

Literary Magazine of Lourdes College

Spring, 1997



The Tau

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About the Tau

whom Sr. Lucilla was one, typed, mimeographed, and collated about their world, about nature, about God. Their teachers, of have computers and printers to make the labor of collecting the their work, collecting it in a volume called The Tau. Today we Francis, the young women wrote poetry and prose about beauty, When Lourdes was a school dedicated to teaching the Sisters of St. and recognizing that we, too, join the past, acknowledge the those students who have preceded us, adding our voices to theirs book that we see in those of yesterday. We echo the thoughts of materials easier, but the same themes run through today's chappresent, and speak to the future.

Nancy Brown

About The Name

Origin of a Tau as a Franciscan Symbol

emblem of reform in the Church of the twelfth century. For the Hebrew alphabet. Pope Innocent proclaimed the letter as the saved whose foreheads were marked with the Tau, the last letter of about impending punishment for their sins. Only those were to be his day, was directed by God to warn the people of Jerusalem opening words, the Pope quoted from the Prophet Ezekiel who, in the Church and improve the quality of Christian living. In his his writings. Today it has a special meaning for thousands of Francis, it became the symbol of his mission to preach the gospel. been there. The purpose of this gathering was to inspire reform in Historians agree that St. Francis of Assisi was very likely to have Franciscan men and women. He used it as a signature, painted it on his door, and placed it on Europe and the Near East, members of the opening session of the Lateran Council at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome On November 11, 1215, Pope Innocent III assembled, from

Sr. Lucilla Osinski

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Introduction to the 1997 Edition

and we are delighted—all of us. Delighted to write, and delighted publication. As the chapbook expands, so does the readership share them with each other and the community at large in this a year we gather out thoughts in one place, bind them together and The merary community to assemble, given the nature of today's fast-paced life-style; but once The literary community of Lourdes College seldom has opportunity

one is ever bored with being in print. be a last time. No matter how experienced these writers are, no a repeated thrill. For still others who may be graduating, it may place their work has appeared publicly. For others, publication is For many of the writers represented here, The Tau is the first

look at life's touchstones are all represented. As you read through mind, the concern for the well-being of children, the charming the nature of life itself. The esoteric wanderings of the youthful ence of the present, worries about the future, or wonders about tion. It remembers experiences of the past, renders the experi-The central theme of this year's edition seems to be self-explora-The Tau, look for the messages -they are for us.

Thank you, Language and Literature faculty for your judgment Thank you, Student Services for your support of our efforts. and guidance. Thank you, Readers, for hearing our voices. The Tau; it is a gift made with joy for your enjoyment.

Nancy J. Brown, Editor

Pen mars perfection

—David Dalton

pen mars perfection that is the pure white paper gives it a purpose

Oakheart —Amanda Kornacki

My heart is like a forest
Dark and mysterious even to me.
It's full of winding paths,
Pitfalls and caves.

There are tree-shrouded mazes
And I have lost my map.
I search in vain by the moonlight,
Fingers scraping through the leaves,
Turning over stones, looking for a key.
Stumbling down a steep hill,

I see a massive oak tree.

It is surrounded by brambles and ivy.

The oak's trunk and mighty branches

Are scarred from fire and frost.

Yet, it stands majestically.

Yet, it stands majestically,
Strong beyond all testing.
My heart is like a forest
You may enter if you wish.
However, stay on the paths,

Beware of pitfalls and clinging vines.
But most importantly,
Harm not the col

Harm not the oak
For it weakens with time.

Watching **the Light** Disappear —Lori Boyer

feel my heart harden and my soul grow cold, your devilish eyes and impish grin that keep me from drowning watching the light disappear in this ocean of loneliness. occasionally one floats off but in the murky depths although bubbles burst, the sound of your voice And across the distance i face the night alone. reminds me that in perfect form. are the lifeboat into the trees

Illuminescent Flame —Holly Garrett

Illuminescent flame
burning bright and free
carries away to fantasy.
In places green
with rolling hills
lavished great in daffodils.
Bring with Thee
Thy sweet caress
abundant in its loveliness.
Where in all souls
shall rest free.

This is where you will find me.

A Dream Passing Through - Holly Garrett

That men do seek, May be lifetime How long will it stay? A dream passing through It knows we know not The outlifted hand, The slanted gaze upward, Many hours to toil Yet maybe a day. "Play with me, teach me!" Long, for the weak. "Play with me, delight me! A deaf soul cries out, How much we can stand. Containing the knowledge I can't go without!"

This dream in its passing Has though left behind A trickling image Impressed in a mind. The memory of such Has struck such a cord, It's lingering essence Always adored, Stop once again When eternity is through. This dream's not a dream, Unless—it is you.

A**pril 23, 1994** —Lisa K Saverdstom Klem

And so the possibility of fighting back the tears—why? And yet now it's real, the relativity, there is none. Money and less keeps me ing into my veins. Now another life to consider, a name, a happioccupied. Only I wish as I was before this, with a cigarette poundnothing. As there are no demands. Pain, anguish, yet really only suffering—(Her Suffering)—could show me this. Why couldn't I ness; what I never had—what did I have? Forgiveness? the table, from . . . I see, it's because I see. Then blind me with just be a friend? Why can't I forgive myself, excuse myself? From Surely not of oneself. Love? I can do that. But now, today, the curse of blindness, yet I'll complain of that too. Heaviness weighing a million causing pain in otherwise potential joyful moments of just being alive. This room has no time. I do not know what time it is.

