
EDITORS' FOREWORD

We are excited to present the Winter 2009 issue of *Euphony*, which offers the poetry and prose of well-travelled authors from across the country and around the world. This diversity of origin is reflected in the pieces themselves, some of which are exemplars of finely crafted traditional form while others strive to push the boundaries of their respective genres. Readers will travel on subway cars and cross-country tour buses, through childhood memories and hedonistic fantasies; we hope you will notice the lively tempo which these authors have managed to capture. We are also very happy to include the poetry of Charles Umeano, whose poem, "The Faithful," was a runner-up in our poetry and prose contest last year.

This Fall marked the debut of Euphony's new website: euphonyjournal.com. All of our issues, including our now out-of-print Spring 2008 edition, will now be made available online, greatly increasing the scope of our distribution to far beyond the Hyde Park area. Furthermore, we will be adding exclusive online content throughout the Winter, allowing us to share fine poetry, fiction, and articles which our limited printing could not accommodate. Our website also provides our complete submissions guidelines and information on joining our staff, so we hope you visit soon.

THE EDITORS

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Euphony is a non-profit literary journal produced biannually at the University of Chicago. We are dedicated to publishing the finest work by writers and artists both accomplished and aspiring. We publish a variety of works including poetry, fiction, drama, essays, criticism, and translations. Visit our website for more information.

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Rynn Williams

Median Strip

The arguments were veins in marble,
brocade symphonics, pool halls of thugs.
Beaten through to pink, past pink
to flesh where no blood was.

The arguments were red then green
then red as Eighth Avenue, needled
with crunch and whine: Sanitation
cruising one curb to the next

like dogs,
like wire-mesh trash cans slung up
and over and gnashed back down
to arguments, teeth, guttered stubs.

Charles Umeano

runner-up in last spring's uchiagospeak poetry reading contest

The Faithful

Gorgeous cries—forgetting that careless men
have drilled unfortunate holes in our street,
breaching both grid and God's patterns, again;
this break confounds us as we retreat
back home.

For its part, the willful wind shakes,
like a British nanny, the cache green
shoulders of dandelion, planting flakes
of warm snow that pardons the fall to feign
summer virtue.

Tempted, my loose hands search
for hers in this sudden tempest of hands
pathetically seeking out the wrong church
bodies to break bread with and sue demands
of,

but troubled Gorgeous has had enough—
“What’s in the air that causes all this fluff!”

Truck Noises

for Tariq

Listen to those carted Muslim boys cry
out like banyan trees wrested from the earth.
You jinxed gamblers who still cast the die

& elect sweet Lady Luck despite her guy
of steel compressed into a stained T-shirt:
listen to those carted Muslim boys cry.

Examine the topography (gone awry)
of this truck's distended, elephant girth.
With your precise measurements cast the die

for the crimsoned garments of these three dry
virgins promised exclusion from the hearth.
Listen to those carted Muslim boys cry!

We are at a funeral where goods vie
to be exhumed from waterfalls of dirt.
To whom should we send tears? We cast the die

assured that a facelift will mollify
Lady Luck & she will will what we assert.
Listen to those carted Muslim boys cry,
Lady, & bless me now as I cast the die.

Janelle Adsit

Grown

we choose familiar
places for goodbye
places with trees,
twigs hardly
fastened,
and geese droppings
like paste beneath us
which we avoid
so as not to stay
or take
the place with us.
the bed
of water holds
the green—only
green—so not even
our reflections
can remind us.

John Hart

Appreciation in G-Major

Were you surprised to find the other farm hands
barely speaking in the Kansas garden, over the hush
of uprooted weeds? Your voice, rusty as the combine
scarcely used all year, ruined the silence. Grandfather,

turn back to the pasture,
where the shades of dawn fade over a house sparrow
waiting to be found. At the track, the horses
are ready to lose again. A panicked dusk
will linger all evening above the dusty furrows.

Grandfather, it's 1982.

Already this September, the frost
has chilled away the birds. The telephone wires
remain silent. The thickets have returned to their land.
Inside your house, not a word is said,
but the gold fish on top of the console television
splash once or twice at the silence.

Teresa Sutton

Elegy for Paul

I

Paul is absent from school—so is his best friend.
Sister Assumpta lectures on Greek myths, but

an announcement interrupts her exaltation of
Daedalus, simplified for our fifth grade ears.

The announcement is confusing. There's no body.
The two of them are probably playing hooky.

Online, I try to find his 1970 obituary or
memorial page, but nothing's there. I google

whirlpools and reservoirs, but I come up empty—
no one believes either needs an explanation.

II

He sits in an embrace of rocks, a child's chair,
beside the reservoir, toils over a pair of wings.

Feathers he sticks onto a skeleton of balsa wood with
a hot glue gun, but glue guns were not invented yet.

Before he runs, flaps the wings, I watch him climb
high to an outcrop, a spot the boys use for high dives.

I sit among garlic mustard, separated from him by
the deepest part of the stream that feeds the reservoir.

Right after I witness the moment that he hangs in air
furiously flapping, right after the plunge swallows him,

a team of Gadwells peck at broken bits of wood and
feathers with black bills, peep under the surface.

III

In the same stone seat, he leans back, a bottle
Of whiskey in one hand, pills in the other, both empty.

This time I sit in sunk cabbage, scream at him to stop.
He can't hear me—I am in school in the last row.

IV

Next time when I see him fill his pockets with rocks,
circle the reservoir, Sister Assumpta calls on me.

I answer incorrectly because I'm fifty years old—
I'm not paying attention to her—I'm thinking of him.

V

His tall friend with black hair and freckles sits beside
me, eyes studying the floor tiles, cheeks aflame.

I hear him translate the word ordinance into Latin—
edictum, scitus, drectum, sanction—I hear him

think about obedience, that he should have tried to
dive under more times than he did—should have cut

a branch from the chestnut tree to reach for him,
but they're extinct now—should have heeded

the no swimming sign, should have called for help
on his cell phone, but it wasn't invented yet.

VI

I am again on the stream's far side. He sits halfway
in shade, studies a gun, looks at it from all angles.

The principal makes an announcement over the PA:
the reservoir has a whirlpool, the police are dragging it.

He is a merman with purple, blue, gray, green skin,
the colors of the rainbow trout that swim in the reservoir.

Gadwells keep watch, wait for him to surface.

Christopher Barnes

Postmark

On second-class stamps
Paper-castle margins flake
And midmost the queen's
A fossil-punch blueprint.
Swash your tongue in slaver,
Dribble on sticky gum,
Thrust a stop-at-nothing thumbprint,
Squash that haughty nose.
I'm due a letter.

John Johnson

Mea Lithos

My wife said she would bring me

I slept some more

Mr. Post, Jim, was smaller
than my dad, and had a goofy streak:
Barney Rubble to my dad's Fred

About the age I am,
for a younger woman

Dark hair like Wilma, equally unable
to deliver torrid, soul-quenching sex

Long gone while the cancer stayed
Wilma came back, nursing him
he didn't die alone

His twin brother died at the same time.

a plate of salad, and some eggs.
She had laid them out beautifully for me.

Richard Bailey

Poem

for Waylon Jennings

“When I say ‘Holy’ I don’t mean, necessarily,
the Old Time Pow’r of the Southern Hymnal.
I take a knee, put my hand flat to the grass,
press the earth and think, Holy.”

—Nipper Davis,

who graced our bus with talk through the years
about “the cradle of humanity”
and made the road seem less heathen.

And Red Keepers, folklore DJ,
encyclopedia of bluegrass pickers and raconteurs,
poking his whisky-mesmered head
through curtains into sex and confessions,
saying, “Y’all find Peace in the Valley?”

They each took port not long after a young hand
went overboard and got devoured by the demon.
He froze his lungs on Freon, found the next morning
draped over the rickety refrigerator he’d used for a bong.

Nipper left to a fish fry in his honor,
a crown of corn stalks, a baptism of three girls
who proceeded to kick off their cut-offs
and invited us all to jump in.

Red just turned loose one night
at a fuel stop, entered the road for himself
as he’d always hinted.

His reflections still mark the border zone of my mystical
Understanding:
the way hymns speak of the invisible taking shape in this world,
and old field songs a cope to this unfinished side
of the kingdom.

How bluesmen have this vision too,
only not of grace, but the shadow of that image:
a crooked figure stirring through the river bottom,
a sharp-eyed man waiting at the cross-roads.

On a winter morning just before the sun can find us,
we hear Red spinning heartbreakers
on a static-haunted channel in Oklahoma.

I said, "Red, was it for the demon chasing this bus you got off?"
He said, "I found a little cranny off the highway
so I wouldn't have to hear its claws,
but every evening its song still stings the bone of my rib."

Anabasis

A few grays pass over like ocean swells,
and now comes a darker mass—horizon
advancing like the horizon of a prairie fire,
small islands reconnoiter and expand.

Strange, there is no wind.

Outside my patio is a vacant lot full of palm trees
and vague elements of construction.

It looks like a lizard was plastered over
with stucco on my patio wall. The strange hump
beside my glass of two fizzing tablets

I hope will dull the star points of pain
in my neck and at my lumbar.

At the airport you could see the thousand bolts
sticking out of the floor where the seats had been removed.

The loudspeaker asked us all to wait in stress positions.

From a wicker chair I watch evening make event with the ocean
and order frequently from the bar under the palapa.

A man my age wears a t-shirt saying SUPERMAX—
Maximilian, I assume—and I say, Max,
may I offer you a fine cigar?

He tells me he builds super-maximum security prisons,
contracts them, goes all over the world,
even Guantanamo. His name is Roy.

I select two cigars and pass a wares table,
finding Chinese handcuffs as a joke for my friend.

