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INSTRESS

spring '93

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Instress has been published by the students of College Misericordia since December 1966. The title, coined by Gerard Manley Hopkins, signifies the moment the reader achieves complete understanding of the written word.

Literary Editor: Anya Musto; **Editorial Staff:** Rebecca Ardoline, Peggy Charnick, Jenn Garceau, Sara Rose; **Advisor:** Dr. Jeffrey Johnson.

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Misericordia

College Misericordia
Dallas, PA 18612

Somedays,
sometimes,
I wish I was nine years old again.
Old enough to know the important things,
 like how to laugh,
 how to love,
 how to play.
Young enough to hold my father's hand.

If I only knew then,
what I know now,
Oh- how I would have savored those times!
 those snacks I was too busy to eat
 the baths that seemed to last forever
 the early bedtime that I dreaded.
Who knew that such simplicity was
luxury in disguise.

I long for the luxuries of my youth
but they are inaccessible.
I no longer fit on my mother's lap,
nor does she dry my tears.
She can't see my wounds anymore -
they cannot be bandaged.
Time is my only healer and,
like an old friend who knows me too well,
its passage brings reality, some pain,
and finally - comfort.

I try to rationalize that perhaps people,
like wine,
improve with age.
After all, what did I have at age 9?
... besides security and stability.
There was no mystery, no excitement,
no romance.
and so I think
that I'm happy with today
and though I've lost the past
there is so much to love in the present
and look forward to in the future
and I don't want to be nine
and I love being twenty-one
I think
somedays
sometimes.

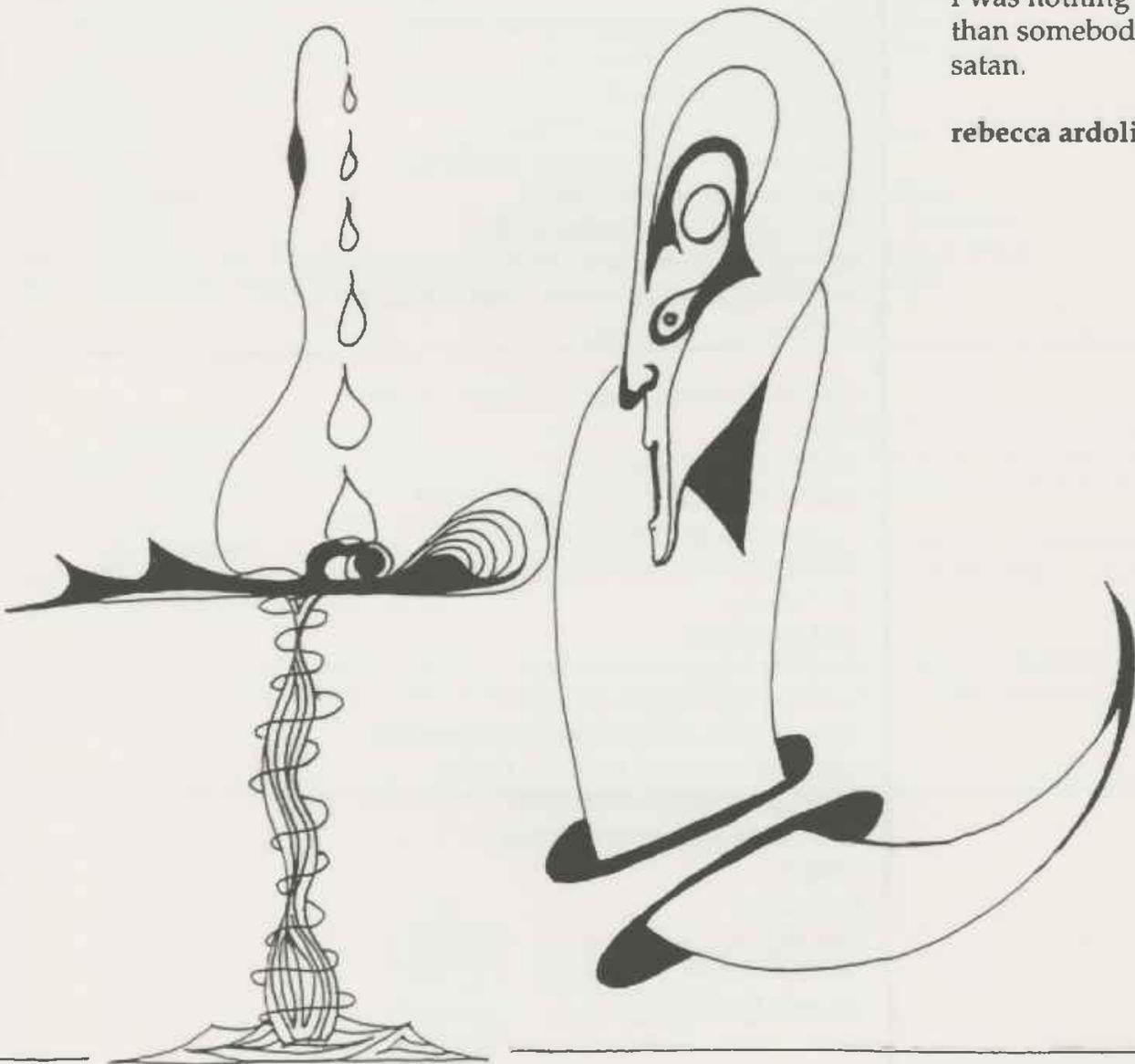
Donna Darnos

evil

One
by
One
they came
to haunt me.
Row
upon
Row
the demons
came to hunt me.
Bit
by
Bit
they wore away
my man-made defense.

