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1991 Fall Quiz and Quill Magazine

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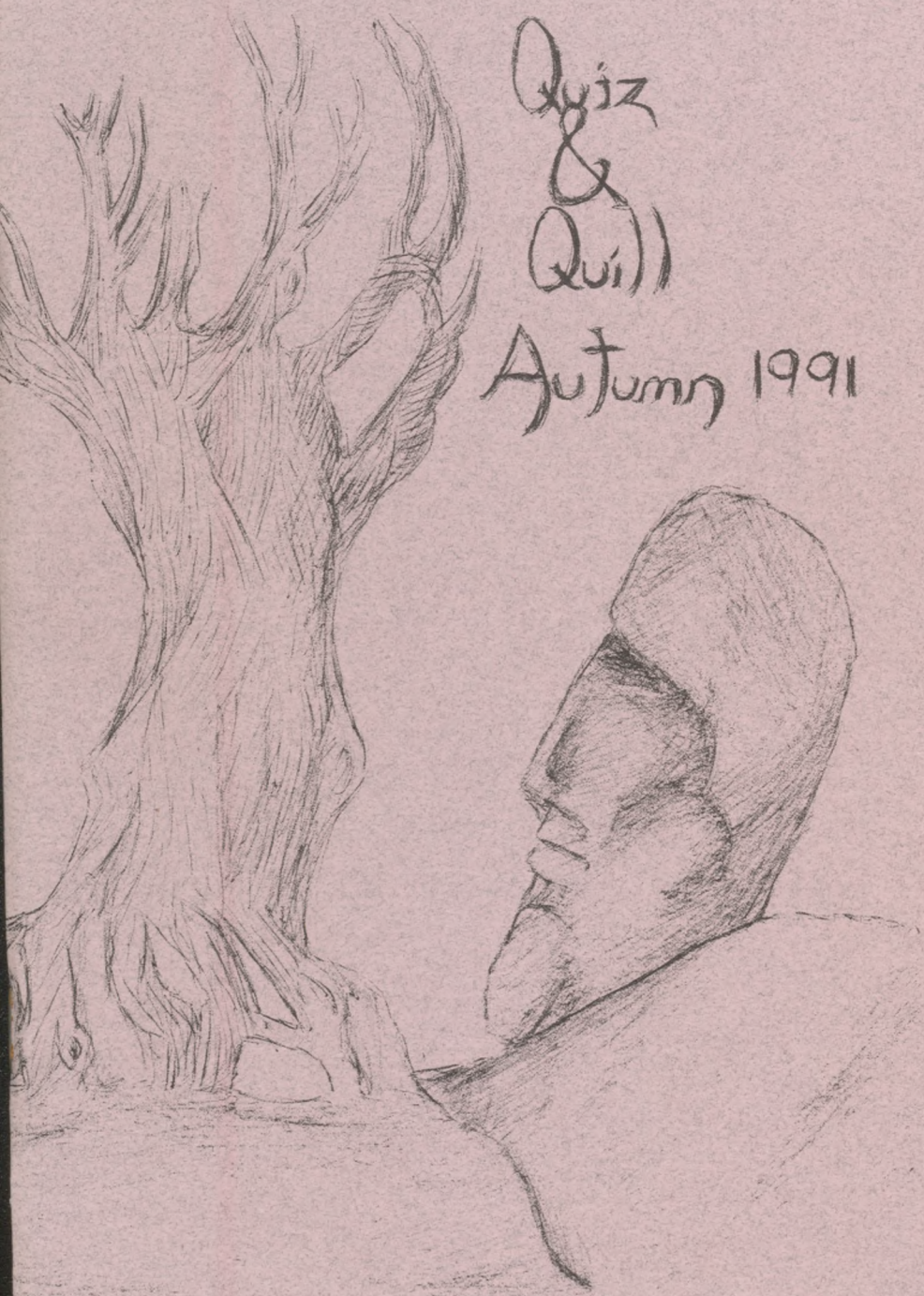


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Quiz
&
Quill

Autumn 1991

Quiz and Quill

Fall, 1991

You are invited to take freely from this issue and to journey into the world of its writers. In all hope, there will be something for you. If not, explore again and maybe a deeper search will find you a treasure.

Thanks and encouragement go to all those who submitted this quarter, and congratulations are extended to all those who had their work selected for this issue.

A special reminder goes to everyone. Next quarter is when the *Quiz and Quill* writing contest will be taking place. Writers can be preparing their pieces over Christmas break to submit next quarter. Good Luck.

