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ସପ୍ତମସିଂହ 1990



INSTRESS has been published by the students of College Misericordia since December of 1966. The title, coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins, signifies the moment the reader achieves complete understanding of the written word. The author, through INSTRESS, conveys to and shares with the reader, an emotionally moving experience.

Submit your works to any of the editors or writers of INSTRESS for publication next year. INSTRESS receives campus members' original artwork as well as their original poetry, prose, and photography.

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**THE ROAD IS
COMING**

THE MOAN HOWLS

THE ANIMALS RUN

THE MOTHER-WEEPS

THE ROAD IS COMING

SCHOOLEY
TURNER



Atom One Eve

Sitting in a room with no walls,
Wondering why there aren't any,
Wishing there were.
Thinking deeply about nothing,
Or everything,
Or myself.
Wondering what time it is,
But with no walls,
Where could the clock hang?
What would it measure?
Lightning crashes!
Thunder flashes!
Atoms smash...
My atoms...
All atoms...
Brilliant darkness in the distance.
I'm there,
Black as the rest,
Unaware... restless still.



I leap forward and backward
And out of my skin,
Laughing electrons along the way,
Sensing the loss,
Groping my neighbors.
Shivering fire, I disintegrate...
No matter... no more... no less.
Nothing.
Something...
Dripping cool and sweet,
Something... or nothing...
Rising and falling...
Freezing then warming...
Then boom!!!
Kaleidoscopically I maneuver and groove.
I grow inward through space.
Something is ticking.
I am sitting in a room,
With four walls,
And two clocks...
Hungry as hell...

John Woods



The Tempest

The wind blows softly,
 Slowly,
 Quietly rising,
 Gathering speed,
 Collecting force.
 Now it's a gale,
 Cursing in fury,
 Violently pulling the roots from the Earth.
 The rain rushes fiery,
 Overwhelming with unrestrained power.
 The barren dust awakens
 At the touch of the tears of God.

Theodora Higgins





Too Much Gold

I was not at my most patient, the afternoon twelve-year-old Corey launched into a long and detailed story about some fictional character that had captured his imagination. Distracted by dinner preparations, the thumps of an out-of-balance washing machine and the antics of our one-year-old, I asked him to wait for a better time to finish his story.

"Maybe you need a vacation, Mom," said Corey. "You could go off somewhere and relax, just you and Emmie." He said this with good intentions, knowing that I would never leave the baby for more than a few hours at a time. I laughed and said, "That's a contradiction in terms. Relaxation and Emmie don't belong in the same sentence."

"A contradiction," he repeated. "You mean like 'too much gold.'"

Too much gold. What an apt comparison, I thought. If we allow ourselves to see only the responsibilities of parenthood, we might easily be overwhelmed. But if we have set comfortable priorities, we can enjoy the golden days of our children's babyhoods, the heart-melting smiles, the priceless love and immeasurable dividends we reap as we watch them grow into capable adults.

No, there's no such thing as too much gold.

Nancy Comstock

My Child

My child,
I give you my big brown eyes,
always open to the injustices of the world,
and showing each facet of hope.
I give you my smile and my frown,
Often one and the same.
I give you laughter and despair.
You will experience each in turn.
I give you my burning ambition,
My aspiration for something more.
I give you faith in humankind,
nurture it,
for on the bleakest days, this faith will give you the
strength to go on.
I give you a fervent hope in tomorrow.
Know that life itself is my gift to you...
Treasure it,
for it did not come without a price.
I give you my desire to have someone to hold,
You were begotten of this desire,
and so shall you search lifelong
for everlasting love.

