CONTEST WINNERS

Eleanor Poetry Award
"Haunts," Deborah Lynne Hollister
"Saratoga," Deborah Lynne Hollister
"Solitaire," Darcy C. Walker

Professor’s Poetry Award
"The Spear," Tom Newton
(Judges chose to extend only
a second place award.)

Short Fiction Award
"All the Young Boys," Darcy Walker
"The Sentence," Al Navarro
"He Knew," Theresa Trahan

Pulse Cover Award
"Reflections," Norma Provost

The staff of PULSE would like to thank the following faculty
members for contributing their time and knowledge in judging
competition entries.

Eleanor Poetry Competition
Perry J. Curet
Faland C. Jones
Charles T. Summerlin

Professor’s Poetry Award
Christopher P. Baker
Dale Dillinger
Winfred S. Emmons

Short Fiction Competition
Harry Benesh
B. Wilkerson
Illynn Georgas

Short Essay Competition
Robert C. Olson
Jo Ann Stiles
Claudia J. Spence

T. Stokesbury is the 1977 recipient of Lamar’s Rowe Award.
Though awarded as a memorial to Bessie Maas Rowe, this grant is
designed to be automatically extended annually, but awarded for conspicuous
service to a graduating senior who has significantly contributes
to creative literature. Ms. Stokesbury, former assistant Editor
of Pulse magazine, has been published in Pulse where she was
editor of the Eleanor Poetry Competition. Her latest
collection will be published by Cedar Rock, Spring 1977.
Haunts
Tears are not the only price.
Sobs
that come from chambers
deep inside my house of
unresolved conflicts are like
Ghosts
bursting
through in
gusts of dank wind, flapping
the shutters and cloudy curtains.
My friend, there are doors
that I will not allow you to enter.
You may see the shadows of ghosts
snuff the candles in my eyes.
Look away, they are not yours
to chase, nor solve.
They are the raven,
the knock at the door,
the unwelcome guests, roosting.
But my house has been
a brooding place long enough.
I have paid the price.
The departure is overdue.
Shoo!
Deborah Lynne Hollister

Saratoga
Oh, you know . . .
where the haunted
lights are and that
funky little
Big Thicket Museum
and the monument
under an arbor
of pine trees.
One-horse town.
A couple of gas stations
and general stores,
red brick post office.
five or six churches,
and not a honky tonk
within seven or eight miles.
(Precinct 3 is dry, you know)
I guess you heard
about the time those two
hippies-with-long-hair
stole some blue-jeans
from the dry goods
store and ran off
into the thicket and
the deputy-sheriff
summoned all the
blood hounds in the county.
They must have been
high on that
marijuana. (the hippies, that is)
Yet, there is a place about
three miles past the old oil field alive
with wild azaleas
in the spring
and
white
white violets
and
morning glories
and magnolia blossoms
and
day lilies
and
crepe myrtles that look like
watermelon slices
and
dogwood
and yellow jasmine
and sleepy wood fern
and . . .
Karma.
Deborah Lynne Hollister

Night Play
I watch the curtain drawn, the rope pulled over
itself, hand over limbered hand.
Audience of one, tired tree,
clacks its branches, releases
birds and leaves, their wings small and mingled.
My ended day, my pretty play, the lovely ones
together mount each other and ride the pale,
unbridled horse through the monuments of night
to stand before the stone that tells my name.
Carol Stokesbury
Solitaire
Alone does not mean lonely
As night does not mean gloom
and being single does not mean
She could not catch a man
For men can not be caught
It does not mean she failed in life
or failed her duty as a woman
for she herself must write her script
To be — or not to be —
Roots to someone else's tree
Darcy Walker

The Club Taboo
They will always say they love you
with words that are numb
as the tongue they come from.
Last call, round about two,
will always find a bar full
of no one but you.
So you walk to your car all alone
just like you always do.
Your fingers grip the wheel.
Your mind is sad and empty
like a tea-room feel.
Back home you bury your tears in a pillowy bier.
You screw the mattress on your narrow bed
wishing to God it was a man instead
who’d change your nightmare to a dream affair;
who’d promise you breakfast and stay on for dinner;
who’d make you a satisfied saint instead of a sinner.
So unless you hear me now, I guess
you’ll keep not understanding why
my face grows dismal as this bar
when I watch while you cruise
with a drink in your eye
and look in your hand
for the man who’ll never be there.
Larry Norton
Cubicle
I climbed, heart pounding,
from the brick tomb
trapped (an hour paid in advance)
by the Amoeba spewing
faulty thought
twice weekly.
I remove myself
conjuring you through
walls to fill me with
fantasy yet to be born
and that which has matured,
burst like marigolds
and died, seeding my mind
waiting to find a Spring
for new blooms to break
beyond the tomb
when the Amoeba
has found a dry spot
to be dormant
and babble to himself.
Greg Busceme

