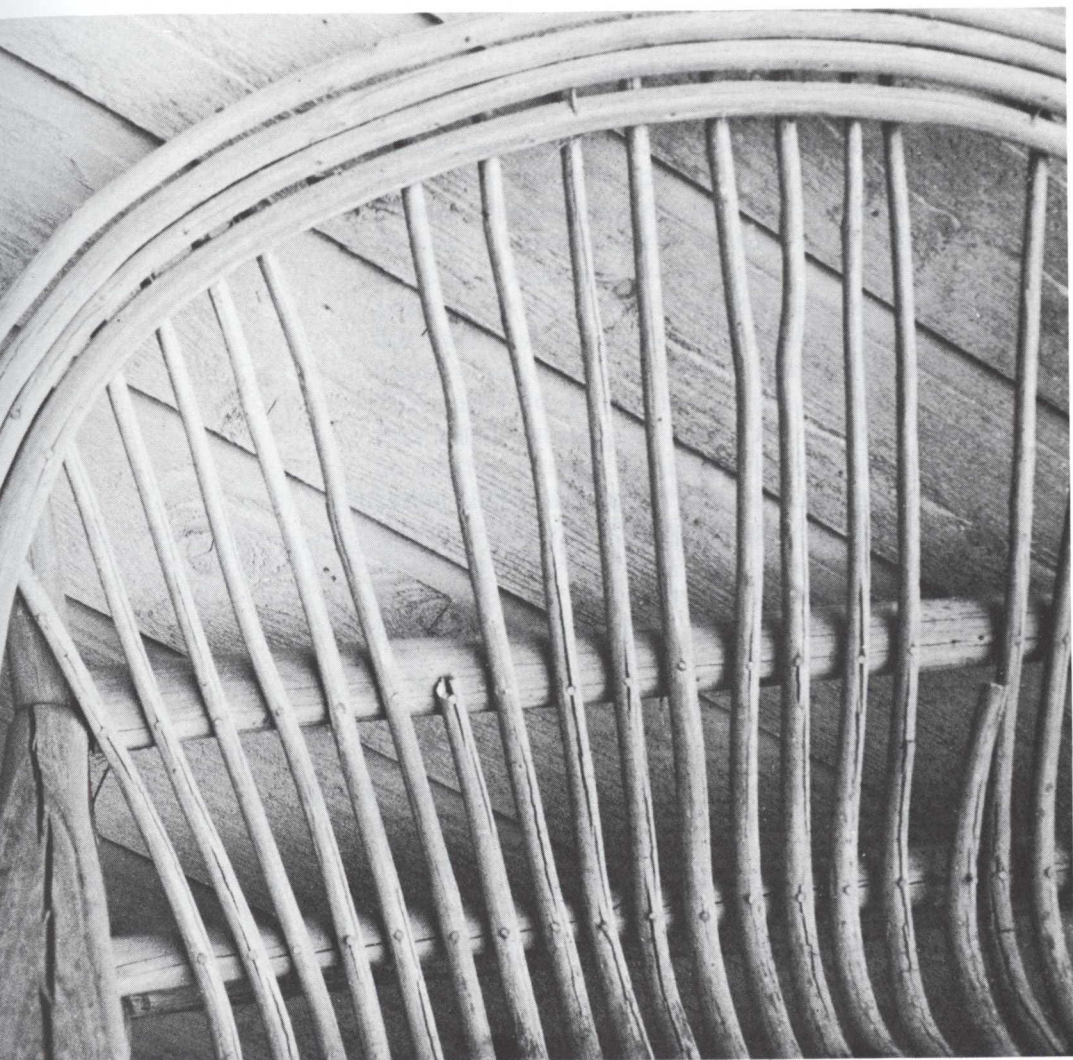


*Kelly Armstrong*



*Ezio Torres*





*Bobbi Opdahl*

## Pebbles

the river is swift and it pulls the silt with it  
the stepping stones have been left unturned  
the river is quicker now as I attempt to cross its width  
at least there isn't chance of being burned

pebbles skipping the water  
like discos and hula-hoops  
I can't reach back any farther

the pebbles of the past seem to drag me in  
and I'm weakened by my fear  
but I'm strengthened enough by the rush to hold my stand  
but I feel as though I'm trapped here

it all loses something, never satisfied  
grows or diminishes  
it all changes with time