Editors

Aaron J. Thompson, **editor**

Jacob Snodgrass, **assistant editor**

Marilyn Saveson, **advisor**

Staff

Shannon Cochran, Greg Davis, Kelley Grant, Sally Gross

Angel McMullen, Robin Reh Mobley, Dave Smith,

David Villwock, Duff Woodside, Previn Wyatt

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<i>Cover Design</i>	Greg Davis

For Julie, wherever I may find her

If I were an artist,
I would like to draw your face.

But I'm no artist, I'm a writer
And my pen cannot capture
the mysterious beauty of your eyes
or the shyness of your knowing smile.

I would like to be a film maker—
and put down on film what I see
so often in my day dreams (you and me)
walking in the autumn, holding hands
kicking leaves, and laughing.

(Sometimes I wonder) if someday you might
sigh and laugh with your daughter
and tell her, "There was this poet once . . ."

Duff Woodside

love is an ephemeral truth

"three days is forever"
you tell me with a smile
i try to laugh but it's not right
and so we talk awhile

"Nietzsche was a misogynist and you're a bastard," you cry
glad to be your bastard, but Nietzsche's got his place
"God *can* dance," you say in laughter
as i kiss your ghostly face

"Oh Dave, my mind hurts," you say in your special way

"hang on," i say in mine
there's too much left to say
intoxicating sleep creeps up
and carries you away

i watch fulfilled as you sleep
shade who haunts my cobwebbed mind
beautiful, happy, but troubled young ghost
who has smiled at me through time
which love transcends but still i'm down
for just three days you are mine

David Smith

Called Home

Second Place, 1990-91 Quiz and Quill Short Story Contest

I had to leave spring training when Grandma called. It was my first week with the team, and the management was kinda hacked when I asked if I could go home for a while. They said I had a week to get my "family crisis" under control and get back to camp, "where ballplayers belong before a season."

It had something to do with my brother Tapeworm. His real name's Eric. I just call him Tapeworm 'cause he never stops eating—you know, like those little parasites that are always sucking the blood out of something. Grandma said she couldn't talk too much on the phone—she was calling from some hospital. All she said was that Tapeworm hadn't been hurt—you know, broken jaw or anything—, but had snapped in the head or something.

I took a night-flight back to Greensboro the day after Grandma called—I had to spend the morning and afternoon pitching castrated fast-balls to all the other minor league bump-ups before the coach would let me go. My granddad was pacing all around the gate when I got in. He looked like one of those paramedic Joes waiting on a heart for some poor guy sucking blood through a machine and all. When he saw me, he gargled "hello," grabbed my bag and took off for that luggage deal. He had always been like that: leaving way too early for things and always doing something, like clearing the table while everybody's still eating. He just about drove me crazy when Ricky and me and Tapeworm moved in with him and Grandma after Dad died.

My dad died from this massive heart attack when I was in fifth grade. It was just after my mom passed on from having Ricky and Tapeworm—they're fraternal

twins. Tapeworm came out first, but Ricky got all twisted and stuck. The doctors say he's so slow now 'cause the cord got wrapped round his neck and cut off his air. They got Ricky out, but Mom died when the "trauma" made a bunch of her ribs snap and rip her intestines open. She bled to death.

The night after Mom's funeral, dad died in his sleep. We buried him with Mom. I haven't been to a funeral since. I hate seeing that talcky makeup crap they put on dead people; it makes 'em look like powdered donuts. Besides, I figure I've had my share of those things.

It's kinda hard to believe Dad had a heart attack anyway. He wasn't overweight or anything, but I guess he didn't get much exercise behind that desk of his. You wouldn't think that somebody who'd been so athletic would die a fat man's death, though. I mean when he was in high school, he was an all-state pitcher like me. He was even drafted to pro ball right out of high school, but he didn't go for some reason. I haven't gotten the whole story on that—Grandma never likes to talk about it for some reason. Anyway, all I remember about him was that huge desk and all those dusty plaques hanging on the wall and some diploma paper lying on his file cabinet.

Before seeing Ricky and Tapeworm, Granddad took me to see Grandma. It didn't take a college guy to figure out she'd been crying. She'd stayed up most of the night doing rosaries for Ricky and Tapeworm. Heck, she even sent the priest over to talk to Tapeworm—she really does care about that kid.

