MOUNTAIN LAURELS

Spring 1996
Volume 3
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

THE NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE LITERARY MAGAZINE

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Spring 1996

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My Mother, The Space Alien

My mother is a space alien — I am incontrovertibly certain of it. It’s not that she’s sprouted green hair or a couple of extra arms and legs or anything . . . although she does have a mustache now. And it’s not that she’s forgotten what night of the week she’s supposed to cook the Stove Top stuffing on, either. It’s just that — and I’m still not used to it — she’s being so nice to me.

I’ve noticed that she’s had this look to her when she’s being nice to me . . . I don’t know how to explain it; she just acts sincere when she’s nice, for a change. Like she really cares, you know?

Here’s an example for your elucidation. The other night, when she was sprawled on the couch in her usual let-me-go-in-peace attitude of reclination, she asked me to do something for her. I must say I’ve grown quite accustomed to her addressing me by any other four letter word but John emitted at volumes that would shatter stainless steel and I was floored when she simply said “Son, do so and so for me . . . “. But what was really incredible about that request was the fact she didn’t give me a list of a dozen things to do at once. Needless to say, I’m still in shock.

Even more bizarre, now she’s agreeing with everything I say. Before she was kidnapped and replaced by the space alien, my mother totally discounted everything I said. If I said “the sun’s coming up in the morning” she denied the existence of the universe. If I said “it’s raining outside” she’d go outside and cut the grass. If I said “it’s hot in here” she’d close the windows and doors and wrap herself up in a blanket. She absolutely, positively refused to believe a single word I said — even when I showed her examples from my textbooks and other primary sources of information.

The final proof that my mother is a space alien came the day she stopped putting pounds of pork fat in her beans, greens, casseroles, and everything else she cooks. You see, my mom’s one of those Southern wide-load builders and believes you can’t eat vegetables that haven’t had vast volumes of pork fat dumped
in them. She’s a firm believer in frying everything -- even baloney. If it isn’t fried she won’t eat it. And she says “it ain’t Sunday” unless she serves her version of the Colonel’s “extra-greasy” fried chicken. It’s really superfluous for me to say this, but the hog farmers and makers of Crisco really love my mom.

My stepfather is equally amazed by her transformation, too. He really enjoys it when she brings home his favorite elixir, props up his feet, and sits with him quietly watching “Cops,” “True Stories of the Highway Patrol,” “Geraldo” and the other programs he loves and she used to hate.

Let me tell you something — things are so good now I may never leave home! If there’s a heaven it’s got to be like this! This is the life!

So if you are presently in the same situation I was in a few weeks ago, go outside, paint huge signs (in space alien hieroglyphics, of course) advertising your desire to trade your mother for one of those ultra-nice space alien substitutes, get your laser beam blind-you-if-you-make-me-mad flashlights and wait. How do I know this works? I got rid of my mother, didn’t I.

*John Charles Brogdon*
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

First Place Art

Time Old Traditions

Bobby Hall
Barbie is a Feminist Too

I believe Mattell Toy Company has done the world a great injustice. Take a stroll through any “Toys R Us” and find the pink splattered isle. Look within the boxes and see the “perfect” women with their “perfect” husbands living in the “perfect” little doll houses. Barbie, Ken, Skipper, the RV, the corvette, and the rest of the gang living in harmony under the roof of the doll house. No problems, cares, or worries for these folks; oh no, they have the ideal life. It is a crime I say! Mattell is convincing young girls that this fantasy is how life turns out. When are they going to come out with the swinging single Barbie or the divorced mother of two Barbie? When are they going to turn the extravagant doll house into the double-wide trailer? When is Mattell going to stop this injustice and start showing what real women’s lives are all about?

Maybe I am being an extremist, or I guess the new coined word is “female activist.” I just wish some of these toy companies would get into the nineties and realize that there has been a women’s rights movement ensuing for the past hundred years. Feminism is not a new concept; it has been around since before the turn of the century. In the late 1800’s, there were women who spoke about it, reporters who told about it, and authors who wrote about it. Henrick Ibsen’s play A Doll House (1879) is an excellent example of how authors, especially playwrights, used their creative abilities to express and explore feminist issues and values. Ibsen examines feminist rights in a time when society was dominated by males. Because of this social status, Ibsen makes no direct reference to female’s rights. Instead he raises interest and awareness in the subject using realism and symbolism. Ibsen uses these literary devices to create a drama filled with feminist themes and issues, including male superiority and female inferiority. Most importantly, however, Ibsen destroys the doll house image of the “acceptable” place of a female and a wife in society.

