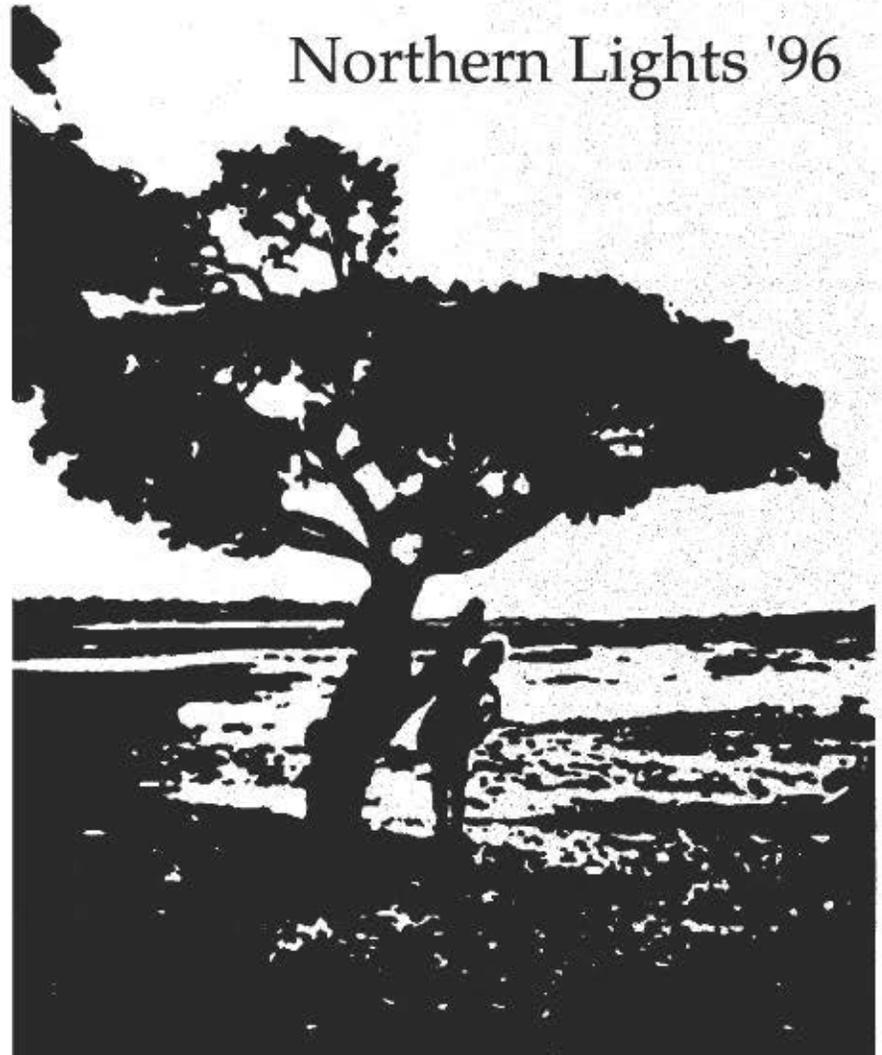


Northern Lights '96



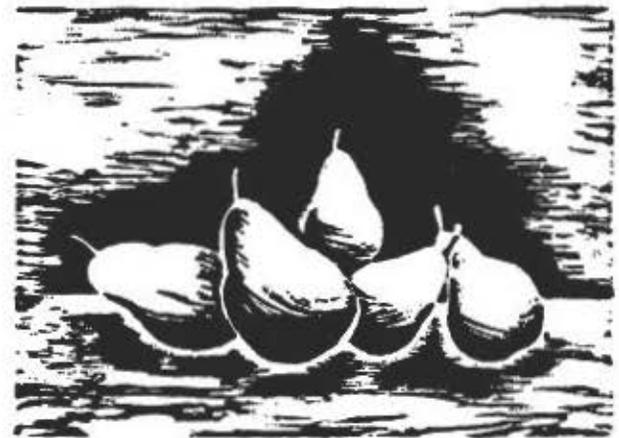
University of Wisconsin Center
Marinette County
Arts Journal

Northern Lights

1996

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Fruited Plain by Liz Erickson

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Acknowledgments

We were not able to publish all the entries submitted this year, but we wish to thank everyone who contributed. Thanks also to ABC Printers for their printing assistance.