I think it was just yesterday  
and it was enough for me  
but it grew so much that my pleasure was overtaken by my fear  
I ran away

the river widens and deepens around me  
I'm thinking of giving in  
I release myself unto the river, unto the deep  
and I can feel the change

a flash in the pan  
a fire to flee  
destiny does what it can

pebbles once mountains soon to be dust  
I can't believe  
for everyone who doesn't need an thing  
for another it is a must

*Chris Schenkel*

## Gehenna

Thrust into this living hell — vivid pictures  
A wordless telling;  
Physical barriers and mental blocks — time  
Expires on handleless clocks  
Odds are stacked against our leaving — if we  
Leave we're barely breathing...  
But what of those who never leave; are they  
Captives unwillingly seized by circumstances  
That seem to be greater than anything they may  
Face later?  
Or are they victims of pleasureable pain,  
Living wildly, often violently — a situation  
Where no one wins, done in by our mortal sins  
Ask a few & talk awhile, your answer is found in  
A painted smile that's placed to hide, and mask the  
Crying that accompanies a soul that's dying.

*Stephen R. Demkin*





## Flight at Three Feet

Chestnut trees and chestnut jumps  
Interchange in the parameters of this silent place  
Along the edge of the pasture appears a flame of bay  
Suddenly merging into the smoky wind  
A graceful, gliding skyrocket  
Exultant in her thunder-strides touched by lightning  
She swerves, launching over a barrier  
Conquering that, she stakes her claim on the rest  
With snorts from her supreme blue-red blood  
She succeeds in her leaps  
Her hooves barely caressing the grass blades  
Her voice the bugle  
Her tail the victory banner  
Slicing through the slipstream  
As the rest of her disappears.

—Sometime in 1983  
& August 18, 1988

## Painted Leaves

God has taken His paintcans  
And splashed them on the trees.  
He never minds if the paint drips onto the ground.  
God has moulded the mountain chains  
Against His kaleidoscope of the sky.  
God has sketched the shorelines  
Against the swirling paints in a color collage.  
God has flicked His paintbrush  
Into the engulfing blackness of the night  
Giving us the works entitled "Moon" and "Stars"  
And all are still talked about to this day.  
But of all the art  
That God ever sculpted or painted or sketched,  
These dripping canvases on my trees' boughs  
Are the everywhere beauty of gasps.

*Rena Sherwood*

—Sometime in 1984  
& August 3, 1988



*Peter Farrell*

## Betrayal

All looking for a new place to go,  
The empty souls search for peace.  
Knowing no one is to blame,  
They slither over the orange horizon.  
Their misconstrued thoughts,  
Drift through their loneliness.  
A feeling of despair, of violation—  
A betrayal of hearts.  
Emptiness clings to the walls of trust,  
Which have been broken,  
By meaningless words and desolate dreams.  
A feeling of trust lost,  
Never to be found.  
A feeling of love,  
Never to be lost.  
A feeling of emptiness,  
never to be filled.

*Erin Boyle*

## And She Dances

And she dances  
to no set pattern that I or God can see  
And she dances  
as the cloud shadows cross the glow of the moon  
And she dances  
with silver luminescence flashing from her arms and her legs  
And she dances  
while I peer through the applause of the bowing branches  
And she dances all alone

And I watch  
while I know she'd scream if she caught me  
And I watch  
aching to scorch her instrumental limbs with my flame's tune  
And I watch  
my shadow mingling with the grass her passing sways beneath me  
And I watch  
my nocturnal eyes tracing the sunshine of her pirouettes  
And I watch all alone

And she dances  
And I watch  
biting my knuckles to keep me in my hiding place  
but my curled body can't stop metronome-rocking  
to the forceful swing of her self-triumphant twirls  
the terror of her smile makes me tremble  
but I can't seem to close my eyes

And I watch  
And she dances  
And I watch all alone

*Rena Sherwood*

## Communication

my lover lying  
in my bed  
putting words  
into my head  
can't recall  
just what he said  
but *MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*

and when I ask  
where have you been  
he gives me his special  
little grin  
and calmly states  
without chagrin  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*

I tell him fondly  
I've been so true  
but none of it means  
much to you  
and he replies  
I have been too  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*

this language leaves me  
not so sure  
of what exactly  
does endure  
when lovers moan  
and reassure  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*  
*MUMBO JUMBO*

*Gloria Beam*

## The Brimming Cup

What is this strange  
burning liquid  
some people welcome  
which causes them  
to lose the balance  
of their soul

Liquid welcomed  
rushed out toward  
as if a yearned for lover  
that once consumed  
releases burdens,  
inhibitions, cares  
to slip beneath  
unsteady and insensate feet.

