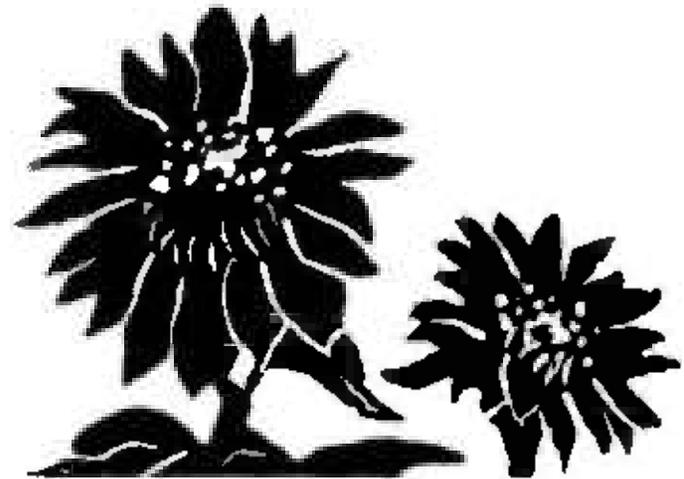




## Northern Lights '91

# Northern Lights

1991  
Arts Journal  
University of Wisconsin Center  
Marinette County



Sunflowers  
by Katie Harpt

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Editorial Committee: Jane Oltzinger, chair; Brian Cashen, Jane Eberly, Katherine Holman, James LaMalfa, Maureen Molle, and Herbert L. Williams.

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## Camp

by David Renaud

Early mist on the lake  
my paddle silent  
they are surprised  
slapping tails and barks  
break the silence

Gliding  
through the woods  
in tune  
to every sound  
I hear plants grow

Over the trees  
moonbeam on the lake  
in soaring circles  
the light below  
made brighter in dark

Sparks from the fire  
race, twisting, flying  
I return again  
to you  
to you

## Scrolled in Terror

by Charles M. Clark, Jr.

On a warm, bright day in August of '76, I scanned the beautiful countryside. Steep green mountains and deep valleys surrounded vast rice paddies, spotted here and there with tiny villages.

I didn't realize the events in the next few moments would permanently etch these peaceful visions in my mind with the scrolling tool of terror.

I was a door gunner in a UH-1 Huey helicopter over the DMZ of Korea. I knew the chance of an armed conflict breaking out was real, but I had subconsciously ignored it. To me, "Operation: Paul Bunyan" belonged to the leg grunts on the ground. I felt safe and powerful way up in the air.

Tightly wrapped by the heavy slack-vest and multi-pocketed flight vest I was wearing, I'd take a deep breath once in a while to make sure I still had enough room to breathe. My special C.V.C. helmet hugged my temples and forehead snugly, yet softly. I had the dark face visor down to soften the bright sunlight as I listened to the radios.

As I looked up at the main rotor, every inch of my body could feel the vibration of the floorboards and the concussion of the blades as they slammed through the air.

With my right forearm resting across the machine-gun in front of me and my finger tips caressing the shiny belted bullets, I glanced down to the black jump boots weighting down my feet as they dangled out the door. A thousand feet above the trees, we screamed by at 120 mph. "Wow, what a rush," I thought.

Just then, the co-pilot informed the colonel that we were getting a little too far north. I looked up towards the cockpit and about then the radio waves went berserk. There was chaos on the ground, chaos between the three "birds" in the flight, and chaos on the intercom. "What the hell is happening!" I thought in a panic. Everyone was either targeting or maneuvering evasively. The colonel slammed the Huey into a hard right dive as I completed the final steps of locking and loading the gun. Burning with fear, my head and chest felt as if they were about to explode. Between the gut-wrenching fear and the hard G-forces of the zig-zag, dropping, sweeping maneuvering, I thought I would lose it. The radios were wild with a hundred panicked voices.

Suddenly the world seemed to go into slow motion as the

colonel yelled "Sheet!" I heard the "crack-pop" of incoming heavy caliber machine-gun fire. Fear blurred my vision as I desperately tried to swing the gun towards the enemy fire. I felt as if my arms and torso weighed a hundred pounds each. Thump, Thump, Thump, WHAM! "Christ, we've been hit!"