Editorial Committee: Jane Oitzinger, chair; Maureen Molle, Katherine Holman, James LaMalfa, Linda Lemire, Kathi Pollard and Herbert Williams.

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Circle of the Center

by Fran DalSanto

Presented at the 1995 Fall Convocation/Dean's Investiture

An opulence of nature
Embraces the senses –
Blue/ green/ windsong
Captured in the circle of trees
Which now reach longer
toward the sun;
Earth hugs
Us each a little closer
In the cycle
Of birth and death
And life-giving energy.

The Circle which we form –
with walls that stretch
and swell and open and grow
yet snugly surround
the mutable center of the circle;

The circle which we form
germinates thought
liberates hope
stimulates reach

celebrates the diversity
of dreams and realities
we each bring
to the circle
which we form.

The swellings and contractions
In the cycle of the circle
Forge paths for our memories
And birth new possibilities
which will form and evolve
in the cycle that revolves
around an opulence of nature
embracing the senses
with blue/ green/ windsong.

We are each of the circle –
reaching longer toward the sun
bending nearer to the Earth
sowing thoughts
and hopes
and dreams
in the center

Of the Circle of the Center.



Dolphins by Dena Osting

Oasis

by Kris Leitzke

Best friends are better than sisters in one very important way: they don't remember changing your diaper. The girl that got you through pimples and high school crushes, college and affairs of the heart, marriage and babies is the one person you want to talk to when things go wrong.

"Are you able to come talk with me today? I'll make a pot of coffee and I baked those brownies that you love so much." I'm trying not to sound depressed, but I know that Anne can hear it in my voice.

In a calm, reassuring tone that follows a brief pause, Anne says, "I'll have Mike watch the kids this afternoon and I'll see you about 1:30. Hang on 'till I get there."

At 1:15, the aroma of freshly ground coffee wafts through the apartment. After living in a 12-room house, this two-bedroom postage-stamp-sized apartment is quite a change – although it is quicker to clean.

"That couch looks like a stage prop. My bed doesn't look right in that room. I hate having neighbors who keep me up all night while they watch T.V. I'm going to the mall, Mom. I'll be back later." The voice of the 16-year-old, dark-eyed whirlwind named Katie rages through the apartment. Yet the body is out the door when this final sentence is shouted and before I can ask her where she got that skirt she's wearing.

The coffee smells like cinnamon, the brownies fulfill my craving for chocolate, and my soul is searching for peace with the blonde woman across the table from me.

"So... how's Katie?" Such an innocent question yet so charged with emotion. She knows why she's here, and she knows how much I need her.

"Katie is so hurt by all this. She told me this morning that her father says that my selfishness in going back to work is what caused the divorce. And, she sounds like she believes it."

My brownie has lost its appeal, but the gold flecks in the table top have suddenly become fascinating. My head is bowed with a pervasive sense of dejection, my fingers tracing imaginary patterns on the table.

"All she sees is that I've taken her away from her home, and that I'm not here with a hot meal when she gets back from school. I'm trying so hard to do what's best for us, but I think I'm losing her."

The tears I've been fighting all day begin to trickle down my face. Anne looks at me and smiles that funny half smile/half frown she

taught herself in the seventh grade as her first attempt at flirting with boys. She squeezes my hands to stop their restless movements.

"Katie loves you. Give her time to adjust. Do what I do with my teenagers: consider her partially brain-dead until she turns 21!" A reluctant laugh is interwoven with the inevitable hiccups that accompany my crying spells.

