

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

Cauldron

WINTER/SPRING
1985

A hand-drawn illustration in black ink on a light background. At the top, the word "Cauldron" is written in a large, bold, blackletter-style font. Below the title, there are several swirling, wavy lines that suggest steam or smoke rising from a pot. In the center, a circular lid with a handle is depicted. Below the lid, the text "WINTER/SPRING 1985" is written in a simple, sans-serif font. The bottom right portion of the illustration features a checkered or grid-like pattern, possibly representing a tablecloth or a floor. The overall style is sketchy and artistic.

A Kalamazoo College Student Publication

Editors' Statement

The **Cauldron**, Kalamazoo College's literary/art magazine, is, as stated above, an entirely "Student Publication." Students have written the poems and short stories, drawn, taken photographs, organized, edited, and designed this magazine from start to finish. Throughout its production, this Winter/Spring 1985 issue has involved members of every class at Kalamazoo College, from the freshmen of '88 to the graduating seniors. Despite the vicissitudes of the K Plan, all Kalamazoo College students have had the opportunity to contribute to this issue of the **Cauldron**, and many did.

We of the Editorial Board wish we could have published all of the submissions, since as the representations of developing talents the poems were all meritorious. We appreciate everyone who took a chance and exposed a new-born poem or short story to the scrutiny of a group of critical strangers — an act of true courage. Yet with limited space and funding some selections had to be made.

The poems, short stories, and artwork presented here are the best of the new work Kalamazoo College students submitted to the **Cauldron**. We hope you, the reader, enjoy this new issue of a Kalamazoo College legend.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Howard Busklrk
 Beverly Gustafson
 Carolyn Krueger
 Jeffrey Kulpers
 Mary Mancewicz
 Jeffrey O'Brien
 Lynn Staley
 Ginger Strand

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Statement		1
Contents		2
Jon Riedel	To Robert Frost	3
Mark Crilley	Beyond the Fence	4-7
Howard Buskirk	The poet sat in his leather arm chair	8
Jeffrey Kulpers	A visit from Father	9
Jeffrey O'Brien	Catnap [for Carrie]	10
Anne Fildew	Madame President	11
Dolores Smith	White-flower Gardens	12-13
Jon Riedel	To Mark	14
Jeffrey Kulpers	Entropy	15
Kathy Profitt	The wise and watchful	16
Carolyn Kreuger	"chameleon love can feed on air"	17
Mary Mancewicz	While I lay here	18
Elizabeth Whiting	Boy (Photo)	19
David Bayler	Winter	20
Beverly Gustafson	Rain	21
Tina Stoecklin	Youngest, to Carol Muske	22
Deborah K. Williams	Thresholds	23
Jeffrey Kulpers	China Hutch	24
Jeffrey O'Brien	Bubble Love	25
Ginger Strand	Letter to a Friend who Died Too Young	26
Beverly Gustafson	It was a cold evening	27
Tamar Cooney	Drawing	28
Howard Buskirk	Major Joe was calling ground control	29
Chris Tower	Never Euphony	30-31
Abdel El Ouardi	Hospitality?!	32-35
Elizabeth Whiting	Photograph	36
Katie Garfield	Warped Sea and Plastic Shell	37
Mary Mancewicz	Puddle-Wonderful	38
Brian Benson	Aunt Edna; Or, Why I Don't Smoke	39
Dolores Smith	Matter of prestige	40
David Bayler	Nicodemus	41
Jorgen Bond	person poem	42
Jennifer Corryn	The Funeral Home — for Louie	43
Steve Ruimveld	A Rude Awakening	44
Laurin M. Buchanan	elegy for an only child	45
Kathy Profitt	The water	46
L.M. Staley	For a Small Town in Upper Michigan	47
Jennifer A. Clemiega	We Walked Hand-in-Hand Without Touching	48

To Robert Frost

Tell me, old man,
do sunsets still burn so gold
to wrinkled eyelids
tired from the pulsating,
eroding,
currents of words flowing
through the capillaries.

Fingers, frozen by the sea
of yesterday's rejection slips
and unmilked cows,
still fondle an ink well.

Pouring a drop of ink
into the crease between
the nail and the joint.
It rolls,
 hobbles,
 yet finds a course
to the center of an eye
still swinging birches.

Tell me, old man,
How can I grow as old as you?
your eyes still hold the yellow woods
and fragmentary blues
I can only touch with my shadow.

Feet, residing on
a Shaker rocker
holes in the shoes,
rocking with the rhyme.

Jon Riedel

Beyond The Fence

They've opened up
the asylums,
and
the crazies
are out
on the streets.
They climb
onto my car
and pound
on the windshield,
smiling
and staring
at me
with glassy eyes.

In the
afternoons,
I sit
on the patio
among
the cactus plants
and sip water
from
an ice-filled glass.
Great blue islands
of smoke
float up
from
the chemical plant
beyond
the fence.

The crazies
are building houses
on the traffic islands:
moving in
for good.
I push through the
crowds to get a look.
"There must be
some sort of law
against this,"
someone says. But
there isn't, and the
crazies know it.
They laugh
at me
and pull
on their noses.

Penguins
are watching me
from
the garden
beyond
my fence.

