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Calliope



1989

Calliope

*Volume Six
Spring 1989*

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The Offering

cover photo by Chris Klug

SB277

*When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep*

Yeats, "When You Are Old"

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Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting
Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality"



Genesis
Kathy Cohen

Drowning in a sea of velvet
darkness
made not of absence but of
ignorance and ignoring
struggle
faster, swimming, cling to darkness
that falls away under the hands
Grasping, struggling, kicking
lungs on fire to
Burst
into light and
draw
deep ragged breaths
pause, gather, assimilate
thoughts to still the endless inner
quivering.

The noise drones
one long single note
of never ending variety
higher
faster
louder
wilder
ageless newborn roaring

Hero at Large

Beckie Jackson

He is everywhere, intruding, pushing his way into every thought. I beg for quiet, solitude. I must finish my paper. "I'll be quiet," he promises, but I know not to believe him. He's made this promise before. It's not that he doesn't mean it, it's simply that he can't. He is five years old.

He is my little hero asking, "Lady, are there any bad guys in your house? I'll take care of them." And, "Do you have a husband? I will marry you."

How can I love him so much and yet get so exasperated I want to scream? When I took on this job five years ago, it was the answer to a prayer. There's been more happiness than can be measured, yet my blood pressure has risen ten points.

He is my little monster, barging into the bathroom demanding lunch, hiding while I call his name until I'm near panic. Yet he has sugar pockets on his cheeks, so sweet to kiss. Tickle him and he knots with laughter. Enough of this, I have work to do.

I retreat to the privacy of the guest room upstairs only to be followed. Climbing up beside me on the bed, he says, "I guess I'm sleepy," and proceeds to push me, asking for more room. Can he have my pen and pad to draw a picture of the sunshine and his best friend? Can I work on the floor and give him the whole bed? He wants to help me write. He cries, saying over and over, "Momma, I want to help." He slides headlong off the bed calling, "Help, help me Momma." He cries on the floor because I slid him down instead of pulling him back. I feel like a heel and worry about emotional scars.

Giving up, he goes in search of his candy cane pencil. My mind wanders back to our mornings. He wakes me at daybreak to tell me the sun is shining and the birds are singing. Sleepily, I convince him to climb into my bed and cuddle for a while. I'm hoping for a few extra minutes of sleep and he's turning into Bobby Mole, tunneling under the covers and tickling my toes.

I'm brought back to the present by the sound of his chirping as he climbs the stairs. I give him paper and he tells me not to look

because he's writing me a secret. It will be a book without words. I am to make up my own story. Despite his secret, he keeps me posted every five seconds on what he's doing. He heads back downstairs and my mind starts to wander again.

He likes to wear cowboy boots, jeans, and no shirt. He once wrestled himself--much to my delight--across the living room floor, shirtless, in a pair of blue shorts and his boots.

He's back again with sharpened pencil in hand. "Don't look at my paper, look at your own, O.K.?" How I wish I could.

He barks and bounces, cock-a-doodle-doods like a rooster while I try to concentrate. He starts asking questions, tough ones. "Can you see through God?" I answer as best I can, then turn back to my writing. He interrupts me to look at his picture. He's done it very well except for nickle-sized ears on a dime-sized body. He interrupts again for a counting lesson.

Would I trade him for a more demure child? One willing to sit and watch the world? Not a chance.

Now he sits behind the rocker quietly filling a small wagon with his treasures: a bow and arrow, Raggedy Ann and Andy, and a comb. His prizes are as eclectic as he.

Out of nowhere, I am attacked by an Indian. A rubber knife follows my pen across the page, pressing me to complete my work and join in the play. The knife moves to my dictionary, slicing it into pages.

I must go. My hero has waited long enough.

Watching Them Grow Yellow

Adam Tenenbaum

Life is very long for a ten year old, time is a good friend. So it was for Tom, who sat endlessly at his desk listening to his teacher's hum. That's all her lectures were to him, background music for daydreams. Some days he was the captain of a ship, a one-man sixty foot sailboat. Swim all day, play with the fish, and never worry about rain. Other days it was horses. Watch them run, their speed, their grace. And all too willing to give you a ride. You can go anywhere on a horse, over mountains and through streams and even to movies and shopping.

Tom wiggled in his seat. It was a warm and sunny day. The warmth made the classroom smell like old milk. It was mid-afternoon, the sleepest part of the day. Tom had the eraser end of a pencil in his mouth and was absentmindedly chewing on it. He closed his eyes and went into a hot-air balloon. Up in the sky he went, high above the world. He stopped on a cloud and got out for a walk. He bounced on the cloud as if it were a giant trampoline. When he was hungry he simply grabbed a handful of cotton candy cloud.

Tom was chewing harder on his pencil now, as a steady stream of saliva ran down his chin. The music flowed as the teacher talked about history then math then geography, each one a different tune.

Meanwhile, Tom was kite flying on a cloud. The wind was strong and was pulling Tom along as fast as he could run. Every few steps Tom would trip and bounce off the cloud somersault fashion. But a second later he'd be back upright again. No shoes up in the clouds, feel the mist between your toes.

A puddle of spit ran down the desk and onto Tom's hand on his lap. The wetness brought Tom's attention back to the classroom. The rest of the class was already filing out the door. Tom packed up his books and headed home.

It was about a half-mile to Tom's house, but on a nice day like today the walk could take almost an hour. There is so much to see on a spring afternoon. So much to hear and smell. The beauty of pale blue robins' eggs. The smell of freshly cut grass.

When he reached home his mother was sitting on the porch smoking. "Hi, Tom, how was school? I've been waiting for you. Wanna coke? We've got to get you shoes and I'd like to leave now

so we can beat the traffic. After shopping we're supposed to meet Dad at Hurley's for dinner. You like Hurley's, don't you dear?"

Because it was still pretty early Hurley's wasn't very crowded. Tom's father was a little ragged from a hard day. "That Jones deal has really turned into a regular pain. I've been running around all day. Those people don't know what they want, they don't communicate with each other. I really wish we weren't handling them at all."

"Tom," his mother said, "is something wrong with your steak?"

"Eat up," his father said, "we can't wait forever for you. I have a meeting in less than an hour." Tom just kept playing with his potatoes. He was adding more and more butter, watching them grow yellow.

Later that night, after they got home, Tom had hours to spend playing with his toys.

.....

"School can wait," Tom thought as he watched one of his more favorite Yogi The Bear cartoons. School didn't wait though, it went right on without him, and so Tom was late.

Tom looked at the tiles on the floor as he walked down the long hall towards his classroom. There were about five times as many light brown tiles as dark brown ones and Tom was trying his best to jump from dark tile to dark tile. This was not a new routine for Tom, and he was quite good at it. Tom entered the classroom and disrupted the class as little as possible.

Today Tom was a king. He had money, jewels, and servants. And cats, something Tom's mother wouldn't let him have even though Joey Simon had a cat named Charlie. As king Tom could do whatever he wanted, sleep, watch cartoons, eat dessert first, and never grow up. Tom the boy king.

The day went very quickly and before he knew it Tom, along with his parents, was on his way to his grandparents' house. "Do we have to stay long?" Tom's mother asked.

"No," his father said, "We'll just eat and leave. Two hours, tops."

Toms' grandparents' house always smelled funny, like a combination of chicken soup and shellac. "Oh look how big you're getting, Tom," his grandmother fussed. "You must be twice the size you were last week. Go tell your grandfather you're here, I think he's watching T.V. in the den."

"Hi Grampa."

"Oh, when d'ya get here?"

"We just came in," Tom said. "Guess what, I lost another tooth. See?"

"Did the tooth fairy leave you anything?"

"Only a quarter."

"Well, we'll see what we can do about that. Why don't you go ask your grandma for a deck of cards and I'll show you a trick."

Tom ran into the kitchen yelling, "Grandma, Grandma, Grandpa wants a deck of cards."

"Is he doing those stupid card tricks again? Here you go Tom, but don't let him do more than two tricks."

Tom's grandfather's hands were old and arthritic. They would not clinch completely, nor would they fully straighten. Shuffling the cards was a task of great effort. But it was not his hands that bothered Tom's grandfather the most, it was

his mind. The intricacies of the card tricks evaded him. Not one trick could he remember fully. He thought he remembered each trick, but painfully realized at the end of each that he had erred somewhere along the way. The fact that he had no idea where he had erred served only as a source of greater irritation.

"Boy," Tom's grandfather said to him, "did I ever tell you about the time I beat fifty men in a foot race at the county fair? It was 1938, no, no, 1939. I weighed 143 pounds back then. My brother wouldn't enter the race, he knew how quick I was. Your grandmother was sitting . . ."

"Come on," Tom's father interrupted, "Dinner's ready."

Tom was glad that it was dinner time, he'd heard his grandfather's story many times before. Besides, Grandma always makes plenty of mashed potatoes to play with.



My Thoughts

Kathy Cohen

Sometimes my thoughts
Are like a bottle of thick rich liquid
Where, when it is over turned,
A large bubble forms at the bottom
And rises:

 ever-
 so-
 slowly-

To the top
Where it bursts quietly, slowly
Without drawing attention
Or praise.
Yet that is the most beautiful thought
The clearest, the best
But it comes so very seldom

At other times my thoughts
Are like a glass of champagne
Starting small and quickly rising
To burst
 With sharp tiny bangs
These thoughts draw the most attention
And make people shake their heads at me.
In every thousand maybe ten will be good.
These are my thoughts of action.

Sometimes,
Not very often,
They will be both:
A carefully planned out deep emotion
Rising to be joined at the top of my brain
By a quickly moving bubble of action.
These are my thoughts of wisdom-
My thoughts of freedom-
My thoughts of others-
My thoughts of love.

Wind, Marriage, and Mankind: Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" as Exemplary of Romantic Poetry

Stacy Hooks

'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose.

Byron

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is not merely a tribute to the wind, but a poet's single-minded struggle to connect with the universe. To connect, to find his place, Shelley turns to that element in nature to which all others—from "leaves dead" to "sea blooms and oozy woods" far beneath the ocean—must submit. "Chained and bow'd" by the heavy weight of hours" adulthood inevitably brings, Shelley cannot freely follow the wind as in his boyhood. He realizes that the wind cannot physically release him from the confines of time, but this is not his goal. Instead, he asks the wind for intellectual release, first to "drive [his] dead thoughts over the universe . . . to quicken a new [intellectual] birth, and then, for the wind to be, through him, "the trumpet of a prophecy" to all of mankind. This prophecy is a summons for man to turn from the finite—the temporal and the physical—to the infinite—the intellect and nature. This turning away, this intellectual release, is man's apocalypse.

Although "Ode to the West Wind" reflects one poet's quest for apocalypse, it is not a novel poem; in message and method, namely that of specific image patterns, it exemplifies Romantic poetry. Like other Romantics, Shelley is acutely conscious of the moral turbulence plaguing nineteenth-century Europe, and that the corrupted ideals of the French and Industrial Revolutions are largely responsible. Realizing that established law and religion are only breeding grounds for corruption, the Romantics view man's apocalypse as a catharsis of sorts which purges the mind of secular restraints. Because they so firmly believe this, the predominant image patterns--wind and marriage--stem not from the secular and finite but from the spiritual and infinite--nature and intellect. It is by emphasizing the infinite that the Romantics hope to guide mankind to and through apocalypse.

