"An author creates wonders.
An author breeds pleasures.
Somewhere . . . Sometime.
A reader reads the author's fabrication.
Which gives the author untold joys.
And this alone is the true reason
The author writes.
For he is the closest thing to God.
And God is the closest thing to him.

Thomas C. Webb

Perceptions is a creative arts magazine published by the Humanities division, Gainesville Junior College, to encourage the arts among students, faculty, and friends of the college. Some of the works published herein are the creative products of art and writing classes; others are contributions from friends of the creative arts. Poems, short fiction, essays, line and charcoal drawings, photographs, musical compositions, and short plays will be accepted for consideration during fall and winter quarters for publication each spring. Submit all written work (in typed form) and all photography, music, and art to the appropriate faculty sponsor.
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THE MEMORY

On quiet nights or busy days
the image flashes—
no less dimmed by time.
Tears so quick flow from
swollen streams of grief
that rage within

Rising,
Falling,

Reaching out to touch
damp curls on downy cheeks
resting gently on sheets bright
with Mother Goose and Jack-Be-Nimble.

But as I reach to pick you up,
Teddy Bear and Raggedy Anne
Gaze up,
lifeless and lonely,

Breasts still longing to be suckled
in rocking chairs
waiting patiently,
empty, empty.

Toy soldiers, Jack-in-the-Box
so cold in pools of moonlight
as I close the door
against the sorrow
one more time.

The memory too painful
to remember
is too precious to forget.
The Mother-Child that never was,
will always be.

Suzanne Allen
WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY THE OTHER DAY

Washington:
They said that Hiroshima and Nagasaki "saved lives;"
   They sought the survivors—alive, but radiation-doomed.

They said that NATO was a "deterrence against aggression";
   They scratched the walls: "Yankee, GO HOME!"

They said that Korea was to be divided into North and South;
   They scarred Korea's terrain; East and West's "limited war."

They said that the new peace had become a "Cold War";
   They siloed the earth with missiles, nuclear-tipped, to "keep the peace."

Moscow:
They said that "Western provocateurs" lit the Molotov cocktails in Budapest;
   They sledge-hammered "Freedom Fighters"; crushed defiant rock-throwers.

They said that "Socialist Unity" deterred "Western Imperialism";
   They shackled their people; "99.7% voted Communist!" they bragged.

They said that the Wall protected their people from "Western decadence;"
   They scoffed at blood staining the Wall's inner side.

They said that "your grandchildren will live under Communism;"
   They secluded their children behind an "Iron Curtain."

Washington:
They said that Bikini Atoll was a "perfect site"; Atomic Age eminent domain;
   They salted the air and sea with radiation—again and again.

They said the U-2 was a "lost weather plane";
   They swapped Powers for Abel—pawns in Cold War chess.

They said that the Bay of Pigs would create a Cuba without Castro.
   They salved their consciences with ransoms paid.
They said that Vietnam was "one of the dominoes";  
They shouted on campuses: "Hell no, we won't go!"

Moscow:  
They said that half a million Warsaw Pact soldiers had been "invited in";  
They shouted in Prague: "Russians, GO HOME!"

They said that they had come to protect them from "reactionaries";  
They scrawled swastikas on Soviet tanks, taunted Soviet crews.

They said that "Communist ideals had been betrayed";  
They spurned steel and spat defiance: "Why are you here?"

They said that they were not "occupiers, but Socialist comrades";  
They sacrificed freedom's frailties, again, but the Czechs did not send  

to know for whom the bells tolled.

"Who is on my side, Who?" II Kings, 9:32  
"Who is the slayer, who is the victim? Speak!" Sophocles  
"What region of the earth is not full of our calamities?" Virgil  
"But such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks  
and all it wants, is the liberty of appearing." T. Paine

Heyward Gnann
DECEMBER 9, 1980

Those of us who went to bed early last night
Rose to find once again that the world
Had been totally changed:
John the Seeker Lennon is dead
Joining the others whose lives
Bought the nameless a name:
John, Bobby, Martin and his mother,
Poor ruined George.

Honest John Lennon is dead.
Some final innocence
Some everlost hope
Fades in our psyches to a mechanized voice,
Voice without blood, throat, or tongue
Sings through rounded grooves
The music that now can never change again.

And we who feel that loss of growth for John
Know it also in ourselves, diminishing potential
This year of the decade's turning.
With slow familiarity we witness once again
The mangling of the one outstanding,
The slaying of the heroic.
"More popular than Jesus Christ," he said,
And like Him too this final way,
Impersonally destroyed by those
Who no way can achieve the personal creation
Of the individual person, the self, the soul of life.

"John loved and prayed," his widow said,
"For the human race. Please do the same for him."
But seeing what is human, we
Close heavy eyes to weep
And hold out empty hands
And listen silent for the help which will not come again.

