

Fall 1985

Fall 1985

Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter_62-03



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Valparaiso University, "Fall 1985" (1985). *The Lighter, 1962-2003*. Paper 11.
http://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter_62-03/11

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Lighter, 1962-2003 by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

30
Fall

The Lighter

FALL 1985

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

DEC 16 1985





The Lighter, Volume 30, Fall 1985

Art and Layout Editor: Barb Gade

Submissions Editors: Andrew Beck, Barb Bergdolt, Kari Clifton, Cindy Deichmann,
Kathrin Eimer, Paul Fackler, Debra Griswold, Wendy Hurst,
Joe Kreoll, Mary Maronde, Deb Piehl, Dan Prusaitis, Bill Rohde,
and Stuart Selthun

Typesetter: Barb Gade

Faculty Advisor: Professor Richard Maxwell

Assistant Editor: Rene Steinke

Editor: Laura Blair

Cover Drawing: Sara Dorow

The Lighter is published with the help and cooperation of Home Mountain
Publishing and the *Torch*.

Many thanks to all the staff members for countless hours of
conscientious and dedicated work.

Special thanks to Professors Richard Brauer, Ed Byrne, Fred Frey, and
George Strimbu for their encouragement of creativity on this campus.

The Lighter encourages any criticism concerning the content or appearance
of the magazine. Please address all comments to the editors.

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.

—Wallace Stevens

On the Shelf in the Back of the Pantry

You're the only one I've ever met
who thought years were meant to be
stored in jars.

There was the one we opened the night
we danced till we dropped
though there was no music and we
ate whipped cream in bowls with three
ragged strangers in the dance hall.

There was the one you unleashed by mistake
and a hurricane swept through the house,
its blind eye staring beyond the window,
beyond the crust holding the sky in place.
We were crying upside down, so
the tears rolled into our eyes, and
we couldn't see the children and all
the chains in our careful fence
pulled apart. It took a long time to squeeze
that year back in.

There was the lovely little glass year
that you dared not breathe on.

There was the year we planted
too early and it died from frost.

There were even years pushed way
in the back, that only you knew about,
like that year you spent with a key in your
temple that locked with a snap.

Which shall we open this time?
The cold of the new year is coming on
and I'm hungry for a small place to rest.

Terri Muth

Versions of the Rune Stone

1.

The secrets I keep secret from myself
keep shouldering up through their strata of darkness,
brawny, unmentionable,
stones in a Texas field in spring.

2.

I think this stone is named
the hermit stone;
that other, the stone of sheer
serenity, the seeing-through
stone.
Already they contain long stories.

3.

A drift of linden
in the summer rain,
a drift of linden-scent
above the summer's green.

4.

As I am waking this morning
rhythms of the lines of poems,
solid and open,
rise like scaffolding beneath me.
Dancing them lightly,
uplifted, just half in the half-light,
I am slipping what cripples:
fear of these heights.

5.

Curious, that I should gather in
these stones. And, with that harvest,
hear, through darkness
these distant words,
long-drawn and hard-drawn
from the heart's clearest well.

Kathleen Mullen

A Window on the Park

Lighted in this western window,
alone, I dangle
one conspicuous leg
over the ledge.
Young couples kiss
and part below, or meet
amid late roses.
Inside I find pressed blossoms
black with age.

Impatient bells foreshadow the escape
of children, and the park
becomes a kaleidoscope
of confusion.
With unseen signals
mothers find their own,
win peanut-butter-and-jelly
hugs and kisses.
One gremlin grins up
at the gargoyle
in my window.

Without children I watch the sun
set. Cold bones barely feel
its warmth. Between the sun
and me the low-ceilinged clouds
suspend. Rain falls rustling
amid red and yellow leaves.
I am an old woman, good
for propping windows open.

Christine Grusak

a squirrel gaily jumping o'er the grass
leaps on a mine
and explodes

“sometimes i belive then”

S.M. Buss



Uptown—Chicago 9/85

Amy Richter



Bill Lemmons

Wall of Words

You
Sit in front of me
Talking.

Talking,
Talking,
And talking

You
Do not think that i
Am talking (do you?)
but i am.

While your words
Bombard Jets From
My Of A
Ears Cold Shower
Like Water Massage

While your moving lips
Become one blurry image in front of my tired eyes

i am crying

i am screaming

i am huddling up

inside
but

You
Will never know what i am saying
Because
You're
Talking

S.M. Buss

As I Always Do

Keith Moriarty slides his gym shirt
over his linebacker shoulders as I shiver
by him, beads of water clinging
to my pale body.
“Bwaad, when you gonna get some pubic hair?”
I snatch my towel from a locker and turn away
as I always do,
counting the cracks in the gray tile floor as I walk
to the john—this room that holds
the sweet stench of a half century
of sweaty boys’ piss. I see
my face in the mirror, and I can’t imagine
my father looking like this
when he was sixteen.
I notice, in the last stall,
an empty pant leg draped
over the edge of the toilet like a blue tongue.
My jeans, underwear, and t-shirt soak in yellow water.

