

PULSE



PULSE

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Department of English and Foreign Languages

Lamar University-Beaumont
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Co-Editors

Brandy Copley
Brie McCain

Staff

Tim Carter
Leslie Lawhon
Jody Pate
Catherine Preslar

Cover Artist

Tracy Silverberg

Faculty Advisors

R.S. Gwynn
Jim Sanderson

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Judges

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Eleanor Poetry Award

Given to the best poem overall.

C. L. Foster "Nostalgia for a Youth I Never Lived"

de Schweinitz Poetry Award

Given to the best poem written in an open form.

C. L. Foster "Marilyn"

Barnes Poetry Award

Given to the best poem written in a traditional form.

Leslie Lawhon "In the Rafters"

Rowe Poetry Award

Chosen by Pulse co-editors (limited to undergraduates).

Jody Pate "The Man In The Picture By Matisse"

Foreign Translation Award

Given to the best foreign translation.

Stephan Malick "Denken an den Freund bei Nacht
aus dem Gedicht von Hermann Hesse"

Pulse Essay Award

Given to the best essay.

Catherine Preslar "A Simple Solution"

Pulse Fiction Award

Given to the best short story.

Catherine Preslar "Applause"

We wish to express our most sincere thanks to

Eleanor Perlstein Weinbaum

for her generous and constant support of
Pulse and the liberal arts of Lamar University.

DEDICATION

Kirkland Charles Jones, Ph.D.

1938 - 1993

Kirk Jones was a scholar of poetry from several eras. In his last years he published an important study of Arna Bontemps, one of the great figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Turning his attention to the younger generation, he wrote essays on Rita Dove, now Poet Laureate of the United States; Yusef Komunyakaa; and Marilyn Nelson Wanick. He was a man of letters in the finest sense, and his presence at Lamar will be missed. The following poem was written by the late Dr. George de Schweinitz shortly before his own death in 1990. We print it here as a dedication to the memory of Dr. Jones.

To Praise

I have no theme now but you.
You are in truth a subject now.
You are gone from your confidences.
Gone from the water you mermaided in.
Gone from time, the sliver of it we knew.
My praises were not ended when
you left. Now you come back in memory
and I have to test the texture
and the density, as if you were wearing
a knitted sweater whose weave I liked.
now it's all an invitation laid
in the words of mutual friends
who indirectly press your case.
Who try to praise. I live to praise.

George de Schweinitz

Eleanor Poetry Award

Nostalgia For A Youth I Never Lived

I hear the songs that carried me through high school
and think back onto someone else's life.
Evenings spent with friends I never knew
conversations never spoken
cruising the drag in a car I never drove
picking up girls I never had the courage to approach
making love to them in the back seat of my mind.

I hear the anthems of my youth
and recall with bitter-sweet emotion
the moments that bind the lives of others
like common threads in the fabric of humanity:
The smell of after shave on Friday night
the mad, reckless adventures of a car load of teens
the hot, trembling passion of virginity lost on a summer evening
the cooling comfort of friends on the beach still talking at sunrise--
Episodes culled from the memories of others
and the endless nights spent watching TV.
Weekends, spring breaks, summer vacations
invested with cowardly daydreams and fantasies
from the lifeless safety of my couch.

I hear the ramblings of old men
reliving the glory days of their past
feeling sorry for the loss of what they once had.
I understand their loss as if it were my own
for it is and it isn't
and I have lost more and less than any of them.
I hear the songs I used to know
and music fills me with nostalgia for the loss of a youth
that belonged to someone else.

C. L. Foster
Computer Science, GS

de Schweinitz Poetry Award

Marilyn

I found a bird with a broken wing
shattered
in some cruel hunter's snare.

Her beauty, marred by scars of anguish
drew me
all the more for its wounded imperfection.

I had known her in summers past, seen her flight
remembered
how she wheeled her arcs above me. . . I could have flown with her. . .

but the wind was against us,
seizing
sweeping her away--I thought her lost

until this tempest turned her backward to my shore
wounded
and fearful of flight.

She remembered me,
and came
I offered shelter in the hollow that her leaving left

took her in my arms, a gallant fool
thinking
to mend the bone and wipe away the pain with just the tender comfort

of my touch

but I know nothing of birds
or wings
or pain.

My touch was awkward, and the smell of man was on me
a scent
she'd learned to fear.

She fluttered from my clumsy grasp
talons
brushing my heart with rose thorn scratches in her passing

to light a wary distance from my hand;
not far
but safe.

I do not know if she will fly again,
or if
in flying she will come to me

I only know that wings are fragile things,
and fears
may dissipate with time and nothing less.

C. L. Foster
Computer Science, GS

Barnes Poetry Award

In the Rafters

Cotton candy wings
spreading from the rafters.
Suspended in the air
like a banner
above the door.

Curtain of fine dust
cloaking the owner.
Dinner remains trapped
in a thread prison
at life's end.

A tiny tattered wing,
a stringless kite stuck
to a telephone pole
whipping in the breeze
over and over.

The stretched webbing
spans out like a canopy.
Dirt and dust are parts
to this patch-work piece
of fine art.

Leslie Lawhon
English, SR

Rowe Poetry Award

The Man In The Picture by Matisse

the man in the picture
reaches up with silent energy,
and is apparently being crushed
by a handful of air.

the door in the picture
is empty and open,
with no lawn, no fence,
no shadows.

the wall in the picture
is not touching the floor,
but the carpet is a very bright
blueberry and white.

the man in the picture
will turn to look at his background,
and at his cue they will retake
their honest positions.

*Jody Pate
English, SR*

Foreign Translation Award

Denken an den Freund bei Nacht aus dem Gedicht

Früh kommt in diesem bösen Jahr der Herbst . . .
Ich geh bei Nacht im Feld, allein, den Wind am Hut,
Der Regen klirrt . . . Und du? Und du, mein Freund?

Du stehst--vielleicht--und siehst den Sichelmond
Im kleinen Bogen über Walder gehn
Und Biwakfeuer rot im schwarzen Tal.
Du liegst--vielleicht--im Feld and Stroh und schlafst
Und über Stirn und Waffenrock fällt kalt der Tau.

Kann sein, du bist zu Pferde diese Nacht,
Vorposten, spähend unterwegs, Revolver in der Faust,
Flüsternd und lächelnd mit dem muden Gaul.
Vielliecht--ich denk mir's so--bist du die Nacht
In einem fremden Schloss und Park zu Gast
Und schreibst bei Kerzenlicht an einem Brief,
Und tippst am Flügel im Vorübergehn
Auf klingende Tasten . . .

--Und vielleicht

Bist du schon still, schon tot, und deinen lieben
Ernsthaften Augen scheint der Tag nicht mehr,
Und deine liebe, braune Hand hängt welk,
Und deine weisse Stirne klafft--O hätt ich,

Hätt ich dir einmal noch, am letzten Tag,
Hätt ich dir etwas noch gezeigt, gesagt
Von meiner Liebe, die zu schüchtern war!

Du kinnst mich ja, du weisst . . . Und Lächelnd nickst
Du in die Nacht vor deinem fremden Schloss,
Und nickst auf deinem Pferd im nassen Wald,
Und nickst im Schlaf auf deiner harten Streu,
Und denkst an mich und lachelst.

