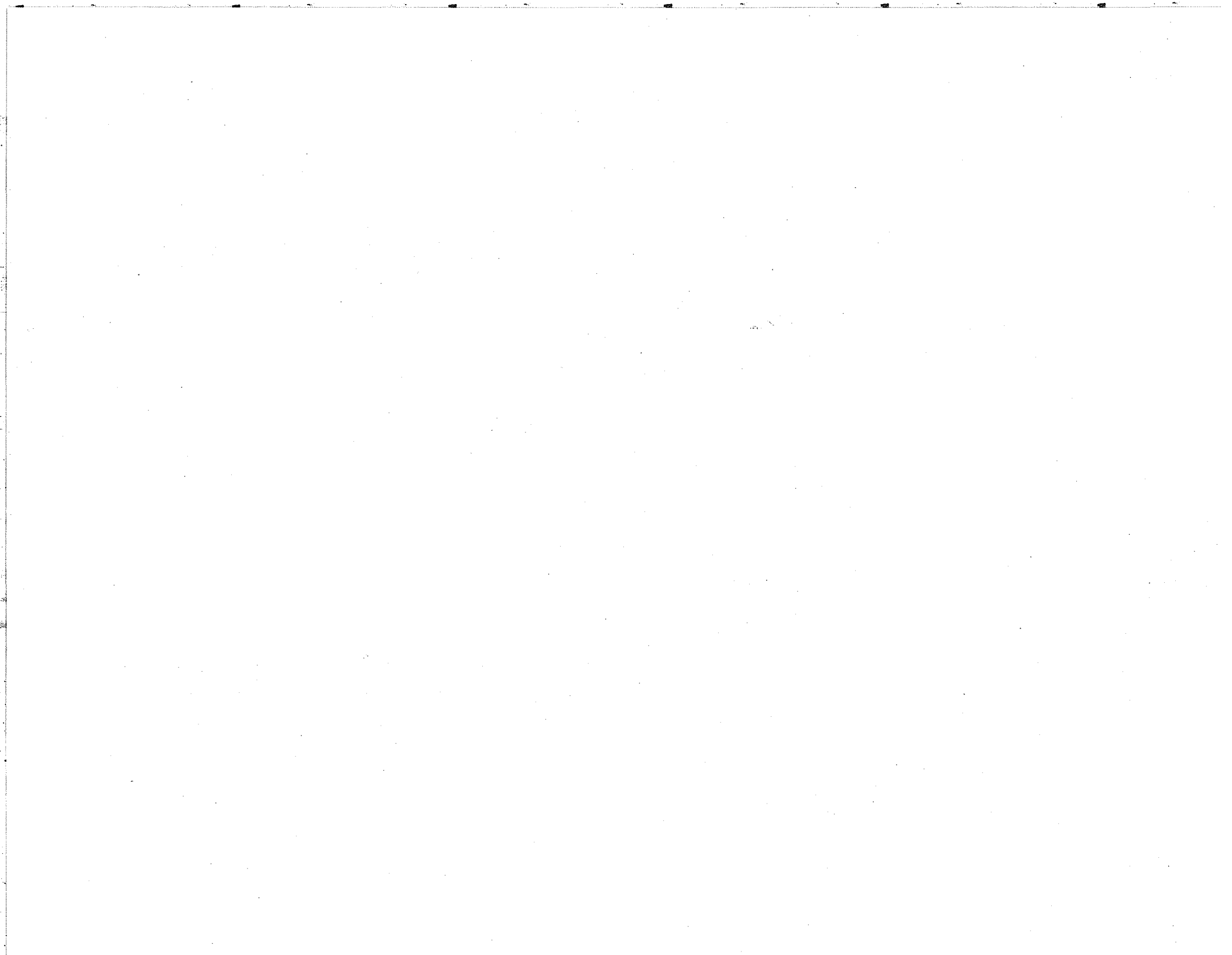


NORTHERN LIGHTS

***1981
Arts Journal
UW Center-Marinette***



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This second issue of NORTHERN LIGHTS
features the literary and artistic
work of:

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Sue DeKolver	David Liegeois
Kay Fritz	Judith Lintereur

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University of Wisconsin Center
Marinette County
Bay Shore
Marinette, Wisconsin



TWISTED TREE
-- David Liegeois

Acknowledgments

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A man becomes creative, whether he is an artist or a scientist, when he finds a new unity in the variety of nature. He does so by finding a likeness between things which were not thought alike before, and this gives him a sense at the same time of richness and of understanding. The creative mind is a mind that looks for unexpected likenesses.

