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Fall 1983

### 1983 Fall Quiz & Quill Magazine

Otterbein English Department

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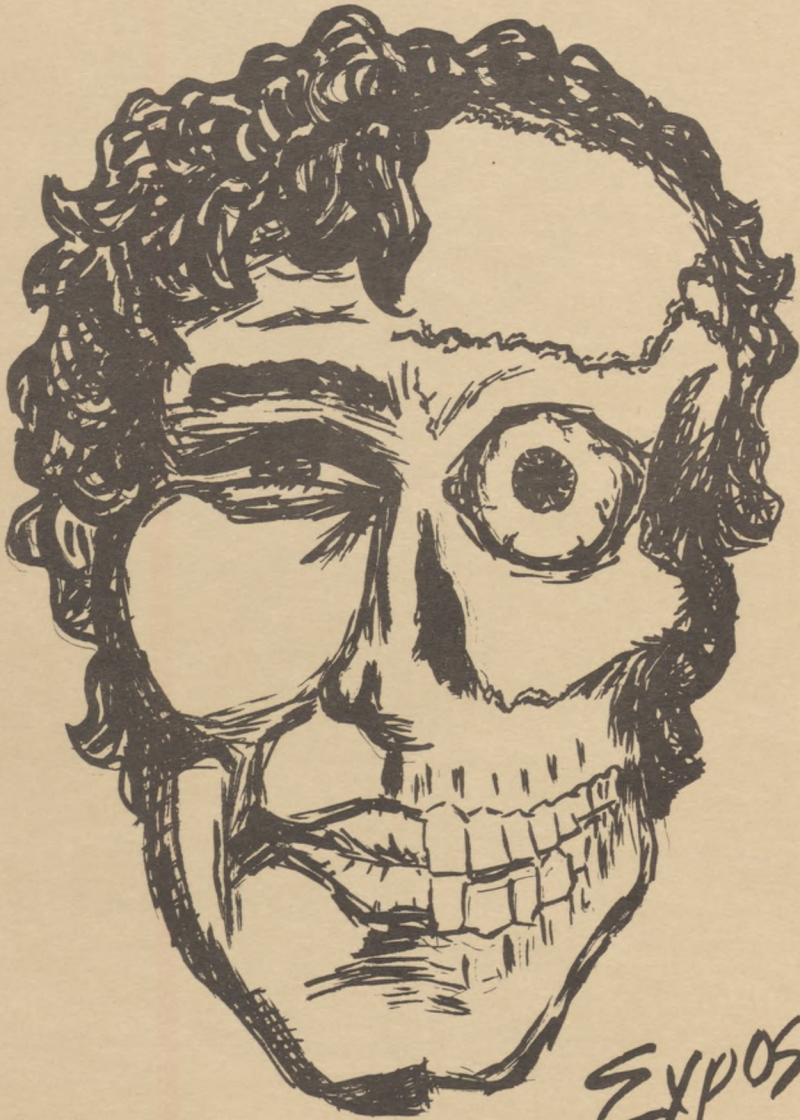
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EXPOSURE

BLANKENSHIP  
1983

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*EXPOSURE*

A publication  
of Quiz and Quill  
Fall 1983

## Editor's Note

The relevance of "Exposure," the title of this issue, is twofold.

First, it emphasizes one of the main purposes of Quiz and Quill. The magazine provides a forum where Otterbein writers are exposed. Quiz and Quill is the only place in which the creative writing talents of the students are showcased.

Second, through literature--poetry, essays, fiction--the writer exposes himself or herself. As is graphically depicted on our cover, the process of creative writing reveals the Inner Man--the soul, if you will. Elizabeth Drew, discussing the nature of poetry, says the writer "apprehends and interprets . . . general experience in ways which belong to him alone."<sup>1</sup> Writing is the expression of the individual, the exposure of a mind.

John Tetzloff

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Drew, Discovering Poetry (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1933), p. 18.



# EXPOSURE

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## PLAYING WITH FIRE

The knowledge I have  
I wish to rebuke;  
For to lose that knowledge  
Would be to gain lost secrets  
Secrets children tell  
And laugh about  
But I have touched knowledge  
Taken it in, heard its dark noise.  
It took me,  
Taught me how to be sorry  
And to play the games of  
intelligent people.