Und vielleicht,

Vielleicht kommst du einmal vom Krieg zurück,
Und eines Abends trittst du bei mir ein,
Man spricht von Longwy, Lutich, Dammerkirch,
Und lächelt ernst, und alles ist wie einst,

Und keiner sagt ein Wort von seiner Angst,
Von seiner Angst und Zärtlichkeit bei Nacht im Feld,
Von seiner Liebe. Und mit einem Witz
Schreckst du die Angst, den Krieg, die bangen Nächte,
Das Wetterleuchten scheuer Männerfreundschaft
Ins kühle Nie und Nimmermehr zurück.

Herman Hesse
{September 1914}

Thinking of a Friend at Night
(September 1914)

In this evil year, autumn comes early . . .
I walk by night in the field, alone, the wind on my hat
The rain clatters . . . And you? And you, my friend?

You are standing--maybe--and seeing the sickle moon
Move in a small arc over the forests
And bivouac fire burning red in the black valley.
You are lying--maybe--in a straw field and sleeping
And dew falls cold on your forehead and battle jacket.

It's possible tonight you're on horseback,
The farthest outpost, peering along, with a revolver in your fist,
Smiling, whispering, to your exhausted horse.
Maybe--I keep imagining--you are spending the night
As a guest in a strange castle with a park
And writing a letter by candlelight, and tapping
On the piano keys by the window,
Searching for a sound . . .

--And maybe
You are already silent, already dead, and the day
Will shine no longer into your beloved
Serious eyes, and your beloved brown hand hangs wilted,
And your white forehead split open--Oh, if only,
If only, just once, that last day, I had shown you, told you
Something of my love, that I was too timid to speak!

But you know me, you know . . . and, smiling, you nod

Tonight in front of your strange castle,
And you nod to your horse in the soaked forest,
And you nod in your sleep to your harsh clutter of straw,
And think about me, and smile.

And maybe,
maybe some day you will return from the war,
And take a walk with me some evening,
And somebody will talk about Longwy, Lutich, Dammerkirch,
And smile gravely, and everything will be as before,
And no one will speak a word of his worry,
Of his worry and tenderness by night in the field,
Of his love. And with a single joke
You will frighten away the worry, the war, the uneasy nights,
The summer lightning of shy human friendship,
Into the cool past that will never come back.

Stephan Malick
Mass Communications, SR

To Be or Not to Be

Hanging loosely to the ragged edge I see her--
like a tattered banner in a storm
fragile silk before the vicious wind
flung from agony to hope
and back
she clings without desire
tired
wishing it would all be over soon.

How easy to let go.
How easy to relax

release

to fall

to plunge into the dark and swirling storm
a mote thrown unresisting through the night
to crash oblivious to jagged rocks on some forgotten shore.
How sweet to fall,

to die,

to sleep,

"to sleep, perchance to dream . . ."

She frightens me.
I see her loose her grip, eager to fall,
and reach for her not knowing if she will even take my hand . . .
Always somehow she returns; always wounded, always scarred,
cursing whatever strength or weakness it is that draws her from the edge...
but at least I have her for another day.

I can not stop the wind
nor turn back time to days before this fear.
I can not fill the void
ripped in her heart by cruel and callous hands
or even guess the hollowness she feels.
I do not know a way
to make her wish to stay more than to leave.
All I can do is love her
and pray that it's enough to keep her here
with me.

C. L. Foster
Computer Science, GS

America

when driving in alabama,
the highway sprouts weeds
and rabbits.

in texas, ants bunch up to trees
in times of high water.

montana is not famous
for potatoes.
every state has the sky.

and the ground we walk on.

Jody Pate
English, SR

Surrender

She found herself on the inside of a bottle
a misplaced ship without
breath or water
some tweezer-artist's joke.

Miss Ginger would have wept at
inaudible cries, fingernails
on glass, the profuse sweating
of the condemned
the torture in her struggle.

When help came, she was near collapse
gasping for air
choking on acrid fumes
and they came with that word--
that shattering, dehumanizing word
that word full of despair.
full of 'all's lost'
full of 'joke's over'

But she had done that!

She had surrendered!
She had, goddamnit!

To the whims of men
To the maleaucracy
To the institution of marriage
To the demands of a child
To the whine of a dog

She had surrendered!
Her passion
Her poetry
Her dreams

Everything she ever
believed in
fought for
hoped for
lied for
thought
said
did

All of it gone!

There was nothing left to throw up.
Oh god, dry heaves.

With less than a whimper
she took the bitter word
like a man
in her mouth and swallowed it
like every other dose of life.

It went down
not like burning whisky
that promised relief
but like the panic
of the last breath.

Hiding inside
a scream--
atrophied
a prisoner
from the first regime
not knowing the difference
between surrender
and strangulation,
not seeing the difference
between surrender
and defeat,
hid in her belly
to wait.

Catherine Preslar
English, SR

what i found in the largest library in the universe

a semi-medium sized marmoset once said to me, through a
12/1000 mesh voice muffler, "no one knows nothing like
nobody." i considered an intricate analyzation. ouch.
Goag the Grinticulous was not an oarsman.
i am out in any field
i am laying on my face (lying)
the grass IS fondling my eyes (anthropomorphising)
like a tiny green elf grasping
her lover's testicles (simile)
the stars are both above and below me (fact)
although i can see nothing
i can propound to the ground
that's right
propound to the ground
(as if the ground can hear) a word or a
gnashing of my teeth. "no one knows nothing
like nobody," i repeat. convicted. (allusion to religion)
of my surety.
stars make lines both parallel and perpendicular
to space. someone asked me somewhere (really):
and i answered.
very simple, isn't it? what i know
an egg also
poetry equals nothing. . knows
and you have fallen for it. .

Jody Pate
English, SR

Convulsions That Resemble Laughter

I'm gifted, you see,
with sardonic grace.
Those who know the cruelty of the world
understand me.
Everybody else thinks I'm real nice.

Catherine Preslar
English, SR

Just What You Wanted to Hear

jazz is so fucking selfish.
the bassist is playing a solo
from here to there.
the little midget saxophonist
is stomping on his own goatee
in the corner. we are all very
impatient for the bassist to
stop. so we can all go on.
we are sweating and the floor
is becoming wet with waiting.
the bassist is not there yet.
yet. yet. if he would just slip.
this far. we could force him to ground.
the pianist is screaming "stop
your damned plucking!!" but his
feet are nailed to the floor
and he is very quiet.

we are all old. the drummer is dead.
the bassist is still playing.
jazz is so fucking selfish.

Jody Pate
English, SR

bilingual cat litter

I read on a box the words above
and struggled to picture bilingual litter.
Could it be paper that palavers quite well
in slow proper English or Italian pell-mell?
Perhaps it is litter that speaks of its woes
set afoot by randy American toms
who require relief from bladders ignored
after nights spent carousing
with equally saturated Hispanic tabbies.
Maybe it's strips of old German papers
mingled with those discarded in France
which ad-lib with ease about droppings received
from eager-to-please kitten trainees.
I even conjectured a confetti quite classical
reciting in Latin long practiced phrases
or discoursing in Greek about anal phases.
In the end, of course, I failed to decipher
the semantic relation of bilingual litter
but became fondest of my belief
that the words advertise litter blessed with a knack
for receiving the scats of two-tongued cats.

