Fall 1986

1986 Fall Quiz & Quill Magazine

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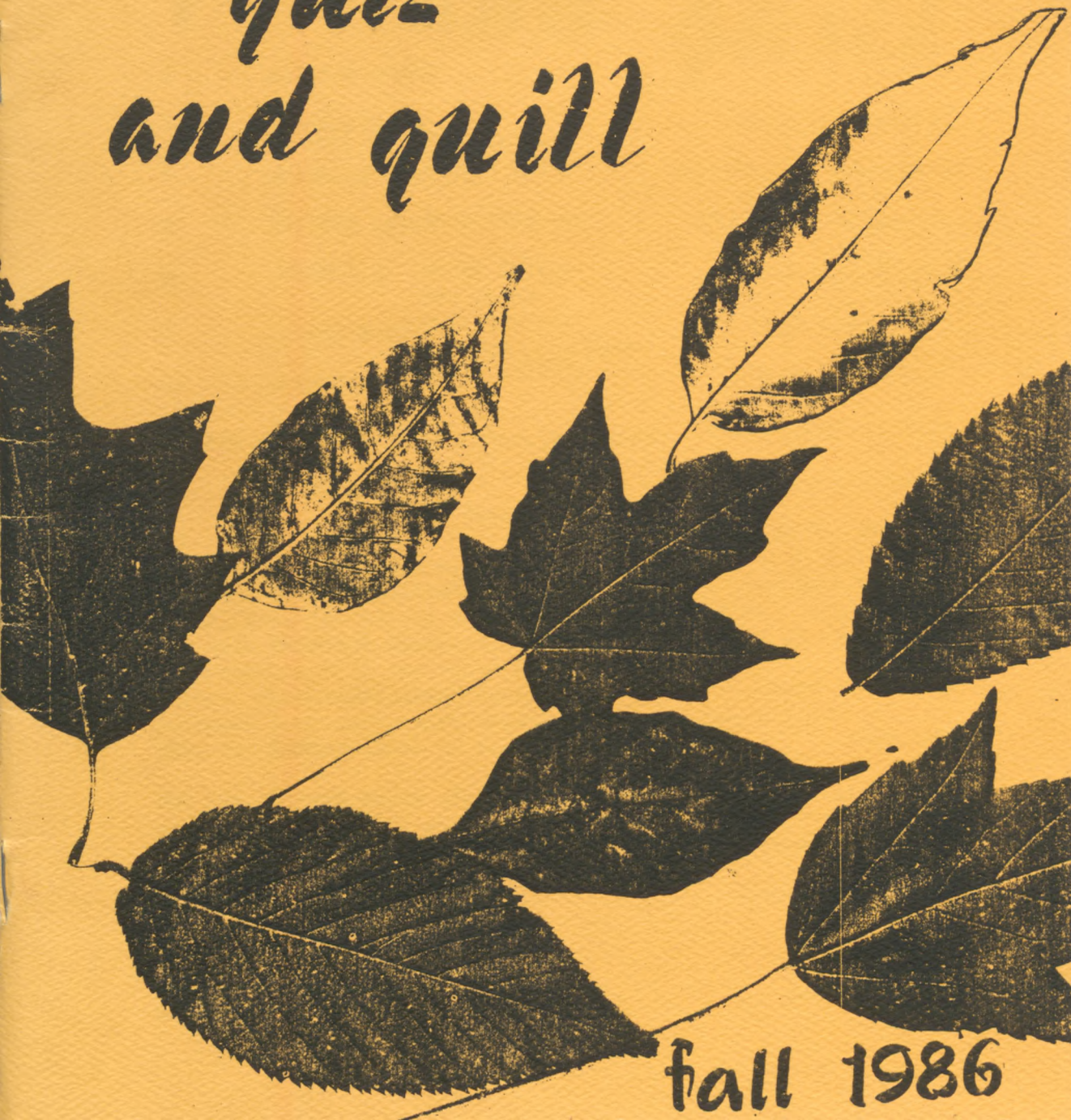
quiz and quill



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Editor's Note

Like the contrast and diversity found in fall, this issue of Quiz and Quill combines numerous genres of literary work and exemplifies the talent of many Otterbein writers. Winners of the 1986 Quiz and Quill literary contest as well as many new contributors fill the pages of the largest issue in recent years. Increased submissions have once again forced us to postpone publishing much exceptional work, but be sure to look for these pieces in the Winter Issue.

I'd like to express a sincere thank you to my staff who have worked so diligently while I have been in New Mexico. Because of your enthusiasm and that of our many contributors Quiz and Quill continues to thrive.

Otterbein College
Westerville, Ohio

Beth Helwig

A NOVEMBER MEDITATION

Winter whispers in my ear,
Cold and bitter is her voice.
Her words ramble, constant and steady,
Like a passionless heartbeat,
As the words "I love you" are said professionally.

Cold, brittle leaves crackle underfoot.
Crunch, crunch, crunch . . .
My footsteps chant with my heart.
Unchanging, unguided, unloving:
And I greet loneliness with a shivering kiss.

A spark! a warmth found in steamy breath,
Changes my frosty, frozen focus,
To memories of mad, passionate
Love affairs with loneliness,
As I see Spring's Dawn in my mind's eye.