The doll house image created by Ibsen (and Mattell alike) is of the ideal family life. The
The father works to support the family and controls the household matters. The mother is submissive to her husband's demands and simply raises the children. The wife is supposedly not capable of making decisions for the family. She exists for the pleasure and satisfaction of her hardworking husband. Harmony is presented through the dominance and control of the man of the house.

In the play, Torvald is the working husband, and Nora is his wife or his "little squirrel" and "lark" as he calls her. Torvald controls the financial matters while Nora raises the children and serves as his trophy, prize, and pet.

Throughout the play, Ibsen demonstrates Nora's dependence on her husband for approval, money, and will power. Ibsen makes it seem that Nora cannot survive without the wisdom, knowledge, and support of Torvald. It appears they have a perfectly happy marriage where both man and wife act out the role they are expected to play.

However, the final scenes of the play reflect society's stereotypical roles and shatter the "doll house." Nora comes to the realization that she is nothing but a pet or toy in her husband's doll house. She makes a drastic stand for feminist qualities by choosing to leave her husband and family and search out her own life. Torvald rages against this decision, calling her an "incompetent child," and tells her that her duties are to her home, husband, and children first. Nora's response is as follows:

I don't believe in that anymore, I believe that, before all else, I'm a human being, no less than you-or anyway, I ought to try to become one. I know the majority thinks you're right Torvald, and plenty of books agree with you, too. But I can't go on believing what the majority says, or what's written in books. I have to think over these things myself and try to understand them.

This sentiment expresses the ideal behind feminism: that females are human beings also and long to experience life under their own control. Instead of being a puppet in her husband's doll house, Nora shows that there is an escape. Although she is rejecting the socially acceptable role of a wife, her fire, passion, and logic show that her actions are justified. Nora gives up her role as a wife and mother in order to...
pursue a life of her own. She decides to become "someone," rather than "something," and although she loses love, she rediscovers her honor. Torvald is left with his shattered doll house, but in the end he realizes that his wife's realization is the "greatest miracle" of all.

Ibsen uses the play *A Doll House* to shatter the stereotypical traits society feels mothers and wives should possess. He uses the relationship between Torvald and Nora to create a Barbie and Ken world where on the surface things seem perfect and peaceful. However, within the walls of the doll house lie secrets and problems that destroy the happy home. A wife's feelings of inadequacy and discontent, brought about by her husband's over-dominance and control, come to destroy the doll house. Ibsen makes a statement for feminist rights in a time when those rights were ignored and denied. His play shows that perhaps there is no exact role for women to play in society.

Everyone, whether male or female, must do what is best for his or her own life. As Nora says, the "duties to herself" are just as important as the duties to her husband and family. A Doll House was written over a hundred years ago, and in today's world women still fight to break the same stereotypes. Women have only recently gotten out of the kitchen and entered the mainstream work force. Men still do not stay at home to care for the children or clean the house, but how much can you really ask for in a hundred years time? Dorothy Sayers was quoted as saying, "Every woman is a human being-one cannot repeat that too often-and a human being must have occupation if he or she is not to become a nuisance to the world." If women want to work in the work force, they should be allowed to and respected in doing so. If women want to stay at home and raise their family, they should likewise be allowed and respected. The point is that Barbie could get a career and Ken could baby-sit and clean house for a change. Realism does not only have to exist in the literary world. Mattell should get real because Barbie is a female activist too.

*Danielle Rowe*
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

Second Place Art

Untitled

Karen Camp
On Bonding

There are many things that people do together but the most important is bonding. To share together an experience that is lasting. Mothers bond with their babies from birth; however, it never ceases. The thing that changes is the types of events that they share. I have found that the older my daughter gets, the better our bonding. I have attributed this to her acceptance of who I am and her willingness to let me be that person. I have always allowed her to express who she is even if I am not real happy about her decisions.

Recently, she had divorced after little over a year of marriage. She had been physically ill most of the time since the separation. Being Christmas time, her pain was intensified by her loneliness. She finally came to realize the connection. I had tried not to interfere in this period of awakening, but I felt that a time of healing was necessary.

