Editor: Deidre Eby
Associate Editor: Angie Roberts
Art Editor: Eric L. Pittman
Faculty Advisors: Sally Russell
Robert Westervelt

Special Thanks To: Our proof-readers, Sallie Duhling, Jessica Jackson, and
Barbara Thomas
Brad Strickland, for sharing his "Page-Maker" abilities
Frankie Abercrombie, Stacey Alexander, and Terry Hulsey of
The Anchor for their creative and technical contributions
Dr. Robert Westervelt, for the "Table of Contents" background

Perceptions is a creative arts magazine published by the Humanities Division and
Student Activities of Gainesville 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.

All unsolicited manuscripts and art work should be accompanied by a stamped,
self-addressed envelope. While care will be exercised in the handling of these
materials, the editorial staff cannot assume responsibility for them in the event of
damage or loss. Submissions will be accepted for consideration during fall and winter
quarters for publication each spring. Submit all materials to Sally Russell, Humanities
Division, Gainesville College, Box 1358, Gainesville, Georgia 30503.

Authors and artists retain all rights to their works in this publication.

Cover: Terry Hulsey
Colored Pencil

Title Page: Glenn Chandler
Computer Graphics
### CONTENTS

#### Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angie Roberts</td>
<td>Never Say Die</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnathon Todd Hudson</td>
<td>Clear the Connors</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hale</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Jackson</td>
<td>Afternoon in the Barn</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Lehett</td>
<td>Riches</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Cline</td>
<td>Breaking Up</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. F.</td>
<td>Please Come and Hold Me</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Gardner</td>
<td>Author's Graduation Speech</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hudson</td>
<td>Homage to a College</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Jackson</td>
<td>Letter to a Father</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Robles</td>
<td>Slipping Down</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. McMichael</td>
<td>As the Nest Settles Down</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Parham</td>
<td>A Middle Vision</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Roberts</td>
<td>Closing Time</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. T.</td>
<td>Weep For</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Trux, Jr.</td>
<td>Morning Dreams</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Short Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Alexander</td>
<td>Goodnight, Amanda Jane</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Alexander</td>
<td>Goodnight, Amanda Jane</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Brothers</td>
<td>Scratchboard</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Carnuth</td>
<td>Pen Drawing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Chandler</td>
<td>Computer Graphics</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Freedman</td>
<td>Stone Sculpture</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Huff</td>
<td>Stone Sculpture</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Halsey</td>
<td>Colored Pencil</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Lacey</td>
<td>Oil Painting</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris McMichael</td>
<td>Ink</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Palme</td>
<td>Graphite Drawing</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney Park</td>
<td>Stone Sculpture</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Penoncello</td>
<td>Conte Drawing</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric L. Pitman</td>
<td>Watercolor</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Reed</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dianne Skinner</td>
<td>Ink &amp; Wash Drawing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taft Stephens</td>
<td>Stone Sculpture</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Waldrep</td>
<td>Conte Drawing</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Watkins</td>
<td>Felt-tip Pen Drawing</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela West</td>
<td>Felt-tip Pen Drawing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Westervelt</td>
<td>Pen &amp; Ink</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusty Williams</td>
<td>Scratchboard</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**"Goodnight, Amanda Jane" was the Winner of the GC Writing Contest in the short story category."
I was bored. A stranger passing through a strange land, I was curious and my journey afforded me little time to learn. So, when I passed through a village square and spied a storyteller practicing his craft, I decided that my journey could wait a while. After all, the artifact rumored to be somewhere in the lands of the elves would not be going anywhere.

As I settled myself on the ground, I caught the end of a tale and resigned myself to continuing my quest. But, gods be praised, a small child asked for another story. The old man stroked his beard, straightened his robes, and cleared his throat. "My friends, listen well, for I will tell you about the time when Elementals roamed the lands." All around, I heard murmurs of delight and anticipation.

The story teller began, "Long ago, before the Great Wars, the Elementals roamed the earth. They, as you know them, were Fire, Earth, Water, and Air and, all together, worked in conjunction to serve the Earth Mother in the coordination of Nature's seemingly capricious actions. This they did for many centuries with little interaction with the other races.

Near the end of the Wars of the Races, there arose a magician whose dark powers were of such magnitude that he was able to enslave the Elementals. Alkinoor unleashed the Earth and Fire Elementals upon every army on the field of battle, even his own. The earth began to shake beneath the soldiers' feet. Soon, great rifts opened and cleared the open plains. No one was able to withstand the might of the Elementals and Alkinoor was victorious. Any of his enemies left alive were taken as spoils of war and later sold as slaves to people from across the Great Sea. Thereafter, Alkinoor declared himself ruler of all and utilized the Elementals to enforce his reign. The lands were under the influence of that magician for twenty years. During that time, any creature possessing the smallest bit of magic were killed or imprisoned.

"But, the gods had not deserted their creations for born to Masilon and N'estoi, the greatest magic-users left living were twins." I was shocked. Those children would be more endowed with magic than their parents because twins are naturally magical even though that ability might never manifest itself. Fearing I had missed something vital, I resumed listening to the old man only to realize that he had only explained the significance of such a birth. "Masilon kept the blessed event from Alkinoor and sent the babies out of the prison to live with an old man who lived in the remotest mountains of the region. Many years passed and the children grew and developed their talents under the tutelage of the old man, Masilon's teacher.

"In time, the children were prepared for life in the midst of others and were sent to the capital city of Se-dish, Alkinoor's own residence. There, they learned of the deaths of Masilon and N'estoi and the tale of the capture of the Elementals. Riderch and Crydia decided to avenge their parents and were sent to obtain the necessary tools for the construction of the Spheres. Riderch and Crydia were under the influence of that magician for many centuries with little interaction with the other races.

They, as you know them, were Fire, Earth, Water, and Air and, all together, worked in conjunction to serve the Earth Mother in the coordination of Nature's seemingly capricious actions. This they did for many centuries with little interaction with the other races.

Near the end of the Wars of the Races, there arose a magician whose dark powers were of such magnitude that he was able to enslave the Elementals. Alkinoor unleashed the Earth and Fire Elementals upon every army on the field of battle, even his own. The earth began to shake beneath the soldiers' feet. Soon, great rifts opened and cleared the open plains. No one was able to withstand the might of the Elementals and Alkinoor was victorious. Any of his enemies left alive were taken as spoils of war and later sold as slaves to people from across the Great Sea. Thereafter, Alkinoor declared himself ruler of all and utilized the Elementals to enforce his reign. The lands were under the influence of that magician for twenty years. During that time, any creature possessing the smallest bit of magic were killed or imprisoned.

"But, the gods had not deserted their creations for born to Masilon and N'estoi, the greatest magic-users left living were twins." I was shocked. Those children would be more endowed with magic than their parents because twins are naturally magical even though that ability might never manifest itself. Fearing I had missed something vital, I resumed listening to the old man only to realize that he had only explained the significance of such a birth. "Masilon kept the blessed event from Alkinoor and sent the babies out of the prison to live with an old man who lived in the remotest mountains of the region. Many years passed and the children grew and developed their talents under the tutelage of the old man, Masilon's teacher.

"In time, the children were prepared for life in the midst of others and were sent to the capital city of Se-dish, Alkinoor's own residence. There, they learned of the deaths of Masilon and N'estoi and the tale of the capture of the Elementals. Riderch and Crydia decided to avenge their parents and destroy Alkinoor. They returned to the mountains and sought council with the old man. He said, 'You can defeat Alkinoor only after he has been stripped of the powers of the Elementals. In order to do this, you must gain their control, but I have not the means to enable you to do this.' The twins then journeyed to the oracle in Tarantor and were instructed to create a physical means of holding an Elemental captive.