-- Jacob Bronowski

Snow leaves small patches
Clinging dear to rotted shade,
But Spring is patient.

-- Jean DeMille

Renewed Delight

The sunshine warms the soil which surrounds you,
And melts the snow for life-giving moisture.
Delicate first flowers, so beautiful,
Bring promise of renewed delight in spring.

-- Darlene Baetke

Roll Me a Snowball

Roll me a snowball--
Please.
Pat it round and firm.
Shape it carefully in your strong hands
For us to play with.
Push it past the unsettled
 slopes of my mind
To a crystalline wonderland,
Encircled by laughter
And sheltering trees caped in
 shimmering innocence.
Guide it cautiously along the icy roads,
Giggling as it goes,
Happy to be five again,
Confused and silly,
Yet, oh so safe with you.

Take me high above the sleeping city
And roll me a snowball.
Let it melt in my mouth,
Slowly,
Gently,
So I can savor
The flavor
Of you.

-- Jessica Audin

Letting Go

It's so hard to let go
--to let you be enveloped
By the sea that threatens to drown you
--to give you back
To the maze that misdirects your energy,
And diverts the love
You share so freely
With me.

When I let the sands of our time
Reluctantly slip through my fingers,
I conceal a few precious grains,
Pressing them deeply
Into the flesh of my palm,
Imprinting the ecstasy
Into the engrams of my soul.

Then, when I give you back to your reality,
Back to the commitments
Of your static, temporal world,
I still retain a fraction of your being,
Encoded in my every atom,
Duplicating itself
Eternally,
In the psychic blood of my existence.

-- Jessica Audin



FOREST WALK
-- Kay Fritz

Personal Equinox

Summer's night moves about
Quietly pressing its fragrances
To those who take them in,
And once they breathe
The thickened air
Their souls are
Forever suspended
On that sliver of a Summer Moon.

While back on earth
Their bodies journey
Through the continued
Fall and Winter--
Then suddenly that
Jointless Spring
And back to the
Moon of Summer.

-- Judith Lintereur

For All the Times When I Can't Be with Her

The vaguely familiar landmarks blink by as the funeral procession winds its way through the small Southern town. I close my eyes to these unwelcomed images as I have been closing my mind, for the last few days, to the seemingly endless hours in the stuffy funeral home, with its maze of strange faces, and its overpowering wave of mismatched floral aromas assaulting my nostrils and unsettling my stomach.

I pull away with the same type of self-imposed anesthesia I used as a child in the dentist's chair. Back then, I would grip the cold, black arm rests and replay my favorite movie, Peter Pan, on the inside of my eyelids. Now, as we pass the heavy iron gates of the cemetery, I search for a different brand of novocain.

My writer's mind thumbs through its file of unfinished stories, incomplete plot outlines, new character lists--and a little girl dances across the pages of my imagination, pirouetting between her giggles before an approving grandfather.

Perhaps this is the diversion I need to block out the last few moments of this painful ordeal...a short story...with a simple plot...two characters...and a happy ending...

When men and women can stare back
At the Universe,
Unblinking,
Resolute,
Unflinching,
At childhood's end,
And tolerate
The ambiguities, random violence
Of starbirth
And death,
Then,
I will reveal all.

How can the earthbound
Brook the chilling cold of space?
Such truths lack credibility
To those born of clay.
They will be given a tale,
Spun of half truth and fancy,
A necessary fiction
To sustain them.

Yet sometime
This race will reach outward
And claim their starborn heritage.

I can wait.
I have Eternity
At my
Disposal.

-- James LaMalfa

COSMOLOGY

One task remains.
My progeny must not know
Their origins
Straightway.

The searing heat of stars,
Violent clash of astral bodies,
Will be kept from them
Until,
Mature,
They can withstand the awesome magnitude
Of Creation.

Foreknowledge of that exploding realm
Would send them whimpering in impotence,
To cower in the bowels
Of dark earthbound caves,
Stunned to mindlessness.

The reality of the Cosmos
Shall be masked in allegory,
Softened,
Till mind
Can comprehend the vast, relentless forces
That could reduce this globe to cinder,
In the wink of an eye.

