1992

Reflections 1992

Kathy Henson
Barry Martin
Joyce Compton Brown

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/reflections

Part of the Art and Design Commons, Creative Writing Commons, and the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
Gardner-Webb University Literary Publications, Reflections, 1992, series 4, Box 5, University Archives, Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Literary Societies and Publications at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reflections by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu.
CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Carreon Ayala, freshman biology major
Sandy Basinger, senior English major
Susan Bell, instructor of art
Ernest Blankenship, professor of English
Joyce Compton Brown, professor of English
Kathleen Brown, freshman
Heather Fortune, freshman English and Spanish major
Dunsey Harper, senior social sciences major
Kathy Henson, senior English major
Tom Jones, professor of biology
Markell Lynch, junior communications major
Barry W. Martin, senior communications major
Johnny Leon Morris, junior English major
Shannon M. Parry, senior English major
Pamela Price, sophomore biology major
Brian Siatkowski, sophomore
Bill Stowe, professor of communications and English
Nina Schnipper, senior psychology major
Jim Taylor, professor of English
Jonathan Turner, senior sacred music major
Andrew White, freshman communications major
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Red to Grey</td>
<td>Markell Lynch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength &amp; Value</td>
<td>Dunsey Harper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plea</td>
<td>Johnny Leon Morris</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Barry W. Martin</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Playground Slide</td>
<td>Andrew White</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder in the Church</td>
<td>Shannon M. Parry</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Bill Stowe</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Contours</td>
<td>Susan Carlisle Bell</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crucible</td>
<td>Johnny Leon Morris</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Love</td>
<td>Pamela Price</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIS IS MY FATHER’S WORLD—1990s</td>
<td>Tom Jones</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript of a Young Reformer</td>
<td>Barry W. Martin</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>Brian Siatkowski</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Yelling Man</td>
<td>Kathy Henson</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughter</td>
<td>Kathleen Brown</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Know Me</td>
<td>Sandy Basinger</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dance of the Firefly</td>
<td>Andrew White</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazy Late Afternoon Sun</td>
<td>Barry W. Martin</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumps and Sons</td>
<td>Jim Taylor</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections of Creation</td>
<td>Jonathan Turner</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ernest Blankenship Loss and Gain 23
Michael Carreon Ayala Man in Silhouette 24
Nina Schnipper Camping 25
Heather Fortune Solace 26
Ernest Blankenship Poets and Statesmen 27
Brian Siatkowski Crossing 28
Johnny Leon Morris Amputating the Essence 29
Markell Lynch “You can’t touch me…” 30
Joyce Compton Brown Tractor Pull Ambiance 31
Shannon M. Parry Clouds 32
Ernest Blankenship The Sum 33
Nina Schnipper Western civilization cannot be accredited for inventing the marvelous Paper Clip 34
Joyce Compton Brown Camping 35
Markell Lynch The Rain 36
Barry W. Martin Cutting 37
Johnny Leon Morris That Movement That Was Civil for Rights 38
Literary Contest

Each year the English Department of Gardner-Webb College sponsors a literary contest for all student submissions chosen for publication in Reflections. Faculty and nonstudent submissions are not eligible for the contest. All works are judged anonymously by the final contest judges. This year’s judges were Dr. Gayle Price, Dr. Bill Stowe, and Dr. Jim Taylor.

Awards

First Place: From Red to Grey Markell Lynch

Second Place: The Yelling Man Kathy Henson

Third Place: That Movement That Was Civil for Rights Johnny Leon Morris

Honorable Mention

Crucible Johnny Leon Morris

Amputating the Essence Johnny Leon Morris

Manuscript of a Young Reformer Barry W. Martin

The Old Playground Slide Andrew White
ART CONTEST

The Art Department of Gardner-Webb College has sponsored an art contest for all student submissions chosen for publication in Reflections. Faculty and nonstudent submissions are not eligible for the contest. All works are judged anonymously by the final contest judges. This year’s judges were Susan Bell, Chrystal Blalock, and Ben Carson.

