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1985 Winter Quiz & Quill Magazine

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THE QUIZ AND QUILL WINTER • 1985



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THE QUIZ AND QUILL WINTER • 1985

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This issue of Quiz and Quill reflects a new commitment to art work, in addition to traditional fields of literature. As of this quarter, the magazine has opened the position of Art Editor, which was awarded to Michael Blankenship. The result has been a great influx of contributions from students in the Art Department.

Quiz and Quill would also like to invite everyone to attend the second quarterly student poetry reading. The first reading in the Fall term was a success, featuring the poetry of five students. The reading will be held in the Philomathean Room on the top floor of Towers Hall on Thursday, February 21, at 8:00 p.m.



Michael Blankenship

NEANDERTHAL

My soul is stocky, wide-eyed,
unfinished.
I drag it forward in time.
I invent and discover
first fire...
then the wheel...

I mix dust and water,
Creation swells within me
Feature by feature
I change
And as I burn and roll
There must be evolution.

CATHY GRIFFIS

A CLASSROOM FANTASY
(with thanks to J. Patrick Lewis). . .
From ETIC ANTHROPOLOGY by Wales and Johnson: Men and
Women in the Farlands--from the recollections of a Skidoo
Tribesman, 1988.

Note: In our thirty years of advanced anthropological study, Benjamin Wales and myself have encountered few people as fascinating as the Skiddo tribesman whose words are recorded here. It was my privilege to bring Jimba here for a period of several months during 1984 and allow him to observe, with no more aid than necessary to ensure his safety, the inner workings of our culture. Jimba returned to give his impressions of our culture to his Skidoo people in the address which is quoted from below. Jimba was particularly interested in man-woman relationships and how they differed between cultures. The simple beauty and economy with which he delivers his observations demonstrate that a preliterate man may still have greater command of his spoken language than many people have of English. The humor and originality of his vision make us see ourselves in a different light.

Dr. Eugene Johnson III

"...Of all the behaviors that I saw and catalogued during my war-brave hunt in the dark and strange Farlands, my Skidoo friends, perhaps the set of behaviors most different from our own were the behavior of man toward woman and of woman toward man. I understand that Farlanders are people like us . . . their parts are the same. Why then do these people treat each other differently than we would?

"The children of the Farlands are puny, white things covered in cloth from birth. Even parents are hidden from their young by the garments of modesty.

"The children pass a short period of great interest in their opposites, then live many groups of days during which nothing seems to interest them less. They hide each other. They yell names like "animal dung head" and spend their time in pursuits which either they or their parents have forbidden the opposites to join in. They seem completely pent up until just before the age of maturity. In this pre-adult time their rebellion against the family may grow to the point of physical violence. These are a very violent people. The pre-adults are expected to arrange their own marriages, my Bravemen, so it is easy to see the pressure upon their souls.

"The Farlander boy of this age is preoccupied with sexual adventure, and embarks upon a quest for sexual wives which, more often than not, is unsuccessful. Much of the boy's time is spent seeking sexual knowledge through writings. This is difficult for me, O Bravemen, but I explain that writings are words 'set down for good.' These writings contain the sexual knowledge of the ages.

"Farlander men-to-be are sexual competitors, the best of them, and they allow themselves interest in women to the point of distraction from work. It is expected of these youth to seek by ritual the young women they desire. The youths gather in large groups. Death-slow dances are danced between prospective sexual partners with bodies touching close. How strange, that a mating dance should be so lacking in vigor. The boy entertains, compliments, and feeds the girl before trying to bring the ceremony to its ultimate conclusion. The girls play and tease in hope of better offers. All of this takes place with the outward disapproval but to the inner smile of the parents. Girls take a passive part in mating, but those most interested partake of 'spirit drinks' with their intendeds.

"The Farland youth will, after a series of sexual encounters, seek marriage. Those with little prowess will attempt to buy a wife in one of the neighboring villages. The boy takes the woman before the family and the gods, where the marriage is ratified by someone not of the family. Boughten wives rarely stay more than one night, consent wives generally stay longer. A man has but one wife at a time. A man may lose his wife by death, or by force of his will.

"My Bravemen of the village clan, there is a legend which explains the odd behavior of these adult Farlanders. It concerns the worldbirth. According to the legend, the first man was Kalu ("clay"), and the first woman was Duhmah ("life"). A wicked jungle animal tricked the woman and the Gods cast the pair out into the terrible world from paradise. The two raised a pair of sons, and one killed the other and deepened the man-family's damnation.