Because it is "tameless, swift . . . proud [and] uncontrollable" the Romantics rely on the wind's "unseen presence" as a foil to the impotence and fragility of the secular world. To Shelley, the wind serves as a reminder that there exists a universal force greater than and ungoverned by the finite world of time or tyrants. From the wind's presence, the "leaves dead . . . the pestilence-stricken multi-

tudes [of the secular world] . . . are driven." The secular world's recognition, however subconscious, of the wind's supremacy appears not only in Shelley—multitudes "are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing"—but also in Blake's "Urizen" when, after separating from Desire and Imagination, Reason "hides carefully from the wind."

Often referred to as the sky-god, the wind shows his wrath toward mankind's fallen, corrupt state. In "Ode to the West Wind," the wind, originating in that direction long associated with death—the West—brings a storm to drive these multitudes from his presence. The "black winds of perturbation" and the "whirlwinds of sulphurous smoke" in "Urizen" arise in violent protest of Reason's separation from his counterparts. Wordsworth, in "The World is Too Much With Us," feels that Europe is so corrupt, so "out of tune," that it is unmoved by the "winds . . . howling at all hours" in protest.

It is not, however, through the wind's display of power or protest, but through its absence or stagnation that the Romantics best illustrate man's temporal preoccupation and need for spiritual apocalypse. In "Ode to the West Wind," the "seeds . . . lie cold and low . . . like . . . corpses within graves" while the wind is absent. Shelley, too, before his apocalypse, is "chained and bowed" to that secular realm, unable to touch or to be touched by the wind. After the Mariner falls, shoots the Albatross in "down dropt the breeze . . . there was neither nor motion [and] the very deep did rot" in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge also stills the wind on the eve of the young maiden's corruption in "Christabel"; that night, "there is not wind enough to twirl the one red leaf." So complete is man's debauchery in Byron's "Darkness" that its stench poisons the atmosphere and the winds "wither in the stagnant air."

That the wind withers or remains stagnant is a rarity in Romantic poetry; this stagnation more commonly precedes a storm, a catharsis for man. After the autumn storm and winter in "Ode to the West Wind," the "Spring . . . blows/ her clarion o'er the earth . . . [filling] with living hues and odors plain and hill." Because such a rebirth follows death, Shelley has hope; like "the forest . . . [his]

leaves are falling," but in losing his "dead thoughts," he gains "a new birth." Though the Mariner's redemption is, ultimately, only partial, the "roaring wind" does signal his journey back to life. Likewise, in "Resolution and Independence," the "roaring in the wind all night," the accompanying storm, and "the sun . . . calm and bright," parallel Wordsworth's internal storm and eventual resolution.

Not only is the wind the "destroyer . . . preserver," and restorer, it is often the source of life to the Romantics. While "Ode to the West Wind" primarily concerns the death/rebirth, corruption/catharsis cycles of nature and humanity, Shelley does refer to the wind as the "breath of Autumn's being" and the "Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere." In "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," it is the wind that animates the daffodils; Wordsworth remembers them "fluttering and dancing in the breeze." He loves the "living air" in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," and admonishes his sister, Dorothy, to "let the misty mountain-winds be free/to blow against thee [because] in after years . . . these wild ecstasies," memories, will be a source of pleasure and comfort. For Coleridge, the wind breathes life into man, otherwise a mere "lump of clay"; this wind is "plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze/ at once the soul of each and God of all"—man is simply an Eolian harp. Byron, by contrast, reflects the diminishment of life in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Feeling less animated by, connected to the wind, Childe Harold fears that because of his increasing years, "perchance [his] heart and harp have lost a string."

Just as the wind is, ideally, connected to unified with man, the images of wind and marriage often appear connected in Shelley and Coleridge. Shelley believes that his apocalypse depends on that union, that marriage between himself and the wind. In desperation, he prays to the wind for that marriage "Make me thy lyre . . . be thou, Spirit fierce/ my spirit! Be thou me . . . be through my lips . . . the trumpet of a prophecy." Similarly, as the wind plays over the strings of the Eolian harp, Coleridge surmises that "all of organic nature [man included] . . . be but organic harps . . . that tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps . . . one intellectual breeze." This marriage complete, Coleridge's imagination "transverses [his] brain/ as wild and various as the random gales/that swell and flutter on this lute."

This marriage imagery is not, however, always connected only with the wind; often Romantics seek a marriage of the mind and all of nature. The scope of "Ode to the West Wind" limits this marriage to the intellect and wind, but the marriage

imagery is, nonetheless, present. Wordsworth says, in "Tintern Abbey," that man and nature "half create," and in the "Prospectus," he equates marriage of mind and nature with "Paradise, and groves/Elysian, [and] Fortunate Fields:

For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe,
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.

Coleridge's "Fears in Solitude" represents this marriage as "society . . . [which gives] a livelier impulse and dance of thought" to the mind. "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" presents nature as the faithful spouse who "n'er desert the wise and pure." Byron wants only "to mingle with the universe, and feel/ what [he] can n'er express."

Like Byron, Shelley strives to, but realizes that the poet can never "render into words and images" that vision all Romantics find themselves both blessed and burdened with. If not entirely successful, they are, through the use of "infinite" imagery, most effective.

Their versions of man's path to redemption all involve rebellion against some element in society, whether it be corrupted political or cultural revolutions, organized religion, social hypocrisy, or sexual repression or discrimination. It is that common ground, however small, of vision—vision to see man's urgent need for apocalypse—that unites Romantic poets.

What makes Shelley the consummate Romantic and "Ode to the West Wind" the model of Romantic poetry is this poet's contempt for all established customs. Arguably the first flower child, Shelley advocates the "emancipation of women, love tender and true, and that man be vegetarian, healthy, and gentle." Though he has "boundless confidence in the reasonableness of mankind," Shelley does not escape the disillusionment with a fallen, finite, and essentially worthless world to which all Romantics are prone. Caught in this disillusionment, and ironically, in a storm, Shelley drowned at age thirty.

But Shelley, like nature, is resilient, and had he lived, or if he does still live, his "ashes and sparks . . . words among mankind," then "if Winter comes [for him], can Spring be far behind?" No.

Shadows

Maureen Lucey

She sits at her desk licking stamps
To put on still more envelopes
In the office that is hers
Dreary and mundane
But for the painting on the far wall:
Of a cabin set deep within the woods
Overlooking a calm shimmering lake,
With shadows sprinkled
Carelessly across the canvas
From the day's last light.
Thoughts of her brown A-frame cottage
At the lake come to mind,
Longing to be there....
Her reverie is broken by the noise,
Then sight of the mail cart being pushed
Down the hall by Hal
His brown hair hanging down
Over his eyes, and
Funny little grin
Poking up through his heavy moustache.
They exchange mail
And the hand of a close friend
Brushes softly against hers,
Leaving an odd sensation
That somehow comforts her.
The day is almost at an end
It seems to say to her, as the dusk
Creeps forward outside of her window.



Resolution

Ron Speir, Jr.

Not a day slips by
 Without a thought of her.
 As the tides change
 I call out her name,
 But only in my mind.

A million times I've spoken,
 Confessing my love with words.
 All in my mind, only in my mind.
 But can she feel my naked heart,
 Through the tangled facade?
 I study the movies diligently--
 How does he know when
 To bear himself to her?



nature's demolition ron speir

I wake up to darkness,
 And only the faded memory,
 Of her musing face
 Can enlighten the blackness,
 Which envelops me.

I resolve to face her:
 My hands will caress her heart,
 So my arms can embrace her soul.
 And I will set it all aside--
 My shy, extroverted shell
 with quivering lips-
 Confessing to the world
 The love I behold.
 But when will I know when . . . ?

*Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea
Thomas, "Fern Hill"*



Epoch

Michele Hepner

And it was conceived. The fruit grew ripe and dropped to the ground. Juices seeped into the earth, making it fertile for the seed. The seed dropped into the land, comforted by sweet nourishment it found there. It felt the earthly pleasures the land had to offer, and with its roots delved deeper, grasping hold. The sun found the seed basking in its warmth and pulled it forward, upward, turning it green with life and lush with gratitude.

Soon the rain came, cooling the young plant's heated embrace with the sun. Placing the dew on each limb with precision, the cold water seeped into the plant, changing, pushing, spreading, branching it.

With each dew drop came a new dependent—some took its tender flesh and bore in, eating it. Some tore the lush green leaves from its palate and built their homes in its limbs. Each sang a song of loving gratitude though the tree could not hear it.

The rain turned to ice and the ice to snow; the sun disappeared behind a colorless cloud. The youth had been sapped from the tree, leaving only maturity and experience to be gained from survival. Naked of its life and forced by the season to become dormant, it grew silent and watchful, digging deeper into the land in search of nourishment.

The sun reappeared and the tree once again basked wantonly in its heat. Displaying its new maturity, it began to gather pollen from the tempest-tossed winds surrounding it.

And it conceived.

The Still Life

Kathy Cohen

Two bodies rest
a pose
caught
still as a sculpture
for a brief moment
dark shadows fill crevices
and starlight glistens
off the wet curves.
Part
and form again
new darkness and light
in neverending kaleidoscope
of contrast.



the sentinel ron speir

A Part

Nancy Gallaher

An imperceptible tear glistened at the inner corner of her left eye. Deenie, seated before the mirror, considered her daughter in its fluid translucency; but in her own self-conscious busyness, Nina, intuitively aware of her mother's intent and unwilling to be absorbed in the glare of that encompassing eye, shifted in her activities. Undaunted, Deenie refaced her own image and turned inward. Her eyes were a cool pale blue, seemingly detached but determined. Changeless themselves over the years, they had quietly and unobtrusively brooded over the changeless inconsistencies of life. It must be a cycle, she thought, seeming to evolve only because individual experience rendered new insights. Nevertheless, it had long been one of her most tenaciously held beliefs that the nature of one's death was consistent with the nature of one's life, that birth and death were but the visible boundaries, and that there was a pattern and purpose to each individual cycle, no matter the inconsistencies. She listened to her eyes and in their agelessness they had told her it was true. Now she herself would wait only a short while.

Her illness had not yet distorted her vision nor dimmed her eyes. What she saw there within her eyes was herself. She was the child who first realized that the reflection in the mirror was her own; she was the young woman who knew herself and imagined what others might see; she was the wife and mother who saw herself in her middle years reflected as a component of a family unit, connected to them by their needs and her own willing service. She was herself a part of life but apart through it all. In appearance changed, she, there within herself seen through her eyes and within her eyes, nevertheless, was herself. She might believe herself a puzzlement, but in the revelation of all eventual insights, a coherent unit, a piece in the purpose and pattern of life itself. She was adamant in this belief.