CATHYGRIFFIS

## BROKEN GLASS

It's hard to see my shadow  
In the mirror  
My hands are dripping blood  
On cleanest slate of clear conscience  
I see your form in darkness  
My heart cries aloud to you  
As the mirror cracks fine spiderwebs  
In my soul.

Beth A. Deiley

## The Elevator

Norman Middling gets on the elevator in the lobby of the Grammo Building. There are no other passengers. Habit causes his hand to stray to the button marked 45th floor, but he remembers himself and punches the one for the 83rd floor. Norman straightens his new brown tie and attempts to flatten the annoying cowlick on his forehead. He takes off his glasses and wipes them with his handkerchief.

Today Norman is riding to the top of the building to interview for the position of Vice President for Internal Affairs. This is his first big chance since he moved to that department. He is nervous, cracking his knuckles and shuffling back and forth in his freshly polished brown shoes. Still Norman has a good feeling about today. After all, didn't his horoscope this morning say to be on the lookout for golden opportunities?

The elevator stops on the 14th floor and in walks Miss Shapely. Despite his preoccupation, Norman can't help noticing her plunging neckline and her tight skirt with the slit up to her hip. She bats her false eyelashes at Norman and gives him a very friendly smile. Although the elevator is empty, she stands very close.

On the 27th floor, a man walks in who looks as though he comes from the Middle East. He glances at his watch, realizes what time it is, so he faces the east, kneels, and begins to chant.

During this time, Miss Shapely seems to be having trouble with her bra. She unbuttons two buttons of her blouse, reaches in and straightens herself out. Norman gets quite an open view of a couple of Miss Shapely's better qualities.

Miss Obnosten from the stenographer's pool boards the elevator on the 34th floor, chewing gum noisily. In her hand is a white bag with "Blendy's" on the side and a large grease



stain on the lower half. Out of the bag she pulls a flimsy carton, definitely the source of the grease, which contains an order of garlic and onion potato skins. She turns to Norman and asks if he would be kind enough to hold the carton. Norman obliges, but is nauseated. Turning back to the bag, she pulls out a peanut butter and anchovy sandwich (with real anchovy bits) and takes an oversized bite. She remembers the gum, sticks a finger in her mouth, finds the gum and deposits it on the floor. She turns to Norman and grabs a handful of potato skins, and these too go in her mouth.

On the 45th floor, Norman's usual floor, a dog gets on. He looks like a cross between a cocker spaniel and a sheep dog. Though Norman does not know the dog, the dog seems to know Norman. Without hesitation, he trots to Norman and sits on his shoe.

Miss Shapely appears to be having more troubles with her outfit. She notices a sag in her hosiery, and to remedy this she starts at her left ankle and, at two-inch intervals, tugs at the hose until she reaches the top. She repeats this on her other leg, all the while causing her upper thighs to be readily visible, which Norman notices. He fails to hear the dog bark at the chanting Moslem, who by this time has reached his third prayer. Miss Shapely catches Norman's eye and smiles again. Norman blushes. Miss Obnosten burps.

The 59th floor arrives and with it the company president himself--the man Norman is to be interviewed by. The president does not recognize Norman. He asks Norman if he could borrow his handkerchief, which he blows his nose into rather extensively. He hands it back to Norman in a very unusable condition.

The Moslem, noticing a crowd in the elevator, decides to get up and finish his prayers standing. Miss Obnosten finishes her lunch, crumples her bag, and wipes her mouth with it. The elevator stops on the 71st floor, and two firemen get on carrying a hose and smelling of burnt rubber. Their faces and uniforms are covered with soot from some recent fire. The president asks again for Norman's hanky. When Norman tells him it is unusable, the president asks to borrow his tie. Norman,

thinking to please a higher-up, hands the bottom of the tie to the president, who blows his nose again.

The elevator gives a sudden lurch and Miss Shapely is thrown against Norman. The Moslem gives him a highly disapproving glance. Norman steps on Miss Obnosten's gum, which the dog has been trying to pry from the floor. This irritates the dog and he promptly bites Norman on the leg.

The elevator stops again on the 76th floor and the door slowly opens. All riders turn as one to see the dark mass of human flesh that fills the doorway. Three hundred pounds of man lumbers onto the already packed elevator as Norman, already in dire straits, watches in horror. He holds his breath as Miss Shapely is pressed tightly to his body. She is having a problem with her skirt and is wiggling back and forth in an effort to fix it-- a motion which drives Norman almost to the point of no control.

