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To My Widow

I am twisted
on your sticky resin, tangled
on your twine.

And you swing towards me
like Tarzan,
on your nimble vine.

I can see your eyes, so hungry
as they view me on the ropes
and I struggle, rabid
to get free
grasping sweetly
dissolving hopes,
maybe a promise,
a little love.

Oh, my spindle wife
I have brought your children life
and this is how you serve me.
Am I now nothing but
melba toast
to be nibbled on daintily
and finally swallowed
with quiet sips
of your herbal tea?

Clyde A. Drake, Jr.

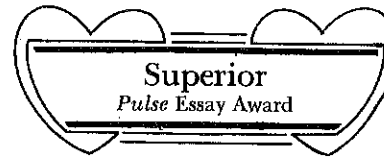


John B. Henry Jr.

Academic Metamorphosis

In green moonlight,
inch by inch,
we creep like hunch-backed
caterpillars through
shelves of criticism,
multitudinous scholarship,
leaving a trail of
luminescent slime for
more followers of the
worn-out path.
Cocooned in sticky threads of
lofty illusions we await
our luna wings.

Deborah Lynne Hollister



Planned Obsolescence and Waste By-Products of Affluence

This is the only nation in the world that can afford to indulge in the kind of conspicuous consumption that we accept as our just due. Even the President of the United States has been known to urge everyone to go out and spend, spend, spend in order to keep up the Gross National Product. This is a flagrant violation of our old Puritan ethic of thrift. Why do we accept it? Why do we cooperate in it? Because we are not convinced that there must be an end to the abuse of affluence.

In the average American supermarket, one whole aisle is devoted to disposable paper products. We can buy paper or foam disposable cups, plates, napkins, serving bowls, carry-out containers with lids attached, plastic forks, spoons, knives, and even disposable foil turkey roasting pans. After all, who wants to wash that greasy roasting pan? Throw it away and buy a new one next time. If we lived in Europe, we would change our buying habits. In the largest supermarket in Antwerp, Belgium, one shelf about four feet long is devoted to paper products - toilet paper.

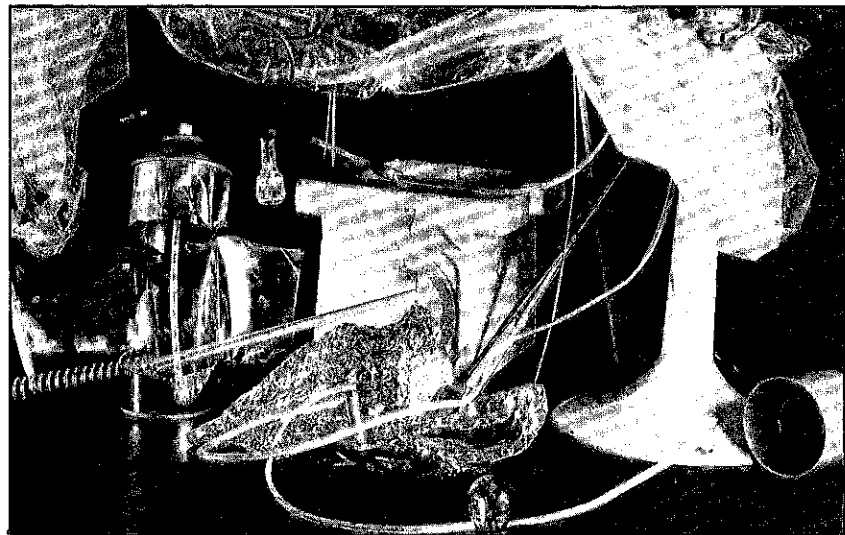
Merchants encourage this kind of throwaway society on small items and even on big-ticket items, because it's good for business. When my first child was born, I was given four dozen diapers. Those diapers were used for all three of my children, and some of them are still in use twenty-two years later as dusting rags. Today many mothers do not bother to buy cloth diapers - the disposable paper ones are so convenient. I am appalled at the attitude of conspicuous waste inherent in such a decision.

Merchants have a vested interest in making it difficult for us to repair an item, because then they can sell us a new one. I have a small electric cooker, the kind with lava rocks which simulate charcoal flavor without the mess of charcoal. The heating element has gone out; I know this is some simple thing, a loose wire or faulty thermostat or something. Yet I cannot find parts for it or anyone who is willing to try to repair it. Sears will not sell me just a heating element, but they will be happy to sell me a whole new cooker for \$50. I will do without rather than be a party to such a ripoff.

I am developing a fondness for old things. Maybe it is a response to this constant pressure to buy, buy, buy new things. I want to say, "No.



no, no!" I have a ten-year-old car, a red Catalina convertible. I love this car; it is my toy, and I am not attached to many material things that one might call toys. I plan to keep it; the car and I shall become antiques together, and some day I shall be a little old lady in tennis shoes, tooling around town in my antique red convertible. There is one problem; planned obsolescence is making it harder and harder to get parts. The plastic armrest on the right-hand door is cracking, and I cannot get a new one. The left wind-wing was leaking recently. I am told I cannot get just the new felt padding, I must buy the whole metal frame, glass etc., and I'd better buy that soon, as they do not make parts for models over ten years old. Since it is a convertible, and nobody makes convertibles anymore, the problem is compounded. The rubber gasket which makes the roof watertight above the windows is cracking; they do not make it anymore.



Construction by Art Nations
Photography by Cecil King

Once one becomes aware of this emphasis on the disposable, this pressure to replace rather than repair, our world begins to look entirely too plastic for comfort or charm. When I see an ad for a new \$50 gimmick, my very own electric pizza baker, or steam chicken fryer, or whatever, it repels me. I do not want to throw away all that is meaningful to me, and if it is not meaningful to me, I do not want it around me. What is meaningful to me must be repairable, so that I can keep it. In a land of abundance such as this, we can afford to be choosy. We can afford to demand quality and reject all this throwaway plastic.

When one insists on being surrounded by material things that one loves, the temptations of the marketplace diminish automatically. There is a charm inherent in the clutter of living. Perhaps my family room is a case in point. The knotty pine paneling dates the room as

date, but it would not be so warm and inviting. The open shelves are filled with bric-a-brac. At one time it was carefully arranged, but now it is crowded together with various candles, bud vases, mugs, tea cups, and school craft projects. Right in the middle hangs a blue plaster of Paris print of a hand, a small kindergarten-sized hand. Cookbooks fill the bottom shelf, and atop them in a heap lie tropical fish books, dog training books, and a copy of *Organic Gardening* magazine. Just as the shelves have filled with a motley assortment of meaningful though inexpensive acquisitions, so have the walls filled until the room is wallpapered with pictures, a Scout appreciation plaque, a Camp Fire appreciation certificate, a yarn picture of a tiger (or is it a striped cat?) made by a fourth grader. One very large framed collection of butterflies carefully covers the patched place in the sheetrock where the window air conditioner used to be. The picture window glare is softened by a twelve-foot-long Venetian blind. Over the years the top slat has been bent hopelessly out of shape, so that no matter how the slats are arranged that top slat is slightly askew. The vinyl floor, an old design of vari-colored spots, is a marvelous help to a mother — it is almost impossible to see a crumb, so no one can tell if you want to swat it, or to find a raisin if a child drops it. It has long ago lost its new look. Countless random pitted places testify to chair legs and table legs having rested there, and the tiles are beginning to crack in places.