Until one day
I was nothing more
than somebody else's
satan.

rebecca ardoline



Murderers of newts we were--
strange and ratty children
with muddied cheeks and blue jeans and mudpies on the back porch.
It was for us to find the world
and name things strange and wonderful names
Like Tooth Fairy Tree at the edge of the woods--
the maple tree laden with new seedlings we believed were fairies
about to be born.
As the frigid end-of-winter wind scattered the fairies
we children stood in silent homage
snowsuits from toes to tops of necks
knowing that many more believers would now find
treasures of shiny quarters and picture storybooks
under their pillows in morning.
We had gaps in our smiles to prove
Like orphans
we confiscated an old water-heater box one summer
and tried to live in it.
With our deluxe-set Crayolas we attempted to decorate
our new abode.
Through suffocating heat of middle summer
we scribbled away on the walls
trying to make the cardboard box more a home.
Once I scribbled with black and red crayons
only to find my artwork looked like a picture of Satan.
It frightened me and I ran off
but that night a thunderstorm dissolved our home in a heap.
We children lived in mystic otherworldliness.
Going indoors at nightfall,
doing piles of worthless homework,
reciting monotonous nightly prayers
did not exist.
To us scampy, ragged creatures of nature
they were a sacrilege.

Anya Musto

I Always Hated Being a Goat

The worst thing I was ever reincarnated as was a goat in India. It was not too bad at first being that domestication was just fine once you got past the idea of living in subservience. This was usually achieved after the revelation that living in the wild was extremely difficult. Even the great cats worry about where their next meal will come from and black and brown bears are often heard complaining that their dens tend to be too damp. When you're domesticated all of your basic necessities such as food and shelter are provided. Added bonuses include pleasurable pettings and an occasional grooming, especially when you're cute. My gig as a chihuahua was heavenly. My life as a goat however was one of gradual deterioration.

The skid downward began with the death of my mother. I had a caring mother as far as goats go. She never failed to protect me from the jealous billys who always felt threatened by other billys. She was a great listener as well as one who could carry a conversation when necessary. She passed away shortly after I finished weaning. Her death was a tragic one. She was attached to a milking machine with six other goats and a cow in our keeper's first efforts to modernize their facilities. A sudden storm produced a lightning bolt which struck the barn, electrocuting all of the attached animals. My keepers immediately perceived this as some sort of divine sign that they should not modernize after all and scrapped the milking machine. I heard one of my keepers trying to find solace in the tragedy by saying that he always felt milking by hand was more intimate, strengthening the bond between man and animal. He was an idiot.

The loss of my mother and the other milk producing animals really hit the financial well being of my keepers hard. So much so that they began to act in desperation. They resorted to trying to milk all of the billys including me. The one who believed in intimacy between man and animal tried twice with me. I vowed that once my horns grew I would ram his knees. I didn't like what he mistook and utter for. But the opportunity for revenge never came about. After several weeks of diminishing fortunes my keepers sold all the billys to rangers of a national wildlife preserve.

I did not know why at the time, but this frightened me. Sure I was leaving the only home I ever knew as a goat, but relocating while being reincarnated was as common as changing name and species. It was something about being at a refuge for endangered animals when not endangered that was unsettling.

The rangers at the preserve treated us with much kindness. They displayed gentleness and patience throughout the transition into our new home, never laying a hand on the most stubborn. We seemed to eat and drink better than the people of India itself. I didn't know if this was because they were supplied by various worldwide organizations interested in the preservation of endangered species, or if they were engaged in dishonest activity such as the black market. We lived the good life which led me to question our good fortune. Had goats been added to the endangered species list? Were we as scared as the cow? Or

did these guys just really like goats? I received an answer the following morning.

We were pulled out of our stalls that morning and led to the front gate of the preserve. Each of the billys were assigned to a pair of rangers for foot patrol of the grounds. All of the billys were thrilled except for me. They had never been taken for walkies before. Our previous owners just let us roam about a fenced area behind the barn. You'd swear they were being taken to Disneyland for the first time. I suspected different motives behind the walkies. I couldn't put a hoof on it, but something was not right. I resisted leaving the compound. One of the rangers offered me a carrot as a bribe to follow him. He led me to the gate with it. I wasn't even sure if I liked carrots all that much, but my limited capacity to reason as a goat caused me to indulge. I went along with the rest of them.

The preserve was an arid place, making the grasses and brush quite unedible. Dust rose with every step I made filling every open pore of my body with dirt making me more uncomfortable than I had already felt. The rangers' job seemed to be checking the health status of the many different animals on the preserve. A lot of them were predatory, including an endangered species of lion.