I watch the woman
across the street
with binoculars. It
excites me to think of
ways to kill her husband.
The best plans are
the most violent ones:
gardening tools,
knitting needles.
But I can't leave
my patio
or the penguins will
knock over
my cactus plants.
So I sit
and watch
the fence.

The vents
In my car send in air
from the world
outside.
The needle is inching
down toward the
little red "E,"
but that's no problem
if the "E"
stands for
"East."
I can watch
the sun rise
when my car chokes
to a halt.

Out on the patio,
I'm choking
on the ice
in the glass.
Or is it
the glass
in the ice?
they look so much alike,
you know.
The crazies
have known this
all along.
They sip
their cider
through
plastic straws.

The children draw straws,
and I'm
"it."
I cover my eyes
and count while they
run off
into the desert
to hide.
The cactus plants
in the desert
are so much bigger
than the ones
on my patio.
Several children
can hide in one of their shadows.

The crazies
are gathering
at the newsstands.
They flip
through
the magazines
and talk
about the
Prince of Wales.

Prints of whales
hang on the walls of the
waiting room. The doctor
calls my name, and I
can tell he's a crazy
by the way he tugs
on his nose. I won't
believe him when he says
"the shots won't hurt
a bit."

The needles will sting,
like the needles of a
cactus, or the needles in
my car, or the knitting
needles in my sweaty hands.
I follow the doctor,
leaving the magazine
on the table.

When I die,
the mortician
will lay me out
on a table
and pull the shades
down over the window
and pull the lids
down over my eyes.

The preacher is
the Prince of Walls,
the poet is
the Prince of Veils,
and they both
sip cider
through a
plastic straw.

Mark Crilley

The poet sat in his leather arm chair
he was of another world
(but still reporting to this one)
God, he said, blank verse and all that
salt peanuts, what a boyhood
and Frost and Frost
the old tennis game without a net, you know
his mouth gushing pipe smoke
I asked of heroes and all that
When I was young he said
I admired no one
and blew out more smoke
giving up as little as he could
Howard Buskirk

A visit from Father

The tongue of keyhole-light tasting my hand
suddenly withdraws,

as if cold fingers were at its spine.

The knob rolls in its socket, squeaks.

Light swarms around the vignette of a man,
quietly pressing upon my door,

then across my floor —

a billion silent locusts.

Father's face is an unshaven blue

as he rolls a look into the hallway,

asking the light to wait outside.

The odors of woodsmoke, ink,

and wool. I hold my breath

back behind my lids as balloons must;

he puts his pointed face to my chest

and weeps into my nightshirt.

Jeffrey Kuipers

The tongue of keyhole-light tasting my hand

suddenly withdraws,

Catnap

[to Carrie]

Hair pets your face,

A red cat

Licking at the purple of the past day,

Curling around a well kept secret,

While lips, whose pout was pulled

Up with potted Geraniums,

Question closed eyelids that swept under

Soft bits of orange clay

And left broken broom bristle on your cheeks.

Jeffrey O'Brien

I am tall enough
to see over the counter, but
short enough
to wear heels for dancing.

Today,
I am in the Oval Office with my Cabinet, but
yesterday
I was on a Kentucky horse farm.
Tomorrow
I will be in Russia. I am bringing
friends and a toothbrush.

Breakfast was a caviar and mushroom omelette.
The waitress asked
what I wanted and I told her
world peace,
technological and allocative efficiency, and
fraternal twins.
She wasn't amused.
Neither am I.

I have a 3 carat square-cut
emerald ring.
I never leave home without it, but
I always wear sensible shoes — except for dancing;
who can dance in sensible shoes — so I guess
life is pretty fair after all.

My fingers are always sore
from the ring biting my handshakes, but
I can swim across the Delaware
nearly as fast as
George's men could row.

After all, a silver dollar is a silver dollar.

White-Flower Gardens

I liked him a lot. The nurses did, too. I often heard them whisper things like, "It's a shame, so young, talented and good-looking!" Well, I didn't really know about his good-looking and to me he had long since passed youth, but I knew he was talented. And except for the little epileptic who didn't seem to be interested in anything but drawing, everybody liked him for one reason or another.

I would spend whole afternoons and half the night in his room. Looking through his passport and asking him about all the countries he had been to, I often forgot the mealhours. It was amazing how much he had travelled, — more than... "Yes, quite a bit, but that's no reason why you should have forgotten to eat! You looked like a skeleton when I first spotted you on the ward — all eyes — all sad eyes! And your father was kind of glad about that. At least one **visible** reason for your being with us. You were getting thinner and thinner and so you had to go to the hospital, but he was not guilty because he had always fed you well" ...my father who had travelled quite a bit.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

He had been to all theatres of war, to places where governments had changed, and he had seen places and events of minor importance to this globe. These he liked to talk about. At first I was more interested in coup d'états and war zones. I wanted to know what was really going on in the world, but then I lost interest, for whenever he started talking about these, he seemed to lose track of his story at a certain point... "Chile, was it last year? Are we in 75? Chile, Valparaiso, Luisa and her white-flower garden... Jordan? Oh yes, Amman, there aren't many flowers in Amman, only houses, houses, stone, too, Nassief made a stone-garden for his mother... In Cyprus they grew oranges, I think they were Turkish"... I didn't mind. He was good at describing landscapes and people.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

He was a foreign-correspondent, and I was eighteen and wanted to become a journalist. But that wasn't all for which I like him. I liked his room, too. It was the cosiest on the whole ward. Little by little he had brought in a TV set, table cloths, vases, things he had brought back from his journeys, a type-writer and his favourite books. I would read through some of the less complicated stuff while he was typing stories about the ward, the nurses, patients and doctors on his old machine. Those stories were the other thing I liked him for. I was searching for something to laugh about. Every story was at least a smile. He was good at describing wards and people.

