Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss18/1

This Full Volume is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
CutBank

Spring/Summer 1982

Editors: Jack Heflin, Lyn McCarter, Sandra Alcosser

Assistant Editors:
Emily Ransdell and Kenny Schexnayder

Art Editor: Kenneth Spector

CutBank is now indexed in The Access to Little Magazines, and is available on microfilm from Gaylord Bros., Inc., P.O. Box 61, Syracuse, New York 13201. It is also listed in the Index to Periodical Fiction and The Index of Periodical Verse.

CutBank is published twice a year, in fall and spring, and is funded by the Associated Students of the University of Montana. Subscription: $5.00/year, $9.50/2 years. All correspondence should be sent to CutBank, c/o Department of English, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812. Unsolicited manuscripts are encouraged, but must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Contents copyright © by the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM), 1981.

Copies of back issues are still available. See back pages for further information. Numbers 1-17 are available in a set for $20.00.

The publication of his magazine was made possible in part by a grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines.

The editors wish to apologize for the error in Albert Goldbarth’s poem, “The Rest of My Life,” which appeared in CutBank 17. ‘Laceowork’ should read ‘lacework.’

ERRATA:

On the contents page, ‘Sam Hammill’ should read ‘Sam Hamill.’
## CONTENTS

### FICTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greg Michelson</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>The Tail of His Luck</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Kitterman</td>
<td>28</td>
<td><em>The Man Who Raised Rabbits</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixa Schell</td>
<td>79</td>
<td><em>Hairdo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Colby</td>
<td>90</td>
<td><em>Contortions</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PHOTOGRAPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photographer</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drex Brooks</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Maechling</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna Bullock</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Garrod</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hooton</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Uelsmann</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Branch</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Kies</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanda Schatz</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Spector</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna Bullock</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Branch</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Kies</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanda Schatz</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Spector</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna Bullock</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### POETRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Hammill</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Shuttleworth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances Kuffel</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Barnstone</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Body of Winter</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Proportionate</em></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Blind Man’s Poem</em></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gospel of the Mountain</em></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mary C. Fineran  9  Foundering
Wendy Ranan  21  Inside Out
Greg Kuzma  23  Hearing
Harvey Lillywhite  26  Memorial Day
Abby Rosenthal  27  The Light
James Finnegan  41  Stars and Blossoms
Nicholas Kolumban  42  At a Wedding
Peter Wild  44  Holy Ghost
Bob Ross  46  from Letter to a Dead Wren
Roseann Lloyd  72  Southeast Asia, Second Grade
John Haislip  74  from Storm Journal
Laurie Lamon  75  To the Last Artful Man
77  Lament
Roger Dunsmore  88  Teepee Rings
Michael Dobberstein  98  The Wish
David Axelrod  95  Kaddish

ESSAYS/REVIEWS

Dan Rubey  66  Post-Modern Photography: Mirrors and Windows
Lyn McCarter  97  On Rick Newby
Jack Heflin  100  On Lee Bassett
102  On Lex Runciman

CONTRIBUTORS  105

Cover photograph by Edna Bullock
THE BODY OF WINTER

after Elytis

It is late in the day, very late for beginning again. It has been a long time since the rain didn’t drip from the eaves, and even longer since the crows didn’t huddle like black flags against the iron sky. Nevertheless, I begin:

no one is home; nothing moves but the black slate pencil drawing out a life of words that vanish on the breath leaving only scrawls, splinters of desire on the pulp of dead wood in the smoke of dying December.

The palpable dark is not the dark we fear. But memory? Memory is the hell that burns us black with desire, it is a black flame burning the bridge between the dead and those who almost live. It crosses the sexual water.

Green River, Colorado, Novarro, Sacramento—even their names, no longer attached, sounded against the emptiness, draw them closer. While under the raven’s wing my hand is writing out its future.

But I’m not there: the harder I look, the darker the world becomes until it blurs, water spilling into water, earth sifting the earth, and the dark syllables name that moment in which I might have been.
PROPORTIONATE

Drying my boots
by the propane heater,
why do I think of
a cellar I feared
when I was a boy?
Nothing frightening
ever happened there,
and my only memory
of the house is
a babysitter who
I thought would let
her boy have her
on our couch.

I stepped over the barbed wire fence
after checking for game in corn stubble.
I was going to sit on the grass
by a locust tree, but I thought
I heard a pheasant gurgle.
The woods along the creek seemed unused
and grey, haunted by something
I won’t live long enough to see.
Soon, the house was in view:
the kind of place where the woman
curses the laundry as it freezes
on a wire clothesline.
The wind has been blowing in from the south since morning, and it might snow tonight: Magritte said, "I despise my own past and that of others."

I look at my boots, nearly dry and ready for oiling, and wonder how many more times can I do this. The next time will be as this time, done already and ready to be done once more, yet the ecstasy of chilled feet near a heater always seems new, virginal.
I tell the woman on the Hector Street bus: 
what I really want to see is a dancing bear 
balanced on the high wire, strutting across 
dusty air like a final roll of horns. She laughs 
& speaks of Picasso & the Himalayas. These are the great 
gestures, foreign to my thick books. Times Square 
at night, I reply, my neck swanning out of my collar. 
I want night. I want to taste it like popsicles; 
I want to stand in Times Square under the traffic of neon signs 
& the night will stick to my fingers, fall in stains 
down my chin.

The sighted insist on the worlds I have found, 
as though I live the waxy fluttering of a cherry blossom 
with no need to see its blush or its place among so many others. 
They think that only I can single it out, 
possess it best with my four sharp senses. 
& that if I had my choice, I would lie for hours 
under the cherry tree & watch the scuttle 
that is the visible spring.

If I had my choice, I would sit 
on a closed toilet watching a woman as she bathes. 
I would bring her soaps, glowing & various, 
so she could wash herself slowly, a cat drowsing on a winter 
morning. The cold seeps through my jacket, porcelain 
or the window behind me, as the bus swerves again. 
This is my blind man's career: to juggle the dark against the light, 
to make them both my own. I've become a collector of the absurd 
prancings of an animal above me as he snaps his parasol 
shut with a flourish I call grand.
GOSPEL OF THE MOUNTAIN

On a red mountain north of Beijing (where the Chinese hermits banished morning frost by chopping wood) the wisdom of the air washes the silent herons. Time is lost like a smoke wisp hanging over bamboo. Time of no-mind. The mountain cherries bloom by the white hut, and life is never through although the heart can never leave its room. One life, caught on the planet, never with the burning spice of immortality. On a red mountain, mist and sunlight hold some peaceful lemon trees in their own myth of wisdom. God's disease of history is out of place, and lemon air is cold.
FOUNDERING

The rains that do not cleanse us continue. Outside our gate the street’s edge runs undetectably to mud. Sunday papers swell and choke the flooded ditch. They say in the country crops are bursting. Horses bloat and founder, cry from the too-green fields, sink through curled and useless hooves. We no longer promise each other anything. When we walk through town I watch your face in store widows, listen to stone footsteps echo on the bridge. We pray for lightning, thunder, snow, any human resolution. Nothing changes. I have the same dream every night: teeth soften, lose edge, loosen. The rusty taste of blood, tongue pushing pulp, the endless falling out of things grown familiar: echoes of rain on roof, the fevered horse’s plodding search for drier ground.
Even as the colt's center of gravity moved and he came banging out of the trailer, T.J. understood this was not to be, after all, the horse of his great luck. The colt planted his feet in the fading glare of a dusk-to-dawn light, like a sailor unsure of the ground, and jerked his head as T.J. walked around him slowly, without changing expression and keeping to the very rim of the light which finally erased itself into shadow with an abrupt, mechanical blink. The sky was a cinder, brightening to a puff of wind.

A man came up from the shedrow, crossing the sloppy ditch at its narrowest point, and stood next to T.J. Behind them, a horse whinnied and the colt gave a high-pitched answer. Somewhere along the row, another horse began kicking its stall.

"Not a bad old goat."

T.J. nodded. He shifted his weight and felt a squeeze of mud suck gently at his boot. Everything carried the smell of mud.

The man's name was Ray Cloud, and he took the lead rope from the driver, who was puffy-faced and anxious, and walked the colt around so T.J. could see how he moved.

"This one is going to bring you luck," Cloud told him. "Fast as a goosed rabbit, I can feel it. Gonna bring you lots of luck."

"Lots of it." R.J. agreed. His knee felt like a sponge. It was going to rain again soon.

They coaxed the horse across the ditch and put him in his stall. A ghost of steam rose off a scuff along his canon bone where a leg wrap had kicked loose. They rubbed him down, paying close attention to his legs and treating the scrape with powder. The colt was fidgety. He grabbed a mouthful of bedding and dropped it, then a mouthful of hay. He dropped the hay in his water bucket and splashed at the water without drinking. T.J. decided to keep an eye on him.
Later, at breakfast, Cloud chewed his scrambled eggs. Two jockeys took turns knocking pool balls around an old table, but long strips of tape patched the felt in several places and the balls bumped over them. T.J. stirred ice into his coffee, a habit he had picked up years ago when he had worked in his father's tire repair shop before he was old enough to work at the track. He remembered how they had gone out at night together and scattered nails up and down the highway that ran in front of the shop. "Better than advertising," his father told him and they laughed, and business picked up like crazy until the sheriff caught them at it and made his father pay a big fine. "Damn bastard just wants his cut," his father said, and T.J. figured that was true.

Cloud finished his eggs and pushed his plate to the side.

"How you plan to start with him?"

"We'll see." T.J. shrugged. "Let him settle down today. We'll look at him tomorrow and see."

The jockeys were smacking the balls harder now so that they jumped in the air whenever they hit the tape. One bounced across the room and rolled behind the counter, but they didn't go after it.

His father was still laughing when T.J. came home from the army. The old highway was almost abandoned except for the traffic it fed into the new interstate at the other edge of town, but the pile of tires behind his shop had turned into a mountain.

"Only rubber plantation in the state." And his father laughed. "Someday it'll be worth a fortune," he said.

That night, T.J. went to see Conna Lee, who had written him faithfully the whole time he was away, and she let him take her to the Rocket Inn, telling him over and over again how she had saved herself, and then at the last minute she changed her mind, and he had forced her. After that, she turned curious, and then frisky and enthusiastic. They went back to the same room every night for a week.

Then he found out she was pregnant, her eyes were shiny with
disaster when she told him, and he couldn’t for the life of him see which way to turn. The next day, he was kicked by a horse. He had come back from all that time in Viet Nam without a scratch and then, first thing, he was kicked in the knee by a horse. His father thought it was funny and laughed, but T.J. found himself waking up from sudden dreams, out of breath and grabbing with both hands at the air around him.

“This is God’s punishment for our sins,” Conna told him. She wore a black dress and a look of infinite grief.

“We’ll get married,” he said, but she wasn’t listening.

“Pray with me,” she told him and got right down on her knees in the hospital room with the door open and her father in the hall, waiting. T.J. closed his eyes and didn’t open them again until she was gone. He remembered the story of her grandfather who was burned to death years ago in a battle with the Devil, at a tent meeting back on the ridge above the racetrack. They said the whole ridge lit up at once and he came tumbling down a ball of flame, still screaming defiance, they said, and spooking the horses, and for a moment the vision of it leaped out at T.J. with too much clarity, and that’s when he first lost control and felt himself chasing headlong after the cork-screwed tail of his luck.

Pool balls were flying off the table now with regularity. Cloud got up and looked out the window at the rain that was coming down in sheets, but T.J. shrugged and lowered his head as he walked out the door.

two

Rain was still coming down several days later when T.J. got Cloud to help him hang a mattress against the back wall in the colt’s stall so he wouldn’t do any more damage kicking it. He was about fed up. That morning the owner, a huge Texan with a blue peacock feather in his hat, had come to watch his horse run. The colt pranced all the way to the starting gate and went in without problems, but then he flipped
over backwards before the rest of the horses were loaded, and the
track stewards disqualified him. The jockey was sent to the hospital.

“I’m sick of this,” said the Texan as he walked away.

The colt was fascinated by the mattress. He touched it with his nose
and then he banged it. Finally he wheeled and gave it a hard, muffled
kick. T.J. laughed, an unlikely sound that made Cloud think of
flames snapping into dry wood. The air smelled somehow like
Cloud’s cigar even though T.J. knew he had thrown it away hours
before. Cloud only smoked cigars when owners were around.
“Bothers em,” he said.

“The problem is,” began T.J., “where are we going to find another
boy dumb enough to ride this son of a bitch?”

That night as T.J. sat in the same after-dinner chair in the humid
livingroom of Conna Lee’s parents that he sat in every Tuesday, with
his leg propped in front of him like a dead tree, he suffered a
premonition.

Conna Lee sat across from him, her hands tight in her lap, a
photograph of her grandmother on the wall behind her right
shoulder. The wallpaper was splotched with mildew. The old
woman’s face was set in the absolute, unbending expression it had
taken on the day of her husband’s disaster, and with a shock, T.J. saw
Conna’s face carrying that very same look of a perfect widow that had
nothing to do with patience. For a breath, they stared at him like
twins, and he felt his blood collect between his shoulder blades and
begin to leak down his spine. But, in the next breath, he recognized
that if he moved, the speechless eyes would not follow him because
nothing outside their permanent, fixed gaze would exist.

His own eyes became opaque and slick as the turned-up belly of a
fish, and Conna bit her tongue to keep from saying something
foolish.

Her father was giving T.J. his weekly judgements on the progress of
Conna Lee’s cooking. Every Monday, she cooked for her family and
on Tuesday her father gave T.J. his report. He was not encouraging.
Yesterday, she had burned the chicken and served up the biscuits
cold. She never cooked on Tuesdays when T.J. was over.
"You'll get too much of that soon enough," her father said. His face was oddly unmarked and fragile, but the back of his neck was as thick and creased as a lizard. He fiddled with his pipe while he talked, but didn't light it.

Later, with a determined gesture, he sat out on the porchswing and had a smoke. It was the first time T.J. and Conna Lee were alone together in the same room since that day in the hospital, and T.J. was embarrassed. He felt the room come close and empty of air, but Conna smiled casually, her hands uncurled from her lap, and she asked polite, distant questions about the horses he was training. Her mother made too much noise in the kitchen.

three

T.J. came awake later than he should have. He flung his hands and rolled into a sitting position, a full heartbeat before his brain was aware of the change. A woman's voice had asked him, "Are you awake?"