He says twenty-three-hour lockdown in a pair of these
will spill intrigue from even the most mysterious of prisoners.

He lights his cigar with one match (takes me four) and glosses
the CNN loop. The news is bad. We smoke.

The water laps gently at the shore.

I'm overheated and this suitcase is ridiculous,
an anchor of vanity in a forced march, exodus
on a narrow road along a canal.

No sign of the locals anywhere—

I imagine a sophisticated system of cenotes,
pulleys and zip-lines, and very secretly
they've all gotten a hundred miles away from here.
Everybody's vacation clothes are wretched.
Clouds darken us, then pass away.
Rain pours out of pure sunlight.
We are deprived of anything to expect,
like the mind games endured at the airport.

Refugees charge from the trees in all directions
(skinned knees shining through cargo pants,
laptop cases reinforced by palm fronds)
thirsty for the shelter of temple ruins.
The lurking places are small because the ancients were small
and the tall ex-tourists jam themselves in.
This is the temple of the rainbow, the mother of God,
but I demand a better end than just some place to huddle.
Supermax has radicalized a group to go back into the jungle
and I'll take part. My phone is missing. My beach shoes
are maimed, held to my feet with vines. Somebody here
swiped my Vicodin and my flashlight.

We've come to the middle of the country
and I'm being lowered into a cenote
with a torch tied round my head.
This is a high honor. Only a few of us are thought to be safe here.
I am at Roncesvalles! I am with Roland!
Darkness closes above me,
but in the morning I expect to see the lip of the cenote and the sky,
like something I remember from James Turrell.
Fascinating I should think about culture,
dangling, here, in the heart of hiddenness.
Aloft, I'm neither pursued or pleaded to,
and the newness is kind of a wild, soaring experience.

Steven Karl

After the reading/ Before the morning

Easy to be hypocrite/ spilling/ of lies like/ thick hippos— so (un)poetic
to confess/ to open/ to her/ your loving/ of money/ your desire to
make/ lotsa money/ despite/

Better/ to tell her/ of the night/ Better/ to tell her/ of poets/ BKS &
E.B./ there were/ the girls/ Sandy/ Julia/ Audrey/ Monica/ Eunice/
oh yes & James/ yakking with Brian/ Jared doing dishes/ me wiping
counters/ then/ lights out/ departures/ waiting for trains/ you again/
talking of money again/ a twinkling eye (i)/ but damn/ if the ripped
bag/ didn't betray/ bottle/ wine/ felled/ went shattering/ all over/
platform of /Jay street/ Borough hall/ next stop Bergen/

There were people/ just getting off/ of work/ & people just going/
into work/ & people anxious/ to get home/ to rush/ into small hours/
between work/ & kids/ laughing/ hollering/ feeling forever/ despite
rapping/ of violent demises/

You were there/ feeling fuzzy-headed/ & fine/ so so fine/ that you
smiled thinking/ there will be other days/ as this night/ began yawning/
its way into morning/ there will be money/ & wine/ & more fuzzy-
headedness/ So go ahead/ penniless dreamer/ put the headphones
back on/ you lackadaisical liar/ you/ tired eyes/ tune it/ all out/ let
the music/ of in between/ filter in/

Robin Kish

Mirror

You can do it in a bathroom, curtains drawn, lights out. Any room where there's a mirror. Some recommend the use of candles, but the best results can only be achieved in total darkness. Make sure the glass is clean. You don't want to mistake dust or scratches for anything more than what they are. Say the name three times, five times, seven times: Bloody Mary, Mary Worth, Mary Jane. Variations of Mary and Bloody are best. Repeat the name. Tell the ghost in the mirror you believe in her. Tell her to Come out! Spin thirteen times. Stand perfectly still. Maybe she'll appear. Maybe she'll claw out your eyes. Maybe she'll take you back into the mirror with her. Don't stand too close. If your breath fogs the glass, you might fall victim to an illusion. This happened once to Laney-Jane and she came squealing from the girls' second floor bathroom. Upon further investigation, we discovered that she'd been frightened by nothing more than a patch of her own breath.

There were three of us then, the start of fourth grade: Sadie, Laney-Jane, and me, just Jane, but the others called me Kate, short for Katherine, which Sadie had baptized me in her parents' kitchen sink. There could only be one Jane in the group. I'd wanted to be Medea or Athena or Daphne, something exotic and beautiful and straight from mythology. "They're pagan," Sadie explained, dunking my head into the lukewarm water, which tasted faintly of dish cleanser. "Why would you want to be a pagan? Saints live forever in the glory of heaven." One counts, two counts, three counts, and I was Katherine, after the saint who was beheaded when the wheel couldn't break her. Sadie was Catholic, and knew nothing about mythology: Only the name of a saint would do.

Sadie was the kind of girl most kids said was bossy, but as a fourth grader I was forever in her debt. The year before, I'd been the third grade outcast, the girl who wore dresses with dogs' faces on the hems and plaid skirts in winter when everyone else wore jeans. If you stood too close you'd get Jane Germs. Not a clever taunt, but it caught on and the long and short of it was that most days I just wanted to die. But fourth grade came, I got new clothes and was placed in Ms. Arnold's class where one day, between phonics and math, Sadie tapped my shoulder and said, "Aren't you that weird girl?" When I turned around, expecting the worse from her, she was smiling, like being weird was a good thing and for the first time, I believed it was. Sadie was the girl who always talked during class,

or passed notes, and when Ms. Arnold looked her way she would simply smirk. She didn't try to be good. She didn't even pretend. She knew, most of the time, that the worst that could happen was she'd get sent to the hall for ten minutes. Kids didn't like her, exactly, but she knew how to amuse them. They would smile with her as she marched from her desk for the door, Ms. Arnold flashing her best teachers' glare that did nothing to make Sadie even feel the faintest hint of guilt. Once, even, she'd gotten up in the middle of reading group, marched over to where I sat and yanked my hair so hard a few brown strands, no larger than spiders' string, were left dangling from her fingers. I yelped, and we were both sent to the hall, since Ms. Arnold hadn't seen anything and didn't want to punish the wrong person.

"This is for your own good," Sadie informed me. "Now people won't think you're some suck up." We spent the rest of our ten minutes giggling about people in our class whom we didn't like.

There were many games, as Sadie liked to call them, all of which she'd read about in the books she'd collected from the library. It started with Laney-Jane's Ouija board, which Laney-Jane said she'd used to contact her dead grandmother, although Sadie swore anything store-bought could never really work. We moved on to dream-reading, crystal balls (my mother's glass paper weight), palmistry (I was going to die a horrible, horrible death). We practiced levitating Laney-Jane, who never lifted light as a feather, stiff as a board from our fingers (although once her eyelids did turn very purple). We snuck out at sleepovers to visit the Orthodox cemetery near the school, with its tri-crossed crucifixes and oval pictures of the dead on their headstones, stiff as cardboard in their gray, old-fashioned clothes. We wore dimpled masks which we'd made from construction paper to scare demons, stuck knives in the hard ground beneath the graves and once, even, Sadie broke into the mausoleum and remained there until Laney-Jane and I thought for sure she'd been sucked inside the slate-cold walls by some avenging ghost. Then she'd leapt out, wearing one of the grimacing masks, and scared us half to death.

But nothing could top the mirror game. We kept a notebook filled with our findings, who and what, when and where: *Laney-Jane, school bathroom, patch of breath; Kate, bathroom, Sadie's house, shadow behind her left shoulder.* We would ask kids in our class: had they played the game? what had they seen? what methods did they use to call the ghost? It was a weird, but virtually everyone had a story. The most popular books at the library were scary story collections and young adult spook fests, on stock for the sixth graders. We were that age where anything was possible, even if you didn't believe in it. But even so, we could rule out tall tales immediately: if anyone claimed to have actually seen the ghost, we knew they were lying

simply by the fact that they were still alive.

There was only one person who ever believed she had seen the ghost. We found her in class one November morning, sitting in one of the front row desks that no one wanted to be assigned. Her name was Althea Tillman and she came to us, Ms. Arnold explained, from a wonderful place called New Orleans. This was a city in Louisiana, and what river ran through Louisiana? Someone answered *Mississippi* and Althea looked blankly at the class, trying to decide how all this related to her. She was a pale girl, with cheekbones as flat as a blackboard and the tiniest of noses, making her look like she had no real face at all. Her eyes were bright and green, livelier than her face would have suggested. That first day, she looked like any normal ten-year-old in jeans and a tee shirt, except for a thick rope of beads, black as beetles, looped thrice around her small neck—or something like this. Althea was never seen without some gaudy piece of costume jewelry, or a funny hat or a silk scarf of the most god-awful color, like pieces from a grandmother's closet. When Ms. Arnold asked the class to give Althea a warm Colby Elementary welcome, she fingered nervously at the beads, causing them to clatter together against her fingers. A few of the kids giggled. Althea raised her hand in what should have been a wave, but instead her palm hung in the air, perfectly still.

After school, Sadie and Laney-Jane came to my house with a large book titled simply *New Orleans*. We learned that it had been the first capital of Louisiana, and that cemeteries were above ground because the city was below sea level; Mardi Gras, at the height of tourist season, was a festival designed to ward off evil spirits; it was famous for its jazz, Creole cooking, hoodoo cults (“Voodoo,” Sadie explained. “It’s a typo.”), and a collection of haunted houses, making it one of Stateside Heritage Series’ top twenty spookiest places in the world.

The next day, we found Althea outside, waiting under the canopy at the bus turnaround. “We know all about where you’re from,” Sadie said, holding the book in front of her for Althea to see. “Why’d you move here?”