Clutching the towel
my breaths shorten, and I run
back into the locker room, wet feet slapping
toward him. His meaty back and hairy shoulders taunt
me as he towel-snaps the ass of a football buddy.
He just begins to turn
as I fling my bony frame into him. He crashes
into a locker, the metal mesh grating
his face. Somehow, I am still standing
when he spins around. The blood runs
in so many tributaries that meet
at his dimpled chin and drip
onto his chest. His fists fall
to his side for a moment when he sees
it is me. I don’t even try
to move out of the way of that paw
that comes at me—so slowly, I swear
I can read his class ring.

Bill Rohde



“Water”

Krista Lewis

Mid-August

The crab apples are falling;
it must be August.
It must be a time for all
small things to let loose
and spread themselves,
while larger concerns pull together,
looming: the possibility of love,
the low evening light
lost in wild leaves that
lose themselves
to color,
the lace on a dress turning to wool,
wood, then all-consuming fire,
the world we must slow
to capture
a thick, short moment for ourselves.

Terri Muth

The Bargain

(to a Prague artist)

What I bought of you on April last
as khaki men closed in from
either end of Karlov Most*
a braver world away
hangs finished now.

Your eyes rebellious still
fill now the sepia void,
complete Hradcany's** proud mast,
and sign where should have been
the interloper's star
your name to this
our spirits' framed transaction.

Lois Reiner

*Karlov Most, translated "Charles Bridge,"
spans the Moldau river in Prague,
Czechoslovakia.

**Hradcany is the castle complex
overlooking the city.



Kathrin Eimer

When loneliness
grips my heart
and sucks its strength,
leaving me shriveled
in the sand,
among the broken shells
and tattered sea weed,
I recall
my buoyant strength,
when that last
salty tear crackled
in the heat,
baring me to the
crashing, quenching,
overwhelming wave.

Kathrin Eimer

Mid-August

The sun is high and hot
and the air is thick
with the smell of
salt and sand
and the sound of
waves crashing
against the shore
and the laughter of
children playing
in the surf
and the rustle of
leaves in the trees
and the hum of
insects in the grass
and the distant
call of a seagull
and the soft
whisper of a breeze
and the gentle
lull of a rocking chair
and the warm
glow of a fire
and the sweet
smell of a pie
and the quiet
peace of a summer
day.



Matthew Voortman

What Do You Want?

Man, you tried;
Yeah you did
to put me between borders,
force me to fit where
I didn't want to.
You said, "Let's not talk to her, make
her beg to be a part of us,"
and me—instead of enjoying my own brain—
tried to jump into yours.
If I only could have known
what a pointless move that was:
all I found was lifeless mush.
My *dog* is more interesting.
Yeah, but I pretended and thought
"This is great,"
so I tried to be the
same, think the same,
but I never did.
If I told you that
though, you just laughed and said,
"yeah right" with lots of
sarcasm.
Yeah, well I finally realized
that it didn't matter if
your plaids matched or
if your big party was going to be cancelled.
I didn't give a fuck about you and your
mapped-out life.
I never did like things in "neat packages."
You say "fuck" or "shit" and
the word explodes like a mistake—
so what?
it's just a word:
Nothingness,
like the rest of you.

Samantha Arnold

Till Come the Rains

They say the desert grows larger every year
as a few more stones crumble and the grasslands flee
from the advancing sands. The crops again are poor.
The dunes have crept closer till now they are so near
they hide the horizon. Some remember the tree
that brought rain to the land before the white man tore

out its roots. The whispers say the white men stole our
gods. Our souls are as dry as the advancing sands.
For many days now the prayer for rain has been sung
but the song rings empty as our souls. The power
is gone from us and from the soil, leaving the lands
dry and thirsting. We will sing till the rains have come.

The roots that held the soil are gone and the wind blows
it away. The tribe has scattered before the wind.
The old have starved and the young no longer believe.
The grain has died in the fields and now no one sows
the seeds. The gods punish us, but how have we sinned?
We will wait here beneath the sun and will not leave

till come the rains. Here we will lie down our thirsting
bones and join our barren souls to this barren soil.
This land was fertile once and our roots drank deeply
from the waters. Now the dust covers our drying
skin. We have sown our tears and spent our lives in toil.
When shall we bear the sheaves rejoicing? How softly

the sands have crept upon us and covered our souls.
With empty promises the white man stole our fields.
It is time to plant again, but what shall we sow?
Our words shall be the seeds making man and soil whole.
Plant us where the rain tree grew and hope the land yields
new fruit. Pray for rain that the seeds we plant might grow.