AWARDS

First Place:  Strength and Value  Dunsey Harper
Second Place: Laughter  Kathleen Brown
Third Place:  Reflections of Creation  Jonathan Turner
From Red to Grey
(at the Vietnam War Memorial)

1
A draft list,
a duty roster,
name after name,
soldier after soldier

A red list,
a dead list,
the faceless—
face down in the fields.

A P.O.W. list,
an M.I.A. list,
in the end—
a presumed dead list.

name after name,
soldier after soldier—
lost,
in some rainforest.
in some rice paddy.
in some privileged file.
on some list.

name after name,
soldier after soldier,
engraved in black granite.
all turned grey.

2
name after name,
soldier after soldier,
the Not Men:
crying Not tears,
hiding Not fears,
for the Not war:
Vietnam:
soldier after soldier,
green-brown smeared—
with still, wide eyes,
too wide,
trapped in a scream:
dead.

name after name,
dripping red.
napalm, ground mines
snipers, Viet Cong:

Vietnam.
soldier after soldier,
returning home,
to Not Homes,
unwelcomed, unparaded.
Trying to forget (the):
dead.

name after name,
soldier after soldier,
grey on black granite:

dead

men.

Markell Lynch
First Place

Strength & Value

Dunsey Harper
Plea  
(to Blair)

when you are capable of  
bending the solid imbroglios  
that wring and twine and coil  
about you remember that I am a  
weak contortionist in love.

Johnny Leon Morris

Cape

My god it was COLD that day  
a nor’easter Blasting through  
wind push and shoving against  
silent colossus Hatteras standing  
steadying myself against a constant onslaught  
dry waves whipping mane  
North Carolina coast—like it should be in  
November sky swallowed all the light  
only great terrible surf spat rabid waves foaming at the mouth  
roaring hollow wind sent loose stinging grains  
sleeting across the beach  
silent colossus, silent me  
in awe

Barry W. Martin
The Old Playground Slide

Fire your ammunition
   at the old playground slide.
Although it taught you that what goes up
also must come down,
you throw stones to exercise.
Were you sorry when the carousel was
   shut down because the horses
lost their personality?
   When was the last time you counted their teeth
and combed their fine hair against the grain?
Children’s dreams lost in a sandbox of
   ignorance or perhaps divinity.
Who’s to tell whether the
   mauling child should fall from the
swing or be saved by The Stranger?
Are you afraid that the fun, the
   imaginary friends will jump up
and dance to another station?
   Take hold of the rail so not to slip,
but slipping can be fun if no one’s watching.
It’s too often that the chains, fences,
barricades of steel encompass
the lost areas of wandering.
Count the flowers, paint the trees,
listen to the birds, pick the fruit and

Come down the old playground slide into my sandbox of dreams.

Andrew White
Murder in the Church

Fasting within the flock
   Missing the sight of it, the sound of it, the
   smell and taste of it.
   Dying from so much life.
   Suddenly—its hunger strikes again.

Blood falls like bitter tears of some torn love, at
first as frequent as April rains, then as slow and
continuous as a leaky faucet.

Blood falls in crystallized raindrops, in anger and
in heat, crying out as they plummet towards their
non-existence.

Blood falls from calloused hands, saturated with the
salty-drippings of fear.
   Cold fingers clutch...
   embrace...
   savour.....over zealous death.

Feasting upon the fallen
   Loving the sight of it, the sound of it, the
   smell and taste of it.
   Becoming alive from death.
   Slowly—its hunger recedes again.

Shannon M. Parry
Untitled
(On the anniversary of the death of a colleague and friend)

He would have been 39 this month,
But he didn't live to fear forty,
To worry about paunches and thinning hair,
Gains and losses on a personal ledger.

Crudely arrested potential made us hurt then—
And now.
When a life that vital, that loving,
Is snatched away, we have to hurt
Or not feel at all, forever.

But if he can brighten our lives no longer,
In person,
at least he doesn't have to watch us
watching each other growing
thick and thin together.