Healing can take many forms, but I decided that a small adventure shared by mother and daughter was in order. Many times when Heather was little we would get into the car and take a road and follow it until it ended. This had been a great way for her and I to bond too. It had been very successful in the past, so I used it again. I suggested that a trip up to the big mountains would be fun, and she agreed.

Tuesday bloomed dark and rainy. The sun hardly dared to show his face. Since Heather would be driving and had worked the late shift, I left the decision to go up to her. She awoke at noon and admonished me for not waking her earlier, as she was raring to go. She asked me if I had our route mapped out, as I had chosen the Cherokee Indian Reservation as our destination. I thought I did! We loaded up and headed to McDonald’s for cats.

On our way to McDonald’s, Heather told me that she had all the RxR’s for the monopoly game and that all she needed was B&O to win a new Cherokee. She said it would be nice to win today. When we got our food we drove from the place, and Heather removed the game piece from the drink and started to scream, “I won.” I almost choked on the hamburger I was swallowing. I told her to go back and get her car. She pulled into the Exxon station to collect all the pieces together. We were giggling.
like hyenas. To our disappointment, she found that Short Line was the one she needed. I told her she did get the one she asked for, and we both had a good laugh.

On the road again, we headed out on 19 north. The sun finally came out for a while. Even though the trees were bare, the scenery was still beautiful. I was balancing both my food and Heather's while she maneuvered around the curves. I rarely sit in the passenger seat, and I came to know that I don't like it at all. Now I have never in my life been car sick, but this came very close to a first. I had finished my food as we got on 129 north at Turner's Corner. I had my seat belt on but that didn't help me at all. Even though Heather tried not to drive without care to my stomach, the swaying of the truck was nearly my undoing. It brought to mind the time a friend took me flying after a night of Tequila. Never again! I loosened my clothing around the stomach area in hopes that it would alleviate some of the pressure. Wouldn't that have been some positive bonding. Heather would never have let me in her truck again if I had christened it.

By the time we reached level ground I was feeling a bit better. I do not recommend eating before traveling 129. I don't know how the valiant daily travelers do it. We stopped in Blairsville to check the map, and we found that the place we wanted to go to was by Murphy, North Carolina, we thought. So we proceeded on 19/129.

As Murphy appeared on the horizon, there appeared also a Chamber of Commerce, thank the powers that be. I suggested that we inquire about where the Reservation was, as the map was rather cryptic. The attendant was most helpful. It seemed that we were only 60 miles off course. Oh my! We should have used 441, but she showed us the correct route. We found out that the county of Cherokee was given a place on the map but not the city of Cherokee, and we had driven to Cherokee county and the city was in another county altogether. Clever, hah?

Well, we were going to pass through Nantahalla, and Heather told me that I had almost lost her there on a rafting trip she took in high school. I thought that was comforting. She pointed out the different sites as we passed them and the infamous rock that almost took her life. I was beginning to doubt my navigational skills when the roads were unfamiliar to
me. I had never been through Nantahalla to get to the Reservation. Oops! Well we were having an adventure weren’t we? If we got lost we could just turn around and retrace our steps. Right?

When we finally arrived at our destination, it looked like a ghost town. I knew it was Tuesday, but there is more activity in Dahlonega. All the shops, motels and restaurants were shut up tighter than drums. We had wanted to walk around a few shops or something. We drove around the town to see what we could have seen. If we were gamblers, we would have been happy as clams as that was all the entertainment available. Heather thought she was hungry again so we went in search of food. I was hoping for a trout or catfish dinner or maybe some Native-American fare. No such luck. It seemed ironic, all that way and all that was offered was Chinese, Steak House or fast food. We had Chinese, and it was good.

As we were leaving town it started to rain. Just what we wanted, dark, wet and curvy. What a combo. But during an adventure we are undaunted. Let it snow, we didn’t care. We were enjoying the time spent together, no matter what. We had fun trying to find our way back in the dark, and finding radio stations. The most fun was the Christmas lights in the mountains. Heather pointed at this light in the sky and asked, “What’s that, a UFO?” I started to laugh and said, “No silly, it’s a house way up the mountain with Christmas lights on it.” Heather tickles me sometimes, but all things aside, we both cherish these moments; they are like special presents we give to each other. We are blessed by each other’s presence.