"Tell me about work. Do your numbers still crunch? Does your computer still byte?" She likes to make jokes about my accounting job. She likes to remind me that, thanks to her, I got an "A" in calculus, and she knows how terrified of computers I was when I took a job after 17 years out of the work force.

"The job is great. Now I even have my own office, but I still don't have a window. It's great getting a pay check for something I'm good at and that I really like to do."

Just when I'm feeling better, she manages to make another direct hit. "How's the house hunting coming along?"

"I found a wonderful little white house with black shutters last week. It has three bedrooms, so Katie can have her own room and I can have a home office. There's a nice backyard, two trees in the front, and a small garage. I can see putting a rocking chair on the front porch and sitting there after supper to unwind."

"Katie hates it though. I took her to see it yesterday, but the whole way out there she complained about how far it was from her school and how she would never get to see her friends if we moved."

"How can I ask her to move again when I know she's still upset about coming here? Oh, Anne, I love that house. It's perfect. It's closer to work than this apartment is and it's in my price range."

Anne nods her head as if to confirm some deep thought. "I know how to fix that: we'll find where a cute neighborhood boy lives. So next time you take her to the house, go slowly past the boy's house and give her a nice long look at him." This is a woman with a slightly devious mind, but I like the plan and it just might work.

"Now for the good stuff..." Anne has a wicked gleam in her eyes, and I know where this conversation is going. She leans closer to me, and with the question she's been dying to ask all afternoon, she finds another touchy subject: "How's his new girlfriend?"

"The best thing I can say about a girl half my age and half my size is Katie hates her." These last three words are said in unison as we dissolve into tears of laughter. This is why I love Anne. She always makes me see the funny side of life.

"Oh, I talked to Joyce yesterday, and she asked me when I would

come to my senses and go back to him. She said no other man would ever take care of me as well as he did. Are all big sisters like that?"

Then Anne, very petite and feminine, made the most amazing masculine noise: a derisive part snort, part laugh erupted from her nose. "The next time your sister makes a comment like that, tell her if he's such a good catch, she should have married him. You know that you didn't cause this divorce, and I want you always to remember one thing, you don't need a man to take care of you."

Anne stands up, stretches her arms above her head, then picks up her purse. I'm feeling normal again and she can tell I'll be able to cope with life. She knows she's done her job for the day and that it's safe to leave me alone.

"Well, I hate to say it, but I've got to go. Tomorrow we'll go see your dream house and scope out the neighborhood for potential boyfriends for Katie. Trust me, by the time we get done, she'll think it was her idea to move." She tucks a stray lock of hair behind my ear, playfully slaps me on the cheek, then winks as she closes the door.

* * *

While I plant the first red and white geraniums of the year into the window boxes of the house, Katie and one of her friends are giggling contentedly on the bench we bought for the front porch. At some point today, the two of them have exchanged clothes and Katie is wearing a pair of her friend's blue plaid boxer shorts.

As the ringing of the kitchen phone reaches us through an open window, the girls give out a piercing squeal and run to answer it.

"Hey, Mom, it's Auntie Anne." Poor Katie, she must have thought it was that cute boy they've been talking about all morning. It's almost prom time and she's still waiting for him to get up the nerve to ask her out.

As I wipe the dirt from my hands, Katie says she's going to her friend's house and she'll be home after supper. She hugs me and races out the door. I pick up the phone and lightheartedly say, "Hi honey, how are you?"

That's when I hear it, the small, hurt voice of my very best friend, my oasis. "Can I talk with you today? I'll make a pot of coffee and I'll buy those cream-filled doughnuts you like."