A Eulogy
Almost not there
in the hair on my leg
an ant traverses.
With his machete mandibles
he ambles through
the blondy brush and vines;
canting his frantic antennae
for signs of:
"The Lost Column."
Pausing only for a sip of sweat
at some partially filled pore,
he wipes his forehead
with a leg
and rests upon a pimple
in a clearing near my knee.
From there surveys the world
as far as he can see;
reflects upon the marvels of creation,
the freedom of his nation,
transubstantiation.
Then,
more mundanely
checks his gear
before deciding
on a path that's near
(the years of trooper-training
obviously well ingrained).
He soldierly inspects
his weapon,
testing bayonet
for razor point,
finds the edge
still keen
though somewhat stained.
He wiped it clean
till not a spot remained.
Then,
as if to finish off
this satiny shine,
raised up his ass
and put his full
untiring weight behind
the slender needles mass,
altering weight behind
the slender needles mass,
driving downward into oil
deep within the sebum soil;
and that is why
I wrote
A Eulogy
Jess J. W. Doiron, Jr.

The Spear
The eyes observe the sharpness of the stone
As blood drips from the savage hand of man.
The brain perceives a puncture past the bone
And vital meat to feed his hungry clan.
The agile thumb and fingers join the shaft
And point with vines. He draws the weapon near
And feels the wood and stone — admires the graft.
Now puny man will be something to fear.
The clawless, fangless beast sets forth with hope.
He finds his prey. His triceps flexes hard.
The charging beast falls down the shallow slope.
Its charisma is now forever scarred —
There lying dying on the ancient plain
Is proof of mankind's destiny to reign.
Tom Newton
hear, bird of you, the air
dazed wing —
air flow traveler flow.
te the diagonal shadow
etches
etch across time.
ue to be, to prove,
ere is a pattern,
are linked.

Jess Brown

Strong Wind Huh?
What be the only way of knowing
Where the wind that’s blowing,
Going?
Whistling, thistling, through
Streets that are bustling
With both automobiles
And pedestrians cussing.
’Tis appalling,
My Darling,
To see your health falling;
Because of this wind which is steadily calling:
Help!
On account
Of the smoke
And the smut,
That only
A slut
And a bald,
Ribald rut
Could dare
To inhale
As they sit
Drinking ale
To the tune
Of a song
That’s so
Terribly long
That’s carried by wind that’s so terribly strong
And stinks!

Jess J. W. Doiron, Jr.

Butterfly Hunting with Carlo
In my mind
there is a warm summer day;
filled with green
and time.
You are there
and I;
we are young
and laughing.
Someone yells.
Eyes fly open.
The green
is rubbed over our faces
suddenly;
there is little time.

Jess J. W. Doiron, Jr.

Visions
Pearl pendant moonlight
Is transgressed by weightless
Footfalls through avenues of void.
Surging of blood through bodyvein
Is hidden in no secret oozing recess.
No river heaves and swells to refuse
To be spanned from rib to rib by rib.
Primeval urge and process
Are quelled by machines
And white-masked men.
Our lands of now never present silence
Long for past visionary days when
Awe was a product of first glances . . .
We desperately need our mysteries —
Else, when all truths are man-ordered,
The patterns are known,
The dancer knows the Dance,
We curl up in some deserted,
But Understood corner,
Pick our noses, and ask, why bother?

Allen R. Brown
Tommy
its hard to tell
that within such a small box —
a small, metal casket —
so many people lie.
the parents and grandparents
the universe of knowers
all packed tightly,
permanently,
within the grey box,
against the velvet
and the child
who died too suddenly
for one to clench teeth,
grasp an armrest,
anything to buffer the shock
of the sky falling full weight
on them.
the mortician suggested
it remain closed;
a tiny, grey box is all I saw.
we placed it above the hole
as strained sobs dart through the air
slowly testing the waters of reality
of the child in the box — Box
above the hole, dug deep,
where so many people lie.