Karen Knapp
Untitled

Daniel Leuthner
Men of few words are the best men. - Shakespeare

Falling Water

Katie Burnette
**Mountain Laurels**

*First Place Poem*

**to keep us here**

if I promise not to leave for school,
and you promise not to let them call you home,
maybe it will keep us here.

if I wish we could stay ten and catch leaves
in the wind, or get a sheet of paper and
color over them:

we could drink hot cocoa and eat popcorn on friday nights,
or sleep over in one piece pajamas and wake up to the
morning cartoons.

we could listen to old records, and ride our bikes
side by side
on the road.
and if you fell, I would help you up and
we'd ride away from there,

far away from there.

we could watch late-night movies and giggle
at what "lovers" say,
or play board games and drink soda,
trying to be the best and fastest at both.

we could race in the snow, our blushed noses leaking,
freezing hot to our faces.
and if you start beating me (start getting bigger)
i'd pull you down and we will run away from there,

far away from there.

*Rick Church*
Reflection

A thick sheet of glass is all that separates me and you--
A windowpane, a marked divide.
Alone in my liberty, I visit you with my eyes,
Glean from your life a slight stream of happiness--
Smooth and shiny, reflective.
Transparent.

I watch as you act out your daily routine,
Wishing I set my table for two.
I taste the comfort in the familiar hello,
Yearning for apron strings and the glare of the glass on your finger.

I watch you through a thin sheet of glass,
Through the window you gaze into as if you wanted out.

Kelly Leach
try not to hold your breath
escape the chill that comes from death
hold on, hang on my baby blue
I will try to find what caused this hue
hold on, hang on my baby blue

why don't you speak anymore
silence that's louder than past uproar
just keep holding onto my hand,
and soon you might be able to stand
hold on, hang on my baby blue
save the memories of having you

you can lend out all your air,
but I promise there'll be none to purchase there
when you let go and let yourself drift,
it won't be me, but you who will cause this rift
so you can hold on or let go my baby blue
just know that I've always wanted you

Rick Church
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

Does he paint? he fain would write a poem. - Does

Quandary 13

Darrel Brewer
Pay No Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain

We're not in Kansas anymore.
My first half-life was a process of dissolution.
God, the Monolith, smiled on my youth;
The smile a remnant of my lost people's duracell hopes
Revelation's Progress
Rich wind shakes the ice cubes
Chattering like a chorus in the wind
Icicles coat the rainspout,
Melting like starbursts in the morning light.
Steam rises to a cobalt sky,
Stage to icicle party streamers
Dripping reflected truth in drops of water
Forming craters on the sand below.
How He Died
"Where were you?" I asked my smiling friend.
He was a poor friend, never there when needed.
Eyeing the sparrow; secretly loving the hawk,
He was there when I saw
A prostitute pay a man twenty dollars
Just to find a vein in her swollen arm.
Young pregnant girls sold themselves
To pay the Obstetrician.
One father died, another murdered
As babies screamed for milk.
God pulled a Mussolini (El Duce!),
Arms crossed, cruel mouth, jutting chin.
I pockmarked his face with questions at first,
Heavy shots to the body, then a timeless haymaker
To his big glass jaw.
The bigger they are; the harder they fall,
Monolith in pieces.
Second Verse, Same as the First
Adrift! I settled for shade in a soulless world.
Silky hedonism, God's evil twin (El Duce!)
She shone like revival fire, a shiny brand-new God,
With soft eyes and warm skin.
I put my faith in her,
And offered up myself to endless danger
In an effort to be finished or saved.
Wearing my black leather jacket,
The one with the big gun pocket,
I searched out words I longed to hear
In the alleyways and scuffed yellow brick
Of a darkened Emerald city.
But the second God of my youth
Died like the first God,
Ugly in the glaring light which defines us,
And on Easter Sunday she left, hating me
With the old hate born from too many words
Spoken with too little thought.
I cried and breath was not in me.
Resolution
I held my breath and branched out like Kudzu
Until the root was forgotten.
Vines growing out of decay
Cast into heaven in search of sustenance
And found life in my life—my final God,
The one true God, the only one I have
Now every day is a page
Bound by truth—my truth.
Clothes do not make the man,
Nor do cars, ear rings, tatoos, or haircuts—
Mere embellishments, smoke and mirrors,
Brass, glass, and tinkling symbols.
The essential man remains.
Don't be fooled by cheap imitations.
Where false Gods and Messiahs let me down,
Love and honor took me home.
And in her shining eyes and soft laughter,
I found holy ground and was humbled.
The simplicity of the truth overwhelmed me.
I will show you hope in a handful of hand,
And a killer smile resting between dimples
That fit just right (and beautiful brown hair!)
Burning Corvette-red over my-second half-life.
God fades to black,
As our humanity grows in richness.
The man behind the curtain is me
And we're not in Oz Anymore.