And there was something else I liked him for. That was the way he went on bringing in things he needed, even after he became one of those who weren't allowed to leave the ward. He did leave. Whenever he felt like it.

The most inconspicuous way to leave was to not be bothered about clothes. He usually went to town in his pajamas. When it was chilly he'd wear his azure bathrobe. I liked unconventional clothing and I was searching for something to laugh about. I would spend whole afternoons sitting in his room, looking out of the window, giggling as I pictured him out there in the real world, in his azure bathrobe with my red-hearts umbrella meeting human beings... "It wasn't really adventurous once I had passed the gate. The miner's quarter wasn't far and once I was there, I wasn't an unusual sight. I often met guys in pajamas and slippers who

had been on nightshift. They used to get up at that time and some were too sleepy to be bothered about clothing. They'd just drag their feet to the nearest newstand to start the day with a pack of cigarettes and a newspaper. And from there I would take a taxi home, where I had money and clothes, sources of my occasional independence, — no big deal. But I knew you were picturing something else, so I wrapped myself in silence"...but he wouldn't tell me much about these excursions.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

He often came back with a huge paper bag full of cake, which he distributed among the other patients of the ward. The epileptic and I would get two pieces. And he always bought himself flowers. Most of the time they were white. The nurses knew he never got any visits and suspected something. One afternoon they searched the whole room for the key to his apartment but didn't find it. It was stuck in the lock of his dresser, the key of which he had thrown into the toilet. He was no idiot. That's why I liked him.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

One day, instead of cake, he gave me flowers, nine white roses. Everything would have been just fine if I had had a vase or had asked him for one. When I asked one of the nurses for a vase, she said, "Careful, young lady. He's in love with you." I don't know why it was that I suddenly panicked, but I gave her the flowers — I couldn't handle white roses. And I didn't go to see him after that. Three days later, someone brought me cake — ..."I knew I had scared you, I knew it the very same afternoon when you didn't come back. I should have given you one of the stones I brought back from Amman, maybe the turquoise you liked so much, but I liked white flowers a lot. I thought you'd come back after some time. When you didn't I had the little epileptic bring you nine pieces of cream-cake"...nine pieces, I couldn't handle nine pieces of cake. I couldn't laugh and I couldn't eat, and the doctor told him to leave me alone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

So he **was** crazy after all! He was thirty-four and I was eighteen! A normal male of his age wouldn't have...or maybe I wasn't used to be given something for nothing...? The others told me he didn't go to town as often. They were missing the cake. One day I met the nurse in the bathroom, and she said, "Don't be silly, he just loves your sad smile, that's all!" It didn't change anything.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

One morning, there was an envelope someone had slipped under the door for me. It was a photograph. He was sitting on the bed in his azure bath-robe, broad smile, surrounded by books, cakes, his type-writer and flowers. On the back he had written, "You'll be all right. It's normal to feel sad about this world at your age. It isn't at mine. Love..." They had sent him to an asylum. In the lock of his dresser I found the key to his apartment. I kept it. He was no idiot. And I planned to go visit him..."So you left the ward and you're home in Valparaiso, Luisa, tell Nassief to grow white flowers in his stone-garden. It's possible — even in Amman where you find only houses, and stones, too, so many stones, too many white flowers you've got, I should have given you a turquoise"...when he was back home.

To Mark

I can see in you the morning sun
passing through the cracks
in unplowed country dirt,
squinting with a half-cocked eye
and picking with a hoe
at the crusty shell.

There are ghosts in your soul
a brother who never lived,
a boy who fell off the bridge,
another boy who used your eyes
to burn wild grass
to pick ripe, yellow apples
and to husk the passing years.

I have plucked the wrong place
to plant a geranium
Better the corn of the summer
and the tough weed of asphalt
should beat in your ear.
But inside the weed
I know the softness of melting fruit
flows.
I will reach for the fruit.

Jon Riedel

Finally she lunged over the small carpet, eyes wide, and squeezed his wrists with pain and intensity; "That's enough competitive bullshit! Tomorrow I want a man, no mental athlete!" From the spring-smelling berth, through the open window, into the centuries-stained court where an ineffectual serf polished the chrome manifolds of a Bentley, his gaze fled and left the two voices to rustle like wind.

Maybe in the darkness,

where Sea is god

and folds its many hands across a smiling belly,

lies proof of order, evidence of rhythm.

The Bottom of a glass,

The Bottom of a well,

so there is symmetry to be fixed in the spaces between

elements of life and love.

Comrades, families, lovers;

amalgamated as simply as the process of conception,

must at last evanesce,

as cottonwood seeds carried across the water

to drown upon another shore,

and thus to know love.