Grandma said it all happened during the last inning of one of Ricky and Tapeworm's games. You see, Ricky's the bat-boy on Tapeworm's high school team—the same team I played on when I was in school. Ricky

loves baseball, but he's never been able to play—you know, being so dull-witted he might get hit in the head with a pitch or something. His room is plastered with pictures from my years in high school legion ball and my seasons in the minor league. I got him autographed baseballs from every team in the minors—he told me I was his “best friend for life” when I got him those things. I was looking forward to his trip up this year to see me finally play in the pinstripes with the Yanks.

Tapeworm, on the other hand, doesn't work hard enough. He just doesn't care, or maybe he doesn't appreciate his talent. He's gotta have it. It's just untapped and all, ya know. Anyway, he just embarrasses himself by playing half-assed all the time. He wouldn't have such an attitude problem if he was in poor Ricky's shoes—my God.

All grandma really knew was what Ricky and Tapeworm's coach had told her. She hadn't been at the game and Tapeworm wouldn't talk to her. Coach Carlson told her that in the last inning when Ricky tried to give Tapeworm a bat, Tapeworm grabbed it and started pounding on Ricky with it! When Ricky hit the dirt, Tapeworm started for the end of the dugout where some other players had been sitting near Ricky, but Coach and the umpire tackled him before he got there. Grandma said it took five minutes just to get Tapeworm to stop screaming. I still think she might be stretching that 'cause he hardly says more than three words a day: “What's for dinner.” Ricky was taken away in an ambulance. Poor kid, he always liked those things so much. He wasn't awake for that ride, though.

I really couldn't understand any of this. I mean, the only double play Tapeworm could turn was downing a cheeseburger and milkshake at the same meal. It just didn't figure, Tapeworm showing any energy about

something.

Once I'd heard what Grandma had to say about the whole thing, I told Granddad I wanted a ride over to where they had Tapeworm. I would have gone and seen Ricky first, but the doctors told Grandma he was under *sedation* for the pain and he wouldn't be awake for a couple of days. Once I got Granddad pulled away from the weather report, we took off.

Tapeworm was put in some mental hospital. You know, one of those places where they got dogwood trees hiding a big glassy fish pond where the inmates are supposed to "meditate," or relax, or whatever they do. The hospital guy said Tapeworm had calmed down by the time they got him there and didn't make any trouble.

"I had a short session with your brother Eric, sir. He was calm by the time he arrived, but he wouldn't say anything. Unfortunately, we had only one room available for him to stay in, and it was one of our security units. We gave him toiletries and told him that it was the only space we had left—we didn't want him to think we were trying to restrain him. We left the door open so he could . . ."

"Where is he? I want to see him."

"Well yes, that's fine. He has had his breakfast and is in his room now. I think he will benefit from having a visitor. I will have someone escort you."

When I got there, Tapeworm was just looking through the thick screen on the window.

"What the hell do you think you're doing cranking on little Ricky with a damn bat!" He didn't answer until I grabbed him and shook him some.

"They told him to! Those crumby, jockstrapped bastards told him to!"

"Told him what? Who told him what?"

"To piss his pants! He waddled out there all bow-

legged and stupid with piss running down his leg to give me a bat. You know they call him 'Wishbone' because you can see the sunset through his legs. They say it to his face, and he just laughs right along with them."

"Well that's just great you onion-skinned baby. Somebody makes fun of you, so you go pound the hell out of our retarded brother. Ricky's lying in a hospital bed with four broken ribs and a fractured skull. Hell, I oughta bust your skull! You know, Grandma is on the verge of a breakdown. She stayed up all last night praying for you and sent the priest over here first thing this morning. You should be thankful she does so much. And don't ever let me hear you call Ricky stupid again, because I will crack your skull open then."

Tapeworm swung around and looked back out the window for a while like he could just ignore me. Who knows, he was probably dreaming about some giant ice cream sundae that he could eat himself to death in. I mean, it's sorta funny, I could see him just kinda floating in a big vat of ice cream—you know, his body frozen and preserved and all.

"How's Ricky? Is he gonna be ok?"

"Look at me when you say something."

"How is he? Is he going to be ok?"

"How's Ricky? How's Ricky?" You're the one who split his head open, ya idiot! How the hell do you think he is? Or wasn't that you cracking on him with the bat?"

"I didn't want to hurt him. You know you shouldn't say 'hell' so much. The priest was here and. . ."

"You know, you could be one of those talk show hosts with as much as you're spewing out today. I liked you a lot better when you kept your mouth shut. Man, the more I think about it, the more I wanna kill you . . ."

you're worthless! Ah damn, I don't care what the priest said to you, I hope you rot in hell."

