Pulse
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April Adams</td>
<td>4, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floy Arredondo, Jr.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Bandy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Bigelow</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona Brittain</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Cannito</td>
<td>22, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Castro</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail Cucanice</td>
<td>5, 7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex de Schweinitz</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. de Schweinitz</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winfred Emmons</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Fears</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. W. Frissell</td>
<td>3, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Gaskin</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Georgas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Green</td>
<td>24, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobson “Butch” Hennigan</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Higginsethan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Hill</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melvin Kene</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Letulle</td>
<td>4, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longknife</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Mente</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libby Minges</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale Priest</td>
<td>27, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Richards</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Rodgers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Stokesbury</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Summerlin</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Editors**

- **Editor**: Jo Ann Thrash
- **Assistant Editor**: Sandra Stirling
- **Art Editors**: Orlando Castro, Butch Hennigan
- **Sponsor**: Dr. Olga D. Harvill

**Judges**

- **Eleanor Poetry**
  - Mr. Tom Brady
  - Dr. Winfred Emmons
  - Dr. Tim Summerlin
- **Professor's Poetry Award**
  - Dr. Harry L. Frissell
  - Mrs. Annette Platt
  - Dr. A. W. Yeats

**Essay Awards**

- **Pulse Essay Award**
  - Mr. L. H. Blum
  - Mrs. Nora Lichten
  - Mrs. Joan Setzer

- **Short Fiction Award**
  - Mr. William Fahrenback
  - Dr. Marilyn Georgas
  - Mrs. Mary Louise Yokley

- **Pulse Poetry Award**
  - Mrs. Ann Longknife
  - Dr. Robert Olson
  - Dr. Ann Rayson
Lame again:
Being here with one who's promised
to him I've never seen or known
(While promises are strange to me
Since she's with me and bound to him.)
Yet she never talks to me it seems
Or sees, but only hears muted
My screams to reach her. And inside
She surely dreams of New York snow
And the form she loves. We lie here,
And watch the sun ignite
Her shining ring.

Grand Island's green splits the river
The water empties to the deafening falls,
Here I see you talking and alive,
I see you feel comfortable;
Here is where you usually are, yes
With me, yet more and still with him.
My old retreat once cold and blunt
More real and painful now —
Like the island I am touched in flow
But only feel your life before the fall.

George W. W. Frissell
The Museum at Nagasaki

Like those Miocene ants trapped in resin,
the metacarpals of a hand lay gloved in
green glass; they say that the critical mass
multiplied by the speed of light, squared, would
in one over ten to the seventh seconds have
fused hand and beer; that the thermonuclear
flash, in a fraction of 11:04 a.m., August 9,
1945, blew down the concrete Christ of
St. Xavier, which is rubble now, left
where the sun descended, in memoriam,
Fifteen hundred feet below the second coming.

Bob Gaskin

Release

I stood facing the blue norther.
It stung my face like a thousand bees;
it drew its fingers through my long hair
like a tormented lover.
Spreading my arms, I felt the undulating wind
caress my body as I trembled at its touch.
The fickle wind diminished,
leaving me purged and peaceful.

Joan Letulle

Returning Home

The shell road curved into the leaf-strewn lane,
my jeep leaped forward, shuddered to a halt.
Gone was the white clapboard house;
flattened were the old cane fields.
And the shroud of silence screamed
as the jeep backed away.

Joan Letulle

Steppenwolf to Music

Listening to
Tchaikovsky can be so
Steppenwolf —
Like January lonely

Or a gray peep through
window
shades into a hollow courtyard
that asks
to catch you
hurting.

Gail Cucancic

White Summer Sheets

You were so tanned
And dark on my white
Summer sheets, as
The window fan brought in
Wiaps of scented air
That made your skin pucker.
I went to my treasure chest
And brought back
Old photographs and iced tea,
A sensible combination at the time.
And we lay in the hot and
Sunlit aura of a Wednesday afternoon leisurely.
And when you left
I picked up the granules
Of sand your togs had left behind.
And placed them in an envelope
In my treasure chest.
To show on yet another Wednesday afternoon
To another tanned
And puckered lover.
Salesman
Selling cameras and wearing ties
At twenty-two, his mind is far away
From strangling ties and lenses,
Perhaps a face he saw today
Reminds him of the Academy,
Reminds him of a girl in Colorado.
Two years ago he lay beside her,
Uttered desperate departing words.
About not ever understanding why,
And as he turned in his other uniform
A quick calm acceptance entered.

His thoughts burst back to Wards:
And he welcomes ends of days,
Ends of weeks, ends of winters,
Yet while he pours wax in molds
Or straps canoes to tops of cars
Meaning wanders back into his life.

George W. W. Fristell

Unnamed
What once was
And nevermore returns —
Blind guitar players
Sedately dance and call
On down the floor.
They do not wander
But silently shuffle
In the silver shimmer
Of the long, bright hall.

Mistaken chords in
Swift progression fall
Out of tune, wherein
This silly situation
Containing groups
Of singer-strummers
Dancing madly in our minds
Calls forth our sympathies
And nevermore returns.

Does anybody ever,
Really ever turn back
To hear and stare at
The unrelated clink
Of silver syncopation —
Inducing flashes of
Grateful indifference
From the blind guitar players
Who nevermore return?

John Fears

The Trees Moan
The trees moan.
They speak your language rather well.
The rain reminds me of
Sitting on the porch last spring
And swinging our feet in a pendulum exposure,
Just so the drops would dampen our toes
With tempting petals. And you said
That was life, a steady rhythm of
Temptations and refusals.
I thought you sounded like a minister then.
And later when the thunder shook
Our bodies in a double tremor
I thought you were wrong.
The lightning brought no enlightenment,
Nor does it now, only striking
My memory on nights like this.
Illumination is not awareness,
Nor are swaying trees treated as threats.
And philosophical lovers are not prophets.