The old man rocked slowly, back and forth, in his favorite chair, his lame leg propped on the fraying foot stool. The crooked fingers of his bulging-veined hands gently blanketed the well-worn wooden arm rests that curved down into delicate loops, forming vague, faded sculptures of dark swans. It was Sunday, and it was quiet. With his wife off to church, praying for the poor souls of the world, he could soak in the aroma of baking chicken and sweet potatoes filtering in from the kitchen and reflect on the sameness of his Sundays.

That morning, as usual, he had read the newspaper, completed the cross word puzzle, and deliberately stayed out of his wife's way while she rattled and chattered the kitchen into one of her fine dinners. Then, with her missal and beads in hand, she'd scurried off to Mass, with a reminder, "Now, Pop, your medicine's on the cupboard. Don't forget...11:00." And an admonition, "And don't you touch that peach pie I got coolin."

He relished that peaceful hour when he could prepare for the afternoon. He liked to enjoy, in advance, the time shared with his growing family as they filled the placid, old house with their laughter and confusion.

His only son arrived each Sunday at noon, bringing with him his pretty although slightly frazzled wife and their three lively children. They were a comforting

legacy, these grandchildren of his, but the oldest, Sukey, a blond-haired, blue-eyed tomboy, was undoubtedly his favorite, not just because she was his first grandchild, or because she was the little girl he never had, but because they would travel together through the uncharted lands of make-believe and magic.

Her constantly twinkling eyes only hinted at the wealth of imagination bubbling inside. Her love of fantasy colored everything they did together--the fishing trips, the picnics, the excursions to the zoo, and especially their music. What joy it gave him to hear her clear, perfect voice following him on the banjo, while he played his favorite, "Sweet Sue," and hers, "Old McDonald." She delighted in noiseless animals like giraffes and beetles.

"And on this farm he had a beetle..," she'd sing, swaying to the plunking rhythm. "With a beet, beet, here, and a beet, beet there..."

But all their adventuring had stopped with his stroke. Six-year-olds weren't permitted to visit the hospital, and during his first few weeks of recovery at home, their time together was limited by his too-worried wife, and her overly protective parents.

EVE

Gathering my energies,
I prepare the other.
I will generate her from my flesh,
And we will conform to the themes,
The ebb and flow
Of this green-gold
And blue world.

I lie on carpeted forest floor,
Birthing chamber for the other.
The planet's star mounts blue heaven,
Then passes behind the thigh
Of a distant hill.
As magenta evening falls,
She is complete,
Glistening,
Bejeweled,
In the fading light.

Dusk born,
Symmetric in all parts,
Graceful queen of twilight,
She wants naming.
She shall be
Eve.

ADAM

It is done!
I am transformed!

Staring into still forest pools,
I admire my new being,
Fair, symmetric, lithe.

I observe the working of each joint,
Flow of muscle,
Graceful movement of limbs.
I open my mouth to speak,
And am amazed
At the sound of my voice.

What shall I call this new thing,
Self created?
Ego demands it;
Adam I was,
And Adam I shall be
On this nascent world.

Now,
While the power of creation
Still surges strong within,
Another birth is due,
For to beget life on this fertile sphere,
Two must join
To bring forth another.
It is a mechanism most peculiar,
But upon reflection,
Marvelous.
How blessed the one who carries life.

That is my next task,
To shape the vessel of new life,
Before star memories fade irrevocably.

Occasionally she was allowed to sit by his bedside. Softly stroking his hand, she'd encourage him in her most grown-up voice. "It's okay, Paw Paw. You'll be better real soon, and then we'll have lots of fun together."

It was about that time Johnsifer appeared. At least through her fanciful tales this imaginary companion sprang to life. She spoke of him matter-of-factly, never doubting the old man's acceptance. Yet when he asked her to describe this new found friend, she responded with the same sparkle that laced her voice when she told him about Christmas and all the wonders Santa had left for her.

"He has a brown suit and a green vest. He's about this big." She held her hand level with her own shoulder. "And he wears a round brown hat. He's got scratchy whiskers like you, Paw Paw, and tiny glasses too."

The old man smiled, "Sounds like a fine fellow to me."

"Oh, he is! And we do all kinds of things together. He's got a little banjo so we can sing. He even knows "Sweet Sue"--but he doesn't play as good as you."

