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Volume 7, Number 2

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*Jack Cbielli*

Summer's Hurling Whims

left waiting in the trees  
a summer dress  
dashed off  
naked you at the hem of the woods  
picking apples big as brains  
your eyes caught the seeds  
and you floating child  
drifted in the churned river  
through all that must be  
smoothly effortlessly

you who took me  
out of the light  
into the un-imagined unlight  
handed me your rosey apple  
and said it was golden  
in the iris of the light  
it doesn't matter, when I went to take  
the fruit from your hand  
I misjudged its distance  
and the fruit the river and all the apples  
disappeared  
only a summer dress  
left waiting in the trees  
sways in the richly embroidered air

*Jack Chielli*

In the Midst of a Drummers Night

I have walked through the green hay fields  
Smelling the thick sweet stalks  
And stables  
Warm with rocking brown hides  
Have given me a time  
In which to clock my life

I breath deep: my breath swarms and steams  
In the cold moon air  
There is a time here  
There is part of the rock sea life here

With the sleeping trees budding in dream, a sun rises  
In the midst of a drummers night  
The beat jerks  
Through an orchard ripe  
With the fruit of young roots

*Jason-Michael Jefferson*

“Calliope”

Celestial muse  
from a dawning well past  
I will not resurrect your sound

Big top images that smelled of sawdust  
and peanuts, are now city booze  
saturday night women

The clowns of mime  
speak in fallen tongues  
driving your name into my back

At the keyboard  
the muse of poets  
played a juvenile dirge to  
the clowns dancing  
in my boyish time  
Now, they only trip and fall  
and her sisters yell “Change!”

Her name once jumped  
like her works upon the keys  
the hawkers would wail “step right up!”  
now her keyboard sours from misuse  
the circus creaks and crumbles

Search your keys, first sister  
draw forth your other eight.

*Karla M. Hammond*

Blueberry Picking

Mornings we got up  
& went to the field  
bedded in its sweat

the day coming in  
thick with fog &  
just East, the sun

a rim of yolk break-  
ing through the white  
clouds puffed up with

their own importance  
for everything a reason  
pant legs rolled up

mid-calf, hands purpling  
with the berries, stomachs  
sweet & less than full

then the stain spreading  
up our arms like colored  
yarn, tufts of which were

berries in our sacks  
bearing heat & burning  
heavy on our bended backs

the smell reaching us  
with earth — damp, clay  
fresh of that place &

noon we'd leave for lunch  
& later for the dinner hr.  
but all that day it was

as if — the smell, the  
stain, the sap that knit  
our fingers — would stay.



*Gus Hemenway*

### THE TREE CLIMBER

It was 11:00. The evening was warm and quiet, and the trees gently tapped their branches in the slow breeze. Keith and Ken were walking side by side along the tall cemented stone wall that cast a long shadow of darkness in the buzzing street lamp light. They could hear their footsteps echoing down along the sidewalk and didn't talk much.

They walked around a corner in silence and turned down the long driveway of the boarding school. There were no lights past the wall that surrounded the front grounds of the school, except for a spot light on the building itself, which was set well in back of a long grass field bordered by tall trees and laurel bushes.

Keith was smaller than Ken and had to walk more rapidly in order to keep up. He looked at Ken. "Hey Ken. We're late. All the lights are out."

Ken shrugged.

They walked towards the end of the driveway. They could just make out the shapes of the trees along the road, and past the playing field they could see the night lights of the city, and could hear the distant hummings and thumpings of the night.

"Boy, Keith. I wish we didn't have to go back to school. I wish we never had to go back." Ken looked up at the stars that were mostly faded out by the street lights of a whole city. "It's outrageous."

Keith smiled a little.

A slightly white spot in one of the trees near the school building caught Ken's eye.

*Gus Hemenway*

The Tree Climber

“What’s that?” he said. He stopped abruptly and tried to make it out.

Keith stopped and looked. “Where?”

“There in the tree. It’s moving.”

“Where?”

“It’s a person!”

Keith caught sight of it. “Oh yeh!”

Ken stalked towards the tree, and Keith followed him.

“What the hell do you think a person’s doing up in a tree?” Ken whispered, waving at Keith to be quiet.

They stood beneath the tree.

“Hey, what are you doing up there?”

The figure was silent.

Ken cocked his head. “Hey, are you drunk or something?” He looked at Keith and shrugged.

They heard the tree rustling as the figure moved slightly along the branch. The leaves shook quietly in the wind. The boys watched the figure in the tree.

The figure moved a hand up to a branch above, and then it walked farther out on a long limb that pointed out away from the tree thirty feet above the ground. The branch swayed and sail-boated.

“What are you doing down there?” the figure suddenly said. It was a man. Keith and Ken looked quickly at each other and turned back to the man.

“What the hell are you doing down there? You drunk?” said the man, swaying up and down.

*Gus Hemenway*

The Tree Climber

“He’s drunk out of his mind,” Keith said. They watched him. He began walking farther out on the limb, and the limb bent like a fishing rod. He began laughing. “I think they’re drunk down there.”

Keith turned to Ken in disbelief. “Ken, he’s going to kill himself up there!” But Ken was staring at the man. “Hey mister – you better come down. It’s dangerous up there. Come on down.”

The man sat down on the limb, and almost fell off backwards. He saved himself by grabbing a small branch beside him. He laughed again.

“Could it be dangerous?” he asked ludicrously.

Keith looked at Ken, who was still staring at the man in the tree. “He’s nuts,” he whispered. Ken was smiling. He looked back at the man.

“Hey, I think it’s dangerous down there on the ground. I could break my pencil down there. You really think it’s dangerous up here?”

“I think you better come down,” Keith said.

The man was still, then he suddenly dropped off his perch to another branch that was perhaps five feet below him, and grabbed it with his arms and legs. “He he he,” the man laughed. He hung upside down like an opossum.

“Jesus Christ! Oh man, I thought he was falling that time. Man, you better come down.”

The man sat up. “Come down! What are you talking about? What are you so worried about? Jesus, it’s only a tree.”

“Man, he’s outrageous!” Ken said to Keith.

*Gus Hemenway*

The Tree Climber

“Ha! I’m outrageous!” The man grabbed the branch and swung upside down from his knees. “Whooo, ha ha,” he laughed. “Outrageous!”

Keith looked at Ken. “Kenny, I think we better tell the head master. He’s gonna fall. I think we better get the police.”

The man was laughing and swinging like a clock. The boys watched him. He let his feet down, and hanged by his arms. “Outrageous, outrageous,” he giggled. The boys watched him let go of the tree and fall twenty feet to the ground in a bundle that rolled and sprang up to its feet. He disappeared into the shadows laughing “Outrageous, outrageous!”

*Virginia Walter*

Night Shadow

My bed still smells of you,  
that rancid odor of lust,  
and lips  
like strips of bread dipped in water,  
remains after  
I have stripped my skin,  
my mind  
and my bed of you.  
Your smell still rises from the mattress,  
like a cloud of dust from a sofa,  
and hovers over me  
as a moan in the shape of a plea  
rises from my nightmares.