My heart quickened. The artifact I had been instructed to gain possession of was a Sphere of Element Control. In fact, I think it was the one for Earth. If this story was based on fact, then my quest was not just so much useless traveling. It was too much for me to digest so I returned my attention to the tale. "Riderch and his sister, Crydia, returned to Se-dish and began constructing spheres for the containment of an Elemental." I couldn't believe my ears! The spheres were not just a figment of Fleece's mind. They truly existed! I listened with bated breath, for the outcome of my quest hinged upon the outcome of the tale.

"Alkinoor soon discovered the plot against him. He sent soldiers to arrest the twins and had them brought before him for questioning. But in the middle of the session with the tyrant, Riderch and Crydia created a portal and stepped through. Alkinoor cast many divination spells and used his seeing pool in vain; the twins were not to be found. Enraged, he sent the Elementals searching throughout the material as well as the elemental plane but they also could not find them."

A child interrupted and asked, "But where did Riderch and Crydia go? Did they ever come back? Did they ever beat that mean magician?" The storyteller chuckled and said, "Wait a moment, young lady, and I will tell you."

He continued, "When the twins stepped through the portal, they went to the ethereal plane. From there, they were able to obtain the necessary tools for the construction of the Spheres. Riderch labored for a year in their formation while Crydia used her magical bonds to keep the spells upon Crydia dissipated that the tide of the skirmish turned and Alkinoor was subdued.

"Freed of their bondage, the Elementals entered the Spheres and Crydia was able to complete the spell begun by her brother. You have sealed your fate by entering these spheres. Here you will remain, in an eternal sleep, until you are awakened by this command: 'In the name of Alkinoor, I command you to aid me now.' You will return to your Sphere at the command, 'I no longer require your services.'"

"When Alkinoor was defeated and the Elementals controlled, the land was returned to its former peaceful state and remained that way for fifty years. Then, barbarians from across the water invaded. All were enslaved and the Spheres were lost until rumors of their presence in elven lands recently surfaced. There have been tales of possessions of the twins surfacing in bazaars. It is to be hoped that these stories are false, for the powers in the Spheres alone are unimaginable."
At that, the old man got up and entered the inn behind him. I could not help but wonder exactly what powers the Spheres possess and I decided against recovering the Sphere of Earth Elemental for Fleece, my unscrupulous employer. Rather, I would recover the Sphere and any treasure the magician twins may have left behind. After all, I'm sure that I could find a better use than thieving aids. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't introduce myself. I am Lucarius, son of Pierethius, son of Alkinoor.

*****

Death Would Be So Inconvenient

Now.
I've got so much to do.
I haven't begun life;
Ten years or twenty years or
Preferably a hundred years
Would be O.K.
After I've married, become a mother,
Had a career, lived my
Life,
Then it can be taken away.
But not while I'm waiting
for those things still.

Death can't come yet;
I haven't finished school yet--
I have a term paper due
Next week.

But I read, sickly,
About the Psychotic Killer
The Drunk Driver
The Enraged Mother
Who think they are God.
Lives no further along
than mine--gone.
Lives that weren't finished.

How? Why? When?
Will death be the way
it's supposed to be--
a peaceful, silent passing
from one world to another,
or will it be evil, violent, sudden?
Will it be the beginning
of blissful eternity,
or the entrance
to nothingness--
like dreamless sleep?
How can we know
that the Greeks weren't right?

Angie Roberts
Riches
Our only china pattern was Love bordered with Kisses
Our fine crystal was Virtue tempered with Patience
Our silverware was Honesty and Compassion
Our family heirlooms were Values and Traditions
Wealth immeasureable dispersed by one woman
Whose name is not important we just call her Mother
Sandra E. Baker

Blue
Tell me, Momma, what is blue?
Well, blue is a brilliant summer day or the coolness of a mountain stream
It's how you felt when your bunny died and it's the color of the mountains touching the sky
But the loveliest of all the blues is the blue of the eyes inquiring up at me
For soon, my child, you'll no longer ask of me You'll know everything
Sandra E. Baker
Never Say "Diet"
by Angie Roberts

Sometimes I think it would be much better if Adam and Eve had never committed that first sin. Think about it. We would all be naked, no one would care. Everyone would share everything; no one would steal or lie or cheat. And there would be no diets.

You see, when Adam and Eve sinned, they created shame, and shame is why we have diets. If I weren't ashamed of how my rear curves a little too much, I wouldn't feel the least bit guilty about curling up on the couch with a nice, big cup of hot chocolate with marshmallows and a bag of Double Stuff Oreos while the lady on T.V. is putting away at aerobics. It is not hard to tell that I have just finished (or, rather, prematurely ended) another diet. This was an "all-you-can-eat" diet. All the fruit you can eat, all the vegetables you can eat, and water. Now, if you will notice, neither fruits nor vegetables were mentioned above in my list of irresistibles. This diet also comes complete with a recipe for "Miracle Soup," which is said to cause malnutrition if eaten alone for extended periods of time.

The diet before that was, logically, one that said "eat no fruits or vegetables, eat only meats, fats, and processed foods. In fact, eat whatever you want, as much as you want, just don't eat fruits, vegetables, or sweets." Another says to only eat bananas, another still says eat only grapefruit—I want a diet that tells me I can have all the twinkies and ice cream I want!

The hardest part to believe is to what extent desperate people will go to be thin. Someone told me about going on a diet of boiled eggs and buttermilk. BOILED EGGS AND BUTTERMILK!! "But oh," she said, "you can have a banana a day, too." I think I'm going to be sick. It's amazing that it's possible to eat combinations that would choke a billy-goat, but to actually eat foods that we actually know what they are made of turns our stomachs. I guess if someone told me that broccoli and brussel sprouts were fattening, I wouldn't be able to get enough of them.

Once I remember fasting for a week. For an entire seven days I ate nothing and drank only water. My shame turned quickly to pride. I was proud that even though I could hardly stand, my jeans were actually loose and I had defined cheekbones. I was ready to shamelessly don that bikini (the fact that it was December didn't matter). Shame returned when I gained all of it back the next week (plus some).

When Adam and Eve sinned, they created shame, and shame is why we have diets.

It's unfair, also, that weight has become such a commercial profit source. Every time I turn on the T.V. or radio or pick up a newspaper or magazine, I see thin (shameless) models who say "I lost 42 pounds in just 3 weeks, and you can, too, with 'Gorgeous Bod diet plan'." Spas tell me "But is $88 a month too much for your good health and positive image?"

Phooey. Eighty-eight dollars a month to pay to go to this place where everyone is skinnier than you are and you're only chastised more by their presence. I can sit at home and look in the mirror for free and get the same results! What have I learned from all this? Only that if this world is too superficial to accept me and like me the way I am, then it can just watch me while I eat another bag of caramel popcorn with peanuts and drink a root beer float!

Ice Cream Sundae

The hot, buttery caramel flows, wrapping itself around the towering ice cream peaks. The syrupy chocolate rushes after, filling the cup—almost running over the edge and down my hand.

I feel the coolness, the soft cream melts all the way down. I savor each morsel making the delight last as long as possible. Licking my lips, tasting the last sticky sweetness.