Michele Nunez
Speech Language Pathology, GS

22. a poem of two people

you
you
my round white crackling love
will in years replace the freezing
bell of my head with an expansive
gleam: a transparent heatless fire
of spring
you
are contained in a circular darkness
because you have painted all your windows
with my severed tongue: my mind is not
a sufficient filter for
you
you my hopping fruit love
are and then are the greenest sky
that ever breathed: you were and are was
the twitching feet of my slain voice
you
are and will be the long hate
in the last day of october
you are the green leaf that won't turn
won't burn

Jody Pate
English, SR

Almost Home

Waiting in patient orbit of your world
I come as close as you will let me.
I see the patterns of the storms that tear across your seas,
the jagged, blood red rifts of pain--
volcanoes self-inflicted on your precious earth . . .
I would soothe them with a touch as cool as space
or a kiss as warm as passion
if I could.
I dream of lying in your warm embrace
to breathe at last your atmosphere beyond this solitary vacuum I endure.
How I would revel in your flowered fields,
and drink the sweet sap dripping from your trees,
inhale the deep intoxicating scent of you at last,
and rest my head within the gentle valley of your breast.
Yet I may not--
for still I see the scorched reminders of invasions past
and know you are afraid.
I will not rush to land too soon my craft.
And though the winds that wrack your velvet skies
may threaten to drive me from you with their pain,
I must fall back again and yet again--
your gravity will not let me escape,
and how could I abandon you, my love?
And so I wait--without regret for time--
for I have, solitary, wandered in this void since time began and night first lit
the stars,
and time has taught me patience in its wake.
The dinosaur seems but a moment lost--
what are a few more centuries to take?

C. L. Foster
Computer Science, GS

Kings' Rondel

Samuel 16:23

"And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David
took the lyre and played it with his hand: so Saul was refreshed,
and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

"You cannot kill the man you love, though God destroy
your mind and plague you soul, yet give him constant joy.
And while I hate him now, I hear his lyre sound
and only in his presence is my lost soul found.
My God has sacrificed me to this boy--a dove.

You cannot kill the man you love."

"You cannot kill the man you love, though he has tried
to murder you, then called you back home to his side.
I once so worshipped you, my king, that all
my world was made of you. I cried to see you fall.
Now, spear in hand your sleeping form I stand above.
You cannot kill the man you love."

Brandy Copley
Political Science, JR

Good Time Charlie's Night Around Town

the rain was Falling.
at two a.m. there was no Wind.
so the rain fell straight Down
plumb-bobbing from Heaven.
and the night was so Dark.

good time charlie smacked Around
in his boots and didn't get Wet.
or if he did, he did not Care.

(all aspects of the Situation
were conducive to Making
people turtle up in Their
houses after turning Off
the lights with a Grinning
close Thought.)

good time charlie smacked Around
in his shiny boots and Laughed.
he surfaced like a U-boat
near telephone poles, Cleverly
hiding from the public's sleeping Eye.

Jody Pate
English, SR

Anger

rolling in calm
like high tide
gentle break on barrier reefs

a foamy warning of
the submerged force
then
exploding

on the cliff
bursts into a million tears

trifling rivulets
return to the sea
and roll back out
to rebuild

Catherine Preslar
English, SR

Moonstruck

the moon rolls, rocking on her back, cradling night in her belly
waxing warm she hungers and hugs the evening star to breast
melting with moonbeams the goddess of love
teases and twinkles in echo
til slowly, not shyly, now winking wild
Venus speaks, Venus smiles

away afar Arcturus aches to slip inside her smile
to spill the passion he has held long within his light
soulful and hopeful he spirals down rays that bear his dream
to Spica setting low and lone, hovering on the horizon, hot
lightyears from his lust

Leo looks, Taurus taunts, Orion stays the hunt
and the stars that fill the dome of the sky sing celestial sex
angels and gods on the moon's dark face that I will never see
ringing in the black nightsea

I sing, I slip from gravity's grip,
I shelter in the mantle of the moon
held in the cover of her love, the moon I ache to spoon
I revel in romance, I dance, I desire,
I touch my soul to the stars
as Mother Earth pulls me home I add my lines as lyrics
for the music made above
a tune for the moon and her sexy stars in love

Michele Nunez
Speech and Language Pathology, GS

if i sleep before i die

dear god, make paper
the expression of my life;
for my life is in you,
and you are paper.

give me bread, give me guns,
give me calmness, give me good hearing,
give me green grass to chew on.
give me psychosis. give me light.

give me myself.

Jody Pate
English, SR

Satan's Sentinel

At the end of day when the shadows fade
the unwelcome visitor appears,
staring fearfully with sightless eyes
at the apparitions within the light.
Painful memories of long ago
rake at the very bowels of his soul,
as so helplessly he must endure
locked forever in this infernal night.

A testament to mindless acts
performed without thought to consequence,
Sodom and Gomorrah renewed
as man walked godless upon this earth.
Mutely he stands just beyond their realm
obsessed with the knowledge he bears,
this vile creature once cursed to Hell
emerges now from the wombs of his birth.

Carol Rabalais
English, JR

Memo

From: Ruth
To: Angeillique
Re: jealousy
dated 9-20-92

Noting that we possess differing interests and talents.

Miss Paxton County to my valedictorian--
diamond tiara and motorboard
Class Favorite to Most Likely to Succeed
aqua pools to sensible steel frames
nail polish to calculators
Juliet while I worked lighting effects--
gels to enhance magnolia skin

yet realizing that we have rapport nonetheless

shared brownies, midnight confessions
dating advice for assignment help
years of joint birthday parties--
two women's pained breathing
having come only hours apart

and having been for some time aware of ambivalent
feelings toward you,

secretly hoping you gain weight
cut Rapunzel's tendrils
become pregnant too soon
secretly admiring you

I request your input toward establishing the
nature of our relationship.

what are you wishing for me?
Urgent reply requested.

Sincerely,
Ruth
Brandy Copley
Political Science, JR

one small ghost dancing and one foot stepping

in a small dark crowded
town in louisiana i saw
a little ghost dancing.
four yards-full of air were
between us, but i could see
his bare feet and they were not
nailed or rooted to the ground.
the grass was depressed
under his feet, and the sound
was a product of his feet
and my mind
and the night's mind.
(just then, from behind
a black pole stepped an extremely
tall black man:
his one long foot
angled to the pavement
disappeared with the rest of him
before the step was completed
or heard
or understood.)
and i produced a step of my own
toward the small dancing ghost
and came upon him like a night train
on a white horse but the sound
was not there and neither was
the ghost or my mind; it was
transformed into a sign:

For Sale
and the small finger of my hand
touched a quarter in the air.
it was warm silver. and very thick.

Jody Pate
English, SR

Barbara

watches Michael sleep
with such tenderness
such love it floods
her and she blinks
back the blinding
emotion.

She strokes his hair
whispers his name
hugs him awake
and greets him with a
shaky smile as he
wakes and stretches.

Before the day is
through she will strike
at him with a back-bruising
rage that no child
could evoke.

Tonight, she will
tuck him in
and plan their
escape.

Catherine Preslar
English, SR

The Alley House
(A Modern-Day Lumberjack)

I'm a modern-day lumberjack.
Striking down ten maples per frame,
crashing, smashing, sweet sound, I make.
No creature around, that I maim.

My urethane saw skidded down
the lane. Brooklyn is the result.
Done with motions; hooked, around,
and crank. Creating no insults.

The turkeys are spared by the
modern-day lumberjacks making
a balance, the way it should be,
with the sweep doing the raking.