I left 'cause I was gonna get on him any second. The priest was in the lobby talking to the hospital guy. He recognized me right away 'cause he had followed my ball-playing since I was a little kid, and, besides, my grandmother had him over for dinner practically every Sunday of my life.

"Hello Joe, I spoke with your brother earlier. He is very upset. I am glad he didn't hurt himself also. When we talked, I sensed that he was harboring some deeply self-destructive feelings. I hope he doesn't act on those feelings. You know what a true tragedy that would be."

"Well, the director of this place told me that when he had his *breakdown*, he released all these 'pent-up aggressions,' and now he just needs time to get himself back into the real world, ya know. And, besides, they've got him in that padded room, he couldn't stub his toe in that thing."

A few days later, I went back to see Tapeworm on Grandma's prompting. He told her what I said before I left, and she was pretty hot about it. She wanted me to apologize to the little squealer. I sat down on the bed in the middle of his room and said I hoped that the doctors could work out his problems. I told him that I had to go back down to camp 'cause I could only get a few days leave for "family emergencies," with the season so close.

Before I went back to Florida, I saw Ricky at his hospital. I could only sit and look at him, though, 'cause he was still on these heavy drugs. Seeing him just made me sick. He had bandages wrapped all around his ribs and head. He looked like a giant ankle splint. He got out of the hospital a week after I got back to camp. He healed up pretty well. That's one thing about him, he at

least isn't a bleeder. I know, 'cause whenever we would goof around and he would get hurt, he wouldn't cry too much. In a way, he was a man about things.

After Ricky was feeling stronger, Grandma thought it would be a good idea to have him visit Tapeworm at the mental place. She wanted them to make amends and all. I guess she thought it would help Tapeworm get over himself. When Ricky saw Tapeworm, he went over and hugged and kissed him. That's the one thing about Ricky I can't stand. He's always hugging and kissing people. I hate it when Ricky does that. I mean he'll kiss people he doesn't even know. But anyway, after Ricky kissed Tapeworm, he said, "I'm sorry I made you mad, Eric."

Earlier that morning, the hospital guy found a regular room available and asked Grandma if she wanted to have Tapeworm moved into it. She said yes 'cause she thought it would be good for him to have a more "homey setting." He hanged himself with the sheets the night he moved in. He left a note that said "I'm sorry." That's it, just "I'm sorry." He's always been like that—never saying enough when he should and running off at the mouth when he shouldn't.

I didn't go to the funeral because I was down here and all, and like I've said, I've had my share of those things. Grandma told me the priest put on a nice service. She said Ricky walks down to the graveyard every Sunday now and puts flowers on Eric's grave. Ricky's a good kid.

Aaron J. Thompson

Blood and Teardrops

They are not tears of joy
Says the clown then with a sigh
This is merely what it sounds like
When a clown begins to cry

He cannot show his feelings
For that is too much of a task
So he laughs it all away
So very safe behind his mask

The sorrow runs so deeply
But the mask will hide it well
For the show must go on
So that the clown can go to Hell

Waiting off in darkness
He is tortured and insane
But in the moment of his entrance
The cheers eclipse his pain

The screams die down to whispers
As he climbs up on the wire
And as he looks down at the ground below
He wishes it were higher

His performance, it is brilliant
His fans look on and cheer
But no one even noticed
That in his eye there was a tear

It is time for the finale
His act excites them all
But excitement turns to horror
As the clown begins to fall

He cries out for their help
As the mask slips out of place
So that now the crowd can see
The terror that haunts his face

Now there is nothing left but silence
And the crowd can't understand
For they treated him as a god
But forgot he was a man

And now the shadow of a corpse
Is cast upon the ground
And around it flow the blood
And teardrops of a clown

James R. Hixson

A Love In Another City

The stale morning, dishes skyscape in the sink,
the front yard is dead.

The sun stole all the water and green and I
almost feel guilty for not throwing trash
on the lawn to give it some color and character

An Asian woman has stepped out onto her deck
three times within the last hour
yet she says nothing and looks at no one.
She sways forward, back and forward again
tiny, flat lips part
and she coughs.

The world has yet to change.
She returns to her apartment
and wraps a pillow about her head
in an attempt to hold onto her remaining thoughts
as they burst into miniature particles,
float toward the ceiling
and burn in the lights

I considered asking her over for coffee
but she never came out again.
And perhaps she is into a good novel or Mozart
or maybe she is remembering a time when she saw an animal,
fed it and for an instant she recognized it as her dead
lover.

