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Quiz and Quill

Autumn 1990

Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio



Quiz and Quill

Autumn 1990

This quarter has ushered in some significant changes for the *Quiz and Quill*—the most substantial being the change in editorship. Sharon and I have set a number of goals for this year and are excited about seeing them reached. Our primary goal is to ensure that the *Quiz and Quill* continue to offer a fresh and balanced representation of Otterbein writers. However, a secondary goal that we also share is to see this magazine publish more material concerning the environment. To highlight our concern for conservation, the cover of this issue was printed on recycled paper. We are hopeful that this will compel students to seriously consider the subject of the environment and that more college organizations will take advantage of recycled materials.

I would like to thank Dr. Wayne Rittenhouse for working as our guest adviser this quarter. His good nature and open-mindedness are much appreciated.

Aaron James Thompson

Editors

Aaron James Thompson, **editor**

Sharon Richardson, **assistant editor**

Dr. Wayne Rittenhouse, **Autumn adviser**

Staff

Kris Cooper	Dan Gonzalez	Joanna Mercer
Greg Davis	Sally Gross	Julie North
Judy Edmonds	Ed Karshner	Chad Rahrbacher
Dee von Entress	Michael Mann	Ronald P. Thomas

Otterbein College

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Gossamer Walls</i>	Greg Davis	1
<i>Drinking in the art supply store</i>	Lisa M. Freeman	2
<i>kindergarten keepsake</i>	Sally Gross	3
<i>March Hare</i>	Adrienne Wehrley	4
<i>The Attic</i>	Laura Lee Brigade	5
<i>Of Poetry</i>	Jeffery David Evans	6
<i>All Ears</i>	William S. Gornall, Jr.	6
<i>Patience</i>	Jacob Snodgrass	7
<i>The Search</i>	Joseph Hecker	8
<i>October Frost</i>	Janet Miller	9
<i>The Question</i>	Cyndi Miller	9
<i>A Creative Connection</i>	Sharon Richardson	10
<i>Starving Lotus Eaters</i>	Greg Davis	15
<i>Father's Mother</i>	Adrienne Wehrley	16
<i>apple tree of the fawn</i>	Sally Gross	16
<i>Cranberry Wine</i>	Joseph Hecker	17
<i>As Long as the Grass . . .</i>	Edward Karshner	18
<i>Apologies</i>	Linda J. Baden	21
<i>Contributors</i>		22

Gossamer Walls

Push your face against the wall.
Let the sweat beading
your heaving chest cool you.
The grim cloak darkness wears,
catches fleeting horrors in its
pitchy folds.

Push harder now— forget.

Forget the tumult
Twisting black water.
Forget the shower of coffins—
some vast as worlds,
others
slight as strands of hair,
most thick like corpses.

Is it their unspeakable dimensions—
or their sick feel to the mind's tentative touch?

Which is it that leaves wet handprints on your sheets?

Or maybe it's the voice.
The voice from over the water.
The voice that softly tortures.
Was it the parched croak of every nameless old aunt,
or the mutters of God?
Cloying caresses of comforting tones.

Push your face against the wall.

Forget the truth of dreams.

Greg Davis

Drinking in the art supply store

Pouring glitter
out of a bottle—
like wine,
but not so bitter.
the sparkle
gets in your
eyes and your ears
and maybe your nose a little
(it smells good, tho')
Who keeps corking the bottle?
Was that me?
take a sip—
it's like a neon light
on your throat.
Bright fantasies,
kind of day-glo,
all mixed together,
enough
to get you high—
but not high enough
to miss the
tie-dyed shroud.

Lisa M. Freeman

kindergarten keepsake

literacy and computer proficiency
were not prerequisites for kindergarten in my day.
instead, we had to have watched Sesame Street
enough to recite our ABC's the Grover way.

plus, we had to know that fire engines were red,
unless they were yellow—like apples.
halcyon days were they: whether spent
squirting orange and green paint on new, blue Keds;

swinging topsy-turvy on monkey bars; or sitting
cross-legged, enraptured by the movie, "The Red
Balloon."

at five, most of us thought the "Pledge of Allegiance"
was what mom used to dust furniture in the living
room.

but inch by inch, we sprouted like good little seeds,
with ambitious eyes fixed on the first grade.
no subsequent school year resembled
the uniqueness of kindergarten though.
why? because it was like
a stretch of untouched, freshly-fallen snow:

a place for five-year-olds to create
figure eights
and plow
into tomorrow.