As the old man's health had returned, he and Sukey would wander through the flower garden sharing her dreams and his

memories. He leaned heavily on his cane, while she, measuring her steps to his, chattered in double time with the latest episode of The Adventures of Johnsifer and Sukey. These afternoon strolls had become the highlight of the old man's week.

That particular afternoon, as he began to nod off in his easy chair, the mantle clock struck the hour, but before it had reached the twelfth bong, the front door jolted open, ushering in the smiling Sunday guests.

Sukey waited her turn while her little brother and new baby sister greeted the grandfather, then their own special ritual began. He pulled her onto his bony knee, saying, "Well, Sukey, how'd we do this week?"

She nestled into the arms that surrounded her with the lingering warmth of yesterday's Old Spice, and allowed him to begin the familiar inspection.

"One, two...", he examined her leg tenderly. "Only three bruises on this one. Not bad. Now let's see the other."

As she eagerly offered the right leg, he tickled her, and she wiggled still closer into his lap, her tiny forehead brushing against his day old beard, the one luxury he allowed himself in his otherwise clean-shaven week.

BIRTH

As it turns over upon itself,
This planet works on me,
Becomes me,
And I
Become it.
For now
I am content to lie cradled on leafy floor,
Sun dappled, warm, moist,
While the rhythm of life,
Micro and macroform,
Swarms around and through me.

Rested and renewed,
It occurs to me
That I prefer this deep bosomed world
To the harsh blaze of the Cosmos.
I melt into it, merge,
And change.

I will stay and scatter my children
Among swaying grasses of green veldts,
Arching mountains, blue and serene,
Vert jungles
Confusing in their multiplicity of life.

I shall be first of the race,
Shaping myself to the pattern of life
As found.

Observing all aspects,
Codes of creation,
Wondrous and strange,
But no stranger
Than that of other worlds,
Nor any less beautiful,
I am ready to begin.

Creator

ARRIVAL

How did I come to this verdant spot,
Oasis,
Jewel,
Floating in the starry night?

Exhausted,
I must rest.
My journey carried me
Through tides of space
And time.

It is pleasant to regard
The myriad creatures,
Bright and twittering,
That surround me
In this place.

How fair to mind and eye
The flashing colors are,
Gem green, vermillion,
Chrome yellow, azure,
Red of dying stars,
And
The sweet cacophony of sounds,
As these bits of warmth
Play out their little lives.

I will stay on this golden orb,
Make it my home,
Sink roots into its black loam,
And populate this world
With my offspring.

"Why, Sukey!" He congratulated her.
"I can only find five bruises altogether.
Last time we counted, uh, let me see..."

He rubbed his bristly chin slowly,
waiting for her to find the answer.

"Eight, Paw Paw, you found eight
last time. Remember? Cuz I fell off
my bike and my roller skates on Saturday,
and you said I'd better slow down or I'd
have no knees left."

"That's right. Now I remember."
He chuckled to himself, and hugged her
tightly yet tenderly, as if she were a
delicate, gossamer princess. She might
appear black and blue and roughnecked,
rather than pink and lacy and dainty, but
he loved her more dearly than any earthly
treasure. She seemed like a rough cut
diamond--her vibrance and strength hidden
deep inside.

An icy blast of January air slaps my
face as the door is opened. The long
retinue of rented limos and borrowed
black Cadillacs has reached its destina-
tion, and we are being shepherded from
the warmth of our velour lined vehicle
to join the family cluster of mourners on
the silent, uphill walk to the grave site.

Strings

In the distance, I see the reddish-brown mounds of clay shielding the coffin from the occasional gusts of north wind. The brass knobs and chrome scrolling reflect no warmth from the snowheavy clouds. Only the already occupied resting place, shrouded in hoarfrost and inscribed in granite 15 years earlier, offers any assurance that they will both R.I.P., together at last.

I hesitate with each step closer to these last physical reminders of my grandparents. My apprehension is punctuated by resistance from a frozen layer of dew under my feet.

Not this walk...

Not this grass...

But another, sweeter, journey crowds my mind...a casual wandering...away from this finality...back to adventuring...vitality...

Sukey rushed to her grandfather's side as the women began to clear away the dessert plates.

"Can we walk now, Paw Paw?"

"Of course, Honey. Tell your mother we're going out to the garden while I get our sweaters."