“My dad lives here,” she answered.

“We’re going to Kate’s house after dinner. You wanna come?”

She did. At exactly five minutes to six, she was on the doorstep. She wore a fuzzy purple hat that was too big, lace gloves, and a silk scarf with fat purple roses snaked around her neck. In her oversized womens’ purse, she had a miniature photo album with the word *Love* etched in gold cursive across its creamy cover. Inside were pictures of ivy-covered buildings, old-fashioned balconies as swirling as the lacing on cakes, broken slate sidewalks, the kind I’d seen in the lakeside towns in summer. “That’s

my mom and me,” Althea said, pointing to a picture of one such balcony. The paint had peeled from the side of the house, but it still looked pretty. Althea and her mom were posed on the porch, waving at the camera. Her mother had Althea’s same flat cheeks and wild butterscotch curls, and in every picture wore flowing peasants’ dresses and silk-like scarves, large, loopy earrings and bracelets up and down her arms, her very own percussion band. Jeans aside, there was no doubt Althea was her mother in training. Only she hadn’t achieved a natural elegance yet, was still just a girl playing dress-up.

“Is that a ghost?” Sadie asked, indicating a smudge on the lower corner of the photograph.

“It’s a thumbprint,” Althea said.

“It looks like a ghost.” Sadie took the album and held it in the air above her head, like a photographer might. “If you see any weird marks in a photo, that means there’s a ghost in it.”

“I don’t have any of those. Just thumbs.”

“Have you ever been to a cemetery at night?” Laney-Jane asked.

Althea shook her head.

“We have,” said Sadie. “I broke into a mausoleum.”

“That would be scary.”

“It was scary,” I added.

From across the square we’d formed, Sadie scowled. “I was the one who went in there. Not you.”

I scowled back. I picked up a mask from the floor, one of the grotesques we’d worn to the cemetery. The mouth, nothing more than a round O cut from the paper, leered back. I think it was one of the ones I’d made. I was disappointed to see I’d forgotten to give her lips. Around me, the others chattered excitedly, Althea beginning to catch on.

“You know witchcraft?” Sadie asked.

“Everyone in New Orleans knows witchcraft. See this scarf?” Althea pulled at the ends so they dangled and danced in her hands. “It’s hexed. The last woman who wore it died.”

From where I sat, I could see the tag, dangling from one end of the scarf. There was a name sewn in dark thread: D. Tillman.

“It was your mom’s,” I said.

Althea looked at me and scrunched up her face, so her eyes disappeared into the creases formed by her brows. “My mom’s dead.”

Sadie’s eyes swelled, fat as worms. “Was it the hex?”

“She had cancer. Anyway, it wasn’t her who died. It was this other woman.”

“It’s too long,” I said. “The scarf.”

Althea looked at the scarf, still in her hands. “I know. But I like it.”

The others giggled. “Ignore Kate,” Sadie said. “She’s cranky today.”

“I am not.”

Althea dropped the scarf and turned towards me. “I thought your name was Jane?”

“We call her Kate.”

“And I’m not cranky.”

I threw the mask down and snatched the album from where it lay on the floor. There were Althea and her mom at a lake, in swim suits. There they were baking cookies. (Even while baking, her mother had been an impeccable dresser.) There they were surrounded by women in broom skirts and men in short-sleeved button-downs, waving from a picnic table. Then there were just those of her mom: Her mom, reading; her mom, staring out the patio door; her mom, doing dishes, the light from the window making her hair glow, a halo of burnt gold. All in all, only a few thumb prints, and certainly no ghosts.

“Have you ever played the game?” Sadie asked. “Bloody Mary?”

Althea shook her head. Sadie looked at me—I was glad it was me, not Laney-Jane—and smiled.

“Everyone knows the game,” I said.

“It’s only the best ever! Mary was this girl who lived back in the 1800’s or something, and she was so pretty all the other girls hated her. So these other girls invited her over to play and when Mary got there, they scratched her all up so she was hideous. She died, and if you look in a mirror and say her name three...”

“Or five,” I added.

“...times, she comes out of the mirror and scratches you.”

“Oh.” Althea looked at Sadie, and then me and finally Laney-Jane, who just nodded. “Why would you want to play that?”

We looked at each other. No one had ever asked before. You just played. Finally, it was Sadie who said, “Well you aren’t supposed to let her scratch you. You jump out of the way first. We’ll show you.”

We marched to the bathroom, Laney-Jane first, me last with the notebook (I was the secretary!). Laney-Jane always went first, since she spooked easily, and if you gave her time to think things over there was always the chance she would chicken out. Sadie went second, and I was usually third, the order we always went in. But when Sadie emerged, having reported saying the name thirteen times and seeing a flash of light, like a camera flash (according to our research, Sadie was prone to seeing flashes of light, like camera flashes), and I started for the bathroom, she blocked the way.

“Let her go.”

And she looked to Althea, still standing near my parents’ door. Althea

looked absolutely pale.

“It’s okay,” said Laney-Jane, “nothing will happen.”

“Just go in there, and tell us what you see.” This was Sadie.

Althea did. She came out a few minutes later, clearly disappointed.

“Nothing,” she said. Not even so much as a camera flash. “I’m sorry.”

She actually thought we were upset. Laney-Jane patted her shoulder and Sadie said something about it never working the first time. I didn’t remember seeing anything the first time, either. No one had patted my shoulder.

“This is stupid,” I said, and went into the bathroom. I locked the door and stood there in the almost total darkness, listening as someone whispered on the other side of the door. Someone else giggled. There was a towel pinned to the blind, which Laney-Jane must have put up, to keep out any excess light. I liked having a fresh start. I removed the towel, and pinned it up a second time. I turned on the lights before turning them off again. When I looked in the mirror, all I could see was the ghost of me: I smiled, but when I did, all my teeth shown, top and bottom mashed together, ready to bite.

“Bloody Mary,” I said. “Bloody Mary. Bloody Mary.”

Nothing happened. Nothing ever happened. I tried with Mary Worth. Mary Jane. Bloody before both these alternate names. I tried with Queen Mary I, the real Bloody Mary, who burned Protestants at the stake. She’d died of cancer, too.

I thought of Althea, standing in the hall in her long silk scarf and stupid hat, a skinned rabbit on her head. I wasn’t good with new people. I wasn’t outgoing and unafraid, like Sadie, or gentle, like Laney-Jane. I, too, was the quiet girl, the one who would always say something stupid if she dared open her mouth. I never knew what bands were hot, what clothing wasn’t, or what stores to hang out at and in what malls. It didn’t help that I’d seen something of my former self in Althea—her outrageous accessories, the way people had giggled when she’d snatched at her beads. How maybe she’d thought she’d looked nice.

“Diane Tillman,” I said. “Darlene Tillman. Daphne Tillman.”

But I must have had the wrong D., because no one came.

I still have the notebook. It was three quarters of the way full when we stopped the game. In it, you can trace our findings: Laney-Jane’s breath, Sadie’s flashes, my shadows. Ghosts of the things we were supposed to see, but never did.

Althea wasn’t with us long, but her findings are there, too. For the most part, they are much the same. She had learned how to make every trick of her eyes into just a little more. But unlike the rest of us, she was

disappointed with these nothings. They weren't significant to her the way they were to the rest of us. They were only beginnings, the winking eye that vanishes before you know it's even there. Althea would spend most of her time in class pouring through the notebook, searching for rituals we hadn't tried, patterns we hadn't seen. She kept the notebook while she was with us, since it was agreed that Althea was far more interested in the findings than I would ever be. This wasn't true, but we'd voted on this: three to one, I lost.

Then there was the first incident.

We were at school, outside the upstairs bathroom. Laney-Jane was inside and Sadie was lazed against the door, propping it shut. Laney-Jane had been more jittering than usual, and we couldn't risk the possibility that she would bolt too soon. Althea and I were standing around her, like we always did. Althea wore a long, silver necklace with a miniature perfume bottle as a charm and a red scarf belted around her tiny waist. One end dragged longer than the other; every now and then, she stuck it to her teeth, as if it were something to gnaw. It was in imitation of Sadie, who was doing the same with the strings of her hoodie.

"Althea," she said, not bothering to remove the string. It sat there, damp and purple, bobbing on her lips. "It's really an odd name."

"What's wrong with it?"

(I'd asked the same thing, only substitute Jane for Althea. Wouldn't it be easier just to call Laney-Jane Laney or just LJ? The answer: No.)

"It's pretty old-sounding," Sadie said. "Was it your grandmother's name?"

"It's my mother's. Althea's her middle name."

Sadie nodded thoughtfully, expecting as much. "Its bad luck to be named after someone who's dead."

"She wasn't dead when she named me."

Althea wasn't challenging Sadie, exactly. She was simply stating a fact. Her mom had been alive once. Obviously.

"What about Margaret?" Sadie asked. "It's still old-sounding, but we can call you Maggie."

Althea looked to the scarf, as if her mother might have been inside, and ready to give advice on the whole matter. "I'm not sure I like it."

"Of course you like it. Who doesn't like Maggie?"

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

Sadie looked to me, and rolled her eyes. "You don't like anything."

I do, I wanted to add, but Laney-Jane knocked to be let out. Sadie went second, followed by Althea, the usual rotation since she'd joined our group. Needless to say, I didn't like this development. But we had to make Althea feel welcome, didn't we? I understood, of course.

Once she was inside the bathroom, we could hear her calling the name in a voice somewhere between a chant and a song. Not quite the monotone we usually used, but not melodious, either. She must have spoke-sang the name over a dozen times, and then over a dozen more. Another fifteen, without pause. Sadie looked at the place where her watch would have been, only she wasn't wearing one. "I like the name Maggie," I whispered, just to let her know I'd meant no harm. "I just don't think Althea *is* a Maggie."