Bill Stowe
Cabbage Contours

Susan Carlisle Bell
Crucible
(to my homegirls)

there are those
that giggle and
cackle at the
old black and
white programs
of the Ed Sullivan
Show of the
Chiffons and the
Supremes
be-bopping
do-whopping
in feathered straight haired
wigs.

because

that way they
can stifle the
chants and spells
that beautify
the black sisters
that break
all those
flying brooms

Johnny Leon Morris
My Love

I live in a bottle
With my only love
Her presence intoxicates me
Another sip, another hour
My mind is subdued
And my senses dulled
She courses through my veins
As a parody of life
Her affection is sharp
I bleed inside
I look in my mirror
Only to see the shell
Of what once was
And the ghost
Of what could have been
Then I go back to my bottle
And meet with my lover again.

Pamela Price
THIS IS MY FATHER’S WORLD—1990s*

THIS IS MY FATHER’S WORLD—
   In which I allow 40,000,000 individuals to starve each year
AND TO MY LISTENING EARS—
   come the sounds of automobiles, industrial plants,
   supersonic jets and overly loud music
ALL NATURE SINGS—
   except the hundreds of species which face extinction each year
AND ROUND ME RINGS THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.

THIS IS MY FATHER’S WORLD—
   Where more than 2000 lakes in the Adirondacks which used to
   support abundant life now contain no vertebrate species
I REST (???) ME IN THE THOUGHT—
   that our congress (which spends more time on dirty art),
   is ever watchful of our environmental needs
OF ROCKS AND TREES—
   even the 70 square miles of tropical rainforest which are
denuded each day, and where the growth rate of eastern forest
trees has decreased by 34-50% since 1950, and where 70-80% of
the adult trees which blanketed Mt. Mitchell in my childhood
are now dead,
OF SKIES—
   where carbon dioxide has increased in concentration by more
than 50% since 1850 and where our protective ozone layer is
being attacked by chlorofluorocarbons, methane, and
hydrocarbons,
AND SEAS—
   where up to 50% of the shoreline is closed to fishing and
shellfishing due to toxic and septic wastes being present, and
where our beaches are closed due to contaminated medical
wastes, industrial wastes, and septic effluent
HIS HANDS THE WONDERS WROUGHT.

Tom Jones

*based on the hymn “This is My Father’s World” by Maltbie D. Babcock
Manuscript of a Young Reformer

It was my last year at West Henderson High. Senior English was very much the bore everybody said it was. The latest atrocity—each student had to teach a class segment. My pariahs were two poems by some modern author I don't remember. English wasn't my bag anyway; there was too much going on outside the classroom. I was helping out with the play The New Odd Couple. I stayed after school for about two and a half hours every day. I got home right in time for the evening news. I learned more from the half hour newscasts than I did from seven hours of school.

I remember one night in particular. The Supreme Court had made a ruling on an interesting case. A high school newspaper's student editor had printed something that offended the school's administration. Their dispute ended up in court. The editor maintained that a high school newspaper had freedom of the press just like any free enterprise paper. The editor battled it all the way up to the high court. I admired her courage and belief in herself. This was the first case of this nature, and I was interested in how the court would decide; I knew it would set a precedent. It seemed to me the real question was, "Do high school students have constitutional rights?" When they finally handed down their decision, I was disappointed but not really surprised. The Supreme Court ruled against the editor. I knew that the full ramifications of that decision would not be realized until much later. I thought to myself, "I can vote and die in a war, but I can't buy beer, and as far as the constitution is concerned, I don't exist." I envisioned myself dying in Central America or the Middle East for freedoms I never had enjoyed. For now it meant there was something interesting to talk about at school tomorrow.

I knew my classmates really weren't interested in what was going on in the world. They were too busy with clothes, cars, and themselves. The next day shouldn't have surprised me, but it did anyway. Nobody had any idea what I was talking about. There were a few, all the people like me, nerds. But even though they knew what I was talking about, they really didn't understand what it meant. All the principles our nation was founded on that we had been taught to believe all our lives suddenly didn't apply to us. I thought, "If these people really understand what that ruling means, and just don't care, then they are sheep and deserve to be led to slaughter." This, I guess, was my first run-in with apathy. That once unfamiliar face is now all too familiar. I made up my own saying: "Enthusiasm may be contagious, but apathy is epidemic." I couldn't talk to those who knew nothing and didn't
want to. The others were legitimately too busy to listen. And I still had a rehearsal and an English assignment to do.