In these strings
Suspended above rosewood,
So taut, so vital, I feel
The tension of life--
Of potential music.

Plectrum caresses
electric wires--
Sounds become colors!
Deep, sonorous browns
and blacks

Clash

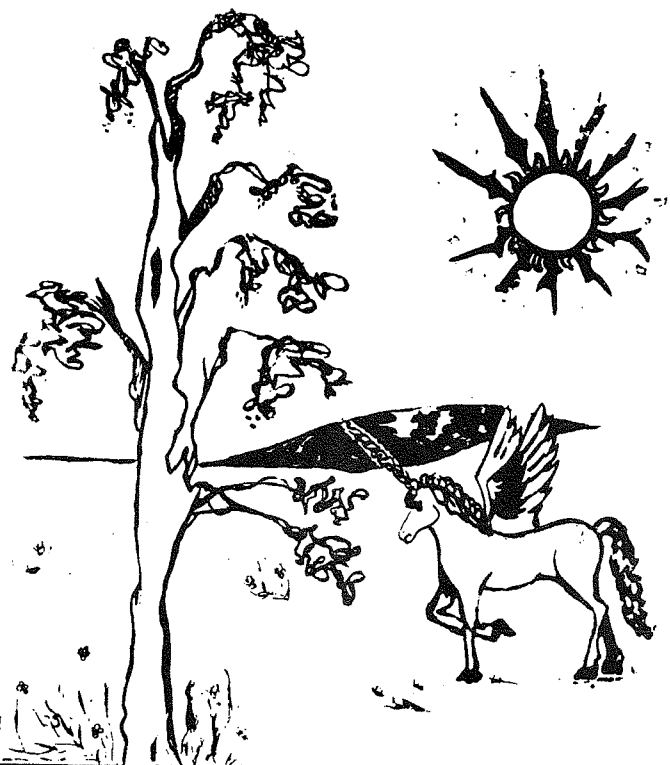
with screaming, crying
blue flame and white--
Colors become heat!
Melodic warmth, discordant chill.

I sense the feedback
pulsing through my fingers,
two-way communication--
As I play the strings
Likewise they play me.

End result,
a product
I cannot control,
nor care to.

The instrument, my bridge,
mind-meld with
the Supreme Being,
the cosmic consciousness;
Insight to truth
and peace
are found
In these strings....

-- Les Lessmiller



Seconds later she bounded out into the hallway. "Mommy says it's okay, but I gotta stay out of the apple tree cuz I got this dumb dress on."

She danced in a lively circle around him while he buttoned his shaggy grey cardigan, the final layer of his Sunday Clothes, as he called them--baggy, shiny-seated, grey flannel slacks, a soft, white cotton shirt, his favorite sweater, and well-worn brown Romeo slippers.

She thrust her anxious arms into her soft, blue sweater, and letting the screen door slap behind them, they ambled off to the world of discovery.

The flower garden was especially beautiful that early Fall. The roses burst past their thorns, the snap dragons crowded their stems with blossoms, and the branches of the apple tree drooped like tired arms from the weight of their juicy burdens. The young girl delighted in the bright colors and tempting smells. Only the old man felt the unmistakable nip of the changing season.

As they settled into the yard swing under their favorite tree, Sukey's expression tightened into a troublesome scowl.

"You know something, Paw Paw? I don't think Daddy likes Johnsifer very much."

The old man breathed deeply and smiled, giving her space to continue.

Mentor Mine

"He says I should play more with Ginger and Joey, and stop pretending so much. But I'm not pretending. Johnsifer is my friend. We help each other.

"Like yesterday, when we went for a walk in the woods, you know, down by Maple Street, and he couldn't make it up the mud hill, so I held his hand real tight, and pulled him up. Then we both slid down on our seats. But Johnsifer said not to worry, cuz the dirt would wash out.

"Then when we got to the creek, we watched the tiny fishes swim around in bunches. 'Schools' Johnsifer called them. Is that right, Paw Paw?"

The old man nodded.

"Anyway, then we watched the little bugs too. And I told him that sometimes fish ate frogs, like the fake frog you have in your tackle box.