Angie Roberts
WINSTON, THE LOCAL FAMILY PRACTITIONER of holistic corrugated fiber board medicine, sent me a red tipped flower today. I believe it was intended to mark the vastly expiring custom of our beloved home country's "Send A Cold Magnolia A Heartfelt Weed Day". Winston, being the comely gentleman that he is, gave me not a weed but a blooming thing. He is my treasure. I am much impressed by his offering of a springtime how-do-you-do development. However, if my apricot honey, Winston, does not show at our pre-postponed planned rendezvous (the old cement plant on Blalock-Pound Place) at 4:10 P.M. today, oh, what shall I wear once I return home, disappointed and downtrodden, to grieve in fashionably?

M.K. Parham

Cashier(Exchange)

Smiling
at his faded blue jeans
she's thinking
what a nice man
some nice
lady's
hardworking
husband no doubt
two-fifty
change
"...one-and-two..."

Staring
out of kindly blue eyes
he's thinking
hi honey chile
how old
are you
'bout sixteen
old enough I'll bet
Rattle-chink
change
"...and thank you..."

Stacey Alexander
Today

I intend to start living,
do all I've dreamed of doing,
...someday

face my fears and take my chances,
no matter the consequences,
...one day

take daring steps,
be true to my heart
say I love you
I think I'll start
...today

Julie Cline

Sometimes I Wonder

Sometimes I wonder
what the future holds.

Will I be successful,
Will I fail?

Will I be happy,
Will I be lonely?

Will I be wealthy,
or doomed to poverty?

Will I be healthy,
or stricken with disease?

I am afraid
to take a chance.
I am afraid
not to take a chance.
Do I have a choice?

Julie Cline

Song of the Living

Love, how quietly your heart calls,
How soft the shadows on your breast,
Flowing through your graceful wrist.

How quiet is the midnight, dear,
How warm the winds where lovebirds fly,
Where all the changing moonlight, dear,
Pales in your shining eye.

Love, what warmth your fair skin hides,
As pure as salt, as sweet as breath,
And in the dark a pale moon denies
the advent of your death.

So revive again the dying light
Of candle, torch, and rotting wood
and listen to the song of night
Caught in your rising blood.

Take up your life, my love
Deny the coming night
And dance with me, my love
To celebrate the light.

Deidre Eby

Song of the Undead

Love, how loud your heart calls,
How deep the shadows at your breast,
Love, how turbulent the rivers,
Flowing through your dying wrist.

How quiet is the midnight, dear,
How warm the winds where ravens fly,
Where all the changing moonlight, dear,
Pales in your fading eye.

Love, what warmth your frail skin hides,
As pure as salt, as sweet as death,
And in the dark a pale moon rides
the foxfire of your breath.

Put aside the dying light
Of candle, torch, and rotting wood
and listen to the song of night
Caught in your rising blood.

Give up your life, my love
Deny the morning light
And dance with me, my love
To celebrate the night.

Deidre Eby
I returned to the office one Monday after lunch and flung my hat towards the coat rack. It missed. My receptionist was not at her desk, so I decided to take this opportunity to get some goodies from the gumball machine—(I'm trying to quit smoking). My fingers had just reached the first piece, when from behind me someone asked, "Mr. Simmons?"

"Who wants to know?" I snapped as I snatched my hand out of the gumball machine and spun around.

"I'm Mrs. McKinnly. We spoke earlier on the phone," "Ah yes, Mrs. McKinnly. Why don't we step into my office?"

This was one gorgeous dame. I'd seen her type before. My first guess was that she thought her husband was cheating on her and she wanted me to confirm her suspicions. But if that was the case, then hubby must be blind or crazy.

"How can I help you, Mrs. McKinnly?"

"I have reason to believe that my husband is being unfaithful."

"Can I pick 'em or what?" I nodded understandingly and she continued.

"He's always making these mysterious errands, and lately he's been coming home late from the office. When he does come home, it's obvious that he's hiding something, and that's why I've come to you. Can you help me?"

Now, being a private detective, the majority of my cases involve following people's spouses—not the most prestigious of work, I can assure you. I had told myself earlier that I would try to branch out and not take so many of these "jilted spouse" cases. I figured now would be a good opportunity to start. Enough was enough. Then I looked into her big baby blues and said, "I'll take the case."

Two days later I found myself sitting in my car parked across the street from Mr. McKinnly's office. Posing as a janitor the night before, I had managed to slip into Hubby's office and stick a bug under his desk. Now as I sat in my car with my headphones on, I began to wonder if maybe Mrs. McKinnly wasn't imagining things. As of yet, Mr. McKinnly had not given any indication of having an extracurricular love life.

I glanced at my watch. 5:30. About time to close shop. Suddenly I heard a door open in the office. "Ah, there you are my pretty. You may go now. Betty."

Betty, Betty—(that must be his secretary.) The door closed.

"Come over here, baby." Showtime. For a few seconds, all I heard was a lot of heavy breathing. Then, "You're so pretty. I can't stand hiding you away any longer."

More heavy breathing. This chick obviously wasn't much for talking.

"Tonight's the night, baby. It's time to let the old lady in on our little secret."

This guy was scum! The office door closed. In a few minutes, they would come walking out the door, hand in hand, laughing and smiling and staring into each other's eyes. Disgusting. Whoever this broad was, she must be some knockout if Hubby was willing to throw over the Mrs. for her. Some guys had all the luck.
Mother to Daughter

I wish you could have remained five forever

When...
I was beautiful and
Daddy, the most handsome, smartest man alive

When...
Christmas took a lifetime to roll around again
Grandparents lived forever

Before you discovered:
Mothers are not perfect
Daddies often cry
Santa Claus is a phony
loved ones sometimes die

I would have kept you safe, secure, and happy
in a world of pink and white

Where...
dollies sip lime Kool-aide
to rhymes of Dr. Seuss
and I could kiss
your hurts "all better"

If you had just co-operated
and remained five forever

Sandra E. Baker

For My Mother

I have made Pilgrimages with you through Colonel Putnam's Woods,
And my collective unconscious remembers well
The Lovers' Tree.
For as much as you are a part of those memories, I am a part of you.
What a wonderful awakening to have rediscovered you as a writer,
to have encountered you as a woman.
What a joyous rebirth to love you as my friend.

Jessica Jackson
I got a visit from myself the other day. If you're confused, it's okay; I'm not sure I understand either.

Two days ago, I was sitting in my room reading the latest issue of Soap Opera Digest. I was about halfway through the "Days of Our Lives" synopsis, when I was blinded by a bright white light. When my eyes were finally adjusted, I was astonished by what I saw. Sitting in the middle of my room was a very strange object every bit as tall as the ceiling. The object was about five feet thick and resembled a light bulb on a tripod with a door that went its entire length. There were words on the door that read, "KENMORE Time 'o' Matic Sears & Roebuck."

Suddenly, the door began to open. I held my breath. As I watched, the door slowly lowered and came to rest in front of me. Through the porthole came a creature dressed in a silver suit that covered its entire body. Even its head was covered by a dark visored helmet. The creature was holding a box that looked like a large calculator and waving it around in the air. Then a voice came from the box.

"Oxygen level satisfactory for sustaining life. Radiation levels are minimal—no danger of poisoning."

When the box stopped, the creature began to remove its suit. In the few seconds it took to remove its helmet, every alien I had ever seen in the movies went through my head. Would it be the cute, cuddly features of ET, or would it be a slimy, parasitic version of the Alien? To my surprise, it was neither. When the helmet was off, I saw the face of a man, and there was something very familiar about the face.