Barbara McMichael
Graduate Study of Springtime
When the Moon is Full

stand up and take notice: when the dogwood flirt in May
skies the moon white white petals soft and blood i wished
upon a thorn bled good good red on May night wind i
it seems a time when a girl from the Bible belt prophet speak
must take it off and so she must she wants to see
where's the white-suited cowboy to come untie her from the tracks
bonds too strong to bite through but hemp raw gums bleed
blood i watch him as he rides strong as he comes comes
to the rescue from railway ties the moon even stronger smiles
(Chicken Little must you squawk?) hear here spring hear
so: you must lie and let lie with friends sweet
be laid in lies sweat in a back seat on Georgia 23 when the
moon is full trees waving in spring as you pass pass
spring's life as you pass fields which way does your garden
grow in country fields spill speed breakers of dead possums
entrails with Gretal's crumbs have fallen the red arrow
pointing to where life can be found in the springtime some
times the moon will sing you can hear it if you try try
try with ear to ground to hear it with tongue in cheek listen
listen with limbs sprawled Oh glory listen at night in May
listen in spring as panty hose stream out the window out
out like a wind sock which way blows the wind it blows so
strong so blow blow with beer's breath the candle out take
out the flame the fire in one last attempt to extinguish
every taste of red in the mouth of the smithy (or was it jones?)
it was was so long long ago i can't remember what time is
the time of spring and youth how do you do my dear my my
Oh my it's just so i am am i Joan no more in Domremy
has drowned has it in coors the voices they speak to me
too me and i must listen as they speak or is it just the moon
moon Oh in May Oh Dionysis what clever games you play
play will you escort me to the ball?

Lynne Ashe
ADVICE TO A FRIEND AT COLLEGE

Practice diligence, shun procrastination
For knowledge awaits to be attained
Pray to overcome any adverse situation
While creating a peace, pure and unfeigned
Once I possessed your opportunity
A chance that I would now cherish
May your efforts contain continuity
And your dreams never perish
Thus my wish of contented felicity
As you write another page of life
May it record productive, worthwhile activity
With gratitude to God, and exemption from strife.

Donnie Cockrel

NEW WORLD WOMAN

Vocal and assertive
A lady in disguise
Bold and extroverted
Much to my surprise
Determined and ambitious
World by the tail
Open, yet suspicious
How could she ever fail?
No time to be romantic
Afraid of being used
Too cool to be dramatic
If she ever becomes confused
Possessor of a super face
Uses it to better her place
Has yet to join the human race
Happiness she'll always chase.

Donnie Cockrel
WHEN THE FIRST TRUE RODENT CREPT OUT OF THE SWAMP

For Loren Eiseley

The chances were one in fifty million or so the rat would make it. Paleocene whirling—"Whirl is king," laughs Aristophanes—didn't stop his grassland, burrowing life. He got good at it—prairie dogs and chipmunks—driving his primate relatives into the trees, and after all these eons we've uncovered the kinship: Ancestors of the modern kangaroo rat were clearly primates. I don't doubt it. I've seen

man gnawing at foolish things, rotted musty insults, dry straws of fear, bloody rage bits, fervent, sharp teeth snarling under beady bright eyes. I've gnawed so myself, and crouched in the black when the lair was crowded, suffocating in stench, gasping for air but afraid to breathe. Thank God

for daily evolutions when we search our other bones and find the power to stand, flex our fingers and abandon dark holes for life in leafy apprehension.

Sally Russell
WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT
WHILE LISTENING TO "LION IN WINTER"

Empty footsteps echo in the halls of time
Empty shadows echo in empty hearted minds
The fool did love you
He was blind
The heavens above him
Showered fiery stars in your smiles
And all rains did flower
In that all consuming spring
When you did love within the hollow ring
Your hands were cold as you carried your
Heavy load, never looking round
Through the streets unshowed
He followed you close
To the reaches of his soul
He loved you
Behind stone grey walls he cried,
There's nothing for you...
The sun does rise
But cursing, he lies
Damned—he does not rise
To see the light in the sky
His eyes fall on the ground
The fool did love you
This, God judged sin,
Men in the company of men.
And all around are cold grey lies
And no light brightens your unfeeling eyes
A fool, I did love you
When you smiled, God turned his back.

Lisa J. Cain
ARTS POETICAL

This morning, stalking in the yard,
My cat surprised a mockingbird,
Which last summer chased her here and there,
Swooping low to pluck her orange-brown fur—
To thick its ragged nest—without surcease.
At last, almost undone, she sought release
And with a haggard look approached the screen
And scratched and cried until I let her in.
So more than proud was she this autumn morn
To have within her teeth last summer's scorn
And paced before the screen until assured
That I beheld the nemesis secured,
Then darted off to seek a private place
Where she would know the pleasures of her quest,
Would savor, where not even I could see,
The untold pleasures of her poetry.