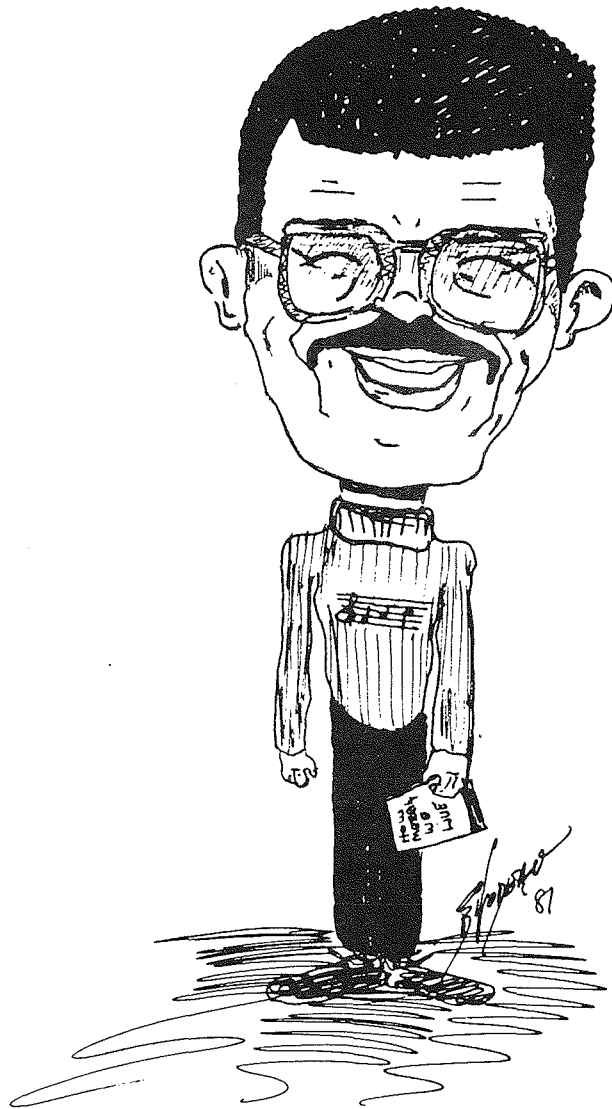
"Remember the time we caught that giant bass?"

"Of course I do, Honey. You yelled so loud half the other boats on the lake heard you. And when we cleaned that bass ...!"

"Yeah, I didn't like it very much-- all that squishy stuff inside. But you said we had to clean it before we could eat it. And then, and then, I asked you if a big fish would clean me before he ate me!"

Oh, owl-browed man of letters,
Parting the air with a delicate hand,
You are so false to your fragile frame.
Your voice echoes through my memory
As my eyes scan the page.
The phrases become volumes
Pulsations growing to electricity.
Your crouched intensity
Ignites my sleeping curiosity,
And thank-you seems so inadequate
For such a gentle manly opening of the door.

-- Sue DeKelver



MAESTRO SCHOONOVER
-- Andy Bilodeau

They laughed through a hug, letting the swing settle to a stand still as Sukey continued.

"Then Johnsifer found a real frog. I hopped behind it for a while, and you know what? They hop zig zag. Johnsifer says it's so they don't get caught. So snakes can't catch them and eat them." She paused, forming a question.

"Paw Paw, do people eat snakes?"

"Sometimes, Sukey."

"And snakes eat frogs, right?"

"Yes, Honey."

"And frogs eat bugs?"

"Just like the fish do."

"Boy, it sure is confusing, but I guess everybody is food for somebody else, huh?"

The old man smiled and reached into his pocket for their cigarettes. He handed her a chalky-white candy Lucky Strike with a bright pink flame. Then, striking a long kitchen match against the chain of the swing, he lit his own Camel, non-filter. As always, Sukey blew out the match.

Ode on a Stuffy Classroom

"In the name of the Father, and of
the Son, and of..."

As the priest begins the service, I
focus on the faces of the family and
friends who've come to pay their last
respects to this woman I called Grandmother .

The bent and craggy great aunts who
outlived her through handfuls of pills and
endless consultations with doctors...

The solemn neighbors, wondering who
will tend the flower garden now that
Barbara is gone...

The somber son, squaring his shoulders
to the weeks ahead of finalizing the estate
and the months ahead of parenting without
being parented...

The grandchildren, my sister especially,
who as a child, ruffled the frilly pink
dresses and mothered the baby dolls that
our grandmother so loved to give...