Reincarnation

—Donald Pack

There is a secret in my soul, that even I have not been told. A mystery of such proportions, Deep with the confines of my past

There was a life I lived before.
I feel it every turn

with men who fought on distant shores. I know I've shared my soul, complete

There was this man, I'm sure who rode in the Crusades. And then my soul returns an image of the Renaissance. Some days I feel his need to find the Holy Grail. I see myself, a monk no less, giving Christians aid.

There is a place called Plymouth Rock, I've landed there before and on my Palomino horse, I helped win the West of yore I've charged up the hill in rebel-grey to fight a blue-clad Yank, I braved the cold New England winds to brush the British back.

There were two wars to fight, both across the sea, Then through France, across the Rhine on to victory! My next engagement, G.I. Joe, we dyed the North Sea with blood. I fought against the Hun and won in trenches filled with mud.

There, that brings me up-to-date, And when I close my eyes for good, I take charge of my soul. Someone else will take my role

Reincarnation does exist
I know because I'm me.
That's when I sit and make a list
Of all the past in me.

The Gift of the Dove Richard R. Drabik

its immense radiance. How like the gaze into the eyes of another can sunlight is. Life giving and a source of refreshment, yet if I were to warmth will break through the window. What a wonderful thing See how the sun moves slowly across the sky; soon it is light and be. Here with you playing gently in my mind I feel an indescribable look directly into the source of all that energy I would be harmed by after the rain. shine down gently on me like the sun on any early summer's morn your visage and obscure the reality that is you? Perhaps you would energy? Would I be blinded by the radiance or would clouds cover endure your gaze? Could I look deep into the source of all that warmth and joy. I pause to consider, if you were here could I

No! Beauty for its own sake. only you own. A fleeting thing or a memory carried in the heart? rainbow I have searched for is as simple as a smile, the one that am a part of all of creation and all creation is a part of me. The and try once again to become one with that from which I sprang. silence, the abyss calls. I immerse myself in all that surrounds me not there be one for me? That promise! That assurance! Pause. . can only be a most natural need. I look for the rainbow. Should tected, naked to the elements. Fulfilling in my deepest self what this a lesson to be learned. I need to walk in the rain more, unpro-Rain! Tears of heaven? A cleansing brought by nature? Perchance

awakened in me? I see things I have never seen before! Not like search out more of the wonders and marvels yet to be perceived? you. Will they maintain this new clarity? Can they grow and these new eyes? . . . no, the eyes are mine, a gift unbidden from removed. Are you the one who could teach me to see through new vision, but more as if long self imposed blinders have been I see the color green, the true color of life. What is it that has Have they a chance without the giver of the gift to teach this infant

how to walk, now to speak, how to be weaned from the breast. This is a great mystery to me and mysteries have their own way.

glory. The vastness of the blue sky is ineffable. It presses down to all I see. Come my dove my kindred spirit, fly with me, as the beauty. Now apart from myself I soar over the winter sleeping It creeps closer now, revealing moment by moment more of its carth. No cloud is there to hide behind; my very essence is bared hard and invites me to flight. My spirit becomes lost in timeless my calling once again . . . an echo answers. My spirit waxes heavy, not come. Are you present, a vision clear for me to see? I send out bird by wandering, as the dove by flying, so the curse causless shall flaccid, I descent

times, its cold familiarity is like an old friend, a well-worn coat. Once again I am where I began, where I have begun so many the hearth, cold and gray. I sit in dust and let dust cover me. Yet fire, it's very being given up in perfect sacrifice, lays now as dust in nant of a wondrous strange new energy still sparks the air like St. Wait, something is different, something has changed! The remthat my loved one once was here. how can clean it away? Even dust is dear to me, for it reminds me Elmo's fire dancing on the rigging of my sails. The wood of the

It can not be sated, I my all and still it demands more. hidden. Again and again it dives into me with unrelenting force den. I am broken through, incised to the zenith, nothing remains with perfect familiarity. No aspect is too private, no region forbid force slowly caresses me, moving with the tingling touch of a lover Fingers of warmth now reach out to touch me. Their life giving

part of it! For it becomes me! I am recreated! I surrender and fall willingly into its embrace which I feel an undeniable need? Not true! I do not become a against it, like a new bridled horse. What is this that hurts but for was with a new intense immensity. My flesh strains and bucks Hold! But soft, for even as it takes it gives. Replacing all that once

wings that I know not how to use. Wait! Do not fly so fast and flight you float on currents of air and bid me follow. I am given what could be, and just as suddenly you are gone. Like a dove in incision to my inner being. For the briefest of moments I envisage dreams. You move past me as a breeze, your touch opens an source of untapped abilities, immense potential, and unrealized on an insignificant planet. Yet I am the center of the universe, I stand alone basking in the warmth offered by an insignificant star far ahead! Guide me, teach me once again how to fly!