"It is for this reason that Farlanders rarely have more than two children, and then hope for anything but two boys. Boys are too fierce to live together in peace, it is believed. It is for this myth that the woman cooks the meat (a man's job in our culture, of course), for womankind was fooled by a beast, and must gloat over its death. A woman cannot enjoy a life of innocence and a sexual life; so, she changes her name in marriage to dispel the evil of the days before, much as we may change a name to cast off misfortune. Harsh discipline not only reinforces the myth, but it also arouses passionate interest in mating in a breed of children who would probably otherwise not concern themselves. Every Braveman here knows the honey is sweeter when it costs the stings of many bees.

"Somehow these behaviors work for them, but they are not for us.

I am told there are those among us who wish to learn writing. We are uncomplicated and Godly in our relations. We need no writing to pervert our people and I will not have it. It is an instrument of evil. Our ancestors needed no writing and neither do their children.

"We must preserve the ceremonies that let us know when we are or are not men. We need not have any of this Farlander confusion about when we have grown. We are the last of the People-of-the-Land; we are content and peaceful in our place, and need no spirit drink of joy. I have seen them and us, and I would rather be us, and I would rather be us! I am Jimba! I am a Person-of-the-Land! We are all people of the land. We are Skidoo!"

John Lee Fisher



I THE CAT

Green and wet the jungle moisture
Clung in hot beads to the Cat.
Silky, soft the black cat commanded
I am here
I am power
Muscles bunched, grace in motion.

I the cat my fine fur laid down on soft skin
Travel on hot and free in the lushness
Moving with purpose stalking fate
Move close and stroke my belly
But know, I the cat behind soft pads and wet sighs
am dagger-clawed and knife-toothed
Moving on, sure footed and knowing in the jungle.

Virginia Caum

DESIRE

Come and play the game of desire
with me.

Outside, dark eyes smile and walk
without intentions, but that is
not our concern.

Black and White, Evil and Good.
Yonder is the smile of innocence;
She plays in the dark, while
neon signs smile and rejoice
the wedding dance of desire.
Beyond such colors is a confused
mind.

My mind travels across the neon
signs. I am on my own and living
on borrowed time. But, yet,
in spite of all the quests which
are now mere delusions to the
eye, let us play the game of
desire.

You can sing, and I can preach.
Hand in hand we will walk
through Heaven and Hell, through
the many moons not known
to the eye.

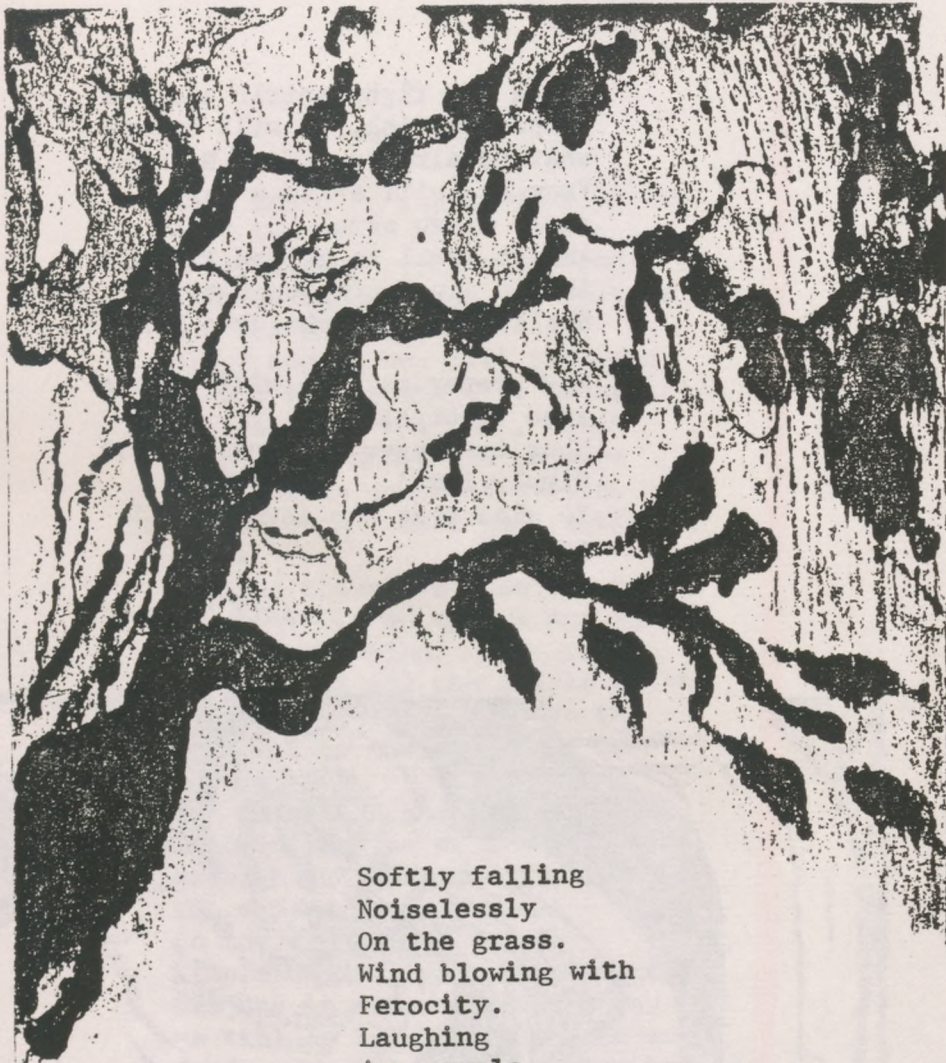
Simple desire, wanton and unkept.
Dressed in robes of confusion,
we will be labelled innocent and
dead. We will live together behind
huge walls. The asylum will feed
us bread, and our chains will
be cleaned every day, until
they shine and make us blind.
Blind and trapped in a dream
of freedom.