Jeffrey Kulpers

The wise and watchful (if I stood on tiptoe,
could I blow you out?)

Three bright stars
draped in a mountain slope...
they mark the curtain on an invisible window,
floating in their cool stream of light.
Greeting me every night
as I arrive home from a long day behind a desk,
these eyes of a distant airborne creature
watch us dash from place to place
in our tiny motorized vehicle.

Who can record how fast they spin and burn?
And
what child can stand with arms outstretched
in a frozen corn field
to catch them in a quart jar
and take them home for supper?

Kathy Proffit

“chameleon love can feed on air”

(William Shakespeare)

you sustain me

on air your lips have twisted

into vibrant images

yet feign astonishment

when you take my hand to comment

on my fading color

and the wrist snaps

Carolyn Kreuger

While I lay here
still for twenty-odd years
grass grew over my arms
like lilliputian fetters
twined with my hair
to anchor my head to this hillside
my body to this earth

now at a time for moving on
I must crush these grassy chains
twist and break the daisy stems
jerk one leg free and then the other
breaking ties

the hardest is my hair
to cut it off is the least
painful path to freedom
but who am I
without
green growing grassy hair?

Mary Mancewicz



Mr. [Name] is a member of the [Organization] and is a [Title]. He is a [Nationality] and is a [Religion]. He is a [Profession] and is a [Hobby]. He is a [Character Trait] and is a [Achievement].

Winter

Winter
Is a new beard,
A splintery stick
Of spearmint gum,
Weekly refills
On windshield wiper fluid,
And longing for
A sticky box seat
At Wrigley Field.

David Bayler

I

The black sky darkened.

The yellow boat tossed in the water. The boy
paddled homeward like a strong fish.

Rain, fierce, plunged into the water. Momentarily,
a trout leaped, then dove nose
first, back.

The boy's face prickled like chicken pox. His
hair lay scattered atop his head.

II

A woman with a scarred face smeared lotion on her
shoulders,

plucked an eyebrow or two.

Music swayed around the room as she hastily applied
lipstick, cheap, dark. She left in a white
car. Her windshield wipers slapping

back and
forth.

III

An alarm buzzed. A big hand pushed
the button, and its owner rolled over.

He was tired beneath the sheets. The rain
tumbled like the whirr of a furnace.

IV

The warm water like Swiss cheese, then silence.

The green skin wore beads of soft raindrops.

Its mouth open, searching for mosquitoes,

its elastic legs pumped past a

clump of weeds. Small

hands pressed into its cushy frame.

Beverly Gustafson

Youngest

to Carol Muske

There was a Casket at the bottom of the grave
 birds lit on loose
 soil and searched for worms

She came late but faded roses insisted
 sisters pious near tears
 black-veiled

Dancers making lace over bruised ground
 cool candles shrouded in flame

She needed to see one last time
 they pushed her to the open stench
 lifted yellow wood
 and let her look

Tina Stoecklin

Thresholds

Standing in the doorway, I see nothing
changed but the bedspread,
faded where pieces of sun
rest in my absence.

Corners that housed piles of gothic
romances mingled in dust
are strangely swept,
clean as silence.

The aging dresser mirror
mutes the summer hues
of fresh-cut wildflowers
wilting in a vase.

They speak of swelling buds
growing uncontained, bursting
into bloom
and pain.

Deborah K. Williams

China Hutch

It's a vault for century-light.

Rose petals, papery within

painted watches, Original texts from

Vienna of 1928, and a flightless

ceramic cherub with paling knees.

But look closer:

at a photograph with a burnt edge,

at worn bibles,

at a wedding-ring in a glass box,

at the rubber kewpie head with a needle thrust through the eye.

What is the date today?

— It's dark here; I need a lantern.

And whose hand is this?

— A ghost with calfskin shoes.

Where does he lead me?

— He'll take you to the tracks.

The trains still leave the shadowy station

by this yellowed timetable.

Jeffrey Kuipers

I noticed
on your shelf
a yellow bottle
of bubble-blowing water
without the cap.

You saw the jar
on the shelf, picked it
up,
and skillfully, without
getting all of your
fingers
wet,
pulled the wand out of the bottle
and gently blew.

Bubbles floated all around you,
like a halo
and you laughed as they popped
as I sat
silently
on your bed.

Please,
look up from your bubble jar...
blow some bubbles my way.

Samantha Clark Whitney

Letter to a Friend who Died Too Young

Death
a small stone. A priceless
gift, a rate prediction.
Proof, with no geometry.
Death doesn't take you away —
not yours.

Cremation: your blonde hair
singeing brown, your face melts.
Your eyes pools of blue,
only water. Why
are you doing this to me?

What
did they do with the squirrel
I gave you for your birthday?
And what was its name? I
forget. I have forgotten.

I am not trying
to Write a Poem.
I am trying to compromise something.
To compromise effects:
your death, replayed each night;
your death, rain outside,
smell of brownies baking
right downstairs.

Ginger Strand

It was a cold evening
when I watched
her.

Shellac-coated tables and

lime carpeting
floated.

Floated past her social

eyes and into

her pajama cloak.

A cloak that encased a

sanitarium.

I observed a long hall filled with
worried neurotics. Or, a greasy tuna fish sandwich
eaten by the security guard.

