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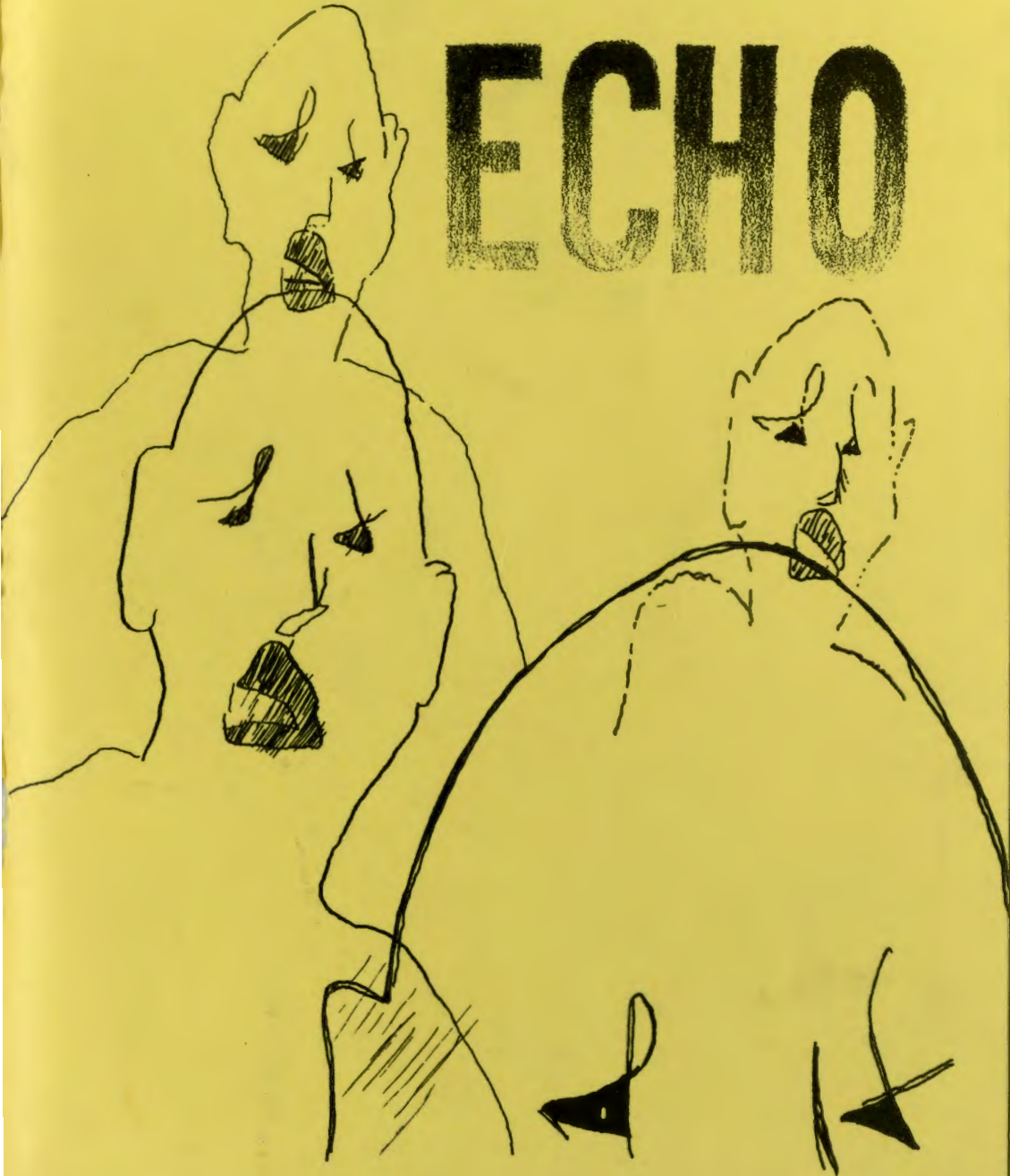
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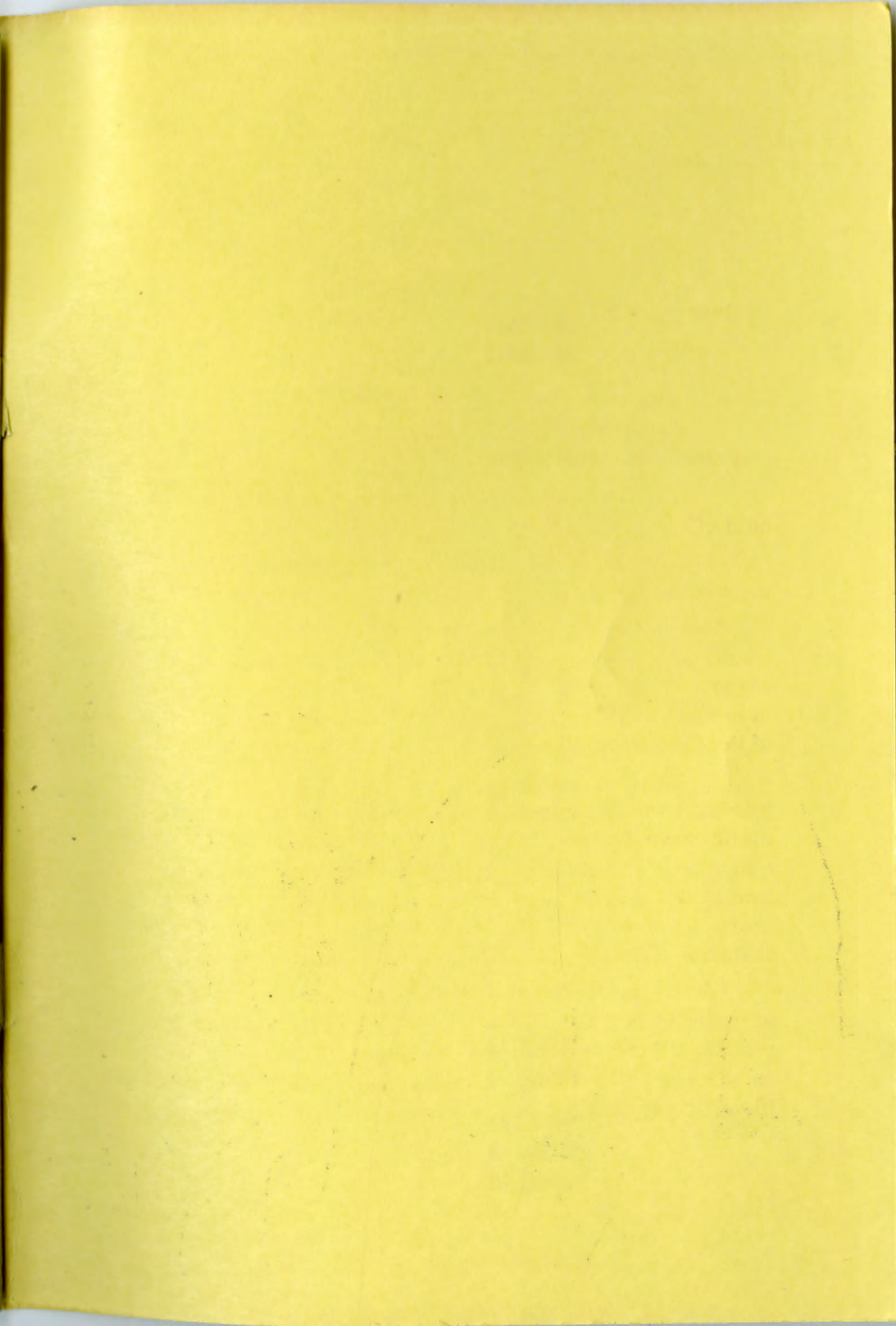
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... but
an

ECHO





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... BUT AN ECHO

Volume I

Number 1

Spring, 1968

"Thus has the bewildered Wanderer to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no Answer but an Echo.!"

--Sartor Resartus
Thomas Carlyle

...but an Echo is a magazine of college writing published by students of Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword, W. E. Bard.....	4
William E. Bard, The Poet, The Man, A. W. Pope ..	5
Poems, Brooke Battles.....	7
Metamorphosis, L. Jane Ulrich.....	10
The Pusher, Scott Eubanks	11
Re-Awakening, Johnnie Lane.....	12
To Sally on the Russian River, Joe Bowden.....	13
Poems, Joe Secrest.....	14
Poems, Giovanni Frisone.....	16
Civilized Cave Men, Story, William Rutledge.....	18
Man's Quest Toward Fulfillment, Essay, Linda Orth.	22
Why Do I Bleed?, Carolyn Chatham.....	27
Poems, Susan Brock.....	28
From Pinnacle to Pit, Arthie Walling Pope.....	29
The Cold Chase, Conrad Pendleton	30
To Make an Earthen Pot, Ruth Ann Ganson	31
Of Time and Space, Michael R. McJilton.....	32
We Created a Mold, Carrol Bass.....	33
What Am I?, Ray Gray.....	33
Black Widow, Barbara Burkett.....	34
Bareback, Louise Hanna.....	37
Haiku, Pixie Smith.....	37
Fiber of Motherhood, Arthie W. Pope.....	38
Metaphysical Design, Don Gerz.....	43
Poems, Richard Coolidge.....	44
Five Hours in Vietnam, Essay, Sgt. David V. Stroud..	46
After the Bombs, Frank Stewart.....	49
Poems, Larry Woods.....	50
The Message, Dennis Phillips.....	51
Las Vegas, Eugene P. Graves	52
Haunted Soul, Allyn Pearlman	52
Zietgeist, Larry E. Standridge.....	53
Poems, Janice Ryan.....	54
Decades of Swing, Essay, Linda Orth.....	56

Tortured Search, Johnnie Lane.....	61
The Path, Short Story, Danny Garrett.....	62
The Magnolia, Short Story, Linda Orth..	71
Poems, Ruth Thomas.....	77
High Stakes, Short Story, William Rutledge.....	78
The Break, Short Story, George Trower.....	87

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FOREWORD

By W. E. Bard, President

Poetry Society of Texas

Texas needs more creative writers, and particularly, poets, through whom the land and sky can speak. To paraphrase one of our own writers, unless we have a poet our precious heritage will be lost, our institutions die. It is to be deplored that our own writers are disparaged here at home, Not that we object to others having a try at the Texas scene; our protest is against the discrimination shown because our writers lack professional status. We feel that those who have cut their teeth on Texas tradition should not be elbowed aside by writers from the north. As the long-horn herds vanish into the sunset, leaving only a dustcloud, it is not in any narrow regional sense that we predict a new generation will define the frontiers of song. It may well be those who have tasted gyp water at a muddy crossing.

Too often the past becomes archaic, remote as an old cowskull, a worn lariat rope, ready to be discarded. At this point the writer comes to build a new image, to invest life with a new and timeless dimension and to bring to us the experience we share when we stand before a great painting. The poet invests his lines with a kind of magic that Robert P. Tristram-Coffin refers to as "strange holiness." When young writers find an awareness "like a key to a bright lost mystery" in Texas life and landscapes, a new Texas literature will emerge. So we hail ...but an Echo as a new urgency. To Miss Smith and her associates we extend our warmest good wishes in this venture.

WILLIAM E. BARD
THE POET, THE MAN

By Arthie Walling Pope

"A young, or new, poet should look beyond the material aspects of life, and should begin early to formulate some philosophy of life. One should begin to write poetry when he feels moved to do so. It is detrimental to wait until the creative impulse has passed." William E. Bard sipped coffee as he visited with members of the Piney Woods Chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas.

It is a rare privilege to talk with W. E. Bard, one of the most influential literary figures in Texas today. As President of the Poetry Society of Texas, he is travelling throughout the state in its interests. He was Poet Laureate of Texas in 1967. All day, he had charmed audiences ranging from junior school to college level with dramatic readings of his emotion-packed poems.

W. E. Bard has won numerous state and national poetry prizes, has been published in such journals as Cyclotron, Kaleidograph, Quick Silver, Voices, and South and West. He is the author of three books of poetry: A Little Flame Blown, Feather in the Sun, and This Land This People. He writes both traditional and modern poetry.

"I have found that the best way for me to work is to let the poem form itself. I get an idea, roll it around a bit, and soon, it begins to take shape." He picked up This Land This People and began to turn through it. "For instance, look at 'The Last Wild Horse'. Written in iambic pentameter and the traditional quatrain, it was inspired by the thought in the last line, 'They were too beautiful--they had to die.' Now, notice 'Not Too Young To Die'."

The publisher had graphically illustrated this poem with a diagonal line dividing the page from corner to corner.

"So Travis drew his sword and traced the line,
Dividing this moment from all other time."