"No. I'm on fire," he answered, and another voice from somewhere deep in his sleep continued screaming, but T.J. had already forgotten it and the sound only registered itself as a cat crying, his ears tuned completely to the noises around him.

He touched the cold place between his shoulders.

Without hurrying, he dressed and put a shallow pan of water on the hotplate. The horses were already fed and their quiet munching floated voices into the camper, but he couldn't make out any of the words. His alarm clock had fallen over and it vibrated like a wind-up toy on a magazine by his bed, but it didn't ring. While he waited for the water to heat, T.J. wondered whether he should tell Conna he wasn't going to see her anymore. He tried it out, tracking back to the day he had come home, trying to find the place where things had taken the wrong turn, but his tenuous instincts failed him. Even with his eyes closed, he couldn't imagine his life without her.
The voices outside were becoming insistent as T.J. turned off the hotplate. He moved some shirts from the counter and put them in a dresser drawer, but he didn't know where to put his memory of those nights at the motel with Conna Lee; or where to put the memory of what she had done with the baby; or what to do with all the other memories that were turning around each other and shifting into the deep, burnt rubber smell of his father's laughter.

A fly buzzed like a dream on the lip of his shaving mug.

When he stepped out of the camper, he was holding the pan of water under his chin and shaving, like he always did, without a mirror. At the bottom of the step, Cloud was arguing with a scarecrow that T.J. recognized, after a moment, as one of the jockeys he had seen playing pool in the track cafe. The jockey's hair was the color and texture of damp straw. His hands were spread open, palms out.

"Hey man, don't worry. It's alright, ya know? I can handle it."

The jockey turned toward T.J., his wide grin producing two missing teeth and breath that carried a sweet smell. His eyes were swimmy.

"He wants to ride," Cloud said.
T.J. shook his head.
"I already told you I can do it, hey."

T.J. tossed out the water and set the pan inside the camper door, pretending to consider it. He wiped flecks of soap off his face with his hand.

"You don't look in any shape to ride."
"I can tame that crazy horse you got." The voice became suddenly gentle. "You watch me tame him."

"If you dope my horse," T.J. told him, "I'll break your legs."
This time the grin was more careful.
"Hey, you see anyone else standing here lookin' to ride for you?" As he spoke, the jockey turned his head in both directions.
Finally, T.J. shrugged and looked at Cloud. "It's his life." Then he looked back at the jockey.
"If you're here tomorrow morning at six ready to gallop, then we'll
see."

"Just so we understand each other," the jockey answered.

The ridge shouldered up from the morning fog as they walked over to the shedrow. The jockey came with them and eyed each of the horses. Then, without being asked, he picked up a rake and started to clean out the stalls. T.J. and Cloud spent the morning re-setting the horses' shoes, and, for once, the colt didn't act up.

By supper, the jockey had moved a cot into T.J.'s feed room, and that night as T.J. made a last check on the stock, he was lying on the cot in his shorts, his bony ribs covered with scars, smoking a joint and whistling under his breath.

four

The colt worked past the rail under a tight rein, and the sound of his hooves fell apart and disappeared in the fog. Although normally it should have been crowded by this time of the morning, today the track was strangely empty, as if the world was holding its breath, he thought. The sky was dark and hanging. T.J. caught himself watching the ridge for movement. It was on days just like this, he realized with a start, that they had moved in on villages, suddenly, as if out of nowhere, burning everything in sight. He almost never thought about those things anymore, and the sharp pain of the memory surprised him. He forced his attention back to the track, rubbing his knee absently.

The colt seemed to be coming along, though he still had days when his mood turned black and mean. But they had worked him through the gates a dozen times, first by himself, then with Cloud's old gelding, until he was comfortable. T.J. had cut small holes in the blinkers so the colt could see a little of what was going on around him, and this helped settle him down some. They took their time, bringing him along slowly so that when they finally jumped him out with a bunch of green two-year-olds, he ran like a dream, as if nothing could ever catch him. The rain held off, and the colt liked the drier track. He
also seemed to like the new jockey.

So T.J. entered him to race again. They had breezed the colt hard two days, and now they were giving him a light work to take the edge off. The Texan was coming up first thing in the morning, and T.J. had been hoping it wouldn’t rain, but he could see now that it would. He looked up again at the place where the layers of clouds bumped the top of the ridge. Some of them, the higher white ones that he could just barely see, thin and elusive, looked like vapor trails above the storm clouds. Please don’t make us go in again, he had prayed back then, whispering into the silence, please don’t make me go in again, but they always had.

“Your turn’s coming,” Cloud predicted as he walked up to join T.J. at the rail. “I can feel it. Tomorrow’s your turn.”

The huge Texan arrived at dawn while T.J. was graining the other horses. The first bad sign was a steady drizzle. The second bad sign was that the Texas was pulling a horse trailer. T.J. saw it would be no use suggesting they scratch the colt because of the mud.

The Texan waited for T.J. in front of the colt’s stall. Cupped in his hand was a small pad of notes which he kept glancing down at until, finally, he pencilled something and put the pad in his pocket. He nodded as T.J. approached and said, “Bring him out.”

But the colt didn’t want to come out. He shied when the drizzle hit his face, and then he walked out on his hind legs, striking with his front feet at the rain, splashing mud everywhere as he came back down heavily on all fours.

“God dammit.” The Texan checked his hat with the enormous peacock feather to make sure it wasn’t splattered.

T.J. felt cornered by the Texan, by the ridge at his back that he suddenly half-imagined was going to burst into flames at any moment. His knee was filling up with the rain that seeped down through the growing empty place between his shoulders. He watched the colt, whose feet were rooted firmly.
The Texan went off somewhere for breakfast.

The third bad sign was the disappearance of the jockey. Cloud threw his cigar to the ground and went to look for him while T. J. tried to calm the colt who weaved in his stall, slinging his head, and thumped the mattress that was still hanging on the back wall. By the time Cloud turned up with the jockey, the colt had worked himself into a lather.

“Hey man, no problem. Just went to shoot some pool first, ya know? All the balls were gone though, can you believe it, weren’t any balls.”

The jockey was floating. A grin gaped across his face, and that’s when T.J. felt himself beginning to lose control again.

“Don’t worry, hey. I can ride. But the way that horse is acting, it won’t make much difference.”

T.J.’s knee throbbed, and he fought an almost overwhelming urge to sit down in the mud. The jockey’s voice came to him like silk from a great distance, and he had to force himself to pay attention.

“It works on me, man,” the jockey was saying. When T.J. didn’t answer, the jockey ducked into the feed room, coming back with a paper bag and a joint.

“Besides, wouldn’t hurt him any. Just relax him a little, that’s all. Wouldn’t even show up in a test, ya know?”


“I’m the one’s got to ride him.”

They were right, T.J. saw he didn’t have anything to lose. As it was, even if they could get him into the gates at all, it wouldn’t matter if he had already worn himself out like this, running his race back here in the stall. The colt splintered his feed box.

“It’ll work, man.”

T.J. knew then that it really didn’t make any difference, as long as he made something happen. He had to decide something. The Texan wasn’t going to hear any excuses, and T.J. could imagine the scenes. When he nodded, the jockey filled the bag with smoke, and T.J. and Cloud managed to hold the colt’s head while the jockey slipped the
And it did work. The colt behaved all the way to the saddling paddock and paraded calmly to the starting gates. A few fat drops mixed in with the mist, keeping the crowd under the roof of the stands and away from the rail. When the gates flew open, the colt almost didn't come out. Then he exploded, already two lengths behind but running like the wind along the inside, his ears pinned flat against his head, and he finished a close third before he stumbled and went down.

five

T.J. sat by himself in the track cafe and thought about last night. Just before dark he had walked to the top of the ridge where he found an old, dead tree that had been split by lightning. There, with the whole world empty and still, except for the wind breathing across the leaves, he had thought about the turnings of his luck, remembering clearly his time in Viet Nam and everything that had happened there, and trying to untangle the impossible situation with Conna Lee and her family.

Now, as he left the cafe and cut across the track toward the shedrow, his knee still ached from the climb, but he almost took a kind of pleasure in it. Although the colt hadn't broken any bones, bowed tendons had finished his racing career; and this morning, after calling their owners, T.J. had turned the rest of the horses over to Cloud.

He had gone to see Conna Lee as soon as he had washed up and changed clothes. Her father endured a moment of confusion at seeing him on the wrong night because they had fallen so comfortably into the habit of T.J.'s Tuesday visits. T.J. had stepped into the livingroom, where they were all gathered for family prayers, and told Conna he was leaving, it was time to make up her mind if she was going to marry him or not. He had hopes of finding work at the big tracks in New Mexico, he said. Her mother tried to turn him to stone

19
on the spot, but Conna Lee answered yes quickly, because the truth was, she told them, there was nothing in this world that she wanted more. Her mother slapped the Bible onto the table under the grandmother's photograph and went into the kitchen without a word, but it was all settled. After a while, T.J. went home to tell his father, and the two of them sat for a long time on the back porch, staring at the incredible pile of tires that was shadowed oddly in the yellow porch light. "Someday when I'm gone," his father had gestured at the vague shapes, "this will probably bring you a fortune." This time he didn't laugh.

T.J. splashed through the ditch to the shedrow. He was going to leave the next morning and come back in two weeks for the wedding. It was all settled. He stopped at the colt's now empty stall, and then he stepped into it for a moment, letting the half-door swing on its hinges.
Look at the evening sea
scallopéd with moths
cooling after a day of fire.

Look how they're right,
the ones who said "Look,
look where you least expect it."

And always, it would be there
disguised as part of yourself;
eyeglasses woven through hair,
keys jutting like knuckles
under a hip pocket.

Tricking it didn't work.
If you looked first in the wrong place
only the right things would be there.

Where is this misarrangement written?
Not on the sea
which won't stand still enough
to keep our faces whole.

There is no name
for the night carried within.
We know it when the child screams
as the light goes out,
when, losing even ourselves
we grope through the same dark.
as if pillows could locate our hands.

At daybreak, we walk through brambleweed, kelp, beaches sparkling like shelves of dime-store jewelry. We say we are searching for shells. Look for us where ocean ends the sand where shore begins the water.
I hear the shins aching.
I hear the mild cacaphony of tea water churning, the lungs of beetles breathing on all sides.
I hear the snore of clocks,
the sunburn on the leaves of plants too long in a window.
I hear, through the bulging rooms, the ineffable muster of old coats, the memories of old medallions, the break of their wars.
I hear, from a distance, the mutter of towns rising, and, from another distance, the deliberations of progress at the auto plant.
Now comes on the whisper of the river bearing, as if some undercurrent, an ebb tide of the sea's regret.
From the corner I hear the old washbasin holding its tears.
And next to it the reluctant hush of the broom, no longer carried forth into the antagonistic day.
Dust sleeps on trinkets, and I hear as well the kink in the water pipe. There is the bird, situated, recalling warm skies.
The tree around it muted in its voice. And now the wind rises to make a speech and I can hear the concentration of the audience.
November has brought the snakes.
Sometimes the scales click and slide.
Now the whirr of the spinning wheel
rises up out of the woolen blanket.
Now the carpet greets my naked feet
with the surging it associates
with the vacuum cleaner.
Pieces of popcorn lie fallen
between counters, collapsing,
collapsing.
Boots, back from the fields,
exhale in heaps, and the socks
catch their breaths.
One might hear, perhaps,
the greeting the window glass
offers the light,
its passage in between the rows
of onlookers,
the warmth of its acceptance by wood.
A tire is slowly losing itself.
Beside it a battalion of autumn leaves
grows flatter and flatter, like ale.
Now is the ice age creaking the shadow makes
descending the wall.
Now is the sponge forlornly drying
on the counter top.
A lightbulb fizzes up in splendid overexcitement,
then is gone.
Down at the town hall
a tremendous barage of eyelids
greet the tall young lawyer.
His pace slackens, his cheeks give off
the bask of gratitude,
his pant crease snaps like a rope.
And I can hear the bullet of starlight
shot a million years ago
plunk down into my glass of beer.
And I can hear the ball of string
hugging itself.
Now there is the sound of batteries
oozing their resources.
Now the little chainsaw of the fly.
Deep in the pond the bass wavers.
High over the house a cloud,
suddenly filled with a rising dust,
sneezes.
And there is the music of strings
plucked once, then set aside,
still resonant in the sound board.
The chopping block with its hacks.
The bandaid cupping the pulse.
Sometimes, late at night,
I hear the moon waiting for summer,
the sleep, deep in the earth,
MEMORIAL DAY

My buckets overrun the flower field
burnt red in the sunrise. The blade I wield
snapped open quickly dives among the stalks
like the swallows that scissor past my truck.
I hack and pitch the wet chrysanthemums,
carnations, poison glads. My muscles hum
with hectic, raging warmth fueled by the scent.
Behind me, a season's growth scattered, spent.

I unstoop my back and crunch through stubble
gather the throbbing stems, blossoms, troubled
with this business of sorrow and the heart.
By noon it's hot, I finish my labor.
The shocks of flowers tied in buckets start
a new life, sucking hard at the water.
THE LIGHT

— for Nada Samuels

What will I do
with this glow
which brightens in me?

At thirty-five
I can’t be expected to compete
with the forsythia’s
yellow gush, the luminous
voice that jumps from the daffodil,
cherry trees dressed like brides;

and when people say I look well these days
I know what they really mean:
it’s the light, that’s all,
breaking out through the crowsfeet
and laughlines, the cracks
in my lovely old mask of a face
which year by year I weary
into genuine likeness.

For no good reason, I’m a woman
who grows happier. What a fine
old lady I’ll make,
with a face like an unsound clay pot,
sweating beads of light.

What a fine old corpse,
the shards of the pot discarded,
and the light free everywhere.
Barry Kitterman

THE MAN WHO RAISED RABBITS

There was no traffic in Ivanhoe by the time Si Franklin fed and watered his rabbits and, slipping through the side gate, headed downtown. He didn't go through the house because the preacher was in there talking to his wife, Ostie, about the boy.