Her calf muscles flexed.

Flexed while I
listened.

Listened while she explained.

But, it was a cold evening
when I watched her.

Almost, cold enough to cry.

Beverly Gustafson



Tamar Looney

Major Joe was calling ground control
he could not handle such giddy heights as all that
the world so small and final looking
he gazed on it
and held it in his sight as if he were God
and then without gravity to keep him good
he acted as no good astronaut
strangled his comrade with his own oxygen cord
unzipped his white suit and exposed himself for everyone to see
said words about God and the president even
that everyone said were most un-Joelike
he had been in short unworthy
now, 16,000 miles up, sweat around his hands and face
humidity filling his dark mask
he flipped the right switches
and pushed bright buttons
Major Joe was going home

Howard Buskirk

Never Euphony

I used to dream of caves
covered with roses until
I discovered thorns.

I would place you beside
me, passionately close,
on a bed of flowers
I'd feed your mind.

First the right lobe.
Then the left. I'd
find both exquisite.

The wind would scream
through the caverns.
A euphonic trance would
grasp us.

The roses would spit
mist. The cave would
spin. Sometimes we'd
hear laughing.

The flowers would
puncture our skin.
Interrupting our
harmony flight. We
would bleed from our
ankles. Blood staining
our wrists.

We would cry of love
in the night. Denying
memory, denying reason,
abdicated our lives
of dirt and rain water.

In the blackest night
we'd see big flaming
stars in the cave.
They would sing
beautiful songs to us.

You would realize
all the songs were
variations of Jingle Bells.
You always do.

I would remember.
I would cry. When
the sun comes up

we would be back
in Prison with eyes
in front and a mouth
that feeds.

Christopher Tower

You took the bus with your friend Latif. he slept in his seat. You tried to do the same; however, your efforts were fruitless. How could one sleep if the number of the hosts exceeded that of the daily regular meals you were expected to receive during your limited stay in Ain Zem Zem? It was an offense to visit anybody in Ain Zem Zem without having a regular meal in his house. Not visiting someone would be one of the deepest injuries to him. You felt for the first time in your life weak and nervous. Your fourteen years at school could not be of any help. You tried to think about the question in a literal sense; however, you came out with no resolution. You thought about it in terms of history, of religion, and of philosophy, yet you found out that no academic subject could provide you with any sufficient answer.

This question, or rather the question of hospitality, had been a part of your preoccupations a long time ago. You were still keeping in mind the discussions you had with the teacher of that new course, the title of which was more interesting than the course itself: "SOCIOLINGUISTICS." The teacher was a graduate from "La Sorbonne." You were told that he was able to explain every social phenomenon relying simply upon the language usage. You remember also the day you had asked him: "What is hospitality?" He answered: "That is a good question. Hospitality in the European languages - *hospitalite*, in French; *hospitalidad*, in Spanish; *hospitality*, in English...(and he spoke the word in as many languages as he could think of) — means: the reception of guests, visitors or strangers, with liberality and goodwill. It is always a choice. It has never been an obligation of any kind as it is here; I mean, in all Arab countries. In Arabic, the word itself — *di'afa* — is derived from a verb which means both to receive and to add. Then when somebody comes to your house, he is automatically added to the family. A new member is always taken care of." You were never satisfied by his answer, since it responded only to the superficial side of the question. You wanted to find its deep meaning. You realized that it could mean anything that came to your mind at that moment.

Pleasure?! Yes, it is a great pleasure for everybody in Ain Zem Zem to receive a guest in their house. Trouble?! Why not? so long as I am thinking about it — I am in a great trouble. It is also troublesome for me to manage this visit without offending any person in this village. It is the hardest job in one's life.

You tried to quit thinking about it, but the thought kept haunting your mind. You opened a magazine. You read: "Smoking helps thinking." It was a silly idea, but it reminded you of cigarettes. You took one and then you remembered that the rules allowed you to smoke only at the rear of the coach. You moved to the back, and then a fellow reminded you that it was the last day of the fast.

You wished it was the first day again, but you remembered that the situation would only be worse, since there are only two meals, and only at nights. You could not have each meal with a different family. You went back to your seat, and at the same time to your imaginings. You said to yourself: "That is a part of their life, of their habits, and of their civilization." You turned to your friend for help. You watched him for a while, and hesitated to wake him up. You could see that he was dreaming about something from his murmur, and the broad smile on the face. "What can he say about it? What can be his point of view? In what terms can he explain this phenomenon?"

You asked yourself a thousand and one questions. You meditated for a while, and then you said to yourself: "Do they really know its meaning? Do they care in the least about knowing?" You doubted if this was the case. For them it was simple. It did not deserve to be thought about. It was there, deeply rooted in their inner life and inherited from father to son. After all, you knew that none of them had ever been to school. Their feelings and deeds rose out of pure spontaneity. They

are illiterate, poor, hospitable, and happy. You wished you could be in their state, in the state of mind of your friend who was sleeping, dreaming, and smiling. They kept telling you that you were lucky because you were a student; you were somebody else. You were an important man. This troubled you more. You thought that they were wrong, that you were more miserable than they were because you couldn't refrain from thinking. You were suffering from poverty more than they, just because you could think about it and analyze it. You blamed your parents for sending you to school. "It is a wonderful world to live in innocence. Father, why have you deprived me of the taste of this innocence? Why have you sent me to school? Did you want me to learn about innocence and to be a cynic like the others? Did you want me to learn about goodness and to live under the spell of fear from evil? Did you want me to believe in God and to be all my life hunted by the idea of an existing devil? Did you want me to know what is right from what is wrong and to be in prison? Father, were you aware of the troubles that awareness can cause for the individual in this country when you decided to send me to school?"