Sadie shushed me and pressed her ear to the door, in time for Althea to let out one final, determined "Mary." No unflattering adjective, just the name, as if she were calling a real girl.

Then Althea screamed. She came crashing through the door so fast she sent Sadie wobbling backwards on her bum, some feet from the door. For an instant, while Sadie sat stunned and Althea flew for the wall and Laney-Jane just stood there, watching them both, the door hung open, just enough for me to see inside. The lights were still out, but I could see right into the mirror. There was a very white face, quick as a shadow which, when you turn your head for just one second, disappears.

This wasn't even the strangest thing: the face, from what I could see, looked just like my own. Only it wasn't. My reflection had been floating, just as white, behind it.

Althea sat scrunched up against the wall, her face so pale it could have been transparent. The collar of her shirt had stretched over the ridge of her bone, where the chain of her lavalier had gathered, a silver pool in the crevice of skin. Her eyes were damp; they were looking right at me.

"You saw her," she said.

"Saw what?" Sadie turned to me, still on her bum, blue eyes flashing from behind a curtain of deer-colored hair. My own hands, I suddenly noticed, were shaking. So was Sadie's entire body, too small to contain her excitement. Two teachers were racing towards us, attracted by Althea's screams. Their students pooled into the hall, watching, but stayed near the classrooms. Althea didn't notice this. She kept her eyes trained on me, waiting.

"Jane, tell them you saw her," she said.

"Saw who?" Sadie, who'd leapt to her feet, was almost screaming. She whirled from me to Althea, trying to decide who was more interesting.

"The ghost."

Sadie went quiet for once. This wasn't a camera flash. Even Sadie, I thought, couldn't believe this one. (As usual, I was wrong.) The teachers, who by this time knelt on either side of Althea, looked to each other. One tried coaxing her to her feet, but Althea twisted her legs beneath her so that she was on all fours. The scarf dragged, pinned beneath her knees.

“Tell them, Jane. We saw Mary.”

They were looking at me now: Sadie, Laney-Jane, the teachers, growing more concerned by the second. Even their students’ necks twisted like birds’ in my direction. They were older kids, fifth or sixth graders, so I wouldn’t have known many of them, but that didn’t matter. A few were whispering. It’s silly, I know, but I swear I heard someone say germs.

“I didn’t see anything,” I said.

I could have been honest. Sometimes, I’d like to think I had been, if only to convince myself that I had at least tried to be nice. But I knew better. I watched Althea slowly shrink into the wall, as if she were deflating. I was too frightened to hate her. *I’m sorry*, I wanted to say, because I should have. But if I had said yes, we both would have been crazy together.

Eventually, Althea let the teachers escort her away for the clinic, a china doll guided between them which they were too afraid to touch. Everyone watched their slow retreat except Sadie, who stared at me from beneath her bangs, almost expressionless. Then, without saying a word, she ran after them.

It was Sadie, and not a hall of faceless fifth and sixth graders, who wasted no time in telling virtually everyone what had happened. Only she wasn’t malicious about it. Althea had seen the ghost! She’d actually seen it! For the week following the incident, when Althea’s father kept her home, Sadie was bursting to tell anyone who would listen. I had thought that this would have been the end of Althea, as far as my classmates—and virtually, the entire school—were concerned. But the older kids couldn’t have cared less, unless they had siblings in the fourth grade, and even then it was no big deal. The younger ones didn’t count, anyway, and people closer to our age were at least willing to listen, whether or not they believed the story. Hadn’t everyone played the game? Maybe our group had more than others, but hadn’t we conducted the interviews? Hadn’t we seen things all the time? Althea’s performance was just extra special. It was good for a few more scares. Pockets of girls from our class raided the second floor bathroom during our usual recess sessions. I heard Sadie complain about this loudly over lunch, giving out a dramatic sigh and addressing Laney-Jane in a voice loud enough for the whole table to hear. Yes, she was saying, to no one in particular, I was there, and you weren’t.

“You’d have to ask Althea,” she’d reply, whenever anyone asked what the ghost had looked like. “But it was definitely a girl with brown hair.”

She and Laney-Jane were at Althea’s house every afternoon that week. They took her homework and cupcakes Laney-Jane’s mother had made. I never went with them. They never asked. In denying the existence of our beloved Mary, I had committed the ultimate blasphemy. Sadie

refused to speak to me. I was permitted to sit at their lunch table, but no sooner would I set my tray down than Sadie would cluster her chair with Laney-Jane's, who in turn would flash only the weakest of smiles in my direction. They talked exclusively of Althea. Althea was looking so much better! Althea had loved the oatmeal chocolate chip cookies! Althea was ready to start the research again. It would be scary, but she knew how important it was.

The only time they were truly forced to interact with me was when Ms. Arnold asked the three of us to lunch with her in the room, just us girls. I had thought for a few glorious seconds that Ms. Arnold had noticed that I'd strayed from the group, and would try, with all the power at her command as our teacher, to make Sadie take me back. As it turned out, it was one of those lunch dates where teachers like Ms. Arnold could grill you on things they were simply too afraid to ask. She'd even gone so far as to squish her rather large body into one of the ten-year-old sized desks, so she could join in our circle. She had to stoop low to reach her sandwich, so far over the desk that she looked like a goose, bending to take water.

"I'm so glad you girls have been kind to Althea," she said, looking to each of us and no one in particular. Obviously, she hadn't even noticed that neither Sadie nor Laney-Jane had said so much as "boo" to me all week. "It's so difficult, being new. It's nice that she has the three of you."

"Thank you, Ms. Arnold."

"And your friend," Ms. Arnold pressed, "is she coping well?"

"Yes, Ms. Arnold."

And there it was, the reason we were there: "Has she ever—done anything like this before?"

At this point, she was looking directly at me. Sadie cleared her throat.

"No, she hasn't."

After lunch I told Sadie: I'd seen it. I'd seen the face.

Sadie stared at me, jaw slung down, one eyebrow arched into the crinkles of her forehead. "Do you expect me to believe that, Kate? Really, do you?"

But the day Althea returned, I found Sadie waiting for me after school near the front doors. "Althea wants to see you," she said, fidgeting with the sleeves of her purple hoodie. She didn't look at me, but at her own fists, balled inside the sleeves. Still, I was ecstatic. Sadie was talking to me again, and I hadn't said a word to her!

"Why?" I asked, trying to match her I-don't-care tone. I failed, and miserably.

Sadie shrugged, the whole thing beneath her interest. "She thinks you can help her. She said to meet her upstairs, by the bathroom."

"Help her with what?" By this time my voice was shaking. I tried

to sound cool, though. I stared Sadie straight in the eye until she stared back, twice as hard.

“She wants you to be there,” she said. “She thinks you saw *her*, too. I don’t think you did,” she added, in case there was any doubt. She might have still been mad but at least she was talking to me again. Why else would I fly upstairs, book bag thumping against the small of my back, to where Althea stood waiting at the bathroom door? I was more scared than I’d been at any point during our game, more scared even than I’d been in the cemetery, waiting for Sadie’s return from the mausoleum. But I was being given one more chance to return to the fold. I couldn’t ruin this opportunity. The last week had been the loneliest for me since I’d traded Jane Germs for Kate, and the prospect of going back, of spending the rest of my natural days friendless, was far worse than anything that could have flown from a mirror.

Althea was waiting outside the bathroom. She’d put on her beige coat and a low-brimmed white hat, pulled down almost to her eyes. Her curls stuck out from beneath the brim as if they had decided their best course was to simply grow around the wool.

“Hi, Jane.” She never lost her smile. The hat dropped a little lower, and she pushed it back to her hairline.

“It’s Kate.”

“Kate.” She let the word roll over her tongue, the last and only time she ever called me by that name. “Jane’s a nice name, I think. Did you see Sadie?”

I nodded.

“Are you scared?”

I shrugged, like Sadie had done. It was easier to fake it, now that Sadie was gone.

Her smile brightened, like one of the saints from Sadie’s book, gladly accepting her own gruesome fate. “Just stay here? Like before?”

She pushed open the bathroom door. In her beige coat, the same color as the walls, she was already a girl in the process of being erased. This wasn’t just another one of Sadie’s games; for Althea, this was real. I never thought to ask why it was so important to her, to see the ghost. I know now that she’d been so desperate when the rest of us settled for our shadows and flashes because it meant maybe, if she could contact that world she could gain entry, or help someone come out—that this was what she’d been too afraid to tell us, maybe because she knew it was only the faintest of possibilities, not even one at all. But I didn’t think of it this way then. I’d never thought to ask why the ghost was important to her. I only thought that this time, when she called to it, whatever it was would be ready. It would be ready, it would scratch her up or worse and I would

be there, the one witness, cradling her like an angel. That was how they would find us, a life-sized icon, a *pieta*. *See?* I would say, stroking Althea's brown curls so that everyone could see her wounds. *She came back. We alone were worthy.*

From inside the bathroom, I heard her chanting, soft as the trickle of water. Although terrified, I stepped closer, hand against the handle, foot against the wood, like I'd seen Sadie do so many times.

That was when the face appeared. It peered from behind my shoulder, a terrible grinning moon. The dimpled mouth was open, screeching. I screamed—and I hated myself for doing so, because I knew from the very first moment that this was no ghost.

The mask giggled.

“Look at you!” Sadie screeched from behind the mask, her own lips smiling from inside the lipless mouth. It wasn't even a real mask, like the ones we'd made; this was constructed from loose leaf, and crudely cute, the holes of the mouth and eyes uneven and jagged. This was how far I'd fallen: I was now a monster, something to be called up, frightened, laughed at. “You are so freaked out!”