A. Duff Woodside

A POEM AT TWENTY-ONE

At twenty-one, the world should
Be a crystalline dance floor,
A good set of speakers, and money
For beer or gasoline.
Poems should be things
Written by those who are dead,
And read by those who are decaying.
Yet I am chasing words across
empty paper again;
Pinning them down, letting them
define me.

CATHYGRIFFIS

BEATLEMANIA 2029

An old man in a cave among the rubble
Asked me to excuse him if he's trouble
"For I am aged," he said, "and none too well--
But listen, please; I have a tale to tell.

There was a time, when I was just a boy,
Feeling free and thinking I was coy,
When minstrels were the heroes of the day.
We'd hear them and we'd while our youth away.

There was Mick, and Jimi, and the Lizard King
(They'd play "Money," "Gloria," and that ol' "Wild Thing"),
And Janis, and that Creedence Revival--
But four young men stood out above them all.

They came from Liverpool in '64;
We met them at the airport by the score.
My girlfriend screamed when she touched Ringo's hair,
And hundreds howled, just like her, everywhere--

Then came December 1966:
The day I saw it end at Candlestick.
I went to fight, the country went to seed;
The young men gave their lives for the old man's greed.

That music got me through the Viet war--
"Hey Jude" consoled this weary warrior.
Some days were so bleak that I'd hope and pray
The Magical Mystery Tour would take <u>me</u> away.

Things just aren't the same now that they're gone,
Though the minstrels' children's children linger on;
None of those kids have the power so great
To make you live millennia in 3:38.

Though I'm no singer, I would give it all
To jam with George, or just <u>meet</u> John or Paul.
This world today, they'd never want to see--
But there will be an answer; let it be.
He said goodbye, and turned around, and laughed
As he cranked up his ancient phonograph.
I slipped my gas mask on to ease the pain
As I stepped out to face the acid rain.

Bob Fritz

THE TURKEY BOWL

Third Place, Quiz and Quill Personal Essay Contest

Wherever I go in Columbus I run into an old acquaintance. Last Thursday was no exception. Despite being a school night, the line of students waiting to get into Willie's Bar was tiresome. Tied between the light posts was a thick rope that kept people from being shoved into the traffic on High Street. As the spastics would cling for their lives, the waist-level cord would rebound the victims into other innocent bystanders like Big-time Wrestling. I stood on the outside of the bar line where the cord snapped tight to crack me in the lower back.

From the throng of people forcing their way into the bar door I heard, "T.D., how's it goin'?" Hearing my dreaded high school nickname, I cringed. T.D. was the kind of name that always brought up questions in college, especially with girlfriends and acquaintances. They ask, "Craig, does T.D. stand for touchdown--as in making a score?" I can only respond, "Yes, as in football--nothing else." The name-caller came closer as a shaved head plowed through all the bodies. I realized that the person calling me was Sean Fitzpatrick, an old friend from our championship high school football team whom I had not seen in five years. We went through the motions of shaking hands and saying, "Hi! How've you been?" I always have had problems in the situation where I had to capsulize five years of good times and bad times, then conclude with some contrived story about my future when both of us know I would not be at campus bars if I really had a future. The social amenities were simple and with Sean, his attention span allowed me to sidestep the issue of my future.

Sean is the kind of guy that should have stayed with football, with a torso of a Sherman tank and the intellect of a loaded baked potato. All he could say for himself regarding our introductions was, "I'm in the Marines, the cream of the crop." I never would have guessed with that jarhead hairstyle. "Craig, have you played any ball lately?" "That's funny, Sean, I was going to ask you that." Sean digressed and reminisced

about the old neighborhood. We grew up in an outer-inner city suburb. It was Little Italy. Not disgusting, but certainly not the Ritz.

Everything in my home town seemed to revolve around athletics. Probably because no one made it as a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Football was the mainline in Little Italy. Ralph Gueliami, Heiseman Trophy winner, Notre Dame all-star, and Cleveland Brown quarterback created a football tradition that the town people live and die by. Being located five minutes from Ohio State accentuated this football frenzy. Sean was not different from anyone else in the community.

Even after graduation and on with a career as a Spartan, Sean could not leave the subject of football. "Have you guys played any ball lately?" "No, they put a VFW Post on the old field." My friends impatiently listened to our struggling conversation as the line ebbed and flowed. My roommate, Tom, who was behind me a little too close for comfort and had steamed his horn rims, said curiously, "What the hell is that goon talking about?" "The Turkey Bowl," I replied. With a drunk expression he joked, "Where the hell's that, I'm hungry." And snorted in laughter like the computer science nerd that he is. "Does it come with gravy and biscuits? Snort, snort."

Sean, with the short attention span, said, "I'll see you inside, Buddy--I'm gonna get me a beer." And he brushed a group of sorority girls aside. Lumbering through the bar door without getting his I.D. checked or paying a cover charge, Sean parted people in his way like he had a reserved seat at the bar. Tom could not stop his giggling fit. "Is that guy brain damaged or what? Snort, snort." I could not think of anything other than, "No, he's been that way for years."