The elevator slowly drags itself up the shaft, one agonizing floor after another. 77: The dog loosens his hold on Norman's leg but continues to growl at him. 78: Miss Obnosten belches about three inches from Norman's face. 79: The president asks to borrow Norman's shirttail. 80: One fireman makes a joke to the other about which floor the fire has reached. 81: Miss Shapely whispers innuendoes in Norman's ear. Norman begins to run out of breath. He feels the elevator start to spin around.

"Let me out!" he demands as he squeezes his way to the front of the elevator. He pushes the automatic stop button just as the elevator reaches the 82nd floor. Norman stumbles from the car, catches his breath, and turns to the other passengers.

He has nothing to say. Absolutely nothing. Dejectedly, he turns towards the stairs for the long trek to the lobby.

The crowd stares after Norman in amazement.

"It takes all kinds, I guess," Norman can hear one fireman remark to the other.

Brian Driver

the simple things

a toy piano  
a rusty music box  
a twirling ballerina  
of the things left to be forgot  
a head full of dreams  
a hand full of wishes  
a heart full of love  
but no one will come to enjoy  
the simple things  
the simple things  
the simple things  
you held so dear  
a crackerjack engagement ring  
from when you were a kid  
the simple things  
we used to remember yesterday  
but Raggedy Ann and Andy  
have gone away.

Giovanni Moscardino

## HUMOUR

Her face was nearly human--  
this black-shrouded figure

Walking down the frozen sidewalk,  
on the coldest of cold days.

She herself was her own shadow,  
as the black habit she wore  
was a void.

Walking to St. Joseph's  
after making her duty-bound rounds.  
(Could a face so expressionless  
be capable of smiling?)

An unearthly wind blew her along  
towards the Presbyterian Church,

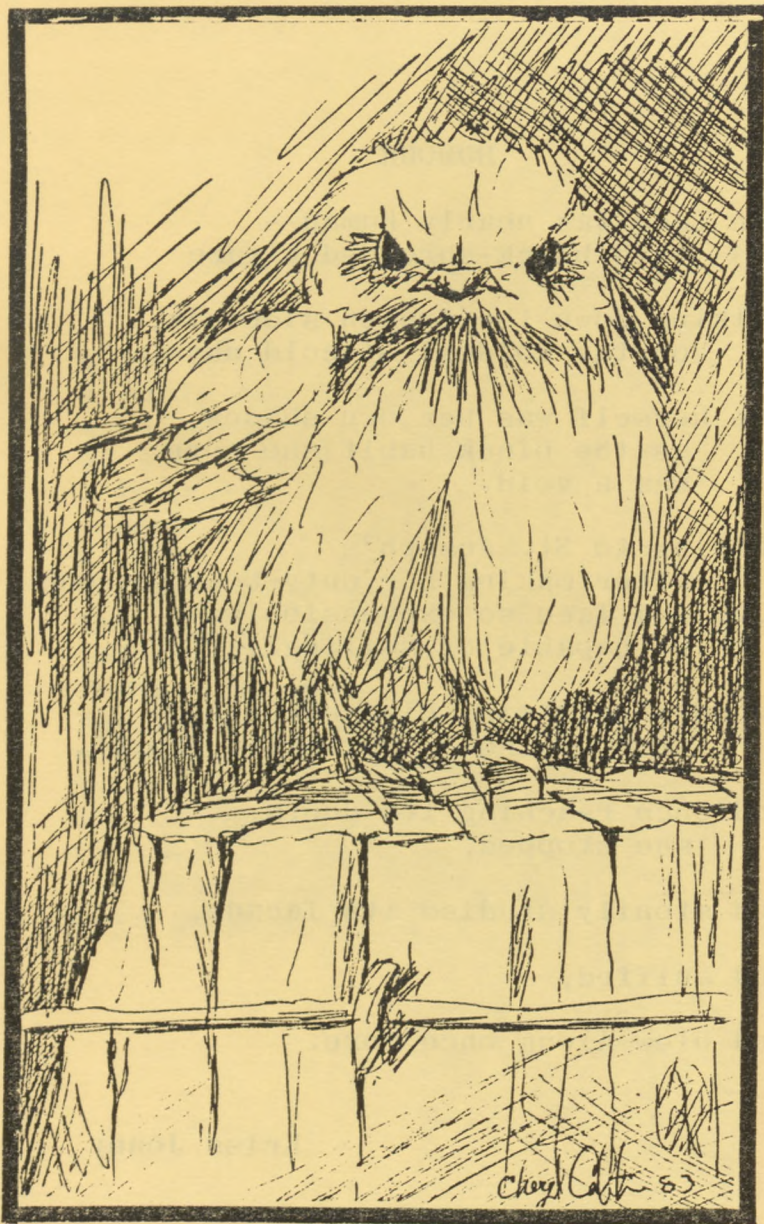
And once reaching its doors,  
she stopped,