Sally Gross

March Hare

I see you out in the cool night air—
“Nibbling tender schustes”
As Mom used to say.
Scamper hither,
But always return to the same spot to chew.

You’re so close I can hear
The grassroots tearing at your tug—
Your ears are radars independent of each other.
I get the feeling you know I’m watching,
Yet you feel safe, unafraid, indifferent.

You make a salad bar out of my yard
And I smile when you roll d

o

w

n the hill.

Impressed by your ease of movement and
Peace of mind,
I thank you for reassuring me—
You can go home again.

Adrienne Webrley

The Attic

Up in the attic of my grandmother's house,
Looking through old chests of toys,
Magazines and photo albums.
Yearbooks yellowed with age of years past,
Memories of laughter and fun—
as well as reminisces of sad times.
Old gowns and costume jewelry,
 dusty from time spent unused.
Alone in the attic with only my thoughts
 and a single light bulb.
Trying to put myself in the past
When these antiques were alive in their own way;
Trying to imagine what times were like then,
 and how people thought and felt—
 people much like myself.
Thinking ahead of others to come
 to look through these treasures—
And where their feelings and thoughts might take
them,
Just as mine have lead me here.

Laura Lee Brigade

Of Poetry

Clock ticks.

A mower moves by the window

And hums and hums and hums away,

Listfully my fingers move

A single stream, sweat slips down my side

(I pause to listen, or maybe turn a page)

Oh, another piece, of art

I know, without reading . . .

That this seething . . .

was not intended.

Jeffery David Evans

All Ears

Dear dog

I don't appreciate

your cold nose

William S. Gornall, Jr.

Patience

As I wallow in stupidity
dare not
brush me off
for just like hell
we all need our time
in heaven

and just the same
fear not
to cast me off
when my knowledge
seeps from my arrogance

yet have patience
with me
knowing that I am
your brother
but even more important
an inevitable
reflection

Jacob Snodgrass

The Search

I saw:

A man in a gold laced cape,
Your body, in his blessed hands,
Extended high above your table.

(He was a tall man)

Sacred words he uttered
Softly under his breath.

I saw a pigeon swoop down
And your body, this foul bird ingests.
But the man had another of your bodies
Of which we may find rest
Is this where Eldorado lie?

I saw:

A man in a dab damp cloak,
Tomes he held tightly in his heart.

A pigeon was tugging
On his salt-pepper beard.
(Pigeons are hungry birds)

With one stroke
The man strake it dead.

I saw lions and bears
Surround this dreary man,
Palms and alms
They offered from their hands.
Is this where Eldorado lie?

I saw:

Adam, my friend.

Forgiveness he asked.

I once had what you now seek

But the blood-red I ingested.

The blue turned shades of gray.

(Ah, the glory of the clouds)

I saw rusty flames spit up from the ground.

The glacier I knew as Adan
Was now liquid.

Joseph Hecker

October Frost

Dark night, clear night,
Crisp October air night.
As a sparkling white blanket
 on all that exists,
Frost is born on leaf and blade,
And gives the earth a taste
 of winter's chill.

Janet Miller

The Question

And as he looked wistfully
 into my eyes,
He said in a voice of anxious question
"What would you do if I were ugly,
 but the most devoted and faithful of all men?"
Immediately
The appropriate answer appeared on the tip of my
tongue

—to take his hand, to hold him and keep him for-
ever—

Then it stopped, my mouth unable to open
as I started back at him
tightlipped—
unable to lie.

Cyndi Miller

A Creative Connection***First Place, 1990 I.S. Essay Contest***

It was nearly dawn. The crowd was beginning to assemble. The most adamant came first, their faces set, waiting. The air about them reeked of revenge. The sky was beginning to lighten, to magnify the footsteps from every direction, and the dove's lament could be heard in the distance.

It was a large gathering. Some had camped nearby the night before. There were in the crowd faces from many years past, some bearing the scars, the countenance they were destined to live with forever. A hush came over everyone as the buses from the sanitariums made their way down the nearby streets. One by one they were emptied, attendants leading the most feeble-minded, though today they seemed able to focus, to almost understand again.

Government agents, attorneys, newsmen from across the nation, fought for the best places. The restless conversation grew louder and louder, drowning the muffled weeping of one small group of mourners near the front who had come to claim the body.