A decorator, I suppose, would strip the room and start over. He has a vested interest in planned obsolescence, in promoting the new. He would insist on a new, shiny, un-pock-marked floor, even though my old one is solid vinyl and the new ones have one-sixteenth of an inch of vinyl over the rotogravure pattern. He would insist on removal of such tacky things as my slightly drunken Venetian blind and plaster of Paris hand prints. But the room has a lived-in, loved-in look just as it is. I can trace the years by school mementoes on those shelves and on those walls. That kindergarten-sized hand commemorated in plaster of Paris is now man-sized, attached to a son who is taller than his mother. All the decorators in the world could not put such warmth into this room as life has put into it. Committed as I am to resisting the planned obsolescence and conspicuous waste of today's society, I can happily survey my old vinyl speckled floor and drive my ten-year-old convertible. I can saunter through the marketplace and view the plastic bumpers on the new cars, the paper-thin vinyl floorings. I can look at the paper dishes and the latest \$50 plastic gimmick designed to "please Mother on Christmas morning," and I can truthfully say to myself what Socrates said as he sauntered through the marketplace, "So many things I do not need."



Lady Audrey

"...With gusting winds up to ninety miles..."
Came the hollow voice from the box that sat
Beside the candle on the table.
The older ones listened quietly.
While we, too young to know restraint,
And just too old to be afraid,
Disdainfully moved to the porch outside.
The driving rain whipped our coats in the wind.
And there we watched it whip the limbs
Of the tree that stood across the yard —
An oak that was tall and straight and strong.
If fiercely stood against the storm.
But then, we saw, on one side of the tree,
A bulge begin to form on the ground,
Growing bigger and bigger, and bigger still.
The tree began leaning the other way.
And as we watched in awe, we saw
It leaning more and more, until
Only the branches were holding it up.
They snapped, and the tree sank slowly down.
The bulge on the ground became the roots,
And as they came up on the other side,
They pushed up a piece of concrete walk.
A slab, raised erect, loomed grey and dark.
Inside, subdued, we sat with the others
By the flickering candle on the table,
Transfixed, while the black box spoke again:
"...Cameron, Louisiana, over 200 dead..."

Ann Levingston Joiner

Reaper

Stepping out I see
that like a
wilting gleaner I
gathered in the tares
of your autumnal grainfield.
And you took me in
to your table and fed me
with wheat and barley cakes.
In your arms
you leavened me
with your own philosophy
and I rose
to walk in a fertile land.

Deborah Lynne Hollister

Icarus

Drawn up with vague impressions
My thoughts, too high, melt to liquid
And flow down my mind.
And now it's clear that
Even the loftiest thoughts
Collect in the lowest places;
I understand the gravity of the situation.

Thus is your thought and
My reaction which opposes it.
Though you would have me unaware,
Time all to perceptibly slips,
The moments passing;
It most painfully marches in quiet.
For the essence of silence is stillness,
As still we sit in the flow of moments;
Still they pass,
Steal silently by.

Ronnie E. Owens



Comic Relief

Men with two pairs of glasses are usually good
At sitting still, at tending to business. And,
Usually, they wear dress socks,
Which let their feet sneak into their shoes.
And usually they have good manners but
No apparent feelings. But, just like the glasses
And the socks, they can change
On short notice. Sometimes they take off
Their glasses (and their socks) and do incredible
Things in the dark.

Lynne Carlisle

The Elixir of the Gods

High in the Jamaican hills
lives the woman who rules the honey stills,
she snergizes the oozing ounces
of sweet delicious honey elixir

The Queen visits the ancient cells of curing houses
to overhear workers speak of kamikazee kills,
she tastes the honey, the elixir of Gods,
sweet mountain ganga honey

Lovers meet to kiss the lotus pods
the flowering buds of the sacred sun,
their resinous tendrils reach out
to caress the Blue Mountain serenity

True Goddess of Aphrodite!
Where is your fantasy lover's city?
Your honey hair, your honey lips
tasting the aphrodisiac,
your dreams of the great Adonis
float like bee pollen upon the wind

Apollo! God of Harmony!
Sing aloud poetic verse,
annoint her tender flesh
with the sticky curse,
slipping and sliding into ecstasy
the exquisite discovery of sensuous Aphrodite!

Victor Humphrey



The Letter

White edges
Peer through
Slender slats
Of Glass,
Propped against
Two walls -
Slyly winking
Out of
Stamped corner,
Patiently waiting
For fumbling fingers
To open
Saliva sealed folds
And read
Blackened lines
That leap from
The pages
Straight into
The eye.

Mary Adams



Night Flower

He said she was
"rare as a black rose,"
and for him, blooming under the moon.
She'd made him think of
Narcisse Noire
so he brought her some French perfume.
He said she resembled
a night flower,
a blossom of black in full bloom.
He called her
an ebony orchid
as a way to get into her room.

Wings

He had wings to glide soft on a noon wind,
he had time.
It was the twelfth day,
it was to come soon.
He had his time
gathered in the fields and stuffed
neatly into a leather pouch,
now all he had to do was wait.

Amidst the stars
on the final day it came,
it was time (he had time)
to gather his wings and curl to the clouds
like a dragonfly kite in the breeze.
Standing perched on a hilltop
he flung himself downward
into the vertigo heights.

Had he seen them?
Was it time? (he had time)
And the vertigo grabbed him and pulled.
A mass of gossamer feathers
strung with syrup strands
of copper ligaments and crystals
When he hit he lost the pouch
and lost his time (he had time).

On the first day they celebrated
a flaming phoenix death,
for he had time
if he had wings.
Wings to glide soft on a noon wind.

Clyde A. Drake, Jr.