Greg Busceme

Savanna Justice
Savanna justice dictated that
Today a battle would be fought
Benaath the blaze white sun
Between the antelope and the hyena,
And that the antelope would lose.
His desperate groans and pleas
To the antelope gods were in vain.
They made no difference when the
Gnashing teeth of the hyenas
Ripped and wearied the antelope
To his knees, exposing sinew
To the blaze white sun,
Confirming that the brief interlude
With life was spilling into the grass.
Back legs fell, pain grew
Beyond feeling.
And the antelope yielded
As he saw eight more hyenas
In even stride crossing
The grassland in his direction
In the blaze white sun.

Allen R. Brown

Mole Hill
A mountain was before me
or more accurately
sprouted from the earth.
It seemed to grow fat
like a pig for lard
and the peak was jagged
not at first but little
by little
from a round smooth greeness
to lumps breaking the top
invading until there was
no green or round or smooth,
and it was too high to breath.
It used to be a tiny place,
just big enough for a two ounce
half-blind creature to seek refuge beneath the earth.

Greg Busceme
Poem To Leave By

This day is held by a locust shell,
brittle, abandoned,
painfully slit down the back
to tell about growing.
Where has the insect flown.
It surely crouched here
waiting to dry,
hiding beneath these leaves
and fearing every shadow.
But then how bright new wings
must have gleamed
to know the first safe sunlight.
I leave brittle things behind —
books not read,
lies and promises,
poems I should have finished.
Crouching in this darkness
I am drying now,
glad for the sun
and for people who love the sound
of bright beginning flight.

Jo Ann Thrash
meeting will now come to order." The president was old; she insisted on using a gavel at important meetings. "Folks, settle down, we can socialize later." Bang, Bang, old do you think she's getting?" Dr. Biyalah whispered, softly. "A hundred forty? Fifty?"

"And she turns one hundred forty-nine tomorrow," I replied. "Wasn't something else happening tomorrow?"

"Biyalah, Dr. Nizamabad, would you set examples for the future? Being quiet?" I believe I blushed; Biyalah did not. "Pipe everyone! This meeting will come to order!" Bang, he sixty-third Initiation of the Institute of Mothology was in session. "Bang, Bang, Bang. Expectant hush. Introductory All of which was really awfully familiar to me, except the last — some fool had thought to cut costs by using Silicorination parchment. Serviceable things, of course, but right for the occasion. They had the texture of rotting rubber. " — Mother of Motherlor-Arikawa Chumash!"

For days we had talked about her. not delivered the Address for men, many Initiation — were only every third year. This might be her last. I said the person I had ever seen came to the stand. She had to appear several years old. (— looked up her age later; she was thirty-one.) Time had left her face a sagging morass that surgery could have smoothed; she had refused. Her face had character under all those wrinkles; she had been stoned out all over her. Even her voice had gone:

"Real to become hosts." Hands like bony claws gripped."

There was no microphone; The architecture of the naturally amplified her clear, strong voice. "For six years you added nutrition, genetics, fetology, and all the other necessary to produce the best babies your generation can. e years you have prepared your bodies for the nine head and developed a lifestyle suited to your body and the will nourish. You know what minerals and vitamins in ses are necessary in what forms during what stages each organ in the fetus. And this afternoon your terms as gan with the injection of the sperm. Nine months from professional mothers will take over. All this will happen again, one premature birth, one baby deformed ay — except, of course, those of you chosen to bear boys."

hear the rest of her speech; I could only hear the urgency, parted face of a boy who wanted very badly to be normal, who could not understand why his genes had booby-trapped him.

There had been a certain desperation in his eyes, a kind of pleading in the way he clutched my sleeve. But he had merely said, "Dr. Nizamabad, could I talk to you? It would only take a minute."

"I don't suppose you remember me."

"Yes, I do." I did, and I did not need to refer to the employee file. "You're the only boy employed at this research facility as anything but an experimental subject — in fact, probably the only boy so employed in any facility."

"I want to be normal!" He whispered fiercely.

Why he had chosen me as confidant I did not know; we had met only once before, while I was passing through the Genetics II Lab. As Administrator, I was an authority figure, not a fairy godmother or symbol of comfort. But he was being quite unreasonable. "You can't, you know that. It's impossible. You've seen the research, in fact, I dare say you've done some yourself. You —"

"I want to be a lab technician!"