Sean, from my dark past, made me reminisce about the old neighborhood and the Turkey Bowl, our brutal Thanksgiving Day tradition. It was a tradition our fathers started that we practiced annually for as long as I can remember. Despite the bar's activity, I could not think of anything else but the indelible neighborhood memories. The kids from First Street and Mulford Avenue would square off, just as our fathers had, in full battle regalia, to flex our muscles for our community fans. We would dig deep amongst the past football season's

dirties and pull out our sweaty jerseys, pads, and cleats. I always wore my Dad's jersey and black hightop cleats for his approval. If I did not score on the field, I scored points with Dad.

Every year we went through the same fevered scenario. From a sleepless night, I would wake at dawn, eat a cowboy breakfast of pancakes, bacon, eggs, and orange juice. When finished, I would make phone calls to the regulars, organizing the troops: "Larry--you ready?" "Rick--you ready? And bring James." By the yearly conscription, the chosen stars would meet at eight o'clock on the corner of Washington and Tindell. The brown overgrown field just lay across the intersection near the Norfolk and Western depot and the city stores of light blue mounds of road salt. The field was long and narrow and looked like the face of the moon--unleveled and cluttered with large rocks for a hundred by twenty yards. Upon arrival we would peel off our warm-ups, lay them along imaginary boundaries, and suit up for the game. We would intentionally narrow the field with our garb in order to limit the passing game. We had our yearly assignments: Mike, Brian, and Dennis DiCarlo were automatics for the lineman positions. Their father, Mr. D., was paralyzed from the Korean War. The DiCarlos would roll him in his wheelchair to the fifty-yard line. Mr. D. served as coach and referee, depending on the circumstances. Everyone in the game and community had great respect for the past football and military hero. He would scream like Vince Lombardi, "Yous guys ain't playin' football--you're playin' grab ass!" whenever anything did not work out to his liking.

We warmed up by passing balls out of each other's reach and punting all over the field like an Iranian gun battery. We lined up in the Power-I formation in order to practice our two plays, up the middle to the meatball (Sean) and the triple option right or left to Rick Rocci with his monkey-like moves. We had no pass plays because as quarterback I had a weak arm and the immediate rush never gave me a pocket to pass out of. It was like the Alamo with Santa Anna's troops pouring through the gate. So, I never bothered passing. I felt sorry for Dennis, who played center. He was the dupe that got his face buried in the mud off the snap as the trenchmen mauled him.

The other team from the lower hill would arrive in gang-like fashion. They were street punks, but were well-organized. Their captain, Bad John Compton, who had been kicked off the high school squad for unmentionable reasons, met with our captain, Sean, on the fifty-yard line for the game terms. Mr. DiCarlo laid down the law, "Tackle, immediate rush, no first downs, no punting." Sean and Compton would bite an earthworm in half signifying a handshake and how they felt about each other. It was understood that when Mrs. DiCarlo came down the hill to retrieve Mr. D and the boys for dinner, the game was over because of their monopoly of players.

The Turkey Bowl games were never eventful. We played typical Woody Hayes football: three yards and a lot of grief. We figured that the best gameplan against the wheezing burn-outs was to wear them down with General Grant tactics--attrition. It always worked, but casualties were high. Sean lost his upper incisors on a Triple Option Right when Compton gave him a forearm to the face. We had replacements, but as cannon fodder they did not last long. However, they did give us a breather when one was needed. By dinnertime, we wore down the enemy. Compton was left at the bottom of the pile in the mud on numerous occasions, and our fans loved the carnage. On the limp home with our proud parents, I can remember my Dad saying as he patted me on the back, "Great game, Craig." "Thanks, Dad." "You kind of remind me of me; hah, hah."

I felt a nudge as Tom slapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Are you gonna stand there all day--can't you see the line's moving?" As Tom and I funneled through the door at Willie's, I could not help but avoid Sean. I had fond memories of him as my friend, but I knew that all he would do when he got out of the service was hang around with Mr. DiCarlo at the VFW Post and reminisce about the Turkey Bowl.

Craig Tovell

CINDERELLA DAZE

I used to be Cinderella,
With my own Prince Charming.
We visited "ballroom" bars
And cleared the dance floors
With graceful waltzes
snappy foxtrots
swaying swings
And, oh the rumba!

What a perfect pair we were--
Moving in and around each other--
Dipping at the last possible moment.
Sensuality unleashed
Under flashing strobe lights.
We fell in love
With our fantasy world--
But not each other.

But Cinderella days
Don't last forever.
And Prince Charming
Usually transforms into a frog.
So now Miss Piggy and Kermit
Toe dance on blacktopped parking lots
On hot summer nights.

What an imperfect pair we are--
Moving on and into each other--
Falling at the first possible moment.
Sensuality unleashed
Under bright, incandescent lights.
We're not in love
With our reality world--
but with each other.

Vickie Kayati

WHAT IS MATHEMATICS?

God I wish I had
the elegance of Pythagoras
the precocity of Gauss
or Polya's easy grace
to charm the mystery
from the unseen.

In my poet's heart
I understand the beauty of symmetry
the awful truth of logic
the mind-whacking rightness of groups
and the aching human questioning
of the infinite--

But when I do functions,
I have to trace lung-shapes on the page
spiderwebbed with x's and y's.
What a computer does in a nanosecond
I can only grasp by drawing "mailboxes"
and filling them with letters and numbers;
and I'll be damned if I know how to win
a game of Sprouts--

I'm somewhere between infinity
and counting on my toes.