Thomas Tuggle
HAIKU

Becoming of age,
always searching for answers,
questions are waiting.

Paul Barnes

UNTITLED

An eagle soaring high
Ruler of the evening sky
Shadow, drifting, Gone.

Kerri A. Pullian

I WISH MORE PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT

Yearning after youth
is a special brand of suicide—
patricide in reverse—
or worse,
a butterfly burning
to be a caterpillar.

Sally Russell
Cherchez les Femmes
"Marietta Street, huh? Pretty rough part of town for a homeboy—less you thinkin' of joinin' up with the circus."

"Do me a favor pal, just drive and spare me the chatter."

Been years since I've seen Petey-Boy. Last I saw of him was in Memphis. Stevie Wonder was all the rage then, and Petey-Boy had his hair all tied-up in cornrows. Petey-Boy was always so nouveau, so au courant.

"Here's the train station—look, yonder is the circus train—it'll be $15.75."

"Yea man, here is sixteen—keep the change and next time don't cruise around the same day—glow orange building three times, you rip-off cabby."

I slammed the door hard enough to shatter glass and walked down the depot. Cold, calculating eyes looked at my gold watch, my neatly polished shoes, and then looked measuringly into my eyes. My major-professor in grad school joked one time that if you wanted to figure a white man's wealth, just look at his watch; and if you wanted to figure a black man's wealth, just look at his shoes. They say after black men accrue graduate degrees, we lose almost every semblance of being street toughs. I figured the rogues along the depot were trying to ascertain not only if I could be taken easily, but also if the take was going to amount to anything. I straightened my frame, stared straight ahead, and looked as hard as a graduate degree allows a black man to look.

"Yo! Davey-Boy!" It was Pete.

Pete limped towards me. His hair was relaxed in a soft perm that all the brothers call "California curls." Watching him limp, I actually wondered: How can he still look as graceful as a cat? He grabbed my hand and pumped it. We grabbed a few Coney-Islands from a vendor, sat on a bench, and covered the same territory we had covered years before: How's Dad, how's the kids, any news from Willy-Boy, did I still like teaching at that hayseed junior college?
Petey-Boy limped back over to the stand to get us more hotdogs—I guessed I still ate four hotdogs. It had been ages since I’d even eaten hotdogs. A high-yellow strutted by on spiked-heels, wearing a cheap chiffon dress slit to mid-thigh that made her look even cheaper than her drugstore toilet-water made her smell. Petey’s hard, grey eyes looked past her to what seemed fifteen years ago.

Petey was a year ahead of me in school, but he seemed five years older. Petey was a decorated athlete who wore a letter-jacket with more pins on it than a bowling alley. Prep All-Star, All-State, McDonald's Dream Team, Journal-Constitution Player of the Year. I had a girlfriend; Petey dated the drill team. We both inherited about the same intelligence from our Dad who had parlayed a job at the campus farms into a degree from the Vet school. Yet while I had to bust my hump to qualify for a lousy endowment, Petey stored the deluge of basketball scholarship offers in an old filing cabinet of our Dad’s.

After the charade of sending military advisors was over, kids our age were being sent to a police action in Viet Nam. College enrollments increased tenfold because military deferments became as important to draft-age males as beans are to burritos, and oddly enough, both Petey and I matriculated at the same university. Petey-Boy was the "campus jazz"—basketball hero, big ear and flashy clothes, the stud who dated whole sororities. Petey majored in physical education, if you catch my drift; he rarely went to class, hardly studied, and never really got acclimated to academia. Eventually, Petey flunked out, lost his scholarship and deferment, and got on a plane to Viet Nam. Four months later, Petey was in a hospital in Saigon; he had been "fired-up" on Hill 3109 outside of Phnom Penh and now he had one leg a half-inch shorter than the other.

It had been fifteen years since that fateful day on Hill 3109 the day I met Petey-Boy at the train depot. Later that night at the circus, after my kids had gorged themselves on cotton candy and laughed at the clowns, ten men on unicycles played a hilarious game of basketball. The men who played the basketball game were all former greats, regulated to peon status and subjected to the condescending chuckling that accompanies circus basketball. Amidst the snickering and guffawing, one player with a half-inch block on one pedal of his unicycle had an especially forlorn look on his face.

Watching Petey pedal furiously around the arena, I couldn’t help but liken his unicycle to a clock, and wonder if he wasn’t desperately trying to turn back the hands of time.
NO RERUNS, PLEASE

A smart announcer on TV
Today greatly surprised me
With his solution
To nuclear war:
Give full coverage to NBC
Exclusively and you will see
It will be cancelled
As so many shows are.