Paul Fackler



The Way Things Were

Rikard D. Eischen

Bowling With God

The preparations begin: we exchange our tennis shoes for
ugly slippery rentals with the size written in big numbers in back—
8½'s for me, 10's for him.

We select our balls.

We select our beer—Mich Light, of course.

He picks up the tab—Nice Guy.

During the game we take turns keeping score.

In the third frame he gets two gutter balls and I tease him all night.

We manage to gab our way like old ladies through three games;

we have a coupon—bowl two games get another free.

Our conversation is typically eclectic—favorite TV shows and M&M colors to
current events in the Middle East (he has relatives in Israel) to
the ideal way to spend the Fourth of July.

And of course we have a blast together (we always do)—
he's such a kick.

Before we leave, I convince him to sign us up for the mixed couples league
on Thursdays.

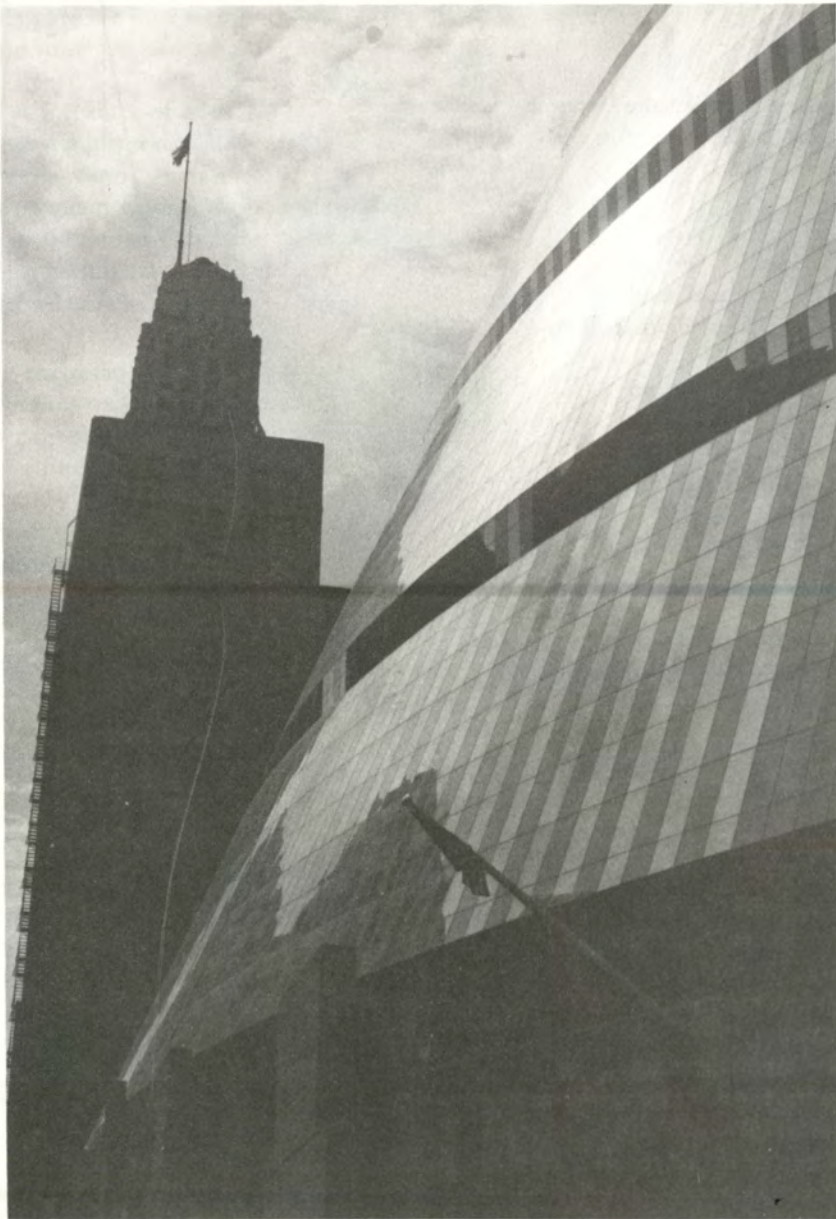
Mary M. Maronde

Our Canvas World

Our canvas world
is more like blue nylon—
tattered,
no artist's *tabula rasa*
and definitely not
for show

but sharing.
Each to other
two build one
mudspattered, leaky
home from home.