What harmony is created.
With the backups and duckpins.
With the oil, resin, and gutters.
Causes us all to be winners.

Jason Marshburn
Business, SO

The Man in the Mind of Time

he was all of these things:
the midnight man, drawing the
lights of the stars, the
light that has arrived, the
light that is already here,
saving it in cold rooms for the winter.
he was the voice that has not arrived, the
words that are on the way, the
sound that will be here soon, the
expecting windows in pre tremble,
he was the tilted, poised ear.
he was the emperor of the treetops, the
green screams flung out to the flat air, the
exploding pipebomb blooms of white, the
ripping of speech from tongue, holding words
at arm's length from wood, water, and fire.

his nights were nights of travel
the sounds of wind falling to earth
was his music his mouth was the mouth
of the skyline he was of the shapeless
beams of sun under the ocean he was
of the births of a thousand birds

he was all of these things:
a tiger dancing a stone frowning
a woman falling from a great height
a moment in the life of a body louse
a burst of september a drop of saliva
he was the only man in the mind of god
his was mine, ours is his

Jody Pate
English, SR

Dusk

Alone in the silence,
my eyes tracing the edge.
Night is descending.
The shadows slowly swallowing
my figure in front of the window.

The breeze sneaking
past my open door,
scratching at my back.

A December chill
fills the air.
The silence is deafening.
Finally broken,
the rhythmic slapping
like a card caught
in a bicycle's spokes,
is louder and louder.
I hear jangling keys--
silence again.

Leslie Lawhon
English, SR

The Word of the Sound of the Late Package

in the huge chair
shrunk among obscene flowers
came visions of burning--
something about a plane,
something about a fire.

folding time over itself the
when becomes now the
soft manilla fiber needles the
smooth square regularity the
physical torn paper with black gloves the
thin hemp rope parting like a vein at the
silver touch of the
patient razor

looking out over the waiting
chance expands into a mazy topography
a funneled mist of probabilities
on the wastes of his face,
the rivers of his eyes

and time always folds back out
like a crumpled straw wrapper
in a drop of water

Jody Pate
English, SR

Applause

Gay Lynn peeked out from under the heavy covers and blew into the air. It was a kind of ritual. Seeing her white breath reminded her of the coming shock. The heated waterbed seemed to be the only warm place in the world. The waterbed and her friend Patsy's sauna where she went once a week to warm herself all the way through. She would sit in the sauna and dip from the water bucket with floating eucalyptus nuts, pour a ladle full over the rocks, close her eyes. The scented heat would wash over her like a drug. The rising steam was almost intoxicating and the tension of cold escaped from her muscles and dripped from every pore. It reminded her of why she left east Texas where the sauna lasted for months instead of minutes.

She swung her legs over the wooden frame of the waterbed and jumped to the floor. Pulling on nylon socks that she wished were silk and then thick cotton socks that she wished were wool, she dashed to the living room where the remainder of her clothing was piled by the fireplace in hopes that the dwindling coals would at least keep them flexible.

Alice and Joe knew to wait until she had put on her thermals before approaching her. Alice, a Walker hound, had come from east Texas like Gay Lynn. Outdoors, Alice was a tireless hunter, but she was hound-dog lazy inside. She could sleep for days when the weather was too severe for her east Texas blood, or she could stay on the trail of some animal equally as long. She was very particular about whom she liked and apparently with whom she mated. During her first heat cycle, she had proudly and viciously refused every suitor, but she broke a chain and travelled two miles to meet up with a handsome St. Bernard. Joe was a product of that union. He was twice the size of his mother and maybe half as smart. Gay Lynn hugged his big neck and ran her fingers through his thick white fur. He had a pleasingly freckled nose and always appeared to be grinning. Alice was more aloof and only tolerated petting as a favor to her provider.

"Two more minutes," Gay Lynn told them.

She quickly got into her jeans and sweater and sat down to lace her cumbersome but wonderfully water and cold repellent Bass boots. They were the best (and most expensive) purchase she had made in the two years she had lived in the mountains. Her coat had come from Goodwill and was adequate except for those spells of extreme and bitter cold. Those were the days when, if at all possible, she would stay close to the fire reading Tolkien's trilogy and toasting herself one side at a time. Still, the perpetual chill clung to her muscles and hid in her bones until she visited one of the sacred temples of warm.

She ran a brush through her long brown hair and braided it as she walked to the coat rack where she grabbed her jacket and ski cap and headed to the kitchen door lighting the burner under the coffee on the way. The dogs were waiting there anxiously and in spite of all her warning, very nearly knocked her down as they rushed out into the bright morning. It happened every day and if she had not so enjoyed their enthusiasm she would have taught them better manners.

She watched them run until Alice was a black speck and Joe had completely blended with the white landscape before turning toward the wood pile. The twisted pieces of pitch wood were stacked so haphazardly that the snow could hardly find a level place to land and so the wood was always accessible even after a blizzard like yesterday's. Blizzards like that one didn't come often enough to suit Gay Lynn. They left everything so pure. The white glittered and the sky was a richer blue than flat-landers could even imagine. At moments like these, she could rejoice in her decision to come here. Nowhere in the world was as beautiful. Nowhere could be closer to God, whatever that was. She felt as if she had left her past with all its aches and pains and sordid messes not just behind, but far below her. She was willing to endure the cold and do whatever else she had to just to be in this place. At moments like these, it was all worth it.

She grabbed two pieces of wood and went back inside to revive the fire. It didn't take much; a grocery sack and a bit of fanning and the pitch started to sizzle and spew. Back in the kitchen, she put the coffee pot on the back burner, yelled at Wally, then started the biscuits. Her biscuits had steadily improved up to a point. They were still a bit heavy, but all attempts to lighten them had resulted in a biscuit too crumbly to butter. So she measured out the usual amount of flour, salt, and baking powder, mixed it together and, using two knives, began cutting the shortening into the mixture. She was lost in the process when Wally slipped up from behind and kissed her neck.

"Mornin'," she said pulling her shoulder up to meet her ear.

"Coffee ready?" he asked reaching over her head for a cup.

"Should be, but it ought to settle a minute."

"I can handle a few grounds," he said, pouring the cloudy coffee from the aluminum pot. "Any special requests?"

"Yeah. Play 'House on a Hill.' It's on that Audience album, side one.

"Any other requests?" he mumbled on his way to the living room.

"Yeah. Play whatever you want," she said to the lump of dough in front of her.

She lit the oven and greased a pan for the biscuits, then sprinkled flour on the counter and rolled the lump out into an even thickness. Using a small jelly glass, she cut ten uniform circles from the dough and placed them

in the pan. Z Z Top came blasting from the living room.

"You'll cause an avalanche," she yelled. "Or at the very least the biscuits won't rise," she added under her breath.

Gay Lynn liked Z Z Top, but she liked them better at night with beer. She went into the living room and showed him one thumb down followed by prayer hands and a mouthed please and returned to the kitchen. The biscuits were baking and the water for the oatmeal was staring to boil when the music stopped altogether. Wally came back in, dressed this time, but his long hair was tangled and he seemed disoriented, like he was struggling with something but not sure what.

"What time is your so-called interview?" he asked between puffs.

"It's not an interview; it's an audition."

"What's the difference?" The words came out hoarse and whispered allowing almost no smoke to escape.

"One's for a job, the other's a performance." She stayed busy at the stove directing her words at the contents of the pot. "I don't plan on taking the job."