“I am not,” I said.

Behind the mask, Sadie's smile grew. “Yes,” she said, “you are.”

“I'm not!”

Sadie tore off the mask. Her own face couldn't have been any less frightening. Her eyes were too wide, her cheeks the same color as the white construction paper, stretched across her thin bones. Or maybe this is how I choose to remember her. Maybe at the time, I just saw her as the girl who'd once been my friend.

“You were so freaked!” She shrieked, like this was the most wonderful thing in the world. She held the mask back to her face, wiggling it, her own hair bouncing wildly around it.

“I did not,” I said, weaker this time. Sadie continued wiggling the mask. She might have done so forever had Althea not opened the bathroom door. She looked puzzled, as if she couldn't quite grasp what had happened in the outside world since she'd been away.

“You frightened her,” she said. She wasn't upset. I thought she was talking to Sadie, but she didn't seem to notice Sadie was even there. She was looking at me, wondering how I had the nerve to scream when I knew very well that she'd been talking with ghosts. “Why did you frighten her?”

“She's there!” Sadie pushed past Althea and into the bathroom. Althea stepped back, startled, as if somehow the mask had rendered Sadie invisible until this moment. Then she followed Sadie inside, leaving me alone in the hall.

I went after them. The bathroom was dark except for one sad ray of sun streaming through the dust-strewn window. There were the stalls, doors stopped still mid-swing, the chipped porcelain sinks, the floor tiles mortared with mildew. The only thing eerie was the mirror, which had been polished cleaner than it had any right to be. Only our three faces stared back: Sadie, disappointed, Althea perplexed, and me, just there, behind them.

“She was really there?” Sadie held the mask up to her neck like a shield, just in case. The eyes on Althea’s reflection flickered to it.

“What’s that for?” she asked. But Sadie was still fascinated with the mirror. “Is that why you screamed?” Althea asked me, pointing at the mask. She didn’t need to turn around. There I was in the mirror, staring back, with absolutely no way of avoiding either of them. Althea’s eyes flickered back to Sadie. “Did you scare her?”

Sadie smiled, still looking at the mirror. “I didn’t *just* scare her. She almost had a heart attack!”

She smiled at Althea, the first time she’d bothered looking directly at either of us. I could do nothing but stand there, waiting for Althea to smile back, the greatest joke in the world. But she didn’t.

“That wasn’t funny,” Althea said. “It was mean.”

Suddenly, she didn’t sound so silly anymore. Whatever saint-like patience she’d mustered was slowly beginning to burn away. “You’re mean,” she said, becoming used to this idea. Her ghost was all but forgotten.

In the mirror, Sadie’s face went pink. “What did you say?”

“I said you’re mean.”

That was all it took, really, to end their friendship. Sadie whirled around, dropping both arms to her sides, ready to strike. She didn’t step any closer, though. “If I’m mean,” she said, “than you’re a little freak.”

Althea didn’t even wince, the way I would have. She stood there, glaring back at Sadie until finally it was Sadie who broke the gaze. She turned back to the mirror, and in it, I could see her mouth the word, *freak*. “No wonder your mom died,” she hissed. “She probably never loved you.”

At this, Althea’s lower lip quivered, but only for a moment. She took a step forward, not towards Sadie but towards me. She came so close I could touch her. “It’s okay, Jane,” she said, smiling at me as best she could under the circumstances. “We can try again.”

That was when I hit her.

It wasn’t a real punch. There was no fist, just my open hand swinging forward, a saber slash. And there, it struck Althea’s pink cheek, nails first. I could feel the skin peel beneath them. Althea stood there, stupid. She lifted her hand to her cheek to feel where the blood dots pimples to the

surface, the four lines growing red in the dim bathroom light. She opened her mouth—only it wasn't a scream that came out, only a gasp.

When you look in a mirror, what is it you see? Is it your own face or something else, something beneath the glass you can't recognize? Is it really beneath the glass or is it under your own skin?

But for now, I am still Kate. I push past Althea, still clutching her cheek, and scuttle as quickly as my book bag and winter coat will allow me to. I am at the cemetery before Sadie catches my arm. She doesn't say a thing. She begins to skip and I skip, too, our arms linked. We skip past the cemetery, where the crosses stick like bones from the snow, waving hello. Although it's near freezing, the sun feels warm and the sky is the deep blue that makes you hope the warmer days are finally coming. We stick our tongues out at the crossing guard when she tries to cross us at the light. We skip through the snow drifts and even though it leaks into my boots I don't care; I have more important things on my mind than just socks. I will need my notebook back; if we got started right away, I could still make up all the time I lost. I imagine that there couldn't have been many developments in my brief absence.

Ingrid Satelmajer

Breakfast at the All-Nude Revue

They were now serving breakfast at the All Nude Revue. Hash browns. Scrambled eggs. Bacon. Toast. Someone had pushed together three of those small round tables, covered them with a cloth, and set out industrial kitchen pans—spoons or tongs on both sides so two lines could go through at the same time.

The men paid Carl at the door. Five seventy-five for an all-inclusive buffet. Plates and silverware at the front. Condiments and coffee at the bar.

The kitchen had considered orange juice during the planning stage, listening for two days to arguments by Harold, the Revue's most regular patron. Citing the beverage's nutritional benefits for the dancers, Harold advanced the discussion to the question of fresh squeezed versus concentrate. But it turned out most people were happy with just coffee and the pitchers of water that started appearing after the first week. It was nice not to worry about the sticky mess juice always makes.

At first, the dancers ignored the food. The meal didn't start until an hour before closing, and even then, things looked pretty much the same from the stage. Vera, a veteran dancer, might catch a whiff of some smell when she walked out with eyes half closed. But the music played like something her kids blasted on her day off. So no way she heard the serving utensils above that din. Even when she bent over at the waist—her legs held in a stiff “V” (not working it, just working)—she never looked back into the audience. All the men held cafeteria-grade china on their laps, forks clinking as they cleared their plates.

That's why everyone was surprised when Clarissa stepped off the stage two weeks in, picked up a plate, and filled it high—heavy on the eggs and bacon.

“Looks like she's following Atkins,” one man whispered to a guy. Not so much his friend as his occasional pool table buddy when they happened to show up on the same night.

Clarissa just had finished the high-energy routine that always surprised the newest patrons. A rush on stage in rollerskates to Nirvana's “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” Hitting the center pole on “Entertain us.” Small tips, without fail, because she looked so healthy and self-sufficient.

“They like your energy,” the manager had told her one night when

her takings were especially low. “But I think they’re worried you might hurt them with those skates.”

The surprise, then, wasn’t that she was hungry. It was that she somehow had managed to take in the buffet while she was skating. (Could she see them from the stage, too?) She moved into the place Harold offered her at the front of the line—pleasant but matter-of-fact in her thanks—and she ate with such gusto that nobody complained when she left her empty plate on one of the tables instead of placing it in the small tub by the wall like you were supposed to.

Five nights later, more tables appeared with identical pans. Now, four lines moved through in the dim light, but despite this efficiency, the lines never abated. New bodies kept showing up, and Doug, chief assistant to the back-room chef, maintained a steady jog between kitchen and buffet, pans held high above his head.

“You just go right to the front,” the girls always knew Harold would say. They had followed Clarissa’s example in such great numbers, it hardly seemed possible that word had spread.

“More like a spontaneous combustion,” one man commented as he piled scrambled eggs high on a slice of toast that already held two broken-up strips of bacon. “You know.” He moved the loaded slice to his mouth. “As if all the sensory signals to inform them of the happenings out here filtered through simultaneously, and then caught them all at the same time. And then, BAM!” He actually managed to fit the entire thing in his mouth. One shot.

But that hardly explained the new men who started showing up, purportedly for take-out. Clean-shaven, bright blue eyes, close-clipped haircuts. Oxfords, khakis, loafers.

One tried to come in with his infant son strapped snug in a BabyBjörn.

“We’re just here for the food!” And he “couldn’t believe” Carl had “*the nerve*” to turn him away at the door.

But Carl didn’t suffer no fools. Even in later weeks, when the men who came for take-out continued lingering and started agitating for day-care facilities, he simply folded his arms. “No babies.” Shook his head and went back to counting out change.

Rumors of Belgian waffles started. Holding out tantalizing possibilities; stirring up dissent among the weak; delineating, defining.

Scent preceded talk. Not especially strong or steady, it revealed in scattered pockets a distinct note of vanilla in the batter.

“You holding out on us, Doug?” one man asked when Doug emerged

from the back, a stiff-legged walk to the tables where he dumped in freshly scrambled eggs.

“That’s all I’ve got.” Doug flashed the empty bin, the question mark clear on his brow.

One of the strongest localized pockets of scent hung over the customer’s head, but even he could not articulate what seemed beyond his grasp.

“My mom used to make this chip beef gravy every Sunday.” But that seemed too salty. He stopped.

“Do you ever find yourself thinking about grapefruit?” Evan, the most regular of the take-out men, leaned over for a minute—

“I think about *them* grapefruits,” snorted Bill, fully beyond the range of the sizzling batter. He pointed a half-sawed off finger at the stage. “*Them* grapefruits.” Then he worked on a stubborn bit of bacon with a toothpick.

Clarissa’s belly always bulged out now from the bulk of her meal, but her dancing only had gained momentum, and the men collectively gasped as she caught herself on an end pole and narrowly missed careening off the stage.

The other dancers hardly noticed. Lined up neatly on the far side of the second set of tables, they groomed each other—picking at bra straps, dabbing on body glitter—as they inched their way toward the steaming pans. This had become “their line”—*de facto*, according to one take-out man with legal training. “They act like they have a right to cut,” he hissed. But few others blamed them.