Lucille Bennett

EASTER 1976

Now you remember how we hunted eggs,
Looking for different colors in the grass
And poking into every hollow place,
Converging on each one like squealing pigs.
I rushed around the yard on tireless legs
But often found the prize not worth the race:
Sometimes the eggs we found were such a mess,
Cracked, faded shells, the inside full of bugs.

None of that mess today. Kids, listen here;
I’ve hid some plastic eggs that pull apart;
In some I’ve put a quarter, some a dime;
A dollar is in one. Look everywhere
In all the downstairs rooms. Get ready, start!
Whoever gets the dollar wins the game.

Thomas Tuggle
SWAN SONG

Swans
Gliding in grace and silence
Through the still water
Setting in motion
Reflections, ripples
Softly seeking your way
Always
One close by the other
With necks curved toward flight
To realms beyond now
Beautiful, stately
Dreaming your parting song.

Betty Maine

YEARNING

Shell come to rest
In alien place
Far from the sea,
Empty of life
That dwelt within
Down in the depth,
Halted at last
Cast from the wave
That carried you,
Cupped in my hand
Close to my ear
The sound still heard,
Echoes of singing
Like roar of surf
Washing the shore,
Filled with yearning
And restlessness
For your true home.

Betty Maine
SOMETIMES WHEN

Sometimes it's hard
To keep love in your heart
When things don't work out,
And you're falling apart.

Sometimes it's hard
To take life day by day,
When you know what you feel
But not what you say.

Sometimes it's hard
To be just "good friends"
When love is still there
And a relationship ends.

Sometimes it's hard
To admit you were wrong
When someone you love
Has been hurting too long.

Sometimes it's hard
When three words mean so much.
When you say, "I Love You"
It's the heart you touch.

Shari Holland
IMPACT

The man was a biologist who'd worked the Alaska pipeline. He'd brought slides and mixed emotions from his time there to the ladies' club luncheon.

The word he used most was impact, interchangeably verb or noun. "We didn't know how the silt would impact on the fish downstream." (Silt was sent down six hundred Alaskan streams.) Or, "We still don't know, probably won't know, for twenty years yet, or thirty, what the impact will be on the land and the life of the region.

"For example, you can see in this picture a little thing, a conduit in a stream, just a few inches too high: grayling aren't like salmon; they can't leap obstacles. We'd found things like this, and we'd report them. In five weeks or six — it would take that long at least a crew would be sent back in. They'd lower the conduit. Then the fish could swim on. Somehow the companies found it was cheaper to do things over than to do them carefully, right the first time."

Outside the wind is something out of the old stories. It hurls angry fistfuls of rain hard against the window panes. It slides into the room snarling around the sides of the glass.

The women shift a little in their chairs, cross a leg, prop a chin, shiver just a little bit when the wind hits a knee or the back of a neck. Eyes glazed, faces held carefully in a pose of interest, they wait for the next slide.
The picture looks like a sandwich:
Dirt, ice, dirt.
"You can't get the size from the picture.
The ice is as high as this room.
When a cut like this is made,
The ice, exposed, begins to melt.
Twenty miles back land will cave in,
Sinking with the melting ice."

Another slide:
An arch in the pipeline
Constructed so that the animals can move free
Without impact of even visual barrier.
Four hundred of these were in the plans;
One hundred were actually built.

Colors flicker across the faces in the room.
"Here's something you don't see much
Men with pickaxe and shovel.
They are being careful with this stream;

This one was done right.
You can't be careful with backhoe and 'dozer."
One stream was done right, the man said,
One of six hundred.

More slides:
Nuisance bears and wolves snapped before they were shot;
Tons of gravel dug out of streambed;
Some eagle nesting sites saved by recourse to law.

Overhead lights are turned on;
The women dredge up some questions;
Everyone is anxious to be polite.
The man announces that he is available
For such presentations to other groups they might know of,
Or this one again on another topic,
Perhaps the impact of women on the pipeline
Or something like that, how they handled toilets and baths.
We leave
Running through icy rain and wind
To our separate cars.
Sheltered inside each turns on a key.
The engines do not
Roar
Purr
Or come to life,
Those things that living beings do.
They start; that's all.

Impact

Barbara McMichael

EXCERPTS FROM THE PEN AND QUILL

Thomas C. Webb

(Fritz Penrose, a writer suffering from writer's block, has gone for a walk and comes upon a strange inn.)

I jumped back and should have run back into the fog to try to find my way home when the man on the knocker turned to a brass image of a lion. I touched it. It was cold. My hand shook as I reached the doorknob and turned it. The door opened. Inside I saw people in clothes from ancient Greek to modern dress. I thought it was a costume party. Quietly I closed the door so none of the people would see me. This was futile, for a man wearing a long frock coat came up to me and said, "Welcome. I am Oscar Wilde, the great playwright and novelist. And you?"