Good

Eleanor Poetry Award

The Rest Home

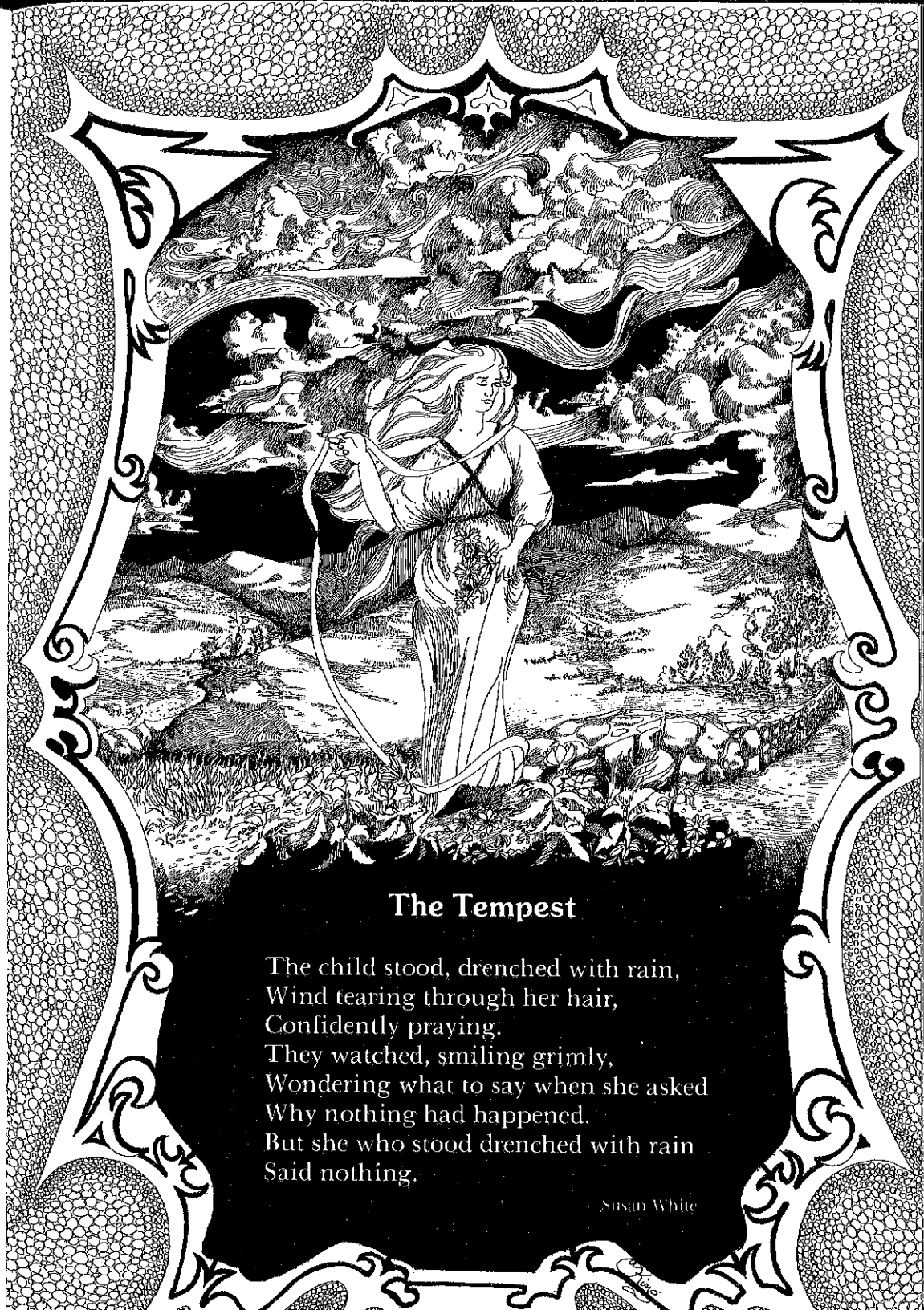
The hands, so strong, that used to knead
The biscuits as I watched them work,
(My eyes just reached the table top),
The hands that held mine tightly as
We pushed the dasher in the churn,
Now sit sedately in her lap.

The eyes that always sparkled still
Smile brightly as we talk. She says,
"I'm glad you're here. It's good of you
To come and see me now and then.
Your children sure have grown, I think
They're taller than they were before."

But now her eyes grow distant, and
It seems as though she sees a place
That's somewhere else. The hands now move
And grasp the wheels that hold her chair.
She wheels away and down the hall
As though we were no longer there.

"I have to go to Groveton, now.
I'll stop by Sister's when I'm through,
And help her with the milking. We
have so much work to do. And then
I have to hoe the garden and
The pickles have to be put up..."

Ann Livingston Joiner



The Tempest

The child stood, drenched with rain,
Wind tearing through her hair,
Confidently praying.
They watched, smiling grimly,
Wondering what to say when she asked
Why nothing had happened.
But she who stood drenched with rain
Said nothing.

Susan White

The Raving

A Tribute to High School

With my sincerest apologies to Mr. Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a school-day horrid, while the
sweat poured from my forehead
O'er many an old and moldy page of
soon-to-be-forgotten lore, —
While I sat there, nearly napping, on my skull
I felt a tapping
Of a teacher's ruler, rapping on my head
so very sore.
'Twas this infernal rap, tap, tapping that made
my head so very sore, —
Only this and nothing more.

"What are you doing?" asked the teacher, dreaded
awful, loathsome creature.
Filled with fear did I beseech her, terrified
did I implore, —
'With what cause are you attacking, with your
cruel ruler whacking?
It feels as though my skull were cracking, splitting
to its very core!
Have indeed I been so lacking for you to pound my
crown full sore? —
Seemingly for evermore?"
"My class is no place for sleeping. As you've
sown, you shall be reaping.
Soon the time shall come for weeping, with the
postman at your door."
Her words struck home with awesome force, my heart
was filled with deep remorse,
I pleaded 'til my voice was hoarse, my eyes
were red, my throat was sore.
"When shall I pass this course?" I asked her, though
my throat was parched and sore.
Quoth the teacher, — "Nevermore."

Gene Dawson





Say Three Hail Marys and Make a Good Act of Contrition

There for a while I just knew I was goin' to hell. I mean, I used to just lay in the bed there, at night, thinkin' 'bout all the nasty things I'd done. Some of the time I wasn't even sure if the things I thought were nasty, were really nasty things, but that didn't stop me from thinkin' and worryin'. Sometimes I'd get so shook up about a particular nasty thing that I wasn't sure was really nasty, that I would get up outta bed all sorta nervous, you know, and sneak down the hall to Momma's room and wake her up, but not Daddy (Hell, I'd rather go to hell than have to ask Daddy some of the things I talked over with Momma when I'd wake her up). Anyway, I'd wake her up and get her opinion of the nasty thing; like once I was awful bothered 'bout not knowing if lookin' at girls or ladies in bathin' suits was a mortal sin. Well, I asked Momma one night, real late, when I just couldn't go to sleep, and she said she was pretty sure it wasn't no mortal sin. Well, I didn't care if it was a ven'al sin cause I figgered just about everyone was goin' to purgatory so I wouldn't be the only one, and I knew durn well I wasn't the only one lookin' at them girls and ladies in bathin' suits.