These lions and the rangers seemed to have developed a common trust and respect for one another. Unfortunately we hadn't. They stared at me like one who stares at chocolate eclairs. They were content with just staring as if on a diet. The rangers' presence was my only protection. The rangers appeared to be studying the lions' interactions and feeding habits. They jotted notes and spoke in admiration of the beauty and majesty of the beasts. I struggled to control bowel movements.

Our next stop was visiting a sick lion who the rangers had been giving medication through its food. The rangers wished to see if it had eaten yesterday's supplement of raw mutton. They were worried that it would soon die. This prospect excited me.

When we arrived at the location, the lion was resting under a shade tree. Its mutton had collected a small swarm of flies. The lion had not even tasted it. The two rangers approached cautiously, dragging me along. They intended to tranquilize it and then take it in for treatment. As we drew closer, I felt an overwhelming sense of danger. The lion lifted its head and stared directly into my eyes. I froze. The rangers did not trust my instincts, but instead dragged me by leash closer to the lion. Had they forgotten that a sick or wounded animal was the most dangerous? Especially if it weighed several hundred pounds and could bite through granite. I cried and struggled but the rangers persisted. They finally stopped when the lion began its charge.

Instead of firing at the lion as I expected, the rangers let go of my leash and ran away. The lion's charge was a direct and deliberate one for me. I realized that I would have to make some pathetic attempt at defense because I could never outrun it. I had no clear, or even obscure advantage. The rangers had abandoned me, I had two small buds in place of horns, and at this point was feeling really nauseous. In a valiant display of bravery, or desperation, I began my own charge. I would make a joust of it. Perhaps if it was still weak from its

illness I could knock it unconscious with a well delivered blow. The only thing I accomplished however was changing the time which would appear on my death certificate.

When we collided, I could hear, feel, taste, smell, and see my front and hind legs break. It was the most multisensory experience I had yet to live. The fight was already over. Its exceptionally powerful jaws pierced through my mid-section crushing all of my ribs. Blood spurted from my mouth as water from a busted water main spurts from pipes. I cried the expected cry of mercy, but obviously received none. The lion's kill was too powerful an instinct to overcome.

And as I lay there being devoured by the recovered lion, I could see through my good eye, the other popped out, the rangers at a distance high fivin' and laughing in celebration of the lion's rejuvenation. The endangered lion's numbers would not decrease this day. I was testimonial to that. This made the rangers very pleased. I, however, was a little more than upset.

I understand that its tragic to see a species near extinction, but saving one is little consolation to a goat who had just been sacrificed. Just because there were only a few hundred left in the world doesn't justify placing more value on their life than say a goat's. Maybe they are near extinction because they are not as practical as a goat. I've yet to eat lion cheese. I never wish to become an animal that receives so little respect and be treated as cannon fodder. Again. Hopefully I could become á dolphin, everybody loves dolphins.

the end

John Zongilla



Snow Fire

Wafered memories,
soothing the silence
Like a father's
embrace
-A February snow-fall-

Absolving past and present
in a
cleansing baptism,

Inviting pilgrims to
stoke the
souls' embers
and warm
the sacred wind.

J. Calderone

Faith

Jesus
What do you want with me?
I am not a fisherman.
I am not a healer.
Hell, I'm not even
a tax collector.

Jesus
Won't you leave me alone?
I cannot make your sacrifice.
I cannot give up my life.
Why, I cannot even
see you at times.

Jesus
Will you never leave me?
I will not put faith in you.
I will not be saved.
Damn, I will not even
believe in myself.

Rebecca Ardoline

Small Wish

The lovely dream of open spaces
come true in daily losses
well seen and felt
through all the faces
confined to smaller worlds.
Within,
the sun shines
in smaller
doses.

The rain rationed
to a moment's time,
and the fog denied to all.

Nights are always
abruptly . . . ended,
before the hour of ten.
And dawns of gold,
thought, well documented
are fantasies to most.

Meanwhile, river time goes by, a mocking ghost,
and me, I, us, We, wish for a chance to be
one and the whole above.