Anya Musto

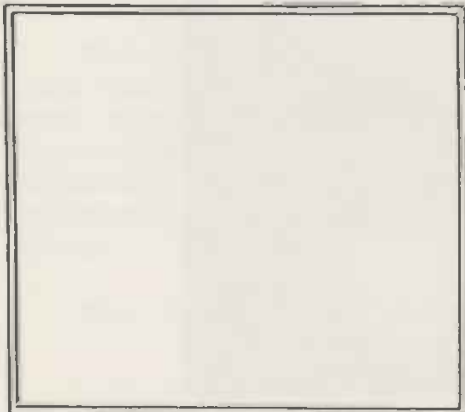
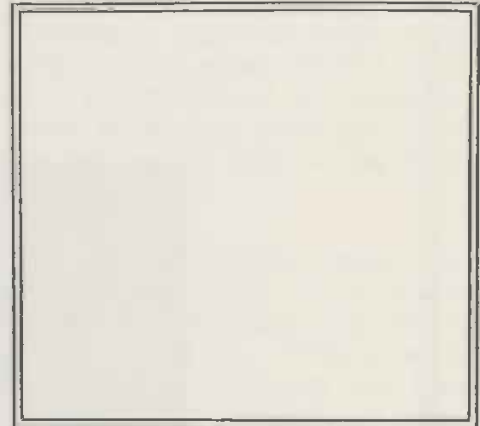




Spaces

Love conjures the closet monsters,
In complete and utter darkness,
Silent hugs hold tight the night,
Ties of the heart as strong as sinew.
Cries go unheard,
And smiles lose their way in the wind.
Endless fields ever-shortening,
Light in the distance.
Hands reaching from afar,
Gripping fields of snow?

Scott Helfrich



The Raven Returns

I don't remember...
When that's possible.
The night's no help.
Nor the morning,
Nor the rain.
The phantoms glow hotly by my bedside,
Flushing my flesh and teasing my soul.
I,
Quietly receding,
Drift into hell.

John Woods

STATES

of

Time

Today
Tomorrow
Yesterday
Always
Never
Now

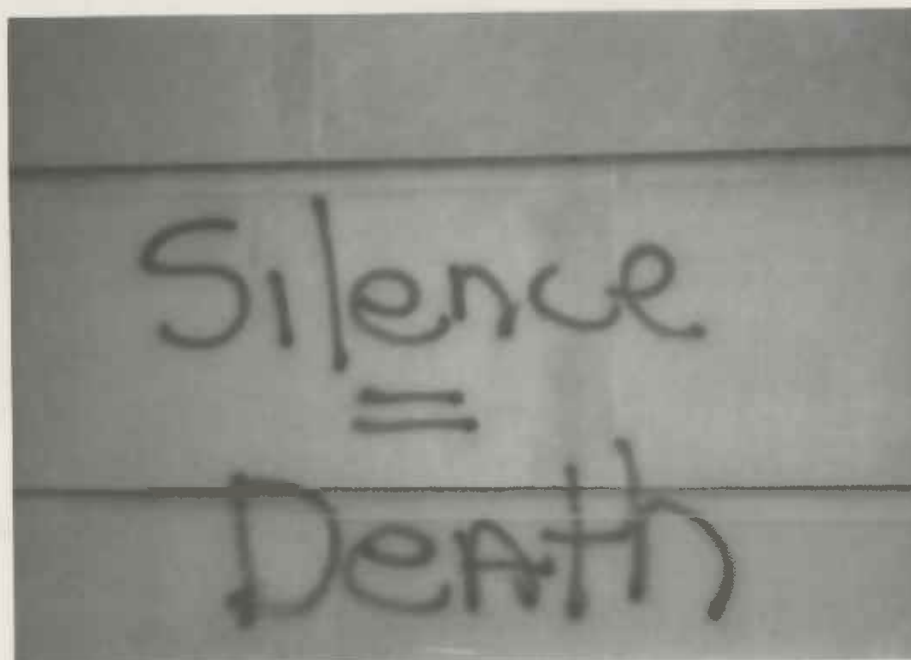
Mind

Happiness
Sadness
Apathy
Remorse
Forgiveness
Banality

Death
Mental
Spatial
Absent
Present
There
Here

Existence

Jill Gorman









Dissolution

Cutting a rectangle with the spade
we slowly lift a scalp of grass.
Deepening the hole we made
Through layers of life and dust we pass.

We slowly lift a scalp of grass,
our minds considering the fall
through layers of life and dust; we pass
to the extinction of us all.

Our minds, considering the fall,
attempt to fathom shoebox graves;
to the extinction of us all
we dwell on lives we couldn't save.