The bus stopped near the path that leads to Ain Zem Zem. You thought that you still had to cross the river and walk the five miles that separated this village from the only road that crossed this part of the country.

"Who are all these fellows waiting for?" you asked your friend Latif.

"They are waiting for you. I told you that they wanted to see you back in the village and that they would be very happy to receive you," he answered.

"But who told them that I was coming, and arriving today in particular?"

"Me, I swore to my friends that I would bring you today with me. I told them that you were not like the others who had forgotten about the village and its inhabitants."

"Why haven't you told me this before? Besides, do I deserve all this importance? I can walk. Why have they brought this mule for me?"

"We wanted it to be secret; a surprise welcome, you know? You deserve our lives."

"Welcome to Ain Zem Zem," the fellows repeated together for a while. Then they greeted you one after the other or rather they struggled to greet you; each one wanted to be the first and as close as possible to you. Each one touched his heart after the greeting. They were all talking at the same time. You could not hear anything they were saying. Questions and remarks were coming from all directions.

"I told you he would change," said Hamid.

"Yes, he is wearing different clothes," said Said.

You would have liked to walk with them, but then you knew that you would offend them if you did not ride. You tried to explain to them that you would like to walk with them, and that you still had a strong feeling to be a part of them. They answered that you were their guest. For the sake of hospitality you agreed to ride the mule.

Wahid arrived at Ain Zem Zem. Here and then, the facet of the alienation was different. Whom he was to visit first was the present dilemma for him. He could not visit them all at once. He had no preference, and he was afraid that they would judge him in those terms. He was certain of what their reaction would be. He knew very well that they had learned nothing about logic, and they managed their life with a logic of their own. In his case their logic was not logical. This was the first time he realized that his own logic might serve him. It was the only chance for him to use his learning and his reasoning, in spite of the delicacy of the situation. An idea occurred to him. It was not the fairest resolution that could make him escape all kinds of critics, but it was at least one of the best, and perhaps it was the most objective one. He was in the company of his friends. There was at least one boy from every family which included a male young person among its members. He would have liked to have had a mixed society around

34 him, but equality between the sexes in the village was out of the question. What about a party, where he could spend the first night with all of them, even though they could not spend it in the center of the village? The village itself had no real center. It was situated on a hill. The houses seemed to be dug into the slopes of the hill. Some were just on the two borders of the valley. He would like them to light a fire on the top of the hill, bring some food, some traditional carpets, and spend the night there. It was a good idea, since it was a hot summer evening. While he was thinking about suggesting the idea to his friends, Latif said: "You remember the traditions of the village, Wahid? It is the last night of Ramadan. Tomorrow is Laid I. We are going to build a fire on the very top of the hill; everyone will bring his couscous, tagin, or meshwi...A group of folk musicians of the village will be there."

"Is Folk going to be there too?" Wahid inquired, playing on the words in a joyful manner.

"Is there somebody who is nicknamed Folk? You know everything, don't you?"

"It is a last name, something like a nickname, but it follows all the family first names, like that of people who go to school in this country. You know?"

"That thing we put on papers?! I hate papers. I am 24 years old, but they have never put my name on any paper. When they come here to count people, my mother gives them her name, my father's name, and that of my sisters. She does not want them to take me to the army. It is stupid to recruit for the army to kill people in Casa. I will not do this even if they take me. In the army I will not be counted anyway. They know nothing about the rules of hospitality."

The first day, the circumstances brought the solution to Wahid's dilemma. The two following days, the traditions gave way to a half solution. All the people spent their time visiting everybody in the village, even those with whom they did not speak for one year. At this time, every conflict came to an end. Whenever and wherever you went, a regular meal with mint tea was presented to you. Wahid thought that this could solve his problem. He could see them all during those two days. They would be preoccupied with the ceremonies, so they would not blame him on the basis of the order of his itinerary. When he had begun visiting them, he realized that those ceremonial visits were something else. They kept telling him that they had to see him again. This was bothersome, since he thought that his dilemma was over, but it gave him some time to arrange things. He could promise to visit everybody and arrange his schedule as he liked.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Wahid was in the middle of his visits, always accompanied by Latif, when he realized that, instead of his asking them not to treat him as a foreigner, they all did their best to give him the best things they could afford for room and board. It was also obvious that they had changed even the decoration of their houses more than they had done before the ceremonies of Laid.

"They do not treat you as a foreigner, but they treat you as a guest," said Latif.

Wahid was bothered by the idea that Mahmoud would do the same thing. He thought about telling him that he was not coming to see him. In spite of the fact that he would take it for granted that he was too poor to be visited, not to visit him would do him a lot of good. He was not wealthy, but he would try more than his best to please his guests.