dove. A globe, caught by and catching the light. The very light it crystal of joy. It sits with momentary perfection on the gift of the softness of a kiss on my hand. From my eye a fear falls, a pure Silence . . . as a pure white feather floats down and lands with the accepts it now breaks apart spilling a rainbow out in breathless become one that to which it brought broken radiance. The gift and the crystal ever they touch . . . the tear dissolves, spilling its life's blood into beauty. The colors sigh and moan as they wave peacefully on what

nothingness. Opening my mouth to speak, all that escapes is a earth. I am bound, I stretch out my hand only to have it close on on, circling higher and higher on the updrafts of the breath of caught and must yield once again to its embrace. The dove soars seeking eye. Where could I run? It is no use trying to escape, I am of their very soul. They offer longed for protection against the virgin sky. The silhouettes of life stand silent sentinel to the rape Shadows now lengthen as the steeds of Helios plunge across the into the embrace of earth. I feel her embrace and stretch wide my lover's moan, set free to echo across the cosmos. Spent, I collapse arms to return what she so willingly gives.

"Sigh" —Amanda Kornacki

Inhale slowly.
Supposedly soft.
Supposedly calm.
Feather light,
Dream heavy.
Exhale.
Gone...

This Morning

—Jodi Schramm

morning light; my sleep sprung a leak. my blanket covered by balls splattered, through my window. An ocean of sunshine poured of streaming rays, I might have drowned in the flood caught unaware by the high tide of Its crashing waves immersed me, of the day before me. strong to keep abreast and dove in headfirst. with my toe, not too cold I decided sketched and tested the sea of light I took great gulps of the squirting falls, But the sturdy mattress held me steady. like an inexperienced seagull on the shore. I swam

February —Michael D. Biscay

My eyes strain cloud-glare, snow-shine, Holds no hint of warmth, of sun, of life. The creek's song, soft beneath dark and crackling ice My awkward feet tread snow-crunch into brittle steps Ungainly flutter, riding winter winds. Where crow-caw shatters shadows into shrieking shades, Lead-grey skies hand heavy over fields and woods Across the paths, drives through window-cracks and coats, Wind creaks the trees and sculpts the snow in drifts Peering in vain for any hint of green. Prying beneath sere and windrowed leaves,

The Seduction of Adam

—Jodi Schramm

lifted to heights greater than conceivable heaven with no fig leaves to cover our nakedness, Come let us pluck the sweet fruits of Eden brazenly compared to the continued torment of my soul condemnation of Heaven shallow punishment Good and evil are not our issue, fruit of love from the vine Let us pluck the ripe tender forbidden Let us pluck the luscious fruits of Eden Tend me, for you shall become a tiller of the ground my fruit fills the air with savory fragrance Lie with me and break the boundary of Eden's gate, I will show you Eden's secret delight with your own hand and feed me my love Pluck the delightful fruit of Eden, Plant the seeds, I will bring them to fruitation My roots thirst to drink from your fountainhead My boughs heavy with ripe desires My leaves are soft and pleasing I am the bearer, I am the tree of life Bittersweet fruit, my Adam Planted in the soft midst of this garden Deflower the vine and I will swallow every seed Beneath the baneful glare of jealous Gods. And bear life of your glory

Winning Entry, 1997 prize for poetry.

Can I Flirt with Madness

—David Dalton

Can I flirt with Madness
Buy her dinner and a rose
Can I flirt with Madness
Dance till dawn before she goes

I need some time from Sadness Faithful lovers though were we Now if I flirt with madness For a time I shall be free

Can I flirt with Madness
Ethereal mistress though she'd be
Can I flirt with Madness
Or am I too blind to see

The Dawn of the Dragon

Emily Besser

Dawn will break, bringing new day One day the wooden heart will give way to decay Gold will rust as dawn turns to dusk Disappointment dies at your hand Velvet turns to sand And the raven will see red

As wilted flowers regain their youth I will not be a borrower of troubles Surrounded by creatures of no heavenly birth Dripping on a harsh and desolate carth Blood smears 'cross the sky Chains unbind, fetters loose

The empty hourglass holds no power
Our vigor slips as we decline
Eyes are opened to see black light
No more burns the sun
And the moon blazes
As if it were day

Silent Dusk

—Emily Besser

To break down the wall and soon, know all It takes a key to open the lock What will we do to take anothers place The eye of a needle does not see

Soon we learn to behold its power The drug of night sleeps silent day Look at the dawn's new flower Who does it control, where will it take its toll?

Open the window and look away
Turn the key and observe
The bird of life weakens its grip
Drinks greedily of the last sip

Then close the door and sit alone
The final finale comes disguised
Darkness falls and you can hide
Does it pay to jest this way?