"Although the line does not achieve exactly what I wanted, it does give some indication of the intended typographical imagery. I used free verse in 'At Half Past Two'."

When asked if he had a favorite poet, he said, "I read and respect many poets: Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Emily Dickinson, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, and W. H. Auden, I enjoy many of the works of Robert Tristram-Coffin. I read extensively of contemporary poetry and admire a great deal of it. As a poet, I feel I should know what other poets are doing."

W. E. Bard is a quiet, soft-spoken, yet dynamic personality. One cannot help but note something of the spirit of the man as he talks. His helpful, generous attitude was apparent as he answered numerous questions and agreed to write the introduction for ...but an Echo. He injects a lively enthusiasm into his immediate plans to carry the message of poetry throughout the state.

His sensitive creativity is reflected in his approach to life. As he told students at Stephen F. Austin State College, "Scientists tell us of sensations of light, flickering far beyond the limits of our universe; faint gleams of galaxies far beyond calculable space to bring new wonders within our grasp. The poet must be more observant, more attuned to spiritual nuances than to the physical aspects of life."

Poems by Brooke Battles

FRIDAY

To
Ten dusky months I spent with you
Learning to love
Your mind,
Afraid to try to love
The body,
A fear that I would find myself
Incomplete,
Of you.
I knew you from the hours we filled
Discussing movies, books, and God-like Finny.
I could understand your mind, and tried
For nothing more
Till Friday.

You could see that I was looking at you
One-eyed,
Hesitantly,
Willing to accept you two-dimensionally
But beautiful in those two dimensions;
And you accepted that,
Not being one to pet Promethean gifts.
But Friday there was something different
About the way that basketball and Chinese food
Faded into night.
The red candle and Dinah
Maybe
Made us see.
I opened--
No
You made me open
The eye that for so long had winked at you.

As the thrill of light
Calméd slowly
In the morning as the dawn became apparent,
I looked at you
Wide-eyed,
Amidst a mass of rumped covers.
We would eat well, I knew, and
Over breakfast
Talk of Dreiser's work
As yesterday.

And I loved all of you.
All
Three dimensions.

Haiku

Winter releases
His grasp on spring, jumping, she
Thuds into summer.

L. Jane Ulrich

METAMORPHOSIS

Yesterday

I saw the world through dirty windows.
Everything was dirty, and gray, and ugly...
I hated the maudlin, the boring--
often mundane existence I led.

Then, I found you. (Or did you find me?)

Slowly, I stirred; I awoke, breaking my bonds,
And ran through sparkle-yellows and lime greens.
I touched each blade of grass, and tasted the dew.
And, I cried because my eyes, and my fingers,
and my mouth
Ravished the sunshine, and hungered for more.

No longer was I empty--

Yet, I knew I could never be filled...
For the eyes that swallowed light will not accept the dark;
And, the hands that felt the real cannot withstand the false;
And, the lips that tasted honey can never again be satisfied
with water.

Scott Eubanks

THE PUSHER

Glorified gutter-suckers drive long black Cadillacs,
Paid for by God's lost and ignorant
Lurking in dark waterfront alleys,
Stalking their prey with saturated confidence.
The young, the depressed, and the defeated
Sweat blood and bow humbly for the pin-striped vultures.
The sellers of sin and false hopes find room in their
 crowded pockets for folding green that should
 have bought food.
Nervously swapping glimpses of Heaven for hours of Hell
In pool hall backrooms and dingy bar corners;
Starvers of children dun
 broken parents for unpaid bills
To buy fresh carnations for filth-soaked lapels.
The same carnations he tosses on graves of self-slain losers.
Then he spits,
And smirks;
And makes an "X" by the dead man's name.

RE-AWAKENING

Warm rain against my face,
Crystal cascades from heaven
Mingle with the tears of my hell.

Drops pounding my body
As you did long ago
With your callous self.

Tender harbingers of rebirth
Are assuaging my burned-out soul
With silvery atoms
In ribulets over my sadness.

Joe Bowden

Poems by Joe Bowden

TO SALLY ON THE RUSSIAN RIVER

you dove
into the river while bears embraced
on the beach and
I die easier
by stepping between them
but I
could have chosen to have
touched the water being kindled by
your naked swim

SPARROW CORRESPONDENT

After the clouds stopped snoring and spewing,
the sun started to squib,
and sunglasses reactivated
as there was a retaliation of fun
a whole bunch cahooting to square off challenges
just spawning for action.

They lucked out on sunshine,
and someone brought the broom from the storage room.
While they took turns sweeping off the puddles,
a few tennis balls whanged and clenched in the fence.
The sparrows, foiled and cheated, left the courts
to seek the black crow for their revenge.

APPOINTIVE PROCLIVITY

I threw my "abc" gum into the offering,
the sani-angel sneezed crime:
"Long live the Identification Card!"
This parole is eating my yeast
shadow before I can teach the parrot
inside my asbestos
patronage within, to tell me
the secret to the plane of flesh,
the theft of vengeance.

I will sell myself into memory, and just
as the theater ticket tears, so night tears away
and I claim her reflection knowing
there are demands that no money can jostle,
and I market miles to possess choices to let me go
since it will be a while before I project a prayer
yet the machines bleed oil for my lost childhood,
"where all the blessings are."

Poems by Giovanni Frisone

A CARPET OF LIFE

unfolds
in a train
while a cigarette
crushed
stares at me
with the sadness
of past.

The ciphers of a newspaper
leave aloof
the moon that discloses
her petals of incense
in the infinite
of a choice without bridles.

The cube fights
with the rose an intricate
stele that talks
about chains and meadows,
allied with warmth
that suffocates the purity
of hopes
limited
by a dark perfection.

The sea
stretches her fingers of foam
pouring out pointless efforts
that flesh repulses
with words of angry sadism,
but the medusa
cradles the memory of a sun
that fled, and sings.

IN A DISCONTINUITY

In a discontinuity gray
of horizons
a gazelle breathes
rainbows perfumed
with patience;
her tunic
reveals wounds of sun
glided over by the nectar
of tongues of love.
The river receives
in his bosom
the leaves born
by the wailing children
tyrants of kites
vexed by thirst
of swallows,
and he takes them
along
to rest.

CIVILIZED

CAVE

M E N

By William Rutledge

"I still think I should go out and help him if I can, Carter.

"Don't be a fool, Harlowe. You don't even know if he's alive."

Harlowe focused the binoculars for the countless time on the unmoving form (corpse?) nearly two hundred yards away in what resembled a crag of ice. The snow had collected around the form, which was unquestionably a man, and had begun to hide the rifle by his side. The storm was building force, making it difficult for the binoculars, much less the naked eye, to clearly spot the form.

"I still think he's a hunter, like us, who wandered out there sometime last night, got lost, and has probably frozen to death," Harlowe continued without lowering the binoculars. "There's a chance he's alive. I think we should both go and see if we can help."

"I owe him human respect. If a man can't help man, what's left? Just a world of savage, self-centered animals? I like to think there's still human decency left in a few of us."

"You and your highbrow talk! You're a stupid little idealist. There are two types of people in this ole world, my friend: the ones who think, act and work only for dear ole Number One, themselves; and the crusading idealists, the idiots like you. You idealists are just too weak to be like the rest of us, so you hide behind your morals and hu-

man respect, and values of human life. All you people are good for is to be used by us self-centered slobs."

"The role of cynic doesn't fit you, Carter. If the places were reversed and you were out there and me and that fellow were in here, would you be expecting help?"

"I would want it, but I wouldn't be stupid enough to expect it."

"Then, you're a fool, Carter. I'm going out there, and even if I'm too late to help, at least I'll feel that man has progressed some since the cave man."

"Idealists and their civilized manhood! You make me sick."

Harlowe pretended not to hear as he prepared for the hike. Stuffing a thick blanket under his arm, Harlowe, now wearing his Mackinaw coat, left the cave and began the slow trip down.

His feet slipped and pain shot through him as he fell against the jagged hillside. Going slow would be a must, he reasoned. Carrying the blanket left only one arm free for balance. "Got to take it slow. Can't rush now!" Harlowe kept reminding himself. He measured his progress in inches as he moved cautiously.

Finally reaching the bottom of the hill, Harlowe cursed as the cold chilled him to the bone. Now only a few feet from the motionless body, Harlowe noted by his watch that over an hour had passed since leaving the cave and Carter.

Kneeling beside the man's body and placing a hand on his shoulder, Harlowe spoke, "Can you hear me? Buddy, can you hear me?"

Harlowe began brushing the snow from the man's head. Relieved, Harlowe saw that the man was still breathing. Tugging the man over on his back, Harlowe hurriedly exclaimed, "You're okay now! I'll put the blanket around you! When you're able, we'll try to get to the cave!"

Stripping his own Mackinaw coat, Harlowe draped the shivering man with it and the blanket. Harlowe's legs drew up under his chin. Harlowe hunched his back forward claspng his arms around his knees, and rocked in a continuous motion, beside the man, trying to ignore the cold. Without his Mackinaw, Harlowe's lightweight undercoat wasn't much protection. Getting colder, Harlowe leaned over the man and tenderly revolved the man's arms in a swimming stroke fashion, trying to keep the blood circulating in both of them.

According to Harlowe's watch, an hour had passed when the man first tried to speak. The man stirred without speaking for another thirty minutes. The cold was becoming unbearable to Harlowe.

"Think you can make it to the cave now?" Harlowe asked.

"I...I...I don't...know," stuttered the man as he eyed Harlowe for the first time. "How f...far is it?"

"Not far. We'll share the Mackinaw and blanket. I think we'll make it." Harlowe spoke through chattering teeth. "Food's low. Now, we'll have to cut down more."

Harlowe helped the man to his feet and the man, clumsily took a few steps. The man faced Harlowe and, slightly stuttering, "I...I bet f...food'd be...scarce for three waiting out a bl...blizzard in a cave."

Harlowe, bitterly cold and seeming not to have heard, stated, "Better get back before night. Looks like we'll have a blizzard. In an hour we can't see two feet." Now grinning, Harlowe asked lightly, "How 'bout throwing me the coat? You keep the blanket. It's probably warmer anyway."

Without speaking the man limped, more surely now, toward his Winchester .270 on the frozen ground. "Sure would like to have a...a coat like this," the man said as he bent to get his rifle. "Sure keeps a fellow warm in w... weather like this." After a pause, the man added, "Next best thing to a co...coat is w...warm food."

Stunned, Harlowe eyed the man as he leveled the Winchester at Harlowe's chest. With a smirk, the man laughingly said, "Thanks for the help, Pard," as he squeezed the trigger and Harlowe felt his chest explode.

* * * *

"No writer knows why he writes; he only likes to imagine he knows."

--William Saroyan

"Whoever wants to tell a story of a sainted grandmother, unless you can find some old love letters, and get a new grandfather?"

--Robert Penn Warren

MAN'S QUEST TOWARD FULFILLMENT

By Linda Orth

Flowers floating on a hill,
Dragonflies and daffodils.
Learn from us, very much;
Look at us, but do not touch. . . .

--Lee Hazelwood

These words, from a recently popular song, express a "hippie" viewpoint. "Flower children" drop out of society and isolate themselves like flowers on a hill; their minds, hazed with drugs, are as free and breezy as the daffodils, and dragonflies. They want the "in"-people to notice them, to react to them, but not to bother them. Flower children are considered a problem by many people; their children are considered a problem by many people; their problems create still other problems for the rest of society. But who doesn't have problems? Our chief problem as a nation seems to be to identify the other people with problems, those who are problems in themselves.

Within our nation's borders, we are confronted with the Negro problem, the youth problem, that of the poor and the elderly, and that of the criminal mind. In 1968, we have the problem of choosing a president who can cope with his own problems, and those of the nation and the world. Each of these problems is people, individually or collectively. We are aware of the problems of Lyndon Johnson, or Stokely Carmichael, or characters like Bonnie and Clyde. We also view problems in fellow Americans seen in mass, great herds of people who breathe, move, require food and housing, and create problems.

Looking back into United States history, we find that this country was founded on problems of other countries. The new land provided a land of opportunity for those with debtor, religious or criminal problems, and for democratic thinkers tired of European aristocracy. A strange phenomenon occurred with these problem people--their problems were incorporated into a progressive spirit of those dedicated to solving problems and striving for individual attainment.

The era of problem-solving in coordination with building a nation has passed. The problems created by the advances of the last 25 years are unique; we cannot learn from their example by looking back into history. We live in a jet-set society; threatened by total physical destruction and the destruction of the values and customs long instilled in us through historical habit.