Ingrained rituals  
that just the thought of  
the sight of  
the cup brimming  
toward these lovers  
brings joy, release,  
euphoria before  
ever being tasted  
or consumed  
and yet it seems  
embraced oblivion  
and sotted sleep  
which follows  
gives no relief  
from those same burdens  
waiting, standing starkly  
like hungry specters  
hovering round the bed.

Specters never faced  
or solved  
cannot dissolve  
and so become  
like larger, darker,  
cancerous pearls  
which form  
new resolve  
for that  
flowing, burning, liquid  
of lost souls.

*Gloria Beam*



## Awaiting Justice

As the sun filtered in through the grate  
of the windowpane  
on the second floor of the courthouse

Vince sauntered to the jury lounge  
requested by the Merit Lady  
jury member to send her husband home  
as she anticipated a ride from  
a fellow juror

The morning dew had turned to don't  
and the noonday sun had not granted a verdict  
as of then.

*Beth Williams*

## Progress

The giant Sycamore  
    bends to the river  
    admiring his reflection,  
While the breeze whispers  
    through his leaves,  
    'I love you.'

The lone male mallard  
    glides on the water  
    rippling the deep blue stillness  
While the insects sing  
    on the bank,  
    'I love you.'

The giant orange machine  
    bends to the river  
    opening his great wide mouth,  
While the ground swell yells  
    in deep tones,  
    'I loved you.'

Perfect is the place  
    that God creates  
    but man desiccates  
In his moronic wisdom.  
    for here is the  
    meaning of life.

*Art Ciocco*

# Rocker

Art Ciocco

THERE SHE WAS, sitting in the arms of that overstuffed slob. Sorry to be thinking that way, but dammit, I was hurt. She should be spending those final hours with *me*! The front door burst open and a blast of cool air started me rocking — it was her brother. Of course, he was all over me, leaving damp, brown leaves, mud, and moisture in every bend of my frame.

"Are you really goin' today?"

She looked up. Her face caught the warm glow from the fireplace, expressing an understanding that glistened in the corner of her eyes. She nodded slowly.

"Mm hmmm."

It was *true*! She was going to this place far away. They started talking about it the last time the leaves were coming off the trees. Oh, where was this place called college and why did she have to go.

The room began to move back and forth, back and forth — faster and faster. A faint whimpering sound grew louder as the motion intensified. Then her brother lept from me and hurried from the room.

I was left spinning. Everything was a blur. The sensation of being catapulted through space sent me careening through swirling clouds of memory; suddenly I found myself perfectly still, but upside down — in that same position when I first heard them — those familiar voices from long ago.

"Oh! stop the car!"

Something screeched.

"What . . . whatsa matter?"

"Look there! There . . . near the curb!"

"For Chrissake, that's trash!"

"Yes, dear, but not *that* . . . on top . . . upside down."

Gently, I was tilted, lifted and carried. On one arm I felt a smooth, warm support and on the other a coarse, cold grasp.

"She'll love it!"

"Harumph!"

A hatch was raised and I was placed on my back on some carpeting. The hatch was lowered with such force that it moved me forward at least a foot.

"Careful, dear."

"Yah! Yah! Let's get goin' I don't wanna miss the game!"

A deafening roar preceded the jolts, the bumps, the tips and turns.

"Honey, please, not so fast."

"Look, you wanna drive?"

One last bump, then we stopped. The hatch opened. He grabbed me by the legs and pulled me out. I hit the pavement with a thud. Did part of me break? They carried me toward the house.

The orange light washed the white stucco with a warmth that penetrated the curtainless windows and illuminated the interior.

Once inside, they sat me next to the fireplace in the livingroom.

"Mary, come see! We have a surprise!"

A thumping noise above was followed by a descending pitter patter. She jumped into view wearing only a cloth below her waist. A ray of light outlined her with a golden halo. I can see her! I can see her — now!

Her mouth opens, then closes on her fingers as she smiles. Shyly and ever so slowly she approaches me — my joints are tightening. She climbs into my lap and sits back against me. Her smooth flesh presses close. Her hands slide delicately over my arms as we begin to move together. We are one in perfect rhythm. A warmth passes between us.

"Uh-oh Mary, you need to be changed."

She is snatched from me. She cries.

"For Chrissake, did she get any on the rug?"

"No, dear."