"You don't have to do this," he countered. "We can find another way."

"So you say." She started to turn toward him when the oatmeal started to bubble. "And maybe it's true, but unless you can come up with it in the next thirty minutes, I'm going. Ten dollars is ten dollars, and it'll probably be the easiest ten dollars I ever made."

She took the pan off the fire and poured the contents into two bowls. She set the steaming bowls on the table and seated herself opposite him.

"I don't like it," he said.

"What, the oatmeal? I know."

"Look, if you're doing this because I'm tired of oatmeal, don't."

"Maybe I'm doing it because I'm tired of oatmeal. Maybe I'm doing it because they won't let me roof. Maybe I'm doing it because if men are stupid enough to pay me for doing nothing more than struttin' around with no shirt, I'm willing to let 'em. Whatever it is, I'm doing it."

Wally took his full bowl to the door and set it out for the dogs.

"Don't expect me to support you in this," he grumbled.

She laughed. "I no longer expect you to support me in anything."

"This is shit, Gay Lynn." He turned and went out the door.

He would be back soon. It was thirteen degrees and he had no coat. Gay Lynn got up and got the biscuits out of the oven and set them on the stove. They looked and smelled good, but she had lost her appetite too. She went to get ready for the trip to Denver.

The bathroom had no heat other than the shower and Gay Lynn stepped gratefully into the steaming water. She stood in the stream letting the hot water wash the tension out of her back as the heat soaked in. Today, she

took time to examine her body as she washed it. Men loved it though she had never been particularly pleased with it. The reason for her displeasure was uncertain; she couldn't come up with a particular flaw. In fact, as standards generally went, she was flawless. But it bothered her. Haunted her, in fact. And it bothered her that she was going to take her clothes off today for some strange man for ten dollars. She knew he would offer her a job and not just because of her body. Men found the light freckles across her face charming, and she had a disarming smile that showed a small gap between her front teeth. She wasn't Miss America or Playboy material and that made most men more comfortable. She had everything she needed to get anything she wanted.

Dressing quickly didn't keep the chill from settling back in. She was drawn to the living room fire in spite of her desire to avoid Wally. He was there, sure enough, reading Dune, and Alice sat expectantly at his side. Gay Lynn felt more comfortable having Alice there.

"Where's Joe?" She asked Alice but hoped Wally would answer. He didn't.

"Have you got anything lined up today?" this time directed at Wally.

"If Jerry shows up, I do." Jerry was a carpenter who stopped by for Wally when he didn't have a full crew.

"Well, if he doesn't, Bill could probably use some help," she offered.

"Fuck Bill. If he wants help, let him hire some."

Bill Rigney was the foreman of the ranch Gay Lynn and Wally lived on. Bill and Gay Lynn had become friends when she worked at the Timberline Inn where she had served him coffee every morning. He was an old man, smitten with her, of course, and flattered by her friendliness. He had ultimately arranged for her to live in the "old" house for a very reasonable amount. She felt like she owed him. Wally felt like he was a grown man with free will and that if he expected extra considerations he should have put it in the contract. Gay Lynn didn't pursue that argument this morning. Better let Wally pout it out.

Gay Lynn stretched the chains out behind the rear tires and backed the Impala on to them. She jumped out to fasten them around the tires leaving the car running. It probably wasn't real smart working so near the exhaust but she was anxious to warm up the car. Putting chains on was probably her least favorite chore. She couldn't work the latches with gloves and her fingers didn't function well in the bitter cold. Her hands were numb by the time she finished and thawing was a painful process.

She eased the car around to face the road with the snow crunching and the chains clinking as they settled into place. She waved at Bill who was just coming back from plowing the mile stretch to the county road. Bill grinned when he saw her and started rolling his window down. Gay Lynn was

not in the mood for chatting but she never refused him.

"Where you headed?" he yelled.

"Denver."

"Better not. The roads will be patchy even if the plows have been through. Why don't we go have some coffee and give 'em some more time?" His concern was genuine, but so was his desire for her company.

"Can't," she called back. "I've got an appointment. Maybe tomorrow." She started rolling the window up against the cold and Bill's insistence.

The Chevy crunched and clanked its way to the county road which was already plowed and sanded. She stopped to remove the chains and decide which way to go. Left would take her a few miles to the interstate which would be the faster, easier, and safer choice, but right would take her through the canyon which was a spectacular drive. She threw the chains into the back and opted for spectacular.

She followed the county road to the state highway and turned toward Denver. Leaving the shade of the pass, she was momentarily blinded. The sun was directly in her eyes and the white landscape intensified the effect. She fumbled for her sunglasses, disappointed. She wanted to enjoy the white of the mountains, the freshness of nature's finest purging. Oh well, it would still be breathtaking. She wound her way cautiously toward Golden passing from brilliance to dark shadow and back again, struggling to adjust her vision and watch for patches of snow and ice. The scenery was grand when she got a chance to look, but most of her energy and concentration went to maneuvering the curves at a safe speed, which was not always easy to maintain on such an incline. Momentum determined the speed more often than her boot. She braked on those rare occasions when the road was clear and visible before her and felt out of control when her descent was excessively fast and patches became the fabric of the road. She was relieved to see Golden appear before her as she rounded a sharp curve. She had never liked Golden; it smelled like the beer it produced and its ashtray and can factories did not belong in the mountains even this close to Denver. But the interstate met the canyon road here and she was glad.

The interstate was completely clear of ice thanks to the constant flow of traffic. It was a virtually uninterrupted, straight slope to Denver from this point and Gay Lynn saw the dome of pollution that encapsulated the city and groaned. Cities were a necessary evil. People were a necessary evil. She looked past the city to the great plains beyond and shuddered. She could see forever and what she saw was nothing.

The snow was piled up deep and dirty beside the highway and that was the extent of the peripheral view. Gay Lynn flipped on the radio and she automatically began singing along. "Let me take you down cause I'm going to Strawberry fields, Nothing is real, and nothing to write home about." She

put in whatever words suited her because they seemed to fit and she never had understood what they were really saying. It sounded like "nothing to get hung about," but what could that mean? The Beatles had gotten too cryptic for her since Abbey Road. She wondered if anybody knew what they were really talking about half the time.

The beauty of the blizzard had vanished in the business districts of Denver. Gay Lynn found her way through the grimy streets and pulled into the parking lot of the Aloha. It looked busy for a bar before noon with twenty-five or thirty cars in the slushy lot. On the other side of the bar was a small frozen lake. It was all rather oxymoronic: a clean snow-covered pond and a grimy-slush parking lot separated by a bar called Aloha. Hello, goodbye. After a couple of deep breaths and a mumbled "well shit," Gay Lynn got out and marched inside.

The door closed behind her and she found herself standing in pitch black. She yanked off her sunglasses and waited for her pupils to react. The room began to form itself around her. Small tables stood scattered on a red carpet. Several pool tables appeared in the distance. A well-lighted area in the far back exposed a buffet that accounted for the pleasant smells. She realized she was hungry and then lost that thought to the terrible awareness of all the heads turned in her direction. She could only hope the dim lighting hid her embarrassment.

A man in a suit approached her with a smile and an outstretched hand. "Hello, I'm Hal Harper. I'm one of the owners here. May I help you?" "I'm here for an audition." The sound of her voice surprised her.

"I suspected as much," he said. "Let's go to my office."

