

CHRYSALIS





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One could say many things about this spring-singing Chrysalis.

For example: A number of prizewinners in the Annual Creative Writing Contest, sponsored by the Criterion Club are represented. Mrs. Martha Arnold of George Mason College won first place in Poetry (State Contest) while Gary Entsminger of Washington and Lee and Connie Lowrance (Mary Baldwin) were awarded second place and honorable mention, respectively. In the Fiction division, other State winners were Richard Bausch of George Mason College who won first prize and Robert Lockhart, second place prizewinner from Washington and Lee.

On the Madison campus, in Poetry, Suzanne Underwood received first place for "Broken Arrow Blues," while Susan Miller placed second with her "Elegy for Edith." These two poems are found in the Winter Edition of the Chrysalis. Dan Culler's first place winning short story appears in this edition and Frank Barker, who won second prize in Fiction for "The Harvest" is represented in the Winter Edition.

One could say, "Congratulations."

—The Editors



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### CAMPING OUT

We shall not sleep tonight—the woods need mending.  
Drawing the breath of trees, we lie limp  
As the wind wrings out every hanging thing  
And slow-soaks the earth which grows all night.  
I have settled myself across your chest  
Your arms are all I need to know of sleep  
The rub of ripping leaves sends down dry whispers:  
*We were not meant to sleep*  
Tonight, winding our limbs across the earth,  
Like two crossed roots, two trees meet secretly.  
We shall not sleep but weave wet threads  
And seam the shuddering trees from underneath.

—Suzanne Underwood



The Daisy Jumper  
for Cynthia Shawn

Nameless, the blond child  
plays.  
Feet bare with brown tender  
dirt.  
Tiny hands squeezing more than  
daisies.  
Beautiful, fragile, innocent  
child  
Trees bend to hear your  
laughter.

You run to jump, to glide on crystal  
air.  
Wispig hair gallops behind your  
back.  
Then one long leap muscles sense  
success.  
Beautiful, fragile, innocent  
child  
Daisies tremble after  
you.

—Judy Bentley





early morning market  
tomatoes and tomatoes and tomatoes  
ripe red fresh  
country lady long skirt  
selling flowers  
one kind & one bunch

early morning man  
looking and looking and looking  
great gray old  
city home one room  
bought flowers  
50¢ & a smile

—Judy Bentley



## TO MAKE US WISH THAT WE WERE IN HIS PLACE

A loud buzz . . . seeming to crescendo until it reached ear-shattering proportions . . . louder . . . louder . . . click . . . silence.

The monster had been temporarily halted. It would not renew its terrifying attack on the senses for another ten minutes. But ten minutes isn't an eternity and the assault was too swiftly repeated, this time with disastrous results.

"Aaaaarrrrggghh!"

Russ Williams faltered only momentarily but that was enough. He was too near the end of his bed when he reached for the shut-off switch and he plunged to the bare floor and awareness. Rubbing his injured elbow and swearing profusely, Russ rose from the floor and successfully switched off his alarm clock.



After throwing on his trusty war surplus army pants, worn flannel shirt and four year old Sears and Roebuck sneakers, he left his one room apartment on Lotus Avenue and stepped out into the brisk McCrackersville afternoon.

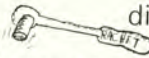


"McCrackersville . . . population 1,743 . . . the booming metropolis," he chuckled to himself. "If it weren't for the college, this place would be a frigging ghost town."

But what the hell. Ole' Russ loved McCrackersville. He had a lot of friends and admirers at Cregor's College of Fine Arts which was just outside the city limits. Russ had quit school two years previously but had decided to stay on in McCrackersville partly because it was a pretty nice place for a twenty-three year old freak to retire and partly because his parents had disowned him after he quit school. He knew the old farts would take him in, but why put up with all the shit. Russ has been the "dependence route" once and that was one too many. Russ didn't need anything from anybody; not in a regular sense, anyway.

Everybody who knew who Russ Williams was thought he was the coolest dude in the world. They could always expect the "cool, anti-hero unusual" from good ole' Russ and they always got it. Russ was independent as hell and a lot of the college kids loved him for it. Russ knew he was admired. 1966 was the year of the eccentric and anybody who had the guts to be weird became a McCrackersville youth culture hero.

Harry Ratchet didn't need an alarm clock. Harry was one of those people who just gets up, does what he has to do and goes back to bed. What Harry had to do was manage the Big R Truck Stop. It was about the seediest place in town, but he made a comfortable living from it and had learned to accept most things and accomplish his various tasks automatically, brainlessly. In fact there was really only one item in the grand scheme of things called living that upset Harry. It was a "smart-assed brat" named Russ Williams. A large portion of Russ' fame rested on his ability to make asses out of authority-wielding adults, and since Harry was Russ' boss, he was naturally a prime target. Harry was well aware of this, but with Russ





bringing in the college kids, a good 30% of Harry's meagre business, there wasn't a helluva lot Harry could do about it.

"One a' deez days dat kid is 'gonna' go too damn far," thought Harry as he pulled on his jacket, adjusted his tie and left for the Big R.