I answered, "I am Fritz Penrose," and my voice shook.

Another man came from behind the bar to greet me. He wore a clean white suit with several cigars standing up in his pocket. His white moustache was as bushy as his hair was in a botch. He spoke in a rough mid-west accent with traces of New England. The man said, "Don't let Oscar scare you. I'm Mark Twain, at least that's the name everyone calls me by. You're at the Writers' Guild Hall valley. Where all writers great or small come to. When we were alive many suffered because they chose to write instead of getting a real job and for a lucky few, fame came and stayed. Here, though, everyone is a beaming star in his own right. Death gave us our peace and our heaven."
I could not believe that Oscar Wilde and Mark Twain were speaking to me, but there they were. But when he said death, I became weak and he guided me to a table where a pretty young woman with a male companion sat. They were Jane Austen and Bram Stoker. Mark Twain gave me a glass of water to steady my nerves and I did become a bit calm. If I had known that I was dead maybe I would not have become weak. Somehow I did not feel dead, but then I had no real idea what death felt like. I still felt my body warmth, but I also felt it of Bram Stoker and Miss Austen. Maybe I was dead. If I was indeed dead (everything pointed to it), then I was indeed in heaven. I could not think of a better place to be. In the tavern there were Honore de Balzac, Edgar Allan Poe, Lord Byron, Sophocles, Bret Harte, Jack London, Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, Robert Louis Stevenson, Dante, Voltaire, Agatha Christie, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Robert and Elizabeth Browning. With this in mind, I became more myself and alert to my surroundings. Since there was nothing I could do about my situation, I quickly decided to meet everyone.

At the table where I sat, Jane Austen was knitting a shawl which she told me was for Emily Dickenson. Bram Stoker was eating steak and draining a mug of ale. It was Stoker who broke the silence and asked of me, "Mr. Penrose, do you by chance have any connection with the stage?" I answered that I did not and spoke on, "Bloody shame 'tis. You see, mate, I was manager for the great Sir Henry Irving. What a man! Through him I knew all the greats like Ellen Terry and Oscar. I still miss the Westend of London. Before you became a writer, what did you do?"

I answered, "I was a student at college."

Austen was tapping her toes as she knitted when I noticed that Edgar Allan Poe was sitting by the fire and being comforted by Charles Dickens. I asked Miss Austen why this was. She said, "Last night Poe and Dickens were both taking opium which, unfortunately, Poe took too much of and saw one of his old nightmares and ran out of here screaming. Luckily Dickens knew what to do and ran after him. What Poe saw I really can not say, but he is constantly seeing it whenever he drinks or takes a drug. Right now I would say that is exactly what he is doing."
I got up and excused myself. Not far from the fire Balzac sat eating. Upon seeing the food that lay on the table I could understand why this famous French writer was also a famous glutton. There was blanquette de veau, chapon, les moules ravigotes, pauchouse, grive, cru chou, a hundred and ten oysters, feuillantine, and coffee. I had not seen so much in my life and there it was finding its way into the small fat Frenchman's stomach. He motioned me to sit at his table. Balzac took a swallow of coffee and said, "So you are the newcomer. Would you care for something to eat? I am sure Twain will be happy to bring you a bite to eat."

I answered no, staring at the loud clothes he wore and the word "tacky" came to my mind. He took an oyster and began to eat the meat inside the shell and said, "Are you calm now? I remember when I came I was so nervous. It might have been the great amount of coffee which helped me on the road to death, but I still believe it was the thought that I was dead. This valley is hardly what the Catholic church claims is heaven. I was expecting angels with harps or devils with pitchforks, but this is truly heaven. Why, they even have enough food and coffee for me. Now go and meet some of the others, I must polish off this culinary delight."

I went over to the poker tables. At the first Sophocles, Robert Louis Stevenson, Voltaire, Dante, and Joel Chandler Harris were playing. Dante was the dealer. It looked like Sophocles was raking in most of the poker chips. Geoffery Chaucer came next to me holding a goblet of red wine. He said, "Quite a game. As a diplomat I could have used such a game to my advantage. Politics and poker both take a certain amount of cunning, bluffing, and intelligence. That's why Sophocles always wins. Stevenson is so damned honest that anyone with half a brain can read his face. Do you play poker?" I was in heaven. After meeting many other famous authors and beginning to feel secure and happy at the Pen and Quill Inn, Fritz has to make a decision.

I do not know why, but Poe got up out of his chair and stared at me. At first I did not see him, but slowly his eyes became known to me. Edgar Allan Poe walked over to me and stopped and stared into my eyes. Quietly he said, "You are still alive."
Lord Byron heard this and came over to stare, but shook his head saying he could not tell the difference and sent for Sir Doyle. Sir Doyle examined me by checking my eyes, and in a clear strong voice he said, "After checking his optics I am positive that Mr. Penrose is still alive."