Attempt to fathom shoebox graves
in twilight, down on muddy knees;
we dwell on lives we couldn't save
and fear we came here to appease.

In twilight, down on muddy knees,
we fill the grave with earth and sweat;
and fear we came here to appease
the grass transfigures to regret.

Nancy Comstock

Continuing and Continuing and Continuing Ed

Returning to college after ten or fifteen years can be a daunting experience. We worry that we're too old to learn and too busy to study. What if the combined effects of saccharin, cyclamates, and Nutra-sweet have left us with only eleven functioning brain cells? Take heart, Bunkie. Even though your mother didn't breastfeed, you're way ahead of the average eighteen-year-old freshman. It's a matter of priorities and attitude.

You see, the young freshman comes equipped with priorities which are the result not of logic and experience, but of still-unstable post-adolescent hormones. Therefore, the top priority is getting as close as possible to members of the opposite sex. After that, if there is time, come eating, sports, styling one's hair, going to parties, listening to music, polishing one's car, shopping for radical styles of sneakers, and harassing one's roommate. The only thing lower on the list than studying is doing laundry, which is no problem, since it can easily be trucked home for Mom to do at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter recesses.

Then there is attitude. Back when some of us were in college the first time, the big gripe was that our classes were not relevant. In between protesting the Viet Nam War and celebrating Earth Day, we demonstrated against irrelevant college courses. But guess what? It wasn't the courses that were at fault. It was our immature, inexperienced, though fully functional brains. Today, history is fascinating. Those English classics are alive and true to our own personal tragedies. Philosophy and psychology relate to everything. And if we do run into a course we really hate, hey, sixteen weeks is not forever, and we are used to coping with minor aggravations.

So, if we start to get discouraged, we need only recall how much better we have it than that kid behind us. His mind is open, but it's drooling. We have confidence, experience, and nothing to worry about except work, school, the mortgage, taxes, that clunk in the transmission, toilet-training the twins, radon, taxes, recycling, Bobby's braces, irregularity, spaying the cat, taxes, and our fading hormones.

See how far we've come?

Nancy Comstock

On the Farm

Awaken,
Go to work,
Sleep...
You are the harvest that they will reap.
Pay taxes,
Insurance,
Everyone else.
Pushed to your extremities,
They're pushing you their remedies.

Kevin Curcio



One Way Street

Wives and husbands
Thrown away,
With a fling in the East River.
Say goodbye to rings and lives,
Unwanted babies, fathered by crack,
Here's \$300,
Take it back.
Disposable razors,
Lives,
Plants,
Animals.
Get rid of it all.
Use it,
Abuse it,
Then lose it.
By the time it comes our way again,
We'll be dead.

Kevin Curcio

How to Paint a Cat

Did you ever paint a cat?
It can be done! It's true!
But first you have to catch one.
Or, use one whom belongs to you.

Inspect and clean its surface
'Cause a ragged cat won't paint.
Use no steel wool, do no sanding.
(The results could make you faint.)

The tools required are simple, --
A brush, some rags, and beer.
(A can or two's sufficient
Although a keg could make work freer.)

Now select a pleasing color
And choose your paint with care.
Remember, -- this ain't drywall, --
It's a crazy cat with hair!

Should you use a primer?
It's up to you, of course,
But priming is unnecessary
On critters smaller than a horse.

You will not need a drop-cloth.
You cannot save your floor
'Cause you can't stop all that paint-spray
(Unless you've painted cats before.)

Also, avoid a thinner.
It does not good, no how.
The application, thin or heavy,
Just makes the cat "MEEEEEOOOOWWWW!"

No ladder, 'cause it's stupid,
And a roller will only fail.
(You're reaching DOWN, not UP, you Klutz!
And rollers snag the tail.)

Use alkyd enamel (two coats),
Brush in direction of the hair.
Hold the cat at arm's length
By the front paws (two, -- a pair.)

Paint carefully near its nose
And as for vital parts, oh well, sir,
I cannot be instructive
Or this won't get past the censor.

When the painting's finished
Try not to look too glum
Although there's cat-claws in your fingers
And fangs stuck in your thumb.