Orphaned at an early age, she had accepted her self-reliant persistence; setting her vision, she had methodically held the long view regardless. Her security was in herself and her willingness to persevere structured that security.

Now looking within herself, she had decided to know her place, that place of which her eyes had spoken. When she arose, her fall was sure and painful.

Consciousness was primitively sensual - an onslaught of physical sensations. Within unconsciousness, the sensations were more intensely real.

Behind Deenie's eyes the little girl reached up to touch the soft black hair falling down to cover her own. She made a pretend wig of it, trailing it beside her face as though it were her own. For the workday chores that thick black hair was always bound; its coarse but lustrous texture, hidden. But here on the front stoop, it was only the crown of her mother's beauty.

"You're so beautiful, Mama."

"All little girls think their mamas are pretty."

Deenie looked so deeply within her mother's eyes she felt herself to be at one with her again, inside and out, a part of someone else but not truly a part. Apart. She marveled at the thought of it. To be alone and yet not so. To be a part of the progression of time. Deenie shut her eyes; and with her fingertip, she stroked her mother's hair. Undistracted by her vision, she created in all her other senses a photograph which she would take with her always. Contented in her unaccustomed singular state, for she had many brothers and sisters and such times as these were seldom to be savored, she sighed deeply and relaxed, allowing the warm, earthy scent of her mother to encircle them. The arms tightened about her gently, pressing her into the sweetly soft but firm flesh. Very quietly and for her ears alone, a low pitched, rhythmical hum set up. With fascination, she flattened her ear closer against her mother's bosom and listened to the blend of her mother's heartbeat overlaid with loving music.

She needed nothing more; this moment caught in time had served her well. Often she turned here. It comforted her at those times just as it did now. The space within was so overwhelming she seemed unaware. She listened within and curled her chin down onto her chest. The rhythmic hum, the familiar tune, vied with the sound of a heartbeat, slower and slower, softer and softer until, having drawn her body knee to chest, the heartbeat stopped and all that remained was the sound of a mother's song.

Her eyes were watching her and propelling her into the unknown. Yet a strange familiarity hovered at the fringes. A translucency that won-

dered at her from within. She had been aware of this duality for some while but had not defined it until the eyes themselves had told her, at first in vague puzzling glimpses and intuitions but then with blatant stares until she felt herself at once exposed and overwhelmed by them and by that one of whom they spoke. They watched and waited.

Nina turned sharply the corner of Ninth and Way. The glass door yielded before her but her eyes did not. She was as before observed and unwilling. She sought the sanctuary of her reflective inner office. She fled into the busyness of her space. They only waited, willing to catch her unawares as she passed windows and mirrors, willing to remind

her of the steady heartbeat of time, willing to wait for her until submissive; she accepted their dominance. There she wondered at this other self. Apart, alone, she was and yet not so. Apart she was and yet a part.

The heartbeat began at first slowly and softly; then more self-assuredly until at last it was her own. She struggled no longer against her ambivalent nature. Listening with her ear pressed against the bosom of time to the growing awareness of her total self, Nina's eye twinkled and in its translucency, an imperceptible tear voiced its silent song of life.



Real Intelligence in the Good Characters of Dicken's *Hard Times*

Anne Muller

Dickens is attacked by many critics for many things, but the charge most frequently brought against him is poor handling of his "good" characters. David M. Hirsch insists that because Louisa Gradgrind in *Hard Times* is interested in art's ability to amuse rather than its "beauty or passion or power," she is, therefore, "brainless." He widens the scope of his attack and says "[S]o feeble-minded do the 'good' characters become at times that it is ultimately impossible to take them at all seriously" (Hirsch, 371).

Mr. Hirsch is explicit about Louisa's feeble-mindedness. He is not in the case of Stephen Blackpool or Rachael, so I will have to provide examples for their brainlessness and then dismantle my own claims to make my point. Fortunately, my work won't be as widely read as Descartes', but nevertheless I am aware of the dangers inherent in this technique. Mr. Hirsch, however, was not sensitive enough to another rule of logic which is also the first rule of writing: substance over style. Certainly, his prose gallops off the page and is as memorable as the smell of a barn in summer, but by choosing adjectives for their impact rather than their aptness he has left the barn door open. Yes, there are problems with the good characters in *Hard Times*, but feeble-mindedness is not one of them. A cursory examination of their actions makes the refutation obvious. While Dickens may not have been at his best in *Hard Times*, there is much about Louisa, Stephen, and Rachael that is fascinating and admirable.

But Mr. Hirsch finds Louisa "hollow," and explains himself by using the scene in which Louisa is comforted by Sissy after fleeing from Harthouse:

This should be a moving scene, for it suggests the power of Christian. . . love to overcome the ruin wrought by sterile materialism . . . [T]he scene . . . is actually ludicrous . . . Christian and human love is triumphant, all right. But over what? Louisa has yet to do any evil. Worse, she has yet to suffer . . . The scene is a failure because the suffering is hollow. And the suffering is hollow because the characters are (Hirsch, 371).

Mr. Hirsch's argument for the brainlessness of Louisa is perhaps best approached by his explanation of her hollowness. He finds the "frustrated

females" (Hirsch, 371) a bit silly, a bit feeble-minded, because their sentiment does not seem directed against anything. Mr. Hirsch's inability to understand this scene is indicative of his inability to understand Louisa. Louisa *has* suffered:

"With a hunger and a thirst upon me, father, which has never for a moment been appeased; with an ardent impulse towards some region where rules, and figures, and definitions were not quite absolute; I have grown up, battling every inch of the way." (Dickens, 165)

She has suffered in her struggle to find something to make her feel real, something to tell her there is a difference between life and death. To her quietly desperate "What does it matter?," her father replies "rather at a loss to understand . . . 'What matter, my dear?'" (Dickens, 77). Her mother is equally supportive, saying, "[Y]es, I really *do* wish that I never had a family. (Dickens, 42) . The love in the scene between Sissy and Louisa is triumphant over the forces that try to kill the soul; the denial of the human spirit is the evil, and Louisa has suffered through that all her life. She has done no evil. But the love is triumphant not so much over the external evil as it is over her emptiness. Her inability, then, to grasp "the beauty or the passion or the power" of art is central to Dickens' point. She has been hollow; she cannot fully know the possibilities of the spirit. What Mr. Hirsch calls her "rapid recovery" (Hirsch, 371) is not that at all; what he sees as hollow in the scene reinforces the distance she has to go. She is not feeble-minded; she is beginning to understand what it is to be human.

It is proof of Louisa's depth that despite her upbringing she can have an understanding that there is more to life than "Ologies." Louisa couldn't have been saved by Sissy if she hadn't been looking for salvation all along. At first we think she's as emptied of humanity as Tom, who says, "Except that it is a fire, it looks as stupid and blank as everything else looks." We think that the Gradgrind education has destroyed Louisa's perceptions as well when she says, "I don't see anything in it, Tom, particularly." But we see that her emptiness — her hollowness — is not brainlessness but bleak, lonely despair. "[L]ooking at the red sparks dropping out of the fire, and whitening and dying...made me think, after all, how short my life would be, and how

little I could hope to do in it." (Dickens, 41) There is something especially poignant in her use of the word "would," as if she is not alive.

Yet despite her emptiness she is not self-absorbed. H.P.Sucksmith says that the scene in which Louisa is sympathetic about Sissy's father (48) "is of immense importance in the novel since it indicates Louisa's better nature." (Sucksmith, 125) Dickens titled the chapter in which this scene is found "Sissy's Progress," but it is more aptly titled "Louisa's Progress." While Louisa is becoming aware of a different reality than the Gradgrind one, Tom is displaying his inability to do so:

Louisa saw that Sissy was sobbing; and going to her, kissed her, took her hand, and sat down beside her . . . Here Tom came lounging in, and stared at the two with a coolness not particularly savoring of interest in anything but himself, and not much of that at present (Dickens, 46-7).

Is it proof of Louisa's feeble-mindedness, then, that she marries Bounderby to help this whelp? Rather, Louisa's actions for Tom are proof of her ability to overcome her upbringing by helping and loving someone else despite her aching emptiness. She is not feeble-minded. "Louisa is a figure of poetic tragedy . . . She speaks from beginning to end as an inspired prophetess, conscious of her own doom and finally bearing to her father the judgement of Providence on his blind conceit" (Shaw, 336).

Stephen's description of the modern world is perceptive enough to make him seem a prophet as well.

Look how we live, an wheer we live, an' in what numbers, an' by what chances, an' wi' what sameness; and look how the mills is awlus a goin, and how they never work us no nigher to onny dis'ant object — ceptin awlus, Death . . . Who can look on 't, Sir, and fairly tell a man 'tis not a muddle? (Dickens, 114)

Does Mr. Hirsch propose that because Stephen is uneducated and has a dialect that his observations are invalid? If the validity of Stephen's statement is accepted, what then is brainless about him? He suffered through his wife's abuses instead of killing her; he brought himself trouble by keeping his word to Rachael and not joining the union; he trusted Tom's motives instead of investigating the situation more. All of these actions brought Stephen only trouble and pain; are they, then, proof of his feeble-mindedness? These are all traits of honesty and decency. Is being moral in the modern world, then,

feeble-minded?

Stephen, like Louisa, is saved from confusion and despair by the healing power of love. His "muddle" that so exactly captures the modern spirit is eased a little by Rachael, who has "the touch that could calm the wild waters of his soul" (Dickens, 59). Stephen speaks of the star he watched while trapped in the Old Hell Shaft: "It ha' shined into my mind. I ha' look'n at 't and thowt o' thee, Rachael, till the muddle in my mind have cleared awa . . . In my pain an' trouble, lookin' up yonder, — wi' it shinin on me — I ha' seen more clear." (Dickens, 207) Stephen is admirable for his goodness, but it is his connecting with humanity that makes him fascinating. Louisa's despair and Stephen's confusion exemplify modern alienation. The world is little improved by their salvation, but they have become more human and more at peace in a world that desperately needs these characteristics.

Stephen's savior, Rachael, does not have the traits of alienation, confusion, and despair that typify modern characters. She is, rather, timeless in her gentle ways. Her actions are least susceptible to the feeble-mindedness charge. Rachael's actions of tending Stephen's wife, preventing her from drinking poison, and not marrying someone else do not display any inanity, but rather a profound humanity. Her plea to Stephen not to get involved in reform has tragic results, but her experience had been that dissent "only lead[s] to hurt" (Dickens, 252) and that the upper classes "don't know us, don't care for us, don't belong to us" (Dickens, 190). Although Rachael's plea brings death to Stephen, her connection with humanity had made his life worth living.

The one charge of brainlessness that all three are open to is their passivity. All three know the sickness of the world — it has made their lives miserable — but none tried to reform it. They lived out their lives and watched as their world "worked monotonously up and down like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness." (Dickens, 17) Rachael had been in touch with humanity all through the novel, and Stephen and Louisa had become connected, but none tried to improve the world. Perhaps, then, after conquering the modern diseases of confusion and bleakness their spirits were killed by the true modern evil, the serpents of smoke which strangled their belief and hope in the possibilities of mankind.