Roberto Montanez

Genesis

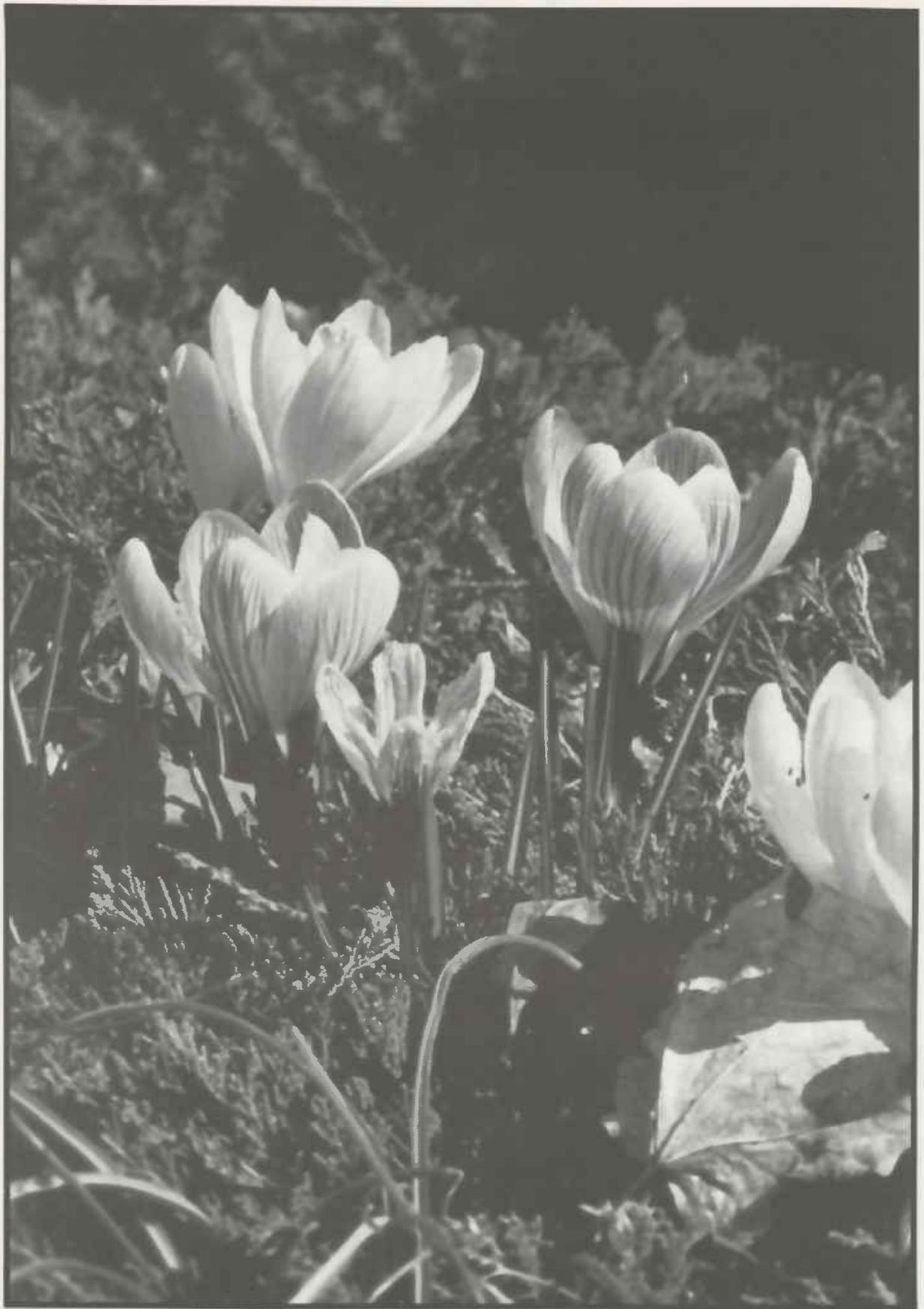
In the east end of my garden
Where the bottlebrush sways
And fragrance of southernwood
Wraiths through the air,
I lean on my spade for a moment
To rest and survey my realm.

And I am well pleased.
Everywhere the eye wanders
There is beauty and design.
Light plays against shadow,
Needle against frond.
Here I designed lavender, there phlox.
I arranged the plants the way
I'd seat a dinner party.
Pale and feathery astilbes nod
And whisper next to bold bergenia.
Shy coreopsis plays the foil
To dashing filipendula.
I ruthlessly evicted common chickweed
And then commanded convallaria to bed down
In the dry spot under the maple tree.
I whittled the viburnum to a shape
As lean and leggy as a faun.
Even the hummingbirds came at my bidding
To nuzzle scarlet beebalm
So enticingly placed by the wall.

In the east end of my garden
Where the bottlebrush sways,
And the barn cat bats at a butterfly,
Time blurs at the edges,
But I hear what the mayfly sings:
 "Stones and bones
 And blossoms
 All wear away.
 Some in an eon;
 Some in a day."

In the east end of my garden
Where the bottlebrush sways,
And the woodbine twines
In the chokeberry tree,
There waits another gardener
 Tolerant,
 Possibly amused,
 Perhaps benign

Kathleen Haentjens



The Confessor

2.20.93

Dm Am Dm

you know my will, yet love me still when I

This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The first measure is in D minor (Dm) and contains the lyrics 'you know my will,'. The second measure is in A minor (Am) and contains 'yet love me still'. The third measure is in D minor (Dm) and contains 'when I'. The fourth measure is in D minor (Dm) and contains 'when I'. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a 6/8 time signature.

Em Bm Bb Dm

fa - - a - - all a wa-y from you.

This system contains the next four measures. The first measure is in E minor (Em) and contains 'fa - - a - -'. The second measure is in B minor (Bm) and contains 'all'. The third measure is in Bb and contains 'a wa-y from you.'. The fourth measure is in D minor (Dm) and contains 'you.'. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a 6/8 time signature.