Given the right spirit and the
proper waiting, we will become
what we already are -- Nothing.
From us, will arise a new
game, a new name.
And it shall be called lunacy.
And if given time enough it
shall have many children behind
it.
The proper waiting will always
lead to Nothing.
What is hunger without chains?
Simply lust!
Be glad that the asylum feeds
you.

Arif Mahmood



Marie Monot



Janet Carr

Softly falling
Noiselessly
On the grass.
Wind blowing with
Ferocity.
Laughing
Are people
Keenly interested in
Exterminating
Snow.

Karen Gibson

GURKHA KNIFE

It was a Memorial Day, and the citizens of Centerburg stood about the knoll of our town's cemetery silently listening to a minister who struggled to keep his notes from being blown off his lectern. He was also obliged to shout his message because the Memorial Days, at least of my memory, had always been sunny and blustery, and a speaker's words were easily carried away by the wind out and up above the cornfields into the clear blue sky. The high school marching band was there; ranks that quickly disintegrated to allow children and parents to come together went unnoticed by the band director on this occasion. Girl Scouts held fresh flowers, and veterans strained to hold the flags that bucked in the stiff wind. Some of these veterans held rifles, awkwardly, from years of having grown unused to handling weapons. When they fired the salute, all of the children cried at the report of the guns which strangely reverberated among the white, gray, and pink stones--stones that seemed to grow like harsh and rigid flowers, yet flowers which strained and reached up for the warm rays of the sun.

Charles Marion Thorpe was there on that Memorial Day too. This veteran of three of his country's wars had been driven out to the cemetery, up the long hill, and past the iron markers of other veterans who always attended that day's ceremonies. Most people in town, however, could easily remember the years when the old mariner could march in the parade with the other members of Charles Andrew Post 460. That day the walk would have been too much for his slight and hunched frame. Old age had shaped and bent him. His skin had become sallow and tightly stretched over his bones. On his face was the inquisitive expression of the elderly created by eternally parted mouths. He had become feeble and needed the aid of a cane that was as thick as a Louisville Slugger. When the car had come to a stop, friends and relatives tenderly, respectfully, helped him out of the car and up the few steps of the speaker's platform which, only the day previously, had been employed as a hay wagon. The children marveled at this antiquity as he came to rest in his chair.

Charlie peered out over the crowd, wrinkling his nose to aid his vision. It was important to him to know who all had come that day. He leaned forward upon his cane as he gazed on the crowd and at that instant I was reminded of his stories that had become part of the fabric of the community. He was a Navy man. He had seen action in the First World War. "War to end all wars they called it," I remembered his saying once. "But they didn't end, did they," he would always conclude. It was in the "first" war that his ship had been

attacked by a German U-Boat. Up there on that platform, with all of his failing energies straining for sight, he looked as he must have on a night a long time ago, on the deck of his ship, straining to see the submarine that had surfaced in the inky Atlantic night to attack him...