Yet, more than likely she has gone empty
thoughtless, hopeless
only holding onto a love in another city
where the grass too has died,
but at least there it can be felt
rather than watched tragically by a skull
smoldering vacant of pleasure and beauty
and even something as miserable as everyday ambition

Jacob Snodgrass

Thin

A dream takes form from the fog in her bathroom
but the mirror is obscured and without it my eyes are useless.
Gasping now, the sweat comes out so fast
that I am reduced and into the drain
I spill ever faster through the sewers in a thousand directions
until she finds me floating on a puddle downtown,
shimmering like gasoline and she puts me into a jar
where I can rest a moment.

At home she pours me out onto the couch and gives me a
cigarette.

The smoke is warm to my throat
but the coughing threatens to turn me inside out
as I am so light of head that I float out of the window
on the Autumn breeze.

I blend in with the clouds
but they begin to bump into one another
and the lightning brings rain
and again water is my enemy as I fall to the Earth
and this time she catches me on the tip of her tongue and
swallows me.

Soon she begins to cry and when I'm whole again
we go outside for ice cream
but it is too cold and I freeze.

She doesn't know and when she touches me
I shatter into a myriad of fragments
onto the flower beds below
and melt into the soil
where the water joins me and protects me
because it realizes now how I have suffered
and she digs but does not find me
and I am finally free.

It is nice here with the Sun shining on my petals.
I bloom quite beautifully really
and every day she comes
but she does not know me
and for this I am so happy.

Bill Mason

Me, Oh My

Me oh my, we live to die.
To crawl or fly, me oh my.
Maybe we were born too late,
Maybe we were born on time—
Maybe things will fall to pieces,
Maybe things will work out fine.

He entered the world head first and crying;
A few seconds of life and he spent them all dying.
Helpless infant that died at birth—
I wonder what his soul was worth?
To be snatched fresh from the womb,
Leave mama weeping by the tomb.
Born straight into heaven a lifetime too soon.
Are we forgiven or are we doomed?

Me oh my, living to die—
The Inexplicable Conundrum
But I might as well try . . .

There is sorrow in the streets
Where strangers come to meet,
Old men rage in loneliness
They haven't got shoes for their feet.
The forest of dead dreams is thriving.
The name of the game is Surviving.
The decrepit and old are departing;
The pathetic and bold are arriving.
Delusions will mesh with their dreams
As memories fade with their jeans—
When God is forsaken, what does it mean?
A desolation of angels is all that it seems.

Lonely prophet lives on the hill.
His mind will wander where it will,
Confronting questions from above—
He knows all of all, save for love.
Counting stars in speckled skies,
He will count them all until he dies.
Holy Bible in his hand,
He digs his toes into the sand,
Looking out across the land—
"TRUST IN JESUS!" he then cries
"Science is a pack of lies.
Eden is where life began,
Christ our Lord will live again."

Me oh my, wondering why—
Are we something from the seas
Or something from the skies?
Though He giveth the wind to dry the eyes of the world,
He giveth the reasons to cry.

John Kessler

Green illumination—below—Green illumination
below shards of glass bottles of beer
below stockpiled ashes standing bold upon ashtrays
 Shakespeare's Hamlet tumbled
 from my cigarette
 and stood palming his tragic brow
Below twirling hairs dancing on my chin
beneath glacial mounds of Chinese take-out
beneath the coffee stains embedded in my taste buds
 I heard a single teardrop
 gradually melt into the crooked floorboards
 and search in anguish for Elsinore

Obscenely seated as an overweighted beast
skin lids droop from my eyeball skull sepulchre
fingers spasm rubbing wrinkles—turning pages
drunk again
4:05 a.m. and I've been sleepless for 36 hours
 it is disturbing how indifferent we all have become

 Couldn't care less about my grandfather dying
blacked out in the bathroom his bowels exploded
dirtied his pants like a helpless infant
 Couldn't care less about my friend's heart failure
shrugged it off knowing my time will come
 Couldn't care less about the cancer in my system
lung coughing contractions sucking down clotted green smoke

I'll shed my tears elsewhere—on Shakespearian tragedies
 weep over Hamlet resting in silence
 poisoned ears unable to hear the words of fading Osric
For there is an uncanny security in releasing my emotions
for fiction which can be forgotten in an instant
or resurrected for the moment

Jacob Snodgrass

painfully ecstatic

sitting.
thoughts of mercury
cold beer and
cocaine
the late night d.j.
gets heavy once again
and i begin thinking about starting a revolution.

sipping.
michael's fired up again
he's making us think
is he
inside our heads?
he is inside the head of humanity
but we don't feel victimized.

no.
not even distressed
the blood flows
and the thoughts go
some know
theirs go
way too much
too painfully ecstatic.

romantic cynic,
i sit
and wonder
is it ever better
to be the
thoughtless one?