That Wednesday evening was final dress rehearsal. I rushed home after classes and did my homework. I sat down with the poem, "An Elementary School in a Slum." I read about blank faces and icky grey walls. I thought about my rights as a citizen and student. I borrowed a book of criticism from the library, and after too long I figured out the social and humanistic points the author tried to make. Then I jotted a few notes down and marked some places in the book. Another mundane, laborious, redundant, and useless task complete. I ate supper early and headed back to school to get ready for the play.

I ran the light board for the show. It was easy, one change for every act. I could set the light levels and relax until the end. The director always wanted a small audience for the last rehearsal to see if the show was going to fly. The parents and friends of the cast and crew were usually invited, along with the school administration. We normally had an audience of about fifteen people. Until that night, no official had ever been to one performance. The theatre got dead quiet when the principal walked in. We were flattered that he chose to come that night. The show was a little squirrelly, but it flew. Our usually emphatic crowd clapped and cheered as much as ever. The principal left without saying a word. Things were so "buzzy" nobody even noticed.

We all came to school the next day, confident in our performance last night. Our ego trips were cut short when the intercom announced that the cast and the director were to report to the principal’s office immediately. What exactly took place in that office I’ll never know. I do know that a very worried director and an irate cast came out of it. Evidently, there had been some dialogue and action in the play last night that he didn’t agree with. He ordered the dialogue and the blocking changed...opening night. It’s a given that these were all the best jokes. He didn’t even let the cast out of classes to rework them. The company had from three ten until seven o’clock to entirely redo three scenes. I was outraged and I wasn’t even inconvenienced. It was the principle of it. We had worked for three months on the play to get the timing, blocking, lines and set just right. Now this expletive was telling us to change all that in three hours and fifty minutes. If he had been worried about this sort of thing, he had plenty of time to do something about it before opening day. Not only that, but every change made was taking the production further away from the artist’s conception.

The director typed up a disclaimer announcing what had been done.
In it, the director apologized for the artistic merit of the play. He also named who was responsible. The disclaimers were handed out with each playbill. The people took them and if they noticed or cared, they didn’t show it. There never is a big crowd for Thursday night openers. They laughed and seemed not to notice the little inconsistencies.

Later that night, I was preparing my presentation for tomorrow, looking over the materials, making sure I had all my major points, and practicing reading the poems. The day’s events were running through my consciousness. I still had that court ruling in the back of my head. I noticed my copy of Fahrenheit 451 on the bookshelf.

English was third period. I walked into class—books, criticism, notes, and Fahrenheit 451 under my arm. Three people were ahead of me. I had plenty of time to get nervous and calm again several times. The assignment called for about fifteen minutes per presentation. Finally, Mrs. Gorsuch called my name. I stood in front of the class. I began a little roughly, but I knew my stuff. I calmly and effectively read the poems, gave several interpretations, including my own, and explained each, the symbols, the metaphors, and asked opinions of the class. After that three minutes, I put the criticism and notes away, took out two sheets of paper and Fahrenheit and began my real lesson.

“Maybe I shouldn’t do this, but...” I began by telling them about that Supreme Court case. Once I had everybody’s attention, I told them about yesterday’s events. I took out the Ray Bradbury epilogue and read several passages aloud. My personal favorite is the bit about school officials and their “mush-milk teeth.” Surprisingly, even the teacher was sympathetic—even supportive. She had a copy of the disclaimer. Nobody slept through my presentation. I believe I opened a few eyes that morning. All that adult stuff really does affect us.