"Damn," the man said, looking at me, "was I really that ugly?"

I beg your pardon," I said, somewhat taken aback. "Allow me to introduce myself," he said, putting out his hand. "I am you."

"U?" I asked, making a motion with my finger in the shape of the letter. "No, YOU," he said, pointing at me, "as in your future self."

"Camel Caca!" I said. "I can prove I'm you if you like," he said confidently. "By all means, prove it.

"You like classical and heavy metal music, but not at the same time. You cry at Disney movies, especially "Herbie Goes Bananas." You often fantasize about Vanna White and Kathleen Turner rubbing cod liver oil on . . ."

"Okay," I interrupted, "so you're me. But what are you doing here?"

"Well, there is a waiting list a mile long to rent one of those things," he said, indicating the Time 'o' Matic. "When my turn came up, I decided to visit myself."

My head throbbed, as I tried to comprehend it all. There were so many questions to ask. I finally settled on an easy one.

"What was that box you had when you got off?"

"It serves two purposes," he said. "I'll just call him "Slip." It protects me from the sun's radiation, and it also converts carbon dioxide into an oxygen, carbon dioxide and nitrogen mix—sort of like a personal atmosphere."

"I thought that was what plants are for," I said.

"Not any more. The last green plant was destroyed on March 3, 2002. That's when the first oxygen suit had to be made."

I thought a minute before continuing. "You mean the suits weren't made before all the oxygen was gone?"

He began laughing loudly. "Of course not," he said. "Don't be so foolish."

"But I don't believe I was sitting here being insulted by myself. Apparently, I was to become very irrational."

"Why do you need protection from the sun's radiation?" I asked.

"The makers of aerosol cans said there might be a possible connection between their products and the absence of the ozone layer."

"Did the government assess heavy fines?"

"Heavens no!" he said. "They told them not to worry about it; they would think of something. Democracy has to protect private enterprise, you know."

There were other questions I wanted to ask on that subject, but I also wanted to get to something juicier. "If you wear those suits all the time, how do you reproduce?"

"We don't worry about that anymore. The government is in charge of recreation."

Aghast, I decided to abandon that line of questioning. I immediately changed the subject. "What do I do in the future?"

"Same as everyone else: sit around and watch television. All jobs have been automated."

"Is there any other way that science has made life easier?"

"I was being sarcastic, but he didn't pick up on it."

"Why in the world would they want to do that?"

"It's impossible to stop the rain from falling."

"Hardly impossible . . . We are so much more advanced than you could ever imagine. Why, they're even making plans to burn out the sun prematurely."

"But don't people die without water?"

"Sure they do. People have been dropping off like flies for the past few months. The government is working on an alternative to water that won't be so quite so damaging."

"That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. It's impossible to stop the rain from falling."

"Is there any other way science has made life easier?"

"I was being sarcastic . . ."
Homage à Colette

"During a sudden silence, thick as a mist, I've just heard fall on a nearby table the petals of a rose which also only waited to be alone before shedding its blossom."

Colette, Vesper

In respect of Colette's roses
I transplant always in silence,
Quietly tearing at roots and shoots
Like a deaf-mute Fascist
Violating the yelling yellow virgin he cannot hear.

Death will rape and repossess me
When I reach my moment of silence also.

And so I do not tremble before the toll of Thundering tremolos. Noise is
Still sense, still life.
The immutable piercing screams that shriek Ripping across the skies are still of this world.

Death is taciturn, so I turn to talk.
And when my voice falters, I also

Will lie silent, still and reposed.
And altered inviolate,
Will offer up my quietus on the reposoir of silence.

Robin Hale
Weep for

the starving buffalo being killed by Montana ranchers --
just hunting for food

the elephants of Africa and the Far East being slaughtered at random
just for wearing ivory tusks

the rural, jobless, economically deprived blacks of Mansfield, Louisiana, selling CRACK --
just looking for a better day

the Palestinian children of the West Bank and Gaza Strip being killed from Israeli soldiers' beatings and plastic bullets --
just seeking a homeland and human dignity

the Kurdish villagers of Iraq killed with chemically-produced poisonous gases --
just for being ethnically different

the young black activist of the apartheid state of South Africa shot 12 times by a police "hit squad" while sleeping, just asking for equality

Wail against

an indifference to violence
an apathy for injustice

Barbara T.
H’dahi’yu Cried they sent their lightning. for they desired the warmth of the flame.

From Sayi. - I Sayi.-!

Long ago when the earth was young,

She and so the Thunders

Was born in the sycamore’s hollow

Sol

Flat,

How come we by the fire?

Oh, of the paws of

The great hunter,

have placed it out of reach

Cannot swim, nor can he fly!

Who will fetch the Fire?

Tsa! Sol

- hu- hu - hu - hu - hu!

Who will fetch the Fire?

The little Scrunch Owl

beats his wings over the water,
crying - hu-hu-hu!

He slights on the tree,

but Hi!

He gazes too long

and the Fire’s hot breath

burns his own-round eyes -

-Wa’ - hu-hu-hu-hu-hu-hu!

Eyes now forever red.

Hi - e! So!

Who will fetch the Fire?

Horned Owl and Hooting Owl -

Tsik’t, Uguku

attempt to reach the flame.

- no- they fail.

The tongues of the fire burn so brightly

that when the wise birds look -

The gray smoke swirls around them,

the white kabsu

leaves ash rings around their eyes.

Ku! Uguku and

Tsik’t rub their burning eyes,

but the white rings never fade

Kabsu une’ga.

Ku! So!

But who will fetch the Fire?

The tsif skwa tried no more -

No bird dared venture

to risk his wings -

Ne!

The Fire burned ever brighter

and beckenoned red -

“Hi! Hut”

but the flyers refused.

“Thou must go!”

Yu’ Am’nyu-hi -

let the water creatures try!

IV

VI

We cannot fetch the Fire!

The Council meets again!

Oh, Wail’st frog,

how come we by the fire?

Oh, Wais’st Council’s leader!

The Ani’Hyu-Hw’kwaas’ti’ve

have placed it out of reach

of the paws of tsif’ti’

and the hooves of the waf’ti’

Ne! Neither the fox nor the deer can approach!

The great hunter, wa’fyu, Wolf,

cannot swim, nor can he fly!

So!

Who shall fetch the Fire?

K’a’mnu, the great Raven,

is the first to fly for the Fire.

Ha!

He soars over the water,

flying far and high,

but in the limbs of the sycamore he hesitates,

and the heat of the Fire

scorches him black.

Sau’-hi Sau’-hi!

And the frightened Raven

flies back,

leaving the flames behind.

Tsa! So!

Who will fetch the Fire?

V

VII

VIII

The small Uksu’hy, Black Racer Snake, slides into the water

and swims quickly to the island. Ho!

Uksu’hy’s snake slips himself

into the sycamore’s rotting base.

Yoho-sh!

The devilish smoke confuses

Little Black Racer -

he darts and dodges,

seeking escape.

The white hot ashes brand his tender skin black

for eternity,

and so also he forevermore darts

as though confused

or confined.

Little black Uksu’hy’s snake returns

by the water.

He lives, but the world remains cold.

Tsa! Animals!

Who will fetch the Fire?

“Tsustu!” Tsistu!

Brave leader of our Council,

Who do you desire to send

to fetch the Fire?

Swift messenger rabbit tsistu -

Mix, mix, mix, mix!

Ne! Though quick, he cannot swim nor fly.

Mocking hulu, yellow bird -

Sau’-hi Sau’-hi hul! hul! hul! hul!