The bird shuddered a few times, then began to shake violently. Suddenly, it smoothed out a little, but was dropping fast. Someone had gotten it into auto-rotation and we were sweeping to the right as we dropped. "Send out a may-day, we're going in!" snapped the colonel. The microphone was right at my lips but I was screaming as if it didn't work: "May-day, may-day, November-five-niner-delta, we're going in, four-four-one, may-day, may--" WHAM!

I wasn't sure how bad I was hurt. My face was pressed against the metal floor-board and my body was contorted. I wanted to move but it seemed I couldn't. I was conscious, but had no control of my body. I could see out of my left eye, but only a blur.

Pure silence. Was I really alive? Was I the only one alive? I tasted blood, and my lips felt swollen. There was a burning, stinging pain in my right cheek. Suddenly I felt my body being lifted, but couldn't tell from where. I was rolled over, and looked into the bloody face of my colonel. He was saying something, but I couldn't hear it. I couldn't hear anything. "How bad am I?" I asked. He didn't answer as he tenderly removed my helmet. It was then that I noticed the dark visor was gone. I could see only with my left eye. The sun was shining brightly on the colonel's short blonde hair as he bent over me. I suddenly felt as if I loved him like a father. "Hold me, Dad," I thought. "I'm still a young boy and I'm hurt." Ah, but he wasn't my father, and I was an eighteen-year-old man. I was a soldier, a warrior!

As the colonel sat me up, I began hearing the ocean in my ears. I was pretty banged-up, but I tried to stand. The colonel helped me up and steadied me as my head spun. I felt faint, but I fought it off.

The starboard gunner was hurt pretty bad. His gutt had smashed his chest during the crash. I watched the colonel and co-pilot take his equipment off as I pulled my gun from its mount.

"Are we going to blow the bird in-place?" I asked? "No," said the colonel, "we don't have time." The co-pilot and I gathered up all the equipment we could carry. "That lucky sucker," I thought, "he didn't get a scratch!" Little did I know, he would die of a massive heart attack later that night.

The colonel lifted the other gunner into a "fireman's carry" and drew his own .45 from its holster. We all looked at each other, then silently headed for home.

As we walked along, I looked up and froze. The colonel had stopped and raised his .45 in a gesture for silence. I could hear several helicopters in the distance as I scanned the bushes around us. "Get in the bushes," he snapped. My heart was pounding as we scurried away like little bugs. I crouched in the bushes silently, listening to the approaching helicopters. It sounded like a lot of them. "Why are we hiding?" I wondered. "They're coming from the south."

I was gently feeling my busted-up face and thinking about how sore my ribs and back were. My right eye was still closed. Suddenly I was terrified by the explosion of a signal flare that the colonel had fired. I looked up and there they were, just above the trees, a couple hundred yards away—two "dust-off" helicopter-ambulances surrounded by five troop-carrying Hueys and seven Cobra gun-ships.

The Cobras turned their noses towards us and raised their tails in firing position as the Hueys ducked below the trees while I fumbled with the radio. "Dust-off, this is November-five-niner-delta; you have us marked over," I blurted. The Hueys immediately re-appeared and swooped in on us as the Cobras went into a circling, cover pattern.

The next hours were a blur of medics, doctors, officers, questions, after-actions briefings, and de-briefings.

It's easier for me to cry today and release the pain when I think about young Johnson, the co-pilot. I cry for "Smokey" Williams too, the young, black door gunner. He died a few days later from massive internal injuries. He suffered a bad concussion and never woke up before he left us. I wish I could have said good-bye. And I still love Colonel "Crash" Smith like a dad, too, even though I haven't heard from him for fifteen years. But it's still hard for me to look up at a ceiling fan without hearing helicopter blades and reliving that August day; maybe someday that will heal too.