She followed him without looking at the customers but she couldn't help noticing that the several women waiting tables, playing pool, leaning against the bar, and even behind the bar, were wearing nothing but sandals and bikini panties. She felt her face turning redder.

Hal's office was bright and professional looking.

"Please sit down," he offered.

She obeyed but kept her eyes fixed frankly on his face.

"Look," he said, "I guess the first thing I should tell you is that I'm a happily married man, and to the best of my knowledge, so are the other owners. In other words, you don't have to screw anybody to work here."

She wondered if she looked relieved. She wondered if she was relieved. At any rate, she smiled and saw its effect on Hal.

"In fact," he continued, "we prefer you don't screw anybody. We only sell the illusion of sex here."

"I don't think I'm really interested in the job," she told him. "I thought I'd check it out but . . ."

He responded to the pause, "Well, since you're here, would you like

to go ahead with the audition? You'll be able to make a better decision based on . . ."

His voice faded into the cacophony of her own thoughts. Of course she would do an audition. She didn't have enough gas to get home. But taking off her clothes would hardly change her disposition favorably. That was for his consideration, wasn't it? Was there more? God, what had she gotten into?

He was looking at her curiously. "Hey, are you alright?"

"What do I have to do?" Her voice was barely audible this time.

"We ask that you dance to two songs of your choice for the club members," he answered.

"I'm not exactly prepared for that," she stammered remembering the women in the bar.

"Well, what can I do to help?" Hal asked, and then after studying her face added, "What exactly is the problem?"

"Attire."

"Pardon?"

"I don't have the proper attire." She almost yelled it.

"Oh. Oh, of course. I understand. Not to worry." He pushed his chair back from the desk and pulled open a drawer and tossed out several packages of different colors. "The dressing room is right through there. Just come out through the other door when you're ready."

"Thanks," was all she said as she walked from his office directly into the dressing room. Now what's wrong with this picture? Well, shit. It was kind of like the one time she went skiing. If you take the ski lift up, you have to ski down--no matter what the cost or the level of fear. She looked at the packaged blue panties in her hand and then at the pegs on the wall, several of which had jeans and sweaters hanging on them.

Sitting on a bench under a vacant hook, Gay Lynn untied her Bass boots and began the earlier routine in reverse. When she finished she was shivering but whether from the cold or nerves she didn't know. More deep breathing, then--one . . . two . . . three, she slipped through the door. Hal directed her to a small, slightly raised stage with a juke box. The stage was well lighted but not obnoxiously bright. She padded across the room, painfully aware of the eyes on her. When she stepped on to the stage there were calls of encouragement and a smattering of applause. A tenuous smile slipped into place.

She studied the juke box selection and chose both songs before pushing any buttons. It took for-fucking-ever to find two she knew she could dance to. She wished she had smoked a joint.

She punched in the numbers for "LaGrange" by Z Z Top and Jerry Lee Lewis' "Chantilly Lace," then turned to face the audience for the first time. She was light headed and everything was a blur. Her legs trembled.

Instinctively, she dropped her head, reciting the Bene Gesserit litany of fear: "... fear is the mind killer. It is the little death. . ."

There was an anxious hush in the room that Jerry Lee Lewis shattered. She began to move mechanically but rhythmically and her hair that had hung so dutifully in front of her breasts moved gracefully back and forth. Now you see me, now you don't.

"... that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear."

She lifted her face. The audience was still out of focus and vague but she could hear men calling words of praise and encouragement, "You're beautiful, baby," and "I love you, baby, dance for me." And there were echoes of Jerry Lee, "OOO baby, thats-a-what I like." Whistles came from all over.

"I will let it pass over me and through me. And when the fear is gone . . ."

The muscles in her shoulders loosened and the blood that had rushed to her face returned to her limbs.

"... only I will remain."

The only thing the song had going for it was rhythm and it helped her to find her own. Her movements became more fluid and the crowd fed her energy.

She felt the heat in her body rise from the exercise, the adrenaline, the exhilaration--her appreciation of their appreciation.

"Chantilly Lace" ended and in the pause before "LaGrange" the applause and cheers were a roar in her head. She flung her hair back smiling broadly and let herself become part of the next song.

"La Grange" took her into another world. The rhythm came easy and the words took her to Texas and the world that she was born to. She closed her eyes and sang with it. "Just let me know--if you wanna go--to that home out on the range. They gotta lotta nice girls out there." She laughed the knowing laugh of the singer. The guitar filled her mind and she was dancing for the pure pleasure of the song. Nothing in the world existed but her body and the song in perfect sync. An occasional whistle or cheer slipped inside the song and she shook it out. She could give them more if she stayed oblivious to them. She gave. More than they expected, more than they would have asked, probably more than they deserved. No matter. She was not here for them.

The song ended and Gay Lynn stood on the little stage soaking up the applause, her body glistening from the effort, her eyes from the triumph. She laughed. She was warm.

On the way home, she bought four dollars worth of gas and then stopped at Woolworth's. She rummaged through the make-up bargain bin and

found some Cover Girl base, a tube of mascara, some powder blue eye-shadow and two sample-size lipsticks. She bought one pair of black nylon bikini panties and two rawhide dog chews. She spent it all.

*Catherine Preslar
English, SR*

The Papler-Mâché Jungle

Donald Benson Holloman had never been to Africa, much less on a safari in Kenya or face to face with stampeding elephants. Despite the facts, Donald loved the life he had never lived better than the one he had.

The living room of his 1960's style bungalow sported a large papier-mâché rhinoceros's head above the fireplace mantle. Covering the hardwood floors were faux-zebra skin rugs, and at one end of the room was a stool shaped like an elephant's foot. In the corner, a life-size lion lurked, teeth bared at a stationary monkey who appeared forever fleeing. A cobra draped over a plastic rubber tree helped camouflage the gnu hiding behind it.

Framed photographs were scattered throughout the room. One had Donald dressed in khakis and smiling at Ernest Hemingway, who was similarly attired, with "Donald, good luck on your hunt! Papa H." scrawled across it. Another had William Holden standing with his arm around Donald, although part of the arm didn't quite match up correctly, with the inscription: "Donald, you are to Africa what Columbus was to America! Your buddy, Bill." Robert Redford, Meryl Streep, and Donald stood posed in another, with "Donald, thanks for your input. The movie couldn't have been done without you. Bob." written on the bottom. In each photo, Donald appeared his present age, including one with Johnny Weissmuller dressed as Tarzan, holding a chimpanzee and standing next to Donald, autographed with "Donald, forever in your debt for training Cheetah. J. W." written for all to see.

Donald worked for a tabloid named The Inquiring World which was where he first learned creative photography. An artist by calling, Donald's work, particularly his papier-mâché jungle animals, were not commercial enough to provide a living for him. But his imagination, often called "Donald's Fantasyland" by his father, proved sufficiently lucrative, at least as far as The Inquiring World was concerned.

His story of hungry aliens devouring a poor farmer's entire cash crop of soybeans as the farmer looked on helplessly, as well as one with Queen Elizabeth seen talking to the ghost of Elvis, had convinced the editors that Donald had what it took.

Short, soft, bespectacled, and with a growing paunch, Donald hardly appeared the big game hunter he so admired. Nor did the almost bashful boy artist seem capable of the vicious, celebrity-slandering lies he produced with ease each week for The Inquiring World.