Now hold the cat until the paint's dry,
Though cat is angry, it is true.
Therefore, hold it out at arm's length
For perhaps a day or two.

Be proud of your endeavor!
Let your courage be glass-clear!
'Cause you'll need that pride and courage
When you paint your cat next year!!

J.R. Smith



Poeta Nova

Out roll his words
like great lengths of White Cloud,
Wiped in taboos
Soaked in excess
Stained with the sneer of his naivete.
And, proud of his creation,
he forgets to flush.

Nancy Comstock



I Went For a Ride Over Walt Whitman Bridge

I look'd beneath my bootlegs today...
And sure as manure,
You were there.
I talk'd to myself in the open-air,
And felt you everywhere.
The leaves turn'd gently
With the wind,
And whisp'rd in my ear,
Leave now, brother, from this place,
Destroy now your teacher.

John Woods

Left? Right?

Pushers,
Pimps,
Panhandlers,
Hookers.
Genocide,
Homicide,
Suicide.
Buy it on the Belt Parkway,
179th Street,
The Pallisades.
Eight million people locked close and tight.
Die,
Hide,
Or fight.
Heroin Crack Ice Weed Cocaine.
Jump to the E-Train from the 59th Street Bridge.
Knifed down outside a bar,
Shot to hell in your broken-down car.
Carry me out of your grand village,
Your garden,
Your supply is not my demand.
Goodbye Harlem,
Bedford Styuvesant,
Knickerbocker Ave.
I guess you don't see what I see.
Take care,
If that's how it's got to be.

Kevin Curcio



La Reflexion

i look into the mirror but cannot see myself;
my reflection competes with things around me.
the pictures on the wall disdainfully judge beauty-
the bed mercilessly compares usefulness-
even the light overhead shines obstinately.
It taunts me, telling me
that if i kill it,
i'll have nothing.
but i ask myself, "what do i have now?"

Jill Gorman

Incidental Love

With querulous start,
Hurt impervious from thought,
Yet left irrevocably distraught.
Irksome chattering,
Oscillating hearts.
Obdurate eyes,
Melancholy cries.
The art of interpersonal love
Dies.

Shawn Rivas

Secrets

Grappling with promises told
In the dark of the night.
Cold,
Dark,
Tear-blown promises.
Promises pushing to the surface,
Breaking through the hidden walls.
From dreams of the flesh and reality,
To nightmares filled with laughter.

Scott Helfrich

Here's Your Love Poem

I am impossible, my love,
And you,
Alone,
Admit me.
My moody-mouthed-ambivalence
Toward you,
While mad,
Had fit me.
Whether nature,
Nurture,
Demonic rust,
My love,
It alters dawn
To dust.
(You don't get this one either ... do you?)

John Woods

"Earth's the right place for love."
-Robert Frost

. . . And the last time I saw you, you said
"It's so hard to let go."
This spinning sphere of earth
With its rising/setting sun
and its fair-flung silver black stars
and its moody changing moon
and its shining spectacle of bright and brooding sky -
You knew you could turn from at the end.
For earth is not ours to hold;
But Love is.
Earth holds for us only our beginnings
Boxed deep.
Love holds together
All of us who share the piece of earth
We think is ours.
It's so hard to let go of love:
The radiant smile, the lilting voice,
The quiet stepping into one another's prayer,
The sacrament of each moment's
Hope and hurt and panic and pain.
It's so hard to let go;
Love holds for us
All we have ever been,
Open to all we will forever be:
No boxed remains,
No odds or ends,
Only the unknown,
Only the dimly-shrewdly guessed,
Only the infinitive "to be."

Dr. Regina Kelly, RSM

David

Tears of joy
Rage.
Visions of baby powder
And baby shoes...
Navy blazer,
Dirty bucks,
Baseball gloves and
Football helmets...

Sheepskin held high in honor,
Praised...

Buildings designed
Out of the stuff dreams are made on,
Still remaining.
Life planned,
Family's love,
Clouds cover all.

Ellie Lawrence



Photo Finish

Into the raging tempest we're hurled
As comets from the netherworld.
We cloud our tails around the sun,
And flash our image to no one.

John Woods