Church  
by Rick Gryboski

## Enduring Pain

by Delores R. Marzu

You are my tormentor.  
I refuse to let you get the best of me.  
At times, my head feels like it has  
been bashed in by a shovel,  
and my back shrieks from turbulent knife pains---  
You enjoy seeing me cry  
and you like it when sadness overcomes me--  
I refuse to let you win.  
It must be my competitive nature.  
Did you know that you also make me laugh?  
Yes, laughter is therapeutic,  
it keeps me from crying--  
I have other ways to fight you.  
My weapons, comprised of acupuncture,  
relaxation techniques, and appropriate drugs  
send you into hiding.  
They work well against you.  
Times are when death seems better  
than having you as a constant companion---  
But you also inspire me to live.  
I can accomplish almost anything I set my mind to,  
in spite of you---  
However, my greatest motivation is to someday,  
wake up without you---

## A Quiet Wood

by James LaMalfa

I'll get me to a quiet wood  
Beyond the rim of time.  
No chattering of satellites,  
Upsets the primal slime.

Suspended in the fragrant air,  
A jeweled web floats by,  
Wet with dew, it gleams,  
Against the silent sky.

A small brown nuthatch works  
To find his morning meal,  
As shaggy caterpillars creep  
With undisguised zeal.

A squirrel weaves a graceful arc  
Across the misted glen.  
Adroitly threads  
His tapestry  
Of bird and bush and fen.  
He doesn't care  
That we're not there  
And won't be back again.

## **Dream #1**

by Brian Cashen

The hour is late  
as the storm gathers steam  
I crawl into bed  
and fade off into dream

As my body lies sleeping  
My mind starts to stir  
The vision is bright  
But the image is blurred

Adrift on a lake  
In a boat made of mist  
Bitter cold holds my heart  
In its clenched, freezing fist

No motion is made  
No sound to utter  
No current or wave  
Can disturb the rudder

The night passes  
Yet darkness abounds  
The aroma of earth  
But no land can be found

Then a glimmer of hope  
As a saber of light  
Pierces the water  
Just off to my right

The luminous beam  
Passes over my head  
It traces the waves  
As my anger turns red

As I watch, it moves on  
And I am alone  
Adrift on this lake  
So far from my home

And then I wonder,  
"Is this where I'll die?"  
As I sit in this vessel  
I start to cry

The abrupt ring of the clock  
Smells of coffee and cream  
I wipe the sleep from my eyes  
It was only a dream

## **Overwound**

by James LaMalfa

Our neon colored cities sit silent now.  
We wound them just too tight.  
Their cockle shells and jingle bells  
Have blown up over night.

# A Rendezvous with Death

by Edwin G. Ackerman II

The day was just like any other. I awoke on another fine August morning in 1987 to the usual sound of boats screaming and racing across Hessel Bay, an expanse of water in the Eastern Upper Peninsula sheltered from Lake Huron by thirty-six wooded islands. After being taken in by the magnificent beauty that surrounded me, I suddenly realized that I was late for work.

My job was nothing glamorous. It consisted primarily of restoring antique mahogany boats that had failed to stand the wear and tear of both time and owner. Occasionally, though, I would be assigned the mundane task of overhauling boat engines while my cohorts at Mertaugh Boat Works attended to other repairs that had to be completed before the end of the summer season. But on August 11, 1987, after conducting a routine maintenance check on a twenty-one foot Boston Whaler, I decided to launch it and run it around Hessel Bay, an action I would later regret.

Since it was a nice, warm day and since the waters of Lake Huron were as placid as glass, I thought that a brief boat ride was certainly in order. I figured that by going out for a short jaunt, I could hit two birds with one stone, so to speak. Not only could I test the Whaler's engine for any lingering mechanical snafus, but I could also relieve the monotony of my day with a cruise in a high-powered speedboat. Little did I know that my little "cruise" would lead me to stray out into the open waters of Lake Huron and eventually to venture underneath the arc of one of the world's engineering marvels – the Mackinac Bridge.

In just fifteen minutes, I reached the massive assemblage of steel and concrete that links Michigan's two peninsulas; and I found myself parked underneath it, staring upwards at it with wide-eyed enthusiasm. I sat for ten admiring minutes in the middle of the Straits of Mackinac when all of a sudden I felt a subtle jerk. I turned around to check on the problem and, to my surprise, the boat engine sputtered to stillness like an old jalopy running out of gas.

"Oh, this is really great," I said to myself. "I'm out of gas. Now what am I going to do?"