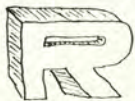
It was 2:15 p.m. and the most famous McCrackersville youth culture hero was running his usual fifteen minutes late for work. Russ was the night cook at the Big R Truck Stop, where the good ole' boys stopped for a bite to eat before continuing their usually long truck drives. Russ' working at the Big R was just another feather in his hero's cap as far as his college admirers were concerned. It was really wild seeing a well-educated, long-haired eccentric working at a truck stop that catered to duck-tailed country roughnecks with a second grade education who loved to beat the hell out of anybody who didn't fly the confederate flag from the antennae of his '57 Chevy. The good ole' boys who knew Russ didn't hassle him anymore and warned the good ole' boys who didn't know Russ not to screw around with him. Russ knew there were dangers involved in being a "Free Spirit," so he always carried a blade which he had learned to use well. A lot of the good ole' boys now wore Russ' signature on their hides. Oddly enough, being beaten by Russ made the good ole' boys think Russ was really a good ole' boy at heart and they had a good ole' boy's respect for the famous McCrackersville freak.

Anyway, anything that could be interpreted as a flirtation with death was thought of as supreme individual bravery by Russ' newly-found fan club, and he was particularly famous for working at the Big R. Famous enough, in fact, for some of his admirers to risk personal harm and go to the Big R just to watch Russ "be cool." Of course some of his most famous performances did not occur at the Big R for Russ was "cool" everywhere.

"Hey! You guys know what Russ pulled last night," one student would say. "He flagged down a cop car, asked the cop for a light, then he calmly opened the car door, laid across the front seat with his head in the cop's lap, used the lighter to light his cigarette, thanked the poor son-of-a-bitch cop and split. Talk about strange; 'at's all right."

"Yuz 15 minutes late, Williams. Yuz ain't been on time since I'ze hired ya," barked Harry Rachet. Oh, ta be back in Long Island wit me mudder, he sighed to himself. "Williams, who da hell does yuz think yuz is?" readdressing himself to Russ.

"Earl of Northumberland, Harry, dedicated to placing my Lord Mortimer on the throne," Russ replied using his best Shakespearian accent.



The Big R crowd chuckled politely, enjoying the spectacle and knowing there were bigger laughs to come. By this time Harry was regaining a fraction of his composure.

"Get on dat stove, Williams, and get dese orders ready for cryin' out loud," he barked.

Without a moment's hesitation Russ leaped, muddy sneakers and all, on



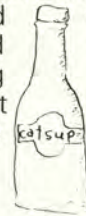
top of the grill.

"Ain't I a card, Harry?"

Something snapped in Harry's brain. Tears rose in his eyes. His face became a deep chartreuse. It was a full two minutes before he was able to utter anything other than a low gurgling sound.

"Williams, god damn yuz, dat does it. Dat was de last time yuz iz gonna try to make a fool outta Harry Rachet. Yuz fired," screamed Harry progressively deriving an obvious amount of pleasure from having the last word, or so he thought.

Poor Harry was wrong. He hadn't had the last word and it wasn't the last time Russ was going to make a fool of him. Calmly grasping a ketchup container between his thumb and forefinger, Russ came through for his expectant audience. In beautiful script he proceeded to squirt "kiss my ass" across Harry's shirt and tie. He then tossed the almost empty container to Harry and walked out of the Big R to the applause and delight of his audience. One college student stood up on a table and, to the renewed laughter of the college students, announced,



"Exeunt Earl of Northumberland."

There was more laughter while the good ole' boys tried to figure out what an "egg-zunt" was let alone an "Earl" or a "Northumberland."

Russ arrived at his apartment and when he was sure he was alone, he didn't look so cool or amused. It wasn't getting fired that bothered Russ, but a rising feeling of despair and pointlessness. He rather forlornly started reading from a collection of poems by Edward Arlington Robinson. Bitter tears started rolling down his cheeks as Harry Rachet kicked the door in and aimed his pistol at Russ' head. But he didn't pull the trigger. He knew he didn't have to. This "punk" Williams was crying. Harry started smiling, then laughing. He laughed until he cried. He dropped his gun on the floor. Harry wasn't deep or compassionate, but why kill him now? Harry had the last word and he knew Russ could never take it from him. In fact Russ was still whimpering and staring pathetically at Harry.



"Yuz is nuttin', is yuz Williams. Yuz is just a big discustin' zero," Harry said. He left laughing, forgetting his pistol in his gaiety.

Russ hadn't moved. He had ceased whimpering but tears still stood out on his cheeks. He looked at Harry's gun abandoned on the floor, to the last lines of the poem he had been reading, and back to the gun before deciding what he was to do.

'And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
Went home and put a bullet through his head."

by Dan Culler



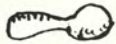
..... hey you, with the barb-wire tongue, be careful how you handle my soul, willya? how



can I be nice when you point out my imperfections all the time? cool it with the funny remarks, huh? can I help it