Poems today reflect the search for the "real me." People with problems act and react to the world in bewilderment, seeking answers to bring understanding of self and man. Some, dissatisfied with the answers they find, participate in a "drop-out" movement, originally based on Love. They believe that all problems can be solved by dropping from the hate and torment of society and creating another world of complete freedom and love. Their basic assumptions have a solid basis, but they have sidestepped the world of man. We cannot communicate our love to others by becoming isolationists. Such flower children cannot face their problems squarely; they have not the love for fellow man or the pride of country to fight to overcome their grievances. Their problems constitute a major problem today. They are "change-breakers"--they neither accept the changing world or help it progress. The purpose they serve is to cause society to re-examine itself in the light of its common problems, and the particular problems of the dropouts.

Other people, the non-hippies, must react and respond to life as it is. Each person who allows his mind to explore the reasons for existence is confronted with the questions: "Who am I?", "Who is God?", "What is my relationship to God and man?" The church does not always provide each person with the answers he is seeking. The church (the totality of Christian organizations for worship) today is in the throes of a new movement. In an effort to keep pace with society, its morals and unconventional modes of thought, various denominations are seeking to expand long-standing, strict viewpoints, in an effort to regain the dependence of the people. The Catholic church is seeking to establish new views on such controversial subjects as birth control, marriage of the clergy and interfaith marriage. The Christian church is striving to combine all religious faiths into one church, providing universal unity within one church. Churches are re-examining their views toward love and sex; they are accepting the presence of the Negro and other minority groups in the life of the congregation. The church is turning to its young people to provide the guidance to find, in faith, the answers of the future. Many will question some of the timeless, out-dated practices and testimonies of the Church. It must adapt to the modern concepts of morality, dress, speech, education and custom.

The role of government in 1968 is readily visible, but it is not completely stable. We feel the hand of the government most actively in the problems of racial equality, and the preservation of freedom in Vietnam. It is foreseeable that the role of government will come to be a much more dominant force in American life. The draftcard burners and the protest marchers present one view of public reaction to government force.

Society is a reflection of the impact created by the changing roles of church, government and man's relation to man. We have psychedelic music, dancing, movies and

clothing to take us out of this world. Mind-expanding drugs are available to any serious taker.

We are going to the moon; we are going to the depths of the sea. We fight 12,000 miles away in unfriendly jungles; we burn at home in the "good old summertime." Is it any wonder that people are confused as to a clear set of values and the proper perspective on life? We can achieve a walk in space; we can stoop to the murder of a president. It would take a most objective mind to correlate the place of the church, the government and society into a pleasing, calming, controlled atmosphere. The problem of creating such a state is yet unsolvable.

Looking ahead to the year 2000, we can examine our society in the light of three types of people. By that date, our religious, political and social institutions as they are today could be totally alien to us.

Religious institutions will encompass many areas of public and private life. The church may control problems in social welfare and guidance, family counseling, educational instruction and political decision-making. A single church may emerge, combining like elements of all religions into one worldwide fellowship in God.

The role of government will be felt intensely in every division of life as we strive for equality for all men--education, industry, business, job opportunity and living standards. One songwriter has said that we may all "go into universities and all come out looking just the same. We may live in houses built like boxes, all looking just the same." It is within man's capabilities to control physical reproduction and heredity, the growth of the mind and individual actions. It is possible that our world could be threatened not only from within, but also from other planets, other solar systems.

Our grandparents gasp at walks in space, cures for cancer and education by television. Our grandchildren will think nothing of travel to other planets, transportation by saucers and computer education. The reactions to life in the twenty-first century will fall generally among three types of people.

The first is the change-maker. He will rely upon his own conscience to guide his awareness of the problems of society. Because of an inner quality of progressive courage, he not only will react to the world, but also will help change it. The problems of the world will become his. The change-taker will accept the changes of the change-maker without protest. His life will be relatively calm and controlled. His problems--those of every other American just like him--the budget, the vacation, the in-laws. The change-breaker will not accept the progress of the change-maker without protest. If he does not choose to drop out of society, he will garner every opportunity to voice his dissent and express it in unconventional modes of behaviour. He may become completely absorbed in drugs; he may march against the government, even plot its overthrow. His problems are more intricate than the usual, for he also worries about the state of the world and society, and himself as an individual. But instead of dealing realistically, with these problems, he will isolate himself and turn away from the world that has created him.

John Donne wrote that "No man is an island entire unto himself." We are confronted with the problems of others because all problems stem from the fundamental needs of man, which vary in degree, but which are essentially the same. Each man strives for equality, security and a sense of dignity; each requires love and affection. From these basic needs arise the problems of fulfillment. In order to make the progressive changes required by

society, we must value the people who seek the finer spirit of life, the knowledge of self and God, the quest to "dream the impossible. . . reach the unreachable."

* * * * *

Carolyn Chatham

WHY DO I BLEED?

I cut myself on a star today,
But it was worth it.
I went soaring out and up,
Breathing cloud whiteness into earth-black lungs,
Bathing in sheets of Sun Love,
Looking at shiny foil-like stars
With eyes once blinded by reality.
Gliding over smooth glass, and feeling its slivers
Slice away the chains of my humanity.
I was at once Everything and Everywhere
While tentacles of sun, bright as bits of lake mirrors,
Sparkled me into Existence.

ETERNAL TRIANGLE

Past cried the day Present left her.
Flawless Future called
and Present shut out his imperfect Past.
Faithfully he pursued the fortunate Future,
but she was only flirting while jealous Past,
swearing revenge, sent memories to torment.

Alone, frustrated Present could not regain Past,
could not reach Future,
and desiring both,
relentless ran in circles.

DREAM CHILDREN

Dreams frolic in the minds of men
Like phantom children exploring the night.

Alarmed by the death of slumber,
Scattering urchins run from reality
To the safe skirts of Mother Subconscious.
Thoughts stimulated by quickening pulse
Fumble in confused pursuit
Only to grasp senseless fragments:

The mind, dizzily dulled by sleep,
Cannot comprehend and turns away to meet day.

FROM PINNACLE TO PIT

An annointed monarch

lauded and loved by his people

wears power, riches and fame

like ornate triple crowns.

Pursuing Omnipotent Truth,

earthly authority

probes the core of Perfect Love.

But from bed on a sultry night,

a king walks the palace roof,

and shifting his eyes from the stars

to the garden fountains below,

discovers alluring disaster in the pool.

THE COLD CHASE

These startle this frosty Eden: the flight
of the autumn buck with wind in his hooves
through the fugitive hiss of swirling leaves,
through the broken pods and the barren brook;
the southward pursuit by the snowy hounds
untethered now from the Arctic Circle,
flaking their bays on the mutinous air.

Perilously cadenced their polar paws
sparkling their tracks on colorless grass
as they skim by under brittle sky;
lovely the buck with his antlers back
and the gusty glitter of fear in his eyes.
Splendid the hounds with their arrow bodies,
and blue-north breath that zeroes the sun;
splendid the chase while the tawny buck
out-races the hounds that whitely pursue.

Michael R. McJilton

Excerpts from
OF TIME AND SPACE

The stars, diamonds
Of God's, sparkle, out of reach
Were it not for dreams.

* * * *

Spring, a young maiden
Untouched by summer's hot hand,
Dons her best attire.

* * * *

Seining lakes of dreams
With my nets of love and hope,
I catch snakes and snails.

Carrol Bass

WE CREATED A MOLD

We created, she and I,
a mold of thoughts and plans;
cast into it, with the alloy of our parts
a child,
engendered by the breath of our loins.

Perfect in innocence,
it grew, became man, and
burst the mold
whose pieces fall about our heads.

Adam, Adam, what did you learn, and
where--where have you gone?

* * * *

Ray Gray

WHAT AM I?

I'm alone in the world of millions;
I hurry with nowhere to go;
I know where I am, but I'm lost;
I'm always laughing, but unhappy;
I'm friendly, but shy;
I'm educated, but ignorant;
I'm a clear thinker, but confused;
I'm strong, but weak;
I'm a Christian, but sinful;
Oh Lord, what am I?

B L A C K W I D O W

By Barbara Burkett

Alone at last, Jayce kicked off her shoes and padded to the kitchen for a tall glass of milk. Returning to the den, she slumped in the easy chair. Propping her feet up on the ottoman, she gazed out the window and sipped her milk. It had been a long day--a long week, in fact. But now it was over and she could relax a moment and think.

But for a few minutes yet, she just sat, gazing at the scene before her, without thinking. Then, unwillingly, she let the thoughts come, slowly at first, then in more and more rapid succession. Thoughts of Jerry.

She had met him while she was still in college. They had dated a few times, but neither had seemed too taken with the other. So they had stopped dating, but had met often for coffee and a pleasant chat before going on with their individual lives. About a month before graduation, over a cup of coffee, Jerry had suddenly asked her to a movie that night, "for old times' sake, before we leave." She had agreed, and that night they had fallen in love. Within a month, only a few days after their graduation, she had become Mrs. Jerry Mitchell.

Both of their families were thrilled, of course. They both had their educations, both could find jobs easily, for both had trained to be teachers, and everything was settled. They would settle down in Jerry's home town, and both would teach in the school there. Her parents lived nearby,

So they could see them often, too. Then Jerry had been drafted, and they had decided that, while he was in the service, she would work and get her master's degree.

So had begun a new life for the Mitchells. Half a continent apart, they saw each other only on Jerry's rare leaves or her few school vacations--when she didn't have to be studying, that is. But they got through it all right, and by working hard, she managed to graduate with honors, only three months after Jerry's discharge.

Then it was Jerry's turn. They moved to a large university town and she taught in the University until Jerry could get his Ph. D.

Six weeks later, George had been born. They were so happy--they had both wanted the first one to be a boy. He could help his daddy, and bring friends home for his sisters to date, and even double-date with them until they were old enough to "go it alone," as Jerry put it.

But then, they had found out there wouldn't be any sisters. The doctor said it had been a ten thousand-to-one miracle that they had ever had George, and that they shouldn't hope for another. So they settled all their hopes on him, and watched him carefully as he grew.

As soon as Jerry found a job, in a small college town, they bought a small farm and built a beautiful brick house. Then they bought a tractor and together they had planted and raised a garden. Jerry had always wanted to keep some cows, and Joyce wanted a horse and some chickens. So they built fences and dug a pond and stocked it well (both loved to fish, and they knew George would, too) and bought some cows, a horse for each of them, and the chickens. Then George had to have a dog, they felt, so they went

shopping for one, coming back with a small black puppy for George and a young hound for Jerry to train as a hunting dog.

They had also joined the church as soon as they moved into their new house, and now they settled down to live. They had all they wanted, and the years began to fly by. George grew and started to school, and Jerry was promoted to professor at the college where he taught music. The year George entered high school, the head of the music department died, and Jerry was given his job. Joyce was busy with church and faculty women's clubs; Jerry was a deacon in their church; and George was a member of the youth choir, and on the track team at school.

The year George graduated from high school was really one to remember. He had been elected Student Congress president, class favorite, Mr. Peabody High School, and had been captain of the track team. Not only that, he was named valedictorian of his class. That same year, Jerry had been promoted once more--this time, to Dean of the School of Fine Arts. Joyce had finally decided to go back to work, and had been hired as a Spanish instructor in the junior college nearby. They had celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary that year. Life was really wonderful.

Now, almost eight years later, George was in a school up north, working on his doctorate, with his wife, Alice, and their baby, Jim. They had come home briefly for the funeral, but George was having finals, and they had had to leave as soon as it was over. The will had left everything to her--George had asked Jerry to do so, as he felt the place they had loved so long should go to her. The insurance, too, was made out in her name. And Jerry had insisted when she started working that every penny she made be put into a private savings account for her, as she had

that It would provide her an ample income while she worked on her doctorate, so she could get a good job at the University. All in all, she was glad she had killed him. Now she could begin to really live.

* * * *

Louise Hanna

BAREBACK

Bounding over each hill and spring
With our hearts running wild
And all our energy fading away,
We will begin to learn the secret
Of always being young at heart
When changes come which want
To keep us locked away forever.

* * * *

HAIKU

Haughty sunflower
greet's gods while the violet
embraces the earth.

By Pixie Smith

FIBER OF MOTHERHOOD

By Arthie Walling Pope

Marianne Dawson slipped through the west entrance of St. Joseph's Hospital, and the air-cushioned door closed quietly behind her. She knew no one had seen her. Face composed, she strode briskly down the street to a telephone booth several blocks away. She fumbled her dime into the slot and dialed the hospital number. She listened patiently to the third ring. She glanced at her watch: 1:37.

"St. Joseph's Hospital. . . Hello?"

"Hello." Marianne felt a strange catch in her throat. "If you will go to the west wing of the hospital," she said in a flat tone, "you will find an abandoned child."