Laura Blair



Barb Gade

The Smell

Oh for the security of my womb:
a place that's warm
and makes me envision
slow
deliberate
sex;
crawling between the layers
of cotton/down comfort
newly-shaven
legs
slide
effortlessly
across soft pink hands
that will later smother them
nevertheless;
the enveloping scent
of Ben Gay and men
like my uncle george
forcing my head down
down into the
complete
irresistible
heaven
that will make me forget
i am a product
of my desires i am a survivor
of my fears
and i
yes i
am
making
someone
happy.

Cutting Loose

(Laverne "Mickey" Muth,
June 13, 1916-September 14, 1985)

Fall is turning jagged
all the curves of summer,
like the nip of a small dog
waking one from sleep.
But in this faltering light,
Grandma,
it wakes you into death.
It wakes me into seeing
the smallness of all I am.

I've lost track of numbers—
today is just a day in the middle
of the world, where children laugh,
a pregnant woman walks in the shade,
the old farmer cuts away falling limbs.
Sun backlights a boarded barn,
caressing it into a hungry sleep.

In the cellar
we find six jars of mayonnaise,
a cupboard full of cling peaches.
We find \$200 inside a lamp,
money shoved in a hatband.
Saving,
always saving,
so you would never again be
the only one with work,
with brothers, sisters, parents
asking for potato soup, potato dumplings,
fried potatoes, money for shoes.
So next time there'd be
cream and toast, wool coats,
and high black boots.
But now we must bring
it all out of hiding—
broken beads,
watches without hands,
spools of thread wound with every color.
We put things in boxes
to take outside and burn.

You nursed your two sisters through the slow
opening death made.
Where others pulled back as if
death were a spreading circle,
I watched you bathe their hands,
their hair,
though your joints ached too,
with the fear that you would
shrink the same way.

What I remember won't be enough in the years to come.
Still, I can't help but recall us sleeping
in t-shirts in North Carolina after
someone had stolen all our clothes.
We could only look at each other
and laugh. It was all we had.
Still, I must remember, once,
that you walked from Mercy Hospital,
dazed, in a red robe. We found
you downtown, in a restaurant,
asking everyone where home was,
as if you didn't know.
Still, I must remember you,
much younger, refereeing basketball,
blowing your whistle blue,
screaming "Foul, foul!"

I've been greedy.
Rubbing the gold you've given me smooth,
wanting more;
wanting always to remember
what remains of your touch.
Going through all you've worn,
stroking the threads,
sniffing them for some lasting
scent of you, I try
each thing on as if
raising up again
the loose garment of your life
onto my own small body.

I'll never change the world.
Yet I am the only woman
left to carry on, the oldest,
the one who's always had
so much to hide.
Here I am on the front porch,
with your small dog,
watching an evening storm ripple in,
white as your old headscarf.
It drops down
the hill, past Moser's, blowing
harder and faster,
thunder splitting the sky,
then darkly rolls away, silent.
Although there is no one here to hold,
although I'm questioning what's real,
there is time
to wonder at the streaks
of color that remain,
to change my life,
to gather the past and go inside.

Terri Muth

North Beach 1985 to Mark

Running my hands through my twisted rat's ass hair. A sunny day and no sweaters or black berets — just tourists and shifty-eyed Chinese. Are we the Day-Glo Beat generation Mark? or are we just Reagan *jugen* grasping at something that doesn't exist? I am stared down by a crazy woman — Woman, what did you see? Do you remember an ashtray full of cigarette butts and jazz and all-night talk sessions that ended with the Golden Gate Bridge? The body is the temple of the soul, the soul is the center of the being, the being is the axis of the universe, the universe revolves around us until we are scattered by four opposing forces and we can see ourselves. And the sun is shining on a Columbus Street bus (30 Stockton). And it is full of temples squashed so carelessly. And my feet hurt from trying to walk into the past but ending up in front of a nudie show that I can't get into. Italian in the bright sun and the City is cloudless and beautiful and it has inspired so many and changed so much and ebbed and flowed and grown and died, and my body is the center of the universe and we are not the Day-Glo Beat Generation but something more...