I asked what it meant. Count Leo Tolstoi came over and patted my shoulder and spoke, "Two things. One, you may stay here to die. When you die, you will suffer great spasms and it will almost destroy your mind if you are strong. If you are weak then you shall be simple. Second, you may travel back on the road that brought you here and live out your normal life."

I replied, "But I must have been brought here for a reason?"

Dante now came up and said, "True. Maybe it was by accident or maybe God wanted to show you why you chose to be a writer. Maybe there is no simple answer. But Mr. Penrose, you ought to go back. I would if I could."

Everyone in the tavern now surrounded me. They could tell that I really did not desire to leave the Hall or them. Many spoke asking me to go back and enjoy the life that God gave me. It was Edgar Allan Poe who spoke. His voice trembled and yet, it was soft, and I knew his voice would guide me to what I ought to do. He said, "I can hardly blame you. In 1849, I was walking the streets of Baltimore relishing the idea of a forthcoming marriage. A wonderful marriage it would have been too. Suddenly for no reason a patch of fog covered my footsteps. I thought it might be a nearby river or the ocean. Suddenly I was in the valley. I too enjoyed talking to the great writers and speaking to them as if we were old friends. Then Christopher Marlowe realized I was still alive and not dead. He told me I must go back. I hesitated, but soon I went back, but alas too late. Some people found me dying in a gutter in Baltimore and four days later I was back in this wonderful valley of the Quill Hall. Everybody thinks I died from drinking and I cannot redeem myself and tell them they were wrong. O' so wrong."

Poe took a breath and spoke on, "Mr. Penrose, you are a writer like us. Yet, you are alive. Do not toss that away like an empty bottle. You can create magic with words. All of us here did. We must have, for you have heard our names and read our stories for what they are. Many of us were unknowns when we came here and now we are known. Some never become famous. Go back and let the world gain from your God given skill. Be a magician with your quill. You can. That is what writing is all about."
I was stirred deeply by Poe's words and decided to go back. I asked if I could stay longer. The answer was a clear no. Bram Stoker and Jack London picked me up and carried me outside the tavern. They put me down on the road. Everyone else followed me out. Jane Austen kissed me, wishing me luck. I heard Oscar Wilde say, "Lucky stiff," and Sophocles say, "'Tis the will of Zeus." I knew Dickens was comforting Poe. The fog soon enveloped me and the voices were gone.

I kept walking till it was pea soup and crumpets again. The old oaks with the hanging moss appeared and the road turned back into a path. I kept walking on. The smell of white pines filled my lungs and I rubbed my eyes. I was under a white pine as if I had been sleeping and what had happened to me had been a sweet dream. I was amid brown pine straw...brown pine straw.

It was not long after I went on my vacation and still I am not sure what occurred was fact or fiction. If it was fact, then I can look forward to going back some day. For even small writers of no fame can be a member of the Hall. If it was fiction, then I did learn something from the strange dream I had. As for me, I am almost sure that it was true and wonderful and I will never forget Poe's telling me the creed he wrote for the Hall after his death:

"An author creates wonders.
An author breeds pleasures.
Somewhere Sometime.
A reader reads the author's fabrication.
Which gives the author untold joys.
And this alone is the true reason
The author writes.
For he is the closest thing to God.
And God is the closest thing to him."
SONNET
Wood and wave and wind-taut sail ashow
Would lure me past land's end and all that's firm,
To deeps and squalls and sounding whales. I yearn
To voyage where Melville's seamen dared to go.

To feel the timbers live in sea's embrace
Lends strength and ease to brittle mortal's heart.
A man can think and feel that he's a part
Of wind-tight sail and spar and beam and brace.

Wood and tar, you see, and pitch and cloth
Are nature's best and first wrought gifts of worth,
Not forged in fire, but coaxed from living earth.
A man can trust a ship with sail aloft.

Not so today on ship of steel and coal.
What place has man on ships from Satan's soul?

Jim Kline

A DREAM

It bursts forth...
   like a new beginning or
   a bright sunrise.
It brings peace...
   like a gentle rain or
   mid-morning hope.
It withers slowly...
   like a rose garden or
   the afternoon light.
It finally dies...
   like a lost love or
   a sunset.

Donna Underwood
A WORLD FILLED WITH LOVE

I wish I could see
A world without war.
No need for armies or navies,
Or nuclear technology,
Just the simple psychology
Of peace on earth.

I wish I could see
A world without hate.
No need for judges, juries,
Or lawyer's debate.
With no jails or prisons
for doing time,
There would be no
Criminals or crime,
Just the innocent.