The telephone voice crackled, "I beg your pardon! Who is this? Hello!"

Marianne placed the receiver back in its cradle.

"Steady now," she reassured herself, turning homeward. She resumed what she hoped was her customary pace. She stopped as usual at the neighborhood grocery for a quart of milk and a loaf of bread.

As she entered the apartment, she heard Bretta cooing in her crib. Lovingly, she took the child. Lovely,

blonde Bretta! "So much like your father," Marianne said "Even at four months!"

Then, without warning, it began once more. "How many times have I been through this?" Marianne sobbed.

Sensing from her mother's behavior that something was wrong, Bretta became fretful. Holding her to one side across her hip, Marianne manipulated a bottle into a pan of water and the pan onto a burner. She wandered pointlessly around the kitchen, the baby still on her hip, while the bottle warmed. Her tears splotted the faded linoleum.

She cuddled the blonde head close in nursing fashion as she gave Bretta the bottle. The rocking of the chair, the filling warmth of the milk and the closeness of her mother's body soothed Bretta to sleep.

"So peaceful," Marianne mused as a fleeting reflex smile illumined the tiny face.

Yet, Marianne could not look at Bretta without remembering Brett, so much did the child resemble her father. And, too, the joy of another baby, so long ago, yet so recently held, haunted her.

Brett. . . tall, blonde, blue-eyed! We liked each other from the first. You called me, "Marnie." And, our first year--sheer joy. Pure happiness--unmarred, except for your occasional bursts of temper. Your job, and the Company! The promotions!

"You can do anything you want to the apartment," you told me when you became Area Supervisor. "And you must join me on every long trip."

Travel. . . the city. . . what fun!

"No son of mine shall grow up in an apartment," you declared when I became pregnant. "Let's go house hunting!"

Kent was a perfect baby.

But how quickly it all changed. . . because of Barnes, you lost your largest account. He got your promotion. "I'd never seen you so angry," she spoke aloud, as she recalled his blinding rage that mid-afternoon as he arrived home after quitting the firm.

Move followed move; state to state; job to job!

"This job smothers me," you would cry in desperation, and we'd move again.

Then the accident. . . "A moment of hopelessness," you said later, but you'd wrecked the car, and left Kent hospitalized.

My body began to express specific signals. "Could it be?" I asked in wonder, hoping the joy of a new pregnancy would steady you. But when I told you, you became brutal. Marianne forced her mind to hurry over Brett's cruelty until that last tragic morning.

You stood, back to me, staring out the kitchen window. When you heard me, you whirled, like a caged animal, your eyes glazed. Oh, Brett, that stare! You whirled and yelled, "It's all your fault. You're to blame! Damn you!" You lunged at me, grabbing for my throat. "I'll kill you!" you screamed, then fell writhing to the floor.

Panic. . . ambulances. . . shots to still your thrashing. Pentathol. And much later, the doctor's words: "You must commit him, Mrs. Dawson. . . commit. . . total mental collapse. . . he's too much. . . You cannot handle him. I cannot

offer you any hope."

"Hope...hope...hope! She leaned against the rocker's high back, her eyes closed.

I brought Kent home, and after Bretta was born, I worked. Three jobs, and not one with decent pay! And Kent cried endlessly. No money for doctor's fees! If Kent were well...but he'll never be well. Spastic...that's the word the doctor used...from the accident. ...periodic treatment...special training....

I couldn't ask Mother for help after Dad's stroke; nor Brett's folks. I used all our money to move south... for Kent...warmer climate.

Sheer luck to find this place and the waitress job so near, but that didn't last long. Kent cried so, I couldn't keep a sitter. Five women in four weeks must be some kind of record.

After I quit work, I went to several churches. They gave, but not enough. The Welfare was no help. We were too new in the city!

Kent's worst day, yesterday! Neighbors complaining; no help. "No one to help!" The last thought wrenched shaken from her aching throat.

Something must be done quickly. She was already counting pennies, and they must have food. She had lain awake all night wrestling the problem. By morning, she had made the decision which she had executed in the early afternoon.

"The evening paper should be on the stands by now," she said, rising abruptly. Holding the baby, she hurried

to the nearest news rack, pushed her dime into the tube and lifted out a copy.

"Headlines!" she breathed as she glanced at the front page. Back at the apartment, she set Bretta in the crib and settled down to read the title story.

"Shortly past noon today, Ruth Allen, switchboard operator of St. Joseph's Hospital received an anonymous call from a woman stating that there was an abandoned child in the west wing of the hospital. The caller seemed calm, not hysterical, said Miss Allen.

Upon investigation, hospital officials found a boy, age two and a half, approximately, in a crib from the hospital nursery which is in the same wing.

"The child is clean and well fed. He shows no signs of neglect or abuse," stated Dr. Fred Ronnelbach, chief of pediatrics. "However, the youngster appears to have been in an accident which caused a serious condition requiring periodic treatment. His injury will be really painful at times."

In an interview at press-time, Chief of Police Gilbert Milner said, "We will make every effort to establish the identity of the boy and to locate his parents, if they are alive. In the meantime, he will be moved to Children's Hospital where they have better facilities for treating him. Then, eventually, if his parents are not found, he will be made a ward of the state and given the care he needs."

Marianne stopped reading. Tears had all but disintegrated the newsprint.

"It worked!" she cried exultantly. More soberly, she reasoned, "I may never be able to reclaim my son. On

the other hand, if anyone to whom I appealed for aid should remember my case, or, if the neighbors become suspicious, I may be discovered. But I'm willing to take my chances, now that Kent has proper care."

She laid the paper aside. "I'd better call the restaurant. Bretta will be hungry tomorrow."

* * * * *

Don Gerz

METAPHYSICAL DESIGN

Airs of resplendent tranquility
pool their silent masses, and edge
tension to mere existence.

The "here-there-afters" flow
as though no thought matters, except
a final rest.

And when there's but one second left
to fill the glass,
a gentle hand will turn this measure
to its own end.

A slightly balding head nods
its self-contained smile, and reels
the half-saved time into its place.

Poems by Richard Coolidge

EVIL EXISTS

It is not

negative or relative,
contingent or correlative
bestial reversion (for
animals are unchained strangers to ethics).

It is

a positive force--
like
purity or morality
gravity and electricity
breeding copiously wherever
sentient beings
revoke the mind
and laugh at love.

Insidiously charming masks cover its rotting face
like the achingly lovely figure of a beautiful prostitute...
the stirring martial drum-beats of war pulling marble-
sculptured
youths into its ghastly and nauseous maw
to feed that which it purports to avert;

The singing glories of love when spinning sweetness becomes
a multitude of tiny-razored knives, peeling, slowly slicing in
dwindling concentric circles of agony
to murder that which gave it birth.

Evil is a laughing pack of hunters
clothed in yellow and black
sounding a winding horn
over the blood-scented trace
of a quarry that weeps as it runs.

NOTHING MORE FRIGHTENING

There is nothing
in any universe
more frightening
than the sound
of morons marching;

stupidity enthroned
gibbering gleefully
the cult of the slob
in columns of four
trampling the cathedral of spirit
with cancerous boots;

a searing new world
striped with crimson
where mediocrity
rapes soaring genius
and giggles spittle;

capering gargoyles
smearing love
with excrement
exalting no-mind
to the god
with a cretin's face.

There is nothing in any universe more frightening than the
sound of morons marching.

FIVE HOURS IN VIETNAM

By Sgt. David V. Stroud, U. S. M. C. R.

Combat was nothing new to the marines of "D" company as they prepared for the coming patrol. It was three o'clock in the morning when they were awakened by their buddies who had drawn the last watch. Like blind people, they used their hands to search for their rifle belts in the bottom of the foxhole. The searching and preparing for battle made a muffled sound, and any Viet Cong nearby would know to walk a little more quietly. A few dark shadows moved, like ghosts in the night, toward the platoon command bunker for the final briefing. They would leave at six o'clock in the morning.

The first rays of morning light came swiftly over the eastern mountains (for day came quickly in Vietnam). It would be another hot day for the marines; already their shirts were streaked with sweat. The men of "D" company waited in the landing zone for the helicopters. It was 5:45, and the "choppers" would be there soon. The Navy chaplain was walking among the groups of marines, trying to cheer them up. He would stop here and there to read Scripture. The chaplain knew that many of these men would never see another dawn. All the marines were sitting down, resting, smoking and talking, doing what men have always done before a battle--acting brave and trying to hide the fear that reached out and covered them like a wet, soiled blanket.

Now, it was 6:00, and the first wave of "choppers" came in. As they landed, the men lowered their heads to keep the sand out of their faces. There were eight "choppers," and their rotating blades created eight separate dust storms. The marines of the first wave ran, bent at the

waist, to their respective helicopters. The "helie" team leader stopped by the "chopper" and turned to help his team board the "ugly angel." Within seconds the men boarded, and the choppers lifted, with their noses turned toward the new landing zone.

Twenty minutes later the "choppers" returned, bringing their eight noisy dust storms with them. Marines moved out on the double to board. Their hearts skipped a beat, for there were empty cartridges rolling on the floor, mute evidence of the fighting encountered. The first wave had been hit in the landing zone. Twenty seconds later, the second wave was aboard, and the "choppers" rose from the earth like elevators. The men sitting next to the door saw marines below shrink from men to midgets as the craft gained altitude. Below the "choppers" rice paddies raced by, and here and there a village would come into view, and pass as quickly as a dream. The men were quiet. The noise of the engine was too loud for talking, but not for thinking as the men headed for battle. In seconds they could change from a living being into an ugly statistic. They made last-minute checks of weapons, ammunition, bayonets, helmets and dog tags--the tools of their trade, the trade of death.

At 6:30, the battle was in sight. The "choppers" swarmed down like angry hornets. The door gunner peered over the machine gun, right index finger on the trigger, ready to play his part in the drama of war. The marines moved as quickly as they could to get out, falling against one another in the bouncing "choppers." The door gunner was cursing and shoving the infantryman out. The first marine made it; the second was hit in the chest with a fifty-caliber round and thrown back into the craft. He was dead before he hit the floor. The next marine stumbled over his dead buddy, and the gunner shoved him out. The fourth marine jumped out and was shot twice, thrown back into the "copter," and fell dead beside his fatally wounded friend. The "copter" and in great confusion with live marines falling over

dead bodies, the "copter" bouncing like a rubber ball, the gunner cursing and shooting his machine gun. The remaining four men crawled toward the door, stumbling and falling before finally jumping out. The "copter" lifted off with its sad burden. Out of the original eight marines, six had made it out of the "chopper." All the air craft were gone now.

The battle was raging as the men ran through the knee-deep rice paddies. Bullets were flying everywhere, cutting through the rice and weeds, finding their mark in the moving marines. The men of the second wave quickly joined the first wave marines and started firing into the rice paddies to the front. No one could see the Viet Cong. All around marines were crawling, firing, cursing and dying. The cry of "corpsman" filled the air. It was now 6:35. At 6:47, marine jets appeared on the scene, screaming toward earth like roller coasters, firing their rockets, and at the last second, turning toward heaven to let the jet behind them have a run at "charlie." Black smoke rose upward like black mushrooms as the rockets exploded. At 7:00, the "choppers" were back with the third wave of marines. The Viet Cong shifted their fire from the men on the ground to the ones in the air. Once more the "choppers" fell, bounced and lurched as marines jumped out from ten feet off the ground, fight, cursing, struggling, trying to turn the tide of battle.

Marines wounded too badly to move just lay in the mud with no expression, waiting to die. All around, Mr. Death could be heard cracking his knuckles, and the god of war smiled. At 7:30 the last wave of "choppers" came in, unloaded the living and waited. With bullets and rockets falling everywhere, the marines who were able picked up the wounded and ran for the "choppers." There were cries of pain as the wounded were taken on board. Many marines carrying the wounded were shot on the "choppers" and they, too, had to be loaded. At 7:35, the "copters" took off, carrying their cargo of pain. When the "choppers" were gone,

the battle stopped. It was quiet as the marines lay in the mud waiting for the next act in this drama called "war."

No one knew why the Viet Cong had stopped firing. Marines rose to their feet and started forming columns to move out. It was a strange drama, for now, the marines would go looking for the Viet Cong. When they found them, there would be more dead and wounded. But they did not think about that now; that could be as much as five minutes away. So the Marines moved out rifles ready, searching for the enemy that lurked in the shadows of the jungle. It was 8:00 in the morning and a new day in Vietnam.