if the toilet flushes funny? —Paula Picard





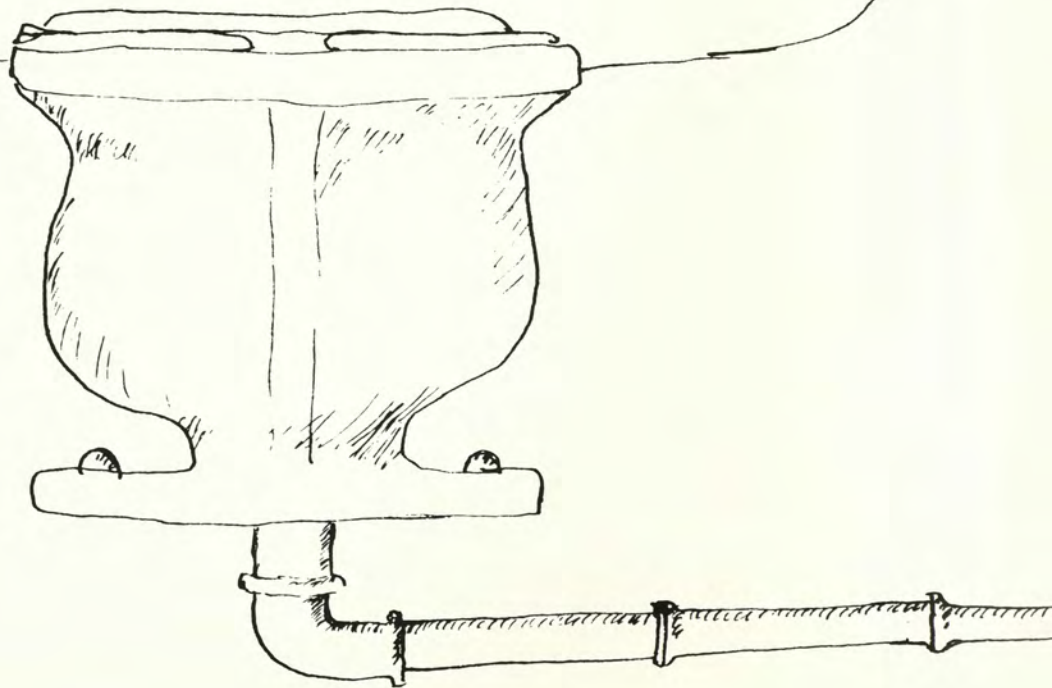
### Ode to a Toilet

There you pose in unembellished splendor  
Your glistening basin majestically  
encircles the  
gurgling, gushing liquescence of  
your innards.

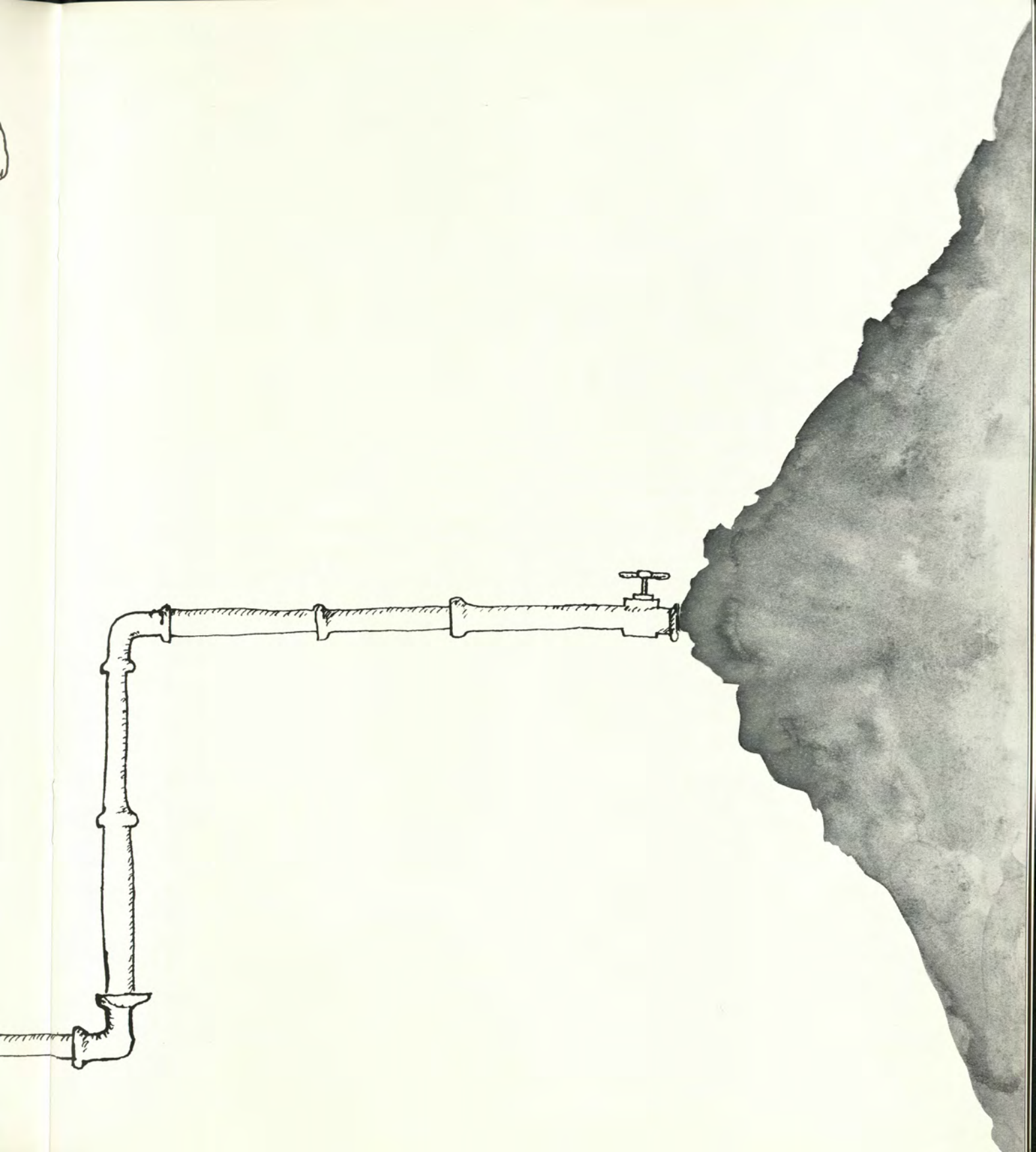
Your temperament fluctuates,  
One moment serenity prevails in your being  
The next your quietness is overcome by  
swirling waters, eager to make you  
clean once again.