*Virginia Walter*

Monologue

Across the buzz of the telephone wire,  
my stubbornly silent plea for help  
never seems  
to reach you.  
You want to tell me about a 'funny'  
girl you saw,  
who jittered restlessly on the dance floor,  
and reminded you of me.  
My face blushing burns,  
and your endless chattering buzzes,  
like the drone of the phone line,  
like a fly at the screen of my window.

*Mandy Dwyer*

Vincent's Dogwood

and now the red sky has mellowed  
and the shadows are rare  
with rainbow drawn sunset horizon . . .  
the shadows are no more  
light/nonlight, shadows/nonshadows.  
which came first?  
the light or the shadow.

wind sometimes creates a wave  
among the magnolia  
and the dogwood  
like Van Gogh  
reaching out to me  
behind the glass.

then all is still  
leaving me  
remembering  
all the mournings  
faded into afternoon  
before its resurrection.

but only in the afternoon:  
the culmination of the day  
does the light meet the shadow;  
simultaneously pondering  
the waves  
in temperature change  
and wind velocity.

Vincent's dogwood calls my name  
and i answer.  
my heart yearns  
to grasp . . .  
to break the glass  
and answer  
the waves,  
hovering in bow  
and expectation  
of the arrival  
of a presence . . .  
bourne  
again.

*Jean Boudreau*

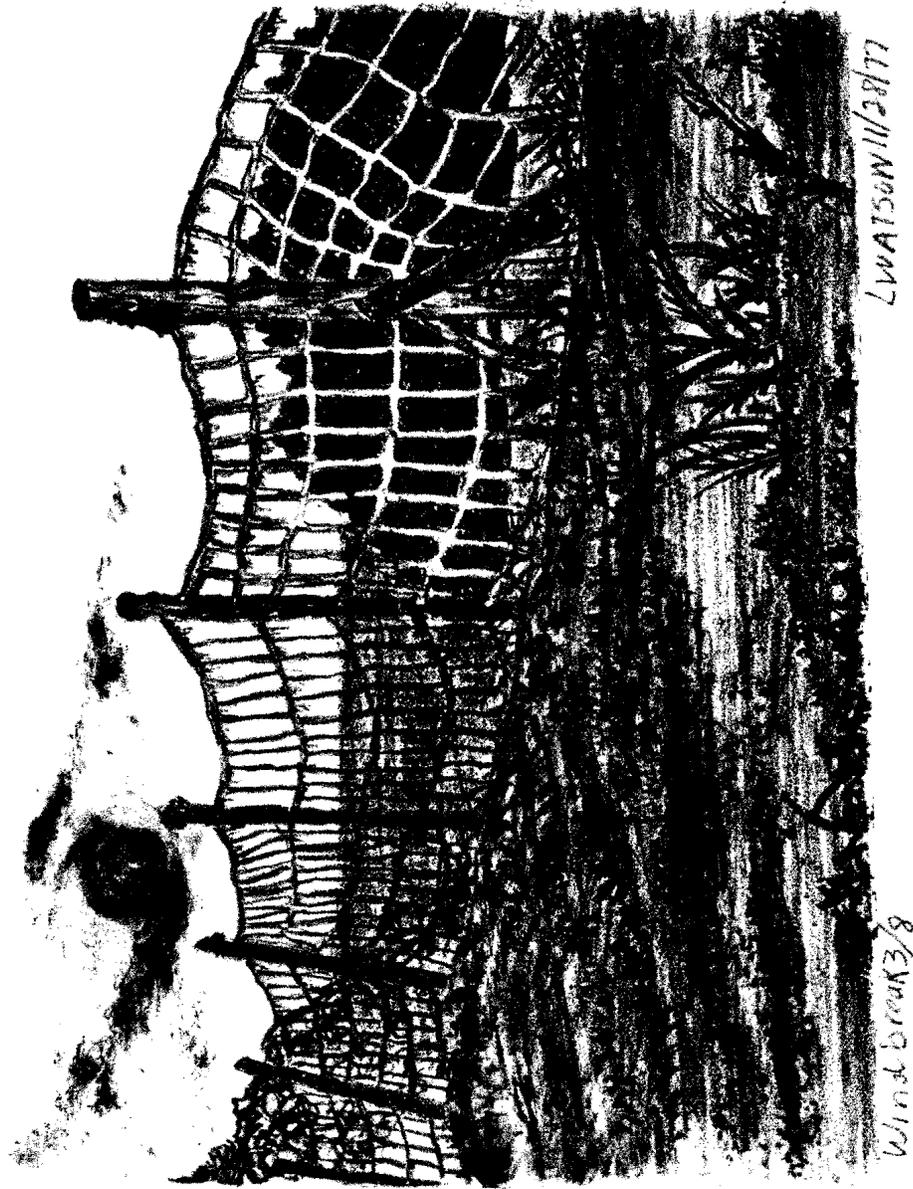
Fields of Pleasure

Dwindled by shapes in its surroundings,  
timeless crabgrass sweats heat of summer  
where cultivated clambeds slithe in black sands  
and pornographic melodies in the name of house lots  
grow like corn on the shore.

Away from picnic tables of familiar advertisement,  
tenderly tempered phrases of Sunday fill the warmth  
as perpetual lovers disguised in soothing breeze.

They are the hungry.

But the scent of baking charcoal blinds the others  
to the salt vapors insimulating lust from the bay.  
While in cultivated clambeds softened by an ebbing tide,  
the awaited is heard — — it's time to eat!



*Jo Makowski*

### SUNDAY MORNING THUNDER

My teddy-bear, Susan B. Anthony threatened to report me to the humane society. I hugged her so hard one night that her head was completely turned around. Her neck was almost broken. The next morning it was raining. I have never liked rain on Sundays since I've been in Rhode Island. There is something dreary about it. The damned New England fog! Back in Pennsylvania I love it when it rains on Sunday. My mother and I would sit and cry over old movies on television. Sometimes she would knit as I read the same page of a book over and over again. My mother was constantly interrupting me with senseless comments which I rarely listened to. On these days the trees would seem to shine and there was a smell of autumn in the air. Even in February. But not here. Now I don't like television. Not even old movies on Sunday afternoons.

A sense of loneliness pervades the air here. It all seems so hopeless. On the Sunday of the teddy-bear incident, there was a scrawny squirrel outside of my window. He hopped around in search of food, oblivious to the rain. I sat and watched it for awhile. I wanted to bring him inside and keep him warm and dry. And to love him. But I glanced away for a moment and when I looked back he was gone. So much for loving, honoring and cherishing squirrels. My roommate, Sheila, said that they made terrible pets anyway.

Without the squirrel to watch, I didn't know what to do. I had already played two games of solitaire and cheated on both. I had threatened my roommate's life four times, and had also threatened to throw the television out the window. So I made a cup of tea and stared at the walls. Our room did not feel like

*Jo Makowski*

Sunday Morning Thunder

home anymore. The Thinker hanging on the wall across the room was beginning to look haggard and bored. My fig tree was covered with yellow spots and appeared to shiver and sigh each time that one of its leaves fell to the floor.

All of the pictures on the walls looked at me and demanded to be taken down. They all seemed to be screaming at me and it was too much noise to handle. My possessions were stifling and suffocating right along with me.