In continuing the precedent he’d started with Clarissa, Harold clearly held responsibility as much as, “the total absence anymore of common courtesy—common decency! Have we really fallen so low?” Harold had created “that entitlement mentality”—*you just go right to the front*—and the other men, not entirely sure they didn’t like the results, initially had faced a difficult choice: join the line with all the girls, Harold patiently anchoring the end spot for a half hour at times, or take a faster route to access the food?

When management stepped in and officially declared it “Ladies Line”—“*de jure*,” the legal guy snorted—the choice was made for them, and even Harold was forced to stand back and watch the glittering profile of the dancers as they moved in one long shining line, always a table’s width away.

The men took up talk of strawberries, whipped cream, and more.

“Think about how the butter melts under a thick gloss of syrup.”

“Or fresh blueberries with a dusting of powdered sugar.”

“Apples thickened with cornstarch. Laced with sugar and cinnamon.”

But the dancers hardly seemed to notice, even though the smell of the waffles hit you soon after you walked in the door, and assorted theories and names had become a matter of open discussion.

“I’ve heard all this is just a front.” One man nodded as he cut his bacon into tiny triangles only to line all the pieces around the edges of his plate.

Rumors settled on bodies dumped behind an out-of-code kitchen and contraband placemats—sometimes the kind with area attractions and ads for local businesses. Sometimes the kind with Chinese astrological signs printed in red ink.

Doug, whose name surfaced frequently in these discussions, brought reports of changed appetites to the back. Slammed a pan on the counter still filled with eggs.

“Eeeeeee! Get that crap out of here! I got the most negative response!”

And the veteran dancer on stage, who more recently had developed a sense of irony in her routines, bent over at the waist while Tracy Chapman played. Looked out between her legs into the audience for once.

The men nibbled on the corners of buttered toast slices. Dragged small clumps of eggs through the ketchup. Smashed flat the hash browns with the backside of their forks.

Clearly, they were no longer there to eat.

In later months, the men all sat together at a giant makeshift table, benches on the longest sides while Doug brought their old favorites to the center. Family style, fully assembled, the men pulled in the benches. Then they bowed their heads for grace.

ZZ Top’s “Legs” usually started almost simultaneously, the insistent guitar appearing to drive forward the opening sentences of the prayer. In fact, the two together were chance and nothing more. The blessing simply coincided with the opening part of Juliette’s routine.

She was a freak, the men concurred. Long ropes of dark, silky hair. Eyes traced in black Goth liner. Dark plum lipstick that never smeared, even when she bit down on her bottom lip with teeth that were sharpened to a point.

Irony, the men thanked God, was gone. Clarissa and the veteran dancer, too. And Carl’s name, generously laced throughout the whole of the prayer, evoked salvation, restoration, new dancers, peace.

“Because without him,” one man intoned as they all set in with full appetites, “we still would desire that which we clearly don’t have.”

Had foresight taken Carl there, to the place where he needed to go? To the place where they needed him to go? Or was it simply that he had been

in the right place at the right time, standing by the entrance for all those months, counting out change, his thick fingers surprisingly deft with the zipper of the banker's pouch that he held?

He had commanded a large view of the place. Had taken in the scene, every one of those four lines even before they became four lines, as well as the changes that had attended change. How Harold's traditional spot as anchor became so assumed that people apparently saw him even when he wasn't there. How when Harold started slipping out of his place, something started to shift and falter. By the time the scent finally made it to the door, Carl long had observed dissatisfaction in the neglected plates of food. But even with the fresh air that came to him from outside—"We thank you for Carl's clear head"—it had taken him some effort to put two and two together, reserving math as he did for cash transactions.

Then one night, three of the girls had taken to the stage together and pantomimed a crazy high-jinks routine. The music, which Carl initially dismissed as some strange new tune, eventually came clear in his head: the Muppet theme song. And Clarissa, in the center, delivering karate chops on her skates.

Carl didn't take his eyes off the "PRIVATE: VIP" door as he walked across the room, moving easily between the tables filled with listless and dreaming men. The scent grew stronger as he passed the line of dancers, and just before he broke in the door, he registered that the "Ladies Line" stayed long, intact, even though no one else was waiting for food. What were they standing there for? He answered his question as the door gave.

Inside, the red light on the waffle maker had just gone off for the second time, but Harold finished preparing the one plate before he fished out the freshly cooked squares. All the men saw that he had stripped down to boxer shorts and a tank-style undershirt. And while Harold claimed later that he hadn't known he'd done something wrong, Carl testified that Harold apparently had tried to stuff his clothes along the bottom of the door in a feeble attempt to keep the smell from escaping.

"Willful intent to deceive," the legal guy later characterized the act. After Harold had been "removed from the premises" for good. On "a technicality."

Accounts later differed on the "who." Was it Diamond, who really was Mary? Clio, who really was Cassandra? Jade, who some said was Mary and others said was Jasper?

But they differed even more on the "what." Almost to the person, one man observed at the time, "as if we all saw our own desires in the toppings that Harold so carefully applied to that final delectable square." As a result, the question remained as to whether he poured, sprinkled,

squirted, or smeared before he handed that last plate to the dancer.

Then, in open violation of the house rule stating “All physical contact in public areas must be initiated by the dancers,” Harold kissed her on the forehead, reached around with both hands to the place just below her shoulder blades, and pulled her in close. It’s hard to say how long her arm stuck out with the plate before the awkward angle wore on her, and the whole of the meal hit the floor. It felt like at least half a song.

We thank you for Carl. We thank you.

W Hash browns. Scrambled eggs. Bacon. Toast.

We thank you for Carl’s clear head.

We thank you.

We thank you.

Thank you.

She’s got legs, she knows how to use them.

Sam Mills

The First of December

*Now the first of December was covered with snow.
So was the turnpike from Stockbridge to Boston
Though the Berkshires seemed dreamlike on account of that frostin'
With ten miles behind me and ten thousand more to go ...*

James Taylor

I was reading War and Peace that fall of 1964, and my father woke me from a dream that the Russians were invading Atlanta, Georgia. I was glad to see him.

“Four-thirty, sleepyhead.”

Opening-day breakfast was a token affair, done more to keep my mother in bed than for any nutritional reasons. More often than not, it was leftovers from the night before. (Years ago, I had learned to avoid my father’s lumpy grits and runny eggs.) That morning, as I gulped down cold macaroni and cheese, meatloaf, butter beans on rice and cornbread with apple butter, he prepared the twin chrome thermoses of coffee with cream and chicken-noodle soup I would take into the woods with me.

While I ate, we went over our game plan. I would hunt Mills River to its headwaters. I would still-hunt in along the old logging roads and narrowgauge railroad the timber men had built. They followed the river back to the base of Fletcher Mountain where it made up in a deep springfed lake. There was a saddle in the mountain there and watching the saddle was good openingday strategy when the first shooting drove the bucks back through the hills to their beds atop the ivy bluffs. I would still-hunt in, then take a stand in the saddle and eat lunch. It was deep in the bigwoods heart of Pisgah National Forest, and I would need to start out no later than three.

“They always take the path of least resistance,” my father said. He wrapped a second meatloaf sandwich in waxed paper and put it in the armysurplus knapsack. “Specially when they’re pushed or wounded.”

“Yes sir.”

“So get up against an old big hickory or spruce. Scuff you out a spot so’s your feet’ll be quiet. Then just stay put. Something’ll be by before long. You remember your watch?”

“Yes sir.”

“Toilet paper?”

“Yes sir.”

I was on the Interstate with my thumb out by six. It was when and where a farmer might pick up a hitchhiker, if it was November or thereabouts and the hitcher had a gun. They were headed for the pulp mills west in the high mountains and did little talking. I-40 was a magical tunnel then that took you west to real elevations, to mixed coniferous hardwoods without a blade of undergrowth and rifles with telescopic sights. Those frigid pre-dawns still seem enchanted journeys through a cavern of headlightwhitened firs and frost-flowers abloom on red-clay embankments. The National Forest was thirty minutes by Interstate, and if you were thumbing before daylight, it took you two rides, both of them first shift with coffee still on their breath. A woman sometimes, though never very young. The stories you heard weren't true.

On this particular morning my farmer was a hunter himself. He was older, maybe sixty, and like those older who still hunted, cared nothing for highpowered rifles or for killing the things they killed. He was a bird hunter, and the gun that was racked across the rear window of the pickup—I saw in the interior light as I climbed aboard—was a fine Ithaca double barrel. (There was a carpenter's level and an umbrella in the other racks and a Goldwater bumpersticker on the glass.) The shotgun looked beat up even in the lights of occasional cars and was twelve or sixteen gauge. He'd bought it off a boy in the Service, he told me, back when guns was plentiful. That would have been fortythree or thereabouts. He'd give twentyfive dollars and a Luger pistol for it. Recently, he'd priced the shotgun in *The Shooter's Bible*.

"Two hundred and a quarter," he said, lighting his pipe onehanded with a big kitchen match, filling the dark interior with firelight. He pulled deeply on the pipe, flattening the flame, and it made him cough. "New. Now I'll warrant you, she was a long ways from new then." He dimmed his lights for an oncoming car, then blew the horn as it passed. "Much less now."

"He's up early," I said, making conversation.

"Won't be up long. That's A.C. Reynolds, night watchman at the paper mill."

"He's off early."

"Nah, security's on a different shift." With the pipe clamped between his teeth, his words seemed grim. "They don't like their guards to change shift same time as the workers. They like some overlap."

He showed how this worked by shingling his hands on the rim of the steering wheel. We were going about sixty, though it seemed much faster in the pickup.