OH! Waste, thou hast fled to newer horizons  
And paper doth accompany you.  
Bear with me, your noise is too much to bear  
In my present condition!

—Patricia Lynn Jones







The child was a dreamer  
And sat, for a moment, in silence.  
A fixed smile played on her lips;  
A wordless song hummed in her throat.

The old man touched the head  
Of the contented one with  
A wrinkled finger that  
Gave evidence to age and use.

Slowly, he sat down beside the child,  
Not speaking, but breathing heavily.  
Moving was not easy  
For his worn body.

Just as he became content with his position,  
The girl stood up, making laughter  
Tumble around her; hopping from one  
Foot to the other.

The old man turned slightly,  
Gazing with knowing eyes  
And remembering with sun-flecked details  
The ways of smiling youth.

—Darlene A. Goode



To Donna's Grandfather, In Sympathy  
Intransitive

When you told me in stressed syllables  
that your grandfather was dying  
and your eyes parenthesized the phrase  
that broke your tongue;  
When what you knew of words had said the picture  
(Grandfather's jagged fragment spelled on sheets,  
hands curled as commas, linking flesh to sleep,  
while summoned ones come scrawling hastily  
to hyphenate the row of bedside hope);  
When you blinked in broken English—one last try  
to tie the aching distance of my face;  
Then striking silence with a sudden blank,  
you sounded my mutual stare. I know you said  
"We split infinity"  
(one before you speechless,  
one word-worn)  
all, all, all who pray or pause  
hold him only figuratively  
and let go the same  
when he declares a sigh, that senseless sign  
running like an error off the line.

—Suzanne Underwood



Grapple me, God, and with Thy gnarled knuckles  
Locked in mine, commit me rudely-soft  
And roughly tender to my knees. And buckle  
My soul with wrists and thighs to plunge from lofty  
Heights, and pride-made palaces, down and down,  
Until my stone-hewn heart is cleft in Thy hands,  
And branded in my mind Thy face, and ground  
In grains my will, as if it were sand.



Then Thou, my spirit's love-lord, lift me softly  
In Thine arms. And I will rise and roll and spill  
Like summer thunder into You. My lofty  
Soul, rejoice to have those hands refill  
My cup; those wrestling fingers bring me gently  
Bruised and bent, with broken knees to ecstasy.

—Paula Picard

The Little Kid  
the little kid

(your Strawberry-ice-  
teasing comes and plays in your  
pleasing you with the sunshine  
and the poppies  
Until you care (not

but as  
You mostly sigh he leaves you then!  
to find that it was  
to find that it was  
your  
your

Oh-the glee  
the ecstasy  
when all the games  
(the games you thought  
& those that

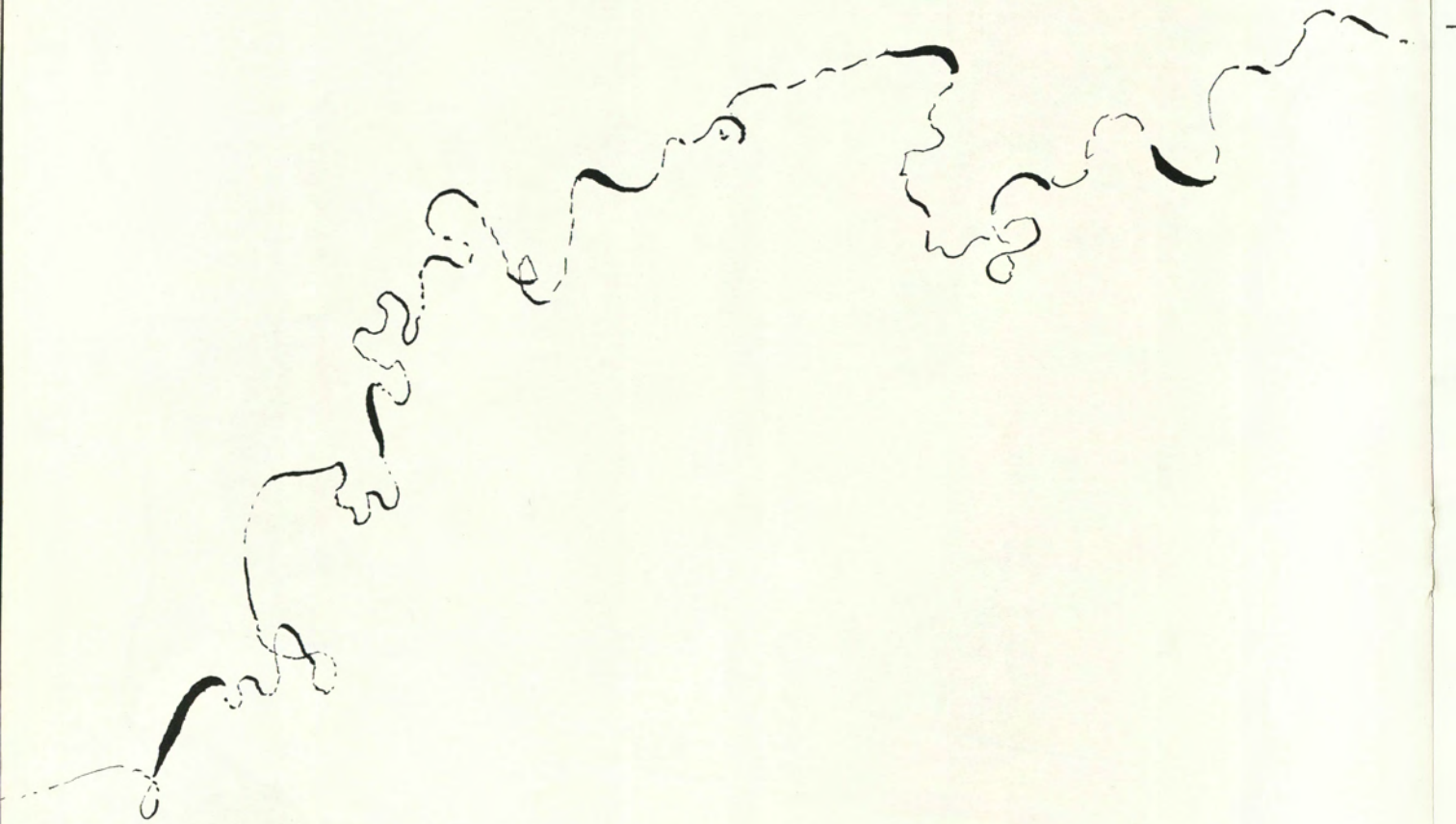
the little kid  
(your magical-  
comes and stays