From that very first encounter, Mary and I became intimate companions and would sit together for long periods. She read aloud, or sang songs or dreamed about how life would be when she grew up. Well, she was growing. A time came when she left in the coolness and returned in the late light. I sat alone, remembering how it was when she was with me always. Then she would rush in and fall into my waiting arms.

As she grew, her positions changed. At first, she sat very straight with both hands on my arms or she huddled to one side sucking her thumb. Now, she sat against my right side with her legs dangling over my left arm. But, it didn't matter, as long as she was with me.

When the light was gone from the sky and the house was quiet, I sat alone reminiscing. Even in her absence, I could always feel her hair, her breathing, her beating heart, her gentle movements. Yet, out of the darkness crept a persistent gasping, pounding fear repeating that something so good cannot last. I prayed for the light to return quickly, fill the house and chase the fear away.

Before long, a screaming, screeching, scrambling change occurred. Mary's newborn brother broke the quiet of the dark and interrupted the flow of the daylight. The joy of his first steps was dreadful. He crawled between my legs, bit my arms, hit my back and stood on my lap. Mary would scold. He would laugh. Her brother made me yearn for the light to go away.

After one long, painful playtime, as I sat in the welcomed darkness and imagined Mary's soft hair against me, harsh voices above wiped the sensation away.

"Honey, you don't understand, I'm your wife."

"I understand for Chrissake!"

"Then, what did I say?"

"Whatdaya mean. I heard you. You aren't *happy*."

"I didn't say that. You just don't listen."

"You *always* say that . . . I've had it! You think you . . ."

"Shhh . . . you'll wake Mary."

I felt her touch, her hair, her rapid breathing, her pounding heart. Mary had come to me. She cuddled up. I held her. The voices above pulsed into soft sobs and bitter whispers, faded into meaningless murmurs, then stopped. Mary drew in her breath. Heavy footsteps descended the stairs. Mary trembled. The

front door opened and slammed shut. She cried herself to sleep in my arms. We would never see HIM again!

After that, things were not the same. Mary seldom sat with me. More than ever I had to rely on those quiet moments when the light was gone to remember — and to imagine Mary's presence. But that nagging fear of mine disappeared, because the good had already ended.

Mary usually sat in a big puffy overgrown easy chair gabbing, giggling, gossiping into a telephone. Today, she sat there quietly reading. Not until her brother rushed into the room, then abruptly left, had she looked up.

"Mary, are you all packed?"

"I'm pretty sure, Mom."

"Let's load the car, then."

"Okay."

"Don't fret about your brother. He's just a little anxious about your leaving. He's gonna miss you."

Her brother's going to miss her! Her brother . . . I can't stand this. Me. . . I don't know what I'll do without her. How often can I *imagine* her touch? Tell me! Oh, God don't let her go!

Pressure was building. Joints were tightening. My arms were stretching. My legs were tensing. My back was arching. A rush of internal agony erupted into an awful sound of cracking wood.

Mary turned suddenly and looked directly at me. Her gaping mouth and wide eyes turned slowly into the smile I so admired.

"Hey, Mom, I think I'll take the rocking chair with me. We got room in the car?"





*Peter Farrell*

## Idolatrous Adolescence

A waste?  
We chased those dreams—  
vivid beautiful dancing schemes  
dreamed with lust and trust  
in superiority and deeper conviction  
to nebulous truths of liberation  
from the human condition.

The purity of voluptuous trance  
licking love from uncertain hands,  
penetrating depths in a charade of romance  
those shadowy caves of unmitigated cold—  
drove us deeper from the sun  
as we rushed into the pyre  
with this chance of love—rising higher.

Those days . . .  
of unacknowledged dreams,  
wandering happily, starry eyed through the maze—  
where resurrection and atonement glared grafitti-like  
from ancient parchment tombs  
we raced down cushioned, fur-lined halls  
and chased confusion for a brawl-good humored; all in fun,  
What violent hope compressed our awe,  
restored our faith, consumated our flaw?

*Neal Spector*

## Untitled

Bloody and bruised he crawls away  
from the car, feels the heat and then the explosion  
of gas, glass, and metal hitting  
his body like hail pouring down  
onto the ground shattering into pieces.  
Pain searing through unknown places  
but he must move away. Torturing  
his body he claws at the ground with bloody hands  
His ears ringing, head pierced with  
pain, arms and hands weakening  
Pulling forward, giving up.