"Do you have a certificate of —"

"No!" His face was flushed. I began to wonder if his mind were going already.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty." His eyes, those wide, desperate eyes, dropped. "Twenty tomorrow, anyway."

He had lost. He knew it, I knew it, the whole world knew it, but he would not admit it.

"I can do the work! I know it!"

"Two years' training to be a technician —"

"One! I've been an assistant for two years, I've been watching, asking questions, all kinds of questions —"

"So only one year of training, what difference does it make? You'll be dead in five years anyway — your heart, your lungs, your brain —"

"My heart.

"You know it. So why fight it? Probably every boy you know will be dead by age twenty-five, and those who live to be thirty either go crazy or become vegetables."

"It's not my fault!" I'd heard of boys getting wild as their time came near. Training him to be a lab tech was not the answer.

"I know. I'm employed by an industry devoted to exploring this genetic sex-linked order to self-destroy. You're employed by it. A quarter of the world's population is involved in it. Have you talked to your counselor?"

"Sure. She wants me to be a good little boy and die on schedule."

"Why must you be a technician?"

"So I can make something of the rest of my life," He said simply.

"— can't do enough as an assistant. If I had been born a woman, The thin hands twisted into knots. "I would be a woman. I mean a woman."

"..."
son. Live long enough to be one.”

you had been born a woman, you just might be the one to
beak-through and save the lives of the boys of the
watched your work. It’s unbelievable. It’s also already
ging erratic. You may not have five years left. You’re due for
up soon, aren’t you?”

oward.”

’s right, your twentieth birthday. Well, even if the
rough came tomorrow, it would be too late for you.
nothing in this world that can stop your body from killing
I could understand why the boy had said so urgently. “I
be normal!”
nd myself on my feet with the rest of the audience,
ing wildly as Dr. Chumash left the stand. I bought a copy
peech later.
hundred twenty-six young women between the ages of
sixty were initiated that night. In their smooth brown
hey had artificial candles that never flickered or went out in
but cast a halo of light around each young face. I could
remembering my own initiation — with real candles
ames had wavered no matter how carefully we had held
right, maybe my hands hadn’t been rock-steady. Still, the
of technology did not necessarily mean the death of
in the ceremony ended,) I would have left in a daze if
had not accosted me. “Time to wake up, Kid. You looked
ombie during Chumash’s speech. Can you get home all

sure. I was just thinking.”
’ll get used to it after a while.”
ved enough to give her a playful poke in the ribs.
er in the streets now; A car slowed down. “Hey, want a
he driver leaned over. “You two left so fast I didn’t get a
say hello.”
just kind of wrapped up in my thoughts,” I answered.
leepwalking now,” Biyalah explained. “Note the vaca
tion” — “I am not!” I protested.
ion, get it!” Biyalah urged. So we settled ourselves on the
ions inside. The driver honked at another car and waved.
’re they?” I asked.
e-initiates,” Khoisan chuckled. “They were a little surprised
ne there. You know how young blood must have its fling
going host. Well, they went to this new bordello on the
de of town — excuse me, is this where I turn to go to your
zz?”

“Not here — the next corner.”

“Oh, that’s right.” The streetlights turned on as the car
approached them; behind, the lights died as the car left them. “As I
was saying, they had their fun with the boys, and in the process,
et the manager — Me. So today they show up in their white
Robes of Ceremony and are handed their candles by someone who
saw them at the Bordello the night before.” She grinned at the
memory.

“What about the boys?” I asked involuntarily.

“What about them?” She pulled up in front of my apartment.

“Khoisan, How do they like being sex objects? What’s it like to
grow out of adolescence and know you have only two or three
years left before your mind and body start to degenerate? What’s
it like to be employed only as a prostitute or quinea pig?”

“Now you’re beginning to sound paranoid,” Biyalah declared.

“Wait a minute, Bi. I hear the boys talking among themselves
about it. How unfair it is.” She was silent for a minute. “Once in a
while a boy goes berserk. Hangs himself. Slashes his wrists. Or
attacks another boy. Actually — and I think both of you will be
getting a memo about this — this Bordello is just one more lab in
which to study their behavior.”

“But they’re illegal” I protested.

“We keep them that way to serve as an outlet for the boys.”

“The Gezire experiment,” said Biyalah.

That’s right. A city without any Bordello, legal or illegal, just a
hotel for them. It lasted exactly three weeks.

I remembered that one. Thirty-one suicides out of forty-seven
boys. I could still hear him: “I want to be a lab technician!” He
wanted some meaningful activity — probably they all did.