Ho! He wishes not for blackened feathers,

as the Raven’s hue of soot.

Singing katydid of forest trees!

Tsustu! Tsistu!

Ku! How comes she so far on her tiny wings?

Then, great awn’ti’, sacred Eagle,

hwa’manh!

Hi!

But even Eagle is afraid.

Tsa. Who will fetch the Fire?
HayO! I will fetch the Fire!
KININE'ski Ama'yi'yi't.
Little Water Spider
With red stripes on her back.
Ha!

How shall she fetch the Fire?
KININE'ski Ama'yi'yi't
spins her silken thread.
Patiently she weaves a tu'osti,
a tiny bowl,
which she fastens to her back.
Hi! KI!

Little Water Spider
dashes across the water,
and climbs through the island's grass -
He-e!
The black smoking stump awaits her approach.
Lisa'yi'yi't
It is dangerous!
For still the Fire burns hotly.
Yioho-qi!
Little KININE'ski Ama'yi'yi't
puts a coa' of Fire
into her tu'sti bowl
and scurries back across the water,
bringing it to the animals.
Hi'yi'yu'we't!
Hi!
Little Water Spider has fetched the Fire!

And so came the Fire to the animals,
who later gave it to the man.
Hi! So ended the quest.
We thank the Thunderers,
An'Hyi'yi'yi't a'axi,
the Givers of the Fire!
Wad'ax!
And we thank the Little Water Spider,
KININE'ski Ama'yi'yi't.
The Fetcher of the Fire,
whose reward is her tu'sti bowl,
which she still wear's today.
Wad'ax!
Hi!

Sandee McGlaun

Author's Note: "The Quest for the Fire" was freely adapted from a cosmogonic Cherokee Indian myth recorded by James Mooney in Myths of the Cherokee, pp. 240-242. The various Cherokee words used throughout the poem were collected from the text of both of the above sources, including Mooney's "Glossary of Cherokee Words" in Myths, pp. 506-548.
Please Come and Hold Me

hold me deep
inside your soul
and keep me warm
when my youth becomes old

hold me today because
yesterday too
many tears
were shed

hold me now because
there are too many
inward books
you've never read

No don't just
hold me
I need more

You held me
the other day
and perhaps
you gave all
I needed... then

But this is
after the
Before

Now my
insides are
twisted in
knots too
tight to unfold

And I can no
longer live
without
love today

So please come and love me
deep inside your soul
and keep me warm when my youth becomes old.

W. Feel
Morning Dreams

Through eyes that run silver and gold
I gazed through worn window pane at
the naked morning,
Mind shivering and racing upon calloused
hills and swaying pine,
Pondering the cost of a day such as this
After a well-buried night.

Claiming no such owner I steal
it for a moment, the morning,
And say it is mine and use it.
Whisper I say. And it does.
Sing to me. And it does.
Cry to me. And it does.

Through cool mist and sodden hills of
teardrops of a dying night,
I watch you. Do you know?
Do you listen to my morning dreams?

So tell me your secrets.
And sing me your song.
And show me your delicate rains
And I will reveal mine.

Do you listen to my morning dreams?
Sleep tonight I say. And it does.

David P. Truax, II
Thunderstorm

Thunder - strike - lightning - bolt -
air - crackle - crash - jolt -
sky - high - black - down -
rain - more - cloud - pound -
sun - gone - all - night -
dark - wet - start - plight -
cover - run - torrent - now -
stall - up - round - how -
crack - flash - storm - strong -
cold - pitch - blind - long -
hide - streak - cower - pop -
slow - rumble - final - stop -
shine - bright - out - low -
promise, promise. Rainbow.

Sandee McGlaun

Afternoon in the Barn

the afternoon drones on
horses in stalls
munching hay
the stillness of the day broken
by the snorting stallion
or the squealing mare
the nickering foals paw their doors
then toenails click on concrete
and collar tags jingle
the dog falls in pursuit
a stallion screams, kicks the wall
a chorus of whinneys responds
the horses settle
resume their munching
all in the barn is peaceful again

Julie Cline
She had come to the city to escape, to escape her concerned parents and the inevitable small-town college life they had been planning for her since she was two. It would have been so easy, going to classes at Grover Junior College among the squirrels and tall oaks. She could imagine herself reading a Hemingway assignment until late at night when the house was so quiet she couldn't help drifting off to sleep in her white nightgown, with the book askew on her stomach. She could see herself smiling for the camera when she was crowned Miss Serious, Miss Studious, and Miss Popularity all in one day. Coming home to Mom's gooey cookies and a cool wade through the creek. Just thinking her new image was the best yet. After all, a new silver Hoefer in her hand, a large cage, and had plenty of room to fly in tiny loops and circles. It also twittered constantly, a fact Amanda had just discovered. She named the bird Tweeter. Tweeter was swinging back and forth on his perch, tweeting.

Amanda looked down at her shoes, an old Glenn Miller tune from inside the club and the damp grating her heels made on the pavement. Winking reflections from a small neon sign that jetted "RESERVATIONS REQUIRED" bounced off several pools of stinking water, and provided staccato illumination for clubgoers. She stepped carefully through the puddles on her way through the alley, being careful of her brand-new silver Marilyn Monroe edition Thom McAn pumps. Amanda Jane Hollifield wanted everything to be perfect, from the silky curls of her platinum wig to the polished gleam of her cigarette holder. The debut of an image was important, terribly important, and Amanda thought her new image was the best yet. After all, it was so hard for a girl to figure out who she wanted to be. Amanda looked down at her gleaming shoes, inspecting them for waterspots. She adjusted her white silk dress and practiced her pout. She felt no guilt at all.

Amanda had been in the city for only two months, forsaking the red clay roads of her childhood for steamy flat plains of concrete where everything seemed to go too fast. When she had first arrived "in town," she felt very small, like a little girl. She scanned all the faces on the street, smiling at strangers who never made eye contact with her. People were so busy here, always urgently hurrying... somewhere. So different from home.

multitudes of small elderly black women, all hunched over with thin scarves tied over their white hair. They walked slowly, clutching their plastic grocery bags, heads bent against the dirty air. There were businessmen waiting to cross at every corner, the dust from the street blowing across their polished loafers. No one here cared "what kooky old Mabel was up to," or "how little Charlie's operation turned out." Where were all the people? Maybe I'm just not doing it right, she thought. She finally decided she probably wasn't looking in the right places, either, and prepared to emerge from her shell in a location other than the library or the A & P. When she closed the door to her apartment and hopefully on her old self, Tweeter was swinging back and forth on his perch, tweeting.