Gail Cucane

Teething
She called, we talked
said nothing
just hurting things.
Tatters of glory
hung on the phone.
Compassion, understanding
absent without leave
remembered
the good times, things
gone.

Why?
To where?
So short ago
it was all fine.
People grow, become
others.
And I, the same?
Surely. But my daughter
is sharper.
Winters in Kirbyville, Texas

The words were inevitable.  
For days we had all lingered in the chasm.  
But now, twenty miles away from the hospital,  
I felt safe and secure in the boiler-warmed  
eighth-grade math class.  
The rattle of the uneven door, simultaneously with a draft  
sweeping my legs.  
Then the tap on My shoulder  
And the usually cordial secretary greasing my lungs with hatred,  
Whispering, "... sorry, he passed on... your grandmother  
needs you..."  
And making my way down the aisle,  
Despising all those unknowing,  
I walked almost silently across the creaky board hall,  
Hoping for a caring teacher to share my emotions.  
But there was none.  
Only the stuffy heat that poor ventilation lends.  
The now sober secretary stabbed at condolences,  
Offering to drive me home.  
I told her I needed time to think,  
While I really needed time not to think.  

On those ten blocks home I cannot remember a single thought,  
Except longing for the warmth of cradling arms.  
On the lawn I thought of what I should say to my grandmother,  
Whom heretofore I had never seen cry.  
I think I expected a breakdown, but she sat in the rocker,  
straight-backed and composed,  
Only a trace of dampness in those fierce blue eyes.  
And I knew we could not comfort each other.  
No one can in November.

Gail Cucancic
The Lame and the Bright

When I read poems by the lame and the bright,
I see my father once more in the cleanest place of all,
an unused reservoir, freshly cemented, his work.
From the top I see him, as always, more on one leg
than the other, wounded in a bridge accident — labor troubles
— when he tried to be a peace-maker. Now he turns slowly
in the reservoir. There of all places his might shines,
doesn't shine in the pupil of my eye and in the sun.
And while he looks at the docile cement
and I see him in his look-around, he becomes this portrait.
I become his painter. And the things that aren't docile
have to wait before they begin their intense anonymous operation.

George W. de Schweinitz

Noman Again

Staff in hand I crawl
through white-clothed nothing
where no-one is able to stand still
but only kick against the light
air as if it were his own loss, till
the long night hours are left with
only tracks, and I am borne off in
the dark corner of my sight, to be
inspired by the naked body now crossing
the same mirror you see here, appearing
to be as lonely or moreso than the
typewriter you cannot see, but which
is there also, deep inside my breast
as I begin to feel no margin to release,
not yet given one key to write by, my
mind unable (though it must try) to
backspace quickly or kite glide off the
page edge. Because this tab is already
set to my single-spaced fist as the
tall body comes clambering down, finally
falling on the wrinkled sheet, naked,
free, casting lies off onto the vast
blank floor, a waste where my pencil lies,
free at last of me, and I rub this
oily eraser of memory into my shadowy
palmpints, feeling the inky unguent
of need surfacing as tonight again, I
will begin.

Mona Again

Shoot low sheriff; they’re ridin’ Shetlands
and this one’s for Slim

When I was 4 chubby fingers old, Cousin Judy go to be
on the Don Mahoney Show and sit on his knee
and goah i wanted to be a cowboy so bad.
I’d saddle up my rocky horse, half-my-dog Spot and me,
and before i could whip out my 16-shooter
i was Annie Oakley in danger at Diablo again.
But brother said they’re wasn’t any bathrooms on the range
and mother said besides, i wanted to go to college and be pretty.
And that was many bathrooms and colleges ago
as i smile at the face that never got pretty
in the window of this train headed west.

Mona Brittain
Brief Spring Jubilee

Might she bring him flowers in her skirt
a kiss-me
an opera girl
a columbine
And spread them out within his hands unhurt
a painted lady
clinging
to this vine

And she, the child
of hill
and sky
and tree
Stood in the wind and joyful viewed the prize
the painted lady
fluttered on his knee
That gem, that gold, reflected in his eyes

Melanie Bandy

The Monogram

Some sights prick a universal curiosity. Like a sleek, smart woman with a stinking, stoody man. Or a woman with a moustache. Or a beautiful child produced by pimply, thick-lensed parents. Or a sight like Lurline Ashworth, a straight-haired, hulking blob in gummy-sack clothing with bulging, glaring eyes that would stop aclock, stalking through a great train station and clutching along with her artons and satchels a college catalog. This girl looked as if she'd do pretty well behind a plow, or managing a pack of mules, or maybe as a mill foreman of some sort. But as a coved, never, unless at a county agricultural college.

Not that Lurline was a total pig — no acne pits, no glasses, no braces, nothing wrong with her eyes that a little make-up wouldn't have fixed. And on the collar of her blouse was a delicately hand-wrought monogram, LA, in pure silk thread. But these were just details, and no one noticed them. It was the general picture that people noticed, and they could hardly help noticing, for this lumbering form appeared unaware that anyone else was in the station, and people had to step aside for her or collide. She didn't have so much as a "How do you do?" or an "excuse me" for those she jostled or forced to yield the path, though she did make a couple of sidesteps for one poor soul who happened to be on crutches. No one noticed this detail either.

People just saw the general picture, and wondered how on earth such a sight ever came to be headed toward the campus of a big state U.

