

NORTHERN LIGHTS

***1982
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Contributors

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

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Wendel Johnson	Tony Perkins
Michelle Koster	Anne Valley

Anonymous

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Window Frost

How came the pattern on my window?
No brush in earthly hand passed by.
No picture discernible by stretch of mind,
Yet the effect is so soothing to my eye.

-- Anonymous

The Visit

Hello! I would have straightened
had I known you were coming. But
come inside and overlook the disorder.
I think anyhow the clutter is a
permanent condition now.

I was just baking a pie and humming
a little snatch of something I heard
somewhere with someone. A long time
ago. I probably have forgotten it all
and made up an entirely strange tune
--remembering only the time or that
I heard something I liked. Oh ... yes,
it's done. Come have a piece with me
and we'll speak of why--yes, come ...
here you are ...

Now, as I was saying, we'll speak of
why you are here. It's been so very
very long since we last talked. I'm
glad you came.

-- Anonymous

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Self-Actualization

i am spontaneous
and child like even though i'm 23

i play hopscotch

ON

BLANKSIDEWALKS

(and embrace a lilac tree)

i am an INDIVIDUALIST who resists CONFORMITY

when others read bestsellers
i read Dumas and poetry

at the same time i need

SPACE

and my privacy

i guess

i am
SELF ACTUALIZED to my OWN self i'm true

thank you dear friend
for ACCEPTING me as i have ACCEPTED you

-- Anne Valley

Stars

Reaching through
Beyond my thoughts
Always there
Wisely gesturing
Nodding quietly
And winking at me.

So silly.
Swan, Lion,
Hunter, Twins.
So serious.

Anything
And everywhere
Now they're
In my eyes.

-- Judith Lintereur

Spring Cold

A spring cold
is not high drama
or a farce,
just a bad performance
from opening sneeze
to final tissue.

No encore, please.

-- Karen Atwood

Haiku

Green is the symbol
Of all things that are growing.
My lawn needs mowing.

-- Marlene Davidson

Outside Me/Inside Me

Maybe on the outside
I look the same
and act the same
as I did before,
but the real me--
the one that's hiding inside--
has grown in ways
you'll never know or understand.

I've learned things about loving
and giving
that I never realized existed.
I've learned about life
the hard way
and gone through a lot of pain.
But most of all, I've learned
about myself
and what the inner me
is really feeling.

All this happened inside of me
when your life touched mine
so long ago ...
when the slow and painful process
of growing up
began.

-- Diane Erickson

Since Those Warm Days

When I was very little, I spent a great deal of time with my grandmother. Our yard held two houses, one ours and one hers. Our yard was a real garden. We had apple trees, peach trees, berry bushes, and a vegetable garden. To some people our yard must have looked pretty shabby. There was a lot of shade from all those trees, so there wasn't a lot of grass growing on what should have been our lawn. There was also a lot of rotting fruit lying around. But all the kids in the neighborhood thought it looked fine. They must have--they were always playing in our yard instead of theirs.

Anyways, I spent a lot of time with my grandmother. She was old and gray, short, round, and every bit a rough German. My grandfather had divorced her sometime before I was born. He died a year after the divorce of pneumonia. Grandmother always claimed a cause and effect relationship between their divorce and his death. God's punishment, I guess. This all happened during the war.

Grandmother was the best cook I ever knew as a child. She agreed. My parents didn't appreciate that opinion, though, because I refused to eat many a meal my mother prepared due to my prejudice. It wasn't really the cooking that got me to eat better at Grandmother's house, it was her stories. Well, maybe the garlic, too. But between the garlic addiction and the story telling, the stories were by far my favorite.

Watch, you old people out there,
as your monthly checks
get smaller,
and for what?
remembering days that have
long been past?
All they want is for you
to die quickly.

Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
give it up before you're hurt.

Hey, you parents out there,
thinking your burned-out kids
will amount to something,
don't you know?
all they live for is a plant
grown illegally?
You'll be lucky if they
stay out of jail.

Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
give it up before you're hurt.