The silver tray doesn't consistently deliver Time runs its endless unknown plight Music plays but hits silently upon the walls What we endure to live this life

Remain and the finish closes in Memories are not secure The pages of a book yellow and tear Only the jagged edge of deceit stays certain

My Vision is Blurrier

J. dwin Patrick, Jr.

Derogation I'm tired of trying to see beyond the mist of Segregation and smoke of Poverty, Depression and Oppression. MY VISION IS BLURRIER because I can't see through the

of Hunger, Pain and Agony. Dehumanized condition of today. I'm tired of trying to see beyond the fog of Suffering and the MY VISION IS BLURRIER because I can't see through the cloud

I'm tired of trying to see beyond the Rain of Hate and Horror that Hopelessness that fill our young ones' dreams. MY VISION IS BLURRIER because I can't turn away from the

Stupidity. I'm tired of trying to see beyond the weeds of Ignorance and ciousness, Selfishness, and Despair. MY VISION IS BLURRIER because I can't walk past the Avari-

ness, Love and Kindness of a more unified Society MY VISION IS BLURRIER not because I'm desperate or beyond Despond, but because I stand alone with hope to see the Good

But at the present, my vision remains BLURRIER

cannot see!

Technology — Lisa K. Saverstom Klem

creating emptiness computer age tech.

to fill busy men important men emptiness

for convenience empty garbage cans left in the street

for the

future

Fear

-Margaret A. Burkhart

able. Rigid, without a single twitch of their whiskers, they ap beady eyes reflecting the light, sat three of the largest rats imagin. flicked on the light. At the foot of the stairs, their unblinking As her shoe touched the second step of the basement stairs, she toward them. peared poised ready to pounce if she made the slightest movernent

of coal to the dying fire. reluctant to go back upstairs without adding at least one shovelful Knowing the furnace needed a fresh supply of coal to keep the house warm until her husband returned from work, she was

walk past or would they jump on her? not brave enough to challenge the rats. even this action didn't seem to bolster her courage. She was just She took a deep fortifying breath as she hesitated on the steps, but Would they allow her to

open to her already wore. Going to bed to keep warm was another option cool off. She could put another sweater on over the two she but the rats were a very real menace. The house would have to an angry husband coming home to a cold house made her tremble, Motionless they sat there, waiting for her next move. Thoughts of

leaving the basement to the rats. Turning quickly and switching off the light, she raced up the stairs In the Stillness of the Night

—Holly Garrett

A baby cries out of hunger A headache rages on

In the stillness of the night

Children quietly sleeping Memories trying to re-live

In the stillness of the night

A party surges on A couple murdered in vain

In the stillness of the night

The stars twinkle above While a husband beats his wife

In the stillness of the night

A student studies diligently
As a mother cannot feed her child

In the stillness of the night

A mind screams for sanity A poison bottle answers

In the stillness of the night

Let Me Be Me

-Ana Romo

This is my childhood and I only get one,

You have the power to make it miserable for me or to make it fun.

I know growing up is not a game,

Help me hold my head high and learn without shame.

Even though my body is small,

My head and my heart hold it all.

I'm red, I'm yellow, I'm black, I'm white,

Let me be me, I have that right.

I learn my actions and words from you,

Make the right choice, so I can learn from your cue.

Your knowledge, love, and understanding is what I need you to share,

So I can show others that I care.

My feelings are fragile, so please show your respect,

Don't let me misinterpret respect as neglect.

I'm big, I'm small, in width and in height,

Let me be me, I have that right.

Allow me to learn at my very own pace,

I have a lifetime of learning ahead, it's not a race.

I will try your patience by making mistakes,

Remember, they're not intentional, give me a chance to show you

I have what it takes.

I have a sense of humor that's wild and free,

So please laugh with me, but not ever at me.

I'm loud, I'm soft, I'm active and full of might,

Let me be me, I have that right.

I need you to talk with me and also to listen,

That makes me feel important, enough to glisten.

Take time to watch how I learn, and how I grow,

Your influence in my life, will surely show.

Encourage my creativity by letting my imagination soar,

I'll show you what I have learned and so much more.

I'm tired, I'm hungry, I'm sleepy but bright,

Let me be me, I have that right.

My family is together, my family is apart,

Sometimes they get along, sometimes they break my heart.

When my feelings of anger or sadness are shown

Support and comfort me, let me know I'm not alone.

When I'm feeling happy, excited and full of pride,

Your acceptance of my feelings, I hope you won't hide.

I'm fast, I'm slow, my eagerness to learn is out of sight,

Let me be me, I have that right.

My morals and values, you will help shape,

What I have learned from you, I will wear like a cape.

This is where it begins to unfold,

My thoughts, my dreams, my attitudes, forever I will hold.

Stand by me, walk with me, dream with me,

You can learn from me too, together it's a guarantee.

If you trust in me, trust in you . . . I might,

Let me be me, I have that right.

The Classroom

—Karen Cummins

A story being read
A story being heard.
Brightly colored paints
Becoming a colorful bird.

A town made of legos
A castle made of sand.
A group of children joining
A small musical band.

Watching a brown turtle go crawling under the ground. Seeing all the children's smiles and hearing laughter all around.

It's dark and quiet now,
I hear a sweeping broom.
I look forward to each new day,
For I am a pre-school classroom.

A Ride Through Hell

-Amanda Kornacki

You stand uncertainly in front of the carnival house's front gate. According to the messenger, someone should be meeting you here any minute now. Doubt begins to enter your mind. Perhaps entering the contest was a bad idea. But how could you have passed up the chance to see the inner sanctum of Hades? In the year 2050, anything is possible.