He didn't care for preachers. He had only called this one to the house as a last resort. Ostie would listen to a preacher when she wouldn't listen to her own husband. They had to do something about Isaac.

Si made his way along the roadside, an old man in a black coat who walked with a cane. When he passed the grade school, he noticed the school children were all indoors. Most mornings the playground was full of screaming, red-faced children playing ball and beating each other up. Isaac was noisy that way, thought Si. This morning the school yard was quiet except for Old Glory and the state flag with the bear flapping in the wind.

Si liked quiet places. The back yard with his rabbits. The Tack Room. He knew he would find his friend Jimmy at the Tack Room now. Jimmy practically lived there. He would sit all day and play dominoes or checkers, nursing a single draft for hours. Whenever he felt like it, Jimmy took his nap there in the afternoon, seated against the wall. It was an old man's tavern, especially during the Series when a black and white Philco was brought out from beneath the bar and dusted off. More and more, it was Si's tavern, too.

Si felt himself growing warm from his walk and the two sweaters he wore underneath his wool jacket. He stopped outside the post office and peered in to see if the mail had come. Thornton, the postmaster, gazed seriously out at the street, pretending not to see Si. The checks were late this month, and it irritated Si. He had things to buy, wire to mend the rabbit hutch. He would have to charge his order at the feed store.

There had been bacon in the ice box that morning. A thick slab,
mostly fat. Si had put four pieces in the bottom of a pan and thought, if you fed bacon to a rabbit that had just thrown a litter, she wouldn’t eat her young. Why was that?

Wanting something special to add to the eggs, he had taken an onion from on top of the ice box and chopped it up until tears came to his eyes and he cut the table cloth. He had stopped for a moment, staring bleary-eyed at the sampler Ostie had hanging over the door. As long as they had been married there had been a sampler in the kitchen that read “God Bless This House.” And now there was another one hanging next to it, a new one with a couple that looked like George and Martha Washington standing over a rhyme.

Women’s faults are many,
Men have only two.
Everything they say
And everything they do.

Si threw the onion into the skillet with the eggs, making a note not to give any of the big pieces to the boy.

“You cooking?” asked Ostie as she brought Isaac into the kitchen.

“Si?”

“I guess I can fry a few eggs.” He was sorry for the tone of his voice but he didn’t apologize. Not first thing in the morning.

“Grandpa’s cookin’!” the boy crowed.

“Granpa’s burning the bacon,” said Ostie. “Watch this baby while I get dressed.”

“God Bless This House,” read the sampler above the door.

“God damn that woman,” said Si.

He had heard a rabbit scream in the middle of the night. The old buck. Lying in bed he had listened for it again, half prepared to get up and take a look, but hoping he wouldn’t hear anything more. He had pulled the blankets closer against the cold.
Si hadn’t been able to fall asleep again, and he’d found himself thinking about the buck, about the day that he bought him from a man at the fairgrounds. Eight years ago—it surprised him to count it up. The buck was older than Si had realized. Could be that was why the does were kindling such small litters. This last time the younger doe hadn’t even been pregnant, unless she had done away with her young before Si had a chance to check her. It seemed unlikely. There hadn’t been any blood on the wire.

The boy liked those rabbits. Isaac begged to go along every morning to feed them and change their water. He always wanted to carry the coffee can full of green pellets that rattled when he walked, sounding like rain on a tin roof.

“You’re not eating those, are you?” Si asked the boy each morning. Isaac was only two and had eaten some of the rabbit food once. The pellets must have tasted . . . green, thought Si. He hadn’t interfered with the boy’s curiosity that morning, not even when Isaac decided to try the little round turds that fell through the wire onto the ground. Isaac had made a sour face, had tried to spit them out. When he began to cry, Si meant to hush him up but Ostie heard and came out the back door. Seeing the green stain about Isaac’s lips, she railed at Si, Isaac cried louder yet, and Si finally had to go to the house and bring the boy a glass of milk and a graham cracker.

“Damn Kid.”

Si stopped in the middle of the sidewalk. Through the weeds of a vacant lot, he could see the back of the Baptist church. The preacher would be telling Ostie now, making her accept that the two of them were too old. He’d show her the brochures for that place down in Bakersfield. Quote some scripture. Ostie wouldn’t be speaking when Si got back home.

Si belched painfully, wishing he hadn’t put onions in the eggs. He hoped Jimmy was waiting for him in the Tack Room.

“You’re late.”
Jimmy sat in the sun filtering through the front window, his thick glasses reflecting the light. He wore his sparse white hair cut short so he wouldn't have to comb it.

"I couldn't get away," said Si, pulling up a chair. He made a face and exchanged the chair for one with four sound legs. "Had to tend to the rabbits."

Jimmy smiled. "How's the old buck?"

"Fine." Si shuffled the dominoes about the table and wiped away a ring of water with his sleeve. "How are you feeling this morning?"

"Ok," said Jimmy. "For 74."

"77, you liar."

"I forget."

"Let's play," said Si.

The daytime bartender brought two cups of coffee to the table. Soon the only sound in the Tack Room was the click, click of the large white dominoes that Jimmy brought downtown with him every day in a black cloth bag. His bones, he called them. He wouldn't let you line the pieces up on end and childishly tip them over in one long rush.

Si tended to think of dominoes as a child's game. He remembered playing with his daughter the first summer she'd spent with her hip in the brace.

Evelyn wore the brace for five years. Ostie took her shopping for new clothes the day the doctor told her she could take off the brace for good. She hardly limped. Only a little, when she got tired. Ostie wanted her to look pretty to the boys at school. He should have put a stop to that then, should never have spoiled her over that hip.

"I decided, Jimmy." Si played the 5-6 on the end of a long train of dominoes. He thought about cheating and saying it was the double five, but didn't. Jimmy couldn't read without a magnifying glass, but no one could cheat him at dominoes.

"What did you decide?" asked Jimmy, staring at his bones.

"I'm sending Isaac away. Down to Bakersfield. They got that home down there. Place is supposed to be clean. The preacher's telling Ostie about it this morning."
"Which preacher?"
"The Baptist."
"Don't know him," said Jimmy. He turned his empty gaze out the window and looked intently across the street, although Si knew he couldn't see past the edge of the near sidewalk.
Si drew a tile from the bone yard. "I suppose you think I'm doing the wrong thing."
"Doesn't matter what I think."
"I can't raise him. I'm too old."
Jimmy nodded as he tallied his score in large x's on a paper napkin.
"I'd be almost a hundred before the boy was old enough to vote," said Si.
"You're pretty old," said Jimmy. "Awful old."
Si looked up from his dominoes. "Not as old as some folks I know."
He let himself glare into Jimmy's eyes.
"You know what your trouble is, Si?" Jimmy took off his glasses and polished them on his shirt front. There were dents on the bridge of his nose that looked sore and red. "You're a wrongheaded son of a bitch," said Jimmy.
"Well, you haven't got any answers." Si played his domino and drew another.
At noon Si walked across the street to the cafe where he ordered hamburgers and milk shakes for himself and Jimmy. He told the girl behind the counter to hold the onions on the burgers.
"You got a date?" she asked, winking. Somebody ought to smack her, thought Si.
While the hamburgers were being grilled, Si walked down to the post office to see if his check had come. Only one window was open and he had to stand in line. He leaned against the long metal table, reading the vital statistics and the crimes listed on a sheaf of wanted posters. An angry young face reminded him of Evelyn, although Evelyn was older than that now. Evelyn was thirty-four, not so young anymore. Her forehead had been creased just so when she'd last stood in the driveway with her bags, waiting for her friend to come and drive her to the bus station.
Si read the poster. The face on the wall was wanted for tampering with the mail. Evelyn’s poster would have read: fornication, child abandonment.

He stopped and got the burgers on his way back to the Tack Room. Jimmy was dozing off when Si re-entered the taven, and in the end Si took most of Jimmy’s lunch out in the alley and tossed it over the fence to a collie bitch that lived in the next yard. He had hardly been able to finish his own lunch, used to having Ostie fix sandwiches for him and the boy. He could picture Isaac in the high chair, a dish towel tied around his neck for a bib. Si wondered if they had waited for him to come home.

He raised white rabbits, New Zealand Whites. He had thought at times about experimenting with another breed but had always decided against it. Colorful rabbits were only harder to kill.

He had brought the first rabbit home when Evelyn was nine, a black and white Giant Checker with one droopy ear. One of the men at work had given the rabbit to him. Si had built a makeshift hutch for the doe out of odds and ends laying around the garage, and he’d told Evelyn the rabbit wasn’t to be a pet. But Evelyn had named her anyway, would spend hours stroking the rabbit, tracing the black and white pattern of her fur with one finger.

Twice that summer Si carried the rabbit in a cardboard box to a commercial breeder’s near Tulare. When she failed to conceive the second time, he told Ostie not to buy anything for Sunday dinner. He tried to ignore the way his wife frowned at him.

Evelyn came home from Sunday School as he was finishing up the butchering. She had known all along it was going to happen, but she cried anyway. Si was stern with her, then ended up taking her into his lap to comfort her, ignoring the way her brace pressed into his legs.

“Good lord, she was just a rabbit,” he had told her. He felt his daughter hated him.

“Just a rabbit,” he repeated, rocking her back and forth. He only
raised white rabbits after that.

Si and Jimmy played cribbage in the afternoon, and Si began to win when he could keep his mind off Isaac. After taking three hands in a row, he offered to buy his friend a beer.

"Why not," said Jimmy, shuffling the cards slowly.

The bartender set two drafts on the bar and punched the keys on his cash register. Si handed him a creased dollar bill. He counted the money remaining in his wallet and wondered again if his check had arrived at the post office.

Jimmy sat at the table, leaning slightly over the cribbage board, his hands in his lap. Si placed the beer in front of him and waited for Jimmy to drink.

Jimmy closed his eyes and ran his tongue over his lips. "Help me to the wash room, will you."

"You sick?" Si set his beer down without tasting it. "You haven’t eaten anything all day."

"I’m quite aware of when I do and do not eat," said Jimmy.

Si leaned over his friend. He smelled a sour odor that reminded him of hospitals and used clothing. "Come on," he said softly, drawing Jimmy’s chair back from the table. "I’ll help you."

He steadied Jimmy to the back of the tavern and into the men’s room. Locking the door behind them Si sat Jimmy down in one of the stalls. "Can I get you anything?" he asked. "You want a drink of water?"

"Hand me some paper towels," said Jimmy. Si felt his throat constrict from the smell of urine and old tobacco as he went to the sink for the towels. He turned on the tap and looked up into the mirror. Jimmy sat on the toilet behind him, watching him. Si was alarmed at how white Jimmy’s face had turned.

"You didn’t pass any blood?"

"No," said Jimmy. "I’m all right." He took the paper towels from Si, folded them in half and wiped the sweat away from his forehead.
Si returned to his place at the sink. He combed his hair, then used his handkerchief, then combed his hair again, allowing Jimmy all the time he needed. Si helped him with the buttons on his trousers, old and at least three sizes too big.

Jimmy tried to flush the paper towels down the toilet. “I don’t know why you’re in such a damn hurry to get old,” he said.

The Collie Si had fed earlier whined at him from behind a redwood fence. Two boys on bicycles raced down the alley, blue fenders flashing in the sun, and the Collie ran along the fence barking and snapping at them. Si remembered the bicycle he had bought Evelyn the summer her hip got bad. It had been blue, too, but she had never learned to ride it. You had to bend your leg to ride a bike.

He wanted to go home and lie down. That was what old people did in the afternoon. But he wasn’t ready to face Ostie about the boy. He walked toward the packing house, wondering if anybody he knew would be there. The men would be quitting soon, and when they quit work, five o’clock, he would walk home just like he had for the eighteen years he had worked for Sunkist. Ostie would have dinner ready and there would be a newspaper. He would feed his rabbits.

He remembered the day a boy named Toland had been crushed to death on the loading dock. Just a young kid, not very bright. The whole place had shut down for the rest of the day. It was the only day Si could remember getting home from work early.

He had walked up the driveway that afternoon, noticing that the car was gone. Thursdays Ostie visited her mother at the rest home. The front door was locked. Si wasn’t sure if he had a key to the front door on his key ring, and he had to try several before he found the right one.

As he stepped into the living room he heard the back screen door shut, and he wondered if Evelyn were home. He thought that he smelled cigarette smoke, too. He went through the house slowly until he came to her room.
“Daddy,” she said, red faced, as he swung the door open. She was dressing, her bed unmade. “What are you doing home?”

“There was an accident,” he told her, thinking, she was only fifteen. He wanted to tell her about the accident and he wanted to ask her what the hell she was doing, undressed in the middle of the afternoon. He could do neither. She asked him to leave the room so she could finish getting dressed. As always he did as she asked. He had sat down heavily in the kitchen, suddenly too tired to even pour himself a beer.

Si kicked the packing house fence. He thought of Isaac and the Baptist home in Bakersfield and his daughter who wasn’t coming back. The five o’clock siren blasted from the firehouse, and Si could hear the conveyor belts inside the packing house shut down.

“God damn Sunkist,” said Si.

When he walked up his driveway he saw the boy standing on the couch looking out the big front window. Isaac had been looking out the same window the day his mother had left four months ago. She had stood by the hedgerow the last day of the long Fourth of July weekend, refusing to look over her shoulder at her son.

“Ostie thinks you’re coming back,” Si had said.

“I might come back,” said Evelyn. “Or I’ll send for the boy.”

She was impatient. Her ride was late.

“At least tell me,” he had pointed a long calloused finger at her in an effort to freeze her in place, “who this boy’s father is. You could at least tell me that.” She remained silent, her eyes on the road. “Don’t you even know?” asked Si.

Trembling, she turned on him. “Daddy,” her voice broke slightly. “Maybe I don’t amount to much, but you don’t want to raise him either. How are you any better than me?”

A green Chevrolet had pulled into the driveway, a frowsy looking woman at the wheel. Evelyn quickly got into the car.

“You’d rather raise those God damn rabbits than your own grandson.”
Si could still hear his daughter's words in the empty driveway. And now Ostie kept Evelyn's postcard on the kitchen table. A picture of two kids riding motorcycles across the desert. On the back, "Sorry. Best this way. Try and send some money." Si didn't know who was supposed to send money to who. He watched Isaac come out of the house now with the coffee can. Si wondered if he should go inside and say something to Ostie. He decided instead to feed the rabbits before it got dark.