Until this day, this moment, this walk across Madison station, nobody had ever before looked at Lurline Ashworth much at all, and until a few weeks earlier, nobody, including the two old maid great aunts who were her guardians, had ever intended that she should head anywhere, much less for a college campus. These great aunts had become Lurline's guardians the summer she turned thirteen, just after her father committed suicide, and her mother, on the same day, finally became totally deranged. The old ladies hadn't for years before that day even remembered that their nephew Charles was grown, much less that he had a wife or child. But when word came about what had happened and they finally got matters straight in their minds, and realized that they were their niece's only surviving kin, the old ladies immediately rejoiced, seeing the whole situation as a divine provision for the perpetuation of their work. These ladies worked as highly specialized seamstresses, stitching shrouds, altar cloths and a few other such items for carefully selected customers. The fame of their work was such that even with their exclusiveness, they were hard-put to keep up with their orders, much less to keep the dresses and undergarments for their own burial in perfect repair. When they realized that their niece was to be their ward, they perceived that God was sending them an apprentice, thus giving them a final sign of divine approbation for their work.

Within the hour the old ladies dispatched two hearse, one for the father and one for the mother, for though they remembered that Stella Ashworth hadn't been a fifty modest woman, she was an Ashworth, and hence not to be subjected to the...
own, opened into the room, once the dining room, where they sewed. As they prepared a place for her, they wondered if ever a girl had been so much of a success, and foresaw that after she finished the obligation of public schooling — for Ashworths were obligated to serve as examples to the community — there would be less and less reason for her ever to set foot out of the house again. Only there in their pleasant little house in Lakeport to her aunts in Ashleys in the sedated, straight-jacketed form of her mother, knowing as she saw the waxen, brown-clad body of her father slid into its place that all chance for helping him had passed, but hoping that she might yet be able to do something for her mother. Maybe she could help by staying up the perspiration that poured across her face or smooth back the matting tendrils of hair, maybe even soothe her with soft words or sounds, for Lurline seemed to feel sounds rushing up in her throat even though she had hardly said a hundred words in her life, had just never gone far to work. She feels she had known that her mother screamed and threw things at slight provocation, and that her father cried easily, one time at nothing more than the gardener’s “It’s a nice day isn’t it, Mr. Ashworth?” By the time she had started to school, her voice had sounded hoarse from disuse. At first, drawn to the air and sound and color of the classroom, she had tried to laugh with the group, but everyone had turned to look at her strangely, even the teacher, and no more words had come, no more sound at all, then or after. School had become merely a grudging recess away from the quiet watch in the dark corners of the house where she sought to work off things which she could freely provoke violence, such as occasional salesman who made his way to their door, even though she knew the neighbors said, “Skip that house.” But in spite of her silent watch, the ultimate violence had come, the black bed and new, and Lurline and her mother were on their way to a new home. And though the mother resisted with terrified Lurline’s efforts to comfort her, Lurline was sure that their new life in Ashleys would soon make things all right.

By starting voices that had come into the house right after it had happened had said that she and her mother would have to be separated. But they hadn’t realized that she had family, that her grandfather had been a very important man, that he had left a great pillared house, and that her aunts still lived there and had their own house, which was a substitute for a new home, and that her aunts were moving furniture and rearranging the whole house to prepare a place for her, and after she got there and learned to do pretty hardwork like they did, she would be able to make pretty things for her mother and herself.

Lurline stepped into the place that was prepared for her on a July afternoon. Her mother was immediately committed to the hands of the mansevant Clyde and his wife Lura, and by bedtime of the first night, Lurline had been given the instructions for a day and a half. There would be occasional errands, and in the fall, school, of course. But central to her life was the handwork, hallmarked on earth and in heaven of the Ashworth women.

That very first night her aunts started her on the cross stitch border of an altar cloth, and while conceding some hours for sleep and a few minutes at ten o’clock the next morning for her father’s graveside rites — this is what the faltering young Presbyterian minister had arranged when the undertaker told him that the ladies wanted him to attend to details — expected a specific length of stitching accomplished by the next night.

And by the next, and by the next, as the stream of summer days immediately
saw only handwork stitching and patterns wherever she looked, even in the halls at school.

Although her daily work yielded no glimpse of her mother, as she worked out her designs for handwork, she felt herself a part of beauty, and that feeling was the sight of her mother who always gave her. By early spring, a time or two somebody who handed instructions to Lura at the back door said, "I'd just as soon that you do this if the Madden's Ashworth can't get to it."

Then that very spring, just as things began to go right again, she was caught by dusk one Tuesday as she was walking home from the gin after taking the cookies. In the sudden darkness she saw carnival lights, half a mile away, on a usually vacant stretch of land, and in amazement that their existence could have been unsuspected as she walked to the gin twenty minutes before but now colored the whole earth and sky, she walked straight toward them without a thought of anything else, and getting there, gravitated directly toward a highly congested spot where people were burning back and forth from one attraction to another, stopping to watch the wildly whirligig rides, laughing and pointing at the little compartments from which hysterical wails and exhibitionistic bellows emerged in a vigorous chorale. She was absorbed into the rhythmic stimulation of the inevitable collisions with the mob — the loose warm tremolo of resonating flab and the glancing staccato of unimbedded joints. She shoved her sleeves up to be closer to the brushes and punches and jabs and bumps, and hoped there would be bruised places to last a long time.

There was hairiness, wooliness, slick cotton on tall men's arms that slid by with such fierce movement that it made her cheek sting, belt buckle prong pricking her exposed forearm. And the smells of tobacco, of dry body moisture, of strong, cheap perfume, of varied sour breaths and reeking hair pomades.

With her eyes open there was that bursting light outside and inside herself like the invisible caging of one star, and she took off her hat and brought the fan to where her heat closing his eyes quickly, tightly. Soon Lurline was deliberately being pushed up into people so that she would feel more, clumsily getting in people's paths in hopes that someone would be forced to notice her, to speak, to say perhaps "Excuse me" or "Hold on!"

She would have said yes to anything that anybody had proposed in that suspended interval of time. Yes, let's set fire to the tent. Yes, let's see what happens if we lie down together in the grass behind the tent. Yes, let's hit the old man who sells kewpie dolls and let's follow him when he steps behind the tent for a few minutes and take the strange whiskey and his money and run and throw and scream and throw rocks and stones and then run and walk back and see what happens. Yes, let's see what happens when we chase somebody else.