When she pushed open the door of the club, a wave of mellow sound rushed over her, reminding her of a thousand polished trombones. She paused just inside the door as she tried to adjust her eyes to the swirling smoke, and hoped the hesitation looked dramatic. She moved slowly across the marble floor of Seventh Heaven through a sea of purple mohawks and sequined busters, angels' wings and fishnet tights. Not one pair of overalls did she see, not one smudgy cap. This must be the place, she thought. This must be the place where the Real Me is hiding. Even though the lighting was subdued, everything seemed to shimmer. The glasses behind the bar sparkled darkly as they reflected the neon accents, green and blue, that touched the smooth surfaces. The club itself was beautiful, but paled in comparison to its clientele. Everyone simply shined in their glittering costumes, laughing over drinks and small talk. Amanda strained to catch an earful of the conversation, but could catch only hissing bits of whispers above a steady low hum as all the voices mingled lushly together. "...last night, wasn't it wonderful?" "Have you seen..." "I saw..." Amanda glanced toward the dance floor where a young girl was dancing furiously with a man in a zoot suit. The girl's slight and nearly bare chest glittered with sequins and rhinestones as she moved to the music. A group of similar-looking girls, all babyfaced and forlorn, were standing to one side, watching the couple dance. Their clothes were torn; they looked like the beautiful victims of some strange holocaust. Amanda turned her gaze coolly back to the path she was making toward the platform of tables above the dance floor. The platform was outlined, as were the bar and stage, with pink neon tubing. As she was winding her way through the clusters of tables, listening to the throb-hiss of conversation and music, she heard a voice. "There was this nigger, see, and one day..." The voice was coming from a young man with blue hair, seated among four or five others. He had the attention of the whole group as he spun out the joke. Amanda walked a little slower, lingering for the punchline. The blue-hair continued without pause. Amanda had already heard the joke, but it was one of Daddy's favorites and she liked it, too. When it was over, she smiledly slipped away from the group, easily lost in the waves of laughter and punchline repetition that always followed a Real Good One.

When she pushed open the door of the club, a wave of mellow sound rushed over her, reminding her of a thousand polished trombones.

Amanda found an empty spot on the platform and sat down at the small, blue, glass-topped table, gracefully crossing her legs. She looked for a long time at the table decoration, which was a tiny, naked troll doll with a full head of green hair suspended in a bottle of pink water. She was contemplating the doll when she heard a voice over (or was it under, she couldn't tell) the noise. "Miss?"

Amanda looked up into a lean masculine face and two of the greenest eyes she had ever seen. His face was streaked with fingers of glitter and a lock of greased hair fell over his forehead. He was very handsome. Amanda was unsure whether she should try a new voice or use her own. She looked into his eyes, and quickly decided on a breathy, Monroesque purr.

"Hi there."

"Could I, uh, get you a drink or something?"

"Sure." Or something. Amanda smiled at him and leaned forward just enough to allow him an inviting peek at her cleavage. He looked down at her neckline and grinned before his cool emerald eyes met her blue
ones. "Please do," she cooed. He grinned wider and sauntered toward the bar.

Amanda watched him go. She liked him; he had a very straight nose like Daddy. She used to like it when Daddy came to her bedroom door to tell her goodnight, way back when she was little. She was always afraid Daddy wouldn't come, but he always did. Sometimes it was very late before he came, after the light was already off; he would lean in the doorway to hear her and talk to her, those babysweet nothings that grown-ups say to ladies' children. "Hello, Amanda Jane, how's Daddy's little angel? Did you play with your tea-set today?" And so on. She could see his profile silhouetted in the light from the hall, his nose not large, exactly, but just very straight. Amanda always felt very small sitting up in her vast twin bed, talking to Daddy way over there in the doorway. Smaller when he was still standing there than when he said, "Well, goodnight, Amanda Jane. See you tomorrow," and closed the door.

"Here you go." Green-Eyes was back, proffering a fluted glass of pink foam. Amanda started, surprised out of her thoughts. What a nice smile, she thought, what nice straight teeth he has. She took the glass from his hand.

"Thank you," she said, and made a gesture for him to sit opposite while she took a sip. The drink was delicious; she licked flecks of foam from her lips before taking another sip.

He spoke, not shouting, barely loud enough to be heard. "So, where're you from? I don't remember seeing you around before." Amanda glanced at the woman, who hadn't moved; she obviously had no intention of leaving. She said nothing, but regarded Amanda with clinical interest, as if examining a particularly interesting specimen. She was inspecting Amanda's outfit even now, her bristling pate cocked to one side, her eyes narrowed against the rising curls of smoke.

Amanda turned her back to the woman and withdrew a small silver mirror from her bag. The mirror had the initials "MM" on the back, engraved and shining in a flowery script. Amanda had picked it up at the flea market, and liked to imagine that the mirror had belonged to the Lady Herself. She loved to fantasize about gazing at her reflection in the same mirror which had once held Her famous image. She imagined looking into it someday and seeing Marilyn's face staring back at her. She had thought about all these things when she had scraped the first dust off the inscription with her fingernail, and later as she polished the mirror. Now it shone in the gleaming luminescence.

With eyes nearly closed, Amanda pouted into the mirror as she applied more Forever Red lipstick and pondered whether the trademark mole was on the proper side of her face. She had never really thought about it, but she believed that it was. Waves of heavy smoke curled around her shoulders and shrouded her image in clouds, obscuring it from her eyes. She turned to find the source and met the stare of the Spiked Smoking Machine, whose eyes were clear ponds of deep ice blue. They reminded Amanda of her own eyes in her little-girl pictures. Wide, deep-set, and full of voyeuristic curiosity. Daddy had always said she had the eyes of an angel. She always thought she knew what he meant—all seeing but impartial, never judgmental. Daddy would watch her sometimes, like when she was listening to an argument between Mother and Aunt Nancy.

"But, Martial," Aunt Nancy would say, "You know Jessie Simmons' boy is . . . well, you know, not right?"

"There ain't a thing in the world wrong with that youngin' but his raisin'," Mother would reply placidly, "or rather the lack of it." Von Nanzy would always come back, "Well you know that Joseph Simmons is not that boy's father, why it could be anybody . . ."

And so on. Amanda would watch the argument, arms folded across her fifteen-year-old bosom as her eyes moved back and forth between the beloved opponents, while Daddy stood in the doorway grinning at her. Sometimes Amanda felt like Daddy was laughing at the whole lot of them: Amanda, Mother, and Aunt Nancy, the three Pea-Hens. She wondered why he didn't put a stop to it if he thought it was so silly, and eventually asked him why he didn't try to make peace, or at least take sides one way or the other.

\[ \text{The Spiked Smoking Machine now wore that same expression, with one corner of her mouth curled into a sneer.} \]

Daddy puffed on his cigar twice, adjusted his grimy cap, and grinned. "Weeell, angel-honey, it's like this. . . " Amanda noticed a drop of spittle gleaming on his lower lip. "I loove ya' listen ta' these silly women's argiments . . . but ye can't pay me enough ta' git involved in one!" Daddy cackled as Amanda wondered when her father had gotten . . . old. Old and something else, something nameless she couldn't put her finger on. But Amanda just smiled and said, "Oh," while Daddy went on smirking.

The Spiked Smoking Machine now wore that same expression, with one corner of her mouth curled into a sneer. Amanda thought she looked a little like an angel with her gleaming blue eyes and vaporous halo. Maybe, Amanda thought, she and Amanda were long lost sister angels. Daddy's little twin angels. Amanda almost giggled. The other girl's powdered pale face twinkled with flakes of silver and gold as she waved a white-gloved hand in front of Amanda's face.

"Hey, chick, snap out of it. . . " Amanda blinked as the girl continued waving her hand. Amanda felt a hand on her shoulder as the girl leaned close, and spoke again.

"Hey, you don't look so good. Are you alright? Oh, are you on something, hey—fine by me. You'll be
okay, you just don't...

Amanda looked into the glistening wetness of those wide blue eyes. "I'm absolutely fine. Really."
The Angel looked doubtful and exhaled a fine steam from between golden lips. "Well, you don't look
fine. You got that look..."
Amanda suddenly felt she had been marked in some way and wondered What Look? but decided to let
it go. "Yes, really... I'm okay."