And finally, my youngest brother; the
recipient of all the old woman's love after
her husband died; the infant who could be
cuddled and rocked to sleep; the young boy,
cookied and coddled and generally overin-
dulged to the rest of the family's dismay--
now the young man, knowing the pain of
death for the first time, openly weeping
over the loss of his special grandparent.

The air is dense and crowded;

My chest is weighted down

With heavy dampness.

Closing walls,

And windows only cracked open

Hold back refreshment and freedom.

The lonely sun

Without her sister breeze

Stares with pressing heat

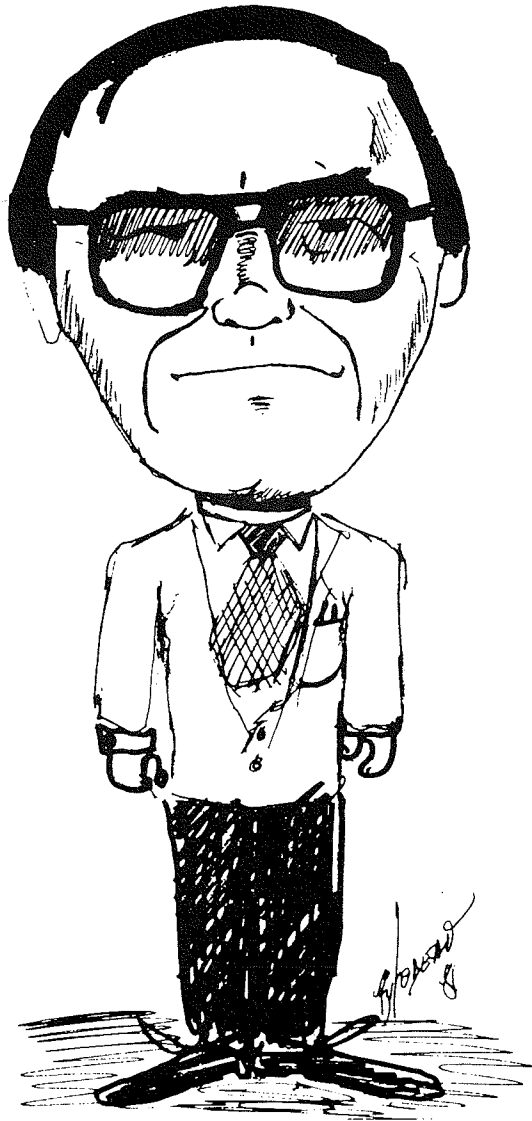
Upon this room of resocialization.

Only the metal marker of time,

Or the unburdening of the clouds,

Can alter this drowsing pain.

-- Sue DeKolver



PROFESSOR RICHARDS
-- Andy Bilodeau

I reach out to touch his shoulder, remembering how it hurts to say goodbye to the grandparent you adore--the grandparent who made you feel so special, and as the tears begin to drip off my own cheeks, a grandfather's voice echoes in my ear, pulling me back to the garden once again.

"So what else did you and Johnsifer do yesterday?"

"Well, we found this real neat tree to climb, only he waited on the ground while I tried it out first. When I started getting way high up, Johnsifer told me to come back down. He said I'd get hurt. And then, just when I jumped to the ground, my foot twisted and I crashed down on my knee. Johnsifer said, 'One more for the collection!' I guess he meant this."

She pointed to a navy and dark red splotch.

As the old man stroked the small bruise, he wondered if anyone could keep her from harm. Could anyone suppress the lively spirit that drove her to the tops of trees, that sent her sprawling over bike handles, or rummaging through the neighborhood trash?

He wished there were some way he could always be there to guide and protect her, but more importantly, to encourage and enjoy her.

A voice from the back porch interrupted his reverie.

"We've got to go now, Pop. See you next week. Come on, Sukey, time to go home."

A polyphony of Amens finalizes the funeral service. I hesitate, taking one last look at their tombstone.

"Barbara, beloved wife of..."

But my eyes transform the letters of his epitaph into my own favorite name for him.

"Paw Paw."

I turn from the grave site, back to the garden...

"Okay, Daddy. I'll be right there."

From the yard swing, the old man waved goodbye to the rest of the family, and taking Sukey's hand in his, he touched her smiling face.

New National Anthem

Lucifer would be pleased to see us now;
Sodom and Gomorrah, if they could speak,
Would call us the perfect seed to sow
To reap the harvests of iniquity.