*Kirk Turner*
The House with Black Walls

The house with black walls
suffocates all laughter
swallows it whole
like a whale
into the darkness of its halls

Hot whispers and hush words
fall on the deadly calm air
they sizzle and pop
when
they hit the
wooden floors

In this house of angry whispers
to love is not enough

Tracy Cook
flower

Sunlight forms
shadows, hues, shades
grassy fields of green
below you, naked feet.
Dew stains the rain
from the storm
tiptoeing out like thunder-cluttered
cold, and Dark
Crazy, Hazy, Daisy
fill the field
empty thoughts memories that flicker,
fading fast from the fall.
Innocence like petals
falls apart
with
tender touches.
The flower in your hair
nestled above your ear
selects
the sunlight
to illuminate soft	naked feet.

Garrick Harmel
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion.

Me Too

Darrell Brewer
but an escape from emotion. - Eliot
One man is as good as another, until

Eclipse

I watched as the stars sprinkled pepper on your back
And the moon shone approval;
Liquid silver through your hair,
Projecting the rainbow that branded my chest
and the grass was wet and tickled my sides and you, incredible you,
Were moving through my soul like hot silk,
Bringing life to my lonesome body.
Your kisses rained like gentle dew
upon my face and breasts, leaving Tiny pink-red lovemarks which sizzled, cinnamon, as I waited on your love
So finally you, sweet you, were shattering; body and soul into me,
And I lay smouldering in your completion, watching The phases of the moon And feeling your breath, cool on my neck, as you slept.

Kelly Leach
Bound By Beliefs

Bobby Hall
When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed,
And the last cry is bellowed,
As the last drop plops into an infant puddle.
One flash, and silence reigns, again.
The cowardly animate return to aftermath, in relief,
And trees and flowers are somberly silent.
And the tempest slowly departs
And whispers reassurances of comforting return
To all that greens and blossoms,
And me.

James Clifton Wood
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

I’ll make thee glorious by my pen.

Untitled

Debra Eaton
White picket fence dream

Today, the sun's blazing
Hot and fearful
My morphine eyes aching
I'm crying with sickness
Looking out the window
Little kids are playing
Their Parents working
Living out their
White picket fence dreams.
It's a suburban nightmare
Ranch houses and bicycles
Freckles and 12-year-old games
Yet, I'm a poet . . .
My ship departed long ago
Leaving me here, stranded
Alone, lonely, and abhorred
A prophet without a country
Watching other folks, so happy
Living out their
White picket fence dreams.
I'm up late curing my fever-
Feeding my disease-
With drink, pills, wild women
Anesthetized against the pain
Still, it lingers . . .
I'll quote my friend Bono,
(He said it like he knew it, too)
"I tried to drown my sorrows,
But my sorrows, they learned to swim"
Makes me wonder, reading his lyrics,
If he, too, is on the outside
Watching others live their
White picket fence dreams.

John Charles Brogdon
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

Write with your spade, and garden with your pen.

Flower Archway

Debbie Martin
The Smoky Mountain Man

He grew up in the mountains.
Some even called him a hick.
This poor old mountain Hoosier,
Bout as smart as a brick.
But they didn't know he had learning.
He had a college degree.
This Smoky Mountain Man,
The last of a dying breed.

They said,
"Who wants to live in the mountains?
There's no culture back in the sticks.
There ain't no malls or cinema's,
And don't forget 'squeal like a pig.'
All they've got is little stores,
Five churches and a school.
These Smoky Mountain People
Must be a bunch of fools."