I wish I could see
A world without war,
A world without hate,
A world where peace
Is a part of fate.
A world without sorrow,
A world without need,
Where would that lead?

To a world filled with
  Love.

Bryan Smith
VICTIM

In the library there are so many volumes
I feel I am drowning in a sea of knowledge.

Donna Underwood

EPIPHANY

It all began innocently enough, I suppose.
It was only a matter of eyes; nothing more involved.

We, each of us, search for the lost half of us,
That part lost at life's onset.

It happens now and again that the one
In whom we find our other self
 FINDS his in us at that self-same moment.

I suppose I was searching for something
I did not yet know was lost
Only to discover something lost to me forever
Deep in a pair of brown eyes.

John Bailey
INMATE

Bars of laughter surround me
    locking me into a cell of isolation.
Huddled within an icy blanket of insecurity
    awaiting only the warmth of hatred
And the coldness of alienation to seep through.
    If only I had someone to reassure me.

Donna Underwood

TIME OF TROUBLE

In time of trouble
    think of the love
    that flows all around you.
In time of trouble
    keep in your mind
    just how much people care.
In time of trouble
    think of the friends
    who worry about you.
In time of trouble
    think of what you would like to do
    and take the chance if you dare.
In time of trouble
    remember that life is worth living
    because God really loves you.

Francis Parrish
DADDY

Twinkly blue eyes set in rows of furrowed wisdom, framed in silver.

Eyes so often filled with tears of joy or sadness through the years.

Six feet two—
Mighty Oak or Weeping Willow?

What puzzlement at tears shed over my first bra—
Teenform 32AA, followed closely by the monthly visitor.
"Your rite of passage" as ample arms encircled me and tears joined mine.

Timeless as the oak and gentle as the willow

There to lean on, cry with and learn from, you gently guided my fragile spirit by giving me your tears and sharing mine.

I found comfort in your weeping, willow, and courage in your strength, knowing bending doesn't always make you weak.

Suzanne Allen
MEMORY OF A MEMORY

Looking out
Across cottage rooftops
Into August's bright day
Gathering up summer's end
With blue, translucent sky
And gulls gliding gracefully
Over shimmering flecks of sunlight
Moving out to meet the crests
Shaped by gentle breeze
Filled with tang and memory
This moment of sheer beauty
And all-encompassing awareness
Piercing the soul
Too fragile to hold
But only to let go
To be caught up by the wave
And returned to the sea
Gone from the present
But held in the heart
This gossamer glimpse
Of what will enfold
In God's eternity.

Betty Maine
TARTUFFE - A COMMENTARY

Tartuffe is one of the classic Eighteenth Century plays, written by an outstanding dramatist of the period, Moliere. It is a classic mainly because of its characterizations and its character analysis, which are cleverly concealed in delightfully satiric comedy. Moliere, like his contemporaries, wrote in a stylized pattern, but he did show that human nature, however portrayed, remains much the same. Truly, "The more things change, the more they remain the same."

Moliere gave his play the subtitle, "The Imposter"; today the appellation of "The Hypocrite" is frequently used. Both fit the case, but "The Imposter" seems a bit the stronger because Tartuffe is posing as one who is the epitome of piety and holy impulses; in reality he is the opposite—and then some! Moliere defended himself against the charge of impropriety in his choice of characters: the wicked man posing as a good man, against the really good, though certainly gullible, man. There is no doubt that these two characters are somewhat overdrawn, but that is a common device in drama and is generally done for effect. However, Moliere pointed out that men dislike satire—applied to themselves, of course. As he said in the preface to his play, it is one thing to show human meanness, quite another to expose it to ridicule.

Moliere very cleverly did not introduce Tartuffe until Scene 2, Act III. By this time we have a clear picture of him through the eyes of the other principals. Of Orgon's whole household, only Orgon and his mother have any great regard for the pious fellow, because the others all have some various evidences of hypocrisy. The trouble is, however, Orgon is convinced that Tartuffe is completely good, and nothing can convince him otherwise. And so the play proceeds to its expected end, the exposure of Tartuffe as the villain he is. He over-extends his crass greed; if he had been content with a modest swindle he might have gotten away with it. But then, of course, it would not have been Moliere's play, and the triumph of virtue would have been less spectacular.

Now to consider whether the character of Tartuffe is believable. It was earlier noted that both he and Orgon were to some degree overdrawn. That is true enough, but dramatists may use this device quite legitimately in order to throw a given character into sharp relief; this may be necessary to understand the action of the play. Careful consideration of the character of Tartuffe shows him to be what the British call "a nasty piece of goods," so that any technique for showing him up might well be justified. Moliere's technique here was delicately masterly. He cleverly balanced subtle scheming with broad comedy. Even when he seemed to telegraph events, they came off smoothly every time. Truly, Moliere was a superb dramatist—timeless in his appeal.