Brian McGovern



Deb Griswold

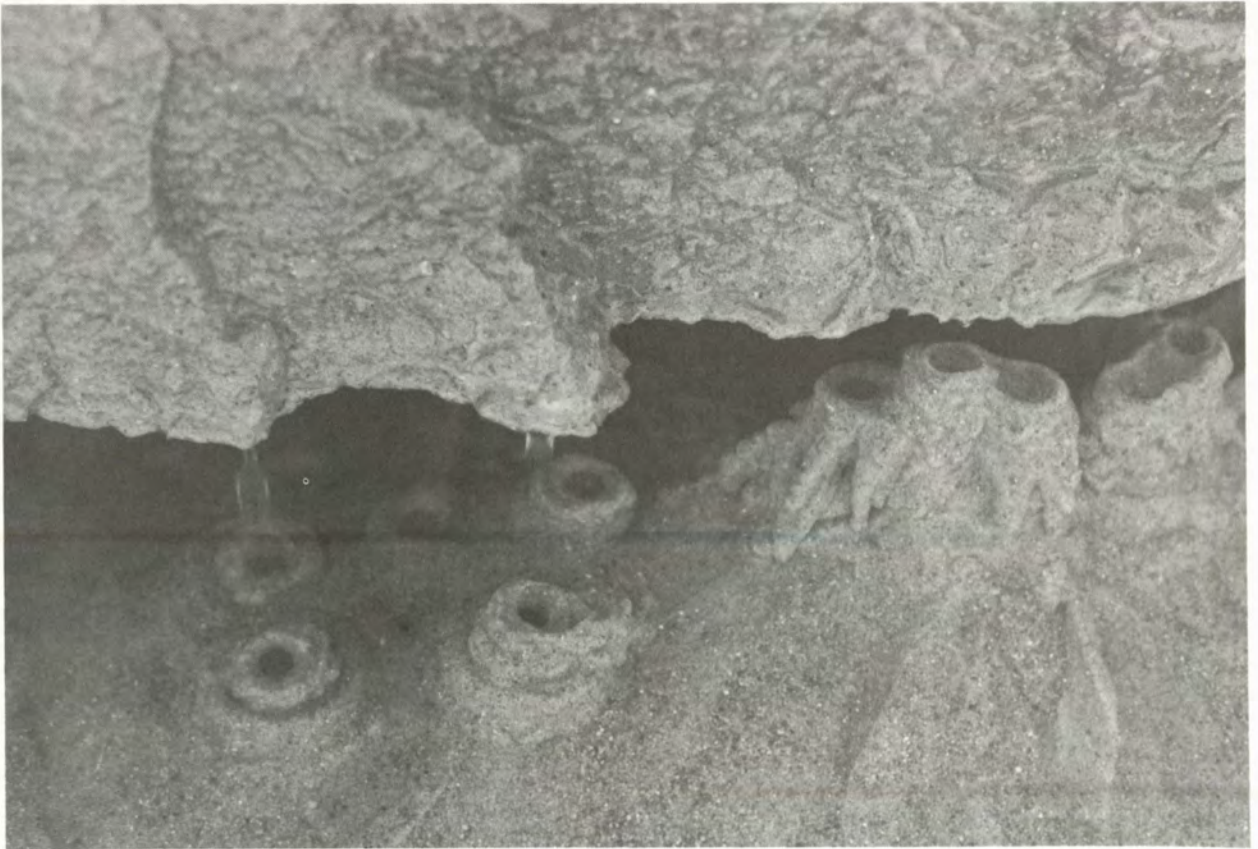
The Neighbor

The fingers tangle
into the ground like knotted roots
of a tree with too many rings
to count. His fingernails wear thin,
black crescents, as if someone has outlined them.
He still kneads the black soil
with an urgent tenderness.

Ten years ago, his face
crunched like a tin can when he squinted
in the sun. He frightened me
with a warning about rhododendron: poisonous
juice that tastes sweet. His voice
banged like a pot fallen on the floor
when he told me how he hated
the factory: after eight hours, his hands felt small
razor slits, the skin stained with sulfur.

Since his wife's death, he cares for the flowers
alone: begonias, chrysanthemums, roses...
The garden keeps its own time, he says.
In years I have not seen
his expression so gentle. He holds
a blossom in his hand like a small,
fragile animal.