I think it's appropriate that
Gauss called mathematics
The Queen of Sciences
with the feminine associations
that calls up:
fertile
intuitive
nurturing
full of unplumbed and mysterious beauty.

For me, she is like Cleopatra on her barge
resplendent with purple and gold
ancient and timeless, at once,
floating persistently
through the river of human memory.

I watch, barefoot, on the bank of the Nile
and marvel: I have so many questions!
I throw flowers
and long to follow . . .

Mary Wehrle

SUMMATION SYMPHONY, OPUS 1

summation			w	w
symphonies			i	i
glide in			t	t
the		on	h	h
ear		and	o	o
and		on	u	u
out			t	t
the				
mouth of			s	s
a society			t	t
willing to			o	o
interpret	the	on	p	p
meaning of	every	and	p	p
thing in	100	on	i	i
words or			n	n
less			g	g

Greg Grant

IN HONOR OF AN AUTUMN FRIEND

Spring has splashed away for you and me.
We've felt the splurge of inexperienced green,
Seen thunderstorms of youth's awakening
Dash verdant expectations of the seed.

We've squinted at the Summer's white-hot glare
As perspiration teased our thirsting souls.
We've swayed in swoons by vain religions' poles
Till baring brightness melted our despair.

And now - crepuscular Autumn gathers in
A store of mindful fuel with gentle hands,
Focusing the spirit's sensuous demands
On golden passion, purer, genuine:

And we - against bleak Winter's cold desire
Join balanced hearts beside a friendship fire.

Jan Robinson

REMINISCENCE

Reminiscence -
the essence
    of Soul
    of Past
almost sacred -
Reminiscence -
    the aching
    the longing
to touch, to hold
the hand of
our childhood.

Micki Glassburn

THE HOUSE

Second Place, Quiz and Quill Personal Essay Contest

I love my neighborhood. Twenty years ago, Sunday drives were taken on these winding streets. They were the "someday" excursions of all young marrieds. Sweet moments in which the reality of financial limitations is suspended. We never tired of looking at the neatly manicured lawns, admiring the stone, brick, and cedar construction, or questioning the cost of seductively draped Austrian shades that I was sure weren't purchased through the Sears catalog. We dreamed of living in one of these "mansions," miles away from our three-bedroom tract house where the only individuality expressed was in the color of the aluminum siding.

Those Sunday outings seem like a lifetime ago. But my wishes were fulfilled. I re-married and moved to the suburbia of my dreams. This neighborhood is not quite the real estate showcase that it once was, but I like to think that we have both aged gracefully. Though it is considered a transient area, everyone seems to take pride in ownership. The arrival of spring is heralded not "like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers"[1] but by the trucks that read J & J Asphalt, Chem-lawn and Le Luxe Painting Contractors. Spring fix-up time has become an obsession among my neighbors. Perhaps we try and outdo one another, or maybe this uncontrollable urge is biologically oriented like the nesting instinct of the avian world. Whatever, we all do it--well, almost all.

Halfway between the brick-pillared entrance to our neighborhood and my residence, sits an eyesore. Nothing about this place that we call "the house" seems to fit into our cozy environment. Tender shoots of grass break through the widening cracks of the driveway, only to be flattened by one of six cars usually parked there. With that many automobiles one would assume that there were several occupants, but other than the

[1]Edna S. Vincent Millay, "Spring," Collected Lyrics (New York: Harper, 1917), 41.

assortment of legs and rear-ends that protrude from the opened hoods of these demolition derby rejects, there is little sign of human life.

The house itself is tolerable enough (though a mansard roof is not one of my favorites); the biggest complaint is that the property just looks neglected. Recently, things seemed to be headed for a turnaround. As hopeful neighbors peered through the gaps in their curtains, a stepladder and tarp appeared on the lawn. Remembering the hours of scraping and sanding that our painting contractors had endured, I sympathized with the grueling work ahead, particularly in view of the threatening sky. But that didn't deter the long-haired young man who must have lost last night's poker hand. With a fierce determination, he set out to complete his job. For three days, in the rain, he applied a new coat of blue paint to all the exposed trim. No one cared that the color clashed with the red brick; to us, this refurbishing signaled that the burdens of home ownership would now be assumed. But our enthusiasm was short-lived. No other projects were initiated.

One summer day as I drove past "the house," I was saddened by the sight of their bassett hound, bulging from lack of exercise and too many table scraps. Desperate for a drink, he was eagerly lapping at the murky oil-glazed water that had collected in the gutter. My gaze continued on to the lawn. It was obvious that no one had applied a pre-emergent weed killer like the rest of us in the spring. The bare patches of brown earth were erratically interspersed with weeds a foot high, a humorous contrast to the plush carpets of grass next door. I was grateful that we lived a half mile away. As I continued my critique, my daughter interrupted my thoughts.

"Mommy, those people are so lucky."

Looking at her eyes to see who had won her seven-year-old admiration, I saw her head turned to my previous direction.

"Look at all the beautiful yellow flowers they have."

I winced with embarrassment at my callousness. I thought back to a few days earlier when the engine of one of their cars

had caught fire on the driveway and the sounds of sirens brought out the curious. As we stood watching the blaze, I jokingly said to a friend, "Got any marshmallows?" "I wish the whole place would burn down," she seethed. Though I knew she didn't mean it, I realized that this is how prejudice begins--two people deciding that a third just doesn't "fit in." I felt ashamed. And I was grateful for my daughter, God's child, who knows nothing of property values.