"Their deck gun was firing at us," he told me, lit up the night around us just like it were broad daylight. "Ever'body in the crew were on their bellies--blubberin' babies, yellow is all they was. I stood on my feet and watched the whole thing. Some of the boys in the crew were so scared they'd soiled their pants! Can you imagine that? huh, can you!?"

He always concluded this story with a slow shaking of his head. He would stroke the head of his cane with his thumbs in wonderment at the idea of soiling one's pants from fear.

As the Memorial Day ceremony continued, Charlie relaxed into his chair to listen to what was being said. It was possible someone might say something which he could take issue with, never being a man to allow his opinions to go unnoticed.

Looking at him that day I came to realize that aside from his stories and his outspoken manner, the legacy which Charlie had left in my memories that will remain with me forever is that of his fascinating store of treasures gained from his life at sea. In my mind those treasures seemed to cling to him like barnacles. Of all his wonderful things I remember best his Indian Gurkha knife and its two accompanying, smaller, skinning knives. I had always been too shy at his house to ask to touch his other things. His manner did not usually welcome inquisitive boys. But the desire for one of those skinning knives drove me to be so bold as to ask for the possession of one.

As the Memorial Day crowd began to leave the cemetery, their duty done, I wondered if Charlie remembered that incident. If he did he must also remember that my request, although entirely innocent, was an encroachment on his real grandchildren. And if he had granted my wish, jealousy and family discord would have resulted. It must have been quite a dilemma for him. I am sure I only made matters worse by quickly turning crimson after I had blurted out my request for one of his skinning knives. "What a problem for you," I thought as he descended the steps of the platform. "A man like you, hard from a life at sea and hard work, put into the position of having to crush a little boy by denying him something that, at the time, was very important to him." I began to walk over to the knot of people that had gathered around the old sailor, and as I did so I marveled at the ingenious way Charlie had extricated himself long ago. He saved himself from a small family uproar, held on to one of his treasures, yet did not hurt a little boy's feelings. Drawing up to the group I

was greeted with a "Hallo!" of Charlie's recognition, and I thought to myself as he was placed back into the car in which he had come, "Thank you, Charlie Thorpe, for showing me that day that you are not all bluster, and that, in your own way, you can show your love of life and mankind as well as any other, milder man."

The car carried him away--I would not see him again in life, although I did not know it then--and as he disappeared below the line of the hill, into a sea of marble stones, I remembered what he had said to me that day long ago. As a little boy I did not realize that I had asked for a very special blade. The Gurkha knife is part of the fraternity of steel with a legendary status gained from the ferocity of the Anglo-Indian troops which carried such knives in battle. The Gurkha and its two smaller companions formed a deadly trinity which no man should ever dare to separate. I know now that Charlie knew some or all of this. He said to me in those tense moments immediately after the proposition was made that a legend had grown up around the Gurkha knife, and that he would tell it to me...

"A Gurkha knife is a very special thing. Once you own one you just can't give one of 'em away. Especially to a friend. These knives are so strong they'll do anything to get back together again. Even turn friends 'to enemies. I'd have to kill you to get my knife back. That's how strong they are!"

I stood before him thrilling to such a marvelous legend. He had so enthralled my imagination that any disappointment was not felt. "Who was I to tamper with the bonds that fire-forged and blood-tempered steel could make," I thought. I was also relieved that Charlie had spared me a terrible death by that scythe-like implement. Charlie considered me a friend worth keeping alive, and he had even revealed to me such secrets of steel and manhood that one of those skinning knives looked small in comparison to the knowledge I had gained. But the thing which I now most thank Seaman Charles Marion Thorpe for is that gift of love he gave me when for one instant he let down his guard, "broke his watch" from his everyday ways of gruffness and bluster, to reveal himself as a truly caring man in his own way.

John Thatcher



L.H.

I.

They'd wheel you down for dinner
every evening at precisely six p.m.
or, by God, they'd hear about it
hear about their incompetance
about the suffering of a helpless old man.

II.

First, the soup
very hot
with three packages of saltines
nestled in the liner
two slices of dark bread
("poopernickle" you called it)
no butter
cottage cheese and fruit
SEPARATE, mind you
and for God's sake
NO DIET FRUIT
you roared at me
the misguided rookie
who broke that sacred maxim.