Like I said, though, there for a while I just knew I was goin' to hell. See, I've gone to a p'rochial school all my life, and it's awful hard tryin' to be like all those nuns or priests like Father Shawley. Father Petkosevek was somethin' else though. He was about the only nun or priest I ever knew that was human, cause you really never got to see Sister Mary Francis (She was my teacher) or Father Shawley doin' anything normal, nothin' but bein' good or workin' or prayin' or somethin'. But Father Petkosevek was somethin' else; he smoked. Boy, man he smoked all the time, before mass, before he gave out report cards (that was part of his job as pasture, to give out report cards) he smoked so much he had this big brown sorta stain on his fingers from where all the smoke must of baked his skin or somethin'. I like ol' Father Petkosevek. He never wore a suit like Father Shawley would do ever now and then, just always wore that long black cassock (that's a kind of dress that Pries's or altar boys wear; I used to be a altar boy, but that was back then when I was always so worried 'bout goin' to hell). Father Petkosevek didn't look funny in his dress either like when Carlo Fasulo or Mark Touns or Jack Follmer or me would put one on. We

were the best altar boys in the whole school. Sister Ceslaus, (she was the principal before she left) she told me once that I was the "Angelic One" (that means — like an angel). She told me that, 'cause I never smiled or waved or anything when I would serve mass on the weekdays in front of the whole school. Sister Ceslaus was sort of in charge of the altar boys at St. Joseph's and that was why it was good to get on her good side, 'cause like I said, she was the principal too and could make it awful tough on anyone she didn't like. I remember once when she found out Ronnie Pemberton had peed in the wine cruets one time before weekday mass. Boy, man I thought sure Ronnie would be struck down dead whe Father Petkosevek began to change Ronnie's pee into the blood of Jesus Christ, but Ronnie just started laughin', sorta to himself, and when Father started to drink out of the chalice, Ronnie couldn't hold back no more and just ran off the altar laughin' and holdin' up his cassock so he wouldn't trip. Father Petkosevek ran out too, after he drunk Ronnie's pee, but I still think it was Sister Ceslaus and not Father Petkosevek that beat the tar outta Ronnie. Ronnie ain't a altar boy anymore. I ain't a altar boy anymore either.

Ya' see, Father Petkosevek didn't seem like such a stuffed-shirt like Father Shawley was. Sometimes Father Petkosevek would just talk to us for no reason at all at recess or lunch hour, he'd tell us all sorts of scary stories about when he was a priest in Galveston and worked in an emergency room where they'd bring in people like this one guy who had his bottom part of his leg shoved up into the upper part of his leg when the motor of the car he was drivin' was pushed up into the driver's seat; Father Petkosevek said he was a Methodist, but he still gave him absolution (that's forgiveness for your sins). That's another thing about Father Petkosevek, when you'd go to confession to him, he never made you feel like you were a big turd or somethin'; I mean, it was like talkin' to Momma real late at night, but Father Shawley was like talkin' to Daddy. Father Shawley it always seemed would look down on you or laugh at you or somethin', but Father Petkosevek didn't do that, but then he wasn't always there for confession and so sometimes you'd *have* to go to Father Shawley if you wanted absolution. That's why I was awful glad when Steven McNally told me what the official word for jackin' off was, 'cause I just hated to say 'jacked-off' to Father Shawley. Sometimes I would just say I had taken physical pleasure in looking at bad pictures or thinkin' 'bout women without anything on (not even bathin' suits), but that dragged out so; it was almost as bad as goin' ahead and sayin' I'd jacked-off. Anyway, Steven told me to just say I had "Master-Mated" and Father would know. Boy, man was I glad to learn that.

Father Shawley would give you big long lectures in confession and real long penances too, like a rosary or somethin', but Father Petkosevek would just give you three Hail Marys no matter what you did or how many times you did it. And it wasn't only in confession when Father Shawley would bawl you out either; he was always

worried about mass and the way you served it, whether you said all the prayers-at-the-foot-of-the-Altar right and all. And he'd really chew you out if he caught you messin' up, but that didn't bother me so much 'cause, like I said, I was one of the best altar boys at St. Joseph's and I knew all that Et-cum-spiri-two-two-oh stuff as good as anybody, and I knew the Shusheepiat better'n anyone and that was the hardest. But I'm not a altar boy anymore, and, ya' know, I'm not half as worried about goin' to hell anymore either.

See, the main reason, I think, is 'cause this one time when there was this other kid who was servin' 6 o'clock mass (6 o'clock mass is really fun, once you decide to wake up, 'cause there's hardly anyone around in the audience, and you can make all sorts of dumb mistakes and all, and no one cares, not even Father Shawley). Not only that, but if Father Petkosevek is supposed to say mass, then you can just bout bet on havin' to go over to the rectory (which is where the pries's live) and wake him up. Then he'll come draggin' on in cougin' and smokin' and sputterin' (specially in the winter) like Daddy's old truck, and he'll go through the whole mass in about fifteen minutes and fart everytime he genuflects or bends over to kiss somethin' on the altar, and it's so funny that half the mass you're laughin' instead of sayin' all the Latin back to Father. Like I said, 6 o'clock mass was really fun once you decided to wake up. Anyway, I was tellin' you Sister put me in to replace this kid who got sick and it just happened that Father Petkosevek was supposed to do mass in the morning that week, and, sure enough, the first day I was there (for the kid who got sick) Father was late. See, I was there about five-thirty, all dressed up in my cassock and all, and then this kid named Johnny Ascal, who was supposed to serve too, showed up a little later. Well, me and Johnny got everything ready and here it comes nearly six o'clock and still, no Father Petkosevek. So then Johnny says: "It's almost six; I guess you better go over there and wake up Father, Joey." So I say: "Why me?" I didn't like Johnny cause Johnny was always trying to get outta doin' things like that.

"Cause you got here first."

"Well, that don't make any difference," I says, but gee, talkin' with Johnny is like talkin' to Duane Talbert; they're both just big-old dumb babies, and so I went ahead over to wake up Father.