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The Best Years of My Life

Carol Ann Causey

PART I

Last night I was in a bind.
I dreamt that I was attacked by my notebook.
I was held captive outside the margin and my teacher gave me an
"F" for sloppiness.
The witch.

PART II

I heard a rumor yesterday.
Somebody said I was a slow learner.
Why am I always the last one to find out about these things?

PART III

Yesterday my teacher returned my test paper.
I had studied for five hours the night before.
Anyway, I made an "A."
She drew a smiley face on it and wrote "SUPER."
Sometimes I wonder why I even bother.

PART IV

I fell asleep last period.
And now I have a large red sleeping scar on the side of my face.
My other teachers watch me suspiciously.

PART V

Today I came second runner-up in a citizenship contest.
Maybe I didn't help enough old ladies across the street.
Maybe I didn't donate enough money to the food bank.
Maybe I didn't feel enough pity for the homeless.
I don't know,
I think I'll try a different haircut.

Then and Now, or now and again

Steve Ealy

Then/now

For a moment
We share the things that are
ours.

For a moment
We share life,
Love, for a moment.

Tears fall and
Remain for a moment
To be kissed away.
For a few steps we walk
The same path,
We hold hands
For a moment.

Sharing for a moment,
For a moment
We live forever.

Now/again

If we part—
Or rather when we part
for the last time,
For part we must, finally,
Whether by death or by life—
The forever of
Our moment together
Will hold us, in
love
and in
peace,
as one.

Joy and pain: their tears
(our tears)
Which stained our cheeks
In hope and less
Now Baptize us
and
Wash our feet.

When we part, for part we must,
We die to ourselves
and are born to life
Anew.

Metamorphosis

Marcy McClendon

At some time during youth, people encounter experiences that cause us to reevaluate previously unchallenged beliefs, ideals, and aspirations. It is at this point that the lifelong process of acquiring insight into the world and the inner self begins. In literature, this point, this beginning of that process, is referred to as initiation.

It is with this theme of initiation in mind that John Updike's "A & P" and F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Ice Palace" were written. Centered around two characters in their youth, these stories unfold the events that lead to the epiphanies, the flashes of insight, that the protagonists—Sammy of "A & P," and Sally Carrol Hopper of "The Ice Palace"—experience. Through careful usage of details, Updike and Fitzgerald reveal the personalities of Sammy and Sally Carrol. Carefully calculated settings provide the appropriate conditions under which each character's lesson is learned. Sammy and Sally Carrol live in different times, different places, and different stories, yet the two are closely intertwined by both their similarities and their differences. By looking at the age, social status, ambitions, assumptions about life, as well as imagination and the changes brought about in each character, the reader sees the comparisons between Sammy and Sally Carrol.

Sammy and Sally Carrol, both nineteen years old, exemplify many common qualities of youth. Though ambitious, they are both lazy. Sally Carrol's laziness typifies that drowsy quality of the South of which she is so intricately a part. The reader infers Sammy's laziness from the statements he makes concerning the "freeloaders" working in the street, about Lengel, who "hides all day," and, most of all, in his remarks concerning the difficulty of his own job. Operating the cash register, according to Sammy, is much "more complicated than you think." Sammy, on the other hand, quits his job in an heroic effort to protect the dignity of "his girls," who have been embarrassed by Lengel. A more explicit example is Lengel's instructing the girls to leave because they are not dressed in accordance with store policy: Sammy thinks to himself that "That's policy for you. Policy is what the kingpins want. What the others want is juvenile delinquency."

Although not directly told, the reader can infer the social status of both Sammy and Sally Carrol. Sally Carrol's father is a doctor, so it can be

assumed that she belongs to the upper class. In the oil paintings of her three great uncles and Harry's mention of a former classmate whom he thought was a "true type of Southern aristocrat," there is evidence of a Southern aristocratic heritage. Sammy, on the other hand, apparently belongs to the lower middle class because his vision of Queenie's home and the party in her living room is a sharp contrast to the reality of his own home and social gatherings. More evidence of Sammy's social status is the assumption that Queenie's home is "a place from which the crowd that runs the A & P must look pretty crummy." The social standings, though quite opposite, provide the basis for ambition in Sammy and Sally Carrol.

Sammy aspires to climb up the social ladder to Queenie's level in society. He wants to get out of the A & P crowd and move on to bigger and better things. Though Sammy has his ambitions, to him, life is just a game. Instead of taking his job seriously, he sees the A & P as a "pinball machine," and the cash register as a piano that plays "a little song" as he punches the keys. He views the parking lot as a place where "the sunshine . . . [skates] around on the asphalt." Although the reader knows that Sammy wants a better life, he does not know what Sammy's future plans are, or if Sammy even has any. Sally Carrol, on the other hand, knows exactly what she wants in life. Like Sammy, she aspires to be in a different place; she wants "to go places and see people . . . and live where things happen on a big scale." She does not, however, stop there. Sally Carrol has real ambition: she wants to make something of herself—she wants "her mind to grow." Her desire is to go somewhere where she feels that her energy and vitality will be useful when she is "not beautiful anymore." Closely tied to their ambitions are the illusions and misconceptions that Sammy and Sally Carrol harbor about people, and about life in general. These illusions reveal much about the protagonists' personalities and moral characters.

With his narrow-minded view of the world, Sammy forms his opinions of people purely on a physical basis. His outlook is superficial, and he is unable to empathize with anyone because he refuses to look beneath their physical surface. Though he likes the girls and quits his job to be their hero, he perceives them with a purely lustful eye. His de-

scription of the girls in terms of edibles is dehumanizing: he refers to Plaid's rear as "a really sweet can" and to Queenie's breasts as "the two smoothest scoops of vanilla he has ever seen." After reducing the girls to mere objects of sexual desire, Sammy attacks their intelligence: he claims that "you never know for sure how girls' minds work (do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?)." Sammy belittles the value of the girls' friendship by assuming that Queenie and Plaid like Big Tall Goony-Goony only because she is one of those girls they think is "striking and attractive but never quite makes it" and, therefore, poses no threat to them. As for older people, he respects them even less. Tagging them as animals and other low-life, Sammy sees them as worthless to society. The grocery shoppers are "sheep" who follow the lead of Lengel and obey his store policies. Sammy also perceives the people as "pigs" and "houseslaves in pincurlers" and the workers in the street as "freeloaders." Unable to empathize with others, Sammy cannot understand why those old "bums" buy all that pineapple juice, and he thinks that old "witch" has never had anything better to do over the past fifty years than watch cash registers.

Not only is Sammy insensitive to people's feelings, but he also has no conception of responsibility. As Sammy says, as far as he can tell the only difference between Stokesie and himself is that Stokesie is married and has "two babies chalked up on his fuselage." In Sammy's eyes, children are merely scores of manhood. However, he views motherhood as a loss of femininity; mothers are "women with six children and varicose veins mapping their legs." This image contrasts sharply with his view of Queenie's "prima-donna legs." Young, single, attractive girls are apparently the only useful people to Sammy, and even they appeal only to his physical senses.

Sally Carrol in no way possesses the purely superficial and narrow-minded illusions that Sammy reflects. Judging people by their personalities, Sally Carrol exemplifies a much broader outlook on life. She does, however, have certain illusions about Harry and the North. As far as she knows, Harry has "everything she [wants]." She admits to Roger Patton that she is "the sort of person who wants to be taken care of after a certain point," and with Harry, she feels sure she will be. He is the key to the adventures she longs to have in the North, which she believes to be a place "where things happen on a big scale"—a place of fun and excitement where she can use her energy. Like Sammy, however, she does classify people into

categories and refers to them as inanimate objects. She perceives Mrs. Bellamy as "an egg," who "[typifies] the town in being innately hostile to strangers." In contrast to the charming Southern women, the women of the North appear to be "glorified domestics." She also has formulated a unique system of categorizing people as either feline or canine, felines being subtle and canines being aggressive.

Both Sammy and Sally Carrol possess vivid imaginations. We see Sammy's imagination when he slides "right down [Queenie's] voice into [her] living room," and pictures her parents having a delightful little party where the guests are dressed up and the drinks have olives and mint sprigs in them. Sally Carrol's imagination places much less emphasis on money and social status and much more on age and sentiment. She admires the Civil War's "unknown" dead as well as its heroes, and, most of all, Margery Lee. She holds a depiction of Margery Lee in her mind of how she must have looked and acted. Her attachment to these people reflects not just her love for the South but also her romantic associations with the time of the war—"that old time that [she's] tried to have in her."

All of these qualities lead to the eye-opening experiences which change both protagonists. Sammy's moment of enlightenment comes after he quits his job and realizes "how hard the world [is] going to be to [him] hereafter." Sally Carrol's illusions are gradually melted away, ironically, by the ice and cold of the North. As soon as she reaches Harry's home in the North, she begins to realize that neither the place nor Harry will turn out as she had previously expected. Alone in the ice palace she knows "she couldn't be left [there] to wander forever--to be frozen, heart, body, and soul . . . she was a happy thing . . . she liked warmth and Dixie. These things were foreign." She realizes that she cannot remain in the North to be buried "with snow on her grave . . . Her grave—a grave that should be flower-strewn and washed with sun and rain." Only at the end, when she awakens to "blurred rays converging toward a pale-yellow sun" does she make her decision to return home to the South. Unlike Sally Carrol's illusions which are unveiled throughout the story, Sammy's misconceptions are never destroyed by any shock in revelation that Queenie will someday have varicose veins, or that the girls are really poor. Another difference in the protagonists' experiences lies in the realization of their mistakes. Sally Carrol realizes that to marry Harry would be the greatest mistake of her life; therefore, she returns to the South. Though Sammy senses his mistake before he makes it, he feels that

Calliope

"once you begin a gesture, it's fatal not to go through with it." It is in this instant—precisely the wrong instant—that Sammy clings to his background and moral teachings and "policy"—the very thing that caused him to quit his job. Sally Carrol also clings to her background, the South—the lazy place that would take her nowhere. It is through these experiences that Sammy and Sally Carrol learn something new about themselves and the world around them.