* * * * *

Frank Stewart

AFTER THE BOMBS

Faceless faces drag skeleton souls
Through funeral communities.
Steel-boned fingers of shabby plaster hands
Point accusingly to the heavens.
Tiny children a thousand years old,
With stony eyes and swollen bellies,
Sit in the rubble
Waiting. . .
Watching refugees hobble off to Nothing
Farther down the road.

Poems by Larry Woods

ARMAGEDDON

Blades never destroy foes
nor their desires.

Death only flings across the void
the object of its aggression
introducing greater dimensions.

Transformed, your enemies wait
beyond Magiddo's visioned gate
for Armageddon's final blast. . . .

REBELS OF THOUGHT

Daydreams,
subterranean conceptions
hints of immortality,
form
insurrections of the norms,
stealing zeniths of excellence
before
subsiding to ruts of subservience
and the bore of existence.

Dennis Phillips

THE MESSAGE

As it were, I'd climb the Rockies
With one giant step from here and once there--
Reach up and touch the moon as if it were a balloon
And pull it down through a beautiful
Diamond-studded silence till it reached my pocket
There, concealed, its glow of warmth radiating outward
Would send the message across the boundaries
Of time and space and reach the one deserving of such
brilliance.

Should it reach the one with the heart of understanding love
And report back to me--the balloon would drift from me--
Not lost to me--but being drawn
Toward the magnetic love, and once there, surround it
With a springtime thought and fly back to the Rockies for me.
Then I would return the balloon
To its place in the diamond-studded silence
For use by some other undeserving soul
Who has the hope that was mine.

Eugene P. Graves

LAS VEGAS

Whirling, glittering fantasies of night
Tempt unwary visitors in the visionary city of sin
 Beautiful, barely-clad babes
 And high rolling playboys
Flock to this Disneyland of roulette wheels.
Disillusioned dreamers curse "one-armed bandits."
Bug-eyed millii naires drool at burlesque queens.
As night fades slowly into dawn,
Big spenders stand bank-roll deep at dice tables.
Alluring Casinos smile at their victories.

* * * *

Allyn Pearlman

HAUNTED SOUL

I walk
Lonely down the street
Memories haunt my mind,
Yet I keep going.

Nowhere to turn.
 No one to turn to.
 No one to talk to...

Night soon will turn to day
Will my mind haunt me then?
Surely not.

Is there no peace of mind?
When night returns,
I'll be haunted again...

Larry E. Standridge

ZIETGEIST

The moon was green like stale cheese;
And the emptiness of the stars looked upon the world
With a dispassionate glow
My heart felt like . . . like it had blown apart,
And the alleycat shrieked
As if to make the world go round.

Deep among the seaweed
There was momentary darkness and despair;
Then the sun rose high
The light of day came bubbling upon the sea.
I sang where the leeches sucked by blood, but
I cared not; I cared not; I cared not
And lava escaped from the earth like sweat
from human pores.

I, the Breath of Life on earth;
And all are dead--gone--sucked up into that
Vast world of nothingness.
I am lonely. I cry into the night.
I hold life's hopes and dreams, the knowledge of their dust.
Now I must take my turn, the Coup de Grace.
My will has perished; so must I.

THE CLOWN

My face is battered and bruised;
I manage a grin,
And my chapped black lips crack,
Streaking my chin with crimson.
I rub off the crusted darkness
With a worn, weary hand.

The audience laughs at my antics.
As I career drunkenly into a wall,
It holds its breath
In anticipation and awful awe—
Watching a knife thrust itself into me.
The applause increases
As the knife repeatedly stabs me,
Finally finding my heart.
I am given a standing ovation,
And, before the laughing faces
Of my rapturous fans
I slowly die.

MY MASTER JERKS MY SOUL

As my master jerks my soul
I dance and bow mincingly.
I have no place to turn,
Except where he directs me.
There is no private life for me;
I am eternally before an audience.
My grease paint runs down in ridges,
Mingling silently with sweat and tears,
No one notices how cracked
And warped my face is.
Everyone is eyeing my actions.
I cannot even be bitter or sad
Because the strings which always--
Always lift my mock mouth upward.
Not even for a meager moment
Can I let my mawkish mask fall.
There are always those strings
That bind me and curb my spirit.

THE DECADES OF SWING

By Linda Orth

The "Roaring Twenties," the "Soaring Sixties," two very distinct and unique periods in American history are periods of many contrasts and many likenesses. The Twenties was the period after World War I, a frantic, bustling, loud time for young people to enjoy being alive and living in a country at peace at last. The Sixties is a period of unrest at home and abroad, threatened by destruction, but inspired by the awe-striking advances of the present. It is a period influenced by sound, by the vibrations of young bands and psychedelic effects, by the dream world of drugs. The "live ones" of the Sixties are criticized broadly for their pleasures, just as the flappers and their boyfriends were deplored forty years ago for their jazz music, boyish bobs, short skirts and raccoon coats. We are experiencing the shock waves of the Sixties today. The waves from the other period are remote enough to be part of American history, and close enough to be part of living memory. The Twenties was a period of amazing vitality of social invention and change which have characterized the years of the modern Sixties.

The ten years following World War I is called the Jazz Age. These years were more carefree and vigorous as the young men were set free from war responsibilities. It was the era of New Economic Prosperity. Prohibition was increasingly advocated, and woman's suffrage was granted. Because of such social and economic changes, dancing called for faster music. The saxophone and the clarinet replaced the violin and piano, and dominated the big-time bands. The Charleston, Shimmy, Toddle, Stumble and Black Bottom came into vogue at this time.

The origin of the Charleston is similar to that of the Cake Walk. The city of Charleston, South Carolina, popu-

larized the dance. Negro dancers brought the dance to New York City and Harlem night clubs. From there it spread to the rest of the country. The inhabitants of the Harlem section also popularized the Wiggle Dance, more commonly known as the Black Bottom.

Following on the heels of the Charleston came the ~~the~~ Lindy, of Lindy Hop, which has evolved into dances of the Sixties. The Lindy was derived from the famous name of Charles Lindbergh after his epic flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. The dance and its counterparts were often criticized by the more prudish journalists of the day; one article said, "The Jitterbug is an unconventional, often formless and violent social dance. Its best known forms are the Charleston, Black Bottom, Shag and Lindy. Its acrobatic forms are limited to public ballrooms."

The Rumba emerged at this time as the leader of the Caribbean dances. More people with increased leisure time and money took Caribbean cruises and brought the dance to the United States. Although the dance appeared at the beginning of the Depression, the general public clamored for cheery dances to forget their troubles in. This desire is likened to today's dances, in which one's mind is on little but loud music.

The Lambeth Walk, a strut originating in England followed the Rumba, and it led to one of the biggest fad dances of the Twenties, the Big Apple. The Big Apple Club, a Negro night club in Columbia, South Carolina, was an abandoned synagogue known as the "House of Peace." It was here that this "mass convulsion" got its start.

The Big Apple is like a Virginia reel done to swing music. The dancers form a circle and respond to the calls of a leader. Each couple then shows off in the center until too exhausted to dance anymore. After each couple has finished, the entire circle runs to the center and yells WAHOO.

Then all shout "Praise Allah," while looking toward the ceiling. One of the many critics of the dance called it the "nadir of group degeneration--a reversion of modern society to ritualistic dances of half-civilized tribes."

The dancing fads furthered indignation at the styles, and vice versa. Flappers were criticized roundly for their short skirts, flimsy dresses, boyish bobs and use of make-up. Jitterbuggers moved in what was termed a "syncopated embrace." No longer did one inch of space separate slow dancers; they clung cheek to cheek. The Catholic Telegraph claimed that "The music is sensuous, the embracing of partners--the female only half-dressed--is absolutely indecent. The motions--they are such as may not be described with propriety in a family newspaper. Suffice it to say that there are certain houses appropriate for such dances, but there are certain houses appropriate for such dances, but these houses have been closed by law." Supposedly "nice" girls smoked, got drunk and went to "petting parties." The style of the dance reflected the new emancipation.

From the Roaring Twenties to the Soaring Sixties is a jump of forty years, and technology, both social and scientific, has changed the world unbelievably in that time. Yet, like the Twenties, the Sixties is a period of the big dance fads. The year 1962 was the year of the Twist, a craze that burst into popularity in the United States and became world-wide. The Twist was reported at Buckingham Palace and the White House; the Duke and Duchess of Windsor twisted in Paris. Even the staid Russian Bolshoi and Moiseyev ballet groups performed the dance in the United States. It also had its critics; one likened it to the shimmy of 1920--"so ugly and frightful that it shouldn't be called a dance." But society took the phenomenon over and it was here to stay. The Peppermint Lounge in New York became "the place to go" for New York elite. "Pepperming Lounges" opened up in all major cities; the Twist was seen on television and in movies, and was included in every magazine and paper.

Numerous variations derived from the Twist, including the Stomp, Watusi, Mashed Potato and the Dirty Bird. The parallel between the Harlem Savoy days and the Peppermint Loungers is unmistakable. Almost all dances of the Twenties have corresponding "brothers" in the Sixties.

A new mixture of Latin American rhythm and jazz gained momentum at this time--the Bossa Nova. When danced fast, it is like a samba. This dance can be compared to the rumba of the Twenties when danced more slowly.

In 1963, swing music set the pace for dancers. The Twist, now internationally standardized, gave way to the Hully Gully, danced to Twist music in square dance formation. It stressed such dance impersonations as the "spank the baby," the shimmy, and the "shoeshine." The Dog, Monkey, Slop, and Slurp emerged as popular fads.

Dance crazes in the following years were based more on imitative gestures that set patterns. The Popeye imitated the comic-strip character, the hitch-hiker pantomimed thumbing a ride, and the Frankenstein panned the movie character. The Frug, however, was a general dance pattern, in which dancers stood in one place and performed various pelvic and arm movements.

The advent of the discotheque hit the American scene in 1964. In these dance clubs, music is supplied by record players operated by disc jockeys. On the west coast, "Go-go" clubs, such as the Whiskey a Go-go" in Los Angeles, made international news. They were named for the "go-go" girl dancers who performed in raised cages at the clubs. The strong beat of the music, blended with its deafening sound, seemed to draw dancers into a hypnosis of endless gyration. The Frug, the most popular of the discotheque dances, derived from the earlier twist, and was followed by the Gator and Harlem Shuffle.

The Swim became popular because of the popularity given to it in a San Francisco night club whose main attrac-

tion was topless go-go girls. The Monkey, Jerk, Temptation Walk and Philly Dog were added as variations to it. They have all been considered as equally primitive as the Jitterbug and Big Apple were in their day.

The year 1967 brought the advent of the great Soul music, which derived from country and western. An entire new set of dances was developed to go with this music. The Funky Broadway is an imitation of a song by that name; the Skate is a dance which imitates the foot motions of a skater. The Boog-a-loo and the Shing-a-ling were developed to go with the music of Sam and Dave and Otis Redding. And the Shimmy has enjoyed recent popular revival. Its forefather?--the shimmy of the Twenties, exactly.

To enjoy the latest in discotheques, the dancer of 1968 must prepare his eyes and ears for the physical shock. The "electronic earthquake" in such a club totally immerses the patron in total recreation-reaction. Blinking neon lights, live or canned music and way-out movies, paintings or pattern flashed on walls are a few recent innovations. Surprisingly, fewer drinks are sold in such clubs, and some sell soft drinks for the same price as whiskey. Who could afford to drink in such a mind-bending, body-churning, ear-splitting atmosphere? Cheetah, on Broadway; offers 3,000 colored lightbulbs which flicker on and off as the music rises and sinks, and a boutique at which to buy the appropriate dance fashions. At the famed Arthur in New York, patrons dance before a Mondriaan background of Op-Art.

A final look at the fashions of 1968 finds a return to longer or shorter skirts, beads, bobbed hair and flimsy fabrics. Its prototype--the flapper of the Twenties. History is a cycle of recurring modes, and the current one seems to be a throwback to the literature, fashions, dances, and music of the Twenties. The hippie movement, free love, and widespread use of drugs challenge our moral standards. Our parents and grandparents, our observers, educators and moralists are shocked at the behaviour of the Sixties, but

it is no more daring for its age than those "outrageous" pastimes of the Twenties. . . After all, who is really to judge extremity? Or sanity?

* * * * *

Johnnie Lane

TORTURED SEARCH

Will it never end?
Will this emptiness exist always?
What is it?
Where did it begin?
It cannot be physical lack; I am sated.
It cannot be spiritual hunger; I believe.

From whence comes this restlessness?
Why the agony of never-knowing?
The search is for peace--
Peace of heart, peace of soul.
Do they exist for me?

A tortured self,
An unsettled mind
Plead for relief.
How, then, to conclude it?
Must I end my life?
Is satisfaction to be denied me?