I will always remember
your penchant for peach halves
like sugary suns in a brown china sea.

III.

I will remember also
how the blue-hairs hated you
your bourbon breath and bawdy rhymes
how they chattered in knots like jays
wrapping bony hands around Sanka cups.
No spice in those lives





You covered your meat with a crust of salt and pepper
defying doctor's orders
deny time
decrying those damned old ladies, anyhow.

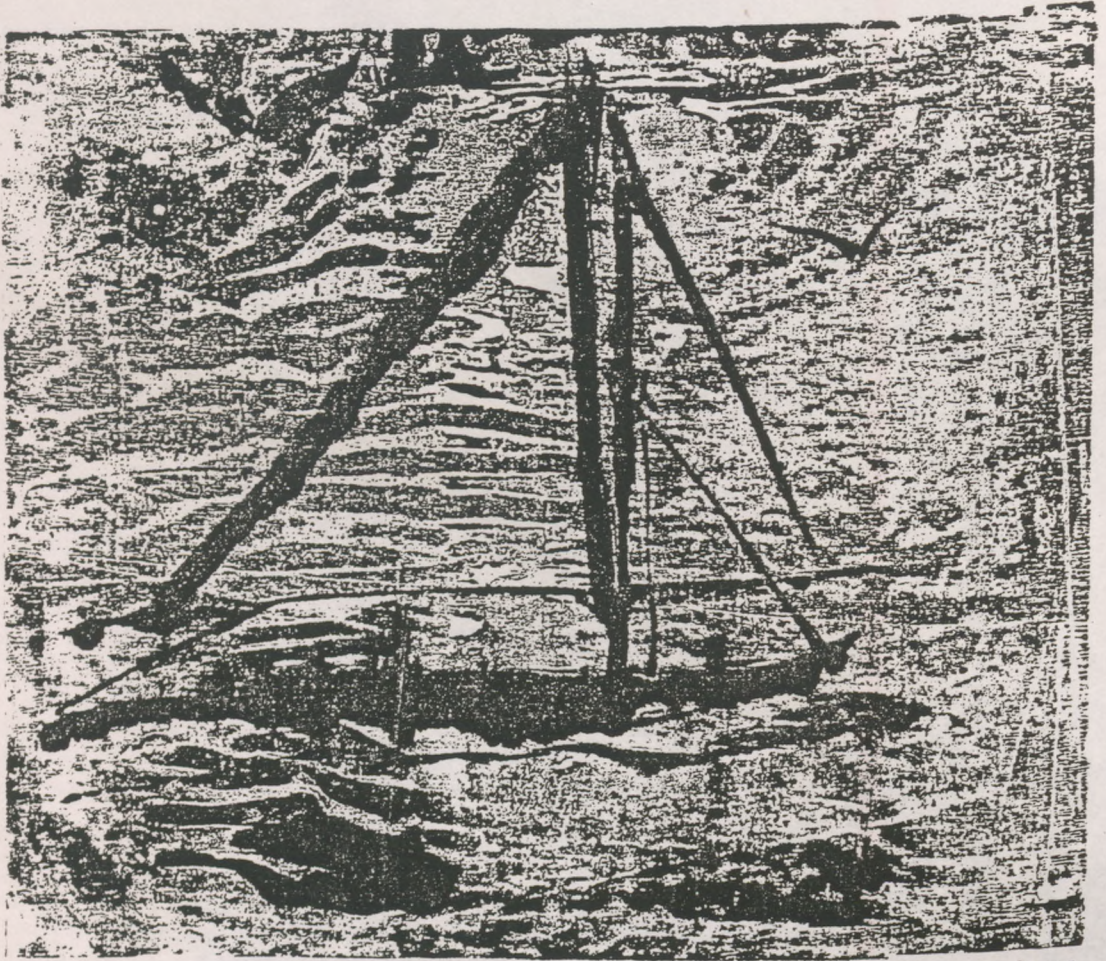
IV.

You took me, finally.
into your confidence
and into your apartment
full of old man's smells:
pipesmoke
leather
bourbon
mildew
urine
quizzed me on my choice of young men
("But is he suitable?")
remembered aloud
Paris
Peking
your grandfather's watch
your daughter's indifference
a woman you had in Singapore, once
a sailor's memories
memories tinged with regret
or remembered appetite.

V.