And stonily studied its facade,

And sniffed,

And blew along once more.

Kriss Jenny



Bluebird

Mrs. Whipple is a Bitch: A Logical Look at "He"

Even though "He" is one of Katherine Anne Porter's less often anthologized and criticized short stories, it is still a thought-provoking look at how a poor white family deals with a severely retarded child. As George Hendrick points out, in Katherine Anne Porter (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1965, p. 84), "'He' was Miss Porter's first attempt to deal with a hopelessly deformed or mentally incompetent person and his place in society or in the family." Mr. and Mrs. Whipple have two normal children, Emly and Adna, and one retarded son, simply referred to as He. The story revolves around Mrs. Whipple and her inability to cope with Him. Hendrick (on p. 84) correctly notices Porter's reliance on the irony of the situation--Mrs. Whipple hating the very child she needs to appear to others to love--but wrongly interprets the story's ending as a show of "compassion for both mother and child" (p. 84), compassion the reader is expected to share. Porter intended nothing of the kind: throughout the story, she stresses the irony of Mrs. Whipple's attitude toward her son with a satiric bite, and the ending, far from being any sort of show of compassion, brutally underscores this irony.

A look at Katherine Anne Porter's style will make her ironic intentions clear. Throughout "He," Porter maintains a rather light-hearted tone. The story is told in third person, limited, from the point of view of Mrs. Whipple, but as narrator, Porter continually injects little comments on the action and the characters, particularly Mrs. Whipple's actions and character. Porter reveals that Mrs. Whipple is gracious only when others are in earshot, and that she is prone to exaggerate her love for her retarded son when her neighbors are not totally impressed through these comments (see pp. 36 and 37 in "He," as reprinted in 29 Short Stories: An Introductory Anthology, ed. Michael Timko [New York: Knopf, 1975]).

Porter does much the same thing, though more subtly, by using similes in her descriptions of the ferocity of the mother pig (p. 38), the rolls of fat on the retarded child (p. 37), and the screeching of the baby pig (p. 39), and, in a moment of pure genius, in her description of the mongoloid boy walking up the road "like a sleepwalker with his eyes half shut" (p. 41). Porter uses these authorial intrusions to distance the reader from Mrs. Whipple by letting the reader see what a liar she is and thereby allowing the reader to make his or her own decisions about her conduct. The author also controls what the reader sees of Mrs. Whipple and in what order. She carefully shows Mrs. Whipple's emphasis on appearances, then reveals that Mrs. Whipple cares what He does only when it affects how she looks to the neighbors. This controlling structure and the authorial intrusions prove that Porter wants to point out, through satire and irony, the basic flaw of Mrs. Whipple, and has no intention of showing, or requesting from the reader, compassion toward Mrs. Whipple.

Just who is Mrs. Whipple? Hendrick (on pp. 84-85 of his book) sees her as the opposite of her practical husband-- a vain woman striving to be pitied and admired by her neighbors while ignoring the decay of her family and her regret at having borne a defective child. This, although a good assessment of the situation, is too generous. Through Hendrick's eyes, Mrs. Whipple looks remarkably like Mrs. Compson in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, but she is, in fact, much worse than Mrs. Compson could ever be. While Mrs. Compson, too, ignores her family's decay and pretends her family is of grand social stock, blaming her husband for her problems, she at least sees to it that Benjy is taken care of, whereas Mrs. Whipple searches for dangerous activities for Him to participate in, in the hope that he might get himself killed and eliminate the burden He places on her. Mrs. Compson prevents Benjy from being sent to Jackson out of a sense of duty toward her family and her late husband, while Mrs. Whipple keeps Him around only for appearances.