Butterflies by Sarah Duran

Balancing Act
by Fran DalSanto

Does fantasy
make reality
more bearable?
Or is reality
but a rude interruption
of the fantasies
which keep us alive?

why is this the way?
by Woody Story

father sky has turned away
mother earth weeps
the great white whale has spoken
the four-leggeds have returned to the earth
the rivers run black
the deer and wolf have forsaken us
the sky shows no happiness
why have they come?
my brother lies drunk in their jail
my sister lives in a drug world
our crops have died
our fish swim no more
our families wander unfamiliar land
our language is not spoken
our gods have died
our young are their young
the elders speak only of memories
the teachings are forgotten
the indian, a white
the warrior, a beggar
the mother, a thief
gather what is left my brother
gather and reap your heritage
return to what was
leave behind what is
look as the eagle
not as the coyote
bring back father sky
dry mother earth's tears

Innocence Lost

by Kathi Pollard

In childlike wonder, I boldly stroked
the clarity of my idealism in watercolor
with the fervor and tenacity of a Michelangelo.

My Mediterranean-blue skyline
always bordered a Kentucky bluegrass lawn,
and the blaze orange sun held a
permanent place in my firmament
picture after picture.

My once soft, supple brushes
sit in their jar, idle now,
crusted and brittle from neglect.

My strokes have lost
innocence and purpose.

My colors have become muted
variations of original hues.

And my once immovable sun
now dribbles jaundiced rivulets
through a hazy winter-gray sky
into parched, mud-brown wasteland.

The Encounter

by Lyle Espenscheid

Would three white people in a red sports car back up a whole city block, just to give him a ride in the direction his thumb pointed? We did! Tossing aside caution, we welcomed him into our air-conditioned cocoon filled with empty pop cans, chips, maps, fresh fruit, and dream-catchers.

We had been off on the dude routine: to see wild stallions romp through wild grass with wild abandon, tamed by no one, answering only to the spirits inherited from the winds. After concrete gave way to blacktop which gave way to gravel which gave way to dirt and spine-jarring washboard bumps, we beheld the broken down *ranch house* and several mangy tepees, graced by a weathered sign proclaiming that these very tepees appeared in *Dances with Wolves*. How does the current expression go? “-NOT!”

The stallions were taking a coffee break and were nowhere to be seen. What we saw was a broken-down school bus loaded with a dozen or so city slickers ready for an artery-plugging steak roundup to the tune of \$45.00 a head. Even a clouded crystal ball would show that this was not a good deal for some heat-wilted lettuce, bitter coffee, and other *fixin's*. So we retreated over the washboard, the gravel, the blacktop, and hit the concrete.

And there he was! Reservation displaced, city of Omaha Sioux. Tall. Thin. Hungry. Blood thinned slightly by a couple of cans of Coors. Our immediate impression: he was safe. Likeable. In tune with the land. He was a storyteller. He talked about his family. He talked about the land. He helped us try to pronounce some of his language. He asked about us; we asked about him. All of us were glad we backed up that city block.

It's good to get a perspective from one of the land's original tenants. Even the years in the city hadn't erased the kid in him. He was fascinated by the mountain becoming Crazy Horse, although he said the mountain should have been left a mountain. He seemed happy; we were!

Its license plates advertise South Dakota as the Mt. Rushmore place: four presidents' granite faces blasted from a sacred mountain; one the face of a slave holder, another of a man who slaughtered innocents while emancipating others. The other two were not any kinder or gentler. When we rounded the final tight curve, he saw them first and pointed them out to us. I had seen them before, but this time I couldn't muster more than a glance. Maybe my perspective has indeed changed.

We merged into the queue exiting the park and in the gathering

darkness drove him to his sister's home. He left us with a few more dollars in his pocket and three new friends; we left him, richer than we had been 100 miles before.



Untitled by Anthony Edlbeck

Haiku

by Kathi Pollard

Tulips bending in
the spring breeze like jesters who
bow before the queen.

* * *

Geese fly overhead
honking just like taxis caught
in city traffic.

* * *

Babbling brook chatters
as it carries yesterday's
leaves out to the sea.

* * *

Rainbow colors spread
across the lawn's dewdrops like
glittering diamonds.

* * *

Caterpillar creeps
through the jungle of fresh-mowed
grass struggling toward home.