It was real, real cold that morning, too; the grass was all sorta crackly cause it was winter, and it was all dead, and it was also kinda frosted over a little. I pulled up my cassock, so I wouldn't trip, but I didn't run real fast 'cause the grass was a little slippery when it was fosted up like that. When I got over to Father's house, I started to ring the doorbell, but I remembered that that never woke up either Father Shawley or Father Petkosevek, and it was too cold to bang on the door without makin' your knuckles feel like they were bustin' open; so I decided o just yell up to Father Petkosevek's room, and I knew that if it didn't get up Father Petkosevek it would sure wake up Father Shawley. Well, I

yelled up there to his room, which is right over the front door, almost, but just as I did, I heard Father Shawley yellin too; so I almost started to run back to the Church 'cause I figgered Father Shawley would wake up Father Petkosevek for sure with all that yellin'. I don't know what made me stay there, but I did. I listened up close, next to the front door, and that's when I found it unlocked; so since it was cold, I went on inside. It wasn't the first time I'd gone inside. I'd been inside alots, well, more than once or twice, anyway. See, they had this sorta doctor's waitin' room right inside the front; so it wasn't like really goin' in someone's house, more like bein' in a doctor's office or the dentist's or somethin'. In there, in that little waitin' room, I could hear real good, and boy, man was I scared 'cause right when I had gotten in real good is when Father Shawley came tearin' down the stairs, and he was still yellin'; he was yellin': "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee..." that's the Act of Contrition, and now I only know the first part of it, but you were supposed to say that when you went to confession in order to get your sins washed off your soul. Well, I just stood there, real still, for a second, and then I jumped down and hid behind a chair; Father Shawley looked real mad or somethin' 'cause his face was real red, and I guess that's why I hid 'cause I knew what was gonna happen if Father Shawley was mad, someone was probably gonna get a lick. I hid there in the waitin' room for a hour, it seemed like, 'cause I could still hear voices upstairs and Father Shawley usin' the phone downstairs, and, honest, I was real scared 'cause I got to thinkin' that it was all on account of me yellin' up to wake up Father Petkosevek, but then I heard a woman. There was someone, a lady, up there cryin', and Father Petkosevek was talkin' to her or somethin'.

And, now this is where it really gets scary 'cause I didn't know what was makin' me do all this, but, anyway, I got my cassock all up and started to sneak up the stairs, and I was bein' real quiet, like I was this big roach or somethin', and whenever I heard everything get real quiet, I'd just stop there, where I was, but I was more'n halfway up before I realized what a idiot I was, for doin' what I was doin', but I still couldn't stop doin' it. It was like when I snuck out of the house one night, real, real late, and went over to see Elizabeth Ainsworth (she liked me a lot, and she was the prettiest girl at St. Joseph's except for maybe Janet Flannigan, and she liked me too.) Anyway, Elizabeth's daddy came out 'cause I had made so much noise tryin' to keep the dog from barkin', and he had a big ol' gun in one hand and a flashlight in the other, and I got in a awful lot of trouble. Well, it was the same feelin', like I knew I shouldn't but I kept on anyway. Finally, I got up there to the top stair and just poked my head up, over it some, and looked down the rug into Father Petkosevek's room (that's the way they say to look up over things or around corners in the Boy Scouts; you keep your head down low so no one will notice you). I could see Father Petkosevek and he wasn't even dressed yet 'cause all he had on was some boxer shorts like

Daddy wears and he was still talkin' away but I couldn' tell to who; so I moved up another step and leaned away over till I could see that there was this woman in the bed there, and she was cryin' and hardly had any clothes on, but I couldn' really tell 'cause it seemed like my eyes were just wigglin' around and couldn't focus right. Then, all the sudden, the woman looked up and said somethin' like: "That was stupid of you Nick!" and it was then I saw her face, and I just stood up and almost yelled: "Sister Ceslaus!" And, gee, I felt all funny and stupid inside, and I don't know why I did it, any of it. I really don't know why I yelled. But, then, everything just got real slow, and it seemed to me like there was a bug hummin' sound all around, and the next thing I knew I was haulin' downstairs as fast as I could, holdin' up my cassock so I wouldn' trip.

Boy, man I just didn' know what to do; so I just ran back over to the church and started to change, and when I got there, do you know it was only five minutes after six, I mean, it all seemed like it was so long, but it'd only been maybe ten minutes. Johnny kept askin' me "What's goin' on? What happened?" But I just ignored him and started to go on out into the audience to get Momma to take me on home when in walks Father Petkosevek. Johnny just shut up then, and Father took me by the hand. I thought I was really gonna get it, but he just brought me outside and says: "Joey, you must feel pretty scared, huh?" and I really did too! Then he says he'll walk me out to the car in the parkin' lot, and all I could think of to say was somethin' like: "I'm awful sorry, Father" and I was, and, like I said, I didn' know what else I could say. Anyway, he keeps on with somethin' like: "I'm the one who should be sayin' he's sorry, Joey." Then I say: "Yes, Father," 'cause that's what I always said in confession after the priest said somethin' to me, 'cause really there's just about nothin' else I could say. Well, Father just kept on and on, talkin' 'bout how bad he felt and all, 'bout how he wanted me to know that he had done somethin' awful and that he needed to be forgiven and all and, gosh, he was almost cryin'. I just kept on sayin': "Yes, Father. Yes, Father," again and again, but I wasn' hardly hearing anymore, I just wanted that the whole talk would be over and end. There for a while I could hear that big hum all around me again and that's when I noticed that Father had stopped talkin'. We were just standin' next to the car lookin' at each other, and you know we both were standin' there with our noses sort of runnin' 'cause it was awful cold, still. Anyway, Father says somethin' like: "Thanks, Joey. I'll tell your mother you're out here waitin' " and I say: "O.K. Father," and then climb in the front seat and just wait there till Mom comes out and we go on home.

Well, like I said, there for a while I just knew I was goin' to hell but then this here thing happened. I don't know why but I just don't seem too much worried 'bout it anymore. See, afterwards, Sister Ceslaus left, and then, a while later, so did Father Petkosevek, and, I just sorta figgered if they could leave so could I; so I just sorta quit bein' a altar

boy after awhile. And, ya' know, I just about quit goin' to confession too, 'cause ya' see they got Father Shawley to be pasture now and then they got this priest named Father Brounard too, and he's just almost like Father Shawley exactly. Ever now and then, though, I wonder if maybe sometime when I see Father Petkosevek again, I'll go over and ask him to maybe hear my confession. But, gee, I don't really think too much 'bout goin' to hell anymore, and when I do now, all I do is say three Hail Marys and make a good Act of Contrition up to the middle, 'cause, like I said, I forget how the rest of it goes.

Jesse J. W. Doiron, Jr.