Maggie McGuire
TWENTY-TWO FRIENDS

Vultures have culture.
Well I'll be dog-ged.
And that's a cool cat.
Rats!
What a louse of a mouse.
Lives in the grouse's house.
A legal eagle advises beagles.
And the moose will remain loose.
Deer.
Charles Dickens loved chickens.
And that's a whale of a tale.
For a lark let's kiss a shark.
In Tuscon, they cherish all bison
And there goes the fly, boys.
Let's play possum.
The skunk thunk a bit
That the mole is very holy.
But alas I have yak-ked
Much too long,
And wish you not to get eel at me.
Say hey to your ant and uncle for me.
Tra la.

To 'ay
Tra la.

Thomas C. Webb
THE ONES AND THE TWOS

The Ones and the Twos are unequal. The Twos seek to effect an equality with the Ones; the Twos' efforts have no effect on the Ones, and this apathy, on the part of the Ones, says the Ones have too much and should know how it feels to have less. The following discourse ensued.

"There are ways, and there are ways," said the Ones, while smiling through their teeth.

The Twos, having heard folderol1 and balderdash many times before, replied with clarity and vision, "Be well advised, do not digress, for we have advice, and will not regress; be fair and wise, and hear our proposal, or we will advise, that you meet your disposal."

The Ones, in their unrighteous indignation, replied in reprisal, "You seek to lead, yet you cannot be led; your paltry freedom has gone to your head. Except for your displeasing presence, we'll accept no more, this ranting of peasants. These rebellious attitudes are far beyond reason, and by speaking your minds, you commit high treason."

The Twos, after not much deliberation and even less thought, spoke in rejoinder and ad ultimatum, "It's plain to see that you will not bend to sway our grief and heal its rend. So make your peace, inherit the wind, farewell to all, this is the end."

To make a long story short, the Ones were directly multiplied by the Twos, and then, One by One, Two by Two, they subtracted each other.

Quite a bit later as the sun took a dive not East, there existed no Ones, no Twos, and all was quiet; the quiet was quite relaxing.

Jeff Starnes
SEPARATION

You jerked the rug from under me
I
fell
Not believing the cry I heard was mine.

Whirling, I dreamed of regained passion
Upside down
I longed for love now lost
Until after a painful eternity
I landed on my feet again.

Lucille Bennett

PISSED OFF: DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND

I'm going to Squeaky's to get me a beer,
You can go with me or you can stay here.

Bennie Ledford
UNTITLED

I did not mean, to put a flea in your ear,
For to instill doubt, is the essence of fear, so
Be not afraid, of the ghost called the past,
Take off his ear, and nail it to the mast,
Tomorrow beckons, near and far,
Yesterday's gone, a fallen star,
The wind and the rain,
They too will pass,
When all has been,
Only love held fast.

Jeff Starnes

Inception.
Perception.
Rejection.
The ego enters.
Fragility.
The next poem goes unwritten.

Merry Chandler
BIRTH DAY

Conceived of love
Born of passion;
A feeling of wonderment
A sense of accomplishment;
A thing of fear
A thing of beauty
A child.

Donna Underwood

HAIKU

To be at your best
and know what you want today,
brings joy tomorrow.

Donna Underwood
YOU NEVER KNOW HOW MANY

Draculas are out there trying to make a decent living off the blood you need. You can't tell by sharp smiles or mysterious eyes because most vampires don't think of themselves as sycophants (and thus have nothing to hide), nor do they realize such living isn't decent. Cripples wishing for others' warmth, they miss the Midas paradox—the wish fulfilled surrounds with zombies. Pity them only at a distance for cures are practically non-existent. I've spotted a vampire once or twice in my life (I knew by the way I felt I was suffocating or at least needed a transfusion) and escaped before I accepted too much charming affection disguised as eternal love that was really eternal devotion on my part. Still I never breathe too easy because Draculas are restless. One will always turn up again, white-faced and yearning enough to make you forget to watch, even as your last life disappears forever and you turn, white-faced and yearning yourself.

Sally Russell
MY CRY

Papa, why lie so
So long like log,
Hands stretched with legs
Mouth and eyes closed, lips unmoved
Face upwards, and as silent as night
Ready for six feet of earth.

Those who dared not look upon your face,
Have come out as me,
Go in and out of Papa's face
Like people from bazaar to funeral
Only to mock, those on Papa's left,
And to sympathize those on Papa's right.

My right arm is broken,
Rain has beaten me
The hope of bread is gone,
And the tree on which I lean is fallen
"Death has slapped me in the face."

What next to do?
To follow father and ancestors?
You are worse than nobody.
Be guided in your thoughts.
At the mouth, it shall be provided.

Becky Ngeve