Hey, you planet earth out there,
always in fear of some
future destruction,
wishing that someday paradise
will be restored?

Give it up!
All you are is a cancer
on the universe.

Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
what's the use?
you'll still be hurt.

-- Tony Perkins

Pipedreams

Hey, you black kids out there,
playing in the streets of
the ghetto,
where are you going?
dreaming of future fame
and fortune?
Don't expect ever to leave
this slum you call home.
Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
give it up before you're hurt.

Look, you women out there,
slaving all day over
the stove,
what are you doing?
hoping for some day of happiness
and equality?
All you are is flesh
for men to desire.
Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
give it up before you're hurt.

Listen, you poor people out there,
living on handouts and
false promises,
what's the use?
dreaming someday your children
won't cry from hunger?
Political tools is all you are,
false hopes in every election.
Hey!
you're on a pipedream:
give it up before you're hurt.

Grandmother always had a story to go along with every meal. I ate lunch with her almost everyday while my mother worked. Each day another story would come with my meal. I got to know them so well that I would request favorites to go with certain dishes. If I became bored with the old stories, she would make up a new one right there at the table. Usually these were about the foods we were eating and what they thought about the whole idea. Especially the vegetables. I remember how she would tell me about the carrots and their natural indignation at being digested in a stomach that contained meat and potatoes. I guess it was the way she told those stories that got me to eat, or at least open my mouth in awe while she quickly shoveled it in. My mother never quite caught on to the trick and, consequently, I didn't eat very well at home.

In the summer my grandmother would select the best of the fallen apples and peel and quarter them for me. I didn't like apple peelings then, but I loved her very much. I promised her that I would marry her when I grew up, if she was still single.

Since those warm days I've grown older and much has changed. I rarely visit her at the nursing home now.

— Douglas Oitzinger

Imprints

The things you said are forever
imprinted on my mind.
They come back to haunt me
in the night air.
What happened to the love
I never dreamed I'd find,
And what makes me
still believe you care?

-- Diane Erickson

The Wall

All around me is growing,
learning, changing,
laughing, loving, and living.
But I grow no more:
My learning is left untried.
My only change is that of time,
and laughter is but a wind
howling about my empty shell.
My loving is a void
where not even tears fall.

For I have built a strong wall,
a sanctuary where I hide myself.
There the evils of the world
cannot penetrate,
nor the goodness.

To exist without hurt,
I must also exist
without happiness.

-- Sherry Dantine

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H
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CROSS TODAY
I
S

G
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A DECORATION
AN ADORNMENT

FASHIONABLE ELEGANT COMFORTABLE
STAINLESS STEEL CARVED WOOD POLISHED GLASS

WITHOUT

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P
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SPIKES SPEARS
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CHRISTLESS
GRACE-LESS

-- Lyle Espenscheid

Yearnings

Love of my life, respond
to my yearnings.
My feelings for you are unspoken.
Please read in my eyes
what my lips are afraid to speak.
I need your understanding.
I want to share my innermost thoughts
and desires with you.

Help me, hold me.
Have compassion for me--not contempt.
My mind is in turmoil, my heart
is aching.
Dearest love, save my mind and heart
from breaking.
Give my soul life.
Love me--I need you.

-- Michelle Koster

Haiku

Try to grasp the joys
From the beginning to end.
Life passes us by.

-- Marlene Davidson

It took a long time to find you
here inside
but it doesn't matter now
let me love you
and live with you
take my hand and walk with me

This life is surely madness
there's no logic to this existence
where are you Lord
where are you

See the sunrise
it is beautiful
I am not afraid
I love you
my heart is open

-- Douglas Oitzinger

He Said

As a dandelion puff on the wind,
A loose apple on a trembling tree,
Such are you without me.