"Course, I see now where I may a got taken."

"Scuse me?"

“I say, I see now where some Lugers go fer up’ards of a thousand dollars.” He looked at my rifle. “I took it off a Nazi captain.” He pronounced Nazi to rhyme with snazzy.

“Was he live or dead?”

He chuckled. “I’m ‘fraid you didn’t take ‘em off live ones. Leastways, not till right at the end. Fortyfour, that’d be. Fortyfive. ‘Course, I was outta it by then.”

“How’s that?”

“I was wounded.”

“Bad?”

“Oh, bad enough, I reckon.” The matchbox was on the dashboard, redwhiteandblue like the Goldwater bumper sticker. He shook it before handing it to me. “Go ahead,” he smiled. “Strike her up.”

The match flared blue, then burned with a steady yellow flame. With a final look at the road, the old man turned to face me. On the left side, where there should have been face, jawbone and cheekbone and ear, the whole side had been scooped away. The heavy scar tissue gave it the look of molten wax, like he was an unfinished figure in a wax museum, or one that had gotten too close to the fire.

Then, quick as a wink, he popped out his left eye and handed it to me.

I jumped, yelling, and dropped the match. It landed between my thighs and, yelling, I beat it out and brushed it into the floorboards. The eye had landed on the seat between us, and now, looking down, I saw it staring up at me, clear blue, the eye of a young man.

I looked back at the road. My heart was pounding so hard I felt it in my temples. The smell of burning cloth filled the cab.

And he rocked with laughter! “Did I skeer ya? Huh? Did I skeer ya? Say! My two granddaughters, they love that one!” He laughed so hard the seat shook. “‘Grampa, show us yer eye!’ they say. ‘Grampa, show us yer eye!’”

He laughed on and on in a spasm of coughing that fogged the windshield. I kept my eyes on the road. The eyetrick had made me a little nauseous. Thick saliva filled my mouth, and I swallowed again and again to keep down a rising gorge that tasted of apple butter.

Finally, when his laughter had subsided to chuckles, he looked over at my rifle. “I wouldn’t suppose that was loaded?”

“No sir.”

“You never know.”

I opened the action and moved the barrel to my right shoulder. It was a 6.5 Italian Carcano I’d gotten from the armysurplus bin at Goldstein’s Sporting Goods. It had cost me twelve dollars and a promise to call Karen

Goldstein. The Carcano was the gun Oswald had used, and though I loved JFK, that fact made me absurdly proud. You would have to be a hunter to understand this.

“You look to have due respect for firearms,” he said, nodding, puffing, smiling. He was looking at his shotgun in the rearview mirror. “Yes siree, a Kraut captain.”

He and his wife had spent one spring in Germany. Sixty-one, that’d be. He said Germany looked a lot like Kentucky.

I loved walking the old mossedover logging roads. It was why I could never kill one; I couldn’t sit still. Every turn brought you something new. Here, a small stream—though large enough at its riffles to support trout—left the forest and flowed down the road like a centerline. After a hundred yards, it veered off the mountain in a single postcard leap into Mills River below. (Even this near the stream, I could hear the white water of the big river.)

Hunting along, I wondered again at the total mileage of all the old roads. It seemed near the total mileage of all the roads in the state. They were all ages. Some were so new you could still see the bulldozer tracks. These had clay roadbeds and were good for tracking. Others like this one were old and mossy and seemed little more than narrow terraces with footpaths worn through the middle. Sometimes on these you found old singletrees and the rusty hoops of broken wagon wheels.

They were all out of use now; out of use to the sawmillers, that is. You had to have them to hunt with. From October on, they were littered with shotgun shells in all the primary colors—Remington reds and greens; Winchester Western yellows and blues—and with the sudden brass of highpowered rifles. I knew them all; I knew all the intersections where it was good to put your fox sets because foxes used the roads, too.

With the first snow, the logging roads became like another world; another world and newer. The square roadbeds were newly paved, freshly glazed, between drifted curbstones. And when it iced up, the bare winter hardwoods acquired a fairytale foliage overnight. Hunting along them then was like walking through a series of great jeweled rooms, sky-lit, shimmering in the noontide, the limbs clattering above you like cheap wind chimes. Sometimes in ice storms, the limbs broke and lay in the roads in shattered piles like broken chandeliers on the floors of crystal ballrooms.

The fate of the logging roads always seemed to me an encouraging setback for civilization, and each abandoned road I hunted helped establish this as a trend in my mind.

By nine, I was in the shadow of Fletcher Mountain. I walked the old

railroad now, winded, my breath showing like something from the Age of Steam. The rails had been taken up when the sawmill was abandoned, and the mossy rail bed was rutted where the crossties had rotted out. In places, the spikes were still standing. Old log skids fed down to the rail bed on both sides like tributaries, deeply gullied now and cut to the dewclaws with fresh deer tracks.

The lake was in sight, frozen in the middle, the shore water glittering darkly through the winter trees, when I saw the first deer, a doe, pawing in a grove of beeches below the road. She wheeled with a snort and bounded away, waving. With the gun up, I watched her veer through the metallic-looking trees. Long after she was out of sight, I could still see her tail flickering through the sunny woods.

On top of the mountain, I took a stand against a big spruce overlooking the lake, just under the ridgeline to break my silhouette. The saddle was to my right. Though it was the mountain's southern exposure, there was still snow in patches under the biggest spruce. I poured out the red cups of soup and coffee, and they smoked in the icy air. I watched as the steam blew by me up the mountain. The wind was right. I settled in.

The red wool coat grew warm in the sun and smelled of wood smoke. As I leaned against the tree, I realized I liked the woods better in winter with no snakes out. Faraway, off toward the checking station, the gunfire was constant as on a rifle range. The wind moved around, and the gunfire popped or roared depending on whether it was upwind or down. I could make out the boom of shotguns and the crack of highpowered rifles.

Around noon, I heard a burst of five shots much nearer. Then it quieted, and the squirrels came back out and began to feed. A pleated woodpecker the size of a grouse lit in a dead chestnut nearby. I watched his red-crested head hammering away, his movement as mechanical as a shuttle. Little chips flew with industrial precision.

I heard the deer first, faraway, coming at a gallop. On the frozen ground, it sounded like a horse in a Western movie. I rolled forward onto one knee, the safety off, the gun up, and saw it flashing through the sunstruck woods, running with its tail up. My father was right: the deer was coming straight for the saddle.

It was a big doe, and I watched her all the way through the saddle. She galloped by so close I could almost have tripped her with the gun barrel. She winded me after she was past and changed directions as abruptly as if she had hit a chainlink fence, bounding away up the steep saddle wall in long effortless leaps, snorting, white flag waving.

When she had disappeared over the mountaintop, I stood up, still shaking, and stretched. I heard a twig snap behind me and looked around

the spruce.

The buck was standing broadside out in the open like he was posing for the Winchester Arms calendar—and only an artist could have imagined those antlers.

Imperceptibly, I began to raise the rifle. There was a big hickory about twenty feet to the side of him, and in a single legless leap, he was behind it. I froze, holding my breath, the gun halfway to my shoulder, the safety off, shaking like a dog passing peach seeds.

I waited five minutes, a redplaid statue, motionless as the mannequin in Goldstein's front window. Then, a step at a time, slowly putting my feet down heel to toe, I walked up to the tree.

The deer was gone, vanished.

Running, I angled along the mountainside to circle the knob, the “pommel” of the saddle. There was his trail going around and up, scuffmarks in the leaves so faint you could only see them from a distance, glistening where the sunstruck frost was melting.

Knowing now that he was circling the knob to gain the mountaintop, I reversed direction and giantstrode across the saddle, up the steep side wall, heart hammering, breath chuffing, and high atop the mountain glimpsed him again, fifty yards away across the windswept clearing, head back, neck swollen with the rut, eyes walled around my way white with fear, those great antlers, bleached skullwhite by the slanting winter sun, held back tight against his withers.

With the gun up, I watched his sundappled grey winter coat dissolve in a stand of silver beeches. My heart pounded, aguestricken, and winded from the climb, I gasped in the cold mountain air.

I sat down then and leaned back against a tree. My hands shook as I opened the candy bar. Twelve points; maybe fourteen. Overhead, a squirrel began to feed, and I sat, shaking, in a gentle rain of hickorynut shells.

The white Mercedes left four black marks coming to a stop a hundred feet up the Interstate. The horn blew, and the backup lights came on, and I ran toward the car, the empty thermos jugs banging together in my knapsack.

The car was a fourdoor model, and I put my pack and gun on the back seat and climbed aboard. Though I had come out early, the Mercedes had been the only car by for an hour. In the gathering dusk, in an inch of new snow, I was frozen to the marrow, and inside, the heater was going full-blast. At the time, I was still a virgin, and that heater was the best thing I'd ever felt.

“Where ya headed, man?”

At first, I thought he was a woman. I had never seen a man with long hair before. His blond hair fell below his shoulders, and the pageboy haircut was held back with a beaded headband. He had on a cutaway waistcoat of blue silk with lacy frills at the cuffs like English cavaliers wore in the olden days. It was over a yellow tee shirt that said Highway 61. His glasses were small rimless squares like Ben Franklin's, but these lenses were orange. And he was old, too, at least thirty.

"So, where to, man?"

"Asheville, I reckon." I couldn't take my eyes off of him.

"Am I going in the right direction?"

I forced myself to look at the road. "Yes sir."

"Yes sir," he said and saluted.