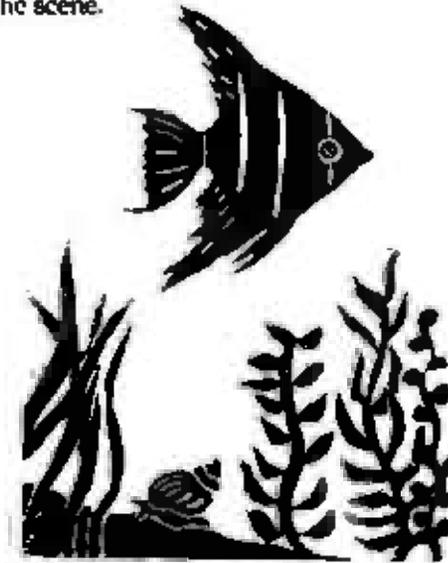
I immediately began thinking of ways to flag down help, but there were no other boats in the area to detect my distress signals. So, I

sat back and decided to float across the straits and get near enough to land to be spotted by the Coast Guard.

No sooner had I sat back when I noticed that my fiberglass craft was slowly drifting toward one of the Mackinac Bridge's twin white towers. However, when I rose to correct my course, the boat began to take on a life of its own. It rocked back and forth erratically, as if it were possessed by a supernatural force. The next thing I knew, the lightweight craft crashed into the bridge's tower; and I, with nothing to grab hold of, was thrust nearly fifteen feet into the air before plunging head first into the deep, frigid waters of the Straits of Mackinac.

As soon as I surfaced, I was nearly thirty feet away from the tower and what was left of the sinking Boston Whaler. The underwater current was so strong that it took me nearly ten minutes to swim back to the tower and to my ill-fated craft; and at times I became so fatigued that I nearly lost consciousness. But, somehow, I finally made it back to my partially submerged vessel and hung on for dear life, and I do mean DEAR LIFE!!!

I waited patiently for help to arrive, but none came. After an hour of being partially submerged in the freezing waters of Lake Huron, I started to go into shock. My body began shaking uncontrollably, causing me to nearly lose my grip on the bow of the sinking boat. However, at about the time that I was going to relinquish my spirit to God and my body to the deep, two large Coast Guard vessels converged on the scene.



Fish  
by Rose Appleglise

## My Verse

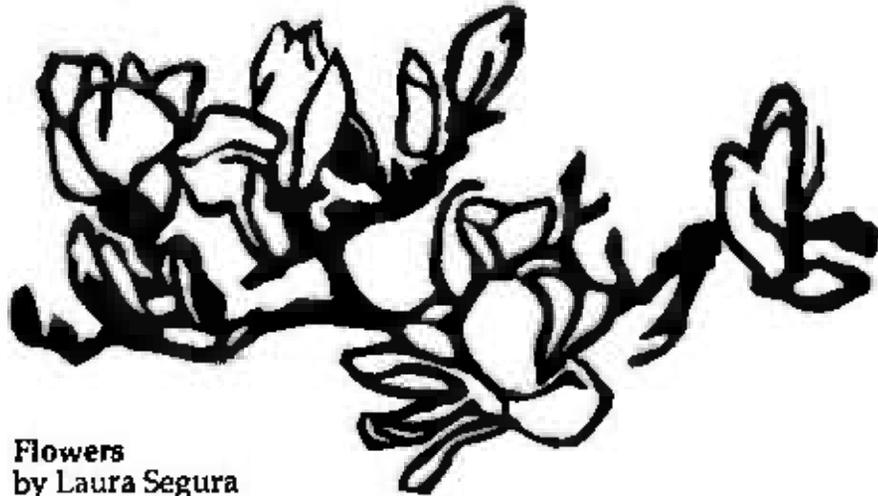
by Randall Saénz

I want to sing my saddest song tonight.  
I want to sing to the night, for she is the  
one that breast-fed my loneliness and  
despair.

I want to sing my saddest verse tonight.  
I want to sing to the hammer that is pounding  
and pounding the nail of suffering through my  
soul.

I want to be joyous in my emptiness and  
sadness, for there is no other way to  
happiness. I want to proclaim my failure for  
there is no other way to taste victory.