When Si opened the door to the garage and turned on the light, Isaac saw a mouse run from the sack of rabbit chow. His eyes grew wide as he pointed under the tool bench where the mouse had disappeared.

"It's all right," he told the boy, dipping the coffee can into the sack of feed. "They don't eat much. Come on." He handed the coffee can back to the boy. Isaac ran ahead of him through the yard.

The hutch was built against the back fence. A few slow flies floated up over the manure piled under each cage. Isaac watched the old buck twitch his nose and stamp his feet on the wire with impatience while Si fed the does and the three young fryers. Si let the boy hold the hose as they filled the water dishes, rinsing the green scum from the sides of each one. He showed Isaac how to turn the water off when they were finished.

The sun began to dip behind the back fence. Si didn't want to go in yet. He watched the young fryers feeding, two does and a buck. They were three and a half months old and needed to be butchered. He had been putting it off.

He left Isaac playing with a trowel in the garden and went to the garage, returning with a bucket and his skinning knife. A short length of wire hung from the lowest branch of the walnut tree that grew beside the hutch. Si set the bucket down beneath it. Reaching into the pen of fryers, he grasped one of the does by the loose skin of her back and carried her over to the tree. He set her down on the grass and checked to make sure that Isaac wasn't watching. When Si was younger, he had been able to snap a rabbit's neck with a turn of his wrist, but he had lost the strength in his arms. He raised a short length
of pipe and brought it down hard behind the rabbit’s ears. He hung the rabbit by one hind leg from the wire and waited for her to stop kicking.

Si could see Ostie standing at the kitchen window, keeping an eye on Isaac. Over her shoulder he could just make out the sampler on the wall, the one with George and Martha Washington.

Si had laughed the first time he saw it. Then the thing started to bother him until he’d taken to sitting in a different chair in the kitchen, one with its back to that sampler.

He pulled the entrails from the rabbit, dropping them into the bucket at his feet, carefully removing the tiny sac of bile from the liver. He laid the skinned and gutted carcass on a newspaper on the grass and realized he would have to work quickly to finish before dark.

Pulling another of the fryers from the hutch, he carried it to the tree where he turned it over and saw that he had the other little doe. Her white fur was thick and smooth. Too bad he didn’t do something with the fur other than bury it in the garden. This one was prime.

He worked with an economy of motions that came from having done the same chore many times. Setting the rabbit on the ground, he broke her neck with the pipe as before, careful to make a sure kill, not wanting to injure the rabbit and cause her to make the strange, chilling scream that he had heard the night before. He remembered the first time he had heard one scream. It had been the Checkered Giant. He hadn’t known how to kill them then. After gutting the rabbit, he severed the feet and dropped them into the bucket, then laid the meat on the newspaper beside the first one.

He removed the last fryer from the hutch and carried it to the base of the walnut tree. As Si searched in the dark for the length of pipe he had been using, Isaac came out of the garden and the rabbit hopped away, feeding on the Bermuda grass that grew thick along the fence. Isaac began trying to catch the young buck, following it across the yard one step behind, afraid to reach out and grab it.

Si caught the rabbit behind the ears and held it while the boy ran his hand along the thick, white fur, then touched the long ears
tentatively. He smiled up at his grandfather, running off a string of syllables that Si didn’t understand at first. He wanted to hold the rabbit himself.

“God damn it, Isaac,” said Si softly. From inside the house, Ostie turned on the back porch light, spreading long shadows across the yard. Si noticed his hands were covered with blood and fine hairs from the fryers.

He set the boy down on the grass and placed the rabbit in his arms. The young buck found his legs and hopped free, going back to the Bermuda grass with Isaac following him slowly along the fence.

Si watched his grandson chase the rabbit back into the garden. He wiped the knife off on his pant leg and thought, the boy was a lot like his mother. Wanting to hold the rabbit, wanting to change Si’s plans. Nothing Si did ever turned out according to plan. There were no right answers. His life had become like the algebra problems he’d tried to help Evelyn with her first year in high school. No matter how hard they worked, often as not they couldn’t come up with the number written in the back of the book. It never bothered her. “I’ll find out tomorrow,” she’d say, drifting from the room. And he would stay at the kitchen table until two or three, finally going to bed, muttering to Ostie, “This time the God damn book’s wrong.”

Si looked down the row of cages until he came to the old buck.

“What do you think?”

The buck stared back at him with his cool, pink eyes. He stamped his hind legs against the wire, proudly. Si had kept him a long time. He wondered how long a rabbit could live.

“The way I see it,” said Si, “there’s a decision to be made.” He’d left his jacket somewhere during that day’s walking, and he shivered now in the night air. “It’s either you or that little one running around in the garden. I’ve no use for two buck rabbits.”

The buck loosed a long stream of urine into the manure under the hutch. Si could see Ostie standing at the kitchen window. She would be wondering why it took him so long to come in from the rabbits. She would want to give the boy a bath.

“You shouldn’t have got old,” said Si to the rabbit.

“God damn it.” Some things were even harder to figure than
algebra. And he'd never know if he made the right decision. He'd never see the boy grown up. The best he could hope for was that Ostie would. Trying to raise Isaac didn't make a bit of sense. It was unrealistic and a task only a damn fool could talk himself into.

And he knew, fool or not, he would do it.

"Cause it beats the shit out of just being old," said Si. "Oh Lord," he found himself laughing, "beats the damn hell out of that." He'd probably have to stop swearing so much, too. Ostie had been after him about swearing. He wouldn't mind, but he'd make her trade him something for it. She wouldn't get that exactly free.

"All right," said Si. "We'll start over then." He lifted the old buck out of his cage and carried him to the walnut tree, where he found the blood stained pipe lying next to the tree's twisted roots. He picked it up and knelt over the buck, looking away just for a moment to the house, all lit up against the night. When he was done with the old buck, he would go inside and make it up to Ostie. He'd watch the look on her face when he told her to throw that preacher's papers away. Isaac wasn't going anyplace. He'd call the church tomorrow. Tell the preacher God had spoken through a rabbit. He'd tell him right out he wasn't so old as he'd thought.

Maybe he could get Ostie to take that sampler down.
STARS AND BLOSSOMS

Late April is a sudden
and deciduous green
in the saddlebacked hills
of Missouri.
At night the trees are nomadic
and we get lost.
Large skeletons of trunks
with dead roots that clutch
the soil they can no longer feel.
A turkey hawk circles
for a century
on the same updraft.
The sky pulled taut at midday.
We fold up like pinecones
and rest in late afternoon.

It is time.
The sun has congealed
into a gong of bronze.
Now you must follow me
into the high woodlands
above this deadfall of shadows,
already the trees darken.
The wind has awakened the leaves
and encouraged them to chant.
The trees will not wait for us.
In the clearing at twilight
the dogwood, ignited with blossoms,
will cast spark-petals
along the ridge.
These are our constellations.
AT A WEDDING

You drive up to the country club
where weddings flourish now.
Inside you elbow your way
to the largest stuffed mushroom,
bite chunks off the salty, gray cheese
nobody wants.
You saunter through the building alone,
as if you were still a bachelor.

In the food line, a woman before you
is strange. Her hair is wind-blown
here where there’s no wind.
The rouge on her cheeks sports fingerprints.
Her eyes are simpleton blue
and are perpetually amazed.
Her large breasts sway
like church bells in the spring.

You watch the roast turkey
garnished with red roses
along its tanned thighs.
The petals resemble a maze.
You steal the rose, transplant it
to your ashtray,
moistening it with beer.
You’re unable to eat,
stare at the flower,
longing to conjure
an image of it.
The bride and groom grope
for each other’s mouths,
this maze,
reacting like marionettes
to the soprano of the crystal.
HOLY GHOST

The man who compiles dictionaries
or writes travel pieces
likes to see a farmer out mowing or pitching hay in his shirtsleeves
while behind him his bonneted wife is upstairs
in the wavering candle of the farmhouse slashing mattresses,
yelling like a searchlight, throwing
saucers and pictures out the window
in a rage because she can’t be the Holy Ghost.

To that man he’s the baseball player of the plains,
a preacher who through his labors
all day is his own best sermon,

And while he proceeds into town
    bearing his future history, swatches
of newspaper clippings stuffed in his pockets,

He dreams of the clodhopper coming around the door of the barn
with an armload of martingales,
    as usual his face forlorn at the prospect,
to confront the wondering, bulbous horses
who look at him disappointed,
    about to think of the answer to a crossword puzzle,
of him reaching over to pinch his wife at night
and making her really scream
    like a marsh entering the turmoil of sunset.

Nevertheless it’s too late as he rolls out the plans,
    gathered above the tavern with the obsequious county commissioners.
In his head he doesn’t see the farmer joined behind the corncrib
by his six stalwart sons,
    all chewing tobacco and looking just like him,
new planets that wobble out of the pine trees
armed to strangle their sisters.
2.
Wren, I have watched
an uncle, a tough, tired farmer,
lean himself against a post after milking,
facing the delicate and marbled and blazing west,
and let a striped kitten chew his thumb;

the same man capable of coming drunk
to work not done and the light gone
and beating his thin-skinned Guernseys
to a weird confusion,
the floor of the milk-barn slick with manure,
spilled grain everywhere, a stall in splinters,
himself near blind with headache,

no one speaking—

Here is the worst thing I've done.
I had a wild dog once, a stray.
He came to love me, and I him. When I was gone

a few days, he left the place.
He didn't return when I came home.
It was winter.

Nights later, when I was sure he was dead,
a howl came from Hagan Lake.
I heard it once, clearly.
It was dark and I'm afraid of the dark.
I didn't go look for him.
Today photography represents no single style or particular method of artistic expression. Modern photographers are using ideas and tools of their art in more diverse ways than ever before. In choosing the following photographs for presentation in *Cut Bank 18*, I selected a body of work that might illustrate this significant trend.

When looking at these photographs, one can see stylistic differences that range from the clear, fine-toned landscapes and housecapes of Richard Garrod and Philip Maechling to the thought-provoking recombinations of object and reality in the works of Jerry Uelsmann and Nanda Schatz. The techniques vary from the reflections, light patterns and subtle tonal control of John Hooton, to the use of the photographs as an expression of printmaking in the work of Jane Kies.

Represented here is photography in diversity—methods of expression as varied and as creative as the individual minds of the photographers themselves.

*Kenneth Spector*
"House at Night" 1980

Philip Maechling
“Palo Mission, San Diego County”
Graveyard, Virginia City, Nevada"
Untitled 1979

Harrison Branch
"Linda As a Drawing"

Kenneth Spector
POST-MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY:
MIRRORS AND WINDOWS

"Most of my likeness [daguerreotypes] do look unamiable; but the very sufficient reason, I fancy, is because the originals are so. There is a wonderful insight in heaven's broad and simple sunshine. While we give it credit only for depicting the merest surface, it actually brings out the secret character with a truth that no painter would ever venture upon, even if he could detect it."

(Holgrave in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, 1851)

Once an object of wonder because of its capacity to render reality faithfully, the camera has ended by effecting a tremendous promotion of the value of appearances. Instead of just recording reality, photographs have become the norm for the way things appear to us, thereby changing the very notion of reality, and of realism . . . The camera makes reality atomic, manageable, and opaque. It is a view of the world which denies interconnectedness, continuity, but which confers on each moment the character of a mystery. Photographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy.

(Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 1977)

Our post-modern moment in history is no longer concerned with the question of whether or not photography is Art. That question, which focused the criticism of photography for a century, assumed a certainty about the nature of Art which we no longer share. The more interesting question is what kind of an art form photography is. Why do some images engage us while the vast majority glide by? Given that photographs seem to have some special relationship to reality, what kinds of information do they really provide?
The two excerpts above suggest that our attitudes about photography have changed fundamentally during its 140 year history. From Fox Talbott's original concept of photography as the "pencil of nature," a transparent medium through which Nature used light and chemical reactions to draw objective reality with more than human skill, we have moved to a notion of photographs as signifiers without signifieds. Photographs point to nothing more than other photographs; photography has no privileged relation to reality, no special access to objectivity. Hawthorne believed the photographic process could give us access to truth about people. Holgrave's daguerreotype of Colonel Pyncheon reveals his essential continuity with his murderous Puritan ancestor, an identity he has been able to mask heretofore. Sontag, on the other hand, believes that photographs explain nothing. Their seeming reality is an illusion, and photographs are no more than screens for the subjectivity of the viewer, objects which invite projection but give no usable information.

These two theoretical poles suggest that the relationship of image to reality (however defined) is central to our ideas about photography, and that our interest in this question arises naturally from the nature of the medium itself. Photographic lenses work like the lenses of our eyes. The images they produce conform to the rules of linear perspective institutionalized in Western painting during the Renaissance. The power that photographic images have for us depends in large measure on their ability to look "real," on the illusion that they give us access to what is outside ourselves.

This sense of photography's special relationship to the real, to truth, underlies one of the traditional dichotomies of photographic criticism, the "straight" versus the "manipulated" photograph. The notion of "straight" (or "pure") photography was formulated in the 1930s by the f/64 Group in California—a loose coalition of photographers including Edward Weston, Ansel Adams and Imogene Cunningham—in reaction to the older Pictorialist tradition that began in the 1850s with the work of Oscar Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson in England. The Pictorialists used a variety of
techniques to produce images. Several (up to 50) negatives might be combined to make a single print; the photographer might work on the negative or print with a brush to create painterly effects. Pictorialist images were often slightly blurred, a soft-focus technique used to give an Impressionistic feeling. The photographer might print only an enlarged section of a negative, using the enlarger to recompose the image during printing.

The "straight" photographer, in contrast, insisted on "pre-visualization"; the final print had to be fully visualized in the photographer's mind before he or she exposed the negative. The camera was to be used, according to Weston, "for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of THE THING ITSELF, whether it be polished steel or palpitating flesh." Straight photography required sharp focus and as much depth of field as possible (f/64 is the smallest lens opening and therefore gives great clarity and depth of field). Prints were usually made by contact printing from a large format negative (8x10" or larger). Cropping the negative was impure, an admission of failure in the crucial creative act of previsualization. In the 1950s and 1960s many "straight" photographers began including the sprocket holes of their 35mm negatives at the edges of their prints as proof that they hadn't cropped.