Nothing was, nothing will be, everything has reality and presence
Hesse, Siddhartha

Winner of the 1989 Lillian Spencer Award for the Best Work in Calliope

Life List

Donald L. Robinson

Playing baseball on hot asphalt streets
 Trying to find God at the Goodwill Baptist Church
 Susie Miller, my first crush
 Mandatory crew cuts in school
 Wrinkled English teachers
 Daddy beating momma when he was drunk
 Playing trumpet in the school band
 Moving to a new town
 Leaving my friends

The loneliness of being the new kid in the neighborhood
 My first joint on my 13th birthday
 The strange taste and feeling of my first kiss
 Beatlemania
 Vietnam starting
 Daddy beating me when he was drunk
 Playing guitar in "The Baby Monkees," my first band
 Wondering about the future
 Ninth grade graduation prom

A scared 16 year old high school sophomore
 Mescaline, Acid, THC, and pot to keep a good buzz
 Colonel Agud catching me in bed with his daughter
 Woodstock
 Protesting Vietnam
 Daddy didn't matter anymore
 Trying to learn all nineteen minutes of Alice's Restaurant
 Worrying that my girlfriend was pregnant
 "Take a Walk on the Wild Side" as our senior prom song

Marrying my pregnant girlfriend
Using food money for pot
Slapping my pregnant wife
April 4, — the day my daughter Natasha was born
Arguing about money, about everything, about nothing
Drinking like my father
No time for music
Fighting my own youth
Needing someplace to grow up

Drafted for Vietnam
The 18 hour flight to hell
Napalm burning villagers down to the bone
Agent Orange killing everything
Platoon members going home in body bags
Thai-sticks and Australian love joints
Two tours playing hide and seek with Charlie
The Dear John letter half-way through the second tour
Going home without losing my mind or any part of my body

Mustering back into civilian life
Welding to pay alimony and child support
Alimony ending when my estranged wife drowned
Natasha coming to live with me
Learning about life from a 5 year old's view
Playing hide and seek for fun instead of survival
Singing her to sleep
Sobering up because I scared her when I threw up or passed out
Growing up because I had to

A 28 year old college freshman
Starting every day sober and drug free
A crush on the dark-haired girl in my creative writing class
Flashbacks
Wrinkled English professors
Coaching a little league baseball team
Helping Natasha with her math homework
Praying she survives
Doing all I can to help her

A Dream on the First Day the Sun Shone

Kathy Cohen

The water rushes
 Past the rocks
 Silvery shiny slipping streams
 Gold and green glint
 Like the words which fall through the
 Golden bubbling wine and from your lips in
 Streams of silver dreams
 Floating through my mind
 Around the tree where
 Underneath we once made love
 In the ever changing autumn leaves
 Past the dusky room with the orange flaming fire
 Shadows cuddle for warmth as
 Drifting purity outside the window blows
 Tiny drops of ice now melting to shining spring
 Bubble to the front of my mind.
 Sitting here in the gleaming sun and watching —
 You work
 So near
 You blink your eyes slowly, lazily in the brightest glow
 Like a large cat content
 With the sun
 The stream
 And me.

The joys left on one window-sill.

a. o. harris

I wish we were still there
 in those same flea market coats
 and used fedoras
 dreaming aloud over black coffee
 and generic brand cigarettes
 wishing the room was still open
 with small mattresses pushed into unpainted corners
 fighting for recognition
 with scavenged art gallery posters
 hidden amongst a sea of newspaper clippings
 and Marley's priceless smile
 wishing the window was still there
 giving the bustling street
 Where the neighboring ghetto children
 play and learn
 back to us
 our aspirations
 and our poems.
 black coffee
 cowboy cigarettes
 and that room.

Torch of Freedom

Jason El-Habre

The five years I spent away from home gave me a chance to reflect on the changes that my country went through since I saw it last back in 1975. Many people had died, families had separated, and the worst had come when the country divided into states that everyone had depended on before. Throughout these mini civil wars, I survived in a little roof apartment of a high-rise building that was located in the center of the busiest streets and near a famous square where the Lebanese martyrs statue stood in Beirut, the capital.

On the apartment's balcony I had the best times with my friends, discussing our timid secrets while watching parades and celebrations live even before they were shown on the news. From behind the rails of this balcony I used to view some of the neatest looking streets in the world. Blinking commercial signs were planted and overlapped randomly on every wall and corner with different colors and patterns. On an adjacent high-rise I could see Pepsi's largest bill-board with its enormous letters, almost blocking a complete floor and flashing a different color every minute like a chameleon. Hundreds of signs made it look like Christmas lights blinking endlessly.

At the center, among all these signs, the square of martyrs was founded. Every Lebanese recalls the history of the square where fifteen people were hung, including one woman, by the French rulers who governed Lebanon just before its independence. These freedom fighters sacrificed themselves for the liberty of their people; thus the martyrs statue was erected for the people by the new government and the allied French individuals who admired the courage of these brave men and women. The first man of the fifteen figures in the statue stood in the center and raised a torch that illuminated life to a new generation.

Under the statue the engineers buried a huge clock in the ground. Its hands were rotating over a bed of flowers that were freshened by sprinklers at dawn. Sometimes, in early mornings, I could see the water drops trapped between the leaves reflecting the first rays of the rising sun, giving people an excuse to start a conversation. By this time, merchants' shouts were already traveling through the neighborhood, flowing like a stream, and announcing the start of the busiest hours of the day. When Big-Ben would strike midnight, people cov-

ered the sidewalks, heading indifferently like sheep to their destinations. The cars floated on the streets bumper to bumper and side to side, and moved slowly but constantly, covering every space all around the square.

In addition to the good times, bad times flashed through my mind. The last day before I left the country, I remembered that the taxi broke down about a half mile from the airport, and I had to walk loaded down with suitcases to catch my flight. Then five years later I came back to visit. Dramatic changes marked the small country and paralyzed its progress. It was in the early eighties and everything had become colorless and sad. The square had been transformed into a battle ground that separated the sites of the square witnessing the harshest fights that it had ever seen in its history. It was almost like a photo with its deep motionless and sovereign silence. The streets, or what were left of them after the bombing, were all deserted. The buildings were terribly shelled; bullet holes had chipped the stucco and burned what was left of it. There were no signs of civilization anymore; even signs for commercial stores were knocked down and melted to the metal. I could hardly see an object that stood without some shrapnel cutting its very core. The eighties had become more serious than what the people had expected and their fate was driving them to certain misery. The Pepsi sign had taken on one rusty, monotonous color. Some letters were blown away by missiles and what were left were hanging precariously on the board waiting for the wind to turn them loose.

At the center of the square, barricades and sand-bags made new landmarks dividing the city in the middle. I could no longer see the other side of the square. Cement walls blocked the main entrances that led to the center of the capital. The martyrs' square was overrun by the high grass. Ivy curled around the martyrs' feet. The torch had been the target of a barbarous ugly act, and the shrapnel shredded the monument of the independent heroes. Dust and ashes clustered everywhere even on top of the clock. Apparently time had stopped at eight-twenty p.m. when a malicious hand tore it up with a grenade. The hands were bent and pointed toward the sky, helplessly pleading God to stop the agony and the killing of more

innocent people.

A strange silence governed the old neighborhoods. All movement was strictly military. I noticed a couple of guys in their green fatigues on guard duty stationed behind a shelter of stacked burnt cars. Behind this guard-post I saw the M.P. jeeps zooming back and forth collecting and delivering data and ammunition. I strolled further down looking for the building where I used to live. Half way down the block I found out that the building was located on the other side of the barricades, and it was too dangerous to cross to it. A sudden flash-back brought me to the good-old-days where there was no spite and dullness to extend with its black cape and shadow the martyrs' square.

Disappointment and melancholy accompanied me on my way back. I was comparing the harmony that governed this country for almost a half of century before the civil wars with how uncertain and depressing life had become. Ten blood-stained years with no solution in sight. Sadly, all the efforts had failed to keep Lebanon as a whole country and one people. Despite the changes, the Lebanese people remain undaunted and continue to live amidst the strife. They are looking forward to meeting the savior who will suppress the oppressor and bring happiness to the needy. They await the time when the cloak will be lifted, when the martyrs' torch burns again, and the cloak begins a new era with peace and freedom for everyone.



iron outlook
heather birkheimer

Standing on the Beach

Lisa Gunderson-Catron

While I undressed, the wind beat against the pane demanding to be let into the room. I pulled the curtains closed to answer its demand and crawled under the covers. On the nightstand, the candle flickered, but still burned brightly. I rolled onto my side and watched its varied hues of red as outlined in the dark. As I slipped off to sleep, the candle waned and appeared to die.

I stood on the sand while the noon sun hung in the sky. Looking into the sky, I saw no clouds, only an endless pale blue broken by a ball of flames. I leveled my gaze to the horizon in front of me and all I saw was the endlessness of a cold blue sea. I turned, and my eye saw nothing except a sea of golden sand stretching off into the horizon. I turned around again and watched the frigid blue reach out and touch the warm golden sea. Looking over my left shoulder I saw a figure in black walking on the edges of the two seas.

As he came closer, I lifted my hand to my eyes to shield them from the sun which had moved to the west. He continued toward me in his measured steps straddling the median between sand and sea. As he drew closer, I made careful note of his garb. On his left foot was a boot of shiny black leather with buttons climbing up his ankle. The mate reflected the two o'clock sun under the water. His trousers were of black wool and seemed not prickly but moving as if each fiber was a separate living organism.

He drew closer to me, still moving with his assured stride down the division of blue and gold. The overcoat was made of the same rough black fabric as the trousers. The shirt he wore under the carmilion vest was of the purest white linen, while the black tie appeared to be silk and in the tie was a ruby stickpin. The ruby was set in silver and it reflected the late afternoon sun changing the yellow glow into a crimson fire. It burned its image in my mind.

Looking quickly up from the pin, I encountered the eyes of the man in black. They stood out in his pale pox-scarred face and were framed by a pair of arched ebony brows. Twilight hung in the air as he approached me still continuing his even gait. When two feet away he fixed me with his eyes. They were nothing but empty black orbs that gave nothing but took everything. He seemed to stare through my person but acknowledged my presence as he walked in front of me. With the particles of light left in the air, I could barely distinguish his dark form as he lifted his smoke stack hat to me and smiled a hollow smile as empty as his eyes.

"Good evening to you, sir," he said replacing his hat on his head. He passed me, still walking in his measured loping strides. I stood in black emptiness.

He continues down the shore merging sea and sand, blue and gold. He continued his stroll in his measured walk following the sun east to west.



antithesis
stacy hooks

Gabriella

Catherine Yagecic

As I rushed my three children out the door for a trip to Tijuana, I had no idea that a Mexican child was about to change our lives. We were headed across the border to the little town to get estimates to have a new paint job for our car. I hadn't wanted to take the children, but we were unable to find a babysitter. Tijuana had all the charm and allure of a different culture, but the part of town we were going to this time offered exposure to things that I preferred to shelter my children from. I like to take the children when we go shopping in Tijuana. Tess, my five-year-old daughter, is impressed with the way I can speak enough Spanish to haggle with the local merchants over prices on items that are already inexpensive. We also love to dine on rock lobster at a diner where the window tables offer a view of seals begging for the fisherman's catch. Today, though, we were going to a less interesting section. We were going to Camino del Autovon, where the people from the country get off the bus to go into town so they may beg from the tourists. The bus is the only assistance offered by the Mexican government to the poverty-stricken. It is a sad sight to see women with their children begging for whatever one might be gracious enough to give. It was here that I met Gabriella.