I want to sing my saddest verse tonight.  
I want to sing it all night long.  
I want to laugh at my despair so my sadness  
will be praise.



Flowers  
by Laura Segura  
14

## Mi Verso

by Randall Saénz and Viricio Arias

Quiero cantar mi verso más triste ésta noche.  
Quiero cantar a la noche, por ser ella la que  
amamanta mí soledad y desesperación.

Quiero cantar mi verso más triste ésta noche.  
Quiero cantar al mazo que golpea y golpea el  
cincel de sufrimiento a través de mi alma.

Quiero regocijarme en mi tristeza y soledad,  
por no haber otro camino a la felicidad.  
Quiero proclamar mi derrota, por no haber  
otro camino para saborear la victoria.

Quiero cantar mi verso más triste ésta noche.  
Toda la noche lo he de cantar.  
Quiero reirme de mi desesperación para así mi  
tristeza proclamar.



Birds  
by Laura Segura  
15



## My Taxes

by David Renaud

I own the land, about 120 acres of scrubby jackpine and swamp. I only have to drive a half an hour to get there. Then I am the king of my land. All my things are here, put in my house, that was already here, and my shed, that I built. I have a deed, filed in the county courthouse, after I paid a lot of my money to have my name put on it. And I pay taxes on my land. Indeed, I did not become king cheaply.

Because I pay taxes, I am entitled to do what I want with my land. I can cut all the trees, and maybe fill in the swamp so that I can park tractors there. With my tractors and chain saw, I can cut all the scrubby little jackpines, put them in a big pile, and burn them, so I will never see them again. I can stand at my driveway with my shotgun ready for all who dare say I can't.

My taxes give me this right. My taxes protect my right. They pay for my job at the mill, my fire department that I can call if my burning jack pines get too close to my house. All my taxes, they pay for making sure I never lose my right to own this land, so I can fill in my swamp. They pay for my army that will make sure no one ever tries to come here and take my land. They will kill anyone who tries to interfere with my right, here or there.

The people who decided where to spend my taxes think they have done well with my money. All the fine factories and the assurance that nothing can come between me and my land, and my tractors, and my mows and truck, all my things. But I notice now, when I drive to my land, that the jackpines are scarce, the pines and cedars have long been gone; it seems everyone has filled in their swamp. Now some of the factories have shut down, leaving only the rainbow colors of oil on the soil behind, near the river. Some of the people in town are hungry, but we need all the taxes to feed our army, so that I can keep my land.

I remember the sounds that the insects made in my swamp. On a summer evening, they would fill the air with music. The jackpines held several birds' nests, and the swallows would come out at dusk, swooping and diving to feed on the insects. I used to sit on a sand bar in the jackpines at night and watch a fox who lived there, silvery in the moonlight, try to catch mice in the grass or the frogs in the reeds of the swamp. I remember catching small fish from the stream that ran out of

my swamp, and bigger fish in the river where it emptied. I felt bad for them when my tractor filled in the last of the swamp and the smoke from my fire chased the last bird from my land.

As I drive along the way to my land in my big truck now, I can't help but wonder if my taxes and deed really did entitle me to be the king of my land, like the others in my country. We are not as happy as we were when there were trees and when our young people were alive. Now that there is nothing left – not even jackpines grow here anymore – I wonder whether I was only meant to be just a guardian of the land, not the king. Now that everything is gone and it's too late, I wonder.



Deer  
by Mark Olson

## Working Poor

by Marjorie Kehoe

Every morning at seven he's greeted  
by the opening of the door

He's just one of the many millions  
they call the working poor.

The machine, his faithful lover,  
never once has strayed a day.

But the worker would not be so faithful  
were it not for a little pay.

In twenty years the dreams have come  
then all at once they're gone.

It seems the man has waited  
and oh so very long.

But still the hope it glimmers  
and the days are not all long.

And the worker keeps on working  
for he's made of something strong.

A pension pictures happiness  
as he walks through the final door.

But then those years are much too few  
for the working poor.

## Ode to the Little People

by Jean Carlin Bickel

Oh to be...a parent...a teacher...  
to share in the lives of these  
complex creatures.