I knew that it was time to get out. Just to get away to a place that my pictures and I could call home again. The possibilities were sparse. I sat and pondered over my cup of tea. But I needed quiet and privacy for such matters. That faded when Sheila stepped in. I had to humor her between fights with her boyfriend. She walked in with one of those “if looks could kill” looks on her face. I set my cup of tea down and flung my suddenly shuddering body down on my bed. I screamed, “I think that I have over-dosed on Morning Thunder Tea!”

She looked at me, standing lazily by the closet door. “Oh yeah?” she said, unimpressed by my dramatics. I could usually play Camille like Bernhardt and get old Sheila rolling. But she was not easy to excite all of the time. Unless you talked about men. So I asked her if our friend Tom still had his machete. He had an antique machete in his house by which we were intrigued. Not so much by the machete itself, but what we could do with it. Sheila started to get excited when I mentioned it, and crossed over to my side of the room.

We then got started on this plan we had to castrate certain men. We had a list of them! It was a fantasy which we had that Freud would have had a field day with. At the end of the discus-

sion we would raise our fists and proclaim: “EUNUCHS UNITE!” Then we would fall all over the place and pat each other on the backs like football players on the winning team. It was fun and brought us closer together in some odd way.

But this time Sheila collapsed on my bed after our imaginary triumph. I looked at her, playfully swishing my arms back and forth at my sides, clapping my hands as they swung forward. “What’s the matter, you tired?” I asked.

The tiny room filled with sighs. “It’s so sick and cruel,” Sheila whined.

“What the hell are you talking about?” I asked, giggling with afterthoughts of our recent conversation.

“I mean – that’s really sick!” She threw her arms up, cupping her ears with her palms, spreading her fingers out. “I mean – sitting around and talking about castrating men!”

“What’s so sick about it? I find the idea rather entertaining.”

“You can’t be serious!” she gasped. “What would we do without men? I mean – MEN!”

It was time for my lecture. I climbed up on her desk, leaning my back against the wall and rested my crossed ankles on the back of the chair. “I think we’d be better off without them. Schmucks.” I shrugged my shoulders as though I had just casually eased the burden of the sufferings of all women throughout time.

Sheila stared at me as she reached into her robe’s ragged pocket for her cigarettes, and lit one. “Seriously, you’re a loon, Katherine.”

I sat up, bringing my feet to rest flat on the chair and took the pose of the Thinker. “You are one to talk, you fool. Look at you! All that you do is mope around, watch t.v., and pluck your damn eyebrows. And why? Because of a man, if that is what you

Jo Makowski

Sunday Morning Thunder

call Ted," I finished off in a huff.

"You just don't understand. I love Ted." I was starting to feel like a fiddler on the roof, perched up there listening to her. "Things are going to be alright," Sheila continued. "Okay, so we're having a little fight now, but things are gonna work out."

"Oh I see," I stepped in. "Things are going to work out. I suppose they are doing just that now while you sit there with your poor battered heart. Next thing you know, you and Ted are going to be all sweet and lovey-dovey so he can treat you with a total lack of respect. You are *so stupid!* I don't understand why you just don't finally end it all and save yourself the trouble of another argument. You're both sado-masochists."

Sheila sat forward resting her elbows on her knees, fists pressed into her cheeks. "Katherine, didn't you ever love anyone so much that it was painful, and that your existence was not whole without them?"

"Sure, my mother when I was about five years old."

"Stop kidding around." Sheila drew her hands down on her knees, pushing off to stand. She was standing in front of me then. I played with a wisp of my hair by my right ear. I was always prepared to be bored by any statement that Sheila made. "Come on," she said, hunting for the right words to say. "I mean — like well, Ted and I do *love* each other. We can get along."

I climbed down from my perch and left the room to go and make another cup of tea. I had hoped that by the time that I got back Sheila would be willing to drop the subject and just sit and think for once.

When I came back to the room, the television was on and she was lying in bed smoking a cigarette. I sat down on my bed and leafed through my Sociology text book. Sheila was laughing at

*Jo Makowski*

Sunday Morning Thunder

something that she must have found amusing on the television. Looking up from my book, I asked her why she had to make noise, along with the television all of the time, especially when I was trying to read. It just irritated me. I don't think that she even knew what a book was. She suggested that I go to the library.

"I happen to live here." I reminded her.

"Well, I do too bitch."

I jumped up and went over to her. I took my index finger and ran it from the left corner of her mouth to the tip of her left ear. "How do you think that you'd look with a scar running from here to there?" I asked, looming over her by the bed.

"Not as good as you'd look with this sticking in your back." She had picked up a silver letter opener and flashed it in front of my face.

"I swear, I'll throw that goddamn t.v. out the window!" My threats were up to seven for the day and Sheila started to pout. She was wearing an old terry robe and her long dark hair was in a braid. I had braided it the night before and listened to her squeal as I brushed through the knots and yanked at the three coarse strands. Just like when my mother used to fix my hair. She was brutal too. Sheila was just lying there like an over-grown five-year old.

"Do you still love me, Katherine?" she suddenly asked in baby talk.

"Sure I do." I answered, intently scratching the dried mud off of my hiking boots.

"As much as you love Susan B. Anthony?"

I let out one of my short snorting laughs. "I love Susan so much that I broke her goddamned neck from holding her so much. In matter of fact, you deserve better than that." I thought

Jo Makowski

Sunday Morning Thunder

for a moment as Sheila sat up in bed. “How do you feel about body casts?”

Sheila was out of bed at this point and stood with her hands on her hips staring at me. “Listen, bitch,” she said while tapping her foot like a mother scolding her child. “I’ve had it with your cracks.”

“Oh yeah,” I replied, imitating her stance. “Well I have had it with your t.v. set, your eyebrows — that is, what’s left of them, and your moping around and crying over Ted. And you ask me if I love you. I don’t know where you get love out of all of this. You just get on my nerves!” I was considerably calm through this and could feel myself losing my cool. I wanted to scream. I shudder inside when something irritates me. Someone once told me that I reminded them of Roderick Usher. There were times when the stereo would be near full volume. If Sheila was brushing her hair I swear that I could hear the sound of the brush going through her hair, over the volume of the music. Sounds like that or someone filing their nails or sitting and stretching, their feet pushing through the pile of the carpeting is intensified.

Sheila was still standing there glaring at me. At least she had stopped tapping her foot. “You *do* love that dumb teddy-bear, don’t you? And I bet even more than me — or any other human being for that matter.” She was serious. For some reason it scared me.

So I explained. “Susan *is* a real person to me. Besides, she can’t hurt me or touch me if I’m feeling bitchy and cringe at the thought of being touched by someone. She leaves me alone when I want to be alone, and would never desert me if I needed someone.”

Sheila lit another cigarette and sat down on the edge of her

*Jo Makowski*

Sunday Morning Thunder

bed. I went back to my side of the room, picking up my then cold cup of tea. "You really don't understand, do you?" she asked me, staring down at the floor. I was just sitting and clasping the cup in my hands the way you do when you're trying to keep your hands warm. Only, the tea was cold. "Hm, I don't believe it," she added.

"The thing is," I decided to say, "I see you and how miserable you are over the whole situation with Ted and I consider myself lucky. After all, Sheila, you do have to admit that Susan would never treat me the way that Ted treats you. So I'm better off."