* * *

Orioles chirping
Outside my morning window,
Pleasant wake-up call.

* * *

Little mouse scampers
below my cat who's perched atop
the piano bench.

* * *

Winding trails through woods
are, in truth, paths to my soul,
solitude my guide.



Mighty Bird by Adam Mullins

Orchestration
by Gabriella Sheldon

Love orchestrates the
Melodies of my heart.
I dare not sing alone,
For those I love
Sing the harmonies.
Together we make the song.
And the scope and the breath
Of that holy refrain
Reach to the sky,
Lifting our spirits up,
Until we soar
As the eagle does
On the wings of love.



Long Necks by Adam Mullins

Mind Games

by Fran DalSanto

Ideas are toys
for the imagination:
thought games
and personal revelation;
fleet-footed mind bursts;
private joys.

Perspective

by Fran DalSanto

I'm a fallen leaf -
green at heart,
a flash of color,
and a bit faded
around the edges.



Chillin by Tim Thieme

The Coyote

by Rick Rickaby

The sun rolled sluggishly down toward the earth as it neared the end of its daily passage. It seemed to hesitate at the top of a tall beech before continuing its slow descent behind the wooded backdrop beyond the dry, grassy field. In the sun's hesitation it appeared to look back toward the field to watch the deer and field mice before it took with it the last particles of sunlight.

A red-tailed hawk glided effortlessly overhead, adjusting its tail feathers slightly to make a wide circle over the field below; its sharp eyes scanned the ground for the quick flash of a brown field mouse. As the hawk soared on to the next field, a yearling buck stepped warily out from a protective cover of cedars. After looking around for a moment, the deer decided it was safe and walked further out into the field. Another, older buck stepped half out of the cedars, hesitated, and, assured no danger was present, moved further out and began nibbling at the short clover.

Another movement at the edge of the trees caught my attention. Straining my eyes, I could make out a hirsute gray and red coyote. I felt a pang of anger at the thought that this coyote could be hunting and killing these deer, although, I realized later, I had never heard of coyotes bringing down deer in the area. The gaunt coyote slinked out further into the field and paused close to my treestand. Standing up slowly, I drew back my bow and placed the sight pin on its shaggy red shoulder. I felt the rush of adrenaline that comes just before the kill; then the coyote did an odd thing. It yawned. Then it sat down on its haunches and licked at the matted fur on its chest. Suddenly I didn't seem able to unleash the deadly arrow, so I slowly eased the bow string forward.

The two bucks had at this time nibbled their way further out into the field, unconcerned with the coyote now sitting lazily in the cool autumn evening.

We hunters like to think of game as being ours and feel threatened by anything that could steal it from us in the night, not at all unlike a farmer protecting his herd. What we fail to realize is that the non-human, untamed predators still have the right, even more so than humans, to hunt the untamed prey.

I can remember a cold winter's night a few years ago when a coyote crept up close to the barn. We kept our sheep in a fenced off area near the barn, which made it easy for the coyote to kill them inside the fence. I was with my father when he went to the house, grabbed the 30-30 rifle

off the rack, and went back out into the chill night air. Standing next to him, I heard the sharp report of the rifle and then saw the coyote running back safely into the dark night away from the barn.

I asked later why he didn't kill it; he explained that although it would be legal and most other farmers in the area wouldn't complain about one less coyote in the area, killing wasn't always necessary. The coyote never did come back close to the barn.

I know now that my father deliberately taught me a lesson that night. We live in an agricultural society but must also respect our cousins who still live by the standards set forth at the beginning of time.

As I sat back in my treestand watching the two bucks move further away, I realized that it was the coyote's human-like yawn and lazy contentment that kept me from killing it. It was then that I felt a certain kinship with it: although we hunt by different means, I with my bow and the coyote with its quickness and skill, we are both hunters, both pursuing the same game.