As we approached Camino del Autovon, the managers of the paint and body shops waved and called to us to come to their shop. Each of them had examples of their work on display and was ready to enter a debate over the value of a new paint job. Tom, my husband, wandered off to collect a few appraisals and Tess, Tommy, and Andrea stayed with me in the car. We watched the people. It didn't take long for the children to become bored and begin to complain. I had noticed a lemonade stand so when Tom returned, I took Andrea and walked over to get refreshments. While I waited for my order to be filled, Andrea began to squirm. When I turned to investigate her discomfort, a little girl was reaching for Andrea's flaxen hair. The girl looked innocent enough, but her torn clothing resembled that of the street people back home. Her hands were filthy and I didn't want all that dirt all over my baby. I told her she couldn't touch the baby because she would get her all dirty. She quickly ran away. My order was ready now, so I gathered everything up and returned to the car. Just as I settled Andrea back into her seat, I heard "Senora,

Senora, lavo, lavo!" Sure enough, here was the little girl again. This time, she had clean hands. She peered into the car and saw Tommy, who, at two years old, had the most beautiful, straight, yellow-blond hair that I had ever seen. The little girl was equally impressed. Her eyes lit up into a brilliance that only displays pleasure. She smiled, then squealed with delight. Then like a hawk attacking his prey, she ran to his window, reached in and fondled his hair. The locks fell through her fingers and she seemed to shudder with excitement.

Her next discovery was the Barbie that Tess had brought with her. The smile told how little exposure she had had to dolls. Trying to cross the language barrier, she pointed to herself and said "Gabriella," then she pointed to each of my children and asked their names. Once the introductions were taken care of, all the children played. Their laughter penetrated the air like sunshine on a rainy day. On the way home, Tess was full of questions. She wanted to know more about Gabriella. She could not understand why she wore clothes that fit so poorly. She could not comprehend the poverty. While I prepared for the return trip the following Saturday to have the car painted, Tess came to me with a package which was wrapped in a child-like manner in newspaper. She asked if I would give it to Gabriella. I asked her what was inside. "Oh mom, just some clothes I don't need anymore and a Barbie with a pretty outfit."

I couldn't find Gabriella that day. I looked for hours. A little girl about the same size had a tin cup in her hand. I gave her the package. I never told Tess. She had only wanted someone less fortunate to have those things. It didn't matter if her name was not Gabriella.

Autumn

Kathy Cohen

The leaves swirled through the air
Brightly colored dried up dancers
Performing their farewell dance
In the gray sky.

The green-gray moss hanging
From gnarled knotted branches
Sway and blow like an old man's beard
Caught in the wind.

They gray fog covered even the
Smallest rays of the sun trying
To break through and touch the
Dying ground.



Ducks on a Pond

Adam Tenenbaum

The room was a mess. I had meant to clean it, but I just never seemed to get around to it. It felt so nice to sit around and do nothing, which, at the moment, seems to be all I ever do. I'm not exactly someone who needs something to do to be happy. I was looking forward to going home for Christmas soon. I am someone who needs something to look forward to. When I went home I looked forward to coming back. I was sitting against the wall, next to the radiator. I had the lights out, so the only lights in the room came from a lamppost shining through a window. I was leafing through an art book. I don't really know where I got it. It had just been sitting in my room for some time. I had finally picked it up and decided to look through it. I was stuck on one page with a painting of a small lake. There were three ducks on the lake, each with a small wake extending from behind it. I held the picture up to the light then brought it back down to my lap. The lake closely resembled a lake I had liked when I was little.

The lake was at the bottom of a hill. The hill was just big enough so that you couldn't see what was atop it from the lake. Actually, it wasn't really so much the hill was raised as that the lake was sunken. Atop the hill, or above the valley, was my Sunday School. Which was exactly what I called it, Sunday School. It was a good-sized building, fairly new, built in my lifetime. It housed many classrooms, from first grade up to tenth.

The principal was a young man in his late twenties. He always carried a movie camera with him. He liked to come in and film classes. He'd

insist that everyone act perfectly normal. That's all I ever saw the man do.

After class and during breaks, most kids would go out and play in this playground. Either that or throw snowballs at cars, depending on the weather. Not me. I spent my time at the lake. It was so nice and quiet. You couldn't even see or hear another kid.

There were always a few ducks on the lake. Big brown ducks with a black heads and green collars. Healthy ducks. And lots of tall green and yellow grass, like wheat.

I remember my fifth grade quite well. I'd walk in the door and pass the monthly-updated graph of how much had been collected to complete the proposed two million dollar expansion. The expansion would give us more cubic feet of space than any other non-profit organization in the land that had been the Louisiana Purchase. I sat in the back of the class. I rarely said anything. I was a quiet kid. Not many others were quiet. They wouldn't kick you out no matter what you did. Once, in the spring, the class was really acting up. The teacher was trying to keep her cool, but when a student threw some chalk she flew off the handle. She demanded that if anyone had anywhere else they wanted to be they should leave. I think I surprised everyone when I got up and left. I was always such a good student.

I went out and sat by the lake. I sat and watched the ducks. I sat for a long time. It was the last time I ever saw that lake.

I closed the book and started to cry.

*they are leaning out for love
and they will lean that way forever
Cohen, "Suzanne"*



a poem. this is not.

a. o. harris

I haven't written in a long time
 but a poem, this is not.
 The feelings have left a mark
 upon my chest
 suns go up and down
 seeing me searching for rest
 for peace
 and sadness sees my anger rhyme
 time and time again I refuse
 to write a poem, this is not.

Sitting under a tree in full shade
 I saw the difference in Nature
 and Man
 as trees swayed, cardinals played, a cricket stood
 upon my ankle and did he look up at me
 as to ask
 what creature art thou under our tree?
 and the ants ignored to obstacle
 and continued to labor
 in the tiny pebbles
 of white

 I still didn't write it down, this poem is
 not a poem
 to me.

Taking paper and pen to the sea
 with me in high expectation of reaching
 back into me, into past, into experience
 and write a poem

 I failed and continue to do so now
 as I decide whether or not to write this poem, is
 not a poem

 but a mind spilling Paint
 wasting colours, moods, time, feelings,
 deciding not to write this poem.

A Long Night Out

Adam Tenenbaum

I'm tired, my head hurts,
And I still don't know anyone
But still I drink
Things are getting fuzzy
The fat girls don't seem so fat
And it's getting hard to think
A guy sitting alone in the corner
Gives me an
"I'm superior to you" wink

Fat, Fat, Fat, I say out loud
As I catch myself
Staring at a fat girl
My bill will be a
King's ransom to pay
And my bladder is almost full

The bathroom's packed
And I wish I could
Just pee in this jerk to my left's hat
The waitress asks if I need another
I just nod
Nod, Nod, Nod, Fat, Fat, Fat

I sit with my hand
Protecting my genitalia
I've been like that all night
If I can protect my genitals
And avoid the fat girls
I think I'll be alright

Aylmer and Young Goodman Brown: Two of a Kind

Cindy Halas

The conflicts with which fiction concerns itself are of many kinds: conflicts within a single person, conflicts between man and society, conflicts between man and nature, and so on. Each of Hawthorne's two stories, "The Birthmark" and "Young Goodman Brown," deals with a conflict within a single man. Young Brown is unable to bear the insight into man's sinful nature, and Aylmer is unable to accept imperfection. Both characters have an idealized, rather than a realistic, view of human nature. Both represent conflicting currents, both are unstable, and both make decisions which lead to great misfortune. In both stories, Hawthorne attempts to draw moral lessons or intentions, as he has both characters trying to solve the mysteries of the human heart and the question of evil.

The settings in both stories do not merely serve as physical backdrops, but also function to set the emotional and spiritual condition of the characters. The actual geographic location of "Young Goodman Brown" is, however, more important to that story than is the location of "The Birthmark." In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne sets the mood by describing young Brown and the wicked forest into which he is about to enter. In the first paragraph, we are introduced to the story's title character, we are informed that he has a young, pretty wife, and we are told that they live in a village named Salem. The word "village" indicates the historical setting; it takes place before Salem became a city, and at a time just before witch trials were prevalent throughout the area. Finally, we are informed that Brown is going on a trivial errand or a long journey. This setting creates an atmosphere of gloominess and impending evil.

Hawthorne sets the atmosphere in "The Birthmark" in the first paragraph with this statement:

The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial ailment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new world for himself.

The setting in "The Birthmark," like the set-

ting in "Young Goodman Brown," gives the reader an immediate sense of a coming evil. However, the settings are not entirely alike. In "Young Goodman Brown" the physical scene is important to the plot, whereas in "The Birthmark" the geographic location is mentioned merely to establish a period of time in which the scientific knowledge is expanding. Both settings encourage speculation and anticipation of what is going to happen. Aylmer is presented as a "man of science," one who is interested in "spiritual affinities." The physical environment, that of Aylmer's laboratory, is extremely important to the plot and to the character. Hawthorne uses this setting to reveal the intention of Aylmer, which is to remove the unsightly birthmark from his wife's face. The threatening mood of the setting is established when Aylmer, referring to the birthmark, states that "No, dearest Georgiana, you came so nearly perfect from the hand of Nature that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfection."

Another difference is found in the attitudes of the two men. In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne has young Brown leave his wife with the "good intentions of returning to follow her to heaven." His love for her appears to be sincere, and he feels that what he is about to do in the forest will "kill her." In contrast, Hawthorne has Aylmer debating with his wife the issue of her imperfection. He cannot live with her blemish and plots to remove it. This suggests, although he says he loves her, that his love is a superficial one, a love of beauty rather than of person.

The major characters in both stories, as in many of Hawthorne's writings, are depicted as men who are trying to find a hidden self—men who are trying to solve the mysteries of their minds. Both Aylmer and Brown are concerned with their problems, and both decide to explore the unknown to ease their minds. Similar as they are in underlying aspirations, these two characters are oddly different. They represent two different forces: Aylmer is an intelligent, capable, well-known scientist who will go to any extreme to satisfy the cravings of his mind. Brown is simply confused over values of right and wrong. Brown sees himself in relation to his surroundings, to the people of the town, and to

his wife. He is especially concerned with the hypocrites of the church and the wickedness among people. Behind this is the notion that Christians should have moral standards. One is either a Christian or a sinner. Brown sees his wife as an angel or a devil, not as a woman. When he sees her in the forest among the sinners, he takes an extreme position by saying, "Come, devil, for to thee is this world given." Not able to accept a mixed view of human nature, he sees the world the same way he sees his wife.

In almost complete contrast, Aylmer sees himself as an accomplished scientist, capable of defying nature itself. His view of possessing power over the spiritual world does not stem from any religious belief. Unlike Brown, he is not concerned with wickedness or what is right or wrong. He is concerned only with the ugly mark on Georgiana's face.

Faith and Georgiana, wives of Brown and Aylmer, have much in common. They are both young and beautiful, and know it and both are devoted to their husbands. Faith, as we are told, is aptly named, but a weakness in her character is evidenced by her presence among the sinners. The details of the ribbons in her hair, combined with her prettiness, make us suspect that vanity is a quality of her character. Like Faith, Georgiana is vain. Committed to fulfilling her husband's desires, particularly the desire for perfection, she agrees to risk her life to become perfect in his eyes. Both Faith and Georgiana display weaknesses. Faith's weakness is joining the sinners, and Georgiana's weakness is in submitting to her husband's will for "beauty's sake."