cream-boy)  
your yard  
in his pocketz  
up his sleeves  
as in maybe  
in surely & purely!  
was only play)  
your yard is grey  
all in fun (ungay)  
your yard has no eye  
(undone)!  
are through  
were his  
were of you)!  
rainbow-boy  
in your yard!


Anga Evans











A Slug Had Left A Trail On The Cement  
And Waited On The Step, Near A Leaf

They said to use salt  
to kill him.  
Plain table salt  
right out of the box.

Good!  
He was too large to step on,  
a huge mound  
round and slippery.

I wanted him dead.  
Even in those few desperate seconds  
when I thought of  
saving him with water  
and washing off the salt  
I wanted him dead.

Still, he should have had a voice  
a croak  
Something!

To writhe, looking upward, shedding  
Shedding the layers of his body—  
He should have been able  
to cry out.

Mrs. Martha Arnold  
George Mason College





### The Watch

She speaks in few completed phrases  
Words and half-words falling like shattered bone  
Or frost, settling,  
Jagged and obsuring, breaking  
In ragged rhythm, ominous and still.  
Her eyes do not reflect our faces  
Pitching headlong out of sight,  
They flee belief like clouds before a wind.  
Her shoulders twitch,  
Dodging blows and missiles of her mind.  
Crouched in its chair,  
Her body howls at the moon-faced clock,  
Shuddering at its simple sway  
While it hurls its endless, insolent seconds  
To fall just short of her tongue.  
She cannot catch their mercy,  
She stands parched, taunted  
In her bitten desert; she revolves,  
Rapt in her wail  
She cannot force down the lump  
Of schedule, pace, filled time.  
Her world rises in her throat  
And sets in her eyes  
And is spitted on her helpless tongue.  
Even her bones do not obey her;  
Let them fall where they may,  
She will not survive the clock for long.