The coyote sat happily scratching away at its side, oblivious to me sitting in the tree almost directly above it. Suddenly it stood up and looked intently at the ground before it. It swatted playfully at the ground with its tawny front paws and finally pinned something to the ground. It reached down with its mouth to where its front paws were held firmly to the ground, and I could see that it had a squeaking field mouse trying desperately to get back to its safe home. The coyote snatched it in its teeth, gave it a playful flip in the air, and then deftly snapped it back into its mouth.



Jungle Lion by Nikki Cairns

The Machine

by Lucia Stedman

Man boasts of the modern technology that surrounds his everyday life. We have machines that do almost anything at the touch of a button. There are remote controls for the television and even lights that can be turned on by a simple clap of the hands. But one technology that is in great use and yet overlooked is the family dog. The family dog, considered to be man's best friend, is a highly advanced machine that is easy to operate. However, it comes in three varieties to suit the individual need: the Domestic Helper, the Mail Carrier, and the Professional Psychiatrist.

The dog comes with built-in programs that enable it to have domestic abilities. Although it is not so advanced, it can do basic things that allow human beings' lives to be much easier. As a Domestic Helper, in the morning it automatically comes into your room and crawls into your bed. It then makes funny noises so that you know it's time to get up. Unlike the normal alarm clock, you cannot reach out and switch the dog off. You have to get up or eventually pay the price of oversleeping. The dog's program has a delayed timer that goes off in seconds, making it pee or poop all over the carpet; you have to get up to take it outside before that happens.

There has not yet been a machine developed to retrieve the newspaper or letters as well as the family dog. Through any weather, the dog can find and retrieve mail or newspapers with great efficiency. With new techniques in dog intelligence, it is able to insure the prompt delivery of service. Mail Carrier family dogs usually know what time to expect the mail and will switch to the attack mode when the mail or newspaper is late. Newspaper and mail deliverers are well aware of the promptness expected by the family dog, so they ensure that mail is delivered on time.

Instead of spending thousands of dollars on a psychiatrist, it is more economical to buy a family dog. The dog has a skill that no machine possesses: it is an excellent listener. Psychiatrists receive thousands of dollars from their patients yet cannot guarantee results. And there are no refunds! The psychiatric family dog gives therapy free of charge and always succeeds with maximum results. Another advantage to eliminating the psychiatrist lies in the reduction in the cost of medications and the trouble one has in remembering to take them. All the family dog needs is a simple stick or a ball to cheer up a person. Scientists have proven that when the patient throws the stick or ball a particular distance, and the dog returns the stick or ball so that the patient can throw

it again, a definite improvement in the disposition of the patient occurs. This method relieves stress and depression very easily in humans.

With these advantages in mind, it is wise to consider the addition of the family dog to one's accumulation of modern, labor-saving and beneficial machines.



Relaxing with a Friend by Tim Thieme

Aunt Margie's Experience

by Kaycee Cadogan

Aunt Margie lived in Barbados all of her life before she decided to move to North America. Since she was widowed, she felt that at the age of forty-eight, she should visit another country and experience a different culture. She was so excited about moving that she could hardly wait for the day of her departure.

The time finally arrived for Aunt Margie to leave. She decided to settle in the state of Wisconsin in a small town called Marinette. Aunt Margie loved this town so much that she wrote to her many friends and relatives, telling them how wonderful everything was. Aunt Margie loved everything, especially the weather. She arrived in the middle of fall when the trees' leaves were turning to bright red and deep orange. Aunt Margie was so ecstatic about this new experience that she went out and bought a video camera from Sears. She filmed eight tapes depicting the town and the country in all its splendor.

It was now the beginning of November, and all the leaves had fallen off the trees. "How divine that the trees lost their leaves to prepare for the upcoming winter!" exclaimed Aunt Margie. She loved everything and was really looking forward to the winter. "I can't wait!" was her response when the locals told her that winter was near.