"Sure. All you have to do is take that thing to sleep at night and everything is alright. You don't have to do anything for it. You don't have to get involved. That's what it is, isn't it, Katherine?" Christ, the way that she talked you would think that she was on the verge of some great scientific discovery or something. "You don't have to get involved," she continued. "All you have to do is be cool and funny about sleeping with a teddy-bear when you're twenty years old."

I put my cold cup of tea down on the desk. It was overflowing with ashtrays, a half empty glass of wine, numerous books and magazines, and letters which I had yet to mail. God, it was all so disgusting. The mess of our room, our dying plants, and that twenty year old woman over there who transformed herself into a child from time to time. It struck me then, that I was a part of it all. Even more, I was disgusted with myself. A twenty year old woman who slept with a teddy-bear. I got up and put on my jacket. Sheila, who had not taken her eyes off of me since she finished talking, observed my disgust. At least a part of it.

*Jo Makowski*

· Sunday Morning Thunder

“We should clean this room.” she said plainly as she got up to open a window. I would usually start to scream about how cold it was, but didn’t since I was going out anyway. “This room stinks from cigarette smoke.” she added as the oriental bell in front of the window rang in the wind.

“Yeah, I know,” was all that I had the energy to say as I dragged myself to the door. I knew that we would probably start to clean late at night when we were exhausted but too restless to sleep, as we usually did. As I reached for the door knob, Sheila asked me where I was going.

“I don’t know,” I said shaking my head, “I’ve just got to get the hell out of here. I’m suffocating.” and slammed the door behind me.

Walking outside I took a deep breath, feeling as though I was actually suffocating. It was no longer raining, but was very misty out. I just decided to walk, in spite of the air stinging me through my jeans and ski parka. I walked down the hill leading to the bay. Two more deep breaths. Tears began to mingle with the mist on my cheeks. I walked, shivering and shuffling through the pebbles and snail shells. Past the rock I used to call my study rock the year before. It was comforting to see the huge structure where I sat and read Shakespeare’s play and wrote those first homesick letters to my mother. I hadn’t been out there at all yet that year though.

I looked out into the water which was being tickled by the first drops of a shower. I did not care. My room was a mess. I had castration fantasies and loved only a little teddy-bear. Did I care? I looked back up at the rock and imagined Rodin’s sculpture sitting there. I wanted to talk to him. Just to ask him what

*Jo Makowski*

Sunday Morning Thunder

he was thinking about. I loved Rodin and was thinking about the time that I went to see some of his work in a museum in Philadelphia. I had turned the whole excursion into a fantasy, where I conferred with the Burghers of Calais. The last time I was home, I wanted to visit the museum again, but it was closed for renovations.

Before I knew it I was getting wet and morbid out there on the beach. Sometimes when I'm alone and depressed, everything that ever hurt me in my life tugs at me. Just then I was thinking that they closed the stupid Rodin museum just to bother me.

I started to walk back up to the campus. It was beginning to get dark. But I didn't want to go back to my room. Sheila had shaken me, and I couldn't figure out why. Not many people could do that. Except my mother. For eighteen years she told me to clean my room, shut the book and put out the light and go to bed. As I got older, it was always, "I'm only telling you these things for your own good because I love you." I heard it when I started to smoke and when I almost flunked out of high school. She screamed at me because she loved me. She cared. Sheila. Sheila the dope was sulking because she was in love. And it bothered me.

I unlocked the outer door of the dormitory and shuffled up the stairs towards my room. When I got back the door and window were open. Sheila was in the process of cleaning the room and was walking out with the waste basket. We exchanged hello's, whispering as though even our voices would clutter up the room. I was standing right outside of the door as Sheila went to pass me. I stopped her by tugging on the belt of her robe. "Wait a second," I told her, and went over to my bed where Susan was taking her

*Jo Makowski*

Sunday Morning Thunder

afternoon nap. I picked up the stuffed animal by the neck and held it out to Sheila. "I think that you're forgetting something."

"No I'm not Katherine." Sheila returned. "I think that you are. You're forgetting how much Susan loves you."

"Take it!" I yelled. "I don't ever want to see that scraggy monster again!"

Sheila took one step forward, was within the room and slammed the door behind her back. I felt frozen as I took two deep breaths to hold back uncoming tears.

"Hey Peter Pan," Sheila finally said. "She called me that because I have blonde hair and cut it short like a boy's. "It's only a teddy-bear."

"Well I don't want it!" I screamed and hurled Susan at the door, hitting Sheila on the shoulder.

"Oh, so you're going to have a little temper tantrum. So Peter Pan doesn't want to grow up."

"Shut the hell up, you bitch!" As I said that, Sheila came towards me and grabbed my arms right above the elbows in a tight grip. "Let me go, you're hurting me!" I cried.

"Be quiet or I'll rip your arms off." she said in a threatening whisper.

"Break my neck too?" I whispered back, weakened.

"Okay, if that's what you want." She let me go and I picked the teddy-bear up from the floor.

Out in the hall with Susan B. Anthony in my hand, I wiped away the last of my tears. We were living on the fifth floor of the dormitory that year. I used to think a lot about what it would be like to fall to the ground from there. At the trash chute, I let Susan drop from my hand and listened to paper shuffle and glass clink.



*Alan DeRaimo*

Stepmother

I.

You wanted an escape  
from the city you said.  
The city is too noisy,  
car exhaust fogs your glasses.

Playing mediator for your wishes  
and your goals, I agreed.  
“Just don’t take the car.”

International Roadhound departure  
5:47 a.m.; our crusade begins.

I watched the familiar greys  
of the metropolis ignite  
into spectral landscapes,  
leaving skyscrapers to memory.

You wanted the window seat  
so you could watch;  
slides of nature  
pass in frame by square windows.

From my seat on the aisle  
I saw the lines of your face  
anxious with a crooked anticipation;  
the city was disappearing.

Concrete to cow pasture  
reflected off your glasses.  
Northern timers were  
a good day’s ride away.

International Roadbound arrival  
2:14 p.m.; Northern Timbers.

*Alan DeRaimo*

Stepmother

Two volunteers  
for the wilderness foundation  
we awaited directions  
from our service station map.

Twelve miles north, full gear,  
you administer motivation  
as our two-person- foot patrol  
leaves for Wolfesboro.

II.

Northern ranges, a stockade  
for weary travelers  
offered little refuge  
from the biting wind.

The Appalachian route  
a carnival of white  
dotted with brown;  
speckled treetops guided us  
past cabins and skis.

New Hampshire deer runs  
wilderness heroics for a fawn  
whose mother fell prey  
to the great white hunter.

So fragile, so young  
Walnut eyes fight for a freedom  
hunger had taken away,  
and you played nursemaid.

Your touch, a misty gentleness  
you became stepmother to nature,  
escaping the city's noise.  
The fawn's breath showed signs of life  
fogging your glasses.

*Mil Kinsella*

WELCOME TO THE LAND OF MASSAGE  
(no hand jive, just a warm rub)

A tropical setting subdued in  
red lights greets the patrons.  
A man with an Italian amulet hanging  
under his contoured beard, nods  
a hello to the skittery eyed guy  
gliding past his desk to seek refuge  
in the lounge where he plays  
“Let’s Make A Deal” with a Danskin  
clad nurse, as the t.v. whispers the neuroses  
of a 45 yr. old illegitimate android  
into red air.