I have a few other observations about the whole affair. My grade for instance didn’t occur to me until later that day. I went by the classroom to see. I fared better than I thought; I made a full letter grade above a friend who really did do the complete assignment. More people came out that night to see the play than all the previous plays’ attendance counts put together for the past three years. I was glad to see them, but also saddened. They were there only out of curiosity. The draw of controversy is still amazing. Just watch Geraldo.

Barry W. Martin
Norm

The little child lies secure.  
His dreams safe inside.  
The bear he holds watches over him.  
The furry face is the boy’s best friend.  
Remember. Imagine.  
The day when freedom was a step away.  
O.K. It still is, only now it’s off a cliff.  
Take your bear, your trust and faith.  
Float away across the waves.  
Across the desert.  
Take into the horizon, the past.  
Remember. Imagine.  
The time a tear would soak into a teddy’s paw.  
A day when your biggest worry was  
To misplace a true friend.

Brian Siatkowski
The Yelling Man

You told me about fire and fear for forty years
even though I'm only twenty-two.
But nine years of CONVICTION
is eternity if you're hanging over Hell.
I don't want to sit at your black shiny feet
or kneel at your altar,
fill your brass plates or cringe underneath
your scowling (oh, but loving!) God anymore
Yelling Man.

Kathy Henson
Second Place

Laughter

Kathleen Brown
To Know Me

Creep inside my heart
Feel the softness of the concave walls
See what they are made of
Feel the intense, steady beat
See what makes it increase and diminish
If you do all these things
Unmercifully and unselfishly
You will know me!

Sandy Basinger

The Dance of the Firefly

How many weeks in an hour,
how many months in a day?
Count the flowers
says who,
says the spotted firefly.
Count the wrinkles in the crease of
a rock
Fight the sunpeople,
Kill the ocean with
a
touch of indigo.
Sing the song the Asians sing,
the wedding song. The harp plays
the melancholy afternoon
Sunday evening rain dance of the
Firefly

Andrew White
Hazy Late Afternoon Sun

Hazy, late afternoon sun sears my eyes shut
exhaustion fills my ears and brain with fuzzy
the grip loosens on the wheel
my head...ever...so...slowly...bends,
the car begins to veer.
my mortality slams into me like a .45 slug.
this is my life racing madly from point to point while
not belonging at either.
clear as crystal, haunting as whalesong.
let the angels weep.
I have claimed the night, like so many others.
nightfall, dark winds rattle the hollow limbs of trees.
misty fog, the world filled with soft, thick, wet cotton
encased in crystalline H2O.
running...where? will I ever get there
imitation light passes through skeleton trees
producing holographic shadows in the midnight fog.
clear as crystal, haunting as whalesong.
hurting through a midnight fog so majestic
it even makes Shoney’s look poetic.
someday may find me naked and muddy, howling in the moonlight
now I’m burning, consuming, running, to...from...
and it’s getting hard to tell the difference between
memories and dreams.

Barry W. Martin
Today I resolve to purge my side of this claustrophobic closet before I lose a finger between the trousers clamp and the black-bent dry cleaners hanger lurking in the dark shadows among the old shirts sagging in retirement.

But all I want now is the green flannel with collar frayed and middle button missing, gone like Pa who kept it in the pantry for quick wintry forays into his backyard to feed the birds and his nomadic square-jawed cat, Bachelor.

I leave the misshapen rod to rock as though abandoned by children called indoors from their see-saws. For I must socialize with stump and son.

One must be realistic with stumps, I recall Pa saying. The benefits you get might be more in the satisfaction of the work than in the notion that you can actually move something so deeply rooted; ask any cynic. But I must try.

Soon I have tools surrounding the stump, bent toward the house the way it fell when Hugo roared through. Cutting the pine was the easy part. I think to the tree: See, I have pick, shovel, hoe, rake, axe, wedge, and sledge-hammer. You may still be there when this day ends, but I must be reckoned with.

Soon the green flannel feels damp, a good dampness over the tired muscles that already tell me that I will be thankful for the exercise. I sit on the stump and see son in the backyard, raking leaves from under the holly tree. He has at twelve arisen early for this task and his moves are the methodical ones of night people out of their element. He wears the brown trench coat from high school
days and the racquetball shoes I didn’t like
and passed on.