The two Hawthorne stories share another common element: each is based on an incident that takes place in a short period of time. In "Young Goodman Brown," the plot deals with a single night in Brown's life—the night he spent in the forest. The plot begins with Brown's encounter with a strange man who had been expecting him. In the forest, where he is led by the stranger, Brown is maddened with despair at finding a series of sinners. He finds that virtually the entire population of Salem, including the most respected citizens, has come to take part in the ritual of the devil worshippers. The "Devil's" comments make clear that he has friends and followers throughout New England: "There are all whom ye have revered from youth . . . Yet, here are they all in my worshipping assembly."

Brown's attempt to resist the will of the "Devil" begins the conflict. The highest point of intensity is reached when the "Devil" leads Brown

to his diabolical rites and Brown finds that Faith is among the sinners. Following his experience, Brown returns to his home and becomes distrustful, desperate, and meditative. Hawthorne cuts himself off from his fellow man and condemns him to a life and death of gloom.

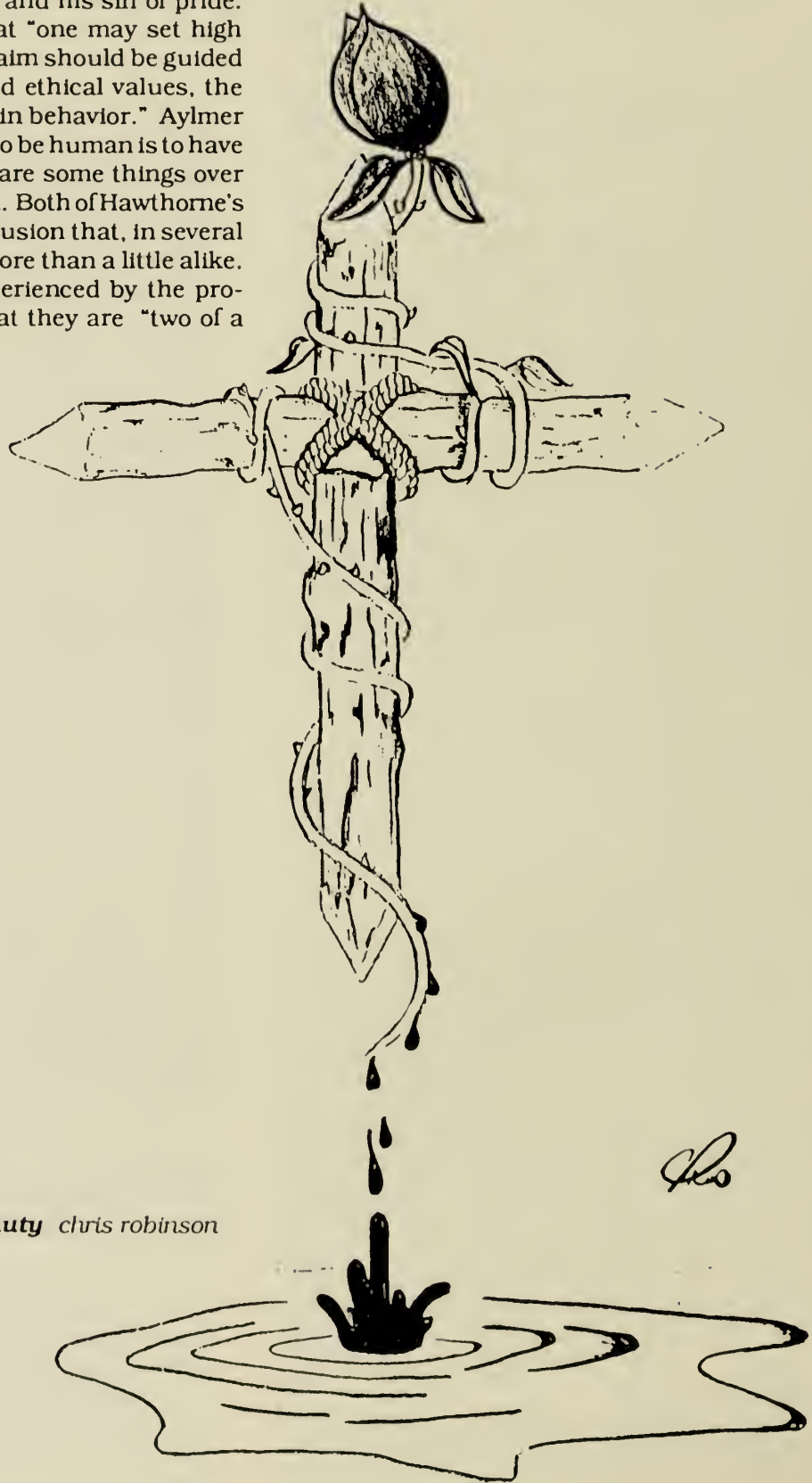
The plot in "The Birthmark" is slightly different from the plot in "Young Goodman Brown." It deals with a minor incident, the dream that Aylmer has about removing the birthmark, and the major incident, the actual removal of the birthmark. At the beginning of the story, Aylmer's wife, Georgiana, discovers her birthmark, a "mark of imperfection left by Nature," is objectionable to Aylmer. Then he has a dream about it. As Aylmer and Georgiana discuss the dream and the birthmark, they both become aware of the intensity of the effects of the repulsive handprint on her face. The dream sets the atmosphere for the plot to unfold upon the scene of Aylmer's laboratory. Will Aylmer be able to remove the stain? Hawthorne makes certain that the reader will wonder by having Georgiana ask Aylmer, "Can you remove this little, little mark, which I cover with the tips of two small fingers?" During this time, the reader becomes aware that Aylmer, at a time when he should be the happiest, cannot do anything but think about the disgusting birthmark. And, "although Aylmer's passion for his wife rivals his passion for science," he discovers that he must attempt to remove the mark. Georgiana agrees since she feels that it would be better to die than have her husband look upon her as an "object of horror and disgust." Forgetting his past failures, Aylmer performs the "cure" by giving Georgiana the medicine he prepares. Georgiana dies, but Aylmer claims success. This is a significant one in Aylmer's life, as his passion for perfection causes him to lose his happiness. Hawthorne does not, however, trace Aylmer's development beyond Georgiana's death except to say that he is "living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present."

The endings of both of Hawthorne's stories are ironically sad. Aylmer loses his wife and his chance for happiness. Brown loses his faith in God and in his family, and becomes a person of "existence" only.

The themes of "Young Goodman Brown" and "The Birthmark" are likewise similar. There are obvious moral implications in both stories. The theme of "Young Goodman Brown" is "In this world where there is good and evil, one should develop a realistic view of man, and must accept man's nature and power to good or to do evil." Simply put, we should have the values—the senses of good and

bad, or desirable and undesirable—which prepare us to choose from the two possibilities.

The theme of "The Birthmark" is based on Aylmer's quest for perfection and his sin of pride. The theme of the story is that "one may set high goals in life, but the ultimate aim should be guided by a rational set of moral and ethical values, the principles of right and wrong in behavior." Aylmer could not accept the fact that to be human is to have imperfection, and that there are some things over which humans have no control. Both of Hawthorne's stories build toward the conclusion that, in several outstanding ways, they are more than a little alike. The conflicting emotions experienced by the protagonists lead us to think that they are "two of a kind."



strangulation by beauty chris robinson

Commentary

Kathy Cohen

The tall dark mountains were covered
With an angry fog so dense
You couldn't see through it. "Crimminey," said the old man
Sitting in the rocker on a sagging porch
In front of the house
"It looks like snow."



anticipating revenuers walter podmore

PODMORE

Just Can't Win

William Hansford

While I grew up I was such a fuss
Everything I did made somebody cuss
Daddy told Mama, "Thangs'll be just fine
The boy only needs a little bit of time."
Time rode past like the train on its track
And Mama made Daddy take his words back
Trouble always found me--I just couldn't hide
I was always a pain in somebody's side
Then the war came along and I got hired
They said it was a job where I couldn't get fired
They sent me to a place where nobody'd give a damn
They sent me to hell . . . called Vietnam
I didn't take long 'fore I got settled in
And I got myself a brand new friend
It took twenty round mags fulla .223 balls
A coupla frag grenades and I'd kill Charlies all
Me and Sgt. Jerry we hit it off fine
And when we weren't killin' we were sippin' on wine
Charlie and his cousins, they comed one night
They thought they'd take us all without any fight.
Jerry didn't make it and I had to cry
I swore to God that Charlie's gonna die
So I volunteered for them recon patrols
And that's when it happened, so I jumped in a hole
The shootin was heavy so they left me there
But they'd be back I heard somebody swear
Let me take a long story and make it kinda short
They sent me back home with a medical report
They gave me some ribbons and some shiny little thang
But I'd rather have my legs if it's all just the same

Don't nobody cuss about me no more
But can somebody tell me what we did it all for?

Une Priere de Noel

Roger Smith

Une femme monte l'escalier du Basilique du Sacre-Coeur a Paris. Elle s'appelle Marie et elle est assez jeune, assez belle, mais elle n'est n'est pas bien habillee; en effet elle est en haillons. Le soleil vient de se coucher: c'est que Maire a attendu Il commence a neiger, et Marie commence a trembler. Elle a froide, mais elle a peur aussi.

Enfin, elle arrive a la porte de l'eglise, mais elle n'entre pas. Les portes epaisses sont fermees contre le froid, mais Marie peut entendre dedans des voix douces, comme celles des anges. On dit une messe de la Veille de Noel.

Marie se met a genoux sur la marche, mais elle ne peut meme pas commencer un priere a cause de ses frissons. Il y a des larmes dans ses yeux. En descendent les joues, les larmes gelent sur le visage.

Marie est nee dans une tout petite salle ou habitait sa mere. Elle est morte il y a quatre ans, dans la meme chambre ou est nee Maire. Les derniers mots de sa mere sont toujours avec Marie: "Ma fille, nous sommes toutes seules. Il n'y avait personne quand tu es nee, ici dans cette chambre, entre, ces draps. Et maintenant nous sommes encore seules." La mere de Marie travaillait le soir dans les rues de Montmarte. Elle ne savait pas le nom du pere de marie. Elle disait simplement que c'était un cadeau de Dieu.

La musique dans l'eglise arrete tout a coup. Marie ouvre les yeux et elle regarde la porte craintivement. Elle recommence a frissonner. Elle se met debout et la porte de l'eglise ouvre. Un feluve de personnes sort. La plupart ne font pas attention a Marie, qui est dans l'ombre, derriere la porte. Elle attend jusqu'a ce que la derniere personne sort de l'eglise. C'est une femme, bien habille, avec son mari. Avec un frisson, final, Marie parte:

"Pardonez moi, madame."

"Quoi, qu'est-ce que vous voulez?" repond la dame, en regardent dans l'ombre d'ou est venue cette voix.

"Est-ce que je peux vous parler pendant deux ou trois minutes, s'il vous plait?"

"Mais pourquoi? Je n'ai rien a vous dire!"

"Oh, je vous implore, madame!"