The man with the paunch hanging  
over his Gucci shoes has already  
opted for the two hour treatment  
And has just bounced out of the shower,  
Clutching his valuables in a plastic bag,  
only to have the merry twinkle in his eye  
fade to a droop as he tugs at the towel  
that will not hide his swollen sex.

*Mil Kinsella*

LETTER POEM TO R.J.J.

I am unable.

The intensity you peddled sears my sleep.  
in waking hours, blue flames catch my eyes –  
yours are sunken in dusty hollows. Once you  
wore spurs to bed to guard against intimacies:  
those cacti phases made to catch and hold,  
I lay back staring as you hammered your ills  
deeper into my silence – that heated frenzy  
was meant to drive feeling into a wall blue  
eyes could not penetrate. Your intensity is  
frail, blue ink is fading. I am unable

here i lie snowbound and mad  
still white and unscathed  
a twist of lemon between  
my teeth.

*George Meyers*

I DREAM I'M THE DEATH OF BOTTICELLI

And all the shells pour in  
with women standing to welcome me.

I dream I'm the birth of desire.

I am a man in the spring of my ways  
calling his Sarah  
on an old black phone through an  
atmosphere of wear and tear, bones.  
A man calling out his omission  
like a journal of days intact. A man  
with rented hats with contacts in Kenya  
and worse places, a man who loves  
a fullness of faces, a man feeding  
the whelping fires, simple in scorn,  
his calling to Sarah in a number  
of ways the first shell opened days.



*Jeanette Erlbaum*

### NEEDLES, NINEPINS, AND PINE CONES

“For sale, for sale, for sale,” Chester droned.

“He’s at it again,” Mrs. Jones whispered, nudging her husband.  
“Just look.”

Mr. Jones looked over and saw Chester on his porch rocker, swigging beer and droning a tune.

“Under the evergreen tree.”

Chester Dolittle was a friend of the Joneses. But not so much a friend, really, as a long-standing acquaintance. And not so much of the Joneses, really, as of their children — Bessy, Ida, and Mark.

You could say he was a neighbor. Because he occupied an old house, something of an eyesore, adjacent to the Joneses. Except that for fifteen years, the length of time they knew him, the Joneses had never once invited him to a glass of beer or a cup of tea. Not in the winter when he had cleaned the boiler in their basement and played Santa for the kids, or in the summer when he had checked their air-conditioners, or in the fall when he had climbed on the roof and cleaned the leaves out of their gutters, or even in the spring when he had mowed and watered their lawn.

At sixty, he was the oldest resident on the block — a sore thumb, so to speak. Mr. Jones would sometimes pass the time of day on Chester’s big porch and report back that he was “really a pleasant geezer and quite harmless now.”

Mr. Jones was not in the habit of doing it often, though, especially as Mrs. Jones disapproved. Why sit around with a crazy old man, she wanted to know, when there were men just his age up and down the block?

Chester still worked, rather infrequently as always, at odd

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Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

jobs. He had been a first-rate television repairman, but several years ago he had quit this occupation on the grounds that TV was the most pernicious human invention since compulsory education.

As a matter of fact, the Joneses had invited Chester once for a glass of tea, and dinner as well. Once. When they had first moved in. Just the three of them. Bessy, Ida, and Mark were still undreamed of at the time.

Chester had appeared in tee-shirt and jeans, his daily costume, even on Sundays. His breath reeked of beer. "This is kind of you, ma'am," he said often, eating quite ravenously.

"It's a shame you aren't married," Mrs. Jones had said. Chester's hair, uncommonly long and curling at the ends, was dark then, as well as the stubble on his face.

"I was married," Chester said. "But my wife ran out on me."

"I'm sorry," Mrs. Jones said, blushing.

"It's not your fault," he laughed. He said, squinting at her, "She looked a little like you." His voice was innocent, but Mrs. Jones detected a note of affront.

"Why'd she run out?" Mr. Jones wanted to know.

"What do you think?" Chester asked Mrs. Jones.

Mr. Jones said a bit angrily that his wife was not good at guessing games and Mrs. Jones tittered, "I'm sure I don't know."

"Well," Chester said, casting an unfortunate whiff into Mrs. Jones' upturned nose. "It wasn't liquor, contrary to what you might think. And it wasn't other women, and it wasn't —"

"The price of eggs," Mr. Jones cried with impatience.

Chester laughed good-naturedly. "You're right. What it was," he said with a theatrical flare in his voice, "was Imagination!"

"Imagination!" Mr. and Mrs. Jones had looked at one another.

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Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

“Imagination,” he repeated. He looked at them both with bright eyes and seemed prepared to elaborate, but Mrs. Jones asked after a silence, “How long were you married?”

“Ten years,” he said. “That was twenty years ago.”

“Any children?” Mrs. Jones asked.

“They’re grown now,” he answered, dipping his jaw to a piece of apple pie.

After he was gone, Mrs. Jones had turned to her husband. “What do you suppose he meant?” she asked.

Mr. Jones tugged at his ear lobe. “Beats me. But I’ll tell you one thing,” he wagged his forefinger vigorously, “he ain’t right in the head!”

Chester’s imagination had proved quite feeble when it came to concealing the squalor of his private life. There was a string of near common-law marriages, each lasting almost four years on the average.

When Bessy and Ida and then Mark came along, it was a running battle keeping them off the Dolittle porch or out of the Dolittle yard or from romping on the plush Dolittle lawn. One or another of the Dolittle wives would come to the door, as likely as not smoothing the hair out of her eyes, and say in a husky voice, “You don’t have to fuss, Mrs. Jones, Chester don’t mind at all.” But still she would snatch her children by their most immediate handles and pull them inside.

“How do you expect them to grow up civilized with a next-door neighbor like that?” she would demand continually of Mr. Jones.

The children had a way of disappearing into the dark recesses of his house, too.

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Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

“Bes-sy! I-da! Ma-ark! Come out this instant!”

Chester would escort them sheepishly to the door. “We were playing hide’n seek, Ma,” Bessy or Ida or Mark would volunteer.

One Sunday Chester made a big show of rolling a tire up the driveway and into his back yard. Mrs. Jones was discussing with Mrs. James whether it was possible to evict a person from his own home by virtue of a show of signatures.

“I’m not sure,” Mrs. James told Mrs. Jones. Mrs. James had a distressing habit of rubbing her inflated breasts whenever she spoke. “But I’ll ask the Reverend.”

“I’ll kill him!” Mrs. Jones had spotted Mark out of the corner of her eye, dashing down the Dolittle driveway.

They were all swinging on the tire which now hung from a tree when Mrs. Jones came storming into the yard.

“I thought they’d like it,” Chester said, averting his gaze.

One morning the Joneses were awakened by a shrill whistle. Mark was sitting at the edge of their bed, blowing himself red in the face.

“Where’d you get that?” Mr. Jones demanded drowsily.

“Chester made it,” Mark said. “Out of wood!” He blew into it. “Ain’t it loud?”

“Make him stop,” Mrs. Jones groaned into her pillow.

Mrs. Jones felt that Chester was looking for a confrontation.

“Mr. Dolittle,” she said to him one day. He was between mistresses, solitary at the time, guzzling beer on his porch rocker. His legs were up and he looked at her without changing position.

“Yes, ma’am?” he said.