There was a strange smell in the car, a sulfurous smell like burning rope. The radio was on, the Beatles singing "Please Please Me." Looking back, I saw a guitar case on the back seat and a chrome clothes bar across it, one of those springloaded kind that ran between the coat hanger hooks on either side. There were a couple of coats on the bar like the one he wore and a lot of empty hangers. On the seat, there was also a jar of peanut butter, a jar of grape jelly and a loaf of bread.

"You some kind of a salesman or something?"

He threw back his head and laughed, and I smelled liquor on his breath. "Far out, man! Yeh, I guess you could say that. Some kind. I guess we're all like some kind of salesmen, dig?"

"Yes sir."

"I'm a record promoter."

"You're puttin' me on."

"I will for a price," he said and laughed. "That's a joke."

"I know. I mean, I get it. I'm a songwriter. Or, I mean, I wanna be. I play the guitar."

"Outta sight, man! Like where would we be without the creative artist, dig?"

"Yes sir."

"Probably blown the world up by now. I'm hip to where you're coming from. How old are you, man?"

"Seventeen."

"Now she was just seventeen," he sang, "you know what I mean," and laughed, and it made him cough. "Hey—what'sit?—"

"Sam."

"Hey, Sam, reach in back there and hand me my attaché case. It's in the floor."

"Sure." Kneeling, I hauled it over the seatback. It was heavy. "You play the guitar?"

“Nah, man, I can barely play the stereo. That’s where I keep my stash.”

“Scuse me?”

He ran onto the shoulder twice, fishtailing back on the snowy road, as he rummaged through the briefcase. Between glances at the road, I watched him dig mostly through copies of *Billboard* and *Cashbox* magazines, though in one corner there was a brick of \$20 bills. Finally, he found what he was looking for.

“Here,” he said, handing me an 8 x 10—and for a moment, his hand rested on my thigh.

I took the picture and turned it over. In the blackandwhite photo, the driver was standing with the Beatles. In the picture, he was in the middle with two Beatles on either side. The photo had been autographed by John, Paul, Ringo and George. George had signed his, “To Roy: You’re The Greatest!” All five were in lightcolored suits so that the autographs showed up well. Somehow, all the signatures looked the same.

“And I saw her standing there,” he sang, drumming with the sides of his forefingers on the rim of the pigskin steering wheel.

“Are you Roy?”

“George is the nice one.”

“George?”

“Harrison.”

“Oh,” I said. “Yeh, I bet. What’s Lennon like?”

“John’s the moody one.”

“My mother says he looks dirty.”

He snorted. “Yeh, filthy rich. Paul’s the temperamental one.”

“I bet.”

The feeling was coming back into my hands and feet, and they tingled. I took off my gloves and rubbed my hands together over the heater vent. The news came on the radio then, full of freedom riding and the Warren Report and someplace called the Gulf of Tonkin. (And tomorrow, Ringo was getting his tonsils out.) After a moment, the driver reached over and turned it off, and for a second time, his hand rested on my thigh. When I squirmed closer to the door and leaned against it, he removed his hand.

“State-of-the-art,” he said suddenly, whipping the Mercedes into the left lane. Behind me, the empty coat hangers chimed softly. “Eh?” he said, whipping back into the right lane to the accompaniment of a second jazz chord. “Could your country Ford do that and stay on its feet? Huh?”

“No sir, I guess not.”

“You guess not?” he said, swerving back into the left lane with enough force to make the coat hangers ring.

I looked back. We were the only car on the Interstate. “There’s been some ice on the roads here of late,” I told him. “Specially on these overpass bridges.”

“Ice, eh?” He whipped back into the right lane. “You crackers don’t know what ice is. Ice! When I left Chicago, it was banked up eight feet. Eight goddamn feet! You hear me?”

“Yes sir.”

“You ever been to Chicago, man?”

Had I ever been to Chicago? I had been to Knoxville once to the 4H Club Officers Convention. But Chicago! Chicago was the Big World rumored to lie somewhere beyond these landlocked mountains. Chicago was 890 on the radio dial. It was Dick Bionde and Shelly Fabres and Neil Sedaka and Johnny Tillotson and Elvis and Dion—and this year, The Beatles. Nights, I lay awake, my sleeping bag zipped over my head, the radio against my ear—“Eight-nine-oh, Chicago!”—the diallight near my face, unfocused, the neon of nightlife, of city lights. I lay there in the dark until two and three and four in the morning and dreamed of a future that led out of Asheville like a yellowbrick road. I was going to be a songwriter. Like Lennon & McCartney. As soon as daddy would let me grow my hair.

“Huh? Say.”

“No sir, I guess not.”

“‘No sir, I guess not.’ You either have or you haven’t, man. Which is it?”

“No sir.”

“Great little town,” he said, lighting a cigarette he took from inside the blue coat.

“I bet.”

“Walking along the lake, checking out the chicks. Catching the Sox at Comisky. Oh man! That’s living! Here,” he said, handing me the cigarette.

“Nah, no thanks. I don’t smoke.”

“I don’t either. Go ahead, man. Try it. It’s not tobacco.”

“What is it?” I said, taking it. Clearly, the cigarette was the source of the sulphurous smell.

“Pot.”

“Pop?”

“Pot,” he said and laughed. “You know, marijuana.” He giggled. “Grass, rope, hemp, weed, ganja, Mary Jane.”

“Oh,” I said, “that.”

I took a puff and it made me cough.

“You gotta like hold it in, man.”

“Okay,” I said.

I took a puff and like held it in.

“You ever had a shotgun?” he asked, taking the joint.

I looked at my rifle. “‘Scuse me?”

But he had already reversed the joint and was leaning toward me like a lover.

My father was waiting at the Asheville exit, pulled off at the top of the ramp pointed toward home, when we pulled onto the shoulder. As I retrieved my knapsack and gun, I looked through the rear window of the blackandwhite car to where the blackandwhite Interstate curved away into the wintry countryside. Faraway, towering over everything, Mount Pisgah’s snowy bald spot was hypertense with sunset, the only color in a monochrome landscape. It looked incredibly beautiful, and somehow, like I was seeing it for the first time.

“I really appreciate the ride, mister,” I told him at the open door. The Beatles’ “I Feel Fine” was on the radio now.

“No problem, man. Like good luck with your music.”

“Thanks a lot.”

“If you ever make it out to L.A., look me up. Paulsen, Roy. E.M.I. Studios. Wilshire at Sepulveda. I’ll like show you the music business from the inside.” He handed me a business card from inside the blue coat. “I’m good for a drink,” he said. “And a warm place to sleep.” He laughed, and the liquor smell was strong even with the door open.

“Wow! Thanks, mister! Thanks a whole lot! I’ll do that!”

“Here,” he said. From inside the coat, he handed me the triangular corner cut from a paisley envelope. It had been sealed with clear tape. “For later, man.”

“What is it?”

“A hit of acid. Owsley Windowpane.”

“‘Scuse me?”

“LSD, man.”

“Huh?”

“Lysergic acid diethylamide.”

“Oh,” I said, “that.”

“Well, enjoy. Catch ya later, dude. Like don’t slam the door.”

“Yes sir.”

I closed the door and he stomped it, squealing out, and left rubber in all four gears. Face averted, hand up, I watched him go in a rain of gravel loud as hailstones on my gunstock.

Up on the ramp, the green 47 Ford pickup wore a rooster tail of steam where the exhaust plumed in the icy air. The truck was surplus,

and the white U.S. Forest Service shield on the door had lost its tree. All the windows were fogged up, the windshield too, except for twin fans of transparency above the defroster ducts. I threw my knapsack in the back with the muddy posthole diggers and bale of hay and climbed aboard.

“Where is he?” my father asked when I had closed the door. He was all dressed up in coat and tie. He had been waiting awhile. The cab was full of cigarette smoke, and the ashtray was full of butts.

“I released him,” I said. It was our standard joke.

I braced the gun butt against the floorboard and straddled the rifle. I opened the bolt and aimed the muzzle toward the window. As we started off, I cranked the window down a couple of turns to release some of the smoke.

“Where you headed, man?” I asked him.

“Lions.”

“Oh, yeh.” It was the first all right. “I forgot.”

“I almost did,” he said, gearing up. “It’s hard to believe it’s the first of December.” My father sighed. “Another year gone. It’ll be Christmas before we know it.”

“I know.”

“See anything?”

“I saw him, daddy! A big one! He was like twelve points at least!”

“I don’t see any blood.”

“He got behind a tree and like slipped off the backside of the mountain.”

My father laughed and it made him cough. “Oh, yeh. An old big buck’ll do that. Every time.”

“Next time I’ll circle around and like cut him off.”

“That’s right,” my father said, looking at me. “You hungry?”

“Starved to death!”

“Your mama’s having waffles.”

“Far out, man! I can dig it!”

Of course, I didn’t know it then, but the Sixties had begun for me.

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Rynn Williams's first collection, *Adonis Garage*, the recipient of the 2004 Prairie Schooner Book Award for Poetry, was recently published by The University of Nebraska Press. Her poems have appeared in *Third Coast*, *The Nation*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Field*, *New York Quarterly*, *Ninth Letter*, and *The Massachusetts Review*, among other magazines. Williams received a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

SUBMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Euphony welcomes submissions of unpublished poetry, fiction, essays, reviews, creative non-fiction, and plays. We publish work from members of the University of Chicago community and from authors around the country, accomplished and aspiring. Please read the following guidelines before submitting your work:

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Regardless of the type of submission, **please provide a valid email address** that is checked regularly so we can contact you on the status of your work—we will use your email address to contact you unless requested otherwise. If you do not have an email address, a phone number is fine. **Print manuscripts will not be returned unless expressly requested and there is a self-addressed envelope with proper postage enclosed.** If you would like one to appear in the journal, you may include a brief biographical note in your submission (2-3 sentences).

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