Dave Campbell

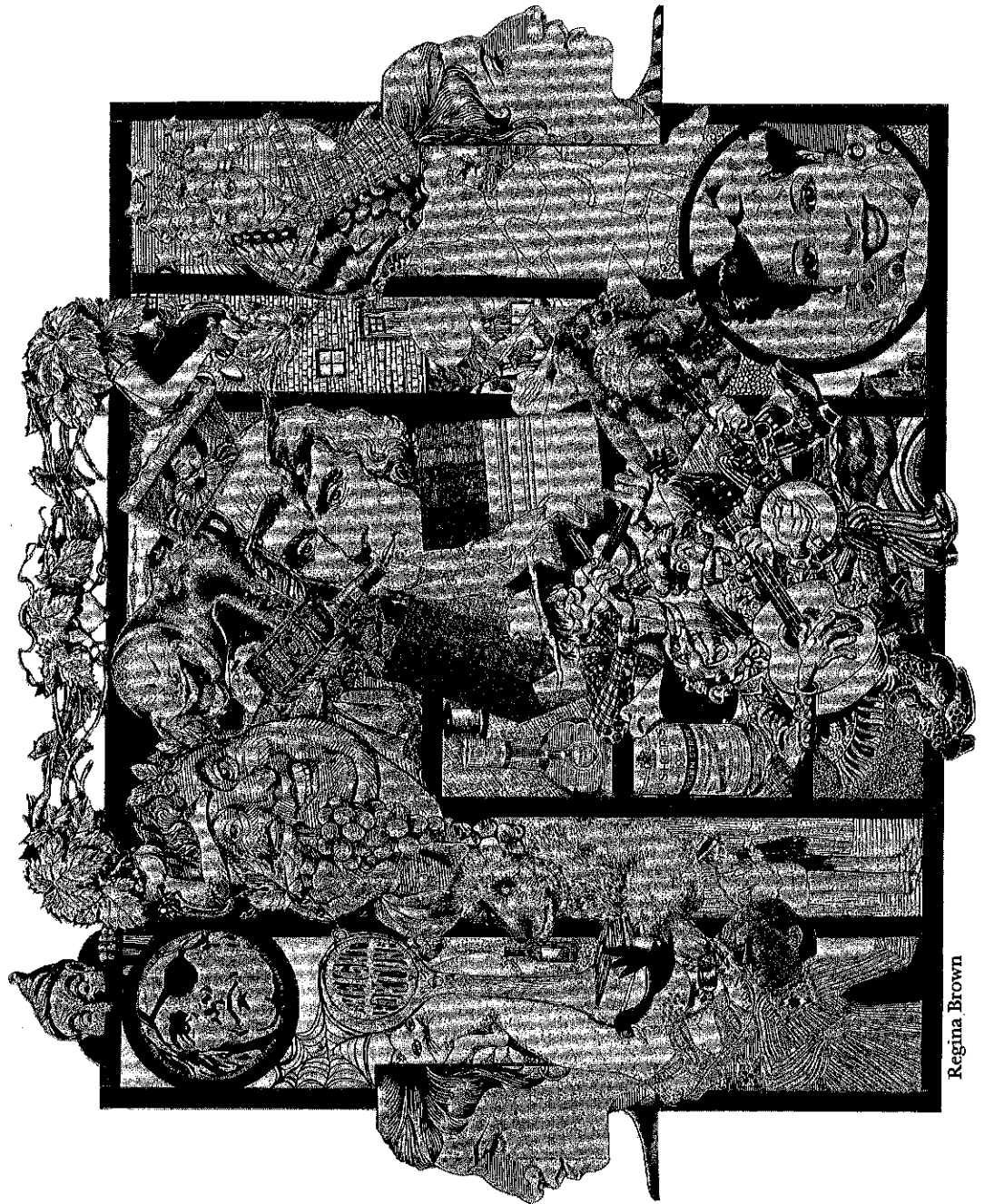
New Streets

Fortune
Flamingo
Cadillac
are names of
new
streets on the other side
of the tracks.
My people
always
told me niggers like
big
expensive
preferably pink
cars.

Jamie Paul Kessler

Between Good-bye

When the motley blur
of weary conquerors and clowns,
always smiling grease paint mouth
turned to a man in drag.
Across the room I saw the lips,
my southern colonel's drunken ears
and cacophony to stop.
Whoofers treated tweeters
to tricks of costumed tunes,
motley blurs of bleary conquerors and clowns
warmly greeted every plea,
liated me with ice and carbonated alcohol,
ed silence to its end.
r of grease paint,
ng in between a bleary conquered clown and king.
udged perpetual smile,
y a sanguine nose
eardropped eyes,
g something to me,
aid. "Good-bye."



Regina Brown

Nourishment Is More Than Nutrition

I never thought a group of barefooted itinerant Jesus freaks would cause me to know a profound truth I already believed, but they did. They were spending New Year's night in our church to escape the cold. We tried to get them to eat their meals at the local 24-hour cafe as our guests, but they refused our offer. They found, they said, in their travels they frequently got digestive disorders from eating food "served without love." They said, "nourishment is more than nutrition," as they ate peanut butter mixed with oatmeal in spite of our protests. It was then I noticed when our family made trips that even though we ate the same foods we usually ate at home, we developed some food-related discomfort. That's when we started preparing one meal a day for ourselves on trips even if it were only cheese spread on bread. What a difference!

Eliza Gant's wheedling in *Look Homeward, Angel*, "it's a good meal," elicited a laughing response, not because it wasn't "a good meal," but because it lacked the secret formula. Her son, Eugene, preferred to eat at his sister's home. Helen nourished his spirit as well as his body with her loving service. It was not until Eugene left home to live with the Leonard family, who served hardly enough to sustain a growing boy, that he blossomed. It was food served with love that made the difference. Another prime example is Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury*. She ladeled love in every spoonful. Everyone knew it. But the realization was most intense in the idiot whose simple mind could receive, without question, Truth. Too, everyone has read of the children in foundling homes who die from lack of love. The nurses are too busy to cuddle the babies. They are also too busy to hold them while they are taking their bottles. So the bottles are propped at an angle for each child to suck without loving attention.

In America today we are witnessing the food chain phenomena as well as the machine-dispensed food fad, and we are taking more medicine for digestive disorders than ever before. Notice how, shortly after a Kentucky Fried Chicken commercial or a McDonald's Hamburger ad, the television will extol medications for indigestion. There's bound to be a connection.

While it is fun to eat out occassionally, it is important, now more than ever, to eat a meal served with love at least once a day even if it means serving ourselves. It may not be nutritional, but it will be nourishing. It will be "a good meal!"

Perle Dumas



Cecil King

A Man of Extended Substance

Will was packing. He sat on the floor of his room, a large pasteboard box between his legs, and with pure joy he took the books from his shelf one at a time, dusted them off, and put them in the box. His sister Peggy, the nun, home for a visit, sat in an armchair hanging her luejeaned legs over the sides. She held a 7-Up bottle by its neck in one hand and a cigaret in the other.

"So," she said, "Baby Bill's going off to teach the heathen world about religion."

"History," Will said, without looking up, "of religious-philosophy."

"Okay," Peggy said. "I really do hope you don't bomb. It's going to be rough when all those freshman — who still believe what they learned at their mothers' knees — hear your spiel about how one religion is as valid as another because —"

"Don't mis-use 'valid.'"

"—they all serve the same function. They might burn you at the stake." Peggy was swinging one leg so that her tennis shoe bumped rhythmically against Will's box of books.

"You're nuts," Will said grinning. "Here, you want this copy of Sartre? It might save you yet."

"Hey, Will?" Peggy said.

"What?"

"I know you're excited about your job." She waited for him to say something. "But you know what else I know?"