Wahid met him in the street the day after. "I am looking forward to your visit," he said. "I appreciate it a lot. I like you. You are the kindest person I have ever met. They never agree to come to my house as though I have nothing to present to them. They think that I am too poor to afford a decent meal.

The next morning, Wahid was walking around with some of his friends. When he came near Mahmoud's house, he stopped for a while struck by the decorations that had been added to the house. There were new steps by the right side of the house, at the top of which was a nice square-like place. Everything was

decorated in lively colors.

"I hope that it is not for my sake or for the sake of hospitality that they are doing all this," he said, deeply touched, feeling that it would be the case he was afraid of, for granted. In two days, he would visit him, but he was afraid that he would do something foolish.

Mahmoud went to Gani's garden as usual; however, this time he stayed longer. He was waiting for Gani to get up, since he wanted to have his permission to take some vegetables. The following day he was going to receive Wahid in his house. Gani was a generous person, but Mahmoud would never dare to take something from the garden without asking him first. After all, he provided him with everything. Besides, Mahmoud could always pay him later by work. Three months' work was too much for a little lamb, but Mahmoud had it before the work was done.

"I am very proud to slaughter this lamb for Wahid. To have a man of knowledge in my house is the best honor I can have for my house. This deserves a sacrifice. It is better to sacrifice the lamb for him than for Laid Elkabir. I want him to say that he was well received in Mahmoud's house, that I know the right of hospitality, and that we were happy to receive him," reflected Mahmoud to himself.

"Karim, Wahid and I will go out for a walk. You slaughter the lamb, and help your mother prepare lunch. God bless you," he said to his son.

"Kamla, prepare at least two good dishes. I know you have the best talent. What about a couscous and a meshwi," he said to his wife.

"Now we have to go out in order to receive him; he is coming in a while. Has everybody finished dressing up?"

"You have honored our house," they all said as soon as they met him.

"It is a great day to see you in our house. Welcome and a thousand welcomes," said Kamla, kissing his hand.

"We are going to eat in this square. We have hired some carpets from the neighbors, and put them in it. You see?" said the little son. His father turned aside, opened his eyes widely at him, and murmured:

"Sssssh, go out to play with your friends."

"Sorry, we haven't hired them; we have bought them," he said and ran away, fearing that he might have made another mistake.

"A mint tea, please," Mahmoud shouted to his wife.

"As soon as we have had tea we will go out for a walk. I will show you Gani's garden. I have asked him for his permission," he said.

"I want just to remind you of what I have told you before; don't do anything special for me. I am a part of your family. I will be very pleased to eat bread and to drink water," said Wahid.

"Now you are my guest. Let me enjoy the pleasure of having you in my house. After all, the house is not burnt," answered Mahmoud.

When they sat at the table, Wahid could not believe his eyes.

"What is this?" he asked.

"A lamb, in the name of God who had given it to us, and who can give us another. Eat, Wahid, you are welcome. Accept our humble lunch. I hope you will enjoy it," said Mahmoud.

The father, the oldest son, and the two guests sat at the table. They took, one after the other, portions of meat and gave them to Wahid.

"Eat, you are at home."

Would his family slaughter a lamb for him? As a matter of fact, yes, but his family considered him as a guest. They treated him in a hospitable way.

Wahid dwelt in the heart of people; he was a guest in their minds. Later on, he sent a large lamb to Mahmoud, who understood it as a challenge to hospitality. He was deeply wounded.

Abdel El Ouardi



She comes to the room
with boxes of shells
and two of those environmental records.
One has the sound of the sea lapping
against sandy shores that don't really exist.

Her shells are all smooth and varnished
glistening and plastic looking.

They aren't the kind one finds on any
time-scarred beach, for those
are chipped, imperfect and
beautiful in their wildness.

She says she loves the sea. But how can
that be so when the only sea she knows
is on a black, flat disc that just
spins around and around
and then automatically stops
when the stereo goes off?

She doesn't know about the nights when
the sea rises, coated in liquid whispers,
to wrap itself around you, and leaves
seaweed clinging like tendrils
in your hair.

She doesn't know about those angry
fog filled mornings when the sea
is green and rioting its
fists against the ancient rocks.

She doesn't know it screams at you
or that it calls you a fool and wallows
in green laughter.

She doesn't know that the sun comes
up over the sea's mist-heavy shoulders
and smooths the fluid wrath with
pink and orange caresses.

She can't hear the murmur of contentment rising from its
She says she loves the sea, so she places her depths.
plastic, varnished shells on the bookcase
to collect dust, and leaves the grooved
circle on the windowsill to warp in the sun.

Katie Garfield

Puddle-Wonderful

**Like cats
knowing where
each foot goes
around the puddles
twisting the path
Like oxen
leg-plaiters as some
Roman said
weaving a braid
of muddy footprints
Like a Sadie Hawkins
three-legged race two
hips from a single pivot
swing legs
and jump land flat
on the other shore
Like our own boys marching
through fog linked
In step and safe
In numbers
keeping the cadence
of European rainwater
But mostly like
oxen yoked by
this pink umbrella,
we step in tandem
through spring rain
settling our shoulders
for the long haul.**

Mary Mancewicz

Aunt Edna; Or, Why I Don't Smoke

She used to spell it Brain when she got older. All the birthday cards, and Christmas cards, Brain was lovingly scratched upon them all. She never lost her sight, so I guess she lost her spelling instead. My dog Spook knew her by name — he couldn't spell either. She lived just two houses away, so Spook bopped over quite often to chat. She liked Spook — she could smoke in front of him. She smoked for years, two packs a day, but secretly. I would walk into a room full of smoke, her ashtray hastily hidden under a pillow. One time she put a cigarette out in her hand so I wouldn't catch her; but I finally did. Only that time the smoke exploded through the windows, spraying glass into the yard, I watched the living room curtains curl up like the end of a cigarette as you smoke it, catching her in the act. Cursing the world, I went home to my dog and waited for the twisting pain in the palm of my hand which never came.