She directed her voice at his forehead. “Mr. Dolittle, we really appreciate everything you do for us. Of course, it isn’t as

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Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

if we ask. I mean, all the little jobs Mr. Jones hasn't time for, seeing as he works so hard. But really, I wish —"

"It's nothing," Chester said smiling. "No bother at all."

"I know that," Mrs. Jones said. "But about the children —"

"They're no bother," Chester said, draining the beer can.

"That's not what I mean!" she sputtered. "And you know it!"

"Sorry, ma'am, but your dress is open," he pointed, retreating behind his door.

Mrs. Jones thought that it was a sneaky maneuver and didn't look down until she was back in her own kitchen. Then she saw that her housecoat had indeed spread open to the fourth button, with an ample show of cleavage in between. Her fingers trembled over the buttons. It was almost as if he had willed them open; she felt violated.

"You don't care what happens to us!" she charged, when Mr. Jones came home that night. He looked at her.

"We have a sex maniac next door, and you don't care!"

He chuckled. "You don't mean Chester?"

"I don't mean the Reverend James," she shouted.

"Chester's no sex maniac." His lips kept slipping irresistibly into a grin.

"Then why did he stare right at my chest the whole time I was having words with him?" she demanded. "And why do you think he plays with the kids so much?"

"He likes kids," Mr. Jones said. "That's why."

"Well, that's not natural! she erupted. "And I told him so."

"What'd he say?" Mr. Jones asked.

"He said my dress was open."

"Was it open?" he asked in a reasonable voice.

*Jeanette Erlbaum*

Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

“Yes,” she said. “But I don’t know how it got that way!”

Mr. Jones looked thoughtful. Ever so slightly, his nostrils flared. “I’ll see what I can do,” he said.

Mr. Jones had a habit of forgetting his promises regarding Chester. At his wife’s urging, however, they would meet with the Jameses to discuss “measures,” the Reverend stroking his chin, and his wife rubbing her breasts with each utterance.

Around Christmas time, the Joneses would always mellow. Mr. Jones would present Chester with a bottle of scotch and have one belt with him on the porch.

“I’ll be playing Santa,” Chester would remind him, and Mr. Jones would pat him expansively on the back. “Wouldn’t feel like Christmas without it.”

One evening Ida sang at dinner,  
“Needles, ninepins, and pine cones,  
For sale, for sale, for sale.”

“What’s that you’re singing?” Mrs. Jones wanted to know.  
“It’s a song Chester made up,” Bessy piped. “Wanna hear it?”  
Mrs. Jones nodded grimly, “Let’s have it.”  
*Needles, ninepins, and pine cones*, Bessy sang.  
*For sale, for sale, for sale,*  
*Under the evergreen tree,*  
*Where the elephant stubs his knee,*  
*For sale, for sale, for sale,*  
*Needles, ninepins, and pine cones.*

Mrs. Jones shook her head. “I don’t like it.”

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Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

“Why not?” Mr. Jones asked.

“What’s it mean?” she demanded.

“Beats me,” he said.

“Something has to be done about that man,” Mrs. Jones declared when the children had left the table. “Once and for all.”

“Dad! Dad! Mommy!” Bessy came charging in Sunday morning while the others were still asleep. Mr. and Mrs. Jones opened one bleary eye each. “Go ‘way,” Mrs. Jones murmured.

“Ma, I need a cigar box and a pair of red socks.”

“What time is it?” Mr. Jones groaned.

“Chester’s having a scavenger hunt,” Bessy cried, “and I need a cigar box and a pair of red socks.”

Mrs. Jones sat up in bed. “What’s he play with you for?” she wanted to know. “Why don’t he play with kids his own age? God, I dunno what I’m saying.” She fell back on the pillow.

Mr. Jones sat up. “Tell him we haven’t got any,” he whispered.

“*Trailing clouds of glory*,” Bessy exclaimed at breakfast.

“Huh?” the Joneses asked, picking up their heads from the paper.

“Why he plays with us,” Bessy reminded them. “He said, ‘Tell ‘em, *Trailing clouds of glory*.’”

“He’s not right in the head.”

“Needles, ninepins and pine cones,” Mark began lisping. “For sale, for sale, for —”

“Don’t sing that! Mrs. Jones snapped. She murmured, “Something will have to be done.”

*Jeanette Erlbaum*

Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

It was a little after Christmas the year Chester decided to stop repairing TV's. Mr. Jones had approached him, though he'd heard the grim rumor, and Chester began shaking his grizzled head.

"I'm sorry it's on the blink," he said. "But believe me, you're better off."

"I'll pay," Mr. Jones said.

"Go out and get some good books," Chester enjoined.

"It's not for me," Mr. Jones said, throwing up his arms. "I'm thinking of the kids."

His gray eyes stared gloomily at Mr. Jones. "I can't do it," Chester said.

"For them. I'm begging."

"Can't do it," Chester groaned, turning away.

Mrs. Jones brandished a fork in the air. "What do you think of your fine friend now?" she demanded of Bessy, Ida, and Mark.

"He's a shithead," Mark declared.

Bessy and Ida nodded with flushed cheeks.

"I'll wash your mouth out," Mrs. Jones threatened, pointing with the fork at Mark. "Next time."

"Maybe they'll stay away from him now," she was saying to Mr. Jones after supper when Bessy and Mark charged in.

"He's building an ark!" Bessy cried.

"We need two more hammers!" Mark shouted.

"Something will have to be done," Mrs. Jones muttered.

It was last Christmas when Mr. Jones had approached Chester again with his annual bottle of scotch.

"I'll be playing Santa," he had said, draining his shot glass.

*Jeanette Erlbaum*

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Mr. Jones drained his. He chortled. "Not this year, old fella."

Chester's face grew taut, then relaxed. "Got the urge yourself this year, eh?"

"They're too old for it," Mr. Jones chuckled. "They been too old for, jeez, I dunno how long."

"The baby," Chester protested.

"He's ten years old! Bessy goes out on dates," Mr. Jones said.

Chester swung his eyes away. "Thanks for the whiskey."

That night Bessy and her boyfriend collided with Chester in the dark.

"Beshy, honey."

She threw off his arm. "Chester, go home."

"Who's that?" her boyfriend asked. He watched Chester go veering down the block.

"He's an acquaintance."

"What's he do?"

She gathered her brows. "Not very much," she said.

The same week, Chester collared Mark. "Hey," he said.

"What's this I hear you too old for Santa Claus?"

Mark smirked and pushed his hands into his trousers.

"How do you think he's gonna feel when he comes down the chimney this year?"

"Aw, you been playing Santa Claus," Mark said, looking at the ground, "and Dad says you ain't doing it no more."

"I can if you like," Chester said in a wheedling voice.

"What's the sense?" Mark asked. "We know it's only you."

Chester bobbed his head, looking sidelong at Mark. "Guess you really are grown up, after all."

*Jeanette Erlbaum*

Needles, Ninepins, and Pine Cones

“Remember how that old geezer used to get your goat?” Mr. Jones was saying now, playfully, to Mrs. Jones. Chester was still sitting on his porch, looking at the sun dipping over the attic across the way.

“That’s gonna make a hole in the Cassidys’ roof,” he told Reverend James’ six-year old, as the youngster paused to bounce a ball off the Dolittle porch.