Smoke rose as the young woman shrugged. "Well, if you're sure... say, do you live around here?
You looked kind of fam-ill-ie-yur."
She strung the last word out like bubble gum as she regarded Amanda sideways. "Really iluvyour outfit!" She was standing in front of Amanda, arms spread wide, grinning ecstatically.
Amanda backed away from her and clicked the mirror shut. She noticed an errant flake of glitter between the girl's teeth, which were dazzling when bare as they now were.
The smiling girl stepped forward again, until her eyes were inches from Amanda's own. Amanda turned and tucked on the door handle. The girl's harsh voice was a strong hand on her arm.

"Hey, I'm Jess. What's your name?"
He was grinning like an imbecile.
Amanda took his hand and purred, "Please to make your acquaintance. My name's Marilyn."
She fluttered her lashes in a gesture of bubbling sexuality and smiled.

"You looked down at the table for a moment while a smile tugged at the corner of your mouth. "Well, Marilyn, what do you do for a livin'? Myself, I'm a pro-
ducer."
Amanda blinked and looked cool while she
thought you were kidd ing

"You know, Marilyn, a MOVIE producer?" Jess laughed uproariously as Amanda reddened and twisted her fingers. She drew herself up straight in the chair. "I really must be going. It's late."
Amanda got up from her chair, almost overturning it. Jess looked at his watch. "It's only eight-thirty," He stood and grabbed Amanda's wrist. "Hey, I'm sorry! C'mon, I was only teasin'. Please come back; I'll be nice. C'mon, please?"
He made a sweeping gesture toward Amanda's chair as he bowed. Amanda hesitated, suddenly embarrassed to be wearing so much lipstick. She bit her bottom lip and sat down at the table. Jess sat down opposite and leaned forward.

"I really must be going to stay."
Amanda smiled, and in her own voice said,

"Thanks. Me too."

"You've got lipstick on your teeth."
Amanda completely busted up laughing, sud-
denly not caring if she had lipstick all over her face.

"Amanda laughed a little too, and then said, with somber sincerity,
Although virtually no one outside the little town of Flannery, Georgia, is aware of the fact, our century has produced a truly remarkable mind. According to a front-page article in The New York Times, "A local English teacher has astonished his students by claiming to possess all knowledge." As the newspaper story goes on to note, "A man who claims omniscience must know something."

The teacher is Mr. David Byrnum, who turned forty last August. Always an uncomfortable age, forty can be devastating to someone in David's profession. Upon reaching that point in life, nearsighted, skinny, divorced, childless male English teachers are apt to contemplate with deep unease the notion that among great writers reaching that point in life, nearsighted. skinny, divorced, died at the age of eighteen.

Writing he once planned. Most of his literary work could be termed ephemeral, consisting of comments scribbled in red ink in the margins of freshman and sophomore compositions. Worse, David suspects his readers don't remember his words from day to day, let alone from era to era. On his birthday last August he concluded morosely that literary or any other kind of immortality was all too likely to elude him.

Adding to his despair is the fact that David, who has taught at Flannel County High School (a two-year institution of the University system) for sixteen years, perceives a deterioration in the quality of mind possessed by his students. Where, he wonders as he grades a plodding, uninspired commentary on Shakespeare's anguished Sonnet 147 ("Desire is death....Past cure am I"), where is the spark, the enthusiasm, the delight in leaning, the sheer wonder that he recalls in the best students of his own generation, such as himself, for example?

A combination of feeling old and feeling scornful finally drove David to a desperate declaration at the beginning of the winter term. Stepping into a class of twenty-five glazed freshmen, taking English 101 (Composition and Rhetoric) not for the love of it but merely to fulfill a requirement for graduation, David took a long look at the blank faces, breathed the dry scent of yellow chalk, and thought to himself, "This is it." Before even calling the roll he began to ask rapid-fire questions of students: "You—who wrote The Great Gatsby?"

"I don't know."

"Next boy—who what two bodies of water does the Panama Canal connect?"

"Say what?"

"Young lady—name three American women who supported female suffrage."

"Uh—Cher?"

He frightened the hell out of them. They knew that freshman comp was supposed to be hard, but it wasn't supposed to be the inquisition. The room was silent, the snow was falling out the window, and he realized the heating and cooling system was broken, as it always is at the beginning of a term, but the students started to sweat as the red-faced madman, his blue eyes staring behind his bifocals, took each admission of ignorance as a personal affront. As for David, he stalked the room feeling as if Abraham must have felt when the Lord allowed him to try to find just ten good men in the whole damn town of Sodom. Great God almighty, Abraham and David thought, there has to be at least one!

Wise Man
by Brad Strickland

But if the classroom had been Sodom, it would have burned with no survivors. Not even a pillar of salt. David's face changed from red to a dangerous shade of pale white as he delved into the student's mine of information and turned up blank. Twenty-three minutes after it began, the class period collapsed into a shamble. In a voice menacingly soft even for an English teacher, David said, "You people don't know anything. How in the hell do you think you can learn to write when you don't know anything? What could you possibly write about when you don't have a single fact in your hollow little heads?"

The class began to get ugly. Vern Pratchett, who had played a little football in high school, said, "Sir, that ain't fair."

But David was ready for a target, even one a size and a half taller than himself. He opened fire: "Do you have sense enough to tell me why not?"

"Vern looked around for support, which he failed to find. "Well," he said, talking slow, "uh, nobody, well, uh, knows everything."

"Wrong," David snapped without stopping to think. "I know everything. It was a mistake, but it was the kind of mistake that any forty-year-old English teacher who had to change to bifocals last year might have made. Instantly the dull eyes of the students lit with a predatory fire. David, who had once marched in an anti-war demonstration and who is proud of it, put one foot in front of the other: "I am educated. I worked hard for my education. I know everything and I can answer any question you ask me."

He had a sudden memory of how badly tear gas stings the eyes and took half a step back: "I can answer it within twenty-four hours."

An eruption of protest burst out, but at least it was something: the class was participating; the twenty-five young people who only minutes earlier had been bovine waking up to the startling panic. David established a few ground rules: the questions could be on any topic, not just English (focused omniscience is no better than shotgun ignorance), he told them, and immediately he wrote on the board because the heating had ceased; but there were two requirements: the question had to have a verifiable answer and the student asking the question had to provide it. This ruled out dancing angels, the problem of evil, and other interesting but unanswerable riddles. Also, David ruled, the student had to provide both the question and the answer in writing.

The next day a young lady named Bitsey Quattlebaum took him up on his offer, asking him what was the difference between stratus and cumulonimbus clouds (she was taking Earth Science 110 and if you're smart enough to take Earth Science 110 you don't need David to tell you). David had no trouble with that one, recalling enough Latin to say that stratus clouds are flat and cumulonimbus clouds are puffy and, well, cloudbury. On the next day David fielded questions on sports, biology, economics, computer science, and psychology. He carried three questions (one involving a complicated math problem) over to the next day and then corrected and answered them all.

A few students cried foul, saying that David had looked up the answers. He said of course he had looked up answers. He pointed out that knowing how and where to find answers to hard questions was part of knowing everything. The students buckled down to the challenge, determined to find some question that David could not answer.

Some surprising things happened. Other teachers were impressed by how hard David's class seemed to be working. Some of the teachers were, anyway. Many others complained about a Trivial Pursuit approach to education. But by that time the students had somehow moved over to David's side. Like young parents with a bright toddler, they were proud of their English teacher. Their questions lost the edge of hostility and began to turn into triumphant occasions of demonstrating David's prowess. Students who weren't even taking English began to drop in to observe and to suggest questions. Dean Dermot couldn't believe it: standing room only in English 101.