Brian Benson

Matter of prestige

The first time I noticed
something had to be wrong
with your housekeeping funds,
was, when tia Nany

asked primo Carlitos
which toothpast he wanted.

You had never asked us.

You just bought the cheapest.

And often since that day

I played this game: "Hang on,"
(when friends were on the phone),

"My mother goes shopping
and I have to tell her
which toothpast to buy me!"

You would shrug your shoulders
for it was clear to you
you would buy the cheapest.

Dolores Smith

Nicodemus

Was not this man
To be lifted up
Like the serpent
Of the law-giver?
How is it then
That I now dress
In aloe and myrrh
Him who denied being born
Flesh of the flesh?

Perhaps there just won't be
A chariot of fire
To bear witness to
This evening,
Just me and this Arimathean
Entombing a capital criminal
Before he starts to stink.

David Bayler

Matter of prestige

The first time I noticed

something had to be wrong

person poem

with your housekeeping funds,

we — gray, snakelike hair

flowing from under a top hat

a black tuxedo draped around

the naked skin like a harlot

around a lamp post;

from the mandolin sprang a

bubbling tune drops of which

splashed on the rollerskates

that smoothly carried you

zig-zagging down the street

following the river

in the next neighbourhood.

You Jorgen Bonde

for it was clear to you

you would buy the cheapest.

Dolores Smith

**The Funeral Home
for Louie**

I saw him blink.

Something in that chalky map
of wrinkles

moved.
A smile, maybe.

He'll get up,
just when they're ready
to close the lid.

And we'll go to the park.

Jennifer Corryn

A Rude Awakening

I am filled with gladness
When the toy train
Falls off its constructed platform
And crashes into reality

Who are you?
You would not believe
How many numbers you have to dial on a face
to get the person you want.

Steve Ruimveld

**elegy
for an only child**

toys in the attic
beside ancient stacks
of National Geographic
each year of the child
packed away
saved for some reason
along with all the other things
one doesn't quite dare
to get rid of
baby clothes
folded neatly away
puzzles with missing pieces
the remains slightly chewed upon
kept beside the Etch-O-Sketch
with the broken knobs
a doll for each Christmas
playmates for a year
vacant eyes stare
out of plastic faces
there are spiders in the attic too

Laurin M. Buchanan

The water
falls
in
strand after strand of clear indian beads
that sway and bend,
matting the fallen leaves
to dampening earth.
The air grows cooler, and as if from
a small breath,
brings mist to my face and neck —
a thin protection from this
sky river.
It is these waters
that filled our earth before us.
When the old woman created us for the dog,
we had to learn to laugh and love
and find the juice
from clear cold streams
to strengthen our bones.

The dog hangs his tongue low
letting the first drops fall
softly
and then when they come faster,
he laps hastily to catch all their sweetness,
while under cover we huddle,
frightened.

Kathy Proffit

Christmas,
Michigan
Is a small town.
Past Munising, low red
And green buildings
It is less than its name implies.

Regulars stopped
Once a year
Until Mrs. Klaus' kitchen
And her pastles, gravied
Burned
To the ground.

The one shop will sell
A postcard
Stamp your letters
"Christmas, Mich"
Rings of turquoise
Bittersweet gem
And tiny ornaments
Of wooden Virgins
Tinsel angels
Leather moccassins
Zippered,
Or lace-up.

Added attraction
For only the price
Of a handful of feedcorn.
Deer,
Penned,
Soft, white and tamed, and
The Bear.
Ancient and muttering
Slow from a lifetime
Of shuffling from bathtub to tire.

Each year, I drop one handful
Of corn,
Watch it rustle down its tin chute
He ignores it.
The accumulated kernels
Of all the years...

One for each slash of his paw
Each drop of blood,
"Young Bear, Half Wild, Escapes"

I am Free from your ceaseless
Pounding of my tin chute
Your rattle at the double
Chain-link fence.

One for each.

One for each blow
To his snuffling, graying snout.

You are ours to pay a nickel
Feed The Bear
You are ours to watch die
You are ours
To watch die.

We Walked Hand-In-Hand Without Touching

I am dreaming
of your large hands
touching with steam
in jacketed nights.

Of separate words
joining
to unzip and unbutton
layers of skin.

Of smiles
crawling
inside bones
where warm marrow
waits
to be eaten.

I am dreaming
of your large hands
reaching through skin
to crack bones
and retrieve
those words.

Of brushes
painting
on ribs
sauce sliding into the grill.

I am dreaming
of licking the fingers
of your large hands
clean.

Jennifer A. Ciemiega