“I was worried about the kids,” Mrs. Jones said. “I could never rest till they were out of his clutches.”

“*Needles, ninepins, and pine cones,*” Chester began droning again.

“He’s still at it,” Mrs. Jones said. “Just listen.”

“*For sale, for sale, for sale.*”

“Thank God our kids are grown,” she declared, knocking wood.

“*Under the evergreen tree.*”



*Robin Boyd*

Rocky's

The door hangs open early  
in the evening and music  
leaks into the gutters  
soaking our heels  
with refrains so familiar  
our feet follow the sound  
like children summoned to supper.  
We don't want to see  
this place in the sunlight  
the bruised hardwood and cracked glasses  
seem to reflect light unevenly  
making us squint, waiting for darkness.  
But at night the moon hangs heavy,  
poolballs click reassuringly  
the thud of a bank shot  
speaks softly, stirring a thirst  
as urgent as memory  
and still, somehow  
we always end up in corners  
revising things we've said  
knowing they are like  
a letter already sent.

*Robin Boyd*

Sleeping at my mother's new apartment,  
Easter, 1978

The shade is drawn an inch  
above the sill so the shapes  
of plants are silhouetted  
against the dull red throbbing  
of the car dealership next door.  
The noise from passing traffic  
is hushed but constant like  
the sound of breath in a tunnel.  
I could be anywhere.

I am reminded of the sounds of night  
years ago, in a different room,  
of the roar of caged lions next door  
and the confused hoof beats  
of three horses escaping  
across the front yard.  
As I laid awake  
the sounds and shadows  
of that darkness were as magical  
as the imaginings of sleep.

Then, the mist of dawn would  
spread evenly, leveling irregular terrain,  
never too early.  
Darkness was the silence  
of the breeze as it surrounded  
the house, sinking heavily  
into thinning crevices of dreams.

It is different here.  
As we doze off  
we try to remember the names  
of neighbors there,  
and from the edge of a dream  
I hear you say,  
"That woman, upstairs, at night,  
she really gets her hifi going".

*Judy Order*

The Woman Misplaced

Someone screwed up  
the dates sometime  
back in '56  
and she was born  
into morals of ash  
and discipline of children  
taught in step by step books.  
Wrong era for  
a woman whose  
flat stomach bulged  
with false pregnancy  
and fear was too unreal  
to fake.

Growth was too fast  
on Women's Equality,  
pushing before she knew  
what she was  
to be equal to.  
Following the trends  
became gimmicks for her,  
and the husband she longed for,  
who would support, cherish and love her,  
was only found in names  
carved on cold gravestones,  
the dates too old for recurrence.

So she clipped her hair short,  
rallied with Steinem, Greer and Frieden  
for abortion rights  
and when the Women's Meeting  
adjourned in her studio apartment,  
she hid her Dr. Spock Books,  
and the tiny knitted sweaters  
she had bought  
once in a dream.

*jan e. m. baas*

Firepoint 1

Looking over my shoulder  
I see a small child crying  
as he clutches his mother's dress.  
I'm growing downwards  
inch by inch back into childhood.  
I hate my chubby arms  
& pink legs.

I've slipped inside myself.  
The doctor slaps me on the buttocks  
& hands me to my mother.  
She squeezes me too tightly.  
I walk in the same small white shoes  
I was baptized in;  
a 1-year-old sucking on a lollipop,  
my mother is building wall cabinets  
& trying to breastfeed me  
at the same time.  
I bite deep in anger  
instead of milk I taste blood.  
She slaps me, puts me to bed.  
I yell like a tyrant directing an army  
& piss all over the blankets  
& laugh for the first time.

*Eileen Mulderry*

This was the longest weekend Gary could remember. As he sped up moving onto the highway he noted the ominous greying of the sky. He increased his speed, changing into the racing lane as he made a silent plea for the weather to hold. The radio report had said only 50% chance of snow, but with early winter storms you never could tell. He didn't want to have to explain to their folks being snowbound between Long Island and Albany.

The girl next to him slept with her head on his knee. The rest of her small frame stretched out towards the door. She was so short and petite she barely had to bend her legs to fit on the seat. He felt, more than saw her shiver and he pulled his coat from around himself to cover her. After tucking it snugly about her he let his hand rest gently on her shoulder.

He watched her face for a moment almost willing her to wake and divert him from his lonely thoughts. "A child carrying a child" the doctor had remarked sadly, and watching her now Gary understood why. With the close cropped hair falling softly about her tiny face, and the little laugh lines pulling up the corners of her mouth even as she slept, a stranger might have guessed her to be fifteen.

Just like a pixie he had thought when they met two years ago. Always smiling and playful yet able to tolerate other people's shyness and fear she had captured his heart that first night. He was almost afraid of her, she was so full of life and feeling. Luckily for him she had liked him right away, even suggesting he visit her the next day. After that it was easy, he had followed as she led him through friendship into a depth of caring he'd never known.

Thinking back on their two years together he realized, how much he'd come to enjoy living. She had taught him to be comfortable with himself and he stopped worrying what other people

*Eileen Mulderry*

thought of him. Her laughter was contagious and he often caught himself smiling just at the thought of her. He owed her all the pleasure in his life and he'd repaid her with an ugly incident she'd never forget.

He could still see the accusation in the doctor's eyes when he'd stepped aside to let Erin sign the consent form.

"Damn!" He muttered to himself.

The old guy was right; he should have known better. He just never figured it could happen to them. He couldn't really blame Erin, she never worried about anything, and she'd only been trying to please him.

He remembered the night she'd come to see him, painfully full of the secret she had to share. She spoke softly as if afraid of his reaction. *Where had he gotten the nerve to feel such joy?* He'd tried to kiss her but as she began to cry the horror of their situation swept over him. He could only pull her close and comfort her while his mind raced on trying to think of something to say.

The weeks flew by while they suffered in their indecision. They both wanted the baby, there was no doubt about it. All the while they told each other they could manage, they knew there was no hope. As much as he wanted to marry her he knew he couldn't support the two of them much less a baby too.

Their biggest fear was their parents. Even as he thought about it the anger rose in his throat until he had to swallow. Why couldn't he have trusted his parents enough to know they would stand by him. Erin's were just as bad. Worried about what people would say, and the immorality of what their kids had done, he was sure they'd have raised a furor neither he nor Erin could have faced. The guilt he felt at deceiving them was relieved by the idea that they were partly responsible for the final decision.

*Eileen Mulderry*

It was Erin who decided abortion was the only thing they could do. He had sorrowfully agreed and started to make plans. Their biggest mistake had been stalling. The school doctor explained that because she was in her fourth month she would have to be hospitalized for surgery. He hadn't said anything to Erin, but the idea of surgery frightened him. He was glad he'd had enough money saved up to take her to a different city. He didn't want the memory of it all hanging around the setting they would have to live in every day. They had both told their parents they were staying with friends for the weekend.

Erin didn't stop talking all the way to Long Island. Although she hadn't said so, he knew she was afraid. It wasn't like her to babble on about trivia. Every once in a while he would reach over and hold her hand, equally afraid but not knowing what to say.

Watching her now he was perturbed to realize their roles had been reversed. He felt he could burst with all the things he had to say, but would she listen?