Bb Dm

(To Verses)

This system contains the next four measures. The first measure is in Bb and contains a whole rest. The second measure is in Dm and contains a whole rest. The third measure is in Bb and contains a whole rest. The fourth measure is in Dm and contains a whole rest. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a 6/8 time signature.

Bb After last refrain Dm

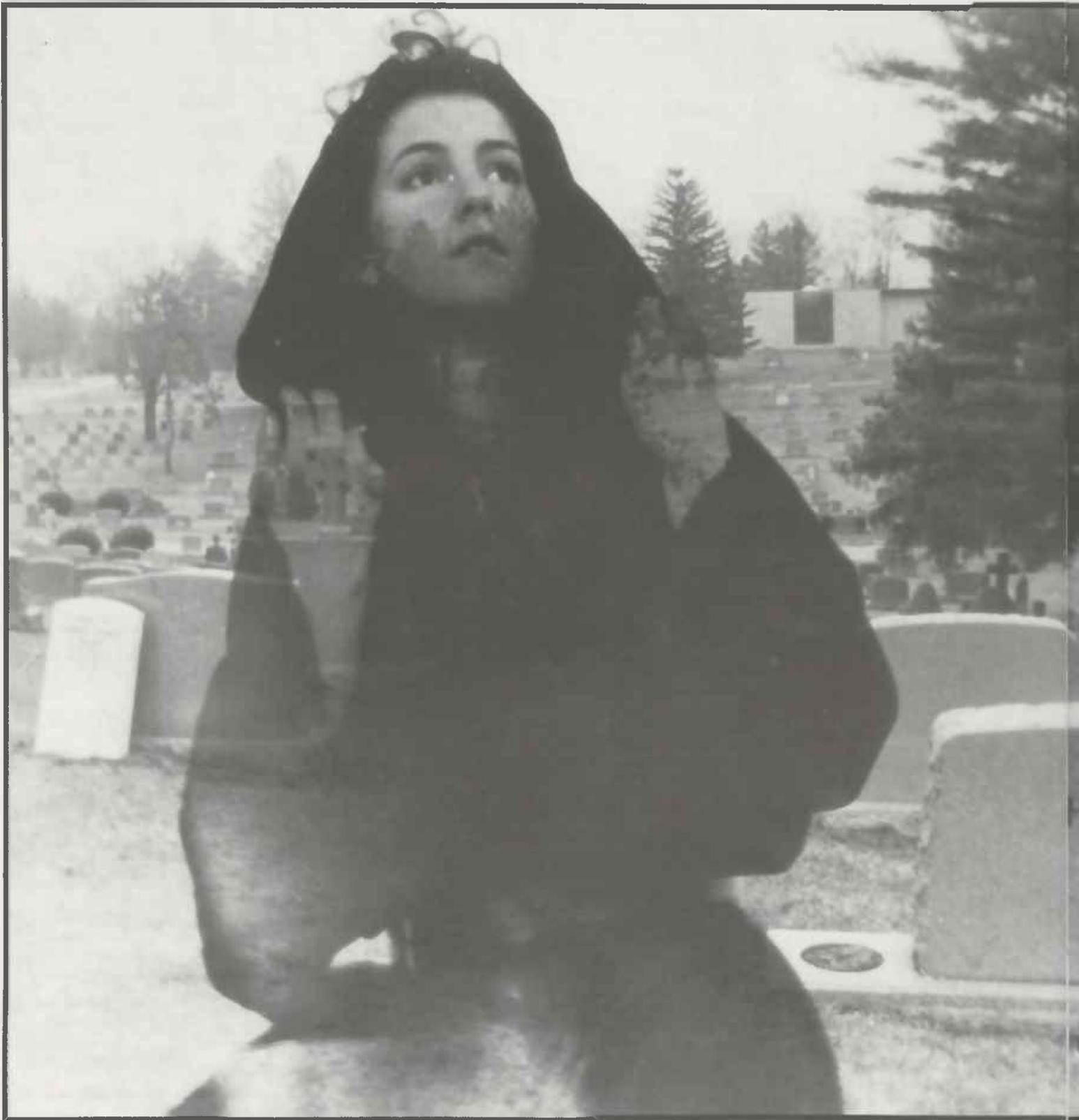
a wa-y from you. Fine

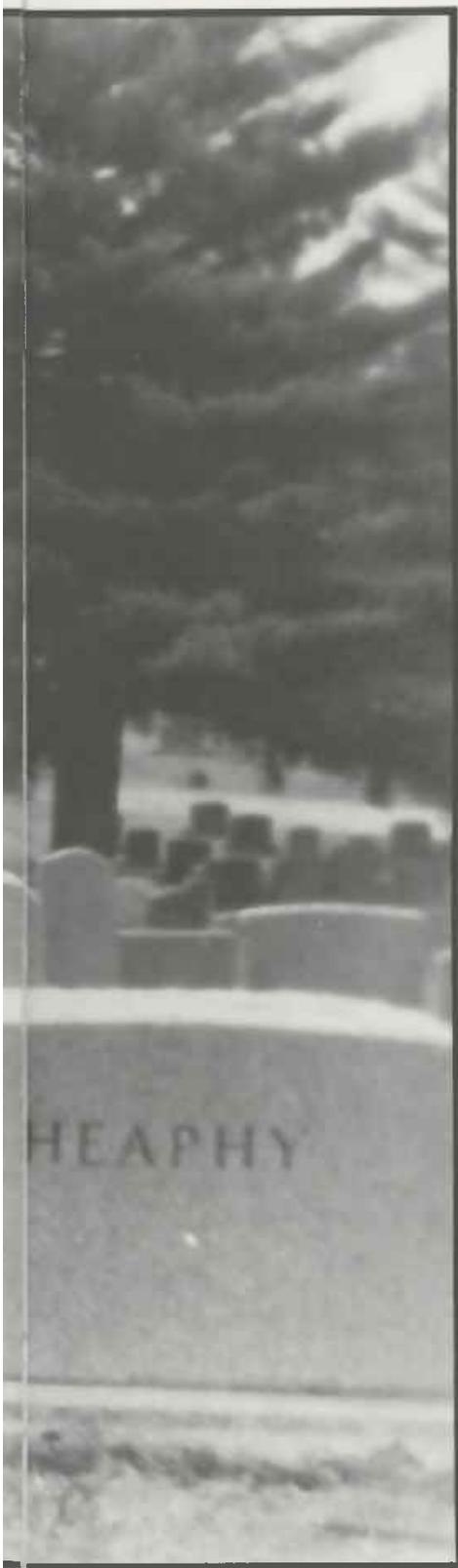
This system contains the final four measures. The first measure is in Bb and contains 'a wa-y from you.'. The second measure is in Dm and contains 'you.'. The third measure is in Dm and contains a whole rest. The fourth measure is in Dm and contains a whole rest. The music is written in treble and bass clefs with a 6/8 time signature.

		Dm	Bb	Am			
Verses	1. My	sins	cut as	deep	as the	nails	pierced your
	2. I	fall	to my	knees	and	beg	your for-
	3. I	o-	pened my	eyes	and	saw	your
	4. your	Word	is the	Light	that	shines	in my

	E	Am	F		
1. hands	and your	feet.	I weep	at your	
2. give -	ness, -	please!	Though	sin	leaves me
3. face	in the	sky!	Your	Light	filled my
4. night -	time of	day!	When	I	fall to

	Em7	Dm	G	(To Refrain)
1. feet,	I	weep	at your	feet.
2. weak,	your	Word's	all I	need!
3. mind,	love	poured	from your	eyes!
4. sin,	You	sift	me a-	gain!





Reality

How can I let the petals fall,
one and then the other.
Quickly they fall in front of me.
I pick them up one at a time,
as if each were a memory someone was trying to steal.

The wind blows stronger.
I try to keep my hat on, but it only lifts up more quickly.
The wind begins to pull me away from where I am standing.

Holding on creates a constant pull away from my body,
as if I were trying to rip the skin from my arms.