*Laurie Guillermin*



# The Canyon

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*Linda del Duca*

**M**Y FIRST LOOK at the canyon the night before had been a spiritual experience. It was near sunset when we'd stopped to look out over the edge. I fell into another dimension. The wind rushed up at me as I opened my wings. The air currents carried me away into a void of blue shadows...

Now, the air was still and quiet as the three of us headed down the Kaibab Trail. The soft yellows and pinks of early morning gave an air of expectancy to the day. I ran down the path with my braids bouncing against my shoulders. At eighteen, I was the swift and capable Indian woman. This was my uncorrupted world, protected from the white man's destructive machines. Here, my soul could fulfill its yearning desire to be whole in nature. Though not born of Indian blood, this white woman sought a spiritual link to the natives of this land.

My brother, the oldest, carried an old Boy Scout knapsack on his back. Binoculars hung around his neck. Inside the sack was food, a hammer, a field guide for birds, a snake-bite kit, and a simple map of the area. My older sister had one canteen and I carried the other slung over my shoulder.

The park brochure advised allowing six hours to walk the Kaibab Trail. We'd been surprised to find out it would only take half the day to hike down to the Colorado River and back.

Bev and I continued to run ahead of Skip. The trail was steep and it was easier on the legs to run.

"Hey, you guys, don't tire yourselves out by runnin' so much," Skip called.

"Don't worry," I yelled back to him. "It's fun running downhill."

Bev and I would jog ahead, then wait for Skip to catch up. I'd look at the colors running through the rock and sand and feel the immensity of the canyon.

The sky was clear blue and the sun became hot as the morning progressed. We came upon some small caves and sat in one to rest in the shade. There was only a little water left in the canteens. We each took a few sips. According to the map, we should almost be to the one place on the trail where there was a source of water. It was the half-way mark.

Skip pulled his bird book out of the knapsack to look up a bird he'd seen earlier. He already had a small collection of rocks which he had extracted from the ground with his hammer. "We've been hiking for two hours and we're only about half the way down," Skip thought aloud. "We must not be making good time." He put the book back and stood up. "Let's go," he said.

We soon came upon the water and filled up both canteens. The sun beat down on us. There was little shade now. We kept on hiking at a steady pace.

After awhile, we became hungry and we finally found an overhang to sit under. The only thing that moved was a little lizard scurrying over the hot rocks.

Skip looked over at Bev. "You don't look too good. Your face is puffy and so are your fingers."

"Wow!" I said when I looked at her. "Your hands really are puffed up. How come?"

"I don't know. I sure don't feel too great." Bev answered.

"She's got heat exhaustion, I bet," said Skip. "We'd better let her have a good rest." Handing her the canteen, he said, "Drink some water." He pulled out an orange and split it into thirds. Then he opened a package of crackers and gave us each two.

"Is this all we get to eat?" I asked.

"Yeah," Skip said. "I think the park map is wrong about the time it takes to hike this trail. We really should have brought more food."

"Oh, that's great. What do we do now?"

"I don't know. Let me think a minute."

I knew we were at least two-thirds of the way down. And I knew we weren't prepared for a full day's hike. Still, I'd hate to have to turn around now.

"Bev, do you think you can go on?" Skip asked.

"I don't think so. I feel kind of dizzy and shaky."

After resting fifteen minutes, Bev started feeling better. The swelling in her fingers went down a little. She didn't want to ruin it for Skip and me. She convinced us to go on without her.

Skip studied the map for awhile. We could cut over to the Bright Angel Trail when we hit bottom and hike back up that way. It was less steep and there was more water along the way. Bev would drive the van over to the top of that trail after she made it back to the rim.

Before we parted, Skip solemnly gave Bev an orange, a pack of crackers and one of the canteens. He ordered her to rest a lot and drink plenty of water. I felt a little guilty about leaving her to walk up by herself even though she said not to worry.

We watched till she walked out of our sight. Skip said we'd better start pushing it to reach the river. The climb back up might take twice as long.

Four hours after we had started from the rim of the canyon, we stood in the middle of the bridge that spanned the Colorado. The water flowed lively and muddy, cooling the air around us. The river seemed not to belong there in the dry world of the canyon walls. It was an alien just passing through, yet it was the river itself which had created the canyon.

Time slowed down as we became a part of that ancient world. Our beings had touched the sand, the rocks, and the air within the canyon. My Indian soul had been purified.