—Deborah Fairfield





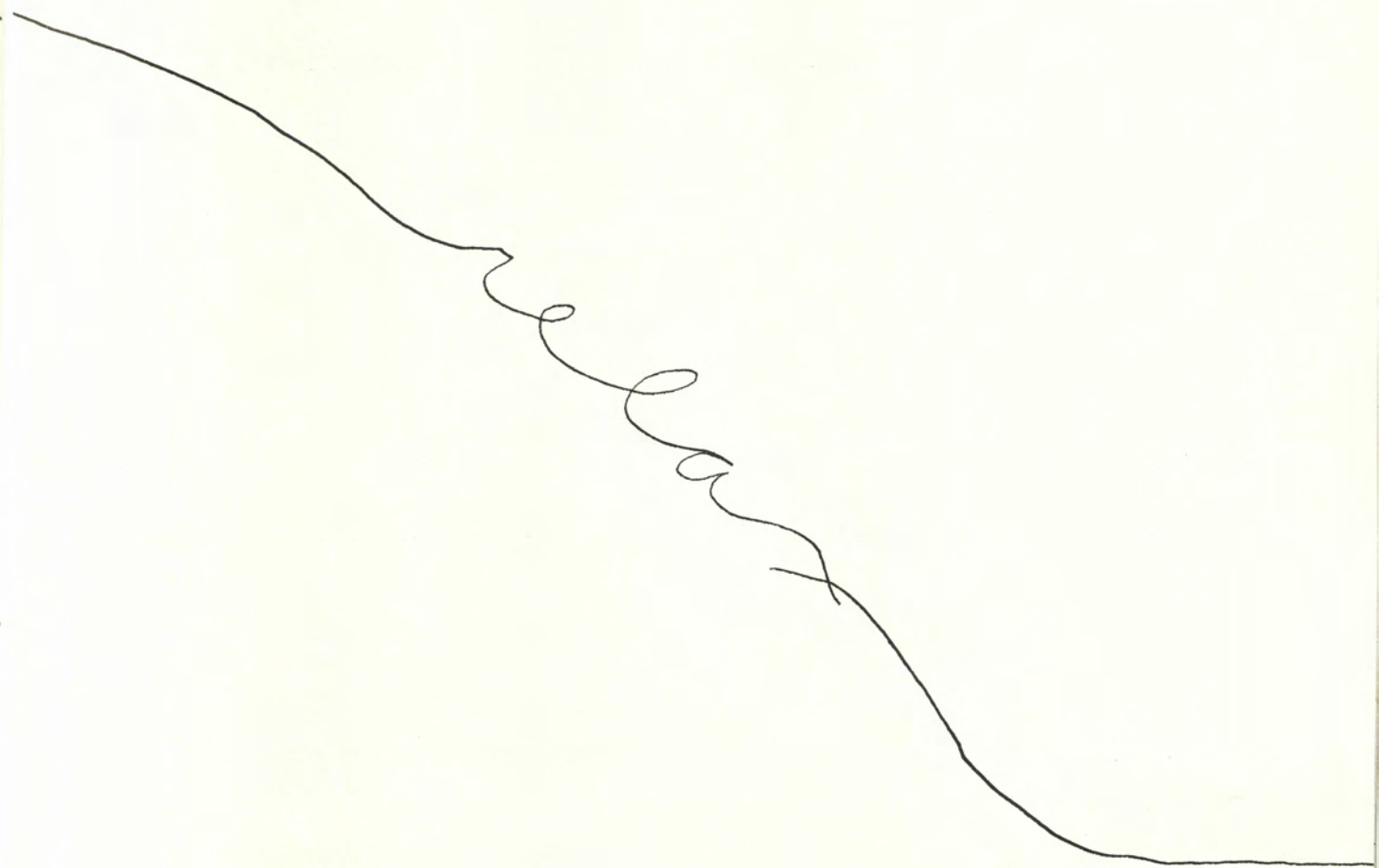
the hot dog man

the hot dog man is silent  
he speaks with his eyes and black hair  
i pay for my hot dog with everything on it  
he fingers the cash register  
like he has been doing for eternity  
he is young his eyes speak a sadder truth  
i leave and he returns to his chili and mustard  
his long slender hands wrap more hot dogs to go  
his long beautiful hands  
the hands of a child artist poet lover  
wrap more hot dogs to go

i leave and he returns.  
i love you hotdogman and you'll never know  
the simple praise i give you.

..... eyes returning a sadder truth —Judy Bentley .....







A Private Marriage and Other Mother Earths  
For George

you slip the ring

on her

finger

and think

at last

happiness is

secured

well

when the trees bend

and your shelter

is a ruse

for privacy

those friends

you said you


didn't need will be

far away

and her be careful

her skin isn't chapped.