Rene Steinke



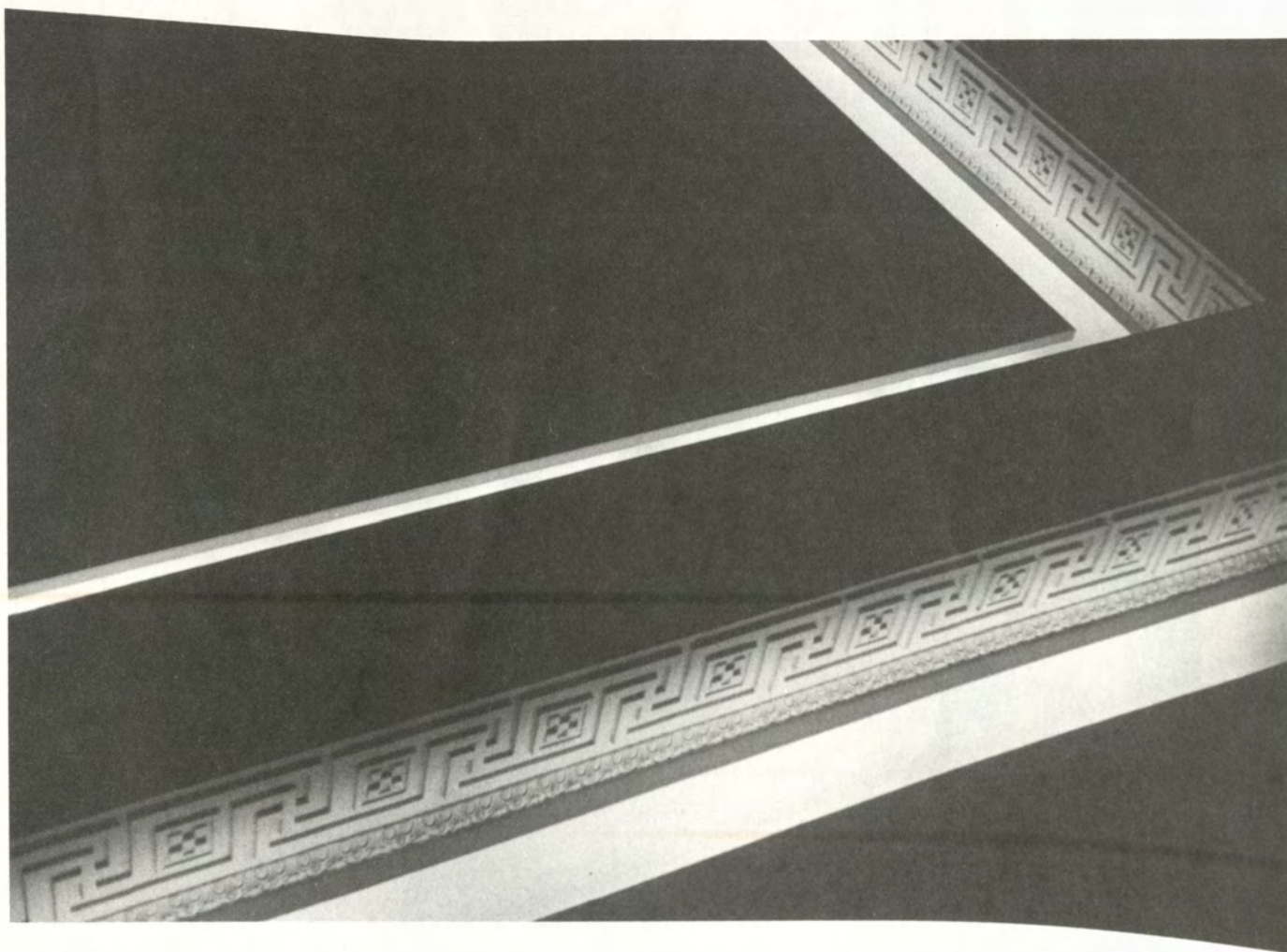
Barb Gade

Yeah, I Remember

the first time. Drinking
a pitcher of vodka and mountain dew waiting
for her lights and what I knew
would be my first hand job. I'd been looking
forward to it all week, getting hard
in homeroom and shit,
but it was quicker
than I thought it'd be and not really much
different than doing it myself.
She left right after—had to go
to a friend's. I just laid
there in the second floor bedroom
with cum on my shirt.

Tommy and Scooter came
upstairs, too, after theirs left.
Tommy's got so wasted she took off
all her clothes and even asked
him to, but he didn't.
They just kinda fell asleep
together for a while.
Scooter's stripped, too, and so
did he. He even slipped
it in, but only for a few seconds
and then he was scared
shitless thinking
'bout a baby and her
for a wife. I started laughing
and he hit me
and told me to fuck off.
it wasn't funny.

“Keith”



“Crisp”

Linda M. Starr



Krista Lewis

Reference Point 6/2/85; The Folk Festival

Lying in a field of people
with a friend and her roommate
on a blanket with bagels and cheese,
grapes and a bottle of carbonated water,
urban monoliths rising about a thin shield
of green, immature trees,
brooding over the modern glass faces
of the back of the Art Institute:
no lions here,
but instead smooth marble sculptures spouting water.