The phone was buzzing as I entered my apartment, and I pressed
you haven’t hung up, so say something!” Silence.

“Hello, Bi,” I tapped her on the shoulder. “Hello, I said.”

“Oh! Oh, There you are!” She grinned. “Ol’ absent-minded
scientist here forgot she asked you to come and look at
something.” She handed me a beaker less than half-filled with a
clear liquid.

“So you’ve invented water.” I sloshed the liquid around. “What
are we paying you that fabulous salary for?”

“That’s not water and I didn’t invent it. Habib did.”

Habib? Yadi Habib?” I dimly recalled the woman who had been a
high-fashion model in her sixties and had matured into a brilliant
chemist. She could not be quite as old as Dr. Chumash. “You mean
she’s still around?”

“You know, Niz, you really are quite observant sometimes.” Bi
shook her head. “She’s been dead about two months now. I came
by yesterday and found her in there”
He Knew

He did not know the sound that woke him. He opened his eyes in fluid motion, pricked delicate furred ears to listen and flared moist nostrils. He lay without sound listening, nearly without a drawn breath listening. He could hear them. Each making twice the noise any forest creature would.

His father sat Indian-style on frozen forest floor some twenty yards distant. A regular show among irregular ones, a darker among patterned ones. Ice coated bramble and yopon gave a mute grey glow that framed the shoulders and head. The boy squatted, his weight on his heels, the backs of his forearms pressing against his thighs, and his wrists strained across respective knee caps. The fingers of each hand were stretched and pulled by the weight of the gun he balanced. A peep hole showed a darker block of silhouette set apart by the mold grey-green of brush and show. The squared shoulders and craggy head denoted a memorial to fathers, connoted a monument for their sons.

They both saw him at the same time. The father remained seated, pretended not to see. Each knew his role in the game. The son would do the killing.

There were two of them. He could sense, almost be, in their breathing. They had three smells. One each masculine and a combined one, not animal, more mineral. A light masculine smell came; it was nervous, wars, a kindred animal spirit. He seemed anxious, afraid. The other masculine smell was heavy, cold, unhurried, unnervous, and uninviting. The animal feared this one. The third smell was high, light, toxic, and clung to every thing it touched. It as a nauseous smell.

With flat velvet eyes, he looked about, and saw almost the same scene now as when he lay down. The difference was the ice. It coated, covered, glossed the uppersides of everything, even his coat. The ice clung to and matted the tan red brown fur with the accents of black and white.

He thought it well to escape. And though not in pain, when he tried to rise he found his knees also ice covered and near frozen. He could not move. He knew, became aware that this may be the end.

The squatting, freckle-faced boy came to his feet with as much grace as his clumsy age would allow.

His head was up, alert, not blinking. He knew.

The father stood up to view the scene, and increased the son’s apprehension and anxiety.

The twig snap was close. Clear and resonant the crack sounded. The feel, the sense of the crack, served as catalyst to explode the emotion, and disavowed the dread felt by the two major players,
of animal spirit. One thought, he was struggling to his racing feet, dropped to his knees on frozen earth. The sudden hanging of head arched to nearly touch his spine. His knees and body fell, then the head smoothly moved forward. As the head, in proper symmetry, he felt his blood rolling over the back of tongue, thick and full, filling the mouth with great salt taste. He knew. Last he placed his chin upon an ice-frosted knee, and of red returned to the earth.

I came from the brush then, the horrified young one, the old ones.

animal lay where he had fallen, his last effort one of sure: legs folded under trim lithe body; eyes gently closed; ice still clinging and matting in the growth patterns of the sole violation of an otherwise natural state was the blood, going from warm body into cold air, it had already begun to freeze, to mingle and merge almost naturally with the ice and twenty-six pointer." The older said. The voice was flat, meaning by what it said. The voice was unemotional, full of facts authority.

said the young one. when He could trust his voice to the hearing of his father, beautiful.

sa Trahan

The Sentence

A cold, November afternoon as the men line up in four files in different groups in what they hope will be their last of Army basic training. A chilly breeze works its way around the young soldiers, yet Polanco knows better than to put his hands in his pockets. Isn't want rocks stuck in them again. Just because basics is over doesn't mean that the drill sergeants have to stop chicken-shit.