Of all the space across the map,  
none so important, as the lap.

What a shame in life, if we  
should miss...the chance to share  
a sticky kiss...

And who can better understand,  
the special warmth of a tiny hand  
I hope you remember the wondrous  
delight, of having a story read to you  
at night.

for some adult to take the time  
to say you share your dream, and  
I'll share mine.

so next time you look into  
those little faces, go inside  
and change places...  
for children help us to recall  
that special child  
within us all.

## Stupid Love

by Marnie Nordskog

When he saw me for the first time, he was in love. I'm not being conceited when I say this. This is what he told me. Unfortunately, he told me many things that were lies covered with gift wrap and a big bow. Anyone who has been in any relationship for longer than a week knows what I'm talking about.

After that crucial first week all my defenses crumbled to the ground. I was in love.

"He's wonderful! He holds doors for me and treats me like a lady. He is the most handsome man I've ever seen and those eyes. Oohh, those eyes."

Once this speech pattern surfaced, there was little hope and the only thing my friends could do was watch hopelessly and pray I would discover he was a man disguised as a storybook prince before it was too late.

This is why he was able to let his imagination go and tell me things I knew were lies, but I believed them anyway.

"I was recruited by the F.B.I. during high school, but decided to graduate and become a stockboy instead."

"I used to have a pink mohawk," he said as I admired his suit and tie.

"I was once asked to join the Vienna Boys Choir, but turned them down because I didn't want to change schools."

"My mom was once engaged to the Prince of Siam. But then there were some political problems, so she called it off and married a sewage treatment plant worker instead."

Once he could get away with these tales, he became a runaway semi and I was a scooter stalled at the bottom of the hill.

"I'm not seeing someone else. That was my cousin Loretta, the power lifter. She was sore, so I was giving her a back massage."

"You smell perfume? No, that's my new fabric softener. Do you want to borrow some?"

"I tried to call you, but kept getting the answering machine. Oh. I was positive that you had one."

Well, that is probably why people say love is blind, to which I could add, deaf and dumb. But fortunately, I began to compare photographs of him from when we first started dating to pictures the

private investigator I hired took. This is when I noticed the increase in the length of his nose.

Instead of dreaming of him in white linen pants, running toward me on the sunlit, sandy beach, things became different. Wonderful dreams envisioning him screaming as I cut off certain parts of his anatomy and dropped them in a blender set on puree. Life is joyous once again and the little weasel is suffering because he knew he loved me the first time he saw me. Love is stupid, isn't it?

## Empty Heart

by Laurie Jorgensen

If I let myself feel

the

void

of

your

absence,  
It would hurt too much;

So I keep very busy  
hoping I won't notice

that my heart is  
bro  
ken.

# Friend of a Friend

by Laticia Niemi

"Jacob, where are you going?"

Katy's beautiful face twisted into an ugly frown. I turned my back on her and continued to button my shirt. I was in no mood for her shit today.

"Jacob, answer me right now!"

Her shrill voice grated in my ears. I glanced at her slender form, clad in that bit of purple lace she knew I liked so well. It was her way of apologizing for being caught kissing Eric Steward. That ass.

"I'm going to a funeral."

"A funeral? That girl who killed herself? Did you know her?"

I grimaced in disgust at the jealousy in Katy's voice. Jealous of a dead girl for Christ's sake.

"Well, did you?"

"Vaguely."

I slipped my jacket over the new shirt I had bought just special to wear to the movies with Katy last night. Instead of going to the movies, she had kissed Eric Steward.

"Why are you going if you only knew her vaguely?"

I ignored her, as I could think of no suitable reply. I was wrestling with that question myself. Friend of a friend; I had met Sylvie only once. Kind of a loner. Like Katy, actually. Oh, Katy could have any guy she wanted, but she didn't have many real friends. Sometimes I thought I knew why.

"I'll be back around noon."

"Noon? I should hope so. You promised to take me to the mall today."

She set the glass of wine that she had been nursing the better part of the morning on the floor, uncurled her long legs, and climbed out of bed. She grabbed my keys from my hand and tossed them under the bed, then started to unbutton my shirt.