This winter while the rest of us were hibernating, only venturing outside for work or staples where we could complain about the weather and discuss trips to tropical islands, a form was taking shape on the lawn of "the house." I didn't see the actual construction. One day, it just magically appeared: a life-size rhinoceros made of new fallen snow. Even the puny carrot-nosed figures in adjacent yards looked impressed at its uniqueness. My heart melted.

I long for a world that is big enough to hold the long-haired young men of "the house" who pound out the fenders of their multi-colored cars, next door to a balding man who trims around his mailbox stake with scissors. A world where we aren't so quick to criticize and judge those who are different, and where we can make room in our souls for people who give us beautiful fields of dandelions and a white rhinoceros, for they are the rarest of all.

Linda Hardesty

A TEAR, A FEAR

-A boy will hold a tear, for fear of his own sin;
A man will take that fear
And
Form tears from within.

Heidi McDannald

WAR

War:
MX-
Missile-
Silo-
Death-
Destruction-
Nuclear F
A
L
L
O U T-

A dangerous way for
Adults
To pretend
They
Are
Children.

T. Brian Hering

THE DARE

The possibilities
of a blank
piece of paper
are so unlimited . . .
that one almost desires to leave it
blank . . . .
But if one doesn't dare to write on it
(with the possibility of ruining it)
then it will never be
anything more
than a blank
piece of paper.
At least on paper
one can erase.

Jodi Garrett

FRANCIS BECKWITH

First Place, Quiz and Quill Short Story Contest

Late one afternoon, in the middle of spring, Francis Beckwith found himself sitting in a small donut shop. His wrinkled hand gripped a cup of coffee as he stared at the white counter-top. The fresh, warm smell of pastry filled the air. A fat woman, wearing a white smock and a white hat labeled "Fred's," leaned on the cash register and gazed absently out the glass front. Three teenage boys were laughing and talking loudly in a booth along one wall.

Francis Beckwith was hiding out. Earlier that day he had run away from the Shady Groves Institute, where he had spent the last six years of his life. Tired of the confinement, the boredom, the dying people, he had simply walked out the front door. The tall young men in white who looked after him--smiling, condescending, brainless bastards--did not even notice him go. By now, however, they must have missed him, and he knew they would come looking. But Francis also knew that he would not go back. Now that he had gotten up the nerve to leave, he resolved with grim determination to remain free of the place.

As he sat at Fred's counter, bald head bent, thinking how intensely he hated the institute and its morbid population, his hands clutching his coffee began to shake. Brown liquid splashed on the clean white counter.

"Hey old man. Take it easy, will you?" The fat woman was looking his way, frowning. Her voice was rough, but not altogether unkind.

Francis started, saw what he had done, and cursed under his breath. He quickly cleaned the spill with some napkins. Muffled laughter came from the boys in the booth as the woman walked toward him.

"Are you all right? You're shaking like a leaf." She looked at his hands. He tried to stop their twitching, but knew that it was hopeless.

"I'm quite fine, thank you," he mumbled. "I was just a bit careless."

She was doubtful, he could see, but returned to her post at the cash register, keeping a watchful eye in his direction. Feeling very conspicuous, the old man threw a dollar next to his mug, and rose slowly from the stool to leave. As he turned toward the door he saw the boys grinning ghoulishly at his stiffness. He choked back another curse and walked out.

The shop was on a crowded street, with many shops and stores in both directions. People swarmed along the sidewalks--businessmen with briefcases, secretaries dressed neatly, workers from a nearby plant--intent on unknown destinations. In the street, rush-hour traffic hurried by. The raw energy of the crowded town made him gasp for breath, but he felt glad to be on his own.

As he headed north, away from Shady Groves and toward the outskirts of the city, the spring sky was filled with tall, billowy clouds rushing to the northeast. Trees beside the walk were newly green. He could not help feeling pleasure at the beautiful day and his new surroundings. Yet as he slowly made his way along the sidewalk, he cast an occasional glance over his shoulder.

His slow pace eventually led him away from the busy streets; the shops and stores began to turn to suburban homes. He was soon in a neighborhood of wealthy estates with expansive lawns and stone homes tucked under groves of shade trees. The rush of traffic was replaced by an occasional jogger.

Francis began to realize his position. He was an old, weak man, alone in a big city, with no place to go. He had not brought enough money to pay for a hotel room, and he did not have a bank account--his sons took care of his financial needs from half a world away. At a younger age he would have camped in a grove of trees or an abandoned building; but in his current condition he could not possibly hope to survive a cold spring night outdoors. Yet, for all this, he felt mostly relief at his freedom. He was enjoying the adventure too much to be concerned about a problem that was still hours away. He did not consider returning to Shady Groves.

In spite of his unhurried gait, he was soon breathing quickly.

He had decided to stop and rest, when he saw a young woman standing on the sidewalk next to a blue bicycle. Her long black hair hung over her face as she looked down, hand on hip, at a chain which sagged limply to the pavement. She looked up as Francis approached.

"I think I've killed it," she said. Her voice was bright and good-natured.