We crossed to the other side and walked a half mile to where a small creek splashed toward the river. I pulled off my jeans and sat in the creek. It provided instant relief from the heat. Skip brought me half an orange and three crackers for lunch. I could have stayed there for hours, just enjoying the cool water. But, after twenty minutes, Skip made me get out. He said we had a long way to go before dark.

We walked over another bridge spanning the Colorado, to pick up Bright Angel. We crossed more than a physical bridge. When we stepped onto the other shore, a new serious state of mind took over. It wasn't just fun anymore.



It was survival. I tried not to become overwhelmed by the chore ahead of us by concentrating on the present.

After an hour, my Indian woman stamina was wearing thin. I could only walk five or ten minutes before I'd have to sit down and rest. We weren't even close to the halfway rest area when I became slightly suicidal. I talked aloud about wanting to throw myself off a cliff or wishing a rattlesnake would bite me so I could give up and die. Skip would get really mad when I talked like that.

"Don't think like that. Just cut it out right now. You're not going to go fall off any cliff." He'd say stuff like that. He also insisted on carrying everything just to make it easier on me.

My legs were like lead. I'd never make it in a million years. How in the world had we gotten into this mess? And Skip with his stupid rocks. That was idiotic. As his rock collection grew, the weight of the pack increased. We could have lived without the binoculars, hammer, and bird book. What we did need was more food and more brains.

One weary foot in front of the other finally brought us to the rest stop; the oasis. A man was lying on top of a picnic table, sound asleep. A few other hikers were sleeping or resting on the ground.

We ate our last meager meal and filled up the canteen. Then, Skip told me to find a place to sleep for an hour. I found a grassy spot by a tree and dozed off and on.

All too soon, Skip came to rouse me. The sun would go down in about four hours. We stepped out onto the path that had become my enemy.

"I know how we can make it," said Skip. He started off at a snail's pace. "This is how slow we have to walk. Don't go any faster than me, Kid."

He's got to be joking, I thought. It'll take us two days at this rate. Never-the-less, I didn't dare pass him.

The hottest part of the day was over. Skip carried everything, but the canteen. And the slow pace really did work. Even when Skip insisted that we rest, I didn't really need to. I knew I would make it now. Gone was the panic and pessimism. The canyon was beautiful once more.

There were two more springs on the way up. We stopped and rested at each. I was feeling great. Skip, on the other hand, was starting to drag. He still insisted on carrying the knapsack. But, he gave me the binoculars to carry along with the canteen.

I wondered about Bev. Would she be up on the rim when we got there? Or was she lying on the trail somewhere? I was anxious to get to the top and see if she was waiting for us. It was seven o'clock now and we had an hour before nightfall.

Skip and I hardly talked; we walked along in shadows. Now and then I'd look back to see how far we had come. Down below, the sunlight was growing weaker. Faint music floated down from the rim. It reminded me that there was life up there somewhere. I almost wished I didn't have to rejoin civilization. Instead, the canyon could be my home; the trails, the roads I would travel.

The music drifted down into the canyon, ethereal. The notes reached out to me, compelling me to follow them. The spirit within the flute sang clearer and

## *The Canyon*

stronger as we approached, until we were able to see it held gently in the player's hands. Standing at the top of a sheer cliff, he played for the canyon and for those within it.

Around every bend we expected to come to the end of the trail. It seemed to go on forever. Finally, turning a corner, we saw Bev sitting by the side of the path. "We made it!" I shouted to her and waved. She jumped up, camera in hand, grinning like a clown.

I looked behind me one more time and saw an eagle flying in the blue shadows of dusk. A piercing cry echoed off the loneliness of solid rock. A tear slid down my cheek as my Indian soul departed to live within the confines of the canyon.

## Thorns

Only once is a life touched by the passion of the rose.  
In crimson glory it beckons, sending forth  
Soft breezes laden with heady perfume,  
And we, with untried innocence, the vagueness  
Of youth, carelessly reach, blinded by  
Anticipation and the promise of splendor, to pluck.  
A few miss it's barbs and with the blessings of fate  
Capture a dream.  
Others are content to gaze upon it's beauty.  
Some receive for their exuberance the deep, plunging  
Paralyzing sting of its thorn.  
Like a mystic dagger it pierces through the heart  
To the soul.  
But still we cling, the promise of a new reality  
Stronger than the pain, and with time the dreams die,  
Our grasp weakens till we let go and  
The blood of our soul pours forth.  
Some die.  
Some survive.  
But only once is a life touched by the passion of the rose.  
Only once are we careless.

*Mark L. Candelori*