O Force Unknown,
Destitution of my soul,
Is there an answer?

THE PATH

By

Danny Garrett

I don't know why I decided to take a walk this afternoon. Perhaps it was the problem of the merger or maybe it was only that I was tired of the house and football and

color TV. Anyway here I am strolling down a wooded trail in the middle of autumn.

People always seem to be talking about the beauty of autumn and I guess they do so with good reason--it really is very beautiful. The trees around this path--the spruce, the pine, the poplar, the birch--arch over my head and gather themselves up into a pale robin-egg blue canopy. Leaves in every conceivable hue of brown and yellow drift lightly on the slight breezes of the woods and dominate the earth with their colors. And the path itself seems interminable as it winds deeper into the forest.

Right now I'm thinking about this path and I'm thinking about my life. They both have their parallels and their similarities. I think about where I've been and about where I'm going. The path seems interminable, though I know it isn't. And that's the way with life, too--there was a time in those spring years of our lives when we all believed that we'd live forever.

Memories are brushing around me now, like the leaves which have left the trees. It's funny I guess, but on that other path under that other robin-egg sky--and Benjie.

I can still smell the sweet scent of the not-too-distant ocean as the early spring breeze blew in from the Gulf. It shoved the white rounded clouds across the face of the sky and rolled through the high grasses like a great restless snake. It made the leaves on the live oaks flash and shimmer in the sunlight.

It was my tenth spring and the world seemed to be nothing but wide and full of adventure. On this day, the sun hung above me through a thin noontime haze and showered the whole world beneath it with light. Everything claimed some share of the golden radiance. It danced off the tips of the highest leaves and poked through the asphalt cracks in the highway. The wind carried it everywhere and it hopped from bud to bud on the backs of insects. My most vivid impression of that one day of my tenth spring is the omnipresence of that wonderful sunlight.

Like everyone at that age, I had a best friend. His name was Paul. He was shorter than I, though his hair was the same golden-brown. Centered between two deep blue eyes was his freckled pug nose which always seemed to be running. He had one of those mouths which smiled continually and set hard when combat was on his mind.

We were inseparable in those days. Paul was the one who always lied for me and I for him. Through hours of baseball, football, and fights we continually emerged as each other's arch-champion. School and girls, of course, were still anathema and our hatred of each was double-barreled.

We were both Depression-poor, though not starving. My father was an engineer and his was a construction foreman. They both worked on the building of new refinery. We both knew the value of food and our personal property was common. There was nothing of mine that was not Paul's and nothing of his that I could not claim.

On this particular day we ducked out of school at lunch and decided to spend the rest of the day fishing. The bell which was calling everyone back into the school from lunch found us walking up the cracked concrete outside Ferrel's General Store.

The black screen door creaked open and banged behind me, sending the loose R. C. sign on the front clanging.

This commotion seemed to wake Mr. Ferrel, who lay snoozing in the rocker by the counter. Old man Ferrel looked as though he'd been created by Norman Rockwell himself. He was about six feet two and weighed nearly three hundred pounds, I guess. He had short black hair, cropped skin-close on the sides and his pudgy cheeks always had a reddish flush no matter what the season.

"Now shouldn't you boys be in school?" he asked, raising his plump hands to rub his eyes.

"No sir, Mr. Ferrel," Paul replied, wiping his nose. "It's so beautiful," Miz Henry says to me, 'that I think you should all go down to Oyster Creek and go fishing.' So we came to trouble you for some sinkers and a little line."

"Um-hum," Mr. Ferrel remarked skeptically as he rose from the rocker.

"Now, Mr. Ferrel," Paul asked as I saw that familiar twinkle come into his eye, "you don't think we'd play hookey, do ya? All's we want is about four sinkers and a spool of that cat-gut there."

"What about hooks?" Old man Ferrel asked as he reached inside the glass case. "Need any hooks?"

"Got hooks."

About that time, the old screen door creaked open again. It was Benjie Goode. Benjie couldn't talk. Some folks said that it was because his father beat him so often that he was scared to talk, others said it was because he wasn't quite right in the head. I don't guess that I ever really knew, I just didn't know Benjie too well. He was all right I guess. He quit school to help his old man on the farm and he just sort of kept to himself. Some people didn't like him though--most of them for no reason at all. One of them was Paul.

Benjie just stood there in the doorway with three old soft drink bottles in his hand. He had sandy hair and the face of a cherub. His eyes were big and deep blue and they always stared as if in complete wonder, and fear, of the world. His faded coveralls were caked in dried mud and he looked as if he hadn't eaten in quite a while.

"Be with you in a minute, Benjie," old man Ferrel said as he scooped up the dime and handed Paul the weights and line. "You can put those bottles over there in the basket."

Benjie turned from us without any expression and put the bottles into the wicker basket. I noticed Paul glaring at him as he did so.

Paul shoved his purchase into his trouser pocket and walked over to Benjie.

"What's the matter, Dummy, can't you say hello?" Paul taunted as he grabbed Benjie by the overalls and shoved him against the wall.

Although Paul wasn't particularly tall, he was stocky and could be very intimidating when he wanted to be, and right now he wanted to be. Benjie was taller and leaner, but I've always had the nagging suspicion that he could take Paul or anyone else if he had a mind to. But all he did was stare with those dark blue eyes.

"Com'on, let's go catch some fish," I said and tugged at Paul's shirt.

"Okay," he replied as he relaxed his grip on Benjie, "but just once I'd like to see the dummy be friendly and just say hello."

The soor banged behind us and we grabbed the two cane poles that leaned against the white-washed wooden building. As we hiked toward the creek, I glanced back to see Benjie staring after us out of the dirty front window. I don't know why, but I waved back at him and smiled.

An old trail led away from the dirt road by Ferrel's down across a grassy meadow and toward the path that girdled the creek. Paul and I raced each other to the path. I can still remember how the wind tugged at my long hair still streaked with childhood blond. That beautiful spring-sweet wind caught in my lungs and propelled my feet through the waving grass. The sky brushed against my cheeks and the sunlight splashed against my freckles and raced down my face and over my shoulders.

I reached the path first and Paul bounded down it after me. I stopped by the first big tree and waited for him to catch up.

"Where do you want to go?" I asked.

"Let's go down by that fallen tree where the fence crosses the creek, near the Phillip's farm."

The world was beautiful that day. The path was beautiful and the creek mirrored its image. The trees, mainly the pecans and pin oaks, were just starting to bloom again. The live oaks, of course, still carried their full load of foliage and the many hundreds of birds darted in and out of the leaves like stealthy wood nymphs. The Spanish moss, which hung like great grey beards from the trees and vines, tossed and waved freely in the breeze. The trees arched and hung and often dipped right into the water so that it was impossible to see more than thirty yards of creek at any one time.

Turtles and snakes splashed into the blue-green-brown waters as we walked by. The big gars darted back and forth beneath the surface and the perch leaped high out of the tributary. Once we spotted an alligator and we threw sticks at it until it slithered into the depths, completely indifferent to us.

The path rolled on. It meandered over trees, around gullies, and through the thick underbrush that hugged the creek. Each twist in the trail was a new world heralded by

singing of a hundred birds and introduced by the shining of a thousand glossy leaves. The world was all gold and green and it was so good to be ten years old and alive.

Paul and I reached the old fence that dipped into the creek and scampered over. On the other side was a huge oak tree that had been toppled by a hurricane the year before. Now it sprawled into the creek and here is where we parked ourselves to do some serious fishing.

For the next three hours we lounged in the limbs of that oak tree and pulled in the perch, bass, creek cat, and gar that darted through the waters. The great white clouds chased each other across the sky and the breezes wrinkled the creek and ruffled the huge mounds of clover that lined the bank.

"Well, I guess we'd better go," Paul sighed as he strung up a dozen fish on his line, "Your pop and mine are gonna be coming home soon and we'll probably catch it for ducking out of school and going fishing."

I agreed as I jerked a hook out of the perch that I'd just caught. I attached the still jerking fish to my line with nine others and followed Paul down off the tree. We agreed that this would be the best place to do our future fishing and stashed our poles and line under the tree. Throwing the fish across our shoulders, we started back for home with Paul in the lead. The sun still poured forth its great wealth of innocent sunlight and scores of birds belted out their avian symphony. There was no hint of terror anywhere.

Suddenly, at the top of a clover-rugged knoll Paul stopped. I was about to say something to him when I noticed his eyes. He was gazing down towards the creek and his pupils grew wide in horror.

I turned. Down by the creek was a man in overalls and a tattered brown shirt. He held something in his hand and stared at some hidden object in the clover. As he raised his hand to wipe his forehead, I noticed what it was that he

held. The breath caught in my throat as the sun sparkled on the crimson tipped scythe. Then I noticed the leg. It appeared to be a woman's leg and bright red blood glistened against the whiteness of it as it poked out from behind a wild oleander bush. The fish slipped off my shoulder and plopped into the dirt.

The man jerked his head toward us abruptly. It was Mr. Beck, who had the land next to the Phillips'. His brown eyes flashed under bushy blackbrows. The scythe slid from his hand.

"Come here, boys," he said evenly as his eyes narrowed.

"Let's run, Paul!" I yelled and grabbed at his shirt. But Paul didn't move; he just stared, his eyes wide with fear.

I never saw Mr. Beck pick up the shotgun; I didn't even know he had one. I only heard the boom and felt Paul fly backwards and away from me. He landed in the green clover with blood splattered over his right side.

The next instant I was running down the path with the wind roaring in my ears. My heart screamed as the branches clutched and tore at my skin. Suddenly the path dipped abruptly beneath me and I went sailing into some scrub brush.

I stared dazed, my eyes blinking. Then I heard heavy footsteps falling on the packed earth of the path. They were near, too near. I jumped up and began to run. Suddenly there was another loud boom and the tree limb to the right of me jerked violently upward and fell away into the brush. As I ran on I felt a warm dampness on my neck and shoulders.

Then my shirt was jerked tight around my neck. My feet flailed out from under me. I was turned and twisted around as a huge fist slammed against the side of my head and sent me plummeting into the dirt.

I lifted my head slowly and only fear kept me from

passing out. The trees and sky whirled about in a blue-green kalaidoscope. Through a thousand multi-colored lights I made out Mr. Beck's face quivering in rage. In his hand he held the still bloody scythe.

"Now you gotta understand, bôy," Mr. Beck said slowly as he bent toward me, "I never wanted to do anything like this."

My eyes were riveted on that red-tipped sicle as it rose slowly in the air. The bright stars flashed everywhere and I was dimly aware of a choking grip on my collar. But my only thought was on that blade and I watched in awe as the sunlight climbed and danced on its silvered edges.

Abruptly the blade was gone and the grip disappeared from around my collar. Mr. Beck was gone--but that was impossible. Then I heard the thrashing in the brush by the creek. I sat up.

Someone was struggling with Mr. Beck and getting beat up plenty for it, too. Then I caught sight of a shock of sandy hair. Benjie!

My heart raced as I jumped to my feet. Dizziness and nausea almost made me black out, but again, fear kept me going. Regaining stability, I leaped towards the creek.

Mr. Beck was forcing Benjie's head under the muddy water. I sent my foot into the burly man's side as hard as I could and he let out a wild yelp. Regaining his balance, he lunged and caught me by the shirt. He drew his hand back and prepared to hit me full force. Just as he swung, Benjie leaped on him, but the blow sent me sprawling.

My mind in confusion, I frantically pulled myself out of the clover. Mr. Beck forced Benjie's head beneath the water. My stomach heaved sickly as I watched the air bubbles boil to the surface.

Before I knew it, I was lunging toward Mr. Beck with a large limb in my hands. He lifted his head up to me

as I swung with all my strength. The blow caught him full in the face and propelled him backwards into the creek. I jumped over Benjie and struck him again. My mind refused to give up the picture of that blood covered scythe suspended in mid air. I struck again, landing the wood squarely on the side of my attacker's head as he reared slowly out of the water. Again and again and again, I brought the club whistling down.

Then I remembered Benjie. I dropped the limb and scooped his limp form out of the water. I rolled him on his stomach in the clover and forced the brown water out of his lungs. After what seemed to be hours, Benjie's eyes fluttered open. At first he stared blindly at me and then he moved his mouth in jerks as if he were trying to say something. I smiled and hoped that it would show him that nothing needed to be said.

Paul lived. I must take the blame, however, for Mr. Beck's death, and for that, I guess I shall always be somewhat sorry. Later we found that it was Mr. Beck's wife that had been killed down by the creek.

And Benjie? He died the following winter in a fire with his mother, three sisters, and four brothers. But I don't think that I shall ever forget him and that day on that other path when he became my friend.