He's seeing the times change now,
Faster than a blinking eye.
Half his neighbors are from Atlanta,
Houses on the mountains so high.
Now who's the one who's stupid?
The roles, he thinks, have flopped.
10,000 dollars an acre,
For what used to be a swamp.
But they brought their troubles with them,
From the world they left behind.
That little school can save our kids
From the drugs that ruined their minds.
We'll bring up all our friends,
Then they'll build a house.
"That's how we do it in Florida;
It's time you came around."

So, he's tired of being put down
For his southern drawl.
If you don't like this way of living,
Why don't you give Mayflower a call?
Quit cutting down the forests.
Take the houses off the bluffs.
Shut down the bulldozers.
The mountains have had enough!

Now he looks down on his mountains,
While soaring like a bird.
wishing things could be undone,
To back when "Dixie" wasn't a dirty word!
He's proud of his raising;
Not many could say that.
If he could have his way now,
He'd take his mountains back.

*James Clifton Wood*
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

are my ministers. - King Charles II

Untitled

Julie Brown
To An Artist

What are the pictures that you paint?
Young girls in white cotton dresses picking flowers and discovering that life is simply beautiful?
Stern men who once saw life's beauty and now notice neon signs?
Happy mothers who cry because they know their children will one day feel the pain and suffering of life and forget that simple life is beautiful?
The still life of a flower which breathes but doesn't move?
My sirens that sing a beautiful death-song and are inspired by the same immortal Muses that grind my soul and pen?
The Father and The Son?
The Holy Spirit?
Can you, my fellow laborer, create the image of creation?
Can you endlessly toil for perfection only found in simplicity leading to complexity? (Evolution).
Can you taste that life is outstanding and pleasurable?
Can you taste that life is nothing?
Are you sometimes afraid of the day after tomorrow and the day after that?
Do you then tell yourself that today was fine and so was yesterday and the day before that?
Do you then tell yourself that you've found your way and there's no need to worry?
Do you then paint the mountains and blue skies that resemble gods and mortals trying to assemble the world in an orderly fashion?

Brett Thompson
Remember

Remember that night? —
When the silver moon
Chased away the gossamer clouds,
And only the strongest stars
Remained to watch us love?
Yes, the night we peered back,
Up into their eyes,
When the autumn chill
Crept upon us, yet repelled
By our warming blanket.
Our happy faces steamed
In that lovely moonlight,
And we smiled 'til our faces hurt,
Then formed them into one.
We melded with the night,
'Til we melted into dawn,
And died until the fatigue
Left our moistened bodies.
Reverie is so much sweetness,
When it is imagined.
Come with me, to find the moon
And give me this night to cherish

Matthew T. McGaha
If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree

First Grade Self-Portrait

Brian Chesser
oak tree reverie

you have grandmother's arms
for branches, and her skin for yours.

Saturday morning of my
childhood Year, while
toilet bowls and showerheads
called for me,
I ran to
you, safe with you.

the seeking boys can
not find me, in your arms
hiding from them and
everyone.

Palm Sunday (a little later),
I heard your screams
as the wind
lifted you up into the sky.

and it took you
like a thief.

Rick Church
Far Away...

Time - it does separate the two by equal lengths
and yet - we think
-I wonder -
what the other is doing at this moment or that.
Just as in our midnight sky
-the stars they do glisten -
and I miss your eyes.

Days - they will come and wait for the sun
then carefully go - as still, we ponder
-I remember -
all of the unforgettable things discovered together.
Made our way through the darkness,
-found the rainbow -
a mystery in your smile.

Minutes - do slip away as they linger on the edge
and pass - as we sleep
-I dream -
of tomorrow and its memories alone.
The warmth like a blanket
-covers me -
your presence becomes a gift.

Seconds - are precious as the surrounding sweet music
that plays - and we sit still
-I flinch -
in our different worlds
we are the same
-listening -
for the echo of your cherished laugh, my friend -
off of our shared moon.