"Be one of the select few to visit the Underworld," the flyer read. On a dare from your friends, you entered your name in the raffle. It's not like you expected to win, anyway. Luckily, or perhaps unluckily, you won the grand prize, safe passage into and out of the fiery pits of Hell. However, you never would have guessed that the gateway to Hell would be a carnival house.

A slight movement in the shadows catches your attention. A tall figure dressed in black slowly approaches you. It seems to float above the ground. The figure's face is obscured by a deep hood. You notice that the hands holding the razor sharp scythe are not human but skeletal. A dry rasping laugh escapes from the furrows of the hood as you cower in fright.

"Who were you expecting to guide you through Hell? Vergil?" The Grim Reaper growls. "Come along now, the contest rules state that I cannot harm you. At least not today." Chuckling to himself, the Reaper bids you to follow him into the fun house.

As you enter, you hear the rising and falling moan of chanting somewhere in the distance. You follow the Reaper down a long corridor and enter a room lit by black and red candles. This room is the source of the chanting. Many people dressed in black robes are milling about. Some hold upside down crosses, while others kneel in front of strange altars. All of them are making incantations in some strange, garbled language.

"This is Ante-Hell." Your guide explains. "What you see before you are the souls of former Satanists. Lucifer cannot stand their 29

constant moaning, so he keeps them out here. You might recall the man over there by the main altar. That's Aleister Crowley. Arrogant as he was, he probably expected private consultations with Satan. Well, let's move on to the fun part, shall we?"

You descent a winding staircase off to one of the alcoves. At the bottom is what looks to be a roller coaster. The front car is shaped like the head of a serpent while the rest of the coaster is hidden in the winding tunnel behind it.

"We had to let Charon go awhile back. He was starting to get senile in his old age. Began placing the wrong people in the wrong circles. As crazy as this place gets, we still like to keep a little order. Also, we are doing some redecorating so not all the circles will be open for your appraisal. Anyway, we found that this coaster gets the souls to their respective circles ten times faster than Charon's rowboat. Come the next millennium, we expect to get a supertrain. We'll be descending to the first circle very quickly, so please fasten your safety belts and keep your hands inside the coaster at all times."

The coaster suddenly accelerates, diving down a steep decline just as it appears that you are about crash into the wall. You drop straight down for two hundred feet before the coaster levels off. The coaster jerks to a stop in front of a cavern. Inside this cavern, people are pacing back and forth, muttering continuously. Shockingly, you recognize one of the figures. You see Richard Simmons babbling something about Deal-A-Meal while running frantically around the cavern.

"The first circle contains the obsessive and paranoid souls. Even after death they couldn't give up their fears and obsessions. I guess they were making such a clamor in Heaven that the Lord of Light couldn't take it anymore and sent them down here. We're always getting his rejects. They provide their own internal punishment, never seem to get any peace from themselves."

The coaster lurches downward once more, creakily rubbing against

the rails. It stops in front of a room filled with televisions. The souls are strapped to chairs with their eyelids held open with electric tape. You notice that a woman with heavy makeup is crying uncontrollably while clutching at the hand of the man sitting next to her. On the TV screen in front of them, an almost mirror image of the scene is being played out.

"The second circle holds the souls of the televangelists. Their sin is the greed for money. We believe the greatest torture, however is to make them watch reruns of their own shows. Onward to the third circle where the arrogant reside."

When you arrive at the third circle, you hear the most horrific wailing with one voice rising above the others. "I was a famous person once, I vill not be treated in such a manner." The owner of the voice is hardly recognizable in her present state. Zsa Zsa Gabor is outfitted in rags, her hair completely disheveled. The room is surrounded by mirrors forcing the arrogant souls to look at themselves from all angles while not being allowed to alter their appearance in any way.

"Lets move quickly to the fourth before you lose your sense of hearing. It contains former thieves." The Reaper shudders as Zsa Zsa lets loose another wail.

The serpent coaster moves on to the fourth circle which contains the souls of the evil dictators. All the crimes that they have committed are brought back against them. You see Adolf Hitler being subjected to his own concentration camp. Eventually, he is sent to be gassed. But, since he is already dead, he is forced to relive this ordeal continuously.

The punishment for the fifth circle is the same. This circle contains murderers. Jeffrey Dahmer is being eaten by Cerebus while being forced to remain conscious throughout the punishment.

The serpent coaster lurches forward before plunging down a vertical drop. Just as you begin to you'll fall through to the other side of the Earth, the coaster screeches to a halt. In front of you

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are two large wooden doors. Something copperish red is oozing from the crack underneath them. A sign made out of a strange parchment hangs from a spike. Written in a copper colored ink (it is ink, you force yourself to believe) are the words "Out to Lunch."

The Grim Reaper begins to speak in a humble tone.

"This is all quite embarrassing. I'm afraid you won't be able to see His Lordship today. I asked him to wait till you arrived, but who wants to argue with Satan? You'd think that after 2000 years, He would have finished eating that Judas character. But, He's gotten so used to the taste that's all He ever wants to eat. We don't let visitors in to watch him lunch anymore. The last one was so horrified that he expired right on the spot. God was quite ticked about the incident for He had to make special arrangements to fit the poor soul into Heaven. It's getting quite crowded up there and deities really do hate to do Their own paper work. Oh well, there's nothing to be done about it now. I suppose you'd better return to the Upper world again. Your Visitor's Pass has almost expired and I don't think you want to get stuck down here. It's been grand showing you around. Hope to see you soon."