Where Polanco is standing, the fourth squad of the fourth, his vision is limited to the men in front and to the side. He sees other close buddies in his company. Garcia and Mez are also in the fourth platoon, in the first and second respectively. Solis is in the second platoon.

The men are nervous. They know the reason for this action. Now that their initial training is finished, they will be led to other places for further training. The anxiety is shown on faces. Most of them have an idea where they will be going next, to Advanced Infantry Training in North Fort Polk, otherwise known as Tigerland. After that, the next step will be Vietnam and Victor Charlie. Of course, most of the men hope for better things like supply school in the East, missile training in Texas or mechanic training in California. Anything else will do but Tigerland.

Sergeant Brydson approaches the end of the formation along with Sergeant Harrison. The young men focus their eyes on them. Brydson is the platoon sergeant, the top dog of the drill sergeants. Polanco feels that Brydson doesn't look right in Army fatigues, holding a clipboard. The big, black sergeant would look better in a football uniform with the number 32, since he resembles Jim Brown. He looks even bigger when standing next to Sergeant Harrison, a blondish, boyish-looking fellow from Indiana. Although short and slim, the men found out that Harrison can be tough. He has already been in combat in Vietnam and has related some war stories to the men, mostly on the lighter side. He got the men curious about bald, slanted puppy. Brydson is also a war veteran, having served in Korea. But Korea does not register with the young soldiers.

Brydson starts shouting names in alphabetical order. "Adams—North Fort." Well, isn't that something, thinks Polanco, first name off and we got a winner. He is headed for North Fort Polk and Tigerland. "Archer—", continues Brydson, "—North Fort." Two for two, thinks Polanco. "Atkins—Fort Huachua." Well, he is lucky. He is going to New Mexico for something but it sure as hell isn't Tigerland. Brydson keeps on with his roll call as he flips pages from his clipboard. Polanco listens. Soon the names have passed through the E's. Polanco's buddy should be the first of the G's. "Grace-sea-a," bellows Brydson meaning Garcia, "North Fort." Polanco looks forward to where Garcia is standing. He can see only the back of his cap-covered head but Polanco knows that at this instant Garcia's eyes must be a little moist thinking about his wife and kids back in San Antonio. Polanco can feel the tenseness in his air as the names crackle all around the platoons. As each name is called, the owner responds with a rigid stance.

It is funny, thinks Polanco, it is like a goddamn courtroom with Ridge Brydson pronouncing sentence. Most of us so far have gotten the death sentence.

Polanco listens for Martinez's name. Brydson again mispronounces, "Martyr-ness—". As the sergeant says it, Polanco thinks in unison, North Fort. Well, tough luck, Polanco says to himself, not looking around for Martinez. I know he was hoping for something else and so was I for him. He sure had a hell of a time through basic and I didn't think he would make it.

Polanco puts his thoughts aside and once again concentrates on Brydson. His name should be coming up soon "Palmer—Fort Bliss." Lucky asshole. "Plummer—North Fort." Sorry, fellow. "Planko—" That's me, recognizes Polanco through Brydson's
tongue. 

"North Fort," finishes the sergeant. Polanco 
says. The gavel has struck. Where the hell else, dammit? He 
ump on his throat and cannot swallow. Shit, I must be more 
than I thought, Polanco realizes. The sentence has been 
and there is no appeal. Polanco had felt fear when he had 
d his draft notice. His buddies back home had joked about 
ng to Vietnam. They had laughed then. Now Polanco knows 
re really is nothing funny.

"His name is called although Brydson says it as Soul-is. Bingo 
a also. North Fort is awaiting. Hell, he is one guy that 
care. Polanco quietly suggests. Verdict accepted. Solis is 
d and out of the four of us seems most Army gung-ho. 
y, he volunteered for the Army. I don't believe he would 
ven if they sent him to Mongolia. If there is any consolation 
this, it is that the four of us will be together, considers 
.

Weber, the last man, is called. He fares no better than 
of the other men. "North Fort." Guilty as pronounced. 
for being in this time, in this place.

son clears his throat and spits. Looking over the olive-drab 
says, "Your individual orders will be given to your platoon 
He will issue them to you. Later you will be notified when 
E. No one is to leave the company area. That's all for now. 
!

's all? Polanco silently queries as Brydson walks away from 
ation. Not even good luck or kiss my ass? Well, I guess 
oul don't expect the judge to wish his best upon those just 
ued. Anyway, Brydson is and always will be a hard ass. I 
ic a thin smile on Harrison. I guess he recognized our looks 
as been there before. He is probably saying to himself, I feel 
or you sons-of-a-bitches. But there is more to that smile. It 
ort of smile that a prosecuting attorney gives once he has 
case.