He would have said yes to anything, but she didn't know it, and of course, nobody asked.

"What I say," she thought, "is that the people who try to do something and who can't get ahold of anything are those that the gods have turned us away from touching the tingling sensations that were imposed upon them by the thought of beauty and by her sense of the rare restraint that kept her aunts from emptying the scissors that were always poised in their pockets. And she knew that this was rare restraint was just what made a world for her and her mother. Some things were just not the same for Ashworths as for others. This she knew with leaden intuition at the same moment that the cesareans of sensation were telling her that she could fly.

In this dread moment she turned and ran with all her strength, and the pain of turning her back on this night and its glimpses, and running from its light and all its great imponderables was such that she thought she had to scream, and though no sound came, she heard in her mind the scream she would make.

But even worse than leaving this night was the thought of her aunts gone to frem...not for more, and scarifying off anyone who came along while convincing them that they were too good for any man on earth and pressing them into a life of days spent in preparation for the only man as long as they were allowed to see them. But they had turned days to making beautiful things, and had kept the name of Ashworth standing for something special for miles around. And they were giving her the chance to do the same.

So she ran. And until the last few steps took her into the yard and she felt the normal rhythm still pervading the house and grounds she began to cry. She had run in time. By some miracle the Ashworth world still stood, and that was her world. Its only irregularities were her sweating pores and her gasping breath, and those she could control. Lurline stood against the porch rail to let the night air dry her, and took deep slow breaths. Inside the house there waited a request from the Methodist ladies for a gift for their bishop's church, a tablecloth twenty feet long to be appliqued with grape clusters along the border. Lurline stood there in the night and understood the number of shadings and shades of violet and purple and blue that she would use to get the right effect. And she named the stitches she would use, said them again and again until there was no other thought, and no sensation.

Lurline straightened herself and went in to that place where satisfaction and accomplishment and beauty were measured in terms of handwork, where wooliness and lurriness were qualities of fabrics to be thought of in terms of servitability and appropriateness, where smells were symptoms of environment to be identified for reasons of safety, with no connection with anything that had ever been or might ever have been imagined to be, where her own hands were the only hands that had any reality, something five spans of which always equalled a yard.

And only once in a while, in a moment, in a moment, in a moment, in a moment, when she was young, asking what she thought about the weather, how many books lately and only then did she know the inevitable longing for human touch, for human warmth blankets, for underwear and bedcovers that were always available, in abundance. And only then did she know that kissing, which she had never seen except for the two rock-lipped cheekpecks which her aunts had directed toward her when she arrived, went on in the way the magazine covers lying on the side table as she went her way, that kissing and the inconceivable rest of it went on, by consent, not by force. Thus it evolved that during Lurline's high school years, while her mother roomed on the second floor of the great house in uncharted fluctuation between ominous silence and violent sadness, and her aunts sat below preparing their own and others' dressesses. Lurline stitched through endless skeins of thread, wrote out schemes of doll, exact answers, plotted once a week to the cotton gin with a piled-up plate of cookies, and watched whenever she could from behind a tree in the yard, though only in the spring, the very last spring of the year when the salmon-throated wreaths and the dowry gray threes were sung over in the century-old magnolias and sycamores, did she ever see her mother. But during that time, she always had a long, safe look as her mother stood at the upstairs window, an arm extended through the bars.

Her mother would be so, perfectly still, for long periods of time during those warm spring days when the birds were singing, and Lurline could see the ivory skin, taut over delicate bones, its incandescence seeming to grow more radiant as determination progressed, Lurline could also see the black, pink, white, and yellow.
Lurline looked at her mother for a long time on those pleasant, warm spring days, and saw the beautiful skin still glowing, the steady arm and hand, so tranquil that the terming birds, one would now and then light on a fingertip, then pull into the house through a gesture quicker than the eye. Lurline saw the awe-inspiring emotion of her mother's perfect tranquility, knowing, after the first year, that she would change the next few days. Lura would bring her mother's clothes down to the laundry matted with feathers and entrails that had dried to them in the sun, a scent of blood, knowing that it was the birds that brought her mother to the window, and that only at the birds' convenience might she ever see her mother again.

After she had ever hoped to see there, and all that she had ever hoped to see the world of what was there had resolved itself into beautiful patterns of cross-stitch, appliques and lace-work, and she went back in her work, confident of the day, maybe not until her own funeral, but sure to come, when the whole town, the superintendents and principal of the school, the president of the school board, and the county judge called on the aunts and patiently endured the ladies' grim pleasures before getting around to the subject of the matter. No sooner had they closed the book on the subject when the lads had started their internment, the aunts added a few words, and then Lurline's interests in the Ashworth estate were paralleled in the county court for her education were withheld, and would set a court order for her to get out.

The aunts stiffened, and their hands moved in their apron pockets. But then the county judge, in whom a secret pre-visor bracer of scorn was breeding eloquence, plunged into a portrait of Lurline as teacher, or as social worker, or best of all, as librarian, pasting little pockets in books and circulating the gospel while weeding out lassitude — in one of these busy ways other hands as well as her own with the activities of the good life. He was a man of rare gifts, and by the time the men of the old land saw that Lurline was meant to go to college, and that the whole thing had been their idea, through divine inspiration.

During the next few days, the only flicker in their new dispensation of light was their perplexity about where to send her. Recalling rumors of the evils of their own state university, where Charles had gone, they dismissed it as a choice, but didn't know the name of any other college. But Aunt Lydie had a recollection that provided a solution. She remembered their brother Thedford's son's visit with them long years before. (Brother Thedford had gone to Wisconsin when the rest of the old land had gone to Texas.) The choice of college thus revealed to them, the aunts ordered cloth from the catalog, busily went about digging patterns from a trunk in the cellars where they had been left Virginia forty years before, and set about preparing Lurline's wardrobe.