The coaster spirals upward until it reaches its dock. You disembark and follow the Reaper up the stairs and through the Ante-Hell. He escorts you out through the funhouse gates. However, when you turn around for a final look, the carnival house and the reaper have vanished from sight.

Hot Down Here

-Glen D. Burel, Sr.

Hot down here, here twenty years, have an eternity to go. Cried many tears doesn't ease the pain sentenced, this place, this heat, this flame! Hot down here, here twenty years, have an eternity to go.

The Tau

Yesterday Today and Tomorrow —Harriet Appleby

Let's be extravagant, just you and me While we reminisce as we used to be When we were young, no battles no strife No problems no challenges, just a carefree life We lived each day seeking to find The rainbow, the mysteries, the mountains to climb There was sunshine and happiness, come what may We drifted along in an unconcerned way When adversity caused us to take a tumble It was a lesson in learning, to make us humble The early years went slowly by, we thought we'd never grow up We were teased, pleased and contentedly drank from life's cup When did the years fly by so fast And when did maturity wipe out childhood's past We can't remember the time and place Changes were accepted, we had a future to face We lived, loved, but what of tomorrow Will there be time to look back and borrow Memories that enriched us, for all we went through There was some cost, but we paid our dues The blessings, both the good and the bad We can give thanks to God for the life that we had.

Tree . . . of Life —Fran Hendren

God grant us the stamina of the tree . . .

the flexibility to bend, to accept, to change,
to grow old and scarred with grace . . .

to be reminded that tears and scars fade
as do the knots in the tree ..

With every "change", we can enjoy rebirth.

In life,
we shed the wonders of youth . . .
for the mysteries of adulthood,
only to find ourselves
with the challenges of middle age.
Then . . . acceptance of the chill of winter!!

Much like the seasons of the tree, we are . . .

born in the Spring, with hope;

matured in the Summer, with faith;

aged in the Fall with charity; and finally,

with the coming of Winter's chill,

we experience the love that has grown up around us.

Brown Stockings and Long Underwear

—Ursula Podzinski

When I think of winter, I think of a skinny 7 yr. old, thick brown stockings and long underwear.

Pulling and tugging those long, brown ridges over legs encased in the hated cotton; folding and smoothing the ankles so the wrinkles wouldn't show.

Other girls didn't have to wear them; Mary thought she was the only one.

Friends laughing; of course it had to be at her because she hated those stockings and that underwear.

Mary wanted to keep her leggings on at school because she wanted to prolong the moment when she had to bare those symbols of a caring she didn't understand at the time.

Then, the school bell rang, doors opened and to the snap of the nun's signal, girls marched in unison, single file to their seats; creased ankles one by one.

Second Love on Lisbon Avenue

—Donald Pack

My crush on Arlene became a full scale romance. It took me to the heights of a Hollywood script. It paralleled the headiest love stories the movies could produce. At 16 years old, I was Tyrone Power, reincarnated, alive in a dark apartment hallway on Lisbon Avenue in Milwaukee. Our embracing walks even on cold winter evenings, our nightly long telephone conversations, our slow dancing at a Valentine's Day party were so animated, so full of emotion that I believed I could accomplish anything to prove my love.

The beginning of this young romance occurred six months earlier, about the second week in January when Arlene was baby-sitting at the apartment of Max and Mollie who were also good friends of my mother and father. She had recently broken up with her teenage lover, Burton, who was three years older than I and was going off to school in the East. I met him the night before his departure when he dropped by to say goodbye to Arlene. She was not disturbed by his leaving, and I had good reason to believe he had broken up with her because of their age difference, or maybe he just tired of her.

When he was departing, he told me there was something he wanted to tell me in private. I walked him down the stairway to the front door where he extended his hand and wished me luck and formally authorized me to move into his past role with Arlene.

"Don, she's a wonderful girl and I wish you all the luck in the

Everything was happening very quickly, and I didn't understand the situation at all. It seemed I was about to be receiving the title to a thin, little, sixteen-year-old girl with dark brown eyes and her hair done in bangs. I shook his hand and slowly walked up to the apartment where she waited at the door. We said nothing and she motioned me to sit down. She sat there, close to me on the sofa,

dressed in her blue, angora sweater and checked woolen skirt. Her black and white saddle shoes were twisted under her as she sat on her legs very close to me.

It was late. I knew it was very late when Max and Mollie came home. They had been playing poker with my parents at our house. Arlene would be sleeping over at the apartment as it was her custom when she worked on the weekend. Max reminded me of the hour and then retired to the bedroom, but Arlene talked on. We both stood up and moved to the hallway, but I could not, did not want to leave. There was only one thing that I was living for that night and that was to kiss her, but she was still talking about Burton and why they had separated and then finally she said to me the words that in my jumbled mind, sounded like the most beautiful poem I had ever heard.

"Oh Donnie, next to Burton, I love you most."