* * * *

"Inspiration is largely a phony and is practically a synonym for laziness. . . ."

--Max Herzberg

"Write something to suit yourself and many people will like it; write something to suit everybody and scarcely anyone will care for it."

--Jesse Stuart

THE MAGNOLIA

By Linda Orth

Jennifer was right. She had heard him calling to her as he cut across the yard and came toward the big old magnolia tree she was lying under.

"Jenny," Randy called, "I need your help."

"Famous last words," she thought. Watching him, she remembered back to the first grade when he had persuaded her to help him learn the alphabet, to the sixth grade when she made the science project he won first prize for in the school science fair. Her life for years after that had been devoted to Randy, against her better judgment.

"Jen, listen; I've got a paper due in English next week, and you know how I am in English. My old prof said I had to do good on it, or flunk the course. I haven't even read the stuff."

How like Randy, to be away from her for nine weeks and to ask her for help the first time he saw her. Randy always had something better to do than study. This time it was track. And Jenny was a brain.

"I'm supposed to take first place in the track meet next weekend, and I'll have to keep in shape for it. So I won't have time to work out and research the paper at the same time. We'll have to divide the work."

"We'll have to divide the work, Randy?" It was always "we" when there was work to be done, and it was always she who did it. "We" were supposed to make the costumes for the senior party, but it was Jenny who worked all night

on them while Randy went out with his latest girl, she remembered.

"Hey, Jen, quit daydreaming and tell me you'll do it."

"All right, Randy, I'll do it." It was really tough living next door to a boy like Randy, and being in love with him. Especially when he knew it. It was a good thing they were going to different colleges, or Jenny would have flunked out.

"Hey, guess who I have a date with tonight," Randy said, pulling a blossom from the tree and tearing its petals. "Lisa McElfish." Responding to her shocked look he added, "That's right, Miss Many, Louisiana of 1968." Jenny remembered Lisa from high school. It seemed to her that Lisa collected boys like many people collect coins, treasuring each one until a better one was found to put in its place, one that would bring a better car or greater popularity to her.

"Well, congratulations, then," she answered. "Where are you going?"

"We're going to Le Bistro for dinner, and then out to the lake afterwards. Some of my fraternity brothers are having a party out there, and I want them to see Lisa. "What a girl?" he exclaimed, biting clear through the twig he held in his mouth.

"Yeah, what a girl," Jenny responded. It pained her to think of the times he had said "What a girl" to her, when she handed him a completed term theme, or got him a date with a new girl, or solved one of his endless problems. "What a girl I am," she thought. "What a sucker!"

"Jen, I'll see you later, O.K. ? Got to get started getting ready for Lisa. You'll start right away on the paper, will you Jen?"

"Yes, Randy. I'll go to the library tonight."

"What, no date, Jen? A girl like you, with all of your intelligence and kindness should have a date."

"Yeah, well my beautiful face and form scares the boys away. I guess they can't face the competition."

Randy looked embarrassed. Many summer nights they had spent talking about beauty, all kinds of beauty. Randy was infatuated with all beautiful girls, and he was exalted because of his own good looks. Jenny, always the deeper thinker, had tried to explain her feelings about beauty to him. To her, beauty was reading an ode by Keats, or sighing over Wuthering Heights. Beauty was brushing her grandmother's long white hair and watching it glow serenely; it was watching her dear old grandfather pat his wife's cheek and squeeze her hand in front of the fire.

"Randy, beauty is in more things than just beautiful people!" she exclaimed to him one time. "It's also in the faces of people who aren't beautiful, when they're thinking beautiful thoughts, or talking about someone they love, or doing something they really enjoy."

"I see what you mean," he had responded, "but being really beautiful is looking like Cathy." Or Dianne, or whom-ever he was dating at the time.

And, Jenny admitted to herself, Randy was beautiful. His handsome face, rugged build and polished manners were beautiful to her. In him, she saw the outward beauty she lacked and she was attracted to it. Add that to the fact that she had grown up with Randy and his achievements, and she was pretty sure she loved him.

"So long, Jen, and thanks." With that, Randy vaulted away, King Arthur going to meet Guenevere.

The next afternoon she saw him again, while he was running around the block in his track pants, and she was working on his paper under the tree. And every day of spring vacation she saw him, and every night he went out with Lisa..

He seemed quite taken with her

One late afternoon he paused in his workout. "How's the paper coming, Jen? I bet you're writing a Pulitzer Prize essay."

"I'm nearly finished, Randy. And how are you coming with Lisa?"

"Great, boy, just great. She's so graceful and cool looking, and just smashing all the time. I really crave that girl, Jenny, I really do."

He was totally wrapped up in the glory of his relationship with Lisa. Randy's life reminded Jenny of the glory in Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality." She remembered the lines talking of "the gladness of May, the radiance which is so bright, splendor in the grass and glory in the flower." She wondered just when all the glory in her life was to come, and she cried because there was no blazing experience of remembrance in her past to comfort her now, when life wasn't exactly glorious. Her grandfather had told her "Your time will come, Jenny. Just be patient. You have to wait for life to come to you, and one day it will, and you will experience all the things you want to know about." But the words were small comfort now, when she was nearly twenty, and Randy was so far out of her reach.

"Jen, you're a doll. A living doll, and I'll never forget it," Randy said the day she handed him the neatly typed paper, the last day of the vacation. "You know, I'll bet one day soon some guy is going to latch on to you, and discover what a truly nice girl you are. Jen, you'll be a real good wife."

"A good wife! Well thanks, Randy. You'll be an exciting husband, for someone." Inside, Jenny exploded. She thought, "A good wife, sure thing, now all I have to do is begin dating, and cram about eight years of lost experience into about one and come up with a proposal from someone."

After all, I'm particular, too. I want a beauty of spirit and knowledge in my husband, a sensitive man who thinks deeply on life and its values, a person to tell my thoughts to."

"I hope you win first place in the track meet, Randy. I feel sure you will. And study, sometimes, all right? I'm not at school with you to make the grades for you."

"Oh sure, Jen. Mother Jenny. I'll try," he answered, "but I have a feeling Lisa will be occupying a lot of my time. You work hard too, Jen, and I don't mean on books. The next time I come home I want to hear about a boyfriend."

When he came home from school after nine weeks and told her, Jenny couldn't believe it. Her life's dream was crumbling in front of her. "Say that again Randy," she asked, her mind too stunned to comprehend what he said at first.

"I'm getting married to Lisa, Jenny." He could scarcely contain his joy. "We got engaged last week." Randy swung on the branches of the magnolia tree. "The date is August 23rd."

"I'm happy for you, Randy." It was all she could say.

The summer passed quickly and from time to time Randy would run over and tell Jenny of their plans. "We're going to the Bahamas for our honeymoon. We're inviting 500 guests to the wedding. There will be a champagne reception at the country club afterward. She'll be so beautiful, Jen. I can't wait to see her walk down that aisle."

The day before the wedding, Jenny cried. She was watching the people streaming in and out of the house next door in preparation. She turned to run up to her room and found herself resting her head on her grandfather's shoulder. "Dear Grandfather," she thought. It was from him that she inherited her love of books and deep thinking. He had found life's secret of true love, devotion and spiritual unity with her grandmother.

"What's wrong, Jenny? Are you crying because Randy is getting married? I know you've always had a crush on Randy, and I hurt for you now because you're finding out that love, life and happiness aren't always found where we want them to be. Your conception of life and people is so carefully drawn, so sensitive. You act on carefully planned thought. Randy acts on emotion; he responds to beauty and charm automatically and acts accordingly. Jenny, he's not the man to correspond to your ideals." He guided her to the sofa and sat beside her. "You'll find someone to love you, and cherish the beauty of your mind, and respond to your thoughts." Her grandfather added gently, "He'll be a person like you, a deep thinker, a dealer in the soul. He'll love books and long discussions as you do. He will enjoy and love you for what you are. Do you know what you are, Jenny? You're a magnolia tree. That thought hit me the other day as I watched you lying out there under the tree. You've taken a long time to grow and mature, but when you are through, you'll blossom into the most beautiful and tender flower of all. Yes, that's what you are, Jenny, a magnolia."

Jenny remembered his words the next day as she watched Randy recite his wedding vows. And the words gave her hope "Maybe, just maybe," she thought, "if someone as wise and beautiful as grandfather sees beauty in me; if he has realized my qualities, someone else will, too. Maybe not someone as good-looking as Randy, but the other beauty is so much more important. I can't wait to meet him. I know I will find him."

"I do." Randy's clear, loud voice startled her back to the present.

"I will," Jenny said quietly, and walked out of the church alone.

Poems by Ruth Thomas

SPIDERS OF AGE

Spiders
Weaving cobwebs
Across the thoughts
of those
Who lie stagnant
in the cesspool
of the world.
The poisonous bite
Of the widow
Raises whelps
on limbs
Reaching to the timbers
To grasp,
Get out,
And hold on to
The elusive wisps
of youth
And antiquity.
Help--
I die.
I try
To wrap my fingers around
The silvery strands
Of imagined Beauty.
God knows I try.
Then I gasp
The last wheeze
Of life
In a futile attempt
To ward off
The web strung across

My hand,
My mind,
And body--
Forming the wrinkled lines
Of age.

CHIFFON

Trust--
A silver thread
Leading to affinity.

One mis-step,
One wrong word
Or action
Tears asunder
The filmy piece
Of nothingness.

Then for all time afterwards
The glimmer
Of the dainty material
Can be seen
Floating in the breezes
Of hot air
While groping hands
Reach
And try to catch
To mend
That which is
Not there.

HIGH STAKES

By William Rutledge

As if for protection, the billiard ball nestled against the green, felt rail waiting for the white cue ball. It slowly rolled across the table, smacked with surprising force the billiard ball and, at the same time, the cushioned rail. The billiard ball scurried the rail and, with a clear thud, dropped into the corner pocket.

"Man, I'm hotter 'n hell tonight, hey boys? What's that? Four racks in a roll I've run? Boy, you hicks ain't gonna forgit me," Dutch Benson bragged as he circled the table which was now surrounded by nearly 20 onlookers. "That two-hundred point game is lookin' better all the time/ How's about us making things a bit more sportin'? Sonny boy, you good for another four hundred big ones?"

"It'd be worth that much seein' you run four more racks," answered Dutch's opponent, Sandy Haskins. "Better not miss, Dutch. If I ever get to shoot, the only part you'll play in this game is to hand me your money."

Dutch took the comment with a grin, while panic tugged at his insides. Chalking his stick with long bony fingers, Dutch stalled, wondering if anyone noticed his shaking hands. Dutch's mood changed as he shouted to the spectators, "Get the hell back. Gimme room to breathe!"

Shooting painfully slow and cautious, Dutch cursed as he missed the sixth shot of the rack.

"The show's over, Dutch. Make your self comfortable. I'm gonna shoot till hell freezes over." Dutch's light complexion reddened as Sandy spoke.

Dutch watched as Sandy ran rack after rack without a miss. Helplessly, Dutch lost the game and \$400.

"You said 400 big ones, didn't you, Dutch? Pay up, pal."

"Now Sandy, don't get bugged. I'll pay. How 'bout another quick game? Just a hundred pointer? What'll you say?"

"No chance. Pay up now. Then we'll try the quickie."

"Okay, okay." Dutch rose slowly and jerked a wad of bills from his left back pocket. Dutch counted out \$400. and slapped the bills into Sandy's outstretched hand.

The spectators noisily moved to other tables as Dutch gripped the crumpled \$50 bill—all that was left after dropping the four hundred dollars to Sandy.

"You're my favorite competition, Dutch. Take care." Sandy laughingly called as he left the pool room.

Gazing around the smoky, dingy pool room, Dutch loudly challenged, "Anybody wanna match my stick for this \$50?"

The challenge silenced the pool room. Dutch grabbed a chair and pulled it to the nearest wall. He leaned the chair against the knife-carved wall and held his cue stick between his legs as he eyed the group.

"I feel lucky now. What's the matter? Don't none of you hot sticks wanna try me?"

"Well, Dutch," a short man by the bar said, "if you really feel hot, I'll shoot a quick game for the \$50."

Dutch studied the balding man as he left the bar, picked a cue, and moved to a table.

From his chair, Dutch called to his new opponent, "Little game of eight-ball suit you? We'll shoot one game, even-money. My \$50. for yours, okay?"

"You're on," the man replied.

Dutch left his chair and moved rapidly to the table.

as Mike, the huge pool room owner, racked the balls.

"What's your name, pal?" Dutch asked as he chalked his cue.

"Marty, Marty Farrell. Why?"

"Just like to know a man's name before I take his money, that's all." Dutch winked.