Men break from their ranks and gather around their 
leaders. Most of them are quiet, with a little grumbling 
nd there. They grab thin sheets of paper and look upon 
The ones that are smiling the widest have been acquitted. 
re not going to Tigerland. Out of 157 men, 144 have been 
d to learn the art of jungle fighting.

nco looks down on his orders. Any faint doubts have been 
vd. It has been deemed right for him to be sentenced to 
ind.

nco wonders who the jurors were.

He was sitting in his car. One of many sitting in their cars on 
Railroad Avenue waiting for the train to go by. He knew that they 
did it on purpose. They would send the trains out at eight in the 
morning to catch you on your way to work and then again at noon 
to make you late for your lunch hour or back to your office. Then 
at the end of your tedious working day, you had to wait on them 
again. They cunningly sent the trains out at four fifteen just in 
time to catch you and make you wait and wait and wait. He was 
sick with frustrated anger. There was nothing you could do. There 
was some law or other about trains not being allowed to block an 
intersection for more than ten minutes. But to do anything you 
had to have the engine number and the conductor's name and a list 
of five witnesses. There was nothing you could do but wait and 
fume and curse and wait.

He flipped his cigarette out of the window. He counted some of 
the cars and got bored at about number fifty-five. That was only 
entertaining when you were a kid. You would jump up and down 
on the seat of the car and see who could identify the car from 
farthest away. Kansas City Southern, The Rock Island Line, Union 
Pacific, Sante Fe, he knew them all and hated them all with a 
boiling passion. He hated to wait. To waste his time and sit in his 
car with the engine idling stupidly and carbon monoxide stinking 
up through the floor board.

They had no right to make him wait. He would like to shoot at 
the cars. He began to daydream about horrible derailings, cars and 
engines burning and tumbling off of the tracks. Loads of freight 
lying about in twisted nightmare shapes. He could hear the 
conductor screaming as he burned and burned with his clattering 
monster writhing in agony. He liked the thought. It made him 
smile and feel a little better. That would teach them, he thought. 
Blow up a bridge with a train in the middle and see the freight cars 
tumbling in slow motion down into the foaming water and hear 
the grinding and screeching of metal twisting and crumpling. He 
laughed a little out loud and began to hum.

The car behind him honked in irritation. The train had passed. 
When he got to his office his boss was waiting for him.

"You're late again, Burley. That's three times this week. If you 
can't roll out in the morning maybe I'll have to find someone who 
can."

"I've been sitting behind some damn train on Railroad for 
twenty minutes. You know how they slow down or stop and then 
back up some before they start again."

"Maybe if you left for work early some morning you might miss 
the train."

Burley hated his boss too. For the rest of the day he had 
fantasies about Mr. Wall with a conductor's hat on in a pinstriped 
overall. He would reach up for the cord of the air whistle. But the
would not be that dull off-key braying that all train whistles could be the sound of the fluid spurting out of the hydraulic He would grab frantically for the emergency handles of the brakes but a note would flutter down out of nowhere and say “Love to you from Burley”; and then would come the n. Burley would change the face of the conductor many a that day. It would be the leering grotesque face of his drill t, or the wrinkled hawk like face of his landlady. Everyone, who ever made him crawl or wait or pay died that day in the railway accident. He felt very good and worked a little e that evening. He decided to take a different route home. was a train on Railroad he would fool it and go home down Street. It passed under Railroad in a beautiful underpass here it was again, half way down College. He did not even ourth Street. There was a Union Pacific engine changing it across College. They almost never used this track. They on purpose. They knew he was going home this way, servile types were running up and down waving red rags other. Jumping and flopping around the engine like little endant on a swollen queen. Burley cursed venomously. He probably have run over them if there weren’t twenty or so ront of him. He would back up and go another way but the l already closed in behind him. He wanted to scream. And probably the day he began seriously to formulate his plan. spare hours he collected information about city rail plans t to the library, to the railway offices themselves, to the use, even as far away as Houston for current information of rails. It took him nearly five months to gather all of references he needed. And then he went to work on the es. This was much harder. There were no construction in the entire area that used them. He had to go to north where the land was rocky and they used charges to cut u the rocks for the highways.