"Oh hell," I muttered as I pulled her to me in the hallway and kissed her on her half-lipsticked smeared mouth and then felt sensations that could only be compared to torrid movie scenes. I didn't dare break the aura of the moment with silly conversation. This spell would last forever. Her eyes were sparkling in the dim light of the stairway, and I told her I would call her tomorrow and left her standing by the door and bounded down the last few stairs and out the doorway into the zero cold of the Milwaukee night.

The light from the moon and the twinkling stars was flooding through the bare branches of the trees and I looked vainly down Lisbon Avenue for the lights of a city bus. I decided to run home. The distance meant nothing to me, but when I passed the gasoline station and saw the time, 3 A.M., I knew I should have called my parents . . . Max should have driven me home in his new Nash . . . I shouldn't be out this late . . . but I had wings and running two miles would not exhaust me. So I ran several blocks and walked 100 yards and ran more city blocks as if I had magic feet inside my pegged-cuff, black corduroy pants. Soon I was at Center street and two blocks from my house.

As I ran up the steps on to the porch, the front door opened and my father's form loomed in the shadow of the entrance. His hand came out of the dark and slapped me in the face. I felt no pain only a defenseless rage. My mother had also been standing in the darkness and she pleaded for him not to slap me again.

"Big shot!" he yelled. "It's after three o'clock in the morning. We didn't know what happened to you!" My mother demanded to know where I had been and I told her exactly where I had spent the evening.

"Why didn't Max drive you home? He had a brand-new 1946 Nash sitting right there. Didn't he know how late it was?"

"They went to sleep . . . I didn't realize what time it was, but I'm okay so please . . ."

"Big Shot," my father continued, "You get a couple of bucks in your pocket and you think you can come and go as you please. Not in this house. No, not in this house, big shot! Give me your wallet!"

"My wallet, why my wallet?"

"Give me your wallet!"

I reached into my back pocket and reluctantly handed him the billfold he was demanding.

"Now you don't have any more money, and you won't be such a big shot."

He placed the closed wallet in the pocket of his robe and thought briefly about his next attack. I knew then this was going to be a drastic resolution. "You'll stay home every night for a month, big shot. Now go to bed!"

I raced up the stairs to my room thinking about how the punishment just meted out to me would alter my present plans. But now I was a martyr doing time for Arlene. The money, I knew he would give back to me. The slap on the face, though humiliating, 38

was pain I could handle. I wanted to cry, but that would be only be for my own benefit. I laid quietly in bed with my eyes closed still savoring the evening and the kiss . . . and now I could bare the punishment and the anger. I managed a smile and thought . . . good night . . . Arlene.

Winning entry, 1997 prize for non-fiction

Body Language at Work

-Ursula Podzinski

I had an occasion to visit the doctor's office recently to pick up some papers for my mother. What better place to observe people? When I first walked in, I saw a lone individual sitting in the corner of the room, eyes downcast, staring at the floor. I checked in at the window and took a seat. As I sat there I decided to try my skills at observation.

I observed a male of perhaps 45 or 50, (judging by the gray at his temples) approximately 195# and possibly 6'. It was hard to tell as he was sitting in a chair, but he had very long legs and looked to be about that height. I watched him for perhaps a half an hour, and it was interesting to see the changes that transpired in this individual in that amount of time.

After a few moments, Dudley (I gave him a name, it seemed the thing to do) glanced up and stared at me with a puzzled look as though he were wondering what horrible affliction had befallen me and hoping I wouldn't drop dead at his feet. Then his eyes moved away restlessly, and I sensed he was trying to shut out the world. From then on he had me hooked, and I couldn't help myself, I had to see what he did next. I was certain that his body language would tell all.

I noticed he held his head very rigid and stiff as though he were daring someone to knock it off. To me he appeared angry and uncertain, but possible it was fear. He scrunched his forehead from time to time as though he were trying to decide to stay where he was or run for his life. He glanced up occasionally, his eyes darting around the room as though he sensed another's eyes upon him, (so much for my undercover observations) but they never made direct contact. At one point he glanced in my direction and gave a rather tight smile that never reached his eyes. It seemed he was trying to tell me not to worry; it wasn't so bad. All the time he was trying to appear calm, but he was not fooling me, the super sleuth that I was. He changed positions frequently, nervously, I thought. One moment his shoulders were hunched and the next moment they were thrown back with bravado. However, I especially noticed his hands. They were never still. He smoothed his hair, checked his nails, picked imaginary lint from his clothing and insisted on rifling through the pockets of his jacket that was thrown haphazardly across his lap. He incessantly licked his lips and I though, fear dries out the mouth. He kept clearing his throat. Perhaps hearing a sound, any sound, was a comfort at that point.

By this time I was feeling a little foolish so I decided to read a magazine but much to my embarrassment, I found my eyes creeping over the top of the pages. Then Dudley walked over to the table and picked up a magazine. Motherhood? He was nervous. I'm certain he didn't even know what he had in his had, it was just something to do, a way to pass the time. He sat down, glanced at the magazine (it was upside down) for a few minutes and then laid it down.

From time to time, Dudley pulled a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket, but as there were "no smoking signs" on the wall, he put them back each time, reluctantly, I thought. All of a sudden, Dudley looked at his watch, jumped up and left.