Callie Clark
nothing can cure it but the scratching of a pen. - Lover

Untitled

Clayton Santiago
Epiphany

Silently
stare at
the face
in the
mirror/Bl
ank of
emotion
void of
hope/Cont
emplate
the hands
that will
never
again
know the
strength
of
youth/The
greying
hair on
now
stooped
shoulders/
And
wonder
why we
wait until
the day
when
change is
no longer
possible

Kelly Leach
Montgomery River

Karen Robinson
Necropolis

In the soothing warmth of an ancient October
I lay upon the waning green grass
with the pine needles invading my sun-drenched hair,
dreaming of love, perfect only in youth.
So safe, secure in knowing you watched and waited,
reveling in my silent, sleeping form-
at the portrait painted by autumn's gentle light.
I lay contently within your gaze,
ear pressed to the ground, listening to fall's failing heart.

Now, in the streets of January's necropolis
separate winds fill the shadowed nightscape
with their pleadings, their forlorn meditations,
screaming at the heavens in objection.
And I, lay dreaming upon my soft childhood bed
of a love eclipsed by the harvest moon,
of October among pine needles and green grass.
While outside, the winds keep their vigil,
their prayers shattered by a lone shot in the night.

In the sullen depths of winter's present night,
you rest upon dry grass and red clay
your soul undone, drifting in the ceaseless night,
and staining the welcoming earth deep crimson.
Encircling, the soldier pines stand guard above you,
protecting your silent, sleeping form-
as failing stars and ash moonlight cast shadows upon you.
And beneath this blanket of eternity,
you tumble into the forgiving arms of God.
Now, I stand within the walls of a grey garden
among sombre columns of remembrance
scorching the barren ground with my futile tears,
and rending the sky with bitter words.
Knowing, of a time when I would have joined you
in self-loathing; I am shaken by it all,
by the knowledge that I loved you more than myself.
Overwhelmed, I watch for omens of spring,
among the white-hot ashes of my childhood bed.

*Beth Holland*
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

For all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest

Honesty

Some things are better left unspoken
not hidden in dark corners, and
yet not placed in bright windowsills
where the flowers grow tall
in sun-heated ledges . . .

Ledges . . . so many in life with
Decisions
To walk the ledges or
jump
falling
in love
or sinking; drowning
(suffocating)

Do you prefer to smother to death
or face the other choice:
Breathe Life
breathe it in deep?

Tracy Cook
MOUNTAIN LAURELS

are these, "it might have been!" - Whittier

 Untitled

David Leuthner

Pam Durban grew up in South Carolina. She has worked as a journalist and teacher in New York, Kentucky, Ohio, and Georgia. She was the 1984 recipient of the Rinehart Award in Fiction, and her first book, *All Set About with Fever Trees and other stories*, was published in 1985. She has received a Whiting Writer's Award and a Crazyhorse Fiction Award. Her novel *The Laughing Place* was published by Scribners in 1993. She presently teaches creative writing at Georgia State University.

Peter Schmidt’s poetry has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *The Southern Review* and *The Nation* which awarded him a 1988 "Discovery" Prize. He’s also received the Peter I.B. Lavan Touyer Poets Award from the Academy of American Poets. His collected poems appear in *Country Airport* and *Hazard Duty*, both published by Copper Beeches Press. He teaches Creative Writing at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.
I would like to thank the contributors to the 1996 Mountain Laurels. We had over a hundred submissions this year, and even though many did not make it into this issue, I strongly encourage the writers and artists who attempted this year to submit again next year.

Thanks to Mr. Hank Margeson for making arrangements for the inclusion of the visual art in this issue. This is the first year Mountain Laurels has included visual art, and I hope our readers enjoy the skill of the artists presented here. I regret, however, that the art was not judged by outside critics as were the literary submissions this year. This issue will hopefully generate enthusiasm for the future inclusion and more prestigious judging of visual art in future issues of Mountain Laurels.

The editorial board and I took special care to keep the literary submissions anonymous during the judging process, and we are certain that the works presented here represent the best of the works submitted. First, second and third place works received cash awards as follows:

- First $50
- Second $30
- Third $20

My congratulations to the winners and to Shannon Scott whose photograph "Spring" was selected for the cover design.

Many thanks to SGA and Sigma Tau Delta for the funding of this year’s Mountain Laurels. Without your financial support, this magazine would not be possible. I hope that this issue inspires the school to even greater literary and artistic effort for future issues.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jim Ewing, Dr. B.J. Robinson, and Dr. Brian Corrigan for their help in the preliminary judging and their many contributions to this issue and Steve Lewis and his staff at NGC Print Services for their help in meeting our deadline.

Many thanks,
Diane King