And on the stage of the band shell,
the miniature performers—
it is not a concert of sight,
but rather, the singing of a temporary stonehenge;
a socially aware oracle
of black plastic-wrapped amplifiers
atop the spider legs of scaffolding,
their voices always a few seconds behind
the amplifiers on the either side of the band shell,
a curious delay,
an echo of the present
reaching our ears twice
to register behind the tones of conversation—

an impermanent monument,
not like the skyscrapers around us,
or its counterpart on the Wiltshire plains—
a ceremony of stones with no one left
to fathom its mysteries,
to interpret its purposes,
our interpreters sing at us *through* our monuments;
the people will last much longer than
the black plastic Stonehenge we lie in—
it will be dismantled this evening after the concert.

It's a matter of opposites:
our slight mythologies reside in our heads.
Those who remember the height of folk music a decade ago
have gathered to perpetuate ceremony;
they bring their wine and children
and in a few millenia,
when another capstone has shifted in England,
archaeologists will turn to the monoliths
that we have erected,
not noticing the empty bottles and handful of black plastic
we have left as a guide post
to the things that have meant so much to us.

Eric Appleton

In Case You've Wondered...

I save the rock because
I know that one day you'll come
Back to me
And I'll ask, "Remember when
You gave me this rock?"
I know one day
I'll show you this rock that I save
That you don't know I have
Nor probably can remember giving to me
Because you gave not intending
For me to hold on
(but how was I to know)

I save the rock because
It is all that is left
And even it is cold
And hard
And lifeless
But I save it still
And you undoubtedly wouldn't recognize it
If it hit you in the face
Since you gave it to me
So playfully
And obviously thought I gave you my
Love in the same manner

Venice Williams

The Hunt

A silent shape slips through the wood, hesitates,
looks back,
then leaps away like a dead leaf driven before the storm's fury.
Another follows,
slower and less graceful
as it wades through underbrush and drifts.
The first dodges,
doubles back,
then bolts onto the frozen river, kicking up a shower of snow.
Out of the woods a shadow slides,
looms like a blotch of black oil
spreading.
A tiny movement, and time stops
as a shot shatters the icicles on the air's frigid breath.
Particles of frozen moisture explode in a cloud of rainbows
as blood flames on the sleek ice:
a red scratch on a silver ribbon.

Jennifer Barricklow

Ode to a Pig named Jeff

PUNCHLINE

hits you hard
like the smack you got in third grade
her long beautiful fingers
etched a pink turkey
on your thigh
Remember?
she screamed
THANK HEAVEN
for
stupidstupidstupid
little angels
Like you, your father
is just another of
God's dirty jokes

POLACKS AND PRE-VERTS

and isn't it hysterical?
the gap-toothed woman howls
over the tiresome commotion
of boys, beer, bras and boobs
I Know Why You Came Here
he says and buys you a drink
but her old hands and twisted face bring out
the sting
the jerking
the handfuls of hair
and suddenly you're eight ducking
just out of reach

HEAVING

memories at him a man
with compassion who leaves with something
from Wild Kingdom, you wonder
Is he going to take her home?
rub her face
in the cracks
of cool callousness
to his buddies
like sometimes they throw you a bone