"Come on, Katy," I said irritably. "I'm leaving now."

"How come you're ~~so~~ dressed up just for a funeral?" she asked sulkily. "You don't love me, do you?"

"Of course I do."

I moved away from her busy fingers and dropped to my knees to look for the keys.

"Prove it. Don't go today."

"Katy. You're not being fair."

I cursed as my sweeping hand gathered dust, but no keys. Didn't Katy do anything around here while I was at work all day? Dammit. She must sweep all the dirt under the bed.

"Aren't I? What will going to her funeral prove?"

"Prove? It won't prove anything. I'm going to show my respect."

Katy sat on my back and wrapped her legs around my waist.

"Christ, Katy."

My fingers touched the cool metal of the keys.

"Show respect for a girl who killed herself? Besides, it won't do her any good now."

"It'll show her family I care."

I stood, dumping Katy on the floor, and deposited the keys in my pocket. Katy glared at me, rubbing her elbow where it had struck the floor.

"Bastard."

I shook my head slowly and headed for the door.

"You're lucky I don't leave you."

"Am I?" I muttered under my breath, but she heard me.

"Bastard!" she shrieked, and climbing to her feet, ran to block the door. "I could do ~~so~~ much better than you."

I didn't say anything. She wrapped her arms about me suddenly, pressing her lips against mine. They tasted faintly of wine.

"Kiss me, Jacob," she murmured against my lips. But I was in no mood for it. I backed away. Fire leaped up in her eyes.

"If you leave, never come back."

I hesitated, hand on the door knob. My heart seemed to pound in my throat.

"Don't do it, Jacob. You'll regret it. I'll never come back to you. I swear it."

Her voice was low now, calm almost. She meant it. Now. Later, she would change her mind and come crying to me. She knows I'm her friend, that's why. People liked to be seen with Katy, but nobody really took the time to know her. I had. But, Christ, there's only so much a guy can take. I dabbed at the sweat on my upper lip with my jacket sleeve and walked out the door.

# Juxtaposition #1: 早春

by Jane Oitzinger

In the spirit of community, of making a private moment public, I transcribe from my journal, in a slightly revised form, a morning reverie. Here I celebrate Spring Break—a rebirth of meditative life after an exhausting series of job-related activities. And I celebrate Love—specifically, but not exclusively, my love for juxtaposing disparate ideas and symbolic systems in playful ways.

"Love," perhaps the fuzziest of warm-fuzzy words, defies analysis but rarely defies a lover's sense or a novelist's art. Thus I turn to Martha Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford UP, 1990) because the title intrigues me: What can love know? Philosopher Nussbaum answers that good decisions on how best to live are not made in the breathless realm of pure reason; contrary to arguments of contemporary moral philosophers, the inclusion of love and other emotions is necessary for a superior form of moral wisdom, a wisdom that finds its appropriate expression in stories of experience—our own stories and those in literature (ix). And I believe her. Love knows life.

Nussbaum begins her first chapter with an epigraph from Dante:

I am one who, when Love breathes  
in me, takes note. And in whatever way  
he dictates within, that way I signify.

"Love breathes." "I signify" that breathing by writing on love. And the Chinese express that breathing in their pictograph for "love" as Ping-gam Go's *Understanding Chinese Characters by Means of Their Ancestral Forms* (Simplex, 1989) shows us:

 which comes from the ancestral form  man breathing air down his heart  and advancing in spite of obstacles .

For the Chinese, "love" is life taken into one's heart, as the lungs take in air; it is a form of knowledge that, despite all obstacles, perseveres. The Italian poet Dante and the Chinese ancestors agree: Love is a form of breathing. (And for the ancient Greeks, the word *psyche*, "soul," comes from their ancestors' word for "breath": Love breathes; souls are breaths; and breath is life itself.)

26

Nussbaum asks us to consider the oddness of discussing powerful emotions in language that addresses only the reader's intellect (7). For example, one of the most dismally numbing lectures I ever attended was called "The Joys of Teaching." Not only did the lecturer lack enthusiasm, he expressed no love for the topic of his speech, which thus lacked life. No emotion, no felt message. The mind may respond but the body (heart/lungs) does not follow. (I recall the movie *LA Story*, a love story in which a freeway signpost says to Steve Martin's character, "Let the mind go; the body will follow"—a delightful ambiguity that can mean whatever one's heart needs to know.)