-- Anonymous

Yielding to the Universe

Why do some people hear God
how is it that they
can talk with him
learn his will
what it is that he is saying
why doesn't he talk to all of us
when do you feel God inside you
know the peace that passes understanding
when are prayers answered
why aren't mine
are some of us supposed to wait longer
am I not worthy

I hear you so well
and I can talk with you
as if I've always known you
I am learning your ways
hearing your heart
I feel you inside me
and I in you
we seem at ease with each other
we are revealing ourselves
naked through our love

Hear me God
I need answers
what is to be the story
how shall it end
why leave me on this senseless planet
alone
why condemn me to this ignorance

The Silver Truck

I sit here impatiently waiting,
waiting for a silver truck
the silver truck;
it's a special one,
with a special person driving.

waiting ... waiting ... waiting ...

The silver truck never comes.
Other silver trucks pass,
many, many pass,
but not the silver truck;
besides, I don't want it to pass,
I want it to stop.

It never stops ...
Impatiently I watch
--day in, day out--
It never stops ...

My head says
it may never stop again.
My heart says
please, God, let it stop.

(The man driving is not my man,
can never be my man;
he belongs to someone else.)

He wants it that way,
my head says.
My heart says,
no--please, no--want me instead.

And day in, day out
I sit and wait ...
for the silver truck
that never stops ...

-- Theresa Krulatz

three roses

three roses there in the vase

--the kitchen around them--
long stems cut to different lengths,
red buds opening,
slowly, carefully,
the morning sun touches them;

sweet and still,
though I cannot see them,
I know they are,
I know they are there,
though I am not
and I know they are beautiful

-- Anonymous

Hunger sated
My spirit leaves this scene
Of necessary carnage,
And with regret
Rejoins my own kind.

Humanity's mechanical killing
Is an obscenity,
My spirit-owl's,
Dark Poetry.



-- James LaMalfa

Owl-Spirit

My spirit slips earthly bonds,
And is abroad
In dark arboreal forests,
Seeking a congenial vessel.

It is found in a great hunting owl,
Golden orbs searching out prey.

Small movement is detected,
Brief passage noted;
Then,
I launch into silent flight,
An airborne predator.

I twist, bank, slip, roll;
Avoiding obstacles,
Drawing in my wings,
I pounce,
Merciless.

Trajectory is true.
Spiked talons
Close on soft fur,
And entrails.

A brief staccato scream
Overrides soft night sounds,
Autumnal susurrations of my midnight realm.

Sharp-edged beak tears and rends.
I devour the still quivering form,
Bright blood spilling out on moss-carpeted
Forest floor.

Quiet Looks

I feel you smiling at me
as we make love
soft gentle quiet looks
that reach inside me
to bring a joy
I've not known before
but god
how natural this all seems
you speak to me with your smile
like a familiar dream
of an old friend

Being naked with you
is so easy
we touch as if we know
what each other is feeling
there is no tension
with you
only warm and safe
and I am happy

You brush my soul
with your naked skin
side by side
in the darkness of the room
breathing
love's memories
holding our softness
between us

I have no understanding
of why we are together
why it is you
why it is me
but it is enough
that you are here
that you have touched me,
and we can cling to each other
through the night's sleep



REFLECTIONS
-- Dan Neece

The Day of the Needles

As if all were waiting
for an appointed and agreed upon day,
the needles of Pinus strobus descended.
Today was the day!

The trees had been browning for weeks,
awaiting only the rain and wind
that would break their bond with mother tree.
Now they lie massed on the ground,
conspicuous,
until the maples fall.

Unlike the acorns,
they hold no hope for the future--
in fact, work hard to reduce diversity
by their acidic nature.
But constructive or destructive,
today was their day.

There has to be a day for the needles.

-- Wendel Johnson

That Aging Tree

Glistening golds, amber reds,
Transforming to hues of brown
Succumbing to the whims of the wind
Scarcely yielding a sound.
Once limber youth that swayed in the breeze
With trunk of supple bark,
Now creased with age and use
Stands alone in the cold and dark.
Majestic beauty has come with the years,
But few bother to see
The wisdom and strength still to be found
In that aging tree.

-- Sherry Dantine

Memories

Silver pond,
catch these images
and press them
in your memory,
so that when I return
there they will be--
rippling on your surface,
feelings and love
of a day
that has now
melted deep
into my mind.

-- Judith Lintercur