“You always give me the shoes you don’t
want,” he once said, not knowing how
particular I can be—about shoes, stumps and
sons among other things. Now he leaves
the holly, freeing the restless redbirds to visit
the feeder, and joins me at the stump.

“What am I supposed to do with the leaves on
the roof?” he asks.
“Throw them in the yard.”
Son stares at the stump. “Why don’t you just
leave it?”
“Because it doesn’t belong anymore,” I say,
not really knowing why. “But take my advice
and avoid getting too sentimental about stumps.”

Son replies stoically, as is his custom,
other matters on his mind. He borrows my
yard gloves, fetches the ladder from under
the deck, and leans it against the new roof
he has never seen. As he climbs, a gust of
wind causes the trench coat to billow, and
the ladder, sun glint, slips slightly before
he rights it.

Son balances himself on the roof peak, gazing
at the hundreds of oaks, beeches, dogwoods,
and even the pines that I plan to have cut.
Perhaps he wonders if after four more months
he will find himself in another place where
few trees grow. He begins scooping leaves
from the gutters and flinging them over the
side to fall wherever destiny will have them.
I watch, remembering an unfettered nine-year-
old who claimed warm fall days for his own,
racing around the yard to finally collapse in
leaf piles, then rising to run again while
tossing crackling leaves heavenward, Arfie
joyously pursuing in the perfect peace of chaos.

Jim Taylor
Third Place

*Reflections of Creation*

*Jonathan Turner*


Loss and Gain

In order for one to win
Another has to lose.
The loser is sacrificed.
It's a principle irrefutable.

The rat feeds the cat.
The wildebeest dies so the lion may live.
Vulnerable rabbits and chickens are
prey for all predators.
Creatures prey on one another all
up and down the scale.

The success of the democrats depends on the
failure of the republicans and vice versa.
In order for Schwarzkoph and Bush to
succeed, Saddam Hussein had to fail.

The doctor takes his living from the patient
The worker feeds the boss
The undertaker profits directly from
my demise.
My going makes way for someone else to rise.

Ernest Blankenship
Man in Silhouette

Whispering softly, gently, quietly
Into the wind.

As darkness passes
The hazy shade sits patiently,
Hidden under the shadows of tall and saddened trees
Rected by his tender hands
And waits,
Ending to the loud calls of the barren.

Until the second coming of the sun
Will he remain.

Redeemer of the graceful swans,
He comforts them,
Allowing an end
To their long and mournful song.

As darkness passes
The hazy form waits patiently,
Whispering quietly, gently, softly
Through the wind,
Still hidden under the shadows
Of tall and saddened trees.

Michael Carreon Ayala
Camping

It won't be like those times when I was a child
A baby snuggled in Mother's arms,
watching adults scurry,
frantically employing their outdoorsmen skills.
Nor will it resemble the toddler years,
When adult outdoorsmen skills had become rusty;
Poor Uncle Norman will never be forgiven for driving a tent stake
Into a hornet's nest, sending us fleeing from the site.
This time is different,
aside from avoiding stinging creatures' habitats.
Tonight a halo of stars reveals a new sight
A brilliant fire,
crackling,
spitting,
the gasping kindling interrupts the unison of cricket's whistling
The segregated buzzing of tree bugs can be faintly distinguished,
as the logs continue to gag and suffocate,
snapping as they plummet deeper,
colliding with tumbling twigs
As the flares tease and engulf the kindling further,
curling slowly around each innocent bark-coated corner,
igniting sticks with a mere Midas touch,
they only instill in me a greater feeling of security.