Most anyone who has read modern philosophical writings understands Nussbaum's complaint that moral philosophers use "scientific, abstract, hygienically pallid" prose to discuss the deepest concerns we have about our choices, values, and actions (19). Literature, Nussbaum says, is the most direct, concrete, and vivid expression of ethical concerns—because in its particular experiences of life overlap general concerns about how best to live. The Chinese character for "literature" agrees:

 which comes from the ancestral form  intercrossing lines representing waves of thought.

As the Chinese ancestors saw, literature is a series of waves of thought that overlap. Nussbaum, borrowing from Henry James, calls literary artists "alert winged creatures" who take into the imagination (into love) "the concrete and deeply felt experience of life" (5). Waves. Wings. Love. Life.

What intrigues me about the Chinese characters and what Nussbaum keeps emphasizing—e.g. "the priority of the particular" and "the discernment of perception"—is absent from our form of written language: Arabic letters strung together to make sound images rather than visual images. For instance, the English word "fly" has little if any visual sense of flight; yet the Chinese character "to fly" represents a flying crane:

 which comes from the ancestral form  flying crane.

27

The Chinese character for "friend" shows an important attribute of a friendship:

which comes from the ancestral form

two hands working in the same direction.

And the character for "profession" or "trade" gives deserved dignity to a life devoted to the love of a certain activity; and it grounds that activity in Nature, in the interrelationship of all life and love on Earth:

which comes from the ancestral form

a tree  crowned with its foliage .

Consider how much richer our lives might be had we evolved a written language based on concrete objects, mostly natural ones. On the other hand, pictographs may be awkward for quickly designating such complex situations and concepts as sexual discrimination or campus racism, but I don't know. As Nussbaum says, every pleasure exacts a price (34). Nevertheless, the poetry of the Chinese characters fascinates me.

We daily encounter pictographs—on highways, at crosswalks, on bumper stickers. For the most part, however, these inform us without engaging us in an emotional or reflective way. Yet there's nothing to prevent us from creating our own emotionally vibrant pictographs.

For example, Marie-Louise von Franz, in *Projection and Recollection in Jungian Psychology* (Open Court, 1980), offers a fine description of "prejudice" by using Carl Jung's image of a hook. The "hook" of a prejudice, she explains, may simply be one's gender or the color of one's skin; whatever it is, it is that "on which one hangs a projection [say a fear of black people] as one hangs a coat on a coat hook" (3). Given the "literary" quality of this image, i.e. its waves of thought, I can form a quasi-Chinese pictograph of the psychological state of prejudice:

a human being  on unrelenting hooks  and impaled  whose tears  fall beyond comprehension .

Prejudice, the obvious and reprehensible public display of unconscious projections, has no love, breathes not life but death into the heart—has nothing more than painful hooks, along with personal and social impalement. Prejudice is a lack of knowledge, a lack of love, a denial of life.

But enough for this morning. In sum, agreeing with Nussbaum, who argues for passionate forms of ethical discourse, and with von Franz, who argues for a moral understanding of projection, I celebrate **Spring Break** and the opportunity it offers to reflect on pictographs, prejudice, love, and life. And I leave with a life-affirming image in mind, the pictograph for "happiness," one of the Chinese good luck signs:

which comes from the ancestral form

emanations  from heaven  that put the products  of the field  under one's roof .



Zebra  
by Dirk Gaiser  
29



Wolf  
by Vinicio Arias

## Snowflake

by Florence Oleksy

See one simple snowflake glide  
Quickly billions of her sisters fly.

Without a word  
No sound is heard.

What a strange society  
Wanders gliding by.

Set to music  
They icily batter.

Strongly grouped  
They icily patter.

Pelting all in sight.  
Nowhere can one hide.

Hail or sleet  
Battering steely night.

Only when one snowflake flies  
Can one see the sparkle.

Majesty, glittering silver shines  
The deeply covered  
Luscious piles.



Errol  
by Florence Oleksy