"Pray, tell." Will said absently.

"I know you're rather excited about moving out of Mom's house for the first time in your rather old twenty-eight year life."

"How do you think you know a stupid thing like that? Huh? Because that's why you ran off to join the circus?—I mean, the convent (a thousand pardons, please)—because you wanted out?" Will was working a second layer of books into the box. "Tell me, Sister Mary Magdalena, purified sinner." Peggy blew a string of smoke rings toward her brother's face. "See there? Some nun you are. You look like a street thug."

"Perhaps. But while some of my actions—note, I say *some*—might contradict my beliefs, your beliefs contradict each other. And then, you think you don't even have any beliefs. They're letting the wrong man into that job."

"What do you *want* me to believe? Tell me what you think I ought to believe in? What do you believe in? What do you think about when you're jangling those pop-beads of yours and chanting all over the place? No. Nevermind. I don't want to hear about it. Just drink your 7-Up while you've still got the chance."

Peggy took a last swig out of her bottle and dropped the cigaret into the box. "Tell me, Will. Where do you think the source of good is? Just where

do you think it comes from?"

"Bullshit," Will said, standing up. He shut the flaps of his box and taped it shut.

"What are you going to tell your students when they ask you that question? Are you going to say 'Bullshit?'"

"I'll think of something," Will said. With a magic marker he labeled the box and then sat it down on the edge of his bed. Peggy said, "I hear Mom coming. Try to be nice."

"I'm always nice," Will said just before the door opened.

Mrs. O'Brien looked depressed. "Willie," she said, "I got you something to put on your desk at your new job." She held out a small wad of white tissue paper.

"Thanks, Mom," Will said. He opened the package and into his hand rolled a little china statue of Mary. There was a momentary silence. He didn't notice Peggy draw in her breath before he said, "Mom, you know I won't put this on my desk. It was really nice of you to get it for me, but you *know* I won't put it on my desk. We've talked about all that so many times..."

"Maybe you could just put it on one of your bookshelves," she said.

"No, Mom."

"Don't worry, Mom," Peggy said. "He'll outgrow it. Just save it for him."

"Peggy—" Will said. But Peggy continued talking to her mother.

"Someday he'll come home for Christmas or Easter break and he'll ask you for it. Just put it somewhere safe. He's still got some good in him, Mom; we'll just have to be patient." Peggy stood up and ruffled Will's hair with her hand before she left the room. Will's mother still stood there bewildered. "I'll miss you, Willie," she said.

Will tried not to smile.

Three days later and two thousand miles away, Will was in his new office putting away books and hanging pictures. When everything was in order, Will adjusted the venetian blinds halfway down the tall windows and sat down at his desk to check the newspaper for apartments. Now and then he'd glance up and find himself captivated by the office. His matted print of Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase" hung on the white wall opposite his desk. He'd often tried to imagine how the painting would look if old Marcel had made his nude going up rather than down. There would have been more ass to the alleged figure but at the expense of the delicate tilt of the nude's face. This morning it occurred to Will that the painting ought to have a storage closet under the stairs. He bounced a couple of times in his swivel chair and read the paper.

The department secretary came to his door with a package. "You're already getting mail, Dr. O'Brien, and I haven't even given you a mailbox yet." Will thanked her and looked at the package from

It was Mary. He set the statue on his desk and looked at it for a long time. He thought about his mother's ignorance. It puzzled him that anyone could live in the world long enough to become an adult and still believe all the Holy Jesus stuff. Peggy was a phenomenon beyond belief. She was his twin sister and full of apparent intelligence. Throughout their lives she would argue against him on any point, just for the sake of the battle—and the frequent victory. He had covered for her when they were teenagers so she could sneak out and run around with her boyfriend, Peter, past her eleven o'clock curfew. He'd been almost jealous of Peter. The guy was quiet, with curly hair and glasses. To see Peggy and Peter together he had to think they looked like a couple of losers—at least by high school standards. She was far from stylish with her short hair and boyish clothes, and Peter was simply too nondescript to be even noticeable most of the time. It irritated Will to envy them, but they looked like they knew something he didn't. Damn it, they played *pool* when they went on dates, and God only knew *what* they did on the nights when Peggy stayed out with Peter way into the morning. Once when he opened the window for her at four a.m., she crawled in and fell onto his bed. She lay on her back staring at the ceiling with her hands in the pockets of her windbreaker. After a while she said, "Whew!" softly, still gazing straight up.

"Peggy?" Will had asked.

"Hm?"

"Do you and Peter have sex?"

"What if we do?" she said, grinning but not moving her eyes.

"I'm your brother. I've got a right to be concerned."

"And what if we don't?" She stood up then and said "Good night, brother."

On their high school graduation Peter was first in the class and Peggy second. Will was third, but third didn't get to make a speech so no one ever noticed. A few nights after the commencement, Peggy asked her family to sit down in the living room because she and Peter had something to announce. Peggy and Peter sat on the sofa chain-smoking while the rest of the family exchanged knowing grins.

"I'm going to enter a convent," Peggy said suddenly. She blew out some smoke and continued. "Peter's going to become a priest. We wanted you guys to know about it first. We're going to go tell Pete's parents later. So—now you know." No one said anything for a long time. Mr. O'Brien fixed himself a drink, and Mrs. O'Brien looked perplexed. Will just sat there looking back and forth between his sister and Peter. Peggy was watching her mother closely but Peter looked right at Will with his usual secretive expression.

"God damn it!" Will shouted, standing up. "You two are full of shit! That's the stupidest thing I ever heard of!" Peter looked away but Will stomped out of the house and didn't come back till the next day.

His sister was a nun. Peggy was a damn nun and he was a philosophy instructor with Mother Mary standing on his desk, looking down with 2000 years of patience on her brow.

Will checked himself. He picked up the china statue and got up from his desk. Opening the most remote cabinet under his bookcase, he knelt down and stuck her into the very back corner of the bottom shelf. There was something there. He put Mary down and drew out an old 7-Up bottle. He sat on the floor and held it in his hand in a way that struck him for a moment as obscene. The bottle was covered with dust. Will wiped the bottle with his pocket handkerchief starting at the top and moving down in spirals. He was very quiet and slow about it. He saw that there was something green inside, little green specks of something, like the "tiny time pills" in a Contact capsule. No, they weren't green; the bottle was green. A cap had been placed on the bottle after it was filled, and it was so tight that Will realized only a bottle opener would get it off. He got up to take it to the faculty lounge where there was a coke machine, but on second thought he was held back. He looked at the door, wanting to close it. But he looked for a long time, unable to form any clear thoughts. He felt pulled to close the door, but rationality told him he was acting like it held the key to the universe in it. There was a bit of sweat on his forehead. He grimaced when he noticed it, then wiped it off with his handkerchief, leaving a brown smudge from the dust which had been on the bottle. "This is ridiculous," he said to himself. Then he shut the door.