Hendrick (p. 86) feels that Mrs. Whipple, for all her bad qualities, is somehow admirable for her protection of her "normal children," but Hendrick has obviously been fooled into believing Mrs. Whipple's version of the story, rather than logically appraising her actions as Porter intends. Mrs. Whipple longs for a life of new white roller shades and happy, normal children. She feels He is holding her back from getting the kind of life she wants, and tries to kill him by placing him in dangerous situations. Although she would probably truthfully deny her intentions in sending Him on these dangerous errands, her vicious subconscious urge to kill him pokes through at times, particularly when she screams "in fright" as He brings the bull up the road. Mrs. Whipple eases her own conscience, as well as her neighbors' view of her, by feigning concern for her normal children and an air of impotence in the face of her problems. She is doing the best she can, she says, as she takes food from her freak and gives it to the rest of the family. Mrs. Whipple further rationalizes her cruelty to Him with the knowledge that he cannot feel the cold or know danger. Mrs. Whipple is no nasty-but-redeemably-suffering mother. She is, on the contrary, a bitch who tries to have her son eliminated so that she can have the kind of life she dreams of.

Once the reader has an understanding of Mrs. Whipple and an understanding of Porter's purpose, an understanding of the meaning of the story, particularly the ending of the story, comes into focus. Fate has dealt the Whipple family some hard blows. The Whipples have done nothing to bring about the poor weather, the heaves of the plowhorse, or the retardation of their son. Yet Mrs. Whipple blames her husband as the farm begins to deteriorate, when it is she who kills one of the piglets, hampers Mr. Whipple's dealings with Jim Ferguson, allows the children to move away when they are needed on the farm, and places a great deal of the farm's workload and nearly all of the dangerous work on the shoulders of her half-witted son, whom she starves and freezes at the same time. This is the story, then, of Mrs.



Whipple and her inadequacy in the face of Fate, which is personified by Him. In the light of this, the story's ending shows us, not the repentance on the part of Mrs. Whipple that Hendrick talks about (p. 86), but a Mrs. Whipple who, even as she realizes the injustice of her treatment of Him and that he may have suffered after all, works out tidy rationalizations for her actions.

"He" is not a simple short story, even though it barely fills eight pages. Without Porter's satiric attitude toward Mrs. Whipple, it would be difficult for the reader to tell whether or not to believe that Mrs. Whipple really does her best and that she truly feels remorse for her treatment of Him at the end. By her very nature, which Porter has highlighted through style and attitude, Mrs. Whipple is incapable of feeling true remorse, and the reader never feels the compassion for her that Hendrick feels is due her.

David Kimmel

### A Thought

If wishes were made of water,  
We would all be drowned in our tomorrows.

Susan Kaiser

## Schoolhouse at Night

The musty, age-old hallway  
Echoes with your every footstep.  
The hollowness reverberates  
From the ceilings and the walls.

Lockers stand, almost as sentinals,  
Some sagging from their hinges,  
Doors creaking, as a random draft  
Comes bristling down the hall.

Echoes of laughter can be caught;  
A fleeting glimpse of children's faces,  
The murmur of the classroom  
And the breaking of the chalk.

You can almost hear the daytime  
In the lunchroom and the hallway  
You can almost see the sunshine  
Through the window down the hall.

But the emptiness has its smell,  
Must and chalkdust overtake you  
And the echo of your footsteps  
Is so loud it conquers all.

Beth A. Deiley

## One Late Evening

I walked down the old gravel road  
Sloping steeply to the river,  
My weight leading me to a stumbling run,  
Through dark woods grown wild.

At the bottom of the hill I paused,  
Out of breath. In the falling night  
The river passed quickly under the wooden bridge,  
And an old house peered from the darkness.

I had not been this way in years!

I stood staring at the relic--  
White paint chipping,  
Windows cracked or missing,  
Shingles curled and rotting;

Like a dead thing it sat doing nothing  
Quietly, in the shadows of the trees.  
And through the bare branches  
A cold harvest moon looked down.

In back, the old orchard  
Had grown wild and careless,  
Apples and cherries twisted together,  
And suddenly I recalled

The grove awash in dappled sunlight,  
I in a straw hat and torn britches,  
Sandy hair cropped short,  
Running through autumn leaves.

Then a strong breeze howled in the dark grove,  
Startling me briefly. And I could bring back  
Nothing more. It was now night,  
And there was nothing but to wander on.

John Tetzloff

## CONTRIBUTORS

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