The payoff for rigorous devotion to "straight" technique, according to the ideology developed by Minor White in the pages of *Aperture* during the 1950s, was images that connected with the transcendental. Straight photography became a Zen exercise; photographers (like Weston) who claimed that they were photographers, not artists, did so because they believed the truthfulness of their images transcended the illusions of ordinary arts like painting.

The "straight" ideology assumes that there is only one correct way to make photographs because only this technique can capture the real, the "thing itself," the essence captured by Hawthorne's fictional daguerreotypist. But now, since we believe that reality is elusive—not easily accessible through surface and appearance, more a matter of structure and relationships—the dichotomy between "straight" and
"manipulated" photographs no longer seems useful or enlightening. There is no one right way to make photographs any more than there is one correct way to write poetry or draw.

Because of the breakdown of its special relationship to reality and the proliferation of its techniques, photography (like other arts) has become increasingly self-referential. Photographs refer to other photographs or to the characteristics of the medium itself. The central question to ask about a photograph today is not whether it uses one technique or another, but how it situates itself with respect to the history of photography and the range of available techniques, and with respect to the relationship between the subjectivity of the photographer and the surrounding world of objects and presences.

John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, has suggested a new critical dichotomy that may prove more useful than "straight" versus "manipulated." In 1979 Szarkowski assembled a show at MOMA called "Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960" which attempted to survey post-modern American photography. He suggested that we approach the photographs in the show either as mirrors, reflecting the photographer's consciousness and concerned primarily with self-expression, or windows, openings onto the external world concerned primarily with exploration. "Mirror" photographs tend to be Romantic, expressionistic and suggestive, shot close to the subject or with a narrow angle of vision. They lean toward abstract simplicity, even a Platonic sense of types and essences. "Windows" tend to be realistic, descriptive, taken at greater distances or with a wider angle of view. They carry more information, they are more interested in particulars of place and time and, in that sense, more Aristotelian.

Szarkowski's categories enable us to group photographs we would have separated before. Within the contrast between "straight" and "manipulated," Jerry Uelsmann's 1967 image in this issue of two men walking along a converging stone wall is clearly manipulated: one negative has been used to print the left hand side of the print, and then turned over to print the right hand side, thereby reversing the image left to right and making the entire print symmetrical. One side is
printed positive and the other negative, creating a dream-like mirror double within the photograph and suggesting alternate levels of reality. On the other hand, the image by Drex Brooks is a traditionally “straight” photograph, a carefully composed still-life concerned with natural light and tone.

But within the context of Szarkowski’s terms, both images are best seen as mirrors rather than windows, expressions of the photographer’s consciousness rather than attempts to give information about the outside world. Brook’s image of the blown flowers becomes a meditation on the camera’s mastery over time and a comment on the still-life genre. In general, photographs tend to deny time and context by freezing a single moment, and traditionally photography has been used to preserve peak moments (flowers in bloom). Commercial photography has created a consumer ideology around these atomized appearances which suggests that our lives can be an unending series of peaks if only we surround ourselves with perfect objects. But Brooks has waited until the petals fell instead of photographing the flowers in bloom. His image suggests a series of time-lapse photographs beginning with the flowers in bud and ending with this one. The image seems to be a statement about photography’s inability to really stop time, to preserve the moment.

In contrast, the images by Richard Garrod (“straight”) and Edna Bullock (“straight” in the printing, “manipulated” in the staging) are best approached as windows, attempts to give information about the outside world. Garrod’s graveyard and mission recall Ansel Adams in both subject matter and precision of composition, focus and tonal range. Bullock’s portraits are anti-portraits; they suggest a world where people cannot be known through their appearance, where they resist being known, defeating Hawthorne’s daguerreotypist. “Lillie” looks away from the camera, engrossed in private reverie. In “Diane Farries, Jerry Uelsmann and Andrew,” none of the figures looks at each other or the camera.

Neither of these “windows” provides anything like an objective view of the world, however. Garrod’s attempt to frame meaningful configurations in the landscape creates patterns rather than finding them; Bullock’s decision to have her subjects look away from the

Dan Rubey
camera lens rather than into it does not make her portraits more "documentary." Both "mirrors" and "windows" involve the subjectivity of the photographer: mirrors give us images constructed from a private sensibility; windows show us our shared world through the filters of another's consciousness.

Freed from the confines of "straight" versus "manipulated," categories which implicitly privilege "straight" photographs by the choice of words, photography becomes a broader art form best defined simply as images produced by light-sensitive substances. Ken Spector's photo intaglio combines photography, drawing and etching to comment on the relationship of image to reality; Nanda Schatz's collage unites her own duplicated photographs of cars with color xeroxes of magazine Madonna and Child to produce an iconography both private and public.

Finally, Sontag's claim that photographs "are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy" poses a question that transcends critical categories. A photograph, unlike a film, presents us with a single image divorced from any explanatory context. Consequently, any interpretation, any speculation about meaning must arise largely from the culturally-determined consciousness of the viewer. As photography becomes less sure of its relation to reality, photographic images become purposely opaque and unreadable, calling attention to the role of the viewer's subjectivity. The subject of John Hooton's image of reflections in a door seems to be its indeterminancy. We cannot make out the figure; the torn paper on the door looks like a word balloon in a cartoon, but its message is illegible. Fox Talbott's pencil of nature is broken; we are left in a richer but more confusing world of funhouse mirrors and frosted windows.
When the art class washes black
over their secret crayola drawings
Blong's Spiderman
pulls a green net across
the watery page. When we write
poems that begin *I remember*
Blong designs
a Mercedes limousine, the exact
military detail. In dream
poems, he colors
a ship with two anchors
a ship whose stars and stripes
shine turquoise, orange, and green.
He prints slowly
*I'm the one who eats ghosts.*
He's the one who searches
all the books for more
designs: a pink brontosaurus grins
and hops, his Arapaho
eagle rises like fire, Norwegian
serpents curl
to bronze, aquamarine and Spiderman
comes back again
and again without a sound
to my desk, to my lap —
the scraps, manilla, white
paper in sixteen folds.
And I'm the one
with the wide Caucasian face
who stares inscrutably
at the nets that bind. Down the hall
the soldiers' boys, pencils in fists,
grudge out the calligraphy of punishment —
I WILL NOT EXPLODE IN CLASS —
these sentences
knotting inside
one hundred times.
Been alone now for a week, and for two days nothing but squalls under the low, slow-moving bearded clouds. Sometimes light like an annunciation, but mostly the sun on the long swells far out from shore in pools of burnished light, rocking. Many of them as large as a meadow, but some much smaller than a barn door burning. Like those sundown flameouts through the rows of tasselled corn flashing on the farmhouse windows.
TO THE LAST ARTFUL MAN

Just as you say it could never happen to us,
I point to the men in white suits
who are crossing our lawn. Each carries a tray
of suspicious-looking instruments.
You say you need time to think

and go on eating your breakfast.
Through the window I watch them set fire
to the trees, the shrubs, now the rosebush
exhaling puffs of fragrant smoke.

When I open the door, one of them edges near.
He says we must get out immediately
and hands me a piece of paper
with signatures I cannot read. I shout at you,

“This is no joke!” but I can see you are not listening.
Already you have begun to perspire
from the smell of gasoline. Even as you sit
on the floor eating toast, your truculent
eyebrows are gone, all of your hair is gone

but a tiny patch behind one ear.
Soon, that too disappears. Your mouth opens
and closes as you begin to dissolve.
The tiny bones of your feet
strut in thin air. I gather what’s left of you

into a paper bag and together we drive
out of the city. I turn on the radio
because you have become so silent. Perhaps
you are sleeping, or trying to find an appropriate explanation. "Look," I tell you, "You must understand we are not the only ones. We must decide, are we victims or survivors?"

Now we can see the lake and the crowds of people already there. Children play happily in the water. They think they have come to the lake because it is Saturday or someone's birthday. We join the others passing coffee and sandwiches. One of them points to a man sitting alone in the lake. We think he must want our attention the way his hat waves back and forth in the air. We hope he is someone important, an official or popular troubadour we should listen to.

We can see he is very excited the way he skips across the beach, tossing us each a fish that plops, succulent-pink, into our hands. He tells us the fish are everything. We must handle them carefully. We must make them last the rest of our lives.
LAMENT

She is afraid of the trader
who has come from the valley
three times already to admire her.
She has heard the climate is all wrong,
inescapable as the layers of cloth
worn day and night, the sun
warming even the glass put away
in the cupboard. She has heard
the streets are clamorous
and filled with rotting fruit,
streets narrow as the paths
of insects. At night, impossible
to sleep or write a letter.
She has heard too of a flower
whose touch fills the women's
arms with sickness. No,
she refuses to marry the trader
with his burned complexion
and those red bags of opium.
She could die in all that warmth.
Here on the steppes it is always
the cold season, a way of looking
at clouds, and the animals,
for their sakes this yearly walking
on ice. No, she refuses to leave
the village. It is too dangerous,
the long journey down the pass,
at dusk the possibility of border guards
or a horse suddenly lame.
Who would help with the shearing,
the feltmaking, who would bring her father
his evening dish of milk? No, she refuses to leave the village. Still, in moonlight, outside her parent's tent, those three white horses that circle and gleam like silver traveling the distance to her bed.
I am always the TWA stewardess named Coni. Spelled that way, with the circle-dotted i at the end. My hair is ice-blonde and shapes to my head like a football helmet: thick eyebrow-length bangs straight across and the rest in a perfect bubble cap so the hairs move together in slow motion and then fall back into the helmet shape again. It is hair just like Ken Berry’s girlfriend wears on Mayberry RFD and my lips are Yardley’s Love-Soft-Peach. My name is always Coni. And I am not a homo. They don’t let homos be stewardesses for TWA, and Marsha and I have never kissed on the lips.

First I climb the tree in my backyard to the branch where I keep the cans. Then I make Marsha come up by the branches for footholds and not the nailed boards like she always wants to. Holly is next door in her bedroom. I see her roll a long section of her hair onto a Donald Duck orange juice can, twelve ounce. So far I have three cans. Each one hangs on a separate twig in the tree, hidden away so Wanda, my mother, won’t know. From where I sit, I could put my foot on Marsha’s head. But I don’t.

I am Coni and Marsha is Ken. Coffee, tea or me, I say, don’t smoke and fasten your seatbelts and the bag goes on your face like this when you want to vomit. Ken pushes his button. He says his seatbelt is stuck. I bend over to see what the problem is and Ken jerks me down and kisses me. No, he doesn’t kiss me yet. I won’t help because I don’t like him. Now Marsha is both Ken and Judy, the other stewardess. Judy flirts with Ken while she fiddles with his seatbelt and kisses him like this: Marsha turns her back and crosses her arms so her fingers come around as Judy’s on Ken’s neck, and she moves her head to show passion. And I think Ken loves Judy. I ignore him with my meal cart in the aisle. Ken writes me a note on a cocktail napkin. It says: Meet me in the bathroom! Ken! In the bathroom together we whisper each other’s names, put our hands over our mouths and Marsha and I hand kiss, moving our heads from side to side until we almost fall off
the branch.

It is the show where Gilligan and Ginger get lost in the cave and the gorilla is about to come in there with them. On her stomach next to me, Marsha copies how I have my chin on the pillow with Yosemite Falls painted on it. I let the phone ring four times before I turn off the sound and bother to get up and answer it.

Like always Wanda calls me Helen and says, you’re not watching the tee-vee. You’re reading the California History homework. Don’t eat. Change those filthy sheets of yours.

A hair dryer is going behind her voice. On the pad that says Notes From Wanda across the top I write “piss” all in capitals and scratch it out.

That tee-vee won’t be on when I get home this time.
I say, moth-er. My appointment’s here. Change your sheets. Byee-byee, she says, making her voice cute at the end.

The sound is back up and Gilligan and Ginger are pawing each other now. Gilligan is the one she leans her big boobs on to this show. I say falsies and Marsha shakes me, they’re real, and Gilligan is jumping all over the place. You can tell he likes it. I know that when the show is off he sneaks into Ginger and Marianne’s hut to catch them in just their nighties. I tell Marsha, I’m Gilligan and you’re Ginger and we hand kiss right there on the living room rug. We know the gorilla is really the Skipper in disguise, so we keep at it without looking up all the way through the credits and theme song. I feel like I have to pee.

After Gilligan, I push in the tv button and unplug it. Wanda will be here in an hour and check to see if it’s warm, but it will cool down by then. Marsha’s gone home, so I make a honey graham and Oleo margarine sandwich and eat it over the sink. I eat three more with two glasses of Donald Duck orange juice. Then I rinse the evidence down the drain.
Dad drinks Brown Derby beer with his supper, Wanda has Cragmont diet cherry soda, and I have a glass of Donald Duck. Her neck jiggles when her lips move. She has a chicken leg in her hand that she pushes potato onto her spoon with.

Those women, she says, they give me a giant pain.

The Miracle Whip dot at the corner of her mouth reminds me of pus and I shove the macaroni salad out to the edge of my plate. There is always too much Miracle Whip in it.

They think they know what their look is, she says, catching the dot with the tip of her tongue. It’s perm and rat, perm and rat, all day and I tell them—she leans way over her plate and tilts her head to the side so the chicken grease on her cheek shines as she takes potato into her tiny mouth—I say, shags are in. Shags are the thing. But no, never that. Give me the usual, they say, give me a perm, and rat it up good.

She huffs her breath out and takes in some soda. It leaves cherry smile marks past her lips. I just stare at her cheek. This is the time of day when all the body goes out of her hair so it separates where her ears are.

If you’re going to set there jaw slack and hair in your face, she says, you may as well excuse yourself and take your plate with you to the sink.

Dad says to her, take a swipe at your left cheek there, babycake. A nice shag haircut, she says rubbing with her napkin, be the thing for Helen. A cool summer cut like all the high school girls ask for.

After I hook my hair behind my ears so it’s out of my face I start clearing the table.

When I hear Bob Barker reunite the soldier boy with his girl from Fresno, the Truth or Consequences song playing above the audience, I have all but the pots rinsed. I leave them for later and hurry to my tv spot. Spread on her recliner that used to be for washing hair at the Beauty Bar, Wanda says she’ll inspect. My chin settles on Yosemite Falls.

