

1992

## Reflections 1992

Kathy Henson

Barry Martin

Joyce Compton Brown

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*Reflections '92*



# REFLECTIONS

Volume 24

1992

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# 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

<b>First Place:</b>	From Red to Grey	Markell Lynch
<b>Second Place:</b>	The Yelling Man	Kathy Henson
<b>Third Place:</b>	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

<b>First Place:</b>	Strength and Value	Dunsey Harper
<b>Second Place:</b>	Laughter	Kathleen Brown
<b>Third Place:</b>	Reflections of Creation	Jonathan Turner



*From Red to Grey*  
(at the Vietnam War Memorial)

*I*

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  
steading 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.

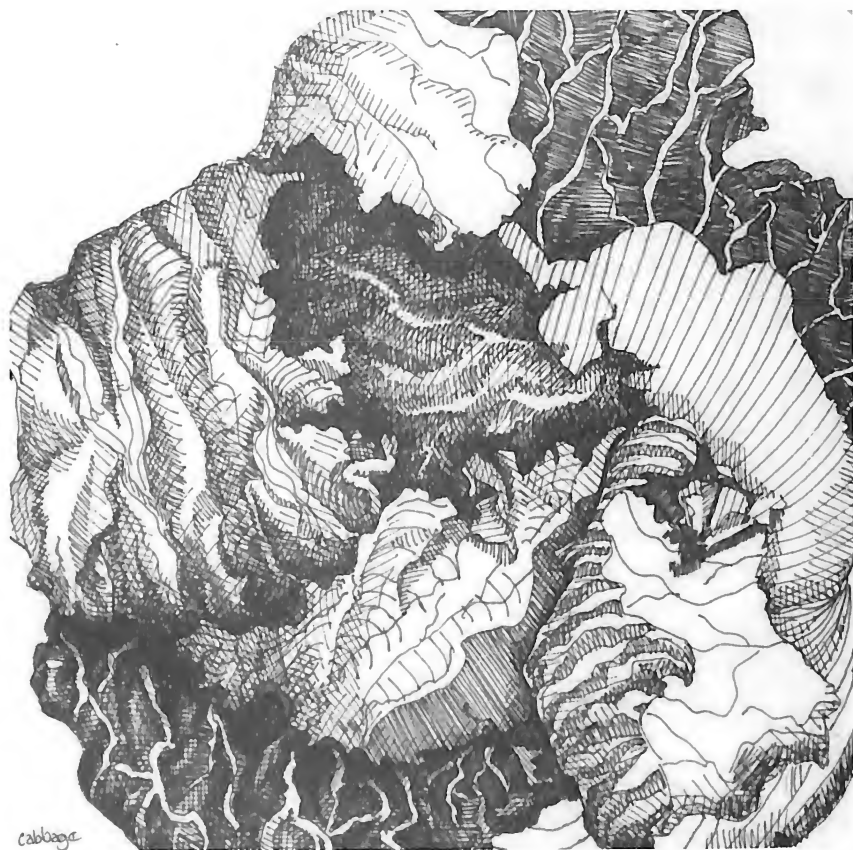
Crudely arrested potential made us hurt then—  
And now.  
When a life that vital, that loving,  
Is snatched away, we have to hurt  
Or not feel at all, forever.

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 bear 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 squirrely, 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 dessert.  
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 H<sub>2</sub>O.  
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.  
hurtling 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*

## *Stumps and Sons*

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.

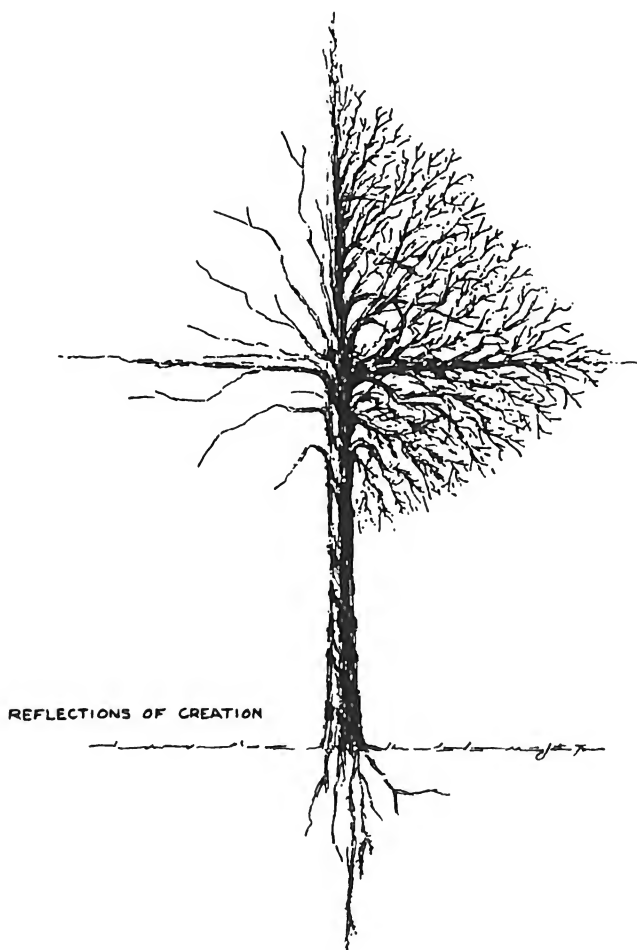
Son balances himself on the roof peak, gazing at the hundreds of oaks, beeches, dogwoods, and even the pines that I plan to have cut. Perhaps he wonders if after four more months he will find himself in another place where few trees grow. He begins scooping leaves from the gutters and flinging them over 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

Erected by his tender hands

And waits,

Rendering 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-  
whoosh-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*