"Qu'est-ce que c'est, Helene?" demande le mari qui avait deja descendu quelques marches de l'escalier.

"Il y a quelqu'un qui voudrait me parler."

A Christmas Prayer

A woman mounts the stairs that lead to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Paris. Her name is Marie, and she is young and pretty, but she is poorly dressed; in fact, she is in rags. The sun has just set: this is what Marie has waited for. It starts to snow, and Marie starts to tremble. She is cold and afraid.

Finally, she arrives at the door of the church, but she does not enter. The thick door is closed against the cold, but Marie can hear from within sweet voices, like those of angels. They are singing a mass for Christmas Eve.

Marie kneels on the steps, but she cannot even begin a prayer because of her shivering. There are tears in her eyes. As they slide down her cheeks, the tears freeze on her face.

Marie was born in a very small room where her mother lived. She died four years ago, in the same room where Marie was born. Her mother's last words still remain with Marie: "My daughter, we are all alone. There was no one here when you were born, here in this room, between these sheets. We have always been alone, and we are still alone." Marie's mother worked nights in the streets of Montmartre. She did not know the name of Marie's father. She said simply that her daughter was a gift from God.

The music in the church stops suddenly . . . Marie opens her eyes and stares anxiously at the door. She begins trembling again. She stands as the door of the church opens. A river of people emerges. Most of them do not see Marie, who stands in the darkness behind the door. She waits until the last person exits the church. It is a woman, very well dressed, who is with her husband. With a final shiver, Marie speaks:

"Excuse me, Madame."

"What! What do you want?" asks the woman, staring into the darkness where the voice came from.

"May I speak to you for a moment, if you please?"

"But why? I have nothing to say to you."

"Oh, I beg you, Madame!"

"What is it, Helene?" asks the woman's husband, who has already descended several steps.

"There's someone who wants to talk to me."

"I told you we shouldn't have come her tonight, among the vagabonds," says the man to his wife.

"But you know I like to come here for Christ-

Marie sort de l'ombre, et les deux peuvent pour la première fois les haillons de la pauvre.

"Je vous ai dit que nous n'aurions pas du venir ici ce soir, parmi les clochards," dit le monsieur à sa femme.

"Mais c'était ici au Sacre-Coeur où on a baptisé mon père," répond la dame.

Marie continue, "Seulement deux minutes, madame, je vous implore! Quand j'avais six ans, ma mère m'a envoyée ici, au Sacre-Coeur, avec une lettre, très mal écrite, j'en suis sûre. Mais elle voulait que le curé me donne des instructions pour la première communion. Il m'a demandé si l'on m'avait baptisé. Je ne savais pas, et le curé m'a fait retourner chez moi. En vérité, je n'étais pas baptisée, ni ma mère."

"Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez de moi?" demande la dame, qui ne comprend pas.

"Je veux que vous fassiez une prière pour moi. Vous êtes bien chrétienne, et moi, je ne peux pas entrer dans l'église à cause de mes origines et de mes vêtements sales. Est-ce que vous pouvez rentrer dans l'église? Je ne veux pas mourir avant de l'avoir fait faire."

"Mais vous êtes jeune et malgré la crasse, vous avez l'air d'être en santé. Vous n'allez pas mourir!"

"Je vous implore, madame! Une prière courte! J'en ai besoin!"

"Non, je n'ai pas le temps. Pourquoi est-ce que vous m'avez choisie? Ma maison est loin d'ici et je dois marcher beaucoup pour arriver chez moi. Regardez-la, mon mari est déjà au trottoir! Voici une pièce de monnaie . . . je pense que ce c'est cinq francs . . . je ne peux pas la lire. En tout cas, vous pouvez acheter quelque chose dont vous avez besoin."

Et la femme s'en va. Il y a encore des larmes aux yeux de Marie. Elle tient la pièce de monnaie dans le poing. Elle la regarde comme une relique sacrée. La dame est chrétienne, elle a été baptisée, et aussi son père, dans cette même église, le Sacre-Coeur, où Marie ne peut pas entrer. Mais la dame était dans l'église, et aussi son argent.

Marie tenait la pièce quand elle a sauté dans la Seine où flottaient des morceaux de glace.

mas Eve. My father was baptized here at the Sacred Heart. Just be glad I didn't want to come to midnight mass," answers the woman.

"Yes, yes . . ." says the man.

Marie continues, "Only two minutes, Madame, I implore you! When I was six years old, my mother sent me here to the Sacred Heart, with a letter, very badly written, I am sure of it. She wanted that the curé give me instructions for the first Communion. He asked if I had been baptized. I didn't know, so he sent me home. In truth, I wasn't baptized, nor was my mother."

"But what do you want from me?" asks the woman, who does not understand.

"I want you to make a prayer for me. You are a good Christian, and me, I can't enter the church because of my background and my dirty clothes. Will you go back into the church and say a prayer? I don't want to die without having it done."

"But you are young and despite the dirt, you seem to be in good health. You're not going to die!"

"I beg you Madame! A short prayer! I need this!"

"No, I don't have the time. Why do you choose me? My house is far from here, and I have to walk a long way to get there. Look! My husband's already on the sidewalk! Here's a coin . . . I think it's five francs . . . I can't read it in the dark. At any rate, you take it and buy something that you need."

And the woman is gone. There are tears in Marie's eyes again. She holds the coin in her fist and looks at it as if it were a holy relic. The woman is a Christian, she was baptized, and her father, too, in this same church, the Sacred Heart, where Marie cannot enter. But the woman was in church, and her money as well.

Marie clenches the coin as she drops into the Seine, where pieces of ice are floating.

Come and Go

Connie Flythe Burnsmier

When you come to me be silent
Utter not a sound.
Spoken words can be so violent

Come to me in the dark of night
Upon the walls no shadows cast.
Love in the dark fades with the light

When you leave me be ever swift
Waste not a single minute.
You'll leave not a single cleft

Leave me before the break of day
While the grass is wet with dew.
It doesn't matter now what you say

I never did belong to you.

Empty Mind

Ron Speir

I sit upon the hill,
Thinking quietly alone.
The cool breeze blows
Calmly, pulling on my hair;
My eyes open up,
As the world begins to spin . . .

My thoughts float round and round;
I recall images—people places things—
The ghosts in my mind
Snap thoughts down my spine:
Life to chase, Death to flee.

Bits of logic,
Fall in place,
My mind begins to click;
Shooting empty thoughts
Straight through my head.

The aberrations fade
Promptly, I try to stir,
Fighting Earth's gravity,
And I stand, all alone.

Sex Talk with Dr. Sue

Stanley Cross

. . . And the only way I can get it up (oops, can I say that on the air?).

* Well, you already have . . .

- Sorry. Well anyway, the only way I can get Aroused is if my wife dresses in camouflage underwear and holds a loaded pistol to my head.

* Well sir, I don't suppose that there is anything wrong with you. Many people need that rush, uh, that sense of mortal danger to add excitement to their humdrum lives.

- I can't tell you how relieved I am to hear you say that. I think many less open-minded people would think that I'm sort of, well, perverted.

* That's true, but I wonder if you don't think that it's sort of dangerous to use a loaded firearm?

- Well, we make sure to keep the safety on.

* I see. What does your wife think about this?

- My wife is such a kind, gentle, understanding person; but I think that she kind of enjoys the role of Dominatrix.

* Yes, but I do believe that it is very important to ask her how she feels about your, uh, special needs.

- You're right, Dr. Sue. I'll do that.

* Well that's good to hear.

- Thanks a lot.

* You're welcome. I'm Dr. Sue and this is *Sex Talk*. Hello, you're on the air, go ahead please.

- Hello?

* You're on the air go ahead...

- Hi, Dr. Sue, I've got a problem.

* How old are you?

- I'm fifteen years old.

* O.K. What can I help you with?

- Well I got this girl pregnant . . .

* Whoa, have you talked to your parents about this?

- Well my father left home recently. . .

* What about your mother?

- She's never really at home. She's very involved with her work, that's why my father left, I think. He felt unwanted, that's what he told me, anyway. He ran away with some girl.

* You never see her?

- Who?

* Your mother.

- Oh. Well, hardly ever. Sometimes at breakfast, but she works at night, so she's usually too tired to talk.

* Yes, but this is very important, don't you think?

- Yes, but she usually tells me that I'm old enough now to take care of myself.

* Yes, that's what I often tell my son. He's about your age. Isn't there anyone to talk to?

- Well, there's the maid, but she's always talking about her 13 children she's been raising since she was 16, and I figure that she has enough to worry about.

* I see. Well, listen son, I think you should make a special effort to tell your mother about this, don't you think so?

- Yes.

* Call her at work if you have to.

- O.K.

* I hope things work out for you.

#

- Thanks. Goodbye.

* It's so important to communicate with your youngsters, folks. I'm a single mother and I know that it can be tough... Well, it's time for a commercial break. This is Dr. Sue, and you're listening to *Sex Talk* . . .

% Hey Sue, pick up on line 3. I think that it's your son, he says it's important. Make it quick, you're on in 30 seconds.

* Hello Jimmy, make it quick, I'm on in 10 seconds . . .



divergence of the twain ron speir

A Modern Poet

Ron Speir

If my voice were strong,
 Strong enough to call out
 Across the buffer centuries.
 To call out to the past,
 Call out to those daft Romantics.

I see the Romantic scribes,
 Putting pen to paper,
 Scribbling aerial thoughts,
 To call out to them:
 Shelley, Keats, Byron, Wordsworth.

They wrote so boldly,
 Wild thoughts transverse
 Through the centuries,
 Pens strike forceful blows,
 Resounding through time.
 The words move me so;
 My heart swells inside,
 As I listen to the wind,
 They call to me:
 But fertile time is lost
 As I rush fervently—
 To load wordprocessor.

Thoroughfare

Carol Ann Causey

Stabbing, jabbing, desecrating my Roget's thesaurus.
 I synonymously massacre, kill, immolate my book.
 Grasping, clasping, seizing my blade.
 I slit, sever, rip its tedious pages.

Dying, expiring, perishing, crossing the River Styx.
 I corrupt, defile, violate the immaculate.
 Shamelessly, brazenly, wantonly, without disgrace,
 Debauching, plundering, raping purity.

An urchin, a ragamuffin, a tatterdemalion
 Pleading, begging, urging to be set free.
 Struggling, laboring, writhing to be set free,
 But denied, refused, negated . . . you'll pay.

Destruction, obliteration, eradication . . . my gang will get you.
 Blood flows, trickles, circulates.
 Disorder, confusion, imbroglio.
 Terminus, Armageddon, The End.

Damn thesaurus.

```
programming life (input,output);  
sigmund hudson;
```

```
10 begin {main}  
20   if sin( abc ) < large then  
30     call Him;  
40   else  
50     increment(time);  
60     continue;  
70     more;  
80     test;  
90   end if;  
100  while (not end_of_line) do  
110    read( cell_data);  
120    mull;  
130    moan;  
140  end loop;  
150  end all;  
160 end {main}
```

execution completed, 10.3.87, 12.01, Reidsville, GA



passages heather birkheimer