As for Lurline, when she realized that her aunts' chattering: "She'll learn every language known to man," meant her, Lurline, and saw that their flickering scissors were cutting threads to stitch clothes related to her size, she began to argue her handwork orders filled as far ahead as she could foresee, and, as time permitted, to help with the elaborate monogramming which her aunts divined as necessary on every piece of her clothing to insure her proper identification.

After the train, then the time was on for her to be on her way, she filled her sewing bag with handwork, packed the drab clothes God willed a lady to wear, and departed to board the morning train to the Santa Fe depot. The closest acquaintance of her departure was that her aunts, bent over their work, chanted a nasal, school-girl "Farewell, Jacque" as she went out the door.

Clyde pushed her trunk to the station on the wheelbarrow and pointed to her car when she got there. Boarding the car, she found it not over half full of passengers and sat down by a window, her bundles sprawled on her lap. Then she got up and laid her scattering parcels on the little overhead racks as she saw that others were doing. Then she reached into her satchel to be sure that she had the ticket Clyde had handed her to show for her trunk in Wisconsin. As she was doing this, the train made a great jerk, and she was on her way to Wisconsin.

After several hours, the motion soon became regular, but even then there was still restless movement in the aisle as people moved back and forth, slow to get settled. It occurred to Lurline that she should arrange her skirt and fold her coat carefully so that they would not hang onto the seat next to her, for somebody might need to use it. After all, her ticket was just for one seat. Anybody might have the other seat, too.

Soon she realized that her parcels were sliding about noisily overhead, and stood up and rewedged them within the rim of the luggage trough. Then she reached her satchel and checked on her trunk stub again, smoothed her skirt, smoothed her hair, and as the train made the various stops, looked out the window while entering the long prairie stretch, repeatedly sprang up and down to rewedge her parcels. But with all her shuffling movement, nobody sat by her or even looked at her. She knew that she was neat and clean, and was sure that if she was invisible, somebody would surely sit on her, since she was in a nice seat by a window.

But she soon realized, of course, that she could actually be a lot more comfortable like this, with plenty of room. And there were lots of things to do. That gold upholstery on the vacant seat beside her, nobody would find out about it. That meant it was cheap. But it had a tight weave, and would last. If she slapped it, she bet a smell would come out. Yes, there it was. Partly like the men's shirts at the gin and partly like Lura's apron the day after she made custard.

There was a lot to do, to be felt and smelled, and after they catalogued all the textures and odors, she would begin on sounds, though hearing wasn't nearly so much fun as smelling and feeling. Challenge succeeded challenge in the pungey of unseen lunches being snatched from time to time and in the smells, disguised and undisguised, of bodies fanning past in the aisles. She made satisfactory identification of each. But the long prairie stretch of the trip began to outlast these diversions, and darkness precluded even the counting of telephone poles.

No homework. No handwork, because the motion of the train would mar her stitches, and not even on her own drawings could she tolerate a rough stitch. Not even the chance of a question for which her answer must confirm preconception, nod
Plan extra patterns? Decide how to make dresser scarves from the linen scraps in her sewing bag? Such was her intention. But instead of seeing a dresser scarf pattern, she saw her Aunt Mayfield, working over a dress pattern, and Effie Mayfield dying happy, knowing she’d be buried in a dress of peach-colored voile with hand-tatted lace inserts in the yoke.

Then, no pattern, but only her Aunt’s gaunt forms bent over nondescript yardage, bolt on bolt alike, churning without meaning, as oblivious of the fact that they had a niece on the way to Wisconsin as if they had never had one at all. They had put her into God’s hands and had no further need to think of her. Clyde and Laura would turn away at the back door that share of the work that was beyond their capacity, and they’d never know the difference. Clyde and Laura and the birds were all that were needed now.

And nobody would miss her at school, unless maybe for the better, for all at once she realized that she had always made the teachers uncomfortable. And she lingered pleasantly over the sudden realization that she had been able to do so without even trying.

But where would she be missed? At the cotton gin? Surely the men would miss their cookies. But that was it, they’d miss their cookies, and her only as the handle on the end of a cookie plate. A stupid, zombie cookie-dispenser. A few men missing their cookies! That’s all her life meant. She could fall off the face of the earth this very instant without there being the slightest difference anywhere. In Ashlea she had left her handwork orders filled in advance, and that’s all that mattered of her back there. That and the cookies. And ahead, in Wisconsin, she was nothing but a name on a card, standing for nothing nearly as specific as an insect’s droppings. And here, on this train, nothing. Nobody would even look at her. She knew she was neat and clean, and even if her hair was straight, it had a nice chestnut color, and her clothes were all handsewn. Her clothes had stitches so fine nobody else in the world could match them. The monogram on her collar, alone would bring a fortune around Ashlea, and it was her own work. She stroked it fervently, sure that people would like it if they would look. She sprang up, grabbed her sewing bag off the shelf and pulled out her handwork. She took out her scissors and snipped great lengths of colored thread. Then, her scissors on her lap, she finished her handwork, made great exaggerated motions of stitches, though not even now could she bring herself to mar her work with a stitch made in motion. But nobody looked at her, nobody looked at her work. The dark of night out the window had become a confusion of light which meant Madison. Time was about up. Quickly she flung her handwork into the aisle but nobody looked at it. Nobody accorded it even the curious glance they would have given a bag of laundry. Instead they were collecting themselves, and would soon be trampling her work in their exit if she didn’t pick it up.

Well people would look. Sooner or later they would look, and they and the whole wide world in all six directions would know that there was a Lurline Ashworth, and that she was the daughter of Charles Ashworth, suicide and Stella Ashworth, madwoman, and all the rest. And that they had not lived for no purpose, but to produce Lurline Ashworth, a person of consequence. Some day there would be people waving her off when she left, and waiting for her when she arrived, and if everything weren’t just right for her perfect honor and comfort, her head would topple. She didn’t know just how it would come about, but she’d find a way. In fact, she was suddenly so sure of that that a little smile crossed her face. After all, hadn’t she gotten herself out of Ashlea and on a train to Wisconsin without even trying?