Catching his breath, Francis smiled and examined the situation. Judging the problem to be minor, he said, "It doesn't look too serious to me. I'll just slip that chain back on the sprocket."

"That sounds serious to me." She was laughing. It suddenly occurred to him that he had not heard a pleasant laugh in many months. How different it was from the mocking laughter of the boys in the donut shop. He studied the woman curiously. She had a young, round face that was surrounded by thick black hair. She wore an expensive jogging outfit with white leather tennis shoes, and her shorts revealed healthy, strong legs. Her smile was an enchanting, girlish smile: her eyes were simply black circles set in white. She was, Francis thought, the most pleasing sight he had seen in years.

Drawing a deep breath, he knelt gingerly to replace the chain. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a look of concern replace the girl's smile. Resentful, he yanked the chain onto the sprocket, but it stubbornly refused to cover the last tooth on the gear. Cursing, he tugged with what strength he could muster, feeling sweat forming on his forehead; but the chain remained outside the row of teeth, slipping off every time he neared success.

Suddenly the stalemate was broken with a crash as the chain slipped into place, and his weight, which had been supported by the jammed wheel, threw him and the bike into the pavement. He winced as a pedal stuck in his ribs.

With a look of horror on her face, the girl jumped to the pile of man and machine. She carefully lifted the bicycle, untangling him from the handlebars, and helped him to his feet.

"Are you all right?" she asked, supporting him while he gained his balance.

"Yes. Yes. I'm quite all right," he answered hastily, pulling himself straight and smoothing his clothes. Frowning, he added, "I've fixed your chain--I only hope I haven't wrecked the whole blamed thing." He put his trembling hand behind his back.

"Oh no, it looks in perfectly good shape," she answered seriously.

There was a long silence as they both looked down on the heap of metal bars and spokes. Suddenly their eyes met, and they were laughing at the silliness of her claim.

"Perfectly good shape!" he snorted. His side was in pain, but it felt good to laugh.

"Are you really all right?" she asked presently, still grinning. "That was a bad fall."

"I've had worse than that," he said, and stooped to lift the broken bicycle from the ground. After he examined the thing, he said, "I really am sorry about this. What is your name?"

"Mariana."

"My name is Francis, Mariana, and I intend to pay for this." He took a worn wallet from his back pocket.

"Oh no, absolutely not," she exclaimed. They argued back and forth for a time, but though Francis was determined, she refused tirelessly.

"It's no concern to me," she said. "Dad gives me all the money I need--he's rich. And there is no reason you should have to pay." Catching herself, she quickly added: "Not that you look like you can't afford it . . ."

Francis looked down at his plain clothes and scuffed brown shoes. He had not had new clothes since going to Shady Groves: he did in fact look poor. He took out his few remaining dollars and shoved them in the girl's hand, and said, "Allow an old man his dignity." She reluctantly agreed.

Francis further insisted on walking the damaged bike to her house, which she assured him was only a few blocks distant. The sky was still a quickly changing panorama of clouds. In the southwest, a towering thunderhead was building. Francis glanced often at his companion. He was intrigued by the way her long black hair swayed as she walked. Her smile, he thought, must be permanent, for it never left her face. He enjoyed watching her.

"Do you live near here?" she asked presently.

"No, I'm not from around here," he answered, unsure as to how much he wished to tell her.

"Are you visiting, then?"

"Actually, I live at Shady Groves," he said. Then, choosing his words carefully, he added: "It's a rest home."

"Isn't that a long way from here?" she asked. To his relief, she seemed only vaguely familiar with the place.

He answered, "The truth is, today was my last day there. I moved out."

"I see," she said. "Will you be staying with someone in the city?"

"I haven't decided yet. This was sort of a spur of the moment decision." He paused. "You see, I really should not have been in a rest home in the first place. My two sons thought it would be best for me, and I mistakenly agreed. They thought it would be easier on me--that I would be near a lot of people my age and such. But I don't think rest homes are for me. Everyone there is sick and talks about dying." He gave a little snort. "And besides that, I'm not much of a Christian, and they put a lot of emphasis on that. It's really not for me." The old man stopped to cough.

"So where are you staying tonight? Do you have a place?"

Francis paused, remembering again that he had no place to go that night. He said, "I'll probably call one of my sons and have him pick me up." He thought of his two boys with their families,

living their lives on the West Coast. He decided to break the line of questioning with one of his own.

"Are you married?"

"No." She gave a quick laugh, as if the idea was absurd. "I live on my own. I'm going to school at the university--getting my doctorate in English--and Dad bought a house for me to live in while I'm in school." She grinned: "I told you he was rich."

"So I see," he replied. He then added: "I think English is a wonderful subject. I've always loved reading the classics. There is something almost mystical in literature that has been written by the greatest minds in the history of the world. It seems to transcend the real world--to be apart from the muddle of everyday lives. Literature is the only thing that really explains what it is like to be a human being." She looked pleased. He went on: "I've always thought of it as the only real science."

"You are a man after my own heart. So many people today just can't understand it."

"I could spend all my life reading the classics," he answered enthusiastically.

She was grinning from ear to ear. She touched him lightly on the arm and said, "It's refreshing to meet someone like you, Francis. Is there really anything that matters more than literature?" She lifted an arm in an animated gesture of a profound statement, and they both laughed and walked on.