Gary Entsminger  
Washington & Lee University



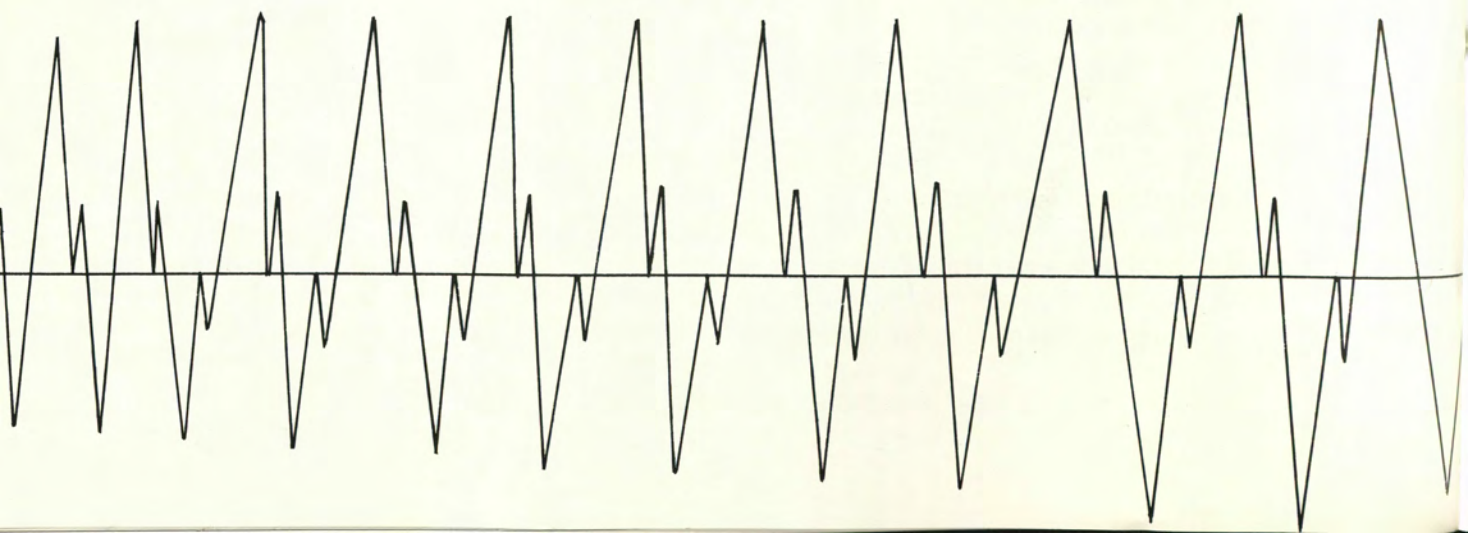
Come, Let Us

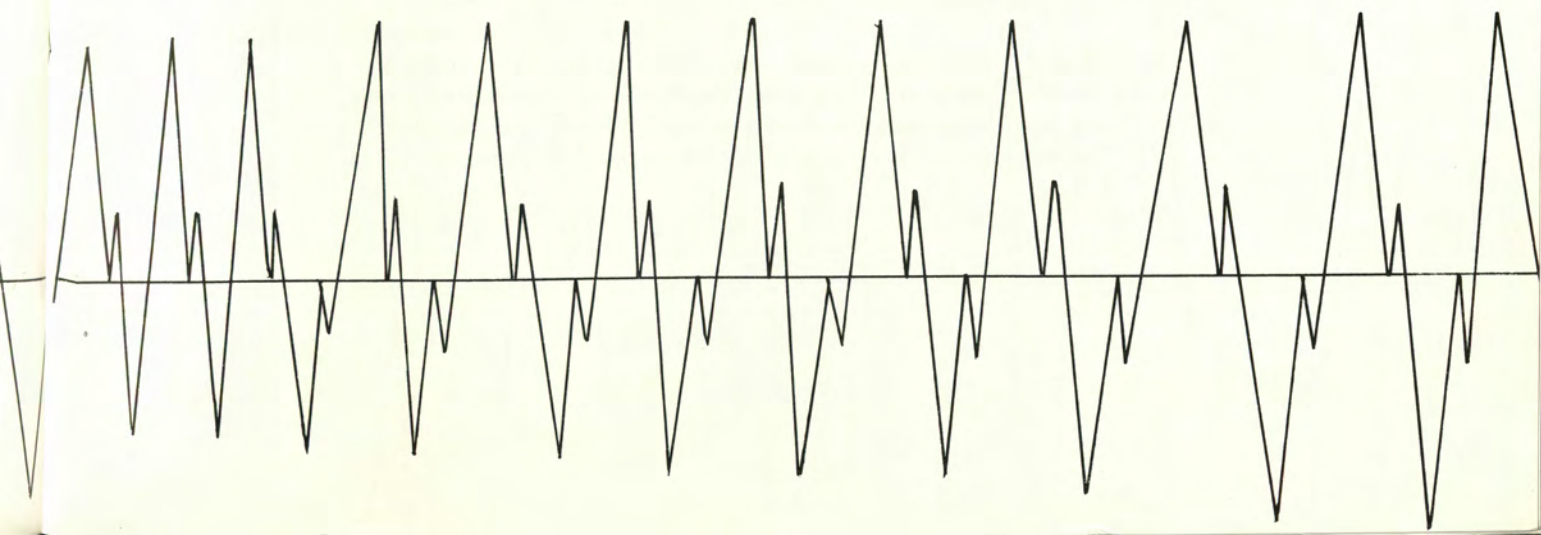
You, my sweat-wrung stallion  
My prick-eared, proud-foot herd-rider,  
Hair-raiser, my dusty warrior  
—may I never shake you off!  
Bear down on me, apocalyptic charger,  
Thrust to the core the center of my desert,  
Until my sun-cracked world runs wet.

The hot sand flees your hooves,  
The air, your burnished skin.  
Your veins swell with sheer pursuit  
And mad day; now run your best, my tail-chaser,  
if you would make this mare before sundown!

—Deborah Fairfield







Richard Bausch

George Mason College  
of the University of Virginia

### RUNNING

He heard the doctor say the word cancer and the word moved on his skin. He listened politely, watching the doctor's mouth.

When his wife came in to see him she began to cry and he was ashamed of her crying because she was ugly when she cried. So to keep her from doing it he feigned death and scared her away. When she had gone a nurse came in and put something into the veins at the crook of his arm and left it there for awhile. Then she came back and took it out and smiled at him and told him it was all right. He told the nurse it was not all right. It was not all right. It was fucking not all right. Then someone said to try and sleep some and so he closed his eyes, shutting out the white curtains and the rumpled covers of the bed. He could hear his own heartbeat where his ear lay against the pillow. No, he was still not dead. He was a funny vessel, still holding a lot of warm liquid.

An orderly came in and told him to quiet down.

A doctor talked of sedatives, pills, drugs, serums—symptoms and remedies.

His wife was there and then not there.

He was given a shot to make him sleep. He did not resist. He watched the needle turn in the skin of his arm. The hand that held the needle was small and had little hairs on it. He thought of his wife and wished her well. The features of her face began to arrange themselves in his

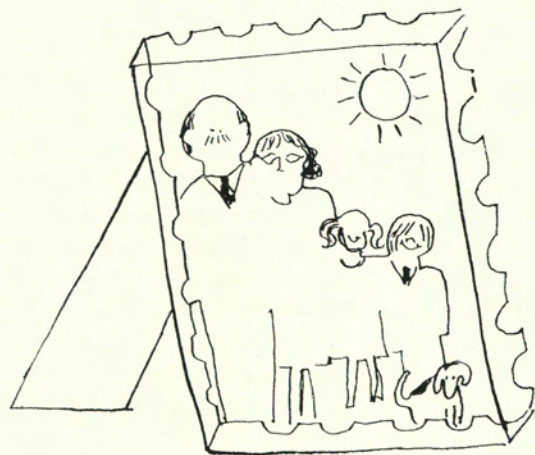


mind, and he saw that she was crying again. The tears made little bright pools in her small hands, and she held them out to him. He rolled out of bed trying to get away and she followed him, still holding out her wet hands, still crying. He went out into the hall, going down on all fours, trotting past serious nurses and harried interns, keeping his head down and his ears back. Some people patted him on the head and he sunk low to escape them. An attendant shooed him out on the first floor, hitting him on the rear end with a broom. He bared his teeth at the attendant, then went out into the highway. He saw a little black car lying on its side in the road, its free door standing open like a shocked mouth. He got into the car and it righted itself and began to move and as it gathered speed, he felt himself waving to himself.