By now she had picked up her embroidery, and had stuffed the work into her bag. She closed the bag with a loud clack of its wooden handles, and tossed it onto the seat beside her own, and then just slipped them into her pocket, where they’d be handy. She slung her coat across her arm, pulled her parcels off the shelf, looped them over her wrists by the twine that tied them, gripped her bags and catalog, lunged through to the front of the car, and was the first one off the train.

Marilyn Georgas
The Man on the Bridge
Mr. Paterson has gone away

I.
It's winter now, this afternoon in Houston.
Down town, a low bridge bends in the rain.
The man on the bridge in his black raincoat is trying
to open a small black umbrella which doesn't work.
His dark hair unfurls to the thick flow of cold breezes.
The drizzle mist laces his mustache with pain.
Looking at him I know I am looking at myself.

II.
I walk to the edge of the bridge
and stare at the water below.
My thoughts climb away from this scene
like pigeons rise over the slow
trough of the green Passaic River
under an overpass near Paterson, New Jersey.
It's almost twelve years since I sat,
turkey, afraid, like a mad
animal among the pylons there
stoning some petrified muskrat
for stealing a wild bird's eggs,
in love with the ladylike willows
whose roots dangle over those banks
like wooden legs . . .

III.
Standing on the bridge
just wondering what I am doing.
Is it still raining and why
can't I open this effeminate umbrella?
Tell me,
whatever happened to
mama's little man.

Michael Cannito
Confinement

The ironing-board bed rotates leaving her on her stomach, eyes focused on tiles.
One, two, three, four, five tiles;
five, four, three, two, one tile.
Seconds slide into minutes minutes creep into an hour.
Pain clamps down on both temples traverses to the neck settles in the shoulders lodging there like a permanent borderer never to move on into unfeeling limbs.

The ironing-board bed rotates leaving her on her back, eyes focused on three paint blumps.

Joan Letulle

“1917 to 1974, Hurray”
The army was cancelled due to rain falling plainly on South Main, the enemy demands a rematch, and the war will be held tomorrow.
Tune in again next week for your hour of pity and sorrow, but please be sure and catch the war to be held here tomorrow.
Boost your team with a patriotic gleam, and a huzzah or two for those remaining few who lay the victors’ claim on the war held here, tomorrow.
Then read the “strongest nations’ prose” of the vanguardism of foes, by the use of repeated blows, and selections of matches guaranteed to hold the crown in their own home town, barring that sad session, leading to concession, if it rains.

Reply to Corinna

In my eyes corner I can see a Celery-slimed gamine, pigtails flying As she whirls a merry-go-round around; No pistons made could stroke the fluid drive of those wild legs. And I, stout I, run on. No full-blowen gourd, but melonish I push And wish that mind could discipline its body. Rouse the slumbering form that curls up for a winter’s sleep upon an April morning While his brother is but limbering up his lubricating legs. So when the intellect Has hit his loping stride, he runs alone. A stiffening body shuffles at a distance; Vacant eyes confess that will is not enough; The sobbing throat confesses that Prince Jonathan relinquishes his throne to Upstart David. Loosening his tunic Scratching young but white and hairless ankles; He concedes. And, oh, how brief a reign.

Tim Summerlin

A Living Off The Change Of Other Lives

He's a scrawny little man on hush puppy oxfords, brown little man with a dirty white band around his hat.

You don't see his face because he never reveals only from behind as his little hand sweeps the nooks and crannies of the vending machine slots.

A nickel, a dime, occasionally a jackpot — but it keeps him where he is — a scrawny little man, brown, living off the change of other lives.

We're not so different — this scrawny little man and I — I, too, plan to make a living off the change in others' lives.

The difference, if any, is that I hope to inspire and guide those changing lives...
Summer in Fairbanks

is like a dull dream. From time to time
the paper boy comes grinning with proof that
something has happened after all. Here
where the highways end. To go north
from here, you must be a bird or wealthy.
The prospectors have each been starved and strained
away down southward and to old folks homes.
Here is where the nights end too. Never
to sense the dark for days is strange, and not
so hot as one might think. It is strange
always to be able to see, and say,
that is there and that is there and that
is over there, always. Strange, not to tell
the end of days by any other way
than clocks, and meals; televisions turning off.
Different, for things to seem
to the eyes like one day, that somewhat
has slowed down to months, years, icebersgs
of minutes so separated by an absence
from anything that ever came before,
that the anxious people find themselves
waiting for the swish on their lime lawns
of the dirty tennis shoes of
the grinning paper boy who brings them yesterday.

Leon Stokesbury

Of Poets and Poetics: A Parody

Expectation in the wind
Is reading poems like this,
or even good ones,
Affame with — no, pregnant with —
the seed and fire of impotent genius . . .
Void and virgin versifiers vying to conceive
(metaphorically of course)
the sweating depths, the orgiastic agony, the . . .
Oh you quasi-duces of dark despair,
It is fortune who should be outraged!
Words and tapers, tears and woes,
sorrows, sighs and smiles
Taxied across the page by literary hacks,
Searching the gutters for gems,
the garbage cans for Holy Grails,
the bars and carnivals and midnight streets
For lost elusive Eleanors.
All tranquil thoughts and thunderings,
varied and de-versified,
Fertilize the unwilling earthiness
Of unwreathen garden-books of rhyme
(but careful to unrhyme it first) —
The cautious cultivation of taxes
demands a dextrous thumb . . .

Exacting disregard
of meter, reader, taste and tune
Is necessary to produce a peach,
a priceless, poignant peach.
Oh you amusing modern muse,
You pimps of sacred poetry
who prostitute Calliope
in epic-like cacography:
"I think that I shall never see
A poet cleverer than me . . ."
But that were fine and right;
Such depths are plumbable, at least.