We pledge allegiance to the currency
Of the United States of America,
And to the illusion for which it stands
And to the highest incomes per capita.

We earn our money and drink it away,
Hunting sensual treasures that never pall
Our senses. One nation under lust
With jealousy and contempt for all.

Much time has passed in perfecting it, so
Please don't disturb our inner sanctum.
Freely let oil and alcohol flow--
This is our new national anthem.....

-- Les Lessmiller



RUSHING STREAM
-- Robert Fritz

"Will you tell me more about Johnsifer next week?"

"Sure, Paw Paw. Johnsifer and I will always have lots more to tell you."

She turned to leave, but spun back and stared straight through the wire rim glasses into his pale blue eyes.

"I love you, Paw Paw," she beamed. "I love you a whole bunch!"

"I love you too, Sukey, more than you know."

As she skipped off toward the house, the old man watched the shadow of her tiny companion following eagerly behind her.

"Stay close to her, Johnsifer," he whispered softly. "For all the times when I can't be with her."

-- Sue DeKolver

You're Welcome

You don't have to be afraid
to say thank you.

It's just a simple

Condensation

Of the volumes

In your eyes--

Two words

That tell me,

What we both already know

That I know.

So, don't be afraid to say

Thank you.

I won't bite...

Unless you want me to.

-- Jessica Audin

Househusband

Unemployed--

By chance, not by choice.
Makes the best of a
new role;

sweet rolls,
Baking bread, making beds,
scrubbing floors
household chores.

Doing what must be done
to get by.

No macho here--

No suffocation of male ego.
He believes in the wait-and-see;
Let things be.

The woman signs the lines now,
The woman puts in time now
And he loves that woman.

Is this man insane,
Or simply more able
To see things clearly,
To view
the grand scheme,
the basic theme?

Unemployed--

By chance, not by choice.
The lower class has always
known

the means,
the way
To self-actualization,
To be fettered,
yet free.....

-- Les Lessmiller

Gloria Steinem

I'd like to see her--

Gloria Steinem,

Driving a '69 Plymouth

and wondering:

"Where is the next rent payment
coming from?"

Would her mind be on ERA

Or the electric bill

She'd have to pay?

-- Les Lessmiller

The Search

Long ago i began

a search

for something that seemed

unattainable.

i traveled by

land, air, and sea

looking for it.

i climbed mountains,

i crossed deserts

to no avail,

but then, one day,

i looked in your eyes

and found

love.

-- Anne M. Valley

Afternoon: March 22, 1981

Tomcat and I,

On the big log:

Front yard of my parents' place

In the woods.

Sun is shining,

Cat is purring,

All around is

contentment.

-- Les Lesmiller

Defense Mechanisms

Currents of current thought
Winds of exchange--
Barometer registers high pressure
situation
Best to keep up a cold front.

-- Les Lesmiller

Lovers in Retreat

She is plain, very plain,
but she loves adventure stories
like Dumas' The Three Musketeers
which she reads
when no one's around.

For her, life is a sepulchre,
just as Aramis said--something
to that effect--when he was
going to become a priest
because he thought his love
abandoned him.

She retreats more and more,
pretending she is Constance
or Aramis' lover.

But Constance died,
Aramis became a priest.
So goes the way of lovers
who retreat.

-- Anne M. Valley

Surrender

I never feel so naked
As when you undress me with your mind.
Stripping me of all my pretty defenses,
Unmasking my fragile vulnerabilities.

Oh, I've bared my breast for a handful,
And my soul has raised its skirt
For those who take some part of me,
Giving their parts in return.

But you disrobe the all of me,
Leaving nothing for modesty to veil.
You cut through to the core of my being,
Penetrate my lust,
Expose my lies,
Pierce my every disguise.

You wisely use my strength to conquer me,
Directing my passion with such gentle power,
That I barely realize I've been had
By a cunning far greater than mine.

You've beaten me at my own game,
And I bow,
In humble submission,
To the lord of my soul,
The grand master of my heart.

-- Jessica Audin

Cold, crisp, chilly mornings
we get out of our warm beds
with goose bumps on our bodies.

-- Diana LeRoy

Hot humid nights
trying to rest comfortably
we stick to our sheets

-- Diana LeRoy



An apple blossom
falls softly off its branch
to the wet green grass.
Diana LeRoy