I wasn't with you
near the time that you went
but I know that you did not go gentle
you
who roared and railed
over peach-half suns
failing to notice
that the night peeked in
through parted curtains.

Mary Wehrle



Janet Carr

Perception

eyes stare from a mirror
laughing at simplicity;
scrutinizing me.

Julie Lynch

THE BLANK GENERATION

I'm pretty sure my generation is doomed. I look in the faces of the students around me every day and at my own face in the mirror, and I wonder if there's any hope at all.

The attitudes of today's youth, from the career-oriented girl majoring in computer science to the 18-year-old male high school dropout whose days consist of marijuana and rock videos, are completely self-centered. Polls bear this out, but surveys don't show the extent to which money and personal ambition dictate the lives of my generation. Otterbein has the cream of the crop of today's young people, the wealthiest and most privileged group of Americans this side of the east coast, the glorious hope for the future. And all most of us think about is how much we will be earning our first year out of college. Education has become a diploma, a ticket into the world of our parents.

The reverence and desire for education for its own sake exhibited by Jude Fawley, the hero of Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obsure, is almost non-existent among today's college students. Jude can conceive of no greater life than one where he can attend school at Oxford, where the "tree of knowledge grows." My generation desires to go to school for the rewards we have been promised by parents, high school counselors, and teachers, rewards such as jobs, good credit ratings, and all the other wonderful material benefits that accrue to the possessors of these things.

Jude Fawley would have been mortified at the typical Otterbein English class. He would have been amazed at the students' lack of interest in and disregard for works of art he longed to read and discuss. Jude echoed Greek philosophy in his belief in the power of knowledge and reason, and in his conviction that being educated meant being a better human being. It never occurred to Jude that the purpose of an education was to improve his economic status.

Margaret Mead pushed the right button several years ago, saying that she was disturbed by a trend toward "vocationalism" in colleges. Mead said students were going to school to be trained for a job, not to "learn to think." Such is the case with students today; they would never believe that reading a book like Huckleberry Finn could actually offer any insight on life. The computer science major I mentioned earlier wants to read textbooks and computer manuals because they have immediate relevance to the task at hand: getting a job, a car, and having enough left over to go to Florida. The hell with Mark Twain.

Sometimes I get so frustrated I want to grab the nearest head and shake it until the intelligence and social awareness that I know is there, that I pray is there, that I depend on, registers as a conscious thought. Idealism went out with bell-bottoms, but I like to think that my generation will surprise me, fulfill its potential and lead humanity on a safer, saner course. But I doubt it. So Jude Fawley and I will just sit and read Dickens and Twain and all the rest for the pure hell of it.

Jeff Long



WINTER BOOTS



Suede to which no water clings,
The soles of my warm feet salute you.
To your gripping treads
All my wide armed praises-
Standing steadfast on the wet
Concrete of life.

Down the strange and wild paths
Of dry snow, I tread surefooted.
Oh, to crepe and lambswool lining
What power has been given!

Each morning, with thick socks
Of warmth, I bow to your laces.
This ritual complete - my
Bruiseless knees carry me northward
And bravely, together, we
Face the bitter wind...

CATHY GRIFFIS

GRANDFATHER

Dad's dad would take me
Down to watch the trains
How they'd roar by
 Whoompa, Whompa, Whompa
He'd give me mints to chew
 and a cigar ring for my finger.

In the kitchen, before we all had dinner
 I'd eat smoked oysters
Sip his drink like a grownup
After, I'd stand close behind his chair
 in the early evening,
Watching the lightening bugs
 Glitter in the night.

Virginia Caum

RITUAL OF ASHES

Leading the procession, Grandpa trod
Through his living church to find the sight
To dash and sow her remnants to the sod
Among long shadows cast by flickering light.
Below the archway of the bowing trees,
We let her vessel sift through yearning hands.
Embers of loss glowed red in the breeze
That blew and scattered the dark, flakey sands
Of death melting in the waiting clay.
The torment was the kindling of the pyre,
Smothered youth, a violent end of day.
Burning flames purify raging fire.
We stood in peace to let the burning still,
Then left the ash of death upon the hill.

Michael Hitt



THE MAGICAL KISS

Listen carefully my friends, for this is the stuff that fairy tales are made of. A young girl had lived with her mother and father for fifteen years when she decided it was time to venture out into the world to find the man of her dreams. She asked her mother if there were any golden apples or magic wands or American Express cards she could take with her, but her mother lamented that she had none.