After a while, she resumed the conversation: "Isn't it rather unusual for a person to leave a rest home, once going to live there?"

"I suppose so," he answered evenly.

There was a pause as they walked on. She finally said, "I think it's admirable. One shouldn't be afraid to start from scratch--to make a new beginning out of life." She looked at him and added, "You must be very excited."

"Yes. Yes, I suppose I am," he said just loud enough to be heard.

The sun was lowering as they came to her home. It was a small but tidy brick house. The lawns and bushes were immaculately kept. A wide evergreen sat in the middle of the front yard, thick and full to the ground.

"Thanks for the help," she said as they came to the driveway. "Don't worry about the bike." She smiled into his eyes. "Good luck finding your new home."

"I'm sure I'll work something out--I always do."

She touched his thin arm. "You are a very nice man, Francis."

He knew that it was his turn to speak, but he did not. They stood, silent for a moment, in the long shadow of the dark green pine. Little shadows worked in her hair. Her dark eyes stared innocently.

She broke the silence, saying: "Would you like to come in for some coffee or tea? You can call your son."

But Francis was not listening. He had turned and was watching a large blue car that had stopped at the foot of the drive. Two men got out and headed toward them. One, with blonde hair, was wearing a tense smile. The other wore a white coat.

Francis stared as the two men walked up the driveway. They had come for him. His mind sought an escape, found none.

"Hello Francis," the one with the white jacket said. He had short black hair and a high forehead.

Francis felt his hand begin to shake. He glanced quickly around him. The girl stood fixed behind him, her eyes wide, uncomprehending.

"How have you been, Francis?" said the man with dark hair. He put on a smile and came closer. His companion remained silent at his side. Francis took a step back, and his hand twitched.

"We've been looking for you for quite a while."

The man was close enough to touch him. He turned to the girl, but she only stared at him strangely.

"We want to take you back, Francis."

His hand trembled visibly. The girl seemed to recede into the shadows of the evergreen. He turned again to the dark-haired man, and glared.

"You can't. I've decided not to live there any more. You can't make me go back." He retreated another step.

"Think of your sons, Francis. They would be very disappointed. They know what is best for you, and have instructed us to take care of you."

The men formed a wall in front of him. He wanted to turn and run from them, but could not bring himself to turn and face the girl again. The blonde man took hold of his arm. Francis struggled, but could not break the firm grip. He desperately wanted to fight--to spend himself in one last effort--but could only think of the girl watching him. He felt her eyes burning on the back of his head. As the men led him to the car he heard her start to speak--but this faded off in the distant shadows. As they drove off, Francis could not look back.

Francis sat in a room at the Shady Groves Institute. It was plain, containing only a bed and an old dresser. It was not his room, but one, presumably, of higher security. The men had told him he would have to be confined for a time, until he recovered from his "illness." Francis had no intention of staying.

The room was dark, lit only by the growing twilight outside the lone window. During the short ride back to Shady Groves, Francis, in a rage, had set his mind on one matter--he would be free. He could not--would not--live a day longer at the institute watching human shells decay and die before his eyes, watching competent minds sink into unconsciousness, waiting to die himself. The vast purposelessness of the place, which had long been a drain on him, now fueled a grim determination that he vowed not to let fade.

He walked to the window, his legs tight from the walking he had done that day. The room was on the second floor, overlooking a street. Below him there was a hedge growing along the sidewalk. Instantly recognizing his course of action, and carried by the momentum of his rage, Francis ripped open the window. The frame was fitted on the outside with a screen. It was molded fast. He quickly searched around the room for a heavy object with which to knock it loose. He was about to give up hope when he found a large Bible in a dresser drawer. He rolled up a sheet from the bed, placed it along the frame to muffle the sound, and began beating the screen with the book. It soon worked loose, and he pulled it into the room.

Outside it was dusk. Francis now cursed himself for not waiting for complete darkness; but fearing a visitor at the door, he decided not to wait any longer. The sidewalk was nearly ten feet below, and as soon as there was no traffic on the street, he lowered himself out the window. He had planned to hang down half the way and take his chances at falling the rest; but as he began the descent his hands gave way and he crashed into the bushes below. Sharp thorns jabbed at his body, and he bled from many wounds; but the bushes proved to be his salvation by breaking his fall.

Cursing, he staggered out of the hedge. Across the street, a man wearing a blue suit was getting out of a car in a driveway. He looked, Francis thought, too much the dullard to present him any problems, but to be safe he quickly started off along the street.

He walked as fast as his old body would permit. He had no knowledge of direction or destination, only an obsession to put distance between himself and Shady Groves. The sky above--oddly--was black in the west but light in the east. This confused Francis as he hurried along, until he realized that a vast bank of clouds had cut off the western sunset. The air stood still about him.

Sweat began dripping from his brow, running into his eyes and mouth. The sharp sourness in his mouth was disturbing. A vague feeling that he was searching for something crept into his mind, but he could not decide its origin. The sensation grew more and more distracting as the darkness grew. Suddenly a bright streak of light flashed in the west, revealing trees and homes silhouetted in the

sky, and he realized that he was searching for a small brick house beneath a wide evergreen. He wondered why he had not realized sooner that he wanted desperately to see the girl again--that the memory of her eyes, staring intently, still burned in his mind.