"You lie for a living. It's a damn disgrace," Donald's father, owner of a chain of Paco's Tacos, lectured. "We sent you to college for this? That's what an art major will get you. I tried to tell you to go into business, but would you listen? This is your mother's doing. She brainwashed you just to spite me."

Donald sat facing his father, but neither hearing the familiar lecture nor seeing his father's red, puffy face. Instead, he saw a hippopotamus lapping scotch and water from a muddy river bed, and a hunter, virile and strong, quietly taking aim while the animal slurped noisily, unaware of danger.

The conversation halted abruptly as Donald's stepmother, Janet, an overly-tanned, bleached blonde in a tennis outfit, entered the room. "Oh, hello Donald. How nice of you to stop by. How are things at The Inquiring . . . Planet?" She never quite got the name right, but, nonetheless, always made a point of mentioning Donald's employment, just in case her husband needed reminding.

Donald smiled at Janet, the long-legged giraffe, future supper for some hungry predator of the jungle, and answered his stepmother. "We're working on a really big story involving housewives working as prostitutes while their husbands are out making a living. It's going to be front page coverage with a headline of: "Hooker Housewives, Dressed for Tennis, Playing with Somebody Else's Balls. Angry Customer Tells Police--It's A Racket!"

Donald's father lit his cigar, ignoring them both. Janet glared at Donald as he continued. "So, in answer to your question, Janet, things at The Inquiring World just couldn't be better. What have you been up to lately?"

"Actually, Donald, your father and I have dinner plans for this evening. I'd love to sit and chat, but I have to get dressed."

"Something in red, I bet. It looks so good with your hair." Donald smiled at his stepmother as she left the room.

His father, gulping his scotch, scowled. "I don't know why we have to eat out nearly every goddamn night. I wish Janet would tell me before she makes these plans."

"Women. Who understands them?" Donald sighed as he stood to leave.

"But every man needs one, right, Son?" Donald's father questioned him.

Donald merely shrugged as he made his way to the door. The hippo was down and the hunter had another trophy. "All I know, Dad, is it's a jungle out there." Donald left as his father poured himself another drink.

Driving home, Donald felt inspired to create more species for his jungle. He envisioned a panther tearing the flesh off its prey, a long-legged giraffe, and began the project as soon as he arrived at his house.

Tearing newspaper into six-inch long, thick strips, using coat hangers to form the skeleton, Donald grinned as he imagined his father's reaction to this latest jungle scene addition. Of course, it was unlikely he would ever see it since his father rarely came over, preferring to summon his son like a houseboy when he wanted to see him. Nevertheless, Donald enjoyed pretending.

His creations took weeks to complete, but Donald had endless patience. Sometimes when he worked, Donald could hear his mother's voice admiring his animals, much as she had done when she was living.

His parents' divorce, followed by his father's hasty marriage to Janet, was, in Donald's mind, directly responsible for his mother's death. He was not at all materialistic, but noting that Janet was motivated him to show some interest in his father's fast food empire. Donald saw it as the last thing he could do for his mother, who, for all she endured, should have been the recipient of whatever Paco's Tacos netted.

The dying giraffe and voracious panther completed, Donald decided to put them in his bedroom where he could see them first thing every morning and last thing every night. The mural he had painted on his wall of a hippopotamus lapping up dirty swamp water provided the perfect background. After rearranging a chest and bookcase, Donald had the animals just where he wanted them.

Finishing one of his creations always made Donald hungry and tonight he had a craving for tacos. He headed for the original Paco's Tacos where the manager always remembered him, calling him "Ray's boy" and never letting him pay for his meal. The restaurant was within walking distance, less than half a block from Donald's house, which added to the convenience. Donald ate alone, heaping the salsa on his tacos and devouring them with such intensity that diners at nearby tables began to stare.

Donald didn't notice the attention for he was, at that moment, a panther. He allowed the salsa to run down his chin and drip back on to his plate. The hunt was good.

Donald walked home, satisfied that his father and Janet would be called by the manager, reporting with concern, of course, that Donald was . . . what was the word he liked to use . . . animated. Donald grinned. He like animated.

Donald decided to retire early, but not without admiring his latest handiwork once more before getting in bed. He checked to make sure his Colt .45 was loaded and in the night stand, just in case. It was his nightly ritual. The gun was where it always was and with that assurance, Donald closed his eyes.

Sleep came quickly and he soon was on safari in a dreamland that at least initially resembled his beloved Africa. He knew he was hunting the fierce panther, but not to kill. It was to be a gift to his father. Capturing the panther was Donald's mission and his destiny.

The hunt progressed rapidly once the panther was spotted. Donald stared into the eyes of the cat, whispering to the animal to come to him. The panther slowly crept toward Donald and his entourage. When the beast was within three feet of him, Donald motioned his companions to open the cage

they were carrying. Slowly, they sat the open cage beside him, and without breaking eye contact with the panther, Donald threw a piece of raw meat into the cage. The panther rushed in and Donald slammed the cage door shut.

The hunting party cheered and slapped Donald's back, congratulating him on the amazing capture. He turned to see Ernest Hemingway and William Holden talking to a man whose face was partially concealed. Donald's mother was there also, smiling with adoration at her son. Donald cried out to her, but she faded from his view as he heard his father's booming voice in the distance, followed by the sound of Janet laughing.

The panther began to growl, wanting more meat. Donald wasn't sure the cage was strong enough to contain the cat, especially if it were still hungry. Donald groped for a gun, a knife, or any weapon, just in case. He knew instinctively this animal was coming for him. But before he could locate a weapon, the panther broke through the bamboo cage, lunging at Donald.

He screamed as the predatory feline leapt on top of him, teeth bared, and ready to tear the flesh from his body. Rolling to the ground, Donald grasped blindly until his hands were in the drawer of his night stand. Grabbing the gun, Donald awoke in terror and took aim. In the dark, it was difficult to see if he hit the panther or the giraffe or both.

Donald fired until the gun was empty. He was still trembling unable to respond to the voices calling from outside the house, even when he heard them forcing open his front door. The man whose face had been partially concealed in his dream was now standing in his bedroom with two police officers. "He's Ray's boy," the man said. "I knew something was wrong tonight when he was at the restaurant." The police officers pounced on Donald, tearing the gun from his hand, and yelling for someone to call an ambulance.

With the light on, Donald could see the giraffe in shreds at the foot of his bed surrounded by pieces of the panther as well as sheetrock chips from the mural on the wall. He had somehow missed the hippopotamus lapping up dirty, swamp water. No matter, Donald thought as he closed his eyes, filled with a hunter's pride, and imagined The Inquiring World interviewing his father.

Gayla Chaney
Sociology, JR

Pulse Essay Award

A Simple Solution

"Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." *Jonathan Swift*

The battle over abortion has gone on quite long enough with no appreciable progress. It should be clear, by now, that advertising campaigns will not stop it. Preaching will not stop it. Even killing the doctors that perform abortion will not prevent its continuation. My hat is off to all those upright individuals who have sacrificed their time, energy and even, at times, their freedom to form a human barrier around the clinics that so heinously promote infanticide, but we must find a better solution. We must find a solution that satisfies both sides.

Clearly, life as we define it begins at conception. The real area of contention is the question of consciousness or a soul. I cannot foresee any reconciliation on this matter and it seems impossible to prove either way. Since those who support abortion have little or no interest in this matter, I will not spend any time rehashing old arguments. It will be in the best interest of all to address the concerns that they (abortion proponents) do have.