And now, you off-despised spirits of a now-forgotten age,
When poetry was honor to the gods,
the noblest voice of man,
Look kindly down upon your insufferable servants.
Brave Keats and noble More,
Marlowe, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope,
Gentle Wordsworth and brazen Burns,
O Rare Ben Jonson and Byron bold-
You hards of beauty canonized
For truth, and reverence for rhyme . . .
Forgive them for they know not what they do,
C. Browne: an occurrence

C. Browne left this earth lying flat on his back in the emergency room of a hospital. He looked around, through a searing, clammy sweat, at the white tiled walls, and the row of black upholstered and chrome stretchers, each bisected laterally by a narrow white sheet. Struggling, he tried to explain to the three women hovering over him that they couldn’t put a tube up his nostril and down into his throat because his nose had been broken. But they did, and he gagged when the tube began to go down his esophagus. An enormous, grey haired, round woman kept telling him to swallow. He gulped and gaped at the tube as she pushed it into his nose. When she was satisfied that the tube had gone down into his stomach, she poured water into it until his stomach was filled, and the water ran back up into his esophagus, and into his trachea. Feeling himself drowning, he cursed and tried to sit up. They pushed him down and tied him to the stretcher with a strap. Putting a pillow under his head, they left. He watched the water and then the blood run out of his stomach by closing one eye, and looking over the bridge of his nose at the flow through the tube.

Another woman, a nurse, he supposed, and a man came into the room and pulled his pants down. “Stupid,” he thought, “take off my shoes.” But all they did was roll him on his side and give a shot. The nurse left, but the man stayed and completed the undressing. When he was naked, the man helped him into a hospital gown, and put a sheet over his legs. He said something that C. Browne didn’t understand. He kept saying it, until Browne suddenly realized that the man wanted a urine sample, and that there was a pot between his legs. He tried to concentrate, but he kept going to sleep.

“Well we’ll have to catheterize you, if you can’t help us Mr. Browne.”

“Goddam it, I can’t pee laying down.”

“Do you want me to get the catheter, then?”

But the pot got warm, and he was saved the ignominy of the orderly’s ministrations. He went to sleep. Then a lady in a suit, with a gold broach on the lapel, was standing next to him. She had a clipboard with a sheaf of papers on it.

“Do you have health insurance, Mr. Browne?”

“No, we have a group policy with Gargantuan National.”

“Do you have any other coverage, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, or any sort of daily benefit plan?”

“No.”

“I see. This is an assignment of benefits, and this is an admission form; would you sign in the places indicated?”

“I can’t see without my glasses,” Browne thought he said. The woman repeated her request, then asked him if he needed any help.

Not giving him a chance to reply she said, “would you help your husband, please, Mrs. Browne?”

“Here’s your glasses, honey. Can you sign the forms, or do you want me to do it?”

“I’ll do it,” Browne said, glad that his wife was there, and wondering where she had been. The woman held the clipboard up for him and he tried to find the places for his signature. He screwed his name once, but couldn’t control the pen. “I’ll sign for him,” his wife said, taking the pen and the clipboard. Browne lay back on the pillow and watched the lights on the ceiling, then tried to turn on his side. The strap held him down, and the tube pulled against the cartilage in his nose. He asked for a cigarette, directing the question to no one in particular. “The doctor said that you shouldn’t smoke, honey, it will make you sick,” came his wife’s reply. Browne rolled his head on the pillow and saw his wife looking up at him from below the edge of the stretcher. “She must be sitting down” he thought.

“Let me have a cigarette, puddin’.”

“I just told you that you can’t smoke, it will make you sick.”

“You dumb ass bitch, I already am sick, goddam it,” Browne shouted. He shouted because his wife was so far away. He had tunnel vision and his wife’s head seemed to be much larger than it should have been to fit her body. “It must be the drug,” he thought. He looked for the woman with the clipboard, but she was no longer there.

“Just let me have a cigarette, if it makes me sick I won’t smoke it.” Silently, his wife put a cigarette between his lips and held a match to it. Nauseated, he took two short puffs, then indicated that she should take it away. When she leaned over to take it out of his mouth, one of her hands touched his. He caught it, and held it. Turning it over, he traced, “I love you,” in her palm with his finger. She leaned back over him and kissed him on the side of the mouth. When she did, he realized that the fluid in the tube was all a dark, muddy-looking color. Then he went to sleep.

He awoke again, briefly, to the touch of a cold, wet sponge on his belly. An orderly was washing his abdomen. Seeing that he was awake, the man said, “I’m going to prepare you for surgery, Mr. Browne. You’re going to get a free shave.”

Browne watched as the man finished washing his belly and groin, then began gently shaving him.

“You be careful down there.”

The orderly grinned, and Browne went back to sleep again before the man was done. He woke one other time, and thought that he was alone, then died.

Jesse Green
"About My Own Dark Lady Leaving"

If I could look behind her eyes
I'd find the joy, perhaps the pain,
That makes her speak in terms of rain
When she means sun, I fantasize
To think that she means me
In saying that she'd like to stay,
But I am sure it's not that way,
For she believes in mystery.

It's something else, that has to do
With why she's younger than her years,
And why she sleeps with quiet tears
That Alph runs dry in Xanadu,
That love is just an old man's song
Sung to the tune of broken strings,
A painful flight on broken wings
To places where she won't belong.

No wonder that she sits and sighs,
And asks me why I tell such lies.