He walked briskly from the building with an air of determination, as he had walked hundreds of times before, but this time his walk ended at the buckeye tree. The crowd was chanting now. One or two, seemingly under control, went completely mad at the sight of him. Security guards made a human fence between the man and the throng. The man remained calm, indifferent, as if he had lived this scene before and was only acting it out again in his mind. What did one man do, what could one man do that would result in this fury against him?

He was a quiet man who lived a simple life.

His routine was his comfort. Up at 7:23 in the morning, out the door at 7:55, arriving at his first class promptly at 8:00. After another class at ten, he kept office hours, then walked briskly home in time to watch "The Young and The Restless." He always ate at 6:00 sharp, watched "Entertainment Tonight," then spent a quiet evening reading Shakespeare, D. H. Lawrence, or Faulkner, and, occasionally, Keats or Yeats (the two greatest poets who ever lived.) On weekends he sometimes went to movies, and every four weeks got a haircut. He believed in God, loved his mother, never ate meat, paid his taxes (albeit creatively) so, why, then?

It all began years ago with his calculus professor. Fifty minutes a day, fifty minutes to complete one problem. One each day. Like a robot, all the movements ordered. He began to see his life before him; a math teacher's life. He switched to literature, which is ever-changing, earned his M.A., then Ph.D. and began his career as a professor of English at Otterbein College.

One evening early in his career, while reading Dostoevsky's *Notes From Underground*, something clicked inside of him. He was never the same again. Why indeed must $2+2=4$? He set out to separate the men from the boys, the women from the girls. He began to give assignments that no one else in the history of his profession had ever dared to think about. He insisted that students come to class and participate. He stretched their minds as far as they would stretch. He sat on his desk, laughing to himself as he walked with his classes through one kind of hell after another, then insisted that they define those walks again and again on page after page. Occasionally he would straddle a chair in front of the class, giving the illusion

that he was coming to meet them on their level. Just when they would feel a bit confident, he would close his book and silently walk out, leaving them sweating, wondering, hanging until the next day.

Essay took on new meaning in his classes, as did overnight assignments. "Specific concrete reference" became swear words around campus, as well as words like "clarity of expression," "clear focus on an idea," "significant analysis," "evidence," and "arrangement." Students were forced to become students again, to think, to make connections. Local libraries were filled with them, wandering from aisle to aisle babbling about the meaning of life. His exams were unbearable. Occasionally a student would pass one, going mad shortly after. (Dostoevsky himself would have been proud.) Lines formed at his door at the end of the term. One by one, students, penitent and hopeful, would leave his office sobbing, cursing, vowing to have their day.

They kept their vows. A few of them had taken sick days from their factory jobs, closed their beauty shops, shoe repairs, and refused to collect garbage that day. They came to watch, to cheer, to finally have that day. Two in the small, tearful group at the front were recognized by the media as Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, former students; one man, one woman, in a sea of boys and girls.

From the throng, four were chosen. Those who were unable to hold the guns were allowed help. As he faced them, he looked almost delighted, as if his life had meant something after all, as if he had found at last the answer to the dilemma of existence. He was given the chance to speak, but no one would let him. One woman heard him say, "Well, I was going to say something, but it doesn't matter anyway."

The body was never recovered. Some say his heart beats beneath the floorboards in Towers 314. The movie about his life was not a box office success. The book, *Tales of Ordinary Madness*, written by one of his former students, was so Faulkner-like that it couldn't be properly written for the screen. However, the book remains on the best-seller list to this day and is required reading in every I.S. 300 course at Otterbein.

Alexander Pope said, "A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring. There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again." I disagree. I was in the professor's class (having passed a test, I now reside full-time at Bide-a-Wee Home for the Somewhat Insane), and I am convinced that a little bit of knowledge will get you a good job, make you smile, and enable you to raise a family. Much knowledge, however, (as the professor and Dostoevsky might agree) will only increase your thirst for more and can drive you mad before you can apply any of it. Only a few can handle it. Only a few have.

Each year on the anniversary of his execution, a man and a woman return to Otterbein and place a rose beneath the buckeye tree in his memory. This year they nailed a plaque to the tree which reads, "Thank you, Professor, for helping us to make the connection, for showing us that $2+2$ can indeed equal 5." *

*This story is part fact, part fiction. Names were omitted to protect the guilty. There really is a professor, and he hasn't been shot, of course, but he talks about it now and then (as do some of his students.) I was in his I.S. 300 class, and he did indeed challenge me as he gently, but firmly encouraged and uplifted all

of us as we read, interpreted, and wrote for him. We did read Dostoevsky's *Notes From Underground* which continues to challenge me as I refer to it again and again.