When the car had only gone a little way, and when it was moving very rapidly and smoothly, the door on the driver side opened and cold night air rushed in. The night air had tomorrow in it. Tomorrow came in the window carrying something that smelled bad, something wet and small. He did not see exactly what it was, but he thought it must have been his wife so he climbed out of the car and began to run in long strides away from it, from the smell and from his wife holding out her hands. The air moved against him as he ran, and he could feel the earth losing its hold on him, each stride taking him higher and farther, higher and still farther, leaping over houses, cities, counties—sprinting, hearing himself breathe, hearing his toes as they touched the ground, as they barely touched the ground, the long ground, blue in a salt rain . . .

His wife leaned down to kiss him where her tears had fallen. He saw that she was crying and he did not like her face. He closed his eyes and began to run again (he felt her touch him with her lips but he did not respond). He was running. He was all leg and foot, all stride: all sinew and straining cords of need—running.

1972



## GRIMM TALE

We should have been children, you and I  
With wishes strung like mittens from our sleeves  
Something to hide in  
When the ice-heeled wind was kicking.

We had a father to pray to—  
His swearing slapped us all the way to the tub  
We learned the scalding parable  
Of Jesus' clean feet.

We were better than children, trees were  
For scenery and all our climbing  
Was done on stairs. We learned about falling  
From leaves we raked in the backyard.

Father kept us from closets  
On those panting nights that raced around the house  
And roared like tigers. We were big-eyed black Sambos  
But the storm, closet-close, never melted.

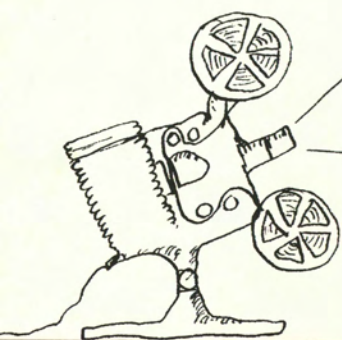
We should have been puppies and shed fuzz  
For fur, with time to romp and run  
No bones were buried in our house—  
We ate them each night for supper.

We had one secret worn inside our clothes  
Father never noticed; all he saw  
Of Beauty's upturned faces made him proud.  
We, too, were fooled in little dresses.

We could not long play children  
When the night undressed us  
Inside the covers we swapped snarls in sleep  
And in our captive darkness clawed the child-scented sheets.

—Suzanne Underwood





# THE FLICKS

Gutted, gaping, random-brick rubble ruin  
Where once stood small town neon pride  
STATE in the biggest yellow lights on Main.  
Procurer of pictured paradises  
Vendor of vicarious vices  
Pander to years of fresh country girls  
And hairsprayed, heavy-legged matrons . . .

Disney and James Bond held over forever—  
Packed, awed houses for Snow White  
(Chronic questioner, as the vultures circle:  
“Is she—dead?” “For God’s sake, yes!”)  
Black-and-mirror ladies’ room,  
Proud passionate balcony  
With its hot and salty popcorn kisses  
And not-quite-quiet discoveries  
Bubblegum excitement, unpopped dreams  
and cinemascopic education . . .

The big glowing clocks, forever out of time,  
The railings for the feigned royal boxes  
housing god-knows-what ghostly critics,  
The dusty brocade and zealous air-conditioning—  
The screen itself, that ever-ever world,  
Framed in mauve curtains  
that must be drawn ‘twixt short and feature  
    annoying pinkish waves over dawning British landscape  
    or grimy New York bar)  
killing director’s titles with incongruity . . .

The popcorn machine shorted,  
one afternoon, pre-matinee.  
The secretary of fifteen years’ service, in the office above,  
went up in smoke.  
Small drama for our dreams’ demise.

—Deborah Fairfield





Place, Following  
a Night of W. H. Auden

Like cows

Huddled

Against a barn

Keeping warm

In a snowstorm

We have crowded,

Every day of every month,

Cold,

Solitary,

Separated,

At the edge of parties

The doors of subways

At the alters of churches

At midday meals

Hearths,

The dens

Of the nearest poets (making their poetry).

Connie Lowrance  
Mary Baldwin College



I lie to ponder through the night,  
In quiet, pastel, half-done dreams,  
The future—be it dull or bright—  
And the worth of half-spent schemes.

Many times I've wondered if it's true  
That loneliness besieges all  
Who lose a friend and lover too;  
Who find the self once again small.

If I find it too-soon ending,  
The tasting made the love worthwhile,  
Like succulent grape, from vineyard to blending,  
Warmed the soul and brought a smile.

Spayding the bitch to spite the mate  
Would not slow hot spring's onward rush.  
Yet action does with dream debate  
When responsibility quells the blush.

I reach up to rub my eyes,  
Wishing them closed and thinking done.  
But they see, like wayward spies,  
The half-done dreams of a scheming one.

—Darlene A. Goode





Haiku

Listening softly

Forever speaking loudly

The world learns nothing.

— Sheppard

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