David Smith

My Friend

My friend I thought I knew you
when we met that evening in the woods,

just to talk.

We shared our deepest secrets,
our sorrows, and our dreams.

With unstructured conversation
and uninhibited expression
we broke the walls between us.

Like the wind around us we were free.

We ran, we played, we made a pact:
friends for life
always there for one another.

"You don't have to be afraid" you said, "not with me."
So I heeded your words
I believed the things you told me,
I put aside my fears,
I opened up my heart to you,
I left my soul unguarded.

Now you act as though we never met
as if there is no bond between us.

The words you spoke, so many words,
are like dust blown in the wind
and this puzzles me.

What have I done?

What can I do?

What can I say?

What does friendship mean to you?

My friend I love you dearly
but my friend I do not know you.

Kelvin Carter

I Want to Marry a Girl Who Drives a Trans Am

I want to marry a girl who drives a Trans Am—
or at the very least, a very sleek car.
As my mind buzzes its drunken hum, my eyes steal a glance
at the perfect girl in the perfect car.
The dripping moonlight ignites
the teased mane streaming from her face
into the vision of God in a Pontiac.
The automobile's features mirror those she was born with
and amplify in an outpouring of hormonal technicolor.
As the sleepy traffic light changes to the dreaded green
she pulls away, my soul reeling behind as her tail lights meld.
I sigh restlessly
and the engine accelerates from the crossroads as if to say
"Keep your head up, there'll be another one."

Aaron Firstenberger

Birth on Lake Erie

Rocked like a baby
in the womb of the wooden boat
I awoke to the sun
perched on the water
to the music of the harbor angels
dancing along the docks
to the smell of fresh water
and the gentle rolling air.

Stephanie Lane

My Friend Jake

In the nighttime draw the curtains, I hear thunder.
Reckless wasteland, wicked homeland, wanton plunder.
He talks to shadows, runs with sinners, loves his mother.
Sunlight splatters, like ashes they scatter,
Like the day when we'll all run for cover...

Lonely women with their children, working fathers —
In family autos, four-door mottos, winning lottos.
"Bring home bacon, eggs, steak, and frozen dinners."
Nine-to-fivers, Wall Street lifers, weekend survivors—

All the while, ghetto child hunts down vials,
Runs with sinners.

Bus stop worries, through twilight he scurries
From door to corner to mall—
In shadow alley, profits tally
The losers keep losing withal.

Morning threatens to diminish the senses,
Twelve hours of sleep all alone.
Refreshed as a flower, no time to shower
It's back to the alley to roam.

Mama's rocking, soliloquy talking,
What's become of her baby?
Off to the races, the dragon he chases,
Coming home safe is a maybe.

Far away in green suburbs, trees thrive beside streetcurbs
Kitty-cats purr on a limb—
Behind the stone mansion there's another dimension
And never a mention of him.

John Kessler

Contributors

Kelvin Carter, a senior chemistry major says, "I'm a quiet guy who enjoys helping others and seeing people laugh and sing."

Greg Davis, a junior English writing major says, "The Davis quadrilateral is: sarcasm, iced tea, Milano cookies and Zen thought."

Aaron Firstenberger is a senior journalism major who claims to be the only "Mott the Hoople" fan on campus.

James R. Hixson, a senior theater major says, "He has come a long way since this poem was written."

John Kessler is a junior English major who thinks "everything will work out fine."

Stephanie Lane, a senior English major says, "On the clock of my life it's about 3:30 a.m.—God, I'm tired."

Bill Mason, a junior computer science major is appearing in the *Quiz and Quill* for the first time.

Dave Smith is a senior English major who believes life is just a phase he's going through.

Jacob Snodgrass, a senior education major says, "My artistic ability has been on a steady decline ever since the age of 8 years old, which was when I did my first water color painting. It was a hen."

Aaron J. Thompson, is a senior English/philosophy major. "Slay your dragon, or it will slay you."

Duff Woodside, a senior English creative writing major says, "Perhaps the most obvious fact about myself is that I laugh a lot."