Even the pots, she says.
Cartoon Jeannie dances in waves past Major Nelson. He gets whirlly eyes when she kisses him on the cheek and then sucks out long and weird, hair first into the bottle. The cartoon is the only time Major Nelson likes to let her kiss him. In real life he makes her vacuum.

She could be my slave, dad says from the couch, sure as sunshine wouldn’t have that pony pushing any vacuum.

Wanda gives the look like seeing filth rings on my white knee socks. You’ve got your slave right here already, she says, her mouth smaller than it really is.

Without looking dad says, Tootie, run open me a Brown Derby at commercial. When I do he says to take the first sip. Wanda gives the look. He doesn’t see but knows and says, Brown Derbies aren’t drinking.

Dad’s mouth opens from his head leaning back. When he lets out a snort, I jab his arm hard with my foot. It’s Love American Style for as long as I can hear Wanda’s bath water running. With Wanda in the tub I go overtime on her one-show rule. The old man laughs slow, huh, huh, huh, and the woman wears red, white and blue hotpants and thigh boots and you know it’s dirty. I hear the faucet whine closed and turn the tv sound off fast. Right away Wanda calls behind the door, Helen you’re brushing your teeth before bed. The old man on the tv Sneaks to the redhead by the pool. Helen. As I go to push the button, the redhead grabs his tie just in time so they both fall in.

Her hair pokes out of the plastic thing with the elastic edge for covering bowls. In the spot I rub clear on the mirror I can see the green parrot washrag just covering her chest. Marsha came over today I suppose, she says to the ceiling with her eyes closed.

No, I say.

Play without that touching business. Promise.

Mother, I say. She’s always asking from the hall in her hair dryer.

82
voice: what are you two doing so long in there that you can't keep the
doors open. Hand kissing isn't touching lips. Why do you have to close
the door, she always says. I sit and pee and watch the island her
stomach makes, first big and then little with her breathing.
And you know just what I'm getting at without my having to tell
you straight out.
I want to touch the erosion marks around her bellybutton.
You two don't kiss on the mouths.
In the bathtub like this she has no chin and her face makes an
automatic frown into her neck. The steam unsticks the eyelashes from
her eyelid, leaving behind the others, a row of baby ones. She
straightens up, dangling the washrag like a curtain on her chest.
I said: you-don't-kiss-Marsha-on-the-mouth. Do you. It is like
she's been crying with the black melting down under her eyes.
No-o, I say, wiping from front to back because she is watching.

I call the Beauty Bar and ask to please speak to Wanda.
Hey Tootie, Joy says, what's doing?
Nothing, I say.
Hang on. Her hand is on the receiver and then I hear Wanda's
breathing.
Helen hon, she says, just a sec. Where the feather bouquet, the red
and pink, is setting Arlene. Take that chair. Hot as a skillet in here,
she says into the phone. Ok now, quick tell me what you want.
Can I sleep over at Marsha's, I say.
Home before noon, she says, the sheets will wait, but those pots
won't be on the stove when I get home today, hear me. We can cut
that mop of yours tomorrow while I've got time for it.
Marsha yanks my arm, canyou, canyou, canyou.
I guess so, I say and we go out Marsha's back door.

From Marsha's tree we see the top of mine two houses down. The
house between is where Holly lives. She's in her bedroom, talking on
the phone.

Marsha says, when our trees grow some more the branches will connect and we can crawl across into each other's trees.

I say, don't count on it. Holly is on the floor and kicking up one foot. Her sock is starting to come off.

I am Vince and Marsha is her mother, Loretta. We're on the train to Reno. The train goes through the tunnel so it's dark suddenly and I jump on Loretta and kiss her. No, I don't kiss her yet. Loretta says, stop it Vince, what about Marsha. The only thing that matters is us, I say. Let's get married in Reno, Loretta says. Come on, I say, you know my wife won't give me a divorce. We must never tell Marsha about your wife. Forget Marsha, I say. Oh Loretta! Can't you see I'm dying for you! Let's do it now! Marsha goes for me with her hand over her mouth. Wait, I say and get the Oleo tub cover out of my back pocket, we can use this instead. I almost feel Marsha's lips through the plastic. She closes her eyes, but I look over her shoulder. Still on the phone, Holly brushes her hair upside down and her surfer shirt creeps up so I see the sliver of her bare back even from up here.

Vince takes Loretta dancing at the Chateau Room and Holly comes over to watch Marsha and me. While Marsha has the hair dryer on in the living room, I am in the bathroom with Holly getting my hair done.

Always start at the bottom when you comb and never brush it wet, Holly says, then you don't get split ends.

I can hardly feel it when she combs the tangles out. Use the Donald Duck cans for mine, I say.

Not yet. Your hair needs to grow to where it wraps around twice, she says, lucky you to have such straight hair. She uses her fingernail to divide my hair into sections. Poor Marsha could never get her kink out, not even ironing it, she says, then she scoops two fingers of Dippity-Doo out of the jar.
Gob on some more, I say.

Mickey Dolenz irons his hair, she says, bobbypin. She holds out her hand while I find one that still has its plastic tips. Your hair is so thick I might not have enough rollers. By the end of the summer, she says into the mirror, it should reach around the Donald Duck cans. Her lips are Yardley's Love-Soft-White. All the popular girls wear white lipstick now, she says.

Make sure it flips up, I say.

They put you in the garbage bin on your first day of high school, she says. Holly's eyelashes are long and black and she doesn't need mascara.

When Holly finally falls asleep on the floor next to us. I sneak the channel to Psycho, but the scene in the shower is already over with. We stay up until Vince and Loretta get back. Loretta pays Holly and tells her to put the money where she won't lose track of it this time, in with her curlers or something. Then Loretta sends us to bed.

I make Marsha keep the door open so we can listen better. Like always, Marsha falls asleep right away and I'm awake, straining to hear what's going on in the living room. I take three or four trips to the bathroom, and once I look around the corner when I don't hear them talking. They are kissing and Vince has his fingers in her hair. His eyes are closed. With the other hand he goes up and down on the outside of her sweater like he's feeling for her bra. I touch my own hair. It is stiff from the Aqua Net sprayed on to keep the flip in. I think he sees me when they stop for air and I rush into the bathroom. This time I really have to go, but nothing comes out.

There is the ashtray full of ciagarette butts stinking on the coffee table when I get up. I put it way over by the fish tank and turn cartoons on low. Marsha comes in at the end of Bullwinkle and I tell her about what she missed last night. Vince and Loretta are making out on the couch, I say, and he says he has an idea, to wait here while he goes to the Stop and Save. Vince comes back and pulls a Playboy out of the bag. Look here what I got, he says to Loretta and she says,
what’s that for. Just wait and see. He opens the centerfold and lays it on the coffee table.

What was in the picture, Marsha says and I know she believes me when she looks around to see if the Playboy is still here.

He unfolds the centerfold and I see a naked man and woman. The man in the picture is on top and Vince says to Loretta, that’s us. And they get in the exact same position on the couch, copying the centerfold. Marsha looks at cartoons for a while and then whispers, I hate Vince. I say, so do I. The set has gone out of Marsha’s hair and now it’s nothing but frizz. I want to tell her it will never be like Holly’s hair.

Before I go home I stop into the Stop and Save. I pick out a twelve ounce Donald Duck and pay for it with the seventy-five cents dad gave me for pulling up dandelions. I sneak a look at the magazine stand on my way out the door, but there aren’t any Playboys.

I’m home at three and there’s a note from Wanda: Dad’s at the bowling tournament and I’m at Joy’s getting a frost. What about the pots! Mom. I pour the last of the Donald Duck into a glass and open the new can. The hot water in the first measure makes the lump melt faster so I don’t have to stir as much. I open the other end and wash the can twice. Then I hide it behind the Yosemite pillow on the couch while I watch the Monkey’s Show. At the commercial, I refill with the fresh Donald Duck. I take a package of honey grahams back into the living room with me. Pretty soon I’m dipping the last one into my juice and a teenage girl is trying to kiss Davy Jones. By the look on his face I know Davy doesn’t like her. You can barely see the little glass slide they put between them on tv to make the kissing look real. They manage to sneak it between their lips so fast that you don’t even know they do it. The car door slams and I almost don’t get to the button in time. I brush the crumbs off the couch and shove the honey graham wrapper into my shorts pocket.
Wanda goes straight into the bathroom, screaming for me to get in that kitchen and wash those pots. She slams the bathroom door.

When the pots are draining I go into the bathroom. They’re done, now can I watch tv, I say. Her hair has orange streaks in it and she’s ratting at it like it will take the color out. What happened, I say.

Just what do you think, she says, what in hell does it look like. And when I tell her it looks like troll hair, she slaps me on the bare leg with her rattail comb, says to get my own hair combed out because she’s getting to me when she’s done.

I’m growing it out, I say, but she just goes on ratting. Shutting the door behind me, I hear her cry, huh, huh, huh. I get the can from under the pillow and take it with me outside.

Holly’s walking around her bedroom in her bra. There are circles on the cups that make them look like bullseyes. My hair isn’t so stiff now and I try to get a section all the way around the can, but it won’t fit.

Helen, Wanda yells, get down from there this second. I just hang the can on a twig near the others. In four more hours Wanda will have given up and gone to bed. The lights will be off in our house. I’ll climb down and then over the fence. Holly will leave her window open for me and say, Coni, is that you?
Many
stone circles sink slowly in the earth,
this bluff along the Missouri,
dried cow chips now,
thunderheads for a hundred miles.
Find a flake big as your thumbnail,
given back.
Stone hammers, battered at both ends,
fit the hand smooth as river water.
And a big grindstone, stained red berries,
or clay.

Sit in this stone circle.
Ancient people scatter along the bluff.
Stone circles sink in the earth.
This wind and the antelope do them no harm.
This sun and small cactus, no harm.
Touch old hands that held these stones,
held grindstone, held scraper, held cutting stone
and pounder—
held the meat and berry and seed bodies.
They are gone,
yet this sky contains them,
this vast, blue sky filled with wind.
These red ants carrying grains of rock contain them,
this dusty sage,
that buzzing-yellow-diamond-beauty,
moving like lava in the river-brush.
Touch their fingers, touch their hands.
Touch the mouth of their hunger in the belly of these smooth stones.
CONTORTIONS

Jonathan watches the naked lady hook a tassel over her nipple. It takes a moment to secure it so she can begin the contortion that causes it to twirl like a pinwheel. The wide screen magnifies the action. Her breasts look as if they had been let down by ropes like a boat’s sails, and then suddenly caught by wind, they billow out, the nipples brown as the secret wounds of bananas. Jonathan’s mother always says, “It’s just ripeness,” holding out the bruised fruit, but Jonathan recognizing that sick boozy odor, refuses to eat.

The lady turns her back and steps out of her g-string. Her fleshy haunches are those of a well-fed animal. Her face, turning to wink at Jonathan is garish. Jonathan feels the cutting edge of his mother’s glance. He shuts his eyes. He can smell his mother’s perfume — heavy and full-blown. It reminds him of great drooping heads of dark red roses. Jonathan opens his eyes. On the screen a man slides a sword down his throat. There is a trick to that probably like the one in which a magician saws a girl in half, but really she just pulls her legs up to her chest. The feet sticking out of the box are fakes. The girl is a contortionist.

Jonathan gets to see a lot of R-rated movies, because his father doesn’t like to pay a babysitter and his mother says all forms of censorship are iniquitous. Jonathan’s mother and father decide to do everything on the spur of the moment. When they get in the car, Jonathan asks, “Where are we going?” over and over, knowing there will never be an answer. Sometimes his father just drives until they come to a place, a park maybe, or a fast-food drive-in, and next thing, Jonathan is playing on the swings or eating a ham burger, catsup only.

Other times, his mother will say “Beach” and that’s where they go, but on arriving it becomes apparent that none of them have a bathing suit, and Jonathan’s father looks at picnickers gulping lemonade and forking potato salad, and says to Jonathan’s mother, “Why don’t you
ever think to pack a lunch?"

Then his mother snaps, "I didn't know we were going on a picnic," after which a volley of complaints goes back and forth like tired tennis balls over the invisible net that hangs between them. Once in a while, his mother makes a speech about planning ahead, but most of the time, she defends spontaneity, even though as far as Jonathan can see, generally her attitude means the good time they set out to have will be sabotaged.

After the carnival movie, Jonathan and his mother and father go to a pizza restaurant. Jonathan's father orders a beer. Jonathan orders a coke. He drinks half of it quickly and sucks an ice cube. "Don't drink that so fast," his father says. Jonathan planned to ask for a second coke when the pizza comes, but he realizes his father has already vetoed it. He shuttles the ice cube to the opposite side of his jaw. Jonathan's mother reads the menu. "I can never decide what to order," she declares, considering the possibilities of antipasto, Italian beef, or maybe lasagna. What they will have is pizza. A large half-cheese half-sausage.

Jonathan wriggles on the hard booth anxious to go home. He has eight mice. Two are pregnant. This morning, lifting the black one by the tail, he could detect squirms in her bulging sides. The mouse hung from his fingers fat and glossy. Her belly blown up as if by a bicycle pump.

Jonathan chomps another square of ice into diamonds. The glitter dazzles his teeth, the bones of his skull. He feels the red wave of a headache beginning. It crests forward beaching at the edge of his eyesocket.

"I have a headache. I don't feel good," Jonathan says. "You ate that ice too fast," his mother tells him.

Jonathan lies on the rear car-seat watching the power poles blur past the window. This makes him feel sicker. Once home, he peers into the fishtank where his mice live. The black mouse is spreadeagled over a clutch of tiny pink commas. Each has a round greenish spot where an eye will be. They heave up and over each other trying to nurse. A last gelatinous glob is emerging from the black mouse's
vagina. All the mother mice huddle around, licking the pink sausages.

Jonathan wakes up. Something is squeaking. He turns on his bedroom light. A lean white father mouse has one of the pink babies in his mouth. He crouches behind the play-wheel tearing at it. His red eyes glare like stoplights.

The black mouse squats over a pile of wrigglings. Jonathan counts seven babies. Nine originally. He lifts the mouse-castle built of Legos. Inside lies a dismembered pink thing, shredded in places. The mice flee from the secret heart of their castle.