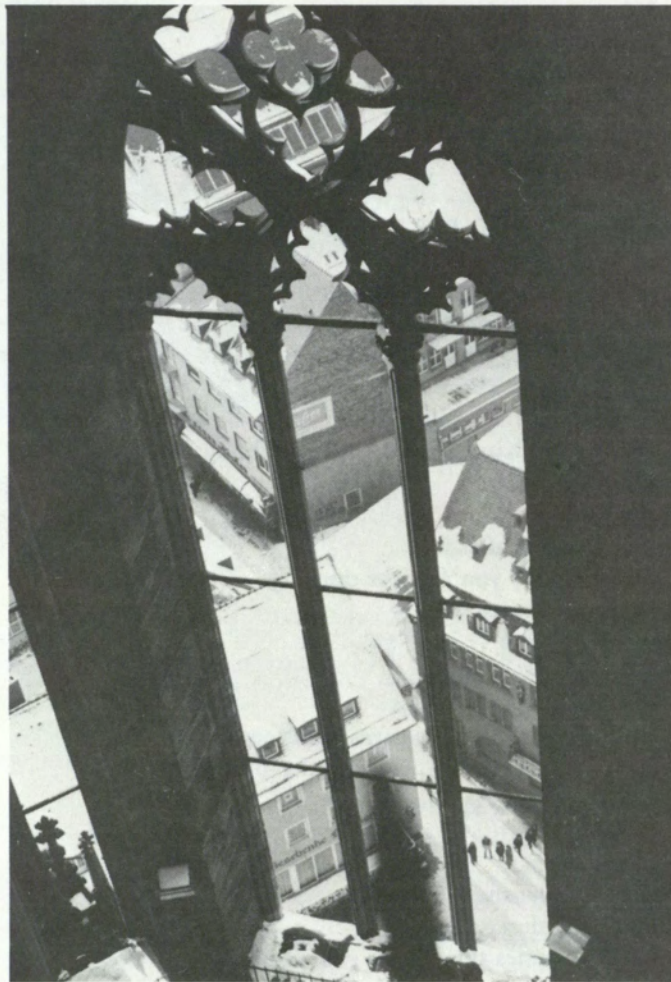
DON'T YOU GET IT

into your head
to be high-falutin
this is

LIFE

there's no special treatment for angels
and no time to waste
when you're meeting a
deadline

Sue McNaughton



Chanelle McMillan

Traveler's Words

The whites of eyes rise from the dark
men's faces when they stare
at this table. My sangria tastes like licorice,
black and sweet. Each night
the locals speak the few phrases
they know to women they've never seen
before. Always hopeful, "Why you not smile?"

We meet at the Oasis Bar in Sagres,
listening for voices we understand.
You sell books for beers,
one diversion for another.
We play gin rummy and hearts,
your words escaping through a blue haze
of cigarette smoke.

In Barcelona, you managed with lyrics
by the Beatles and sign language.
"Everyone understands a little," you say.
Using English with the Portuguese,
you spit out one syllable at a time,
like something hard and round.
By summer solstice, you will be at Stonehenge
to watch the sun return and rest.

I imagine that a child trimmed Portugal
like pink putty, leaving a ragged lace
for coast, a rocky lion and whale
in the water—reasons to name
the beaches.

By midnight, words foggy, you describe
the nightmare of returning
to a job in Canada.
Three hundred feet below us,
the water speaks its own raspy language.

Rene Steinke

Notes on Contributors

- Eric Appleton, Junior Science Writing major, Chicago, IL
Samantha Arnold, Junior History major, Omaha, NE
Jennifer Barricklow, Junior English major, Indianapolis, IN
Laura Blair, Senior English major, Elmhurst, IL
Sue Buss, Senior Social Work major, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
Sara Dorow, Senior East-Asian Studies major, Seoul, Korea
Kathrin Eimer, Sophomore Psychology major, Springfield, OH
Rikard Eischen, Junior Theology major, Skokie, IL
Paul Fackler, Junior English major, St. Louis, MO
Barb Gade, Senior Graphic Communications major, Oshkosh, WI
Debra Griswold, Junior Computer Science major, Lincoln, NE
Christine Grusak, Junior English major, Portage, IN
William Lemmons, Junior Art major, Valparaiso, IN
Krista Lewis, Junior Art major, Fort Wayne, IN
Mary Maronde, Senior American Studies major, Columbia Heights, MN
Brian McGovern, Senior Journalism major, Co Club of Miami, FL
Chanelle McMillan, Senior Latin major, Elmhurst, IL
Sue McNaughton, Senior Journalism major, Niagara Falls, NY
Kathleen Mullen, 9th year English Department Faculty Member, New Orleans, LA
Terri Muth, 3rd year Law Student, St. Joseph, MI
Lois Reiner, 1952 graduate of Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN
Amy Richter, Junior Classics major, Racine, WI
Bill Rohde, Sophomore English major, Appleton, WI
Linda Starr, Senior Communications major, Navoo, IL
Rene Steinke, Senior English major, Dallas, TX
Matthew Voortman, Freshman Exploratory major, LaGrange, IL
Venice Williams, Sophomore Theology major, Pittsburgh, PA
-

WORDFEST LITERARY PRIZES

\$50 EACH

Wordfest and the English Department are pleased to announce guidelines for the 1985-86 Wordfest literary prizes in poetry, fiction, and non-fiction prose.

1. Entries should be of substantial length:
 - A. A single poem of at least fourteen lines or a group of poems.
 - B. A short-story of at least 1000 words.
 - C. Non-fiction prose of at least 1000 words.
2. Entries should be typed, double-spaced, with author's name on each page. Author's name, address and phone number should appear on title page.
3. Entries should be sent to Prof. Edward Byrne, English Department.
4. Winners will be announced at the Spring open reading sponsored by Wordfest. All contestants will be invited to participate in the open reading.
5. A 50\$ prize will be awarded in each category. However, should the judges decide no entry outstanding in a particular genre, no prize will be given in that category.
6. No limit to number of entries from each contestant. Further information may be obtained from Prof. Byrne at 5278.

1000

1000