Dale Priest
The Nothing of Infinity

I have always remembered a cartoon I once read in a magazine. Two prehistoric lungfish were cautiously crawling out of the sea onto a beach. They were destined to be the first vertebrates to walk or crawl on land. One lungfish turned to his companion and said, "Well, here goes nothing." His odd statement about their momentous undertaking caused me to ponder its meaning. At first, I considered two possible reasons for the statement: the cartoonist wanted to amuse the reader or the speaking lungfish was unaware of the importance of the deed he and his companion were doing. Success would have meant the continuance of Earth’s evolutionary process while failure would have caused a delay in the process or set it off on an entirely different tangent. Nevertheless, the lungfishes could not have realized that and were, therefore, skeptical about the significance of their emergence from the sea. Having finished reading the cartoon, I then proceeded to smoother my questions with easy, apathetic answers.

Eventually, though, the answers I had provided were not enough. Not even the traditional Christian assurances were sufficient. I needed explanations for the nagging curiosities about the universe as a whole the lungfish’s statement had spawned within my mind. Two thousand years of tradition melted away under the heat of contemplation as I gazed into the Milky Way, walked along a beach, or sauntered through a quiet forest. It soon became necessary to re-examine my reasoning about the meaning of the lungfish’s words and see if I would come up with another view of the universe.

In one way, "nothing" was an appropriate word for the lungfish to use in describing its venture. I do not mean that the whole process of creation, evolution, and intelligence is unimportant or to justify labeling it "nothing". Still the word raises questions about the relative nature of life and the universe. However, speculation of this sort often places me in opposition with traditional philosophies. Nonetheless, if I accept traditional philosophies without question, I will become an ancestor as time and knowledge leave me behind.

The most widely accepted theory of the Universe’s creation is the Implosion-Explosion theory. Implosion is the bursting inward of matter while Explosion is its bursting outward. Implosion constitutes the annihilation of the universe. Explosion means the creation and sustenance of the universe with all its components, whatever they may all be. Consider the proposition that the nature of life and other characteristics of the universe evolves only during the explosion cycles and is destroyed during the Implosion cycles. Add to this the possibility that the Implosion-Explosion cycles alternate throughout all infinity. There would be no reason to completely discount the thought that, during the Explosion cycles, universes, maybe similar universes, were produced in the past and will continue to be produced in the future. Each universe would have an indeterminate time of existence and, within this time, the entire processes of creation, evolution, and intelligence occur, ending in the Implosion cycle.

For this reason, the lungfish’s use of the term “nothing” is appropriate. The act of emerging from the sea to land is insignificant, having occurred an infinite number of times in the past and will continue to occur an infinite number of times in the future. Perhaps the lungfishes had little comprehension of infinity when they crawled forth, but they were following a continuing pattern beyond their total understanding. Their deed, in relationship to the endless tapestry of time, was insignificant and the lungfishes had a feeling of its insignificance.

The word “nothing” may not be considered fairly if one fails to realize what the significance of the lungfishes’ emergence from the sea is to their particular explosion cycle within which the act takes place. Without their endeavor, the evolutionary process upon their particular planet and within their explosion cycle would be disrupted with unimaginable results. The deed is, therefore, necessary to keep evolution intact and complete the process within the cycle. This realization gives their walk on land its importance. The significance of their action is realized by those of their descendents who will inherit the consequences of their deed.

So tradition has been challenged in the above paragraphs. Whether the speculation is correct or not may not be within our present ability to ascertain. Imprisoned within the vast wall of religion and tradition, man was unprepared for a confrontation with infinity. When he finally came face-to-face with infinity, he fled back within the prison walls from which he had ventured forth. His need for a finite awareness of the universe did not correlate with the infinite universe and the infinity, being beyond his comprehension, filled him with terror. I, therefore, expect cold rejection of the above speculations by the traditionalists. However, new questions about divine guidance and the immortal soul can be raised; questions man will have to answer as he goes on.
Now the Brass Monkey

Huge ears of corn
drive down the highway
on motorcycles.
The armadillos
are getting out of hand.
And eight miles under
the Plain of Jarres
old women gnaw the roots
of family trees.
Still we lament
for such melees
shall never come again.

Now the brass monkey
climbs down from the dresser.
He goes into the bathroom
for toothpaste and remains.

The brass monkey is scrawling
brief memos for me
in toothpaste on the walls,
like "Dust off that radio."
And, "Pick up the clock."
"I have lived in this pig pen
long enough."
Or, "Have you no pride?"
And, "Where is your feeling for me?"

The messages continue but
I cannot see.
The brass monkey has laid toothpaste
on my eyes.
I hear him smashing dishes
in the kitchen.
I think I am blind,
I hear him setting fire
to the parlor.
"Let's purge this sty!"
He cackles in the dark.

My Regards

You are one
with the trees
and old music.

You smile from
between the shingles
of the big house
that everybody wants.

You are the optimism
of just-born leaves
on the branches.

April Adams

Sonnet

I thank you for the offer of your all,
Presented on such a very gorgeous platter;
Venus herself would feel a trifle small,
Not having what you've got, and somewhat flatter.
You make the pent steam whistle in my gauge
As the banked fires leap to life again;
It has to put all Nature in a rage
To see a senior citizen in such pain.

Your butt would startle birds, your lovely legs!
Your face, your teethsome tis a denote a winner;
But how could you arrange to fry my eggs,
And could we ever manage Sunday dinner?

You're a real piece of cake, as I have said,
But dessert, Baby, I must have be brand.
November 11, 1973
The scratching of my pen on this paper.
Dead leaves that scratched the roof
of a train car at Compiegne.
The scratching of another pen: guilt.

Grandfather
you were there when the world went sad,
there as another war began
the minute that the ink dried.
Did you hear tree limbs
cracking in the cold wind,
cracking like the engine that idled
on the track, cracking like the big guns
at Verdun. Did you hear the hate birds
from their trees call down?

(Hitler remembered the dining car,
the clearing in the French woods,
I wonder did the birds bicker then
on their shaky branches.)

And all this so long forgotten
that I must go to books now.

Today I will study German,
will read a few lines of a Soviet novel,
will write this poem.

Jo Ann Thrash