Jonathan scoops out the remaining babies and their mother. He puts them in an empty fishbowl. In the morning he will make a better home for them. A temporary home, until the babies get bigger. Until they get hair and their eyes open.

He stares at the father mice. Two are ripping a piece of stale bread. Another is rocketing in the wheel. It runs perpetually forward, interstices flashing beneath its tiny pink gripping feet.

Jonathan wonders if the father-mice waited until dark to steal the babies. If they deliberately waited, or if the dark inspired them to dreadful acts, getting into their heads the way headaches slide into his.

In the morning the headache is still there, its crimson drumbeat creasing his skull. Clenching his lids, he sees a lineup of savage red mouse-eyes.

His mother says it's natural for father mice to eat their young. Jonathan wants to ask why, but he doesn't. His mother won't know and the question will only irritate her. He looks at the pinkies, little nude breasts and penises. Contorted. he wants to shut his eyes, but when he does sickness ripens and blooms in dozens of malformed pearls upon his forehead.
THE WISH

1.
In this season of mild evenings
What we can see of the city drifts out
Against the horizon
Where converging symmetries of lights
Mark patterns as strict as our own.

Tonight, you are quiet as a child asleep.
I know your dream: a lifetime
Like this, the nights clear
And the low circle of the moon
Keeping the world forever the right shade

Of silver. I should say it's my dream,
But I watch your face, haunted
By shadows in your corner of the porch,
And think that love is the wish
That grows between us like a ripple of darkness.

2.
Again, it is the dream that frightens you.
I know it by heart.
What follows you in the dark is more
Than anything this night
Beating at the windows, will change.
As always, I do what I can.
Always, when you lean out of the tunnel
Of sleep, I catch you,
And in that awakening we both hold on
To the same shape of nightmare.
Nothing can stop this.  
The night stays exactly where it is,  
Its space an emptiness  
Into which, forever, we do not fall.

3.  
Today nothing should be forgotten.  
All morning thunder prowled a sky  
Dark as the earth you worked in the garden.  
Outside now wind rakes  
Explosions of water across the yard.  
In here we try to find things  

We have not thought about for years.  
We listen carefully for what silence brings.  
In the room’s half-dark we wait  
For something more enormous than this weather  
That has sharpened the edges  
Of everything we live with, each day, together.
KADDISH

for my father

After the gas tanks break
and wings fold back like swallows,
after the rain and flames,
father, lead me to the ark
of uncluttered light,
the black veins of your wounded throat.

Let me pray at last
in alsike and rye,
on this hillside north of Massillon,
where the Tuscarawus rises
and leeches wait at the shore
for me to slough my broken skin
and bob downstream
with the swift current and sludge.

Father, give me to the green
Jerusalem of grass,
where you sailed down
from an ignited sky, down
over the quailing maples.

Lead me back, father,
from the river's greased shore,
press my hands over your dark,
punctured neck, show me smuts
and molds where they grow
in the split hollows
of your wrists and ribs.
Give me to the green
shoots that hold us fast
in the thick, downward
whirling earth, the healed fault
where you fell,
the acres of uneroded grass.
This compilation of sixteen poems and prose pieces clearly demarcates a world radiant with the poet's fascinations concerning his art, his books and paintings, the western land he lives in, and the women who funnel a fluid, erotic awareness to all of these through him. And they are the poet's fascinations first, curiously coveted by an "I" behind all the poems before readers can take them over to themselves. But Newby doesn't resist the reader, or use print to revel in himself; instead, he is careful to begin the book with a politic force that arrows his command over poetic language into the reader:

My tongue is a weapon, a tool, a gift.

And certainly, throughout the book, Newby's "tongue" works in the ways in which this line from his opening poem, "Manifesto," decrees it will. Sometimes as a synthesized weapon-tool-gift which marks an experienced and arrived poet, and sometimes separately which shows that Newby's consistency as a poet is young, yet solidly engaged with the craft of poetry.

Among the poems runs a system of recurrent images, reiterated nouns, adjectives and verbs, and a pattern of theme and variation which keeps the reader trying to connect one poem to another. The color white threads through various poems; Gertrude Stein stands as the subject of one poem and appears later in the title poem; there is a
lush strand of nearly identical sexual motion, posturing, and fecundity in several of the poems; and there is the poet's private nationalism for the state of Montana. Connecting them, rather than simply ingesting the poems one by one and allowing them to resound against one another, would be a disservice to the particular ideas and language presented so particularly by the poet here. All the pieces contained in the book constitute "a poem of love"—as Newby ends his title poem—and should be felt through, moved through elementally, with the senses open and prickling.

Otherwise, such sounds in the poetic prose of "Letter to Oregon, From Montana" would be wrongfully lost:

Asleep, the woman smiles and stretches, arranging her limbs. She is composing: a song, a lyric of ecstasy. With her body, her round, Grecian form, she composes the simple verses. They are not to be sung. They will not translate. They must be danced. In a softly glowing bed, at the hour when rain is music.

Newby has been very accurate with his "s" sounds here, never teetering toward sibilance but getting the words to slide over us and bring us along, communicate with us before meaning sets in.

From "Emma Goldman in Montana," Newby shows us how he can forward character and creative history in poem form, still wanting us to listen before conjugating meaning from the language:

Bareheaded and portly,  
Emma stood on the train platform  
and scowled. She had no text  
for natural disasters:  
nine inches of snow,  
a downpour of rain greasing
the iron rails. Chicago
would have to wait.

Only the day before,
she had shouted from the pulpit
of Butte's Unitarian church:
Women, unbind yourselves!
Men, demand a living wage!
And now, in the stuffy car,
the Tacoma baseball team
threw fastballs
past her graying head.

Again the poet writes in a subaural language here in this excerpt from
"Minnie Miller: A Chronicle:"

She whispered the name. Montana.
How strange, she thought, to hear the Spanish tongue
in this northern land. And the Bitterroot Range
rose around her—granite walls, snowfields, icy
mountain streams—and she shuddered. Her fingers,
tight on the reins, turned white as the glacial ice.

It would be difficult to ask for a more serious engagement with
subject and language befitting each subject than Newby offers us in
this book. A Radiant Map of the World is, I think, a book of
meticulously thought through, well-sustained poetry; and, ad­
mirably, a book of poetry often about Montana which does not
exempt non-natives of the state as readers.

Lyn McCarter
To read these thirteen prose poems by Lee Bassett is to reenter the junior high unnoticed, where we are handed the keys that will open again those sensuous, initial rhythms of our lives. Who tells the experience here is the cast of voices inhabiting that adolescent world: Doc Bird, Niki, Nasu, Little and Big Bear, Still-Smoking. The poet fills these prose poems with conversation, diary entries, student essays, letters, and journals. Like eavesdroppers following at a distance, we watch, for example, the group at the symphony or at the target range. When Niki enters the boy's gym after practice and falls in love with its strange smell, we stare almost from where the stage curtains part.

The poetry in “Field” is astonishing.

The world is junk. Everywhere we go, we stop and gather it. Right now we are on a field trip. As a matter of fact we are in a huge brown field, collecting junk. Crickets, seeds, cabbage butterflies. Look at us in this field. Niki, Big Bear, Little Bear, the collecting jars, the nets. We’re so out of place here, we’re the junk, and birds yell at us. We’re scared of many many things and everything. Nasu pulls and guts from a milkweed pod and the bees come. Their cousins the wasps come. Then ants and spiders, a whole family that we don’t belong in. We’re lonely. A thousand eyes like the bee, a hundred hands like the spider, and still we’re lonely. I tell you it’s funny. The glands we are made of, the marrow and the veins and the flesh, are really all hands and eyes. And behind all of them is a lonely field where the empty heart moves, like music.

The poems take great risk in that they assume these different personas. Many poets, fearing failure, will not speak with the voice of the opposite sex, or with the voice of a child. Bassett seems unafraid
in taking these roles and delights in the possibilities of this freedom. However, it’s too bad all of the poems do not do this as successfully as “Field” or “Symphony.”

The girl Niki in “Letter” who writes, “. . . I’ve got a new boyfriend, well, I’m not sure if he likes me yet but he sure is cute! . . . Yesterday, I was sitting in class just staring at his blond curls,” is not the same Niki who writes in the next three sentences “Then he started breathing and I watched his back and shoulders go up and down. Then I started breathing right along with him, you know, the same way. God it made me feel weird inside!” These last lines are lovely perception but don’t fit the silly boredom with which the letter begins and ends. The speech and thoughts of any twelve year old are not poetry; it is the poet recollecting his childhood that supplies this sensitive perception.

Intuiting the sexual thoughts of twelve and thirteen year olds requires an honesty and insight that Bassett sometimes doesn’t bring to the poem. The boy speaking in the poem “In the Hotel” can look out his window and remark, “across the street an old man is also retiring. He carefully folds a dark blanket next to him in a double bed. It looks like the shape of a woman,” or think about Niki, “You could see the top of the crack in her butt and parts of the bones that probably go all the way up to her head. She doesn’t even know.” I don’t believe this last sentence. The girls throughout the book are made to seem silly and vulnerable, and I don’t think it’s true that young girls are as foolish as Bassett would have us believe.

Bassett’s response throughout Hatsutaiken is to celebrate these first physical experiences, to simply rejoice in the unexplainable. Although this is a commendable and very attractive chapbook, I kept wanting to hear his voice, not how that voice sounded in the speech of an adolescent.

Jack Heflin
Whether Lex Runciman is writing about the gooey salamander he pulls from the mud of an abandoned boat, the Oregon rain, or his unborn daughter, he always brings a high level of wonder and intensity to his poems. He has an eye for the unforgettable experiences we carry as charms in our pockets forever. The title poem, as much as any other in the book, demonstrates this quality.

Imagine imprisonment
in a tree

hemlock coastal spruce
sunlight taps the brown bark
and your fingers
pressing from the inside
feel a tapping

do not consider history
family the woman
you cannot name your children’s

breathing
remember the cliff face
the pure calm
of falling and the solid
ledge your flesh fell into

remember that cold salt water
carrying you away strollers
watch from the beach
the sun
white on the faces
and here this morning
it is raining

it's an endless list

An endless list, yes. With another poet this line might seem unearned, but I have the feeling Runciman's consciousness has been focused on the lyric detail for a long time. I suppose it's what Stafford was talking about when he said "poetry... is not something one takes up and begins to do; it is something that everyone is caught up in early, and a few keep on doing."

Many of the poems in Luck are historical. "Seasonal," the poem which opens the book, honors the Scottish dead, his heritage.

Presbyterian, they are gone
from the bright personality of rooms
alone to strange countries.
Empty their houses and farms
in solid pictures, young
like no one ever young, the whin
out of season and the season
gone for kissing.

Gone any evidence they were
ever happy in this country,
or unhappy, grim
weeping in the rain.
Say they lived
and died without regret.
Stones mark the hillside
where they lay, their mythical figures
and whalebone whispering in the grass.
Throughout the poem, Runciman breaks the predominantly iambic rhythm by beginning sentences with trochees—"Gone the Scottish Women," "Gone shortbread and oatcakes," and so on. The poet is driven to statement, his technique forcing energy when there is no cultural energy left, only memory. And if that memory is not recorded there will be no monuments for the dead.

These connections with the past place the poet in a continuum that allows him to take himself out of time. But he is always part of that landscape he inhabits. "The Oregon Rain" ends,

And the next day
when it rains, as it must
as everyone believes it will,
let us say we shall be ready—
our slickers and particular hats—
and become as natural as mosses
and one-celled swimmers,
as natural as the color green,
at home in this climate.

With an ear capable of producing the gorgeous internal rhyme of "our slickers and particular hats," Runciman will be writing poems long after this first book is out of print. I hope the book moves outside the regional audience he has already gathered.

Jack Heflin
DAVID AXELROD has poems forthcoming in Poetry Now and The Ohio Journal. He's presently finishing an MFA at UM.

WILLIS BARNSTONE and his daughter, Aliki Barnstone, are editors of A Book of Women Poets from Antiquity to Now. The book, Borges: Conversations at Eighty (Indians University Press) recently appeared; and, in the fall, Barnstone is publishing The Poetics of Ecstasy, a study of ecstasy in literature. "Gospel of the Mountain" is from a collection of sonnets to be called A Rose in Hell.

HARRISON BRANCH studied photography at Yale with Walker Evans and Paul Caponigro. He is currently teaching photography at Oregon State University, and photographing the Northwest.

DREX BROOKS studied photography at Oregon State and received an MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design. He is currently teaching photography at the community college in Leadville, Colorado.

EDNA BULLOCK began making photographs nine years ago. She is the wife of the late Wynn Bullock. She lives and works in Monterey, California.

JOAN COLBY has published poems in Hollins Critic, Kansas Quarterly, Minnesota Review, Grand Street, and other magazines, and has four books of poetry with two more forthcoming this year. She was recently awarded the Illinois Arts Council fellowship in literature for 82-83, and has been a writer-in-residence for the Illinois Arts Council for seven years while working as a journalist and textbook writer.

PAUL DIX lives in Emigrant, Montana. His photographs have appeared in Esquire and Time. Presently he is documenting strip-mining in the West and working on a book, Aging in America.

MICHAEL DOBBERSTEIN was the 80-81 editor of Quarterly West, and has recently completed the manuscript Touching Metal. Other poems of his appear in Southern Poetry Review and Western Humanities Review.

ROGER DUNSMORE has taught Humanities and various wilderness programs at UM since 1963. He credits his family, the American West and its people, the American Indians, as providing him inspiration.

MARY C. FINERAN, a native of lovely Galesburg, Illinois, is enrolled in the MFA program at UM.
JAMES FINNEGAN lives in St. Louis, Missouri where he works with the Control Data Corporation marketing computerized services. He has poems forthcoming in *Kansas Quarterly, Minneapolis Poetry Review, Phoebe,* and *The Sheba Review*.

RICHARD GARROD works and teaches photography in Monterey, California.

JOHN HAISLIP teaches creative writing at the University of Oregon. He has published in numerous literary journals, and is the author of *Not Every Year* (University of Washington Press). An essay and poems appeared in *American Poets in 1976*. He has also completed a new manuscript of poems entitled *Seal Rock*.