In that half hour I had observed what appeared to be a man, but inside he could have been you or me - a little boy or girl, alone, nervous and filled with fear of the unknown. He really didn't want to be there so he decided it was wiser to cut and run before the nurse called his name. After all, he thought, he wasn't that sick and he could always come back when he "felt better". Like two months from now? Did Dudley do right?

Faculty & Staff

The Farmer

—Dr. Sharon J. Heuschele

Browned by sun, scarred by sickle, bent to the furrow, He trudges across the tilled rows, Tired eyes squinting to find Spring's virgin sprouts.

Embedded in weed-strewn earth and sprout of another kind, A sign, SOLD, ZONED COMMERCIAL, planted in neighboring field,

Burst his thoughts . . . and yesterday fused with today . . .

Horses straining at plow traces, four o'clock harvest suppers, Plum orchards, quince pies, barn raisings, corn huskings, Spring planting, summer weeding, fall harvesting, winter repairing,

Children swinging from smooth tractor tires latched to obliging maples,

Winter repairing and backaches in mud and sun and rain and snow,

Newborn heifers and kittens breaking the near-holy silence of a midnight barn,

Sleeping children under handmade quilts which defy frosted upstairs windows,

Tears plummet down the farmer's weathered face and speckle the loam below,

He glances toward the dark, wet spots and spies A tiny green sprout whose nubby leaves he strokes with his forefinger.

The farmer whispers softly, "Little one, gift from God," What's to become of us . . . ?
You and I eh?

About Reality

—Dr. Sharon J. Heuschele

What are you? But a vision I see nowhere else.

What are you? But a smile which mirrors mine.

What are you? But a touch when no one else touches.

What are you? But that which I lack in myself.

What are you? But that which I do not have.

What are you? But a period to my life sentence.

Would it matter if there were no perception of essence?

Who would feel the absence of perception most, you, or I?

It wouldn't matter.

You

—Marjory Smella

How I cried that I wanted you—
a partner
a pal
a great friend.
Then you came and I cried even more.

As if I had to have a bad guy in my life, a reason to suffer and whine.

You—the guy with the stetson standing at the end of the street—the one with the gun and the lightening draw.

You are not my shadow, you are not my clone, you are not my endless source.

You are perfect, just right for me.
You showed me myself.
You stretched me out and you made me reach beyond us up to God.

Women's Work . . .

-Marjory Smella

Looking backward toward The Garden through that closing gate, what were you thinking?
Was the serpent that beautiful?
Were you so spoiled, so indulged, so smug?
How ironic that the word you needed then for yourself to the serpent was, "NO!"
The serpents are still with us and we still can't seem to say it!

The Process —Marjory Smella

Gratitude—
for troubles
for tragedy
for pain
for afflictions
—doesn't come first.

It comes when I get off my knees.
it comes after You—
with beauty
with strength
with love
in abundance.

Thank you.

And so to sleep

(Beauty Revisited)

—Dr. Barbara M. Britsch

The girl has curiosity— No doubt about that One of the gifts?

Perhaps

Or, is it a tug somewhere in her belly? her mind? a pull on the ribbon that winds her around the narrow stairs? Upward to where I have waited from

Birth

Day

To Birth

Day

To this, the possible one, the one when all those well-meant wishes dropped on the intricate white lace of her christening robe will, for now, drift in the marrow of her bones

Those useless wishes—

wisdom

beauty

kindness

wealth . . .

All well and good, but not one thought for surety, for safekeeping.

You think it was chance that there was one more guest?

One last wish changing death to sleep?

Oh no-I inserted myself carefully into that catalogue, that litany

(all my love and care cloaked by that dreary disguise)

The penultimate position: too soon and the design would be torn; too late and—well—all for naught.

From the beginning—always—there was this foreboding, you see A dreadful warning ringing in my ears

"Keep her safe

Keep her sheltered

Keep her secure"

But from what—I DON'T KNOW

Some parlous state

some black spot

Only one bright red drop of blood to save a river, a flood That was the promise.

(How long I've been fiddling with this ridiculous contraption!)

And so the moment arrives after all

I hear her coming leaning the tug is strong her feet are swift on the stairs her hair floating her hand already outstretched

The hand that will touch the spindle but never the wheel—

Oh she'll be safe, I've made sure of that But WHY?

And what will I do for a hundred years?

Lit Classes

—Nancy Brown

I host an endless brown-bag lunch. Images and voices shimmer— Specters out of time

Apples and Fritoes
Blue jeans and designer suits

Snickers and diet Pepsi Converse and spike heels

> Carrot sticks and designer water Sweatshirts and Fruitopia

Ghost cupcakes and Easter candies.

"I'm already competent; be quick," announce the suits of harried women taking classes over lunch.

"I'm not too old to learn; take me in," plead the polyester pants of scared women, their eyes boring into mine.

"I'll listen, but please don't make me talk," groan
the washed-out, too big baggies
hiding unformed, tentative minds.

"You can't make me like this stuff," challenge
the wing-tipped shoes of young men
flaunting clean-shaven success.

"I'm a major. I know more than you ever could," declare the blasé androgynes come in from other places refusing to read Milton. An eager voice
from the back
floats forward
and
makes my day—my semester—my year
my lifetime

"How do you think this image informs the meaning of this poem?"

"Whose voice was that?"
—nothing but a mark on the wall—