He still couldn't open the bottle, but that could wait till he went back to his hotel room. Meanwhile, he took the bottle to the window, drew up the venetian blinds, and held it up against the afternoon sun. The little specks allowed some light to pass through them. Will was surprised. The things in the bottle were almost as small as grains of sand and were jammed together so tightly that they should have appeared opaque. As Will turned the bottle slowly under that light, minute sparkles glistened almost imperceptibly, the way a distant star will—so faintly that you're never sure it's really there.

Will set the bottle in his briefcase, stuffing newspapers all around it to keep it upright while the briefcase was shut and standing. In the hall he closed his office door very quietly, dropped his keys into his pocket and wiped his hand on his tan corduroy pants leg. He was hungry. He wanted to go to a cafeteria and eat something healthy, then go to the hotel, take a shower, put on his terry cloth robe and sit by the air-conditioner.

On the stairs he met Dr. Milano, the head of the department, coming up with a very pretty, almost doll-like woman. Milano stopped with one foot resting two steps above the other and leaned into the higher leg, bouncing slightly. Milano was only 40 and his hair was perfectly stright and black, hanging just to his chin, where he wore a short but

ery black goatee. Will stopped his urge to laugh by remembering that Dr. Milano had published three very well-received books on symbolic logic.

"Well, Will, hi," Milano said, his smooth black hair moving in rhythm with his bending leg. "Found a place yet?"

"Not yet," Will said, feeling pleased with his own stylishly conservative appearance. "I spent the morning looking, though."

"Well, good. Have you met Deborah?" Deborah smiled, her lipstick gleaming. "Deborah teaches philosophy of art. Part time. Deborah Miller, this is Will O'Brien. Will's going to do history of religious philosophy for us this fall." Deborah said, "How are you," with utter confidence, and she and Marino continued their climb. Will left.

Outside the sun was nauseating hot. He passed a drugstore on the way to the hotel, and on its roof was a billboard for Coppertone. The blonde on its surface grimaced as she held a bikini strap away from her roasted shoulder. Another billboard advertised Seagram's 7, and Will pulled his Volkswagen into the first liquor store he passed.

In his hotel room Will sprawled out in an orange chair beside the window air conditioner after laying his briefcase on the bed, sideways. He drank Seagram's from the bottle and thought about Peggy. She probably had her costume on right now. Her witch suit. Will's parents had visited Peggy at her convent a couple of times, but Will couldn't bring himself to go. He had never seen her act pious and didn't want to. Nuns had taught him in grade school, but to Will they had seemed no more alive than the Mary doll hidden away in his office. Peggy wrote him once a month, but Will never answered. It seemed a blasphemy to Peggy's humanity that she should spend her life praying in a black robe.

"Seagram," Will muttered. "Seagram. Seagram Seven Up. Seven Deadly Sins. Sensational. Irrational." He got up and opened his briefcase.

"Time for a little pop," he said. He carried his 7-Up bottle out into the hall to the coke machine and opened it. He watched its top on his way to the room as if he expected something to fizz out any minute.

In his room he turned back the bed covers and poured the contents of his bottle onto the middle of the white sheet. The tiny globes sifted silently onto the bed and spread out like a puddle. They were clear, minute, like little fish eggs, or miniature pearls.

"I hope no pigs come in here," Will said, "because these are my pearls and I don't want to cast them before any swine." He let out a short laugh which immediately disgusted him. He dropped to his knees and ran his hands across the bed.

"What *are* these little bastards?" he said. They ran through his fingers like water, or talcum powder, like silk against his skin. Though they were colorless, they seemed to reflect what was around them. No

shape could be seen on their surfaces because they were so small, but little hints of color rolled across their faces when they moved.

Suddenly Will stood up. With his hands hanging loose at his sides, he stared at the bed for a long time.

"These are goddamn monads! Geez!" he said, moving backwards until he fell into the orange chair. Will reached for the bottle of Seagram's "Monads!" he said.

Will ran his fingers through his hair and it felt so good he did it again. He kept sprawling his fingers through his thick red hair because the feeling was concrete and undeniable. He remembered Sandra, his first girlfriend, running her fingers through his hair. Even when he was sixteen his sense of logic had been sharp, but none of the lines he threw out worked on Sandra when they used to park behind the church and neck.

"No!" she would say. "I'm going to wait till I'm old enough to know what I'm doing!"

"But that could be never," Will had said.

"I doubt it."

What could he say? Monads. Yes, they were in the middle of his bed and had to be dealt with. The Seagram's and confusion made him sleepy, but his bed was full of Monads.

These must be good, he thought, *because they exist*. He started to laugh, and the laughter began to hiccup from down inside his stomach as the thought of sending Peggy a box of good and extant monads with a note attached: "*Here* is the source of good." What would she say? Perhaps "Oh, well I'm glad that's settled."

What if they *were* monads? What if they *did* hold the source of good? What was he supposed to do with them? Send them to the Smithsonian? Rent them out? Set up a side-show?

"Good doesn't exist," Will said out loud.

"Yes we do!" a little chipmunk chorus cried from the bed.

"Well nobody needs it. Philosophy's set up perfectly fine the way it is. Anything crazy as this would just mess up the system. Get off my bed," he said, grinning. His teeth felt dirty, so he rinsed them with more Seagram's.

Will got up. He scooped some Monads into his hand and examined them. He held them close to his face. He put them in an ashtray and crushed them with the bottom of his whiskey bottle. They crumbled easily into a silvery white powder and just lay there. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," Will said, making himself laugh. The laugh caught him off guard and a gust of his own breath hit the little pile of crushed monads, scattering them into the air like so much dust. He started at the dispersing cloud.

"This is nothing," he said, sitting down again. "It isn't anything, not even a joke."

Our Winners

Dorothy Conn

PULSE Cover Contest-Excellent-Fronticepiece-"Roots"

Mary Lou Schmitt

PULSE Cover Contest-Good-Page 6-"Still Life in Time"

Ann Levingston Joiner

Eleanor Poetry Award-Superior-Page 10-"Lady Audrey"

Eleanor Poetry Award-Good-Page 16-"Rest Home"

Lynne Carlisle

Eleanor Poetry Award-Excellent-Page 12-"Comic Relief"

Jesse J. W. Doiron, Jr.

PULSE Short Fiction Award-Excellent-Page 20-"Say Three Hail Marys and Make a Good Act of Contrition"

Barbara Huval

PULSE Essay Award-Superior-Page 7-"Planned Obsolescence"

Perle Dumas

PULSE Essay Award-Excellent-Page 28-"Nourishment is More Than Nutrition"

Mary Adams

Undergraduate Award-Superior-Page 14-"The Letter"

Jennifer Tibbs

Undergraduate Award-Excellent-Page 14-"Night Flower"