Through all of his sometimes desperate attempts to supply answers to mathematical problems David met Mrs. Elise Cutler, who taught algebra, pre-calculus, and statistics. David, who knew about enough math to dial a phone correctly most of the time, got help from her. He got so much that before the month was out he was calling her Elise and taking her out on weekends.

David felt young for the first time in twenty years.

He was learning more than he had learned at any comparable period of his life, including a few desperate all-night cramming sessions back when he was a student at the University of Virginia. He faced some real posers, too. Sue Minchinson asked him what was unique about the tautura, a New Zealand lizard, and that right he had to make a hundred-mile round-trip drive northwest to Atlanta and back. But in the Georgia State University Library he found that the tautura alone of all God's reptiles has three eyes.

Warren Cox asked him why a mirror reverses things from left to right but not from top to bottom. All by himself David worked out an ingenious demonstration. He used an uncalibrated slide projector to throw white light on a screen and had Warren stand in the beam facing the screen. When Warren moved his right hand, his shadow moved its left. "A mirror image seems reversed," David told the class, "because when you look into a mirror, you're in the same position as someone looking over your shoulder would be. You see the right, you're standing behind yourself."

Warren was right. The term nearly over David has yet to be stumped. A few other teachers still belittle his achievement, but from the stronghold of his success David ignores them. He is immediately pleased with his students. By answering his own questions clearly enough for the rest of the class to understand, they have begun to compose essays with content, papers going beyond who and what and how to why—the best essays he has seen in at least ten years.

David himself has expanded his store of knowledge and has suddenly become a popular teacher on campus. Because the class has a requirement for graduation, he has kept so busy that for six or eight weeks now he has had no time at all to think of his lost opportunities for literary greatness and has pondered only once or twice the sorrowful certainty of growing old and dying.

Stephanie Palmer
"Pen & Ink"
The following poem actually contains three poems. The odd lines compose one, the even a second, and both together, the third.

**Double Vision**

I see you there.
Watch closely,
With your outer mask --
inside.
Smiling and laughing,
you're crying.
Shining for the world --
You feel a darkness
For you allow only perfection,
so hurtful and still,
Always being the best.
You hide it.

I see you there.
Look now.
Telling a joke.
with sad eyes,
Everyone laughs --
You hold back tears.
Just as you wanted, but
You feel you cannot give, and
the show stops.
You're lonely.

I see you there.
Watch closely,
With your outer mask --
Inside.
Smiling and laughing --
you're crying.
Protecting yourself.
You hide your darkness.
Will you understand it,
So hurtful and still.
Someday
the tears and joy must merge.

Sandee McGlaun

---

**Breaking Up**

Gray skies, rain
Every Monday, every day
Hopeless, cheerless, lifeless

Lethargy: too tired to get dressed
A wornout bathrobe and athletic socks
Crying in front of afternoon matinees

Eating too much
Regretting the weight gain
Forgetting to feed the fish
Grieving when they die
Rejecting companionship
Mourning in loneliness

Crying over everything
Crying over nothing

So...
Nothing lasts forever.

Deidre Eby

---

**Shadow**

this ain't no shadow-----damnit!
(give me a flashlight)
turn me around,
let go
laugh aloud (try to run)
hunt me down, kiss me long
love me damnit!
this ain't no shadow.

Jose Gardner

---

Terry Hulsey

Computer Graphics

44

Kelly Brothers

Scratchboard

45
The Great Grandmother

Is she the neveryoung thing of fairy stories infinitely old and wise beyond the sun? Maybe Ah but was old age ever so beautiful as the golden light warms her powdered cheek morning-gloried with pale pink and threads its way through cobweb gray and winks upon her liquid eye such gifties there a washtub full of love and care Her coat is threadbare...

Her joints do creak with the gentle rocking of fourteen children give or take a few

Those eyes so blue still can see the better part of me Soft large ears poised to catch each word each silverbell voice The voices of children They're all children

Stacey Alexander

Letter to My Father

I remember the day you spanked us with the ballet shoe. And the day the four of us ate lunch together--sandwiches on those little plates with the green leaves and white flowers--there are only two of them left now. After lunch you told us; we all cried together: mourning the passing of a family.

I remember the apartment on Walker Street--my ninth summer spent with Aly and Amy. I wanted to beg you then to come home, but the grown-up inside the little girl wouldn't let me.

I'm twice nine now with a dream, and not a little girl anymore. But when you came in my room at three o'clock the other night just to kiss me, I was your baby girl again.

Jessica Jackson

Him

I wish I could tell him how I feel but I can't and even if I could—it wouldn't matter wouldn't change things. but he should know. needs to know. I guess. if I don't tell him he will never know. and it will never begin. what a sad end.

Jose Gardener
Closing Time

"Thank you, ma'am, and have a nice evening."
The drawer slams shut.
The plastic bag rustles and
The child behind the register pipes up:
"My mommy said I could
play with you while she shops..."
"'Scuse me--do you have this
in size 5?"
The elevator music hums
"My Girl" in the distance
"Cash or charge?"
"Can I help you?"
ring like echoes in my brain.
I catch myself asking
again--this time
listening for the answer.
The clerk in Boys vacuums;
Hangers slide and screech
on the chrome racks.
The 2-year old protests.
Silence.
Muzak fades.
Customers are gone.
The register clicks-dead.
"Good evening shoppers,
Belk is now closed.
Please come back and
shop with us tomorrow..."
Oh, God, what time do
I have to be here tomorrow?
"Thank you for shopping Belk,
Good night."

Angie Roberts
**Untitled**

Slipping

Down....

Crazy dream

Lower

Into sleep

Peace....

Drifting....

Silent cries for help

unanswered....

Floating....

Running....

Exhausted

Sleep

Again.

Awake!

To drift....

Along the silent seas....

To sleep

Unfilled void....

Awake!

To run again!

And drift....

Dreams.

Brenda Lehett

---

**Faculty Advisor**

He was potbellied and grim:
But whistling a happy tune,
He said he’d come
To be my guide
Past many walls, through many halls
And keep the wolf at bay.

He sounded good:
Choice Latin sprinkled in
Among ten dollar words
All said this man indeed
Did know school walls and academic halls
And wouldn’t lead me astray.

We started out:
He took me on a winding way
Showed me the sights
That led me down,
Past darkened walls, through smokey halls,
And used up most of the day.

He signed me up:
A fistfull of paper later
My hours were filled
My future all decided
My walls defined, my halls enclosed
And he had gone away.

Then I realized:
He’d led me through the hallowed arch
On across the paper swamp
By sad walls and down dark halls
But also poled the boat back out
And now I’d have to stay.

Charles McMichael
My Graduation Farewell Speech

I wasn't asked to write this
but this quarter was my last,

so if I was to say it,
I had to do it fast

So without further adieu
Here's my farewell speech to you

Goodbye to Gainesville College,
my requirements are all past

The English and the grammar,
the science and the math

Goodbye to Mrs. Newberry,
who advised me all the way,

Goodbye to Barbara Hermann
who thought she'd never see this day.

Goodbye to Dr. Mayhew
and Mrs. Mayhew, too

and the frog in 101,
and the pig in 102.

Goodbye to Ed Cabell,
who didn't like my tone,

and goodbye to Dr. Kline,
I'll leave that one alone.

Goodbye to Dawn and Jeff,
and goodbye to BSU,

And goodbye to Dr. Seerley
from me and Reagan, too.

Johnathon Todd Hudson