The petals fall more quickly.
One and then the other.

Hesitantly, I walk away.

Colleen Yanora

The Promised Sand Castle

A sand castle had been promised
a gift of love
etched
created with great care

A walled city with towers and staircases
a work of art
detailed
a world created for beauty and pleasure

But it was
in reality
a sand castle
predestined for doom

The rain melted the detailed etchings
the sun cracked the walls
the moisture that held the sand firm fled
the wind scattered the grains of sand

But it was the changing tides
that erased all traces
of the gift
created in love

First gentle lapping
eroding the outer facade
turning progressively to pounding waves

Swirling
carrying
destroying
eliminating

What remains is raging seas
salty bitter waters foaming into waves
and a sweet memory of love's gift
the promised sand castle

Eilene S. Wenner

Folding Clothes

Scented from the dryer
Tangled skeins of shirts and socks
Towels twined about the sheets
Jumbled together in lovely warm confusion
Wreckage from the wash.

Plucked piece by piece
Pinioned on the countertop
Socks-- heel to toe
Shirts-- shoulder to shoulder
Wrenched to perfection
Meticulous folds
Concise creases
Piled precisely
Filed by owner

Order from chaos,
My life's work.

Peggy Charnick

A Reaction to Critique

I just read a bunch of bad poems
And now I am going to write one.
Oh, it will have rhythm and rhyme
And meter, but when all is said and done
It won't say anything you've not
Heard before and it won't make you cry
And it won't make you laugh, and it
Probably won't even make you ask why
(As any good poetry should).
So why did I write it? The answer's so clear.
I wrote it because it was all
That I had, and nothing you wanted to hear.