"All I can give you is this magical kiss," said the mother. "You must be very careful how you use it, for there are many treacherous villains in the world. Do not believe all that you are told." With that, she kissed her daughter and put her on the bus to the big city.

When the young girl reached the city, she saw tall buildings, fast cars, and many, many people. She didn't know where to go or who to talk to. She wished she could go back home to her mother, but she didn't have enough money for a return trip.

The young girl began to look about for a phone booth so she could call her mother and ask her what to do. While looking, she walked by an alley where a huge rat was rooting through the garbage. The rat called to the girl and at first she was afraid, but then she thought that perhaps he could tell her where she could find a phone.

"Excuse me, Mr. Rat," she said. "But I'm new in town and I cannot find a telephone. Can you help me?"

The rat smiled in that way that rats smile. "Yes, my fair maiden, I can help you," he replied. "Although there is no one to help me." He sighed, looking more pitiful than a drowned rat.

"Why, what is the matter, friend rat?" the girl cried.

"I have been enchanted by an evil scientist who performed wicked laboratory experiments on me. In truth I am a handsome youth, the man of some girl's dreams."

The young girl thought that surely this was the man of her dreams. "I would gladly help you, Mr. Rat, but all I have is a magical kiss."

The rat smiled again. "Why, it just so happens a magical kiss will free me from my enchantment! Please, kiss me now!"

Rat puckered his lips and closed his eyes, anticipating the wonderful kiss. The girl hesitated, quickly kissed the rat, and just as quickly wiped her mouth in disgust. Just as the rat had promised, he began to change--not into the man of her dreams, but into an evil looking man with a long nose and buck teeth. She saw in a moment that he meant to have his way with her, so she screamed and ran off as fast as her legs could carry her.

The young girl spotted a school bus and quickly got on it. The rat-man, who was in hot pursuit, reached the door of the bus just in time to have his nose pinched by it. The bus drove off with the rat-man running along side, but the end of his nose broke off and he fell under the tires of the bus and was crushed.

The school bus was taking the children on a field trip to The Sewage Plant, so the young maiden thought she would tag along, for what could happen on a field trip?

The young girl thought the tour was very interesting and soon forgot all about the rat-man. She stopped to watch the sewage being treated and noticed a large green object floating about. It was an alligator.

"Oh, Mr. Alligator," she cried. "Why are you in the sewage?"

"Alas," replied the alligator, "I have been enchanted and must be content to live in the sewers. I am in truth the man of some girl's dreams."

"I would gladly help you, Mr. Alligator, but all I have is a magical kiss."

The alligator smiled in that way that alligators smile. "Why, it just so happens a magical kiss will free me from my enchantment! Please, kiss me now!"

The young girl, being ever so young, had forgotten the lesson she had learned with the rat and proceeded to kiss the alligator, for although he smelled most terribly, she thought that surely this must be the man of her dreams. He immediately changed into a huge man with large jaws. The girl could see that he meant to devour her, so she screamed and ran off as fast as she could run.

The young maiden ran into a playground and under the jungle gym. The alligator-man, who was not short enough to run under the bars, struck his jaw on one at full speed and fell down dead.

The young girl finally collapsed onto a park bench. "Oh dear," she sobbed. "Isn't there any man out there that is the man of my dreams? I have had nothing but ill luck with my magical kiss."

Just then, a dove fell out of the tree above her. Its wing was broken and the poor bird limped about pitifully.

"Mr. Dove," the girl cried. "What is the matter with your wing?"

"I am so ashamed," the dove answered. "I have run into one of the statues here in the park. Now I am destined to remain on the ground and will soon be eaten by an evil cat."

The young girl had pity for the bird, took him in her hand, and gently kissed his wing. Immediately the dove was transformed into a tall, handsome youth--the man of her dreams.

"Thank you, fair maiden," the youth said. "Because you have shown compassion for me, you have broken the spell I was under."

The maiden sighed. They walked off in each other's arms and were married the next day. And, of course, they lived happily ever after.

THE END

Brian Driver



Yuppie Blues

I want much more
But it costs so much.
My health club folded,
I'm out of touch.