I realize that preventing abortion will create a certain number of comparatively minor problems. It is, indeed, these problems that provide the pro-choice faction of our society with any legitimate points of argument. Let us then look at these problems and consider some possible solutions so that we may get on with the business of the economy.

The argument I hear most frequently is, in fact, the one that does not lend itself to simple solution. (Perhaps that is why it is used so frequently.) A frighteningly large number of women protest that they themselves are the only ones qualified to make decisions that will affect their lives and their bodies. While this is a repugnantly selfish argument, it is not without merit. After all, none of us wants to bring Uncle Sam into the bathroom with us. We do have a right to some privacy. We could argue, however, that once a woman becomes pregnant, she is no longer a she but a they. Since the baby has no voice and the woman has a conflicting interest, the right of proxy could go to a third party. I had at one time considered that the right person for this job might be the first lady since this would at least eliminate the "men don't understand since they don't have to go through it" rhetoric. The inherent defect in this logic, of course, was made apparent in the last election. Who would have thought, with all the billions of dollars spent to prevent it, that we would have another Democratic administration?

Besides the issue of personal freedom, bleeding liberals propound that we already have too many unwanted and unhealthy children. One in four children live in poverty; the number of AIDS and Crack babies is increasing phenomenally; child abuse is rampant; the cities are full of homeless children and gangs. I hear these statements ad nauseam. I can not deny their validity, but I say life is hard. We have all had obstacles to overcome. They build character. However, in a soft society like ours we must offer some resolution. We could offer institutionalization for all unwanted children. We could use the unemployed and the elderly to run these facilities for minimal costs, and when the child reaches the age of eighteen, he or she could work off the cost of his or her care by doing public service for a predetermined number of years. The problem with this plan lies in the fact that many women who cannot afford to raise another child will still be reluctant to comply for some sentimental reason, and others will want the additional welfare money the child would bring in. In addition, we would still have the exorbitant cost of caring for unhealthy children.

We are left with few alternatives. The solution I offer is simple, economical, and will resolve the moral dilemma of abortion, unwanted pregnancies, and other national problems as well. We should, and, indeed, must implement a national sterilization policy immediately. On implementation, the policy would require all children aged thirteen to undergo a vasectomy or tubal ligation. I have anticipated objections to this program and will address those I consider most legitimate.

First, I understand and respect the Catholic position on birth control (although it is creating some overpopulation problems in some countries). Since this would be a government instituted policy, Catholics themselves would individually be innocent of disobeying church doctrine. The church, which does not encourage premarital sex, certainly has the financial means to reverse the procedure for its members when they marry. This way, the only ones practicing birth control will be those already leading a sinful life. Then, too, there is always the option of moving.

Secondly, there are those that might consider thirteen to be too young. We all know that since the sexual revolution, the age of sexual activity has been steadily decreasing. Even if this were not the case, rapists and incestuously inclined family members have little regard for age. Sterilization will resolve the added problem of pregnancy when unfortunate incidents of rape and incest occur.

Thirdly, I am sure some will object to including both sexes. Well, fair is fair. Besides, we are always involved in some war or another and everywhere we go we leave behind still more unwanted children.

Most importantly, I'm sure many are wondering what will become of our population. Herein lies the beauty of this simple solution. Those

responsible adults who want to have children are free to have the procedure reversed. This will insure that only those who can afford children can have them. It liberates couples who want to wait until later in life or to avoid parenthood altogether to enjoy themselves without the hassle, health risks, or uncertainty of birth control. We will be insured of a healthier gene pool and more conscientious prenatal care. An added bonus is that we are virtually assured of a Republican voting population forever.

It will take a while for the existing population of sick and homeless children to die, kill themselves or each other in drug related violence, or be absorbed into the mainstream, but this will all happen within a generation. In the meantime, I feel certain that the right-to-lifers, freed at last from their responsibilities of protest, will be happy to devote the same time and energy to working with and caring for these children. And we can all look forward to a future free of welfare.

Catherine Preslar
English, SR

Bash, Spit, and Jerk

Some folks say they don't like to watch football (brainball), basketball (hoopjerking), and baseball (bubbleball); the reason they don't like watching these sports is because they are looking for some complicated game plan when there isn't any. We here at Know-It-All Sports will explain these games so the viewer can better understand how they are played.

Brainball is an easy game because all there is to it is ramming and bashing. The object of brainball is to bash each other's brains out. It's simple. Eleven guys line up on each side of the ball and when the center snaps the ball, they all start ramming and bashing each other until the referee blows his whistle. After the whistle blows, each team forms a huddle. Still delirious from the ramming and bashing, the group waits until one of the players comes to his senses enough to make sure they are all still in the game. The spectators who don't understand brainball think that the players are discussing strategy when, in reality, they are just leaning on each other to keep from falling down. Once their heads begin to clear, they all clap hands and run back over to the ball and do it again. The referee sometimes throws a yellow towel in the air and points at one of the players. What is happening at this point is the referee is signaling the judges upstairs that the player wants the ball moved closer to where his friends are sitting so they can get a better look at the ramming and bashing. The judges then decide whether or not they like the player enough to move the ball for him. The only other thing to know about brainball is how the kicker fits into this game. The kicker seems to be lifted out of the action because he is the only player that doesn't get bashed. In fact, if the opposing team bashes the kicker, the ball is moved closer to where the kicker's friends are sitting. Don't worry about the kicker because he gets his bashing back at the clubhouse whenever he misses the kick.

Hoopjerking is a game that is great fun to watch once it is understood. The object of hoopjerking is to grab the ball after the referee throws it up in the air, run down to the opposing team's hoop, stuff the ball through the hole, grab the hoop, and see if it can be jerked off the backboard. The only other concept the spectator needs to know is the player must keep dribbling as he moves the ball down the court or his jerk on the hoop won't count. The players wear nylon shirts and shorts so the spectators won't notice how wet they are from all the dribbling up and down the court. See, all there is to hoopjerking is a bunch of dribbling and jerking.

People that don't understand bubbleball think it's a game of hitting, running, and catching, but it's not; bubbleball is a game of chewing, spitting and adjusting. Bubbleball starts in the locker room when both teams put on supporters that are too small for them, so the object of bubbleball is to see

which team can wear these supporters the longest. Once out on the field, the players hit the ball around to keep their minds off the tight supporters. Gum chewing is an effort by the players to convince the opposing team that they are not in pain and are actually having a good time. Spitting relieves the frustration and lets the other team that they are tough and will wear the supporters all night if that is what it takes. Even though they constantly do it, adjusting is not permitted. The umpire is there to keep track of the adjusting. Whenever the umpire catches a player adjusting himself, he tells the scorekeeper to add a point to the other team's score, and if the umpire catches him three times, the player is out of the game. That is where they got: one, two, three times you are out. Now, it should be clear why the guys don't want the girls in bubbleball; the guys would never win the game.

After reading these sports explanations and experiencing the true art of spectator sports, we here at Know-It-All Sports realize that new fans will want to share this knowledge with their friends. By sending ten dollars (in cash) to Know-It-All Sports, 1908 Las Palmas Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642, we will rush you a copy of these explanations plus the next two in our sports series: BULL-RIDING (the smart man's sport) and BOXING (do-it-yourself cosmetic surgery).

*James Johnson
Engineering, SO*