Essence of Life

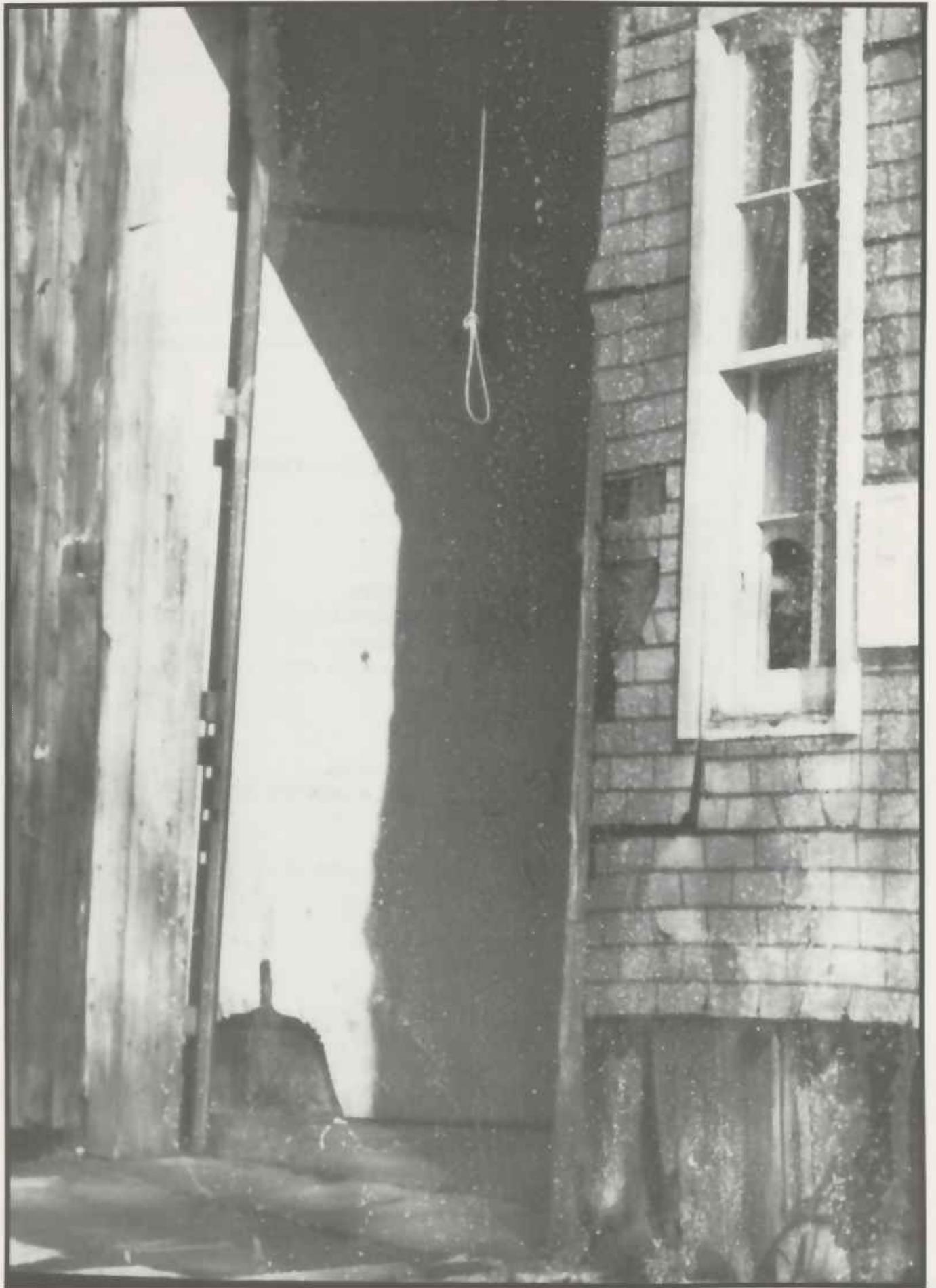
Her newborn head,
Round and hot with pulsing life
The wisps of chick-down hair
Barely dry
Exudes a provocative scent
Of salt
And blood
And something pure
Compelling me to bend closer
In primal answer
I breathe deeply
and with reverence
Savoring the essence of
New life.

Peggy Charnick

Rebecca Ardoline

I don't remember Black Mammy
my soft, tattered brown sock doll
on the cherry-wood-finish curio.
Her gaudy gold earrings from beneath a smart red paisley kerchief
tied on her head
and spotless apron-covered blue smock
belie my turbulent childhood of little red face screeching tantrums
and messes of apple sauce and ground liver.
Black Mammy was a constant childhood companion I've been told . . .
It must have been a strange sight:
Caucasian first-born
unknowing
middle-class child
dragging by the arm a Southern Negro slave doll.
There she sits after twenty-two years
still plain and wise and sadly elegant if she ever could be
retaining dignity
in my parent's 1993 parlor next to the butterfly touch lamp.
Decades after Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X and Brown
v. The Board of Education (Topeka, Kansas)
Black Mammy is ageless in hope
unrelenting
but in the age of microwavable Cheez-Whiz
disposable cartoon-character Pampers
and Michelangelo computer viruses,
time is not able to liberate her.

Anya Musto



Reunion

Big-wheels and popsicles
Your Sit and Spin and my rocking horse
Mrs. Townson's Fourth of July party
Playing Superman in the front yard, with
blankets pinned around our necks
Sleeping over at each other's houses,
eating Coco Puffs the next morning
Coloring at the kitchen table, you told me
that you would love me forever.
We were only four years old.