In many ways this professor is not unique. Without exception, the professors in all of my I.S. courses have dedicated much time and energy toward helping me and other students grow as individuals, become more aware of the world around us, and communicate more effectively.

Three I.S. courses in particular have allowed me to explore and gain valuable insights which, although useful in any career, will be especially helpful to me, a future teacher. The Emerging Woman course helped me to break out of my cocoon and begin to develop a more definite "I am." Once I took flight, I was challenged by I.S. 270 as I explored dialogues of men and women. This class helped me specifically to more clearly define my role as a woman in this age, and to learn how I might live in better harmony alongside my brothers in society. I.S. 300 pulled all of these concepts into perspective for me by asking, "How, then, must I live?" This course was a culmination. It taught me that I must use what I learn. I must do, not just be, and there are no limits. I am especially grateful to have taken this course.

I know that as a result of all three courses I am writing better, thinking more creatively, and making a better connection to the world in which I live. Hopefully, I shall be able to pass along this enthusiasm and encouragement to my future students.

I do not, incidentally, live at the Bide-a-Wee Home, but, then, my life isn't over yet.

Sharon Richardson

Starving Lotus Eaters

I

Appalachian hazy-dust morning
Tree shadows cast vague streaks of sun
on cracked roads and tin roofs.
Kicking up gravel with well calloused toes,
twirling incandescent yellowgirl— she
still wears the happy armor
of childhood.
“What will you do with your life, little girl?
teachernurseastronaut?”
Joyous dervish spell negated—
blank truth-eyes silent and stilled.
“Guess I’ll jus’ marry a coal miner, that’s all—”

II

Colonia bakes backwater.
Big Texas sun burns sparse grass patches,
shatters shacks, makes children wail.
Iglesias blaes part distortion—broken English
calls.
Woman, child— one room huddled up.
Grim eyes set deep in colorful facade.
Detached glances for the three room mansion we
raised.
Stoic grim-eyed woman speaks.
“God bless you.” Phonetic whispers,
swift mechanical embrace—
she felt like stone.

Greg Davis

Father's Mother

Funny smells.
I associate you with funny smells.
And hate.

You used to send me into a
 blind rage;
Now I am numb to your
 bitterness and
Strangely immune to your subtle talk
Of who I am and who I am not.
 But I don't forget.

I have buried you a thousand times.
A spectre in the flesh is
 all you are to me.

Adrienne Webrley

apple tree of the fawn

i like my eyes.
not for their paltry beauty,
but for their everyday
soakings of
sunlight sprays
and
crisp white-blues
that bathe
a reindeerish buck and two fawns
in the misty, apple
tree morning.

Sally Gross

Cranberry Wine

We sat in a room,
Under a naked bulb,
On hard, dark, wooden chairs,
And stared at each other,
As our lungs filled with smoke.
We drank cranberry wine.

Then we glared through the smoke with burning eyes
At the foul, dark, moon
Peaking through the solo pane.
The shade we slammed on the uninvited light.

Then we read Plath to each other
In deep, articulate, oration.
We were pompous scholars with literary tones.

Then we watched a pus-covered spider
Climb a cinder wall.
Quietly, patiently, we held it in our eyes
Until it reached the summit,
For then it was your nicotine-stained fingers that pinched
The creature lifeless.
I yelled, "none may climb alone!"

Then, in passion, we welded our bodies together.
Pretzeled our limbs.
As a vice being tightened,
So we were.
The first meeting of our greasy flesh.
The virgin unleashing of our horse's lust.

Then, as violently as we clashed
We became hateful foes, and vomited each other away.
For philosophers we were that night,
Lovers not yet.

Then, cigarettes we fired
And we drank still more, cranberry wine.

Joseph Hecker

As Long as the Grass Shall Grow, Ye Shall Be...

Not far from the front gates of the Saguaro National Monument is an old wooden shack standing between two large saguaro cacti whose thick arms reach toward the sun. The shack is bleached from the sun, and nailed to an old railroad tie is a sign reading: "Geronimo III: Great-Grandson of Geronimo."

The old Indian man who lived there sat out on the porch of this shack until a group of curious tourists and snowbirds gathered, and then for five dollars apiece he'd weave stories as colorful and intricate as the blanket he sat on. No one ever knew if he really was related to Geronimo, but when he was done with his tales you always felt it was worth the money, if the money really mattered to you at all.