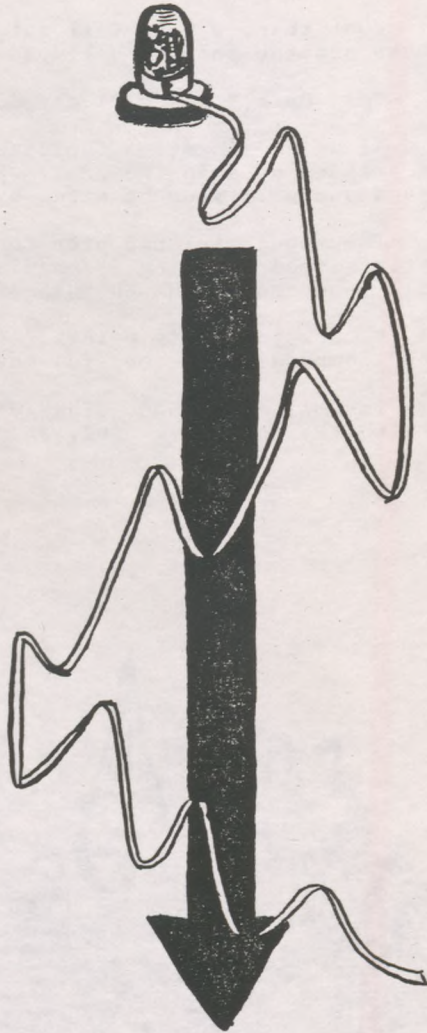
My Sony Walkman's
Batteries are dead,
I've sprung a leak
In my waterbed.

There's a hole in the sole
Of my Florsheim shoes.
Too much bad news
These Yuppie Blues.

My studio flat's
Not on the right street.
My Adidas joggers
Are hurting my feet.
My designer sweats
Just ripped in the crotch.
The band fell off
My Rolex watch.

Gotta find peace of mind
I'm in such a bind.
Just gotta lose
These Yuppie Blues.

My company dived off the Fortune 500.
My health food supermarket just went under.
My wife got promoted to executive v. p.
It came with a raise, now she makes more than me.



The neighbors are coming
And I can't find my wok.
The market is healthy
Except for my stock.

Gotta race for my place
Gotta keep up the pace.
Too much bad news
These Yuppie Blues

There's a hole in my soul
That I just can't lose
To much bad news
These Yuppie Blues.

Greg Grant

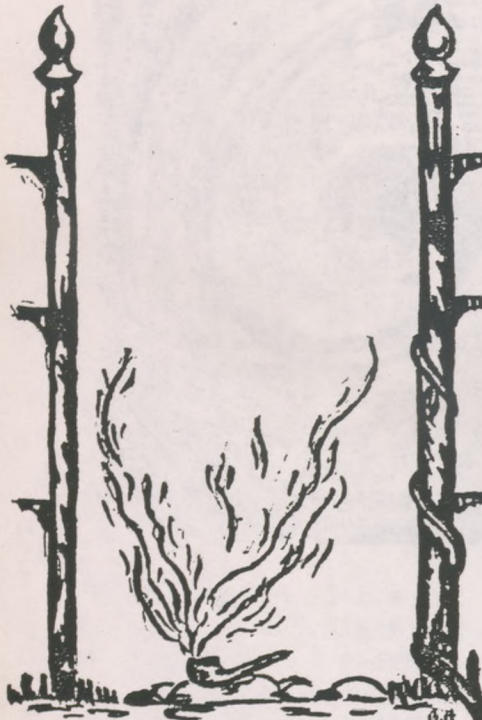


M. Blankenship

Like day-glo banners,
They sit conspicuously.
First-in-line, important,
All-knowing, all-telling.
Under their rule,
All words become one.
Like a master key
they unlock every door.
And improperly used,
They spoil every secret.
That's why there isn't one
Above this poem.

CATHY GRIFFIS

A CELESTIAL REUNION



I walk
through an open gate
in mist
thickened by the sweet smoke
flowing from grandpa's
carved pipe.

I am lured
beyond the facts of my existence.
I catch only glimpses
of my life
as it is whisked
before my eyes.

I spot my father
in a mass of nameless faces.
He throws me a familiar
look of relief, glowing.
Then with a calloused hand,
brushes from my cheek
the streaks of remembered sorrow.
Nodding gently,
he dispels my fears.

Julie Lynch

ANOTHER SONG OF SOLOMON

You leave me with a drunkenness
I do not understand.
I have known the wine-soaked rumble of rage,
But this is something more;
A sleepy, gentle warmth
That cries for rest in you.

John Lee Fisher

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