One morning in the middle of November, Aunt Margie awoke to a day filled with beautiful sunshine, but the falling snow wasn't like anything that Aunt Margie had expected. She jumped up out of bed and quickly dressed in her boots and winter jacket, scarf, earmuffs, hat and a pair of gloves. Then she ran outside with her video camera and started filming. She was so excited that she called her father in Barbados, her sister in St. Lucia and her son in St. Vincent and babbled for nearly 15 minutes to each about the snowfall.

It snowed all night and the next day everywhere was white. Although Aunt Margie was still exhausted from the previous day's activities, she just had to get up to enjoy the snow. She went out and filmed more snow, this time getting some of the neighbors to be a part of the excitement.

On the 21st of December, the weather man reported that there would be lots of snow for the remainder of the night and part of the next day. Aunt Margie sighed and wondered, "When is this thing going to stop!" That night it snowed heavily and the next day some of the neighboring schools were closed. Aunt Margie could not believe it; she was more than beside herself. She whined, "I have never seen anything so



Aghhhh by Kristin Henry

wild in all my life! When is this thing going to stop falling and messing up my plans?"

That night thirteen inches of snow were predicted for Marinette, so Aunt Margie got out her spades, two pairs of long-johns, gloves, socks, three scarves, and her jacket for the next day. She said, "I will be ready for this white mess tomorrow; we will see who is going to win!" Aunt Margie turned off the television and went to bed. She did not hear that it would be about forty degrees below zero and, with the windchill factor, would feel like sixty below. Strict warnings were given that people should try to stay indoors as there would be high winds and drifting snow.

The next morning when Aunt Margie looked out her window, she screamed, "I don't believe this! I really don't believe this! What have I done to deserve such a punishment?"

About three o'clock that afternoon, Aunt Margie called a taxi and, with three suitcases and a box, headed down to Green Bay. She boarded a Northwest Airlines plane and headed for home.

Upon arrival in Barbados, she was greeted by confused relatives. To their questions, she responded, "I said as I left, 'So long, Marinette. I'll see you when the sun decides to shine.'"



April by Melissa Ryan

It's a Year Now

by Kathi Pollard

It's a year now.

The bedroom which once resounded
With raucous jubilations of teens
Has been transformed into a study,
Though little study ever takes place there.

It's a year now.

The piano and trombone which
Regaled the household with their tones
Beg for someone's touch or breath,
But their pleas are ignored.

It's a year now.

The favorite apple tree you climbed in
And fell in love under
Droops its heavy arms wearily
Seeking comfort from its burden.

It's a year now.

The rosebush you helped me plant
The summer of your marriage
Did not bloom its beauty this year,
And now just weeps its leaves, one by one.

It's a year now.

Somehow it feels like a lifetime,
And my heart's unsteady rhythm
Confirms my daily suspicions,
That nothing will ever be the same.

The Crows are Cawing

by Gabriella Sheldon

The crows are cawing
As they did back then,
The time when the land
Bore no trace of man.
The pine trees waved
And the oak trees whispered,
softly, gently.
Together they grew.
Together they saw
What a people would do
To a wooded spot.
A road was etched
Near the rugged shore;
Dreams cleared trees,
But left a few
For the lesser folk.
And the crows cawed
While the squirrels chased
After fallen nuts
On the forest floor.

But dreams kept changing
The hidden homes
Of the sparrow, the thrush
And the white-tailed deer.
One day some people
Came together to dream,
To plan a place
Where the future'd hold
A piece of the past

With a grasp of the now.
And the people came
With shovels and hoes
And monstrous machines
That moved the earth.
Bricks and mortar
Joined rods of steel
To erect monuments,
Angular cradles
For a growing land.

The pages of calendars
Kept turning fast.
What once was new
Became the old.
One decade, two decades
Three decades now
These buildings stand
Where a forest grew.
Out on the bay
The waves still lap
And the seagulls call.
They've learned to accept
Man's breach in time.
Yes, the crows are cawing
As they did back then,
The time when the land
Bore no trace of man.
They know their place
In the scheme of things.
Is that why they sound so loud?