He'd been afraid to talk to her right after the procedure was over. He had sat by her as late as the nurses would let him, but she never acknowledged his presence. The pained look in her eyes spoke of the loss she wasn't putting into words. That night he couldn't face the empty motel room again so he stayed in the car counting the hours until he could take her home.

In the morning he sauntered into the hospital hoping to find her feeling better and eager to go. To his horror he heard her sobbing as he reached the doorway. She lay with her face towards the wall unaware of his presence. He wanted to leave but the sight of her suffering kept him rooted to the floor. He ached to touch her, to hold her against him and share the hurt that was causing her such grief. He was afraid to go to her and instead walked back to the nurses station.

*Eileen Mulderry*

Erin's doctor was there and Gary told him how he'd found her. The doctor was kind this time as he explained "Erin has had a tremendous shock to her mind and body. We talked a bit this morning and she told me she'd wanted the baby very badly. You must realize that makes the operation doubly traumatic. She's going to need a great deal of support and love especially from you, son. I would also advise Psychiatric counseling until she doesn't feel the loss quite so deeply."

When he returned to the room she was sitting calmly on the bed waiting for him. He took her hand and they left.

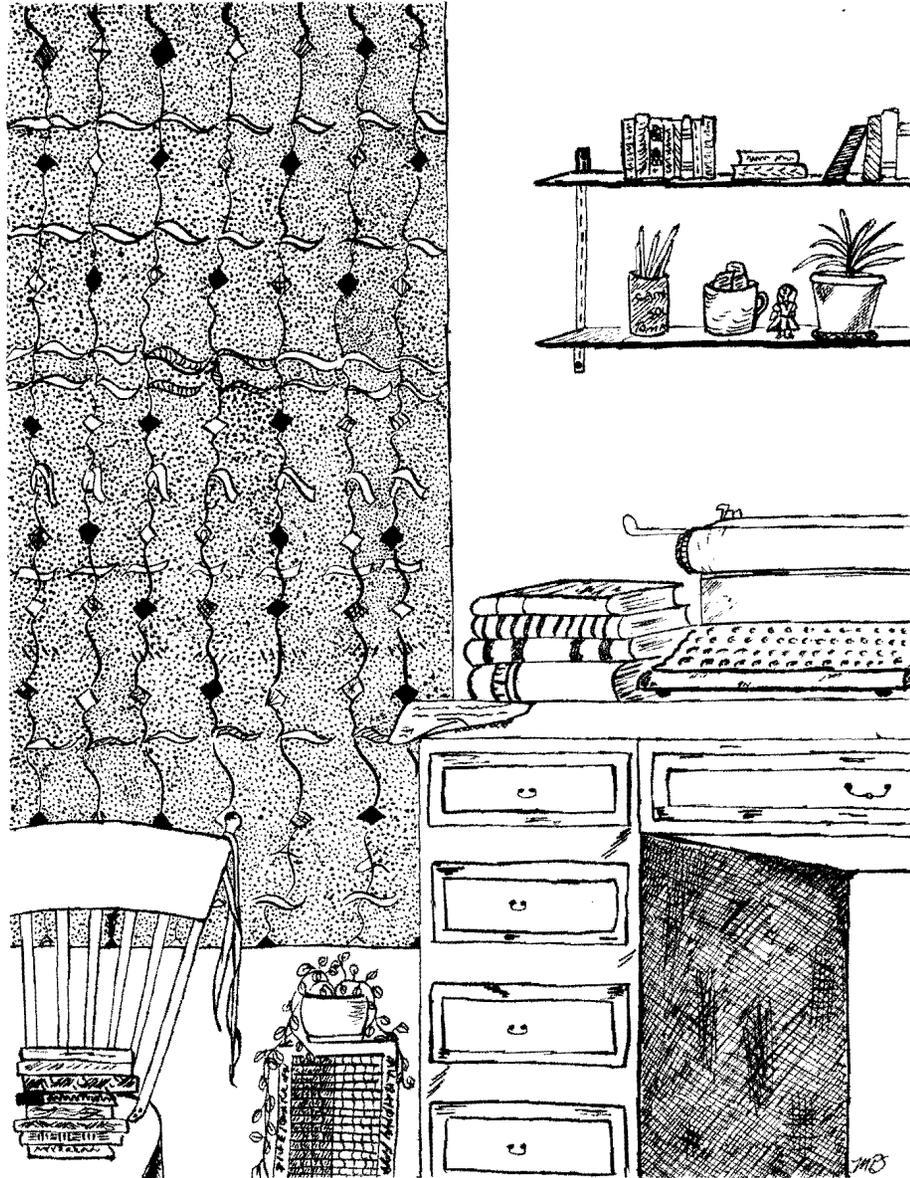
Driving into Albany the familiarity of it started to cheer him. With a little effort he thought maybe they could leave what happened in Long Island out of their everyday lives. He was nervous though, they were almost to her house and no words had been spoken between them. He couldn't just let her go without saying anything.

"Erin, wake up" he said squeezing her arm. She sat up dazed for a moment but he saw relief flicker in her eyes as they pulled in her driveway.

He put the car in park and turned to her unsure of what to say.

"Er" he started, but she interrupted, "Not now, please."

She got out of the car and walked away from him. He watched as the house drew her inside grateful it had the strength he did not.



*Marie Costello*

The Jigsaw Puzzle

The pieces were strewn  
On a brown shag  
Divided in two,  
Ends with ends  
Middles with middles.  
Our fingers poked and prodded  
Shuffling us about  
To find the perfect fit.  
We made up a corner  
Of a child's dream,  
A laughing sun.  
We sat side by side  
Inwardly,  
Circling the edges  
Center piece in place.

House and trees  
Clung together  
Looking just like the box  
But the game was over.  
Pulled apart  
We stand alone  
Waving half smiles  
Secluded in numbers.

*Maria Palma Suscella*

### THE SOUR

You open your mouth as if to speak,  
but only a sigh, soft as the skin  
of a violet, escapes your moist lips.  
You quickly wearied of explanation,  
now you zip your thoughts tightly  
in a pouch and store them underneath  
our bed. At night they crawl out  
and enter your dreams. Images of  
my tongue: taste gone sour.

I see you, my wife, slowly slide  
into oblivion, taking no notice  
of seasons and less of days. I live  
with the knowledge that you have  
not yet forgotten how to cook  
broccoli-raab nor how to torture me  
with a silence so black it chars  
like flames caressing metal.

*Wendy Goodman*

Late Afternoon on the Pier

Gulls like grey and white confetti  
settle in a noisy mass  
on the slick silver fish  
hard beaks pick and tear crisp scales.  
The dog is watching them  
his tail limp on the tar  
like thick and tired rope  
his ears tipped forward  
forming black cups.

The fishermen stew on the wharf's edge  
swallowing beer and spitting tobacco  
into the dark loping sea.  
Anxious buyers rush through the screen door  
of the fish store,  
choosing what is left of creamy moist filets  
the door clicks behind them  
like the shiny coins pressed into the owner's palm.

The gulls begin to scatter  
into an apricot sunset,  
fishermen laugh and mention wives  
the pier eases from side to side  
in rhythm with sleepy waves.  
And the dog places his bristled face  
upon two black paws.

*Cris Rugg*

Sunset

The sun

Tired from day

Searches for an empty place

To spend a restless night alone

At sea.

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