Nina Schnipper
Solace

The sunlight shimmers across the polished wood.
A chill shivers up my spine as I sit at the majestic instrument.
My fingers glide easily across the ivory keys, and the music that escapes from the strings reverberates throughout the spacious room.
As if by magic, the lively song of “Whims” changes to the melancholy “Moonlight Sonata,” whose notes glide through the air like a graceful bird.
Alone with the music, I imagine the great hall filled with people.
As the sonata changes to Rachmaninoff’s “Eighteenth Variation” thunderous applause mixes with the haunting melody.
As the song ends, I return to reality; into the same immense chamber, yet now different, filled with the last echoing strains.
My troubles now soothed, I get up to leave filled with new hope from a never-ending solace of a timeless melody.

Heather Fortune
Poets and Statesmen

Poets are wise but not all-wise
They see through eyes inspired,
But they have blind spots as well
as others

Practical politicians, psychologists,
philosophers, and preachers have insight.
They have great skill in what they do too,
But they are narrow in what they see.

They do in a specialized way
what poets can’t
Poets look beyond the specialization
To the unexplainable inspiration,
But they would have a hard time
running the state.

The statesman rules,
but his work dies with him.
The poet writes,
and his word remains.

Ernest Blankenship
Crossing

Anything is everything
True, if you have nothing.
The bridge is old.
People still cross.
They pray on the cross.
Mark my words in permanent ink.
Words of wisdom from an ignorant mouth.
The old tire in the river beneath the bridge
Feels pain washed away, it fights,
But talks only to rocks.
Stones break windows and bones.
Hunger shows bones.
Dogs bury them, we lose them.
We lose our backbone, like a snake.
The boots on your feet were made of me.
Walk through the pasture with me.

Brian Siatkowski
Amputating the Essence
(for Blair)

“Never allow the Heads to cloak your conspicuous baldness!”
Tis what my Love (the Minotaur) told me.

But

i didn’t listen

No

i didn’t listen

and now
i stand quietly
like the trees do
when defoliating
like the sheep do
while being unwooled
before the keen silver bladed guillotine.

Johnny Leon Morris
“You can’t touch me”
I wanted to scrawl it across the wall
in raw bleeding letters
Not because it’s true
but because I wish it were.
I find myself apologizing to me
for letting you get too close.
I meant to weave the lies
closely about the realities
so that they would appear the same.
I meant to create my delicate illusion of truth,
but the threads broke,
or maybe I wanted to let someone see.

Markell Lynch
Tractor Pull Ambiance

Oh when the black diesel cloud spouting above Bobby Joe Denton’s beloved “Deuce is Wild” modified stock tractor roiled and trailed into the grey-streaked sky

And when Frank Brawley moved the massive Skoal-flagged sled with a mighty heave of his “Carolinian” unlimited class truck And the headers on his Alison engine shot cool alcohol flames into the night

And the green John Deeres silently smoothed the glowing red clay track while Billy Dean blessed two thousand souls at peace on a sloping lawn with his hope that they might find what they longed for

And the white moon pierced the smokey night and glimmered again from the perfect mirror of the oval lake

While sweet young Gaffney girls twined glowing blue and green halos in their hair so that bluejeaned boys might ache with lust

And children flung neon golden lights into the sky and did not cry in their darkness

While the country twang of Billy cried out for what was lost somewhere in his broken heart

So that bluejeaned boys and babies and men with calloused hands and mothers sagging in low lawn chairs might hear and be comforted

Oh you and I ate our soggy ketchuped fries and smiled our distant smiles

And found in each other’s eyes the wonder of eternal moments in a sweltering July night on a grassy hill under a charcoal sky above a red clay track beside a moon-glow lake.

Joyce Compton Brown
Clouds

Shannon M. Parry
The Sum

The essence of sex is that death
gives life.
We are always burning like the candle out,
Making room for others as we go—
Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Prufrock—
poof!.............Me!

Creatively with dubious or no worth
My ashes give rise to no bird.
Let the whole be summed up in a word.
Let it be supplied by anyone on the
scene after me.

Better to give than to receive
Only in the sense that the agony
is over sooner.
What we get used to is hard to give up.

From death we flinch, withdraw, euphemize.
Children laugh and play and run.
Old men sit quietly and contemplate
the sum.