SAM HAMIL is spending the fall in China on an NEA Writing Fellowship and completing a volume of translations from Classical Chinese. His book of essays on poetry and printing, *At Home in the World*, is available from Jawbone Press.

JOHN HOOTON studied photography under Jerry Uelsmann at the University of Florida. He is currently teaching photography at Montana State University.

JANE KIES studied art at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. She is currently a graduate student of art at UM studying drawing and printmaking.

BARRY KITTERMAN has been employed as a woodworker since receiving his MFA from UM.


FRANCES KUFFEL won UM's Frontier Award in 1980 for a collection of poems, *The Whispering of Fences*. She is enrolled in the MFA program at Cornell University.

GREG KUZMA’s poem on the death of his brother, “For My Brother,” was published in December by *Abattoir Editions*. Two books will appear later this year: *A Horse of a Different Color*, from Illuminati, and *Everyday Life*, from Spoon River.

LAURIE LAMON is a PhD student at the University of Utah and has published in magazines such as *The Seattle Review, The Montana Review,* and *GiltEdge*.

HARVEY LILLYWHITE co-edits *Plum* magazine. His poems have appeared in *Ploughshares, The Missouri Review,* and other magazines. He teaches at the University of Utah, and is currently working on a novel.

ROSEANN LLOYD works for Minnesota Writers-in-the-Schools. Recent poems have been published in *12th Moon* and *Sinister Wisdom*. 

106
PHILIP MAECHLING is a photographer and landscape architect in Florence, Montana. He has had one-man shows at the Museum of the New York Botanical Garden, Iowa State University, and UM.

GREG MICHALSON lives in Ashland, Missouri where he breeds and races quarter horses. He is a fiction editor and Special Projects Editor for the Missouri Review, and is finishing a PhD at the University of Missouri-Columbia where he teaches fiction writing. A story of his appeared previously in MSS., and he is currently working on a novel.

WENDY RANAN works as a clinical social worker for a psychiatric hospital, where she is also in private practice. Her poetry has appeared in many periodicals. She currently lives in Cambridge, Mass.

ABBY ROSENTHAL studied at Cornell University and now teaches at the University of Wyoming. Her poems have appeared in Carolina Quarterly, Chicago Southern Poetry Review, Kansas Quarterly, and the Canadian journal, Writ.

After getting an MA at the University of Arizona in 72, BOB ROSS spent eight years in the cattle business before giving up and rejoining the academic community. He has been in the MFA program at UM since fall quarter, 1980.

NANDA SCHATZ studied art at both Trenton State College and George Washington University in Washington D.C. She is currently a teacher at Sussex alternative school and graduate student in art at UM.

NIXA SCHELL studies fiction writing and teaches composition at UM.

PAUL SHUTTLEWORTH's poems have appeared in Poetry Now, Southwest Review, Ontario Review, and others. He edits Nebraska Review at the Fairbury campus of Southeast Community College.

KENNETH SPECTOR is a graduate student in Fine Arts at UM. He was instructor of photography at the College of Great Falls, and recently had an exhibition of infrared photographs at UM.

JERRY N. UELSMANN is Professor of Art at the University of Florida. He is recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the arts grant, and numerous awards. Silver Meditations (1976) is a book of his photographs.

PETER WILD is a contributing editor of High Country News, a newspaper covering environmental affairs in the northern Rocky Mountains. Bitterroots, a romantic little collection based on backpacking in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area, has just been published by Blue Moon Press.
BOOKS RECEIVED

A Protecting Music, Jonathan Moore, poetry, Ghost Pony Press, $2.00.
A Suitable Church, Jim Heynen, poetry, Copper Canyon Press.
Black Orchid, A. F. Moritz, poetry, Dreadnought.
The Burning-Ground, Lawrence Russ, poetry, Owl Creek Press, $4.00.
Departure Point, Haylay Jacques, poetry, The Seal Press.
Driving & Drinking, David Lee, poetry, Copper Canyon Press, $5.00.
Everything That Has Been Shall Be Again, Michael McCurdy, fiction, The Bieler Press, $7.95.
Flashlights, Ingrid Swanberg, poetry, Ghost Pony Press, $2.00.
Hannah's Travel, Richard Speakes, poetry, Ahsahta Press.
Heart Of The Garfish, Kathy Callaway, poetry, University of Pittsburgh Press, $4.50.
Heretics, Peter Wild, poetry, Ghost Pony Press, $2.00.
Holding Patterns, Leonard Nathan, poetry, University of Pittsburgh Press, $4.50.
I'm Amazed That You're Still Singing, Jack Myers, poetry, L'Epervier Press, $4.25.
Judith, Albert W. Haley, Tr, poetry, Modern Images, $3.95.
Laws Of The Land, David Baker, poetry, Ahsahta Press.
The Leaf Path, Emily Warn, poetry, Copper Canyon Press, $5.00.
Let The Dance Begin, William Kloefkorn, poetry, State Street Press Chapbooks.
Mapping My Father, Ripley Schemm, poetry, Dooryard.
The Middle Of The World, Kathleen Norris, poetry, University of Pittsburgh Press, $4.50.
Midsummer Rites, Eve Triem, poetry, The Seal Press.
Narratives From America, Richard Ronan, poetry, Dragon Gate, $6.00.
Opening Night, Thomas Brush, poetry, Owl Creek Press, $6.00.
Platte Valley Homestead, William Kloefkorn, poetry, Platte Valley Press, $3.95.
Ruby For Grief, Michael Burkard, poetry, University of Pittsburgh Press, $4.50.
Sandra, Florella Galt, fiction, Shearwater Press, $8.00.
Song Made Out Of A Pale Smoke, Bruce Renner, poetry, L'Epervier Press, $4.95.
Too Bright To See, Linda Gregg, poetry, Graywolf, $9.00.
Travelling In Place, Neile Graham & Harold Rhenisch, poetry, Saults and Pollard.
Where Sparrows Work Hard, Gary Soto, poetry, University of Pittsburgh Press, $4.50.

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

Abraxas (23-24) Ingrid Swanberg, ed., 2518 Gregory Street, Madison Wisconsin 54711 $3.00/copy.
Carolina Quarterly (Fall 81) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Greenlaw Hall, 066A, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.
The Chariton Review (Fall 81) Jim Brnes, ed., Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, MO 63501 $2.00/copy.


Cold Drill Linda McAndrews/Sally Thomas, eds., Dept. of English, Boise State University, Boise, ID 83725.

Collage Harriet Hirsch, ed., 1200 S. Willis Ave., Wheeling, IL $1.50/copy.

Colorado-North Review (Fall 81/Winter 82) Laurel J. Kallenbach, ed., University Center, University of Northern Colorado 80639 $2.00/copy.

Cosmep Newsletter (Vol. 13, No. 5) Box 703, San Francisco, CA 94101.

Cottonwood (Winter 81-82) Mel Farley, ed., Box J, Kansas Union, University of Kansas, 66045 $3.50/copy.

Design Bureau Waldemar Radtke, 7 Lilac, Kentfield, CA 94904.

Fiction International (No. 13) Joe David Bellamy, ed., St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY 13617 $10.00/copy.

Field (#25 Fall 81) Stuart Fribert/David Young, eds., Oberlin College, Rice Hall, Oberlin, 44074 $3.00/copy.


Graham House Review (#6 Spring 82) Peter Balakian/Bruce Smith, eds., Bishop North, Philips Academy, Andover, MA 01810 $2.50/copy.

The Greenfield Review (Vol. 9 #3 & 4) Joseph Bruchac III, ed., R.D. 1, Box 80, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 $4.00/copy.

Hawai'i Review (#12 Fall 81) Barbara Fulkerson, ed., University of Hawai'i, Dept. of English, 1733 Donaghho Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822 $3.50/copy.

The Iowa Review (Vol. 11 #4) Fredrick Woodard/David Hamilton, eds., 308 EPB, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Kayak (#58) George Hitchcock, ed., 325 Ocean View Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062 $1.00/copy.

Magazine (Fall 81) Jocelyn Fisher/Alexandra Garrett, eds., Box 806, Venice, CA 90291.

The Memphis State Review (Spring 82) William Page, ed., Dept. of English, Memphis State University, Memphis, TN 38125 $2.00/copy.

The Missouri Review (Fall 81) Speer Morgan, ed., Dept. of English, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211 $2.50/copy.

Mr. Cogito (Vol. V #3) R. A. Davies/J.M. Gogol, eds., Box 627, Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon, 97116.

Nebraska Review (1982) Margaret Hayes/Paul Shuttleworth, eds., Southeast Community College of Fairbury Campus, Fairbury, Nebraska 68352 $2.00/copy.

Nimrod "Awards III" (Fall/Winter 81) Francine Ringold, ed., 2210 So. Main, Tulsa, OK 74114 $3.00/copy.


Pequod #13) David Paradis, ed., 536 Hill Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 $4.00/copy.

Porch (Vol. IV #2) James V. Cervantes, ed., 5310 Taylor, Phoenix, AZ 85008 $3.00/copy.
Portland Review (Vol. 27 # 2) Gene Van Troyer, ed., Box 751, Portland, OR 97207 $5.00/copy.
Prairie Schooner (Summer 81) Hugh Luke, ed., 201 Andrews Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588 $2.50/copy.
Quarterly West (Fall/Winter 81-82) Michael Boberstein, ed., 321 Olpin Union, University of Utah, Salt Lake, Utah 84112 $2.50/copy.
The Slackwater Review Ron McFarland ed., Dept. of English, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843 $4.00/copy.
Sou'wester (Fall 81) Diesel-Hamm, Hayes, Nipper, eds., Dept. of English, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois 62026 $1.50/copy.
Stand (Vol. 23 # 1) John Silkin, ed., 19 Haldane Terrace, New Castle upon Tyne, NE2 3AN, England, $2.50/copy.
Stony Hills (Vol. 1 #4) Diane Kruchkow, ed., New Sharon, Maine, 04955 $1.50/copy.
Tar River Poetry (Fall 81) Peter Makuck, ed., Dept. of English, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, 27834 $2.00/copy.
Three Rivers Poetry Journal (# 19/20) Gerald Costanzo, ed., Box 21, Carnegie/Mellon University, Pittsburgh PA 15213 $5.00/copy.
Western Humanities Review (Winter 81) Jack Garlington, ed., University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112 $4.00/copy.
Willow Springs (Fall 81) Bill O'Daly, ed., Box 1063, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA $3.00/copy.
Back Issues


No. 2 John Haines, Quinton Duval, Susan Rea, Rex Burwell, Albert Drake, and others. Larry Hales portfolio. $1.50.

No. 3 Jane Bailey, Lee Blessing, Martha Evans, William Virgil Davis, Andrew Grossbardt, CarolAnn Russell, Paula Petrik, David Steingrass, Paul Zimmer, and others. Photographs by Larry Hales. $1.50.

No. 4 Montana Artists Issue: Michelle Birch, Madeline DeFrees, John Haines, Richard Hugo, Pat Todd, and others. Photographs by Nick Baker. $1.50.


No. 6 Albert Goldbarth, James J. McAuley, W. M. Ranson, Gloria Sawai, Mary Swander, Sara Vogan, and others. Special section on John Haines, with an interview and portfolio of new work. $2.00.

No. 7 Jim Barnes, Madeline DeFrees, Norman Dubie, John Haines, Ray Meek, Carolyn Wright, and others. Translations of Akesson, Baudelaire and Cernuda. Calligraphy by Jacqueline Svaren. $2.00.

No. 8 Jane Bailey, Ralph Burns, Stuart Friebert, Carol Frost, Albert Goldbarth, Alvin Greenberg, David Ray, Kim Robert Stafford, Michael Trelow, Irene Wanner, and others. Feature article on Montana Poets-in-the-Schools. $2.00.

No. 9 Robert Hedin, Peter Wild, Meredith Steinbach, Robert Sims Reid, Madeline DeFrees, Sam Hammill, Christine Zawadiwsky, Mark Vinz, and others. $2.00.

No. 10 Peter Balakian, Marilyn Folkestad, Christopher Buckley, Stuart Friebert, Mary Swander. Jim Todd portfolio. $2.00.

No. 11 Elton Glaser, Edward Harkeness, Robert Hedin, CarolAnn Russell, Claude Stanush. $2.00.

No. 12 Marilyn Folkestad, Albert Goldbarth, William Kloefkorn, Sam Hamill, Steven Cramer, David Keller. $2.00.

No. 13 Stephen Dunn, Gary Thompson, Stuart Friebert, Naomi Lazar, Susan Davis. $2.50.

No. 14 Special Translation Issue: Milan Rúfus, Octavio Paz, Ranier Marie Rilke, Bashō. $2.50.

No. 15 William Pitt Root, Bonnie ZoBell, Albert Goldbarth, Scott Hibbard, Lauri Cosca, Lex Runciman. $2.50.

No. 16 David Quammen, James Crumley, Alberto Rios, Ripley Schemm. Photographs by Wynn Bullock, Ansel Adams, Aaron Siskind. $3.00.

fourth Printing Now Available:

WHERE WE ARE:
The Montana Poets Anthology

Featuring

Jane Bailey  Richard Hugo
Lee Bassett  Ed Lahey
Ralph Burns  David Long
Rex Burwell  David McElroy
Warren Carrier  Michael Poage
Sylvia Clark  Tom Rea
Madeline DeFrees  William Pitt Root
Rick DeMarinis  Mark Rubin
Gala FitzGerald  Ripley Schemm
Tess Gallagher  Gary Thompson
Andrew Grossbardt  Pat Todd
John Haines  Ann Weisman
Edward Harkness  James Welch
Robert Wrigley

and others.

Edited by Lex Runciman and Rick Robbins
With an Introductory Note by James Wright

The Montana Poets Anthology is a special CutBank publication supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. 6.00 each (5.50 to CutBank subscribers). Now available. Make all checks payable to CutBank, c/o English Dept., Univ. of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812.
POETRY
SAM HAMILL
GREG KUZMA
HARVEY LILLYWHITE
PETER WILD
JOHN HAISLIP
MICHAEL DOBBERSTEIN
PAUL SHUTTLEWORTH

FICTION
GREG MICHALSON
JOAN COLBY

PHOTOGRAPHY
JERRY UELSMANN
EDNA BULLOCK
RICHARD GARROD
PHILIP MAECHLING

$300