It nearly gave up many times. He was spending all of his time and the charges were almost impossible to get. One day he was stuck on Railroad again. He looked at the i different way now. He would not curse and smoke es and “rev” his engine. He would grow quiet and sly and hands together while he estimated tonnage. When he got off he there was a note on his desk from Mr. Wall. are fired. You might go to work for the railroad since they’re of your time than I do. Miss Peebles has your check. ye. Wall.”

Ands shook and bit his lip in rage. He raked everything is desk with a violent sweep of his arm. You’ll pay, oh you’ll he thought. He picked up his check from Peebles and raked ing off of her desk too.

Monroe had replaced Burley in Mr. Wall’s office. He was prompt. Indeed early. He was never caught by trains on his way to the office. He was always snuggly settled in his swivel chair when they went rumbling and swaying down the tracks on their way to wherever. He didn’t know much about Burley. They said he was a peculiar type and threw an hysterical fit when he was terminated. That would never happen to Monroe.

Monroe was shuffling through his papers when he heard the first explosion. He thought it was an earthquake at first. He was on the twelfth floor of the Beaumont Savings Building. He ran to the window that overlooked Orleans and saw black smoke and flames boiling into the sky from somewhere by Railroad Avenue. Then he heard the second blast.

It was the College Street underpass, though he did not know it. He thought it was a bombing. Then the overpass by Park Street went. He could see it clearly. Huge sheets of flaming metal shot hundreds of feet into the air revolving slowly. Far away on Eleventh Street the rail cars were tumbling off the framework and smashing automobiles like insects under giant oblivious feet. Calder, McFadden, North, everywhere trains were exploding and leveling buildings and cars and people. The entire downtown section of Beaumont was isolated. The smaller explosions on Crockett and Gladys had sealed it off.

Wallace Monroe was shaking and crying and moaning “Oh my God” “Oh my God”. It was like war... It was beautiful. The dream fulfilled. He could hear the sirens wailing but he knew they could not reach the wreckage downtown, it would burn and burn with all the freight and cars and nasty people, (thought Burley.) He was dancing wildly on the trestle over the Port of Beaumont. He could see the whole city, a giant burning carcass. There would be many “after-explosions”. Grain in the cars, oil in the cars, it would burn for days. He would sit up here even if he starved to watch every moment. The trestle swayed. Burley grabbed frantically at the girders. He held the metal super structure as it wagged wildly, its foundations crumpled by the heavy blasts.

“Take that,” screamed Burley, “that’ll teach you. Does that burn you Wall, does that burn you, Peebles. How do you like your filthy duplex now, Mrs. Langley, you old hag.” He was screaming and laughing and waving his free arm. He could see all their faces crushed and burning.

Wallace Monroe was staring dumbly out of the window at all the smoke and flames and fire and wreckage. He felt he was going to vomit or faint. Then he saw the man. Some poor man caught on the trestle over the Port. He saw the trestle quiver and then lay over on its side in slow motion. The poor man held on all the way down. He seemed to be dancing.

Alaina W. Cribbs
Contributors

R. Brown has been published by the Texas Society of Poets recently in Pulse, Fall 1977.

Busceme, a Speech major at Lamar, has been regularly published in Pulse. He has been both assistant Editor and Editor of this magazine.

Dr. W. Cribbs, assistant Editor of this issue, has won awards for fiction in past issues of Pulse.

J. W. Doiron, Jr. has been previously published in Pulse.

Nah Lyne Hollister is a past second place winner in the Poetry Competition.

Anvarro, a junior English major is published for the first time in this issue.

Newton is enrolled in Lamar's School of Vocations where he studies Plant Maintenance.

Norton is a graduate teaching assistant in the English department.

Stokesbury, a senior English major, will be a graduate assistant in the history department in the fall.

Thrash, past Editor of Pulse, will be a graduate teaching assistant in English at Virginia Tech in September.

Trahan is a psychology major previously published in this magazine.

C. Walker, a sociology major, won the essay competition in Pulse, Spring 1976.

The staff of Pulse gratefully acknowledges the patronage of P. Weinbaum without whose support this magazine would be only a vague abstraction in the minds of student writers.

Also thank Mrs. Audrey Wynn, secretary of the English department, for her seemingly inexhaustible patience and ready grace.

And certainly not least, we would like to thank Dr. Olga D., our faculty sponsor, whose advice prevented our efforts from turning into inextricable pandemonium.