Ernest Blankenship
Western civilization cannot be accredited for inventing the marvelous Paper Clip

Versatility saved me from unnecessary sweat. Although in the recent past I've been adorned with affectionate decoratives, depicting different sizes of "Love," this afternoon a paper clip proved its versatility by operating as yet another structure, although not a decorative. Often paper clips alter themselves as a result of someone's boredom manifested in creativity. In fact, I support the belief that the clips evolved from spiral coiled wire, perhaps as neolithic jewelry, or a doll house stove top, yet originating and deriving their identity from a less conspicuous function, one almost definitely conceived for more culturally practical reasons. Irregardless, the generic household and office paper clips, now available in a variety of vibrant colors and sizes, provided me today with a stylishly abstract hair pin with which to affix coiled hair atop my head, preventing the back of my neck from perspiring.

Nina Schnipper
Camping

We knew they were there.

We sat secured by laurel roots
    watching our fire
    turning our hotdogs stabbed with maple sticks

But those ghost girls came flying in,
    bicycle tires skidding on the dusky dirt,
    crying one more time, please, let us ride this loop
once more before dark.

We burned black spots on the hotdogs,
    watched wood coals glow
    toasted marshmallows brown and crisp
    but runny in the middle.

We ate only two.

Those ghost girls came ready,
    waiting, each in her turn,
    for the perfect mallow,
    accepting spun sugar gifts.

We had wine and cheese and quiet words of satisfaction

But those ghost girls came,
    dark hair and clear clear eyes
    blond tangles and smiles

Intruding upon our midlife serenity
    calling forth from our silent hearts
    one more time, please, ride this loop
once more before dark.

Joyce Compton Brown
The Rain

In sheets out my window,
    a weeping God
or only an act of nature?
"I make it rain"
she proclaims, rejoicing in it.
(So I make it thunder)
She dances the water,
while I sing the lightning.
It is only rain,
the condensation of water molecules
in the air.
She does not cause it,
I do not control it.
God, perhaps, vents it on us
out of sorrow—
if that is your chosen belief.
I believe He has better things to do,
more pressing matters to attend to.

Markell Lynch
Cutting

wait until all the leaves are brown, on the ground and touched
thick with midwinter’s frost.
a steel gray sky, you can see your breath

eat a big breakfast—homemade biscuits, thick, lumpy oatmeal with
brown sugar, scrambled eggs, and black coffee in a sturdy mug.
dress warm, comfortable—faded denims, a tee, and flannel shirt,
high riding wool socks with a red stripe at the top and big,
heavy, steel toed work boots, don’t forget gloves and a toboggan

the trip to the woods should never take long
never cut a live tree, dead ones cure faster
cover your ears when the chain saw whines its way into the trunk
and the once silent giant makes a huge graceful arc of craa-
whooosh-thud to the earth
watch the chain link scalpel dissect limbs from trunk, trunk from
stump

pick up the wreckage, kindlin’, burning and splitting size
armful after armful ’til your arms ache for two-three-four
truckloads
stack it carefully high and be sure to cover it from the rain

splitting
look for the weak spots, cracks through the heart
position a coldfat knife and tap it into place
step back and grasp the hammer firmly raise it high and swing
feel the tentacles of gravity pulling making 8lbs. 16, 16, 24,
until the metallic echo-ous KINK jars the swing to a halt
hear the fibrous taut heart pop and crack with strain
raise the hammer again and attack with prejudice
sometimes the heart breaks and splits open wide
other times the heart swallows the wedge and won’t let go,
it has to be cut out with the axe.
sometimes the handle breaks.

Barry W. Martin
That Movement That Was
Civil for Rights
(a pillow for Rosa Parks)

Steel

helium filled
beige balloons
can be
such a nuisance
if
you allow them
to expand in
your throat!

    silent defiance.
it was a vehicle
from a ghetto
of wincing sighs
and daggered

Conventionalism
it floated for
three hundred and
eighty-one days

floating and expanding.

    buses.
they were ribald
autos filled with

repugnance.

But they carry you places.

So do wheel chairs.

sharpsilencesharpsilence.

Johnny Leon Morris