Moving day...packing boxes, flustered parents
No time to say goodbye.
Sporadic visits, lessening over time 'til
it was only a card at Christmas
...and one year no card arrived.
Our parents lost contact and I knew you no more.

The years flew by and soon
I lost my first tooth and
learned to ride a two-wheeler.
Second grade passed and so did third,
The chicken pox came and went, as did my
love for the older who lived next-door.
The years flew by and I learned to drive and to vote.
I graduated and went to college.
But you never left my thoughts.

Christmas came again, 1991 was ending.
I never understood why I sent you a card that day...
never expecting a reply.

You wrote...we met...so many years gone by --
so much to rediscover about
ourselves and each other.
New memories to be created and
old memories to be rekindled.

Phone calls and letters
Your silk shirts and my baseball cap
Celebrating my 21st birthday together
Playing football in the backyard, with
my younger brothers
Having dinner with our parents,
sneaking out later for pizza
Sitting at the Snowball, with your arm around me,
you told me that we would be friends forever.
And I believed.

Sara Rose

The Dreamer

A night without dreams
is a waste of time.

Monsters, fairies, and devils,
each joining in the show taking place only in the mind.

The window is open.
I can peek through it.
I only peek.

Each dream having a one-woman audience.
Endless hours of creation.

Colleen Yanora



The Season of Giving

It's January resolution time, and
There's a church bazaar next week,
So armed with steely determination,
And fortified with hints from
How to De-Clutter Your Life,
I go to confront my attic once again.

As a bride, I loved this place,
Gladly carted the Electrolux
Up rickety pull-down stairs,
To clean every corner,
Then, designated areas.
Here, Christmas decorations,
There, out of season linens,
And one whole end for extra household things
From his family and mine.
In those days, the accumulation
Felt like wealth and I loved
The saving and the storing and the labeling.

But lately, there has come a different feeling,
Perhaps a peripheral glimpse of the narrow gate,
Or maybe, nothing weightier than weariness and
A longing to be unencumbered,

Everything that I attempt to cull
From this vast storehouse
Has its hold on me.
My mother's crocheted doilies,
Leather books from my grandfather's study,
A silver wine basket, too ugly to use,
But too good to give away.
A set of ironstone dishes
That a grown child could use some day.

Now I take myself in hand,
And with a vision of migrant farmers' children
Approach the corner where the toys are stored.
Wooden puzzles, Legos, neatly boxed,
G.I. Joes and Barbie dolls and then I see him -
That droll totem of my son's vanished babyhood,
An absurd and tattered grey wool monkey,
And I am locked in a relentless reverie with
Those limpid black yarn eyes, as though
He could return my baby to me.

Who could have foreseen
That the getting would be so easy;
The unloosing, the work of a lifetime? **Kathleen Haentjens**

The Calcium Incident

My father and I were in the supermarket one summer evening, a lazy summer evening it was because I distinctly remember having nothing better to do, and going to the store with my father, who happens to be the main cook in our family, is like going to a New York City emergency room with a flesh wound, once you get in, it takes you forever to get out. On the way in, just as we stepped on the grooved black rubber pressure pads that trigger the doors to wheeze open, I reminded him of his tendency to spend inordinate amounts of time surveying the produce section, evaluating the meat section and basically scrutinizing every aisle like a price spy from a rival chain, and urged him not to dilly-dally. He hadn't responded, which usually meant that he had probably thought about responding, weighed the pros and cons of such an action, and basically realized he didn't have to because he was paying the bills. I decided to shut my mouth and make the best of a potentially drawn out situation. I roamed up and down aisles, stopped to read the occasional headline or two at the newspaper stand, grabbed a small cup of free coffee near the entrance, and talked to some check out clerks with whom I had gone to high school. After some time, I realized it was happening. I called up images of the different areas of the store, places I knew he was likely to linger, picturing him mesmerized by the sugary splendor of the baked goods, enchanted by the red-jarred wall of Italian sauces, and overcome by the large bubbling tanks layered with claw-banded lobsters. I had to find him and get out. I didn't have the patience for this. I found him checking the dates on the cheese across from the milk. This seemed purposeful enough, and a remark from me taken in the wrong way, which is usually the way they are taken anyway, might inadvertently prolong our stay. He turned and, in a wonderfully urgent tone, asked me to get a gallon of milk. I did just that. As I waited for him to conclude his cheese dating, I lackadaisically began to swing the white plastic jug in the air, each time rejoicing in the fact that we were getting out of the store at any moment. Perhaps it was the perspiration on my palm, or the condensation on the jug itself, or maybe Murphy's Law throwing in its two cents. Whatever it was that allowed the milk to take flight, it caused time to stand still, it caused me to regret, it caused my father to smirk, it caused me to wince as the jug exploded over the middle of aisle 10. A friend of mine who was in the store's employ appeared to investigate. My conscience wouldn't allow me to stick my friend with the clean up, while my father waited for me in the car.

Michael Fiato