My first encounter with the old man was about three years ago. I was taking a young lady from back east to see the desert. When I saw the sign, I had to stop. After convincing the lady it would be interesting, I paid the old man ten dollars, and he started his tales. The lady thought it was degrading, but the old man intrigued me. I never saw the young lady again.

After that first encounter, I went to see the old man about once a week. Sometimes I was in a group; other times it was just me. A delicate relationship began to grow between

us. I would drive up, pay him a five, and he would talk. Sometimes he would share a story and a beer, and I would watch his old eyes fill with fire as he recounted battles fought long before he was born. He never knew my name, and I never knew what his really was. He called me son, and I called him old man. As I said before, our relationship was delicate. It was delicate for one reason. It was understood that I would never ask who he really was, and he would never ask why I was there.

Winter quarter came, and I was taking an overload because I had been shut out of two classes in the fall. Most of my time was spent working and not enough was spent sleeping. One Friday my brain was fried like a lab monkey, and I had finished my last Corona. I got out my wallet and found only a five. That wasn't enough for another six, so I resigned myself to lie around my room the rest of the day. As I held the five, I thought of the old man for the first time in seven weeks.

I went to the parking lot and peeled the top off my Jeep. The old man could clear my mind and probably even give me a beer. The Jeep started, and I began my hour drive to Tucson.

There were no cars or people by the old shack. I pulled my Jeep up close to the porch. A young Indian girl was walking around the shack picking up pieces of pottery and shoving

them into an old canvas bag.

"Where's the old man?" I asked her.

She turned slowly and looked at me. "He is dead. Go home."

"My God."

Her words made me fall back. I couldn't believe what I had heard. I muttered condolences to the young girl.

Her dark eyes pinned me to the Jeep. "I say he is dead. Go home." She rolled up the blanket the old man had sat on and tossed it across the thick neck of her pony.

I wanted to ask the girl who the old man really was, but something kept me from speaking. As she rode off into the desert, I wondered if he ever really believed he was Geronimo III.

Who he really was, or what he believed didn't matter. Because now I would tell people that Geronimo III, the Great-Grandson of Geronimo, had died. Who he really was no longer mattered. What he wasn't in life, he had become in death.

I pulled the crumpled five from my jeans and tossed it into the fire burning in a shallow pit in front of the shack. The old man had given me many stories. Now, I would give him one.

Edward Karsbner

Apologies

very sorry—
sorry to have made
us
so complicated.
i know now it was just a cry for help.
you saw my frenzied ways
and were frightened by me.

i am not meant to be feared.

please—don't be afraid
its only
me
slipping out, away,
and into your arms,
i reach for your hand—
 somehow it's cold, and unwilling
 to take hold
 of mine.

please, just hold me
 but be gentle—
for my soul is a fragile thing,
and irreplaceable.
what you see is my helplessness...
 the breaking down of my defenses—
that's all.
so, please, don't be afraid,
for i am not meant to be feared.

Linda J. Baden

Contributors

Linda J. Baden is a junior English major. "I love playing my electric guitar and pretending to really play."

Laura Lee Brigade is a freshman who is active in her church as a youth leader. "I spent most of my past summer counseling kids who had much more energy than I did."

Greg Davis is a sophomore English major. "My inspiration comes from the sometimes terrible truth of the world— either that or ice tea and Milano cookies."

Jeffery David Evans is a freshman from Portsmouth, Ohio. He would like to "live on the river bank" and considers getting up every morning his greatest accomplishment.

Lisa M. Freeman is a freshman Speech Communications major.

William S. Gornall, Jr. is a junior Math major. "I enjoy visiting the dugout around 3:00 a.m., and I have discovered the joy of cream cheese and bagels."

Sally Gross, an "anglophile and bibliophile," has an eclectic postcard collection and an abhorrence for clipping her toenails.

Joseph Hecker, a graduate student in education says, "Read Candide."

Edward Karshner is a junior English major "just killin' time 'til the Circleville Pumpkin Show."

Cyndi Miller is a senior English/International Studies double major who is currently studying in Dijon, France.

Janet Miller: "I am a Continuing Studies student, and Otterbein is my first college experience. This experience of learning is fascinating, and the opportunity of a college education is invaluable."

Jacob Snodgrass is a junior Education major who hopes that Jane's Addiction is on the radio when he dies.

Sharon Richardson is a junior English/Communication Continuing Studies student.

Adrienne Wehrley is a vegetarian who likes Twin Peaks, the Soup Dragons, Denny's, and, "oddly enough," the Navy.