Dutch knew he could win. This'd be the turning-point game. His luck was gonna change and he was gonna start winnin'. "Over two thousand dollars lost in four days! My God, Dutch thought as he set to break. "How could I lose all those damn games? Just bad luck? Yeah. Hell, this little guy's my ticket to luck. I'll be a winner from now on."

Dutch felt great. He stalked the table, dropping shots, and shooting quickly toward a \$50 victory. Making his object balls, Dutch called the eight ball for the side pocket. He studied the shot carefully before shooting. As soon as the cue stick hit the cue ball, Dutch knew he had won the game. A shark knows when he shoots if he's hit or missed, and Dutch knew this one was a winner.

"Whatta think 'bout that? Boy, I'm hotter 'n a depot stove! Farrell, gimme that \$50 of yours!" Dutch snatched the \$50 from Farrell's hand and circled the table, laughingly slapping men on the back. "I'm gonna be the biggest damn winner this dump's ever seen! Ya hear me, Mike? You'll name this hole after me!"

"Hey, Dutch, gimme a chance to win it back. Man, that was my last \$50.

"Now, Farrell, I ain't gonna play you again for nothin'. How you gonna raise the money if you ain't got it?" Dutch faced Farrell and continued, "Now maybe some of these boys'll back you. Then we'll shoot for all you can get!"

"I'll see what I can do," Dutch. Man, I gotta win that back."

As Farrell talked to several others at another table, Dutch moved to the bar and Mike. Feeling confident, even with the burly Mike, Dutch said, "I know I can win now, Mike. Advance me a grand and I'll pay you back when I finish this guy."

"Really think you can take him?" the big man said.

"Know I can. Mike, I tell you, I'm a winner. Ain't nobody gonna beat me again. I can win! I'll cool him!"

"Okay, I've backed other sticks and come out on top. I'll back you. You tell Farrell, I'm good for the grand."

"You won't regret it, Mike. I'll make us both rich."

Dutch followed Mike back to the table as Mike racked the balls. Dutch saw Farrell and a group of men coming toward the table. "I thought we'd stop wasting time, Farrell. We'll shoot this one for one grand."

Dutch thrilled as the pool room became oddly quiet, then suddenly noisy. Play on other tables stopped and chairs were pulled around Dutch's table as all eyes turned to Farrell.

"Well, I dunno, Dutch, That's pretty steep. I . . . I . . ."

Dutch cut him off, "Put up or shut up, Mouth. Either shoot or get the hell out."

A thin smile spread over Farrell's wrinkled face. "Okay, Benson, we'll go for a grand. You ready?"

"Hang on, Mike," Dutch called. "Your boy's gonna make you rich!"

Since the stakes were high, Farrell asked for a 100 point game of call-shot, which Dutch, feeling generous to the sucker, agreed to. Dutch quickly ran the first four racks and called a "safe" for his break-shot of the fifth rack. Dutch's 56 point lead made him feel smug as Farrell started shooting.

When Farrell finally missed, Dutch figured it was

over for Farrell. All he needed was four more racks and Farrell's grand would be won. Sweet victory! Dutch could feel it! Making the shots was nothing now. Dutch moved quicker, shot sharper, and aimed less. He couldn't miss!

"Mike, where am I?" Dutch asked after several racks."

"You're 76. Two more racks to game." Mike spoke gruffly through his smoky cigar.

Dutch thought he noticed Farrell squirm. Dutch set himself and started counting his points as he made shots. "Seventy-seven, seventy-eight, seventy-nine." Dutch slowed down. "Each shot is closer to a grand." Dutch couldn't think of anything else. His hands shook. He stood motionless for several seconds after missing his 84th. point by a fraction.

"Really had me worried there for a minute, Benson," Farrell quipped as Dutch dropped into a chair beside the table. Speechlessly, Dutch watched Farrell run four more racks, toss his cue stick on the table, face Dutch, and demand his one grand.

Cursing between cigar puffs, Mike yanked \$1000 from the cash register behind the bar and handed it to Farrell. Dutch, feeling beaten and afraid, moved toward the door. Mike yelled after him, "Where the hell you goin'? There's a little matter of one grand we have to talk about."

"Save it, will you, Mike? I'm good for the dough, you know that!"

"Just how're you gonna pay me back?" Mike asked lightly.

"Well, I'll shoot for it. It won't take long to hustle it."

"Sure it won't," Mike said sarcastically. "You better try muggin' old ladies if you figure on gettin' *it*."

Coming back to the bar, Dutch faced Mike and stat-

ed, "I'll get your money back, all of it. And I'll shoot like hell. When I come back here, I'll be the best stick this place has ever seen."

"Forget it, Dutch. Forget the stick business. You ain't got it, Friend. You just make damn sure I get my money. I'll give you a month and if I don't get it then, I'll get it another way."

"What'd you mean, 'forget the stick business'? Just because I dropped a few games? Hell, Daddy, I've just hit some bad luck! You know that! Now, whatta you mean?"

"It's simple, Dutch. You don't wanna win."

"Like hell I don't! You think I dig bein' the walkin' welfare check 'round here? Sometimes you just don't make much sense, old bud."

"It's simple, Dutch. It's what the college boys call masochism. You're a masochist."

"And what's that suppose to mean?"

"You dig gettin' beat. You get your rocks gettin' stomped. The bigger the stakes, the more kicks in losing."

"You're in a tree! God, you're screwed up! Nobody digs losing! Not me for sure. You've been table racker in this trash can so long, you're startin' to grow cue balls for brains." Hurrying to the door, Dutch added, "Take your college rah-rah bull and cram it! I've lost for the last time tonight. I don't need you scummy bastards takin' my money. I've had it!"

"You're a loser, Dutch, and losers stay that way!"

"Up yours, college stud!"

Dutch slammed the door and hurried down the dark, littered street four blocks to his room. He wasted little time as he lugged a battered suitcase from under the bed and began throwing clothes into it. Within ten minutes,

Dutch was ready--suitcase in one hand and cue stick in the other. He ran out of the dumpy apartment house and down the street.

Dutch's legs ached but he kept going. The more distance between him and Mike's place, the better.

The sky was turning gray as Dutch leaned against a light pole in front of a pawn shop. He could guess how far he had come. He didn't know Dalas well, but he knew he was miles from Mike's. Dutch dozed as the traffic, both in the street and on the sidewalk, grew with the morning.

When the pawn shop finally opened, Dutch rushed in, opened his suitcase, and bargained.

Dutch sold most of his clothes and his suitcase. Finding a flea-bag room nearby, he paid for two weeks in advance, dropped on the lumpy, yellow-sheeted bed, and slept.

The next morning, Dutch roamed the streets following up work tips. He got a job at a dollar-an-hour sweeping and unpacking and stocking merchandise in a drug store. The work wasn't hard and within two weeks, Dutch had conned his boss into paying a \$1.75 an hour. Flattering the boss's fat wife was simple, and through her, Dutch worked less and got credit for more hours. It was a perfect con and he wasn't about to give it up.

One night about six weeks after he had started working at the drug store, Dutch was awakened by a pounding on his door. He figured it was Rosie, the Mexican girl who came to his room about three nights a week.

"Dammit, I thought I told you to make it Wednesday night!" Dutch mumbled disgustedly as he stumbled to the door.

As Dutch opened the door, two men shoved their way in, knocking Dutch out of the way. Before Dutch could focus his eyes clearly on the two, one of them kicked him hard in

the groin Crying out in pain, Dutch fell. The pain moved to his guts and paralyzed his middle.

Without a word, one of the men pulled Dutch's cue stick case from under the bed while the other man stood over Dutch. Dutch recognized the two from Mike's place. Dutch tried to stand as one of the men jerked the cue stick from the case. The man came at Dutch and slammed the butt end of the stick across his face. Blood gushed from his nose and blinded him.

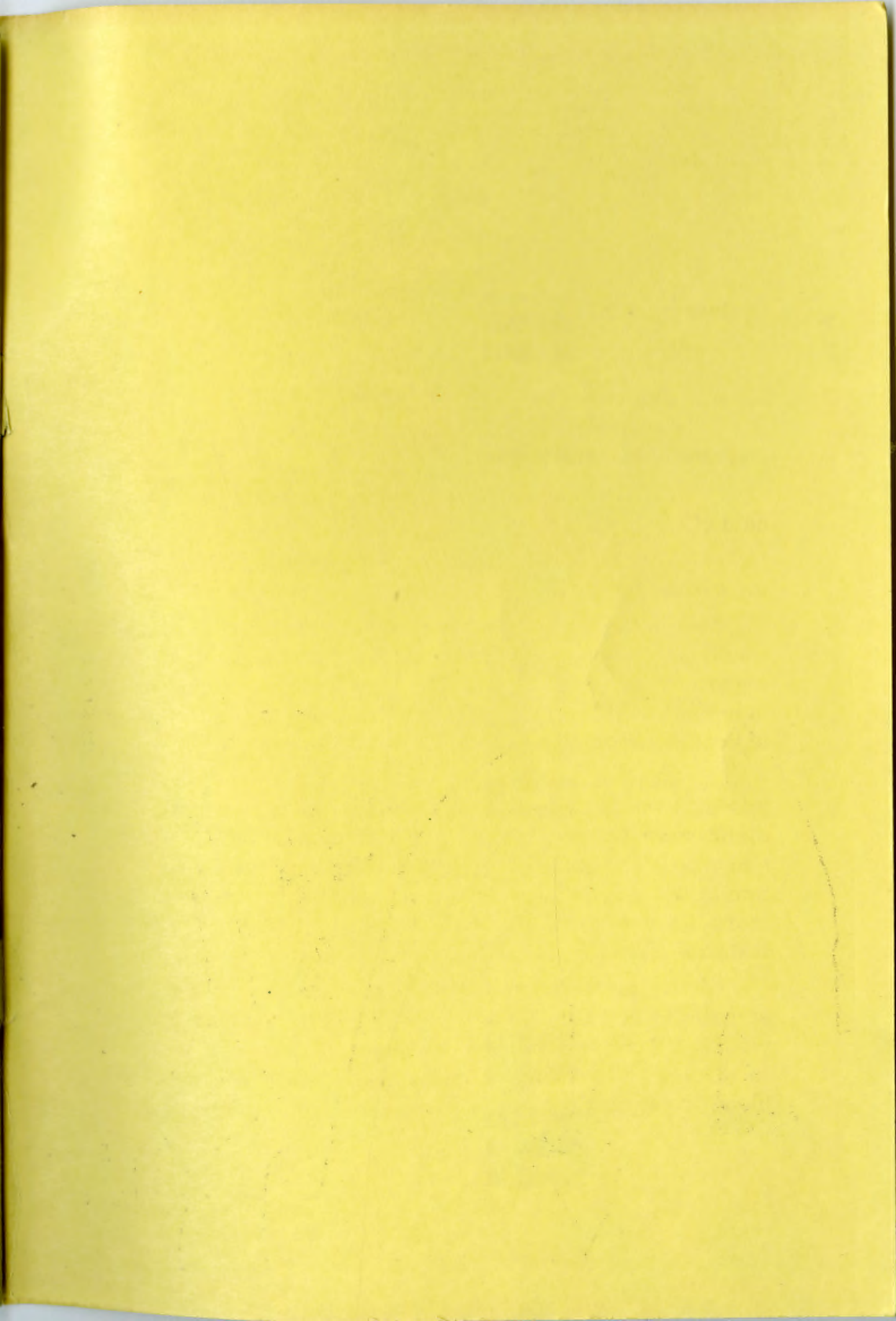
"Mike collects his debts one way or another," was the last Dutch heard. They attacked him from both sides, kicking, punching, kneeling, and gouging. Numbness swept Dutch and soon he felt nothing.

How long the thugs had been gone, Dutch didn't know. He knew only that he was face-down in his own blood and he felt like hell. The sunlight through the window burned his eyes. Painfully, Dutch stumbled to the sink. Squinting into the mirror, he saw that those goons had done a real pro-job. Except for the busted nose, outside cuts were few and minor. But inside! God, it hurt! Washing himself and dressing, Dutch went to the drug store where his boss and his fat wife doctored him. Dutch told them that he had to quit and leave town. Getting his pay, Dutch said goodbye.

Hurrying back to his apartment, Dutch bundled his things together and left without paying. Waving down a cab, he ordered the driver to the turnpike. The taxi fare took almost all Dutch had. He wanted to knock the cabbie out and take off, but decided to pay instead.

Thumbing it was slow on the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike. It took two hours for Dutch to reach Cow Town.

Promising to pay double-rate in a week, Dutch rented another flea-bag. Without resting, he set out to find work. The day was almost over when a job at a livestock auction was promised him.





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