Francis began to have trouble thinking. Without warning, the heavy air began to swirl around him. The bank of clouds, now barely visible in the darkness, had moved across the sky and was above him. Deep rumbling rose from the west. He passed quickly down street after street, without success. The gusting wind hit him with growing ferocity, seeming to strip each rational thought from his mind before it could form, blowing it into the night. Lights flashed around him. And his eyes hunted hopelessly for a familiar place.

The storm broke in all its natural power sometime during the night. On an old muddy road outside the city, Francis staggered in despair. The rain fell in cold, heavy sheets, washing away confusion, leaving only dull awareness. He had no memory of the past few hours, and had no idea how he had gotten to the place. He must have been wandering aimlessly. He was scared.

As thunder crashed and lightning streaked he tried to think clearly--to understand his position. He could see the city lights, remote in the east. The possibility of finding the girl's house seemed even more remote, and, more than this, was now undesirable to him. With his mind now clearing like a dawn, he understood he would not be welcomed in the brick house. In this, his moment of utter hopelessness, Francis Beckwith decided to end his life.

He stopped, shocked by his decision, and stood by the side of the road. He looked across the ditch to a stand of trees on the other side. He tried to peer into their depths, but black shadows revealed nothing. Drawn by a strange curiosity, he worked his way off the road and waded through the rain-swollen ditch. The grove seemed to him a primeval forest--shadows rich and deep, leaves dripping. He decided that he wanted nothing but to become a part of that forest, to die in its comforting arms. Spreading the foliage, he entered the shadows, and crawled beneath the undergrowth.

For many minutes he crawled along the wet ground. Finally, satisfied that he was in deep enough, he lay down in the cool mud.

Wrapping himself in a bed of rotting leaves and brush, he settled down in the safety of the surrounding woods. Violent thunder shook the sky above him, outside the ceiling of branches and trees.

Curled up like a rabbit in a hole, he closed his eyes and waited. He was thoroughly soaked, and his body shook uncontrollably. From time to time he coughed. As he slipped closer to unconsciousness his mind filled with dreams of his past. He tried to concentrate on pleasant memories: he thought of his wife, as she had been when he first met her--so young and unexplainably desirable. But these thoughts were fleeting--he could not hold them. His mind returned inevitably to the picture of a young girl intently staring.

Later that night Francis woke from his dreaming with the disturbing conviction that he had been awakened by some nearby movement. He stared into the black forest, but could make out nothing beyond his immediate area. The rain had stopped and all was still. He listened intently, but the only sound was the wind hissing in the upper branches. Sweat trickled down his face.

Suddenly his eyes fixed on a black mass in the trees above him. He bolted like a deer. One instant he was huddled on the forest floor, the next he was tearing through the grove of trees. As he ran blindly, branches clawed and stabbed, holding him back as if he were in a dream. Behind him came the terrible sound of crashing timber. He struggled onward but the forest seemed to go on forever and he realized that he was actually plunging deeper: but then he burst into the open and saw the road. He splashed through the ditch and started toward town, not turning back. At a distance of a hundred feet he could stand the suspense no longer, and turned. He stood alone on the road. The black forest was silent, swaying in the wind.

By the time he reached the city he was hobbling badly, but continued without halting. Once again he searched unknown streets for a destination. The city slept and he was alone. Wet roads glistened under streetlights. His heart beat harshly in his chest. He was near dropping with exhaustion.

Finally, he saw his goal in the distance, and he ran toward it with his last strength. He crossed the neatly mowed lawn, entered

the deep shadows of the tall building, and went to the front door. It was unlocked and he jerked it open. There was no one around. He quickly walked down a tiled corridor past identical doors, coming eventually to one that was familiar. He entered and turned on all the lights. He quickly undressed, removed a towel from the dresser, and carefully dried himself. Then he put on a new set of clothes, wrapped himself in a blanket, and sat in the lone chair in the room. Long after he was dry and warm he sat trembling through the night.

John Tetzloff

CONTRIBUTORS

BOB FRITZ, a senior public relations/pre-law major, spends his spare time trying to corner the market on gas masks.

JODI GARRETT, a freshman religion major, hopes to be a missionary and/or work with intercity kids.

MICKI GLASSBURN, a junior visual arts major, does freelance work in illustration.

GREG GRANT, a senior English major, has a perfect attendance record for the Quiz and Quill poetry readings.

CATHY GRIFFIS, a senior art/psychology major, has some of her work on display in the Campus Center.

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YEON SUNG LEE was recently accepted in the Batavia National Art Exhibition in New York City and dreams about fame.

HEIDI McDANNALD is a down-to-earth "country bumpkin" who wants to make it to the top of life.

JAN ROBINSON, a June 1986 gradute after nine years' study in the Cont. Ed. Program, wishes to extend her sincere appreciation to Dr. James Bailey for his patient advising & teaching.

JOHN TETZLOFF, a June 1986 English/philosophy graduate, was editor of Quiz and Quill in 1984-1985.

CRAIG TOVELL, who graduated in June 1986, wrote "The Turkey Bowl" for his senior writing project.

MARY WEHRLE wrote her poem, "What is Mathematics?" to fulfill Dr. Hinton's final assignment in his Math 15 course: explain what mathematics means to you.

A. DUFF WOODSIDE, aka Baron Von Swieten in Amadeus, is a legend in his own mind.