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the

a magazine

Pentagram

of poetry, short stories and essays

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WELCOME to the verse of a bunch of guys who think writing should be a part of every educated man's experience. We are a group sanctioned by none, other than our own selves, sanctioned with our own belief that we have something to say. Spend a few minutes with us. Be you science student, English student, agriculture student, whatever your forte we believe there is interest for you in the following pages.

Who are we? Students too. But students egotistical enough to want to have our ideas, any ideas, spread throughout a few minds other than our own. We have talked to ourselves and to each other. Now we want to talk to you.

Glance through the following pages. If you see something of value, talk about it.

If you wish to contribute to the PENTAGRAM submit your work precisely as you wish to see it in print. Send poems, short stories and essays to: PENTAGRAM, c/o BOX 5445, S.F.A. STATION, WACOGDOCHES, TX 75961.

editors:

Jim R. Harris

Bill Armstrong

John M. Good

Sonny Hyles

Gemette McGuire

The Temper of Love

A FATHERS REMEMBRANCE OF BOYHOOD

He stalked me to the clearing,
My curley-headed sprite,
And brought to my lips a smile
Of wrathful mirth.
My glistening tools lay scattered
Around the green,
And a flimsy shack of high-grade wood
Stood under a skinny pine tree.
Before the shack in a glowing bed
Was a campfire of brown pine cones.

"Can I camp out tonight, dad?" the face
Of freckles said.
"I won't be afraid of tigers and bears
Because I have my pop-gun
And a nice warm camp bed".
He wistful-eyed looked at me
And pleaded, "Can I dad?"

I rubbed his mother's curls down smooth
And answered, "Yes little man, if I may
Stay with you."

Gemette McGuire

NIGHT SONG

My darling steps upon the snow at night,
And floats into the soft caressing wind,
And gently tiptoes past the waiting clouds
Into the myriad of vast unending stars,
And chases after moonbeams, fast and light.
She shuts her eyes, and angels swarm about,
And beauty shines around her golden face.
Amid this splendid sight she stops and glances
Down on the heart that lived but for her touch,
And nods. With hands outstretched she spans the gulf
That separates this world from that she left,
And beckons with a voice, impassioned, warm...
"Come to this place." And all my soul responds,
And rises to her calm enchanting touch,
And rests with her, until there is an end.

John M. Good

#2

Spring fell fast, I guessed,
Over the rail a thousand feet
To pavement, movable crowds
The city sprawled in ordered fashion
West the chalky smoke shoots
Up, a laboring many toil
Sickness not of body works quickly
Taking from me precious hours
And how sacred they
To be handled by any but me.

Spring fell fast, summer gone
I kiss my fleeting soul till
Another day, year when we
Shall mate somewhere in a field forlorn
Or in another hour of desperation
When the kissing relatives again
Descend like bats to suck
My blood, my life, my precious
Humble minutes of self-glory in
Solitude.

Jim R. Harris

Hymnal--Hope

WHERE

Caught in the swirl
Of a mad, dashing world
I know not where
To put my face.

Whether to lift it
To Thee, O God
Or let it hang
Amid the crowd
Of nameless,
Faceless
People.

Bill Armstrong

THE TOMB

From that first stone the sepulchre grew
Until the first light faded away.
The ancient wisdoms, how much they knew,
From time unmeasured have a isen.
The stones sit mute, a burying place,
So that all who see wonder
What age of man, what holocaust has
Left this place untended.
The fiery gasp of life is lost
Within the walls quiescent.
The kings and pharohs that built
Have left it unprotected.
Still it points its head
Toward the skies,
And leaves breath bequethed
To funeral pyres
And magnificent spires which are like
The sword unsheathed.
They lay alone, in death masks final.
And gaze amid the treasures
Of untold wealth and finery
And, stranger still, their pleasures.
The temple virgins in their gowns
Of pious regal splendor,
Still dance the dance that once retold
The gaiety and careless thoughts
That reigned supreme, then ended.
The endless time, much of it lost,
Still lingers in the image
Of great men sitting, unsurpassed
In velvet, silken plumage.
Then life is through and begins again
And strips this place of grandeur.
Verbage, vintage flow within
The confines of without an end
And voices, careless, still the plend
Within the walls contained,
The tune is played, the sin is sinned
For that unseen, fathomless day.
The skies are darkened from the rage
Of the sightless, mirthless men.
The cycle flows from day to day.
One knows, perhaps, the only way
That death may conquer thoughts.
For the walls they hear and hold too dear
What blood and toil have bought.
The game is played the same once more,
For nowhere is variation known

(continued page 5)

THE TOMB (cont.)

From the sudden beauty that may spring
 From decadence and decay alone.
 Over and over and over again,
 The tomb rings out its cry.
 That aging, lifeless song and sigh
 That shudders from the by and by
 And thunders from the stars up high,
 And, then, prepares to lie
 Within the arms of the whence and why
 Cast down from the heights and depths unseen
 And grasps the thought that seem to mean
 That life will never die.
 Within the tomb it goes on and on and on,
 That eerie, feeble, constant tune.

Sonny Hyles

BLESSED IS HE

Now we have crossed the dark veil,
 It has been rent asunder,
 And all can enter.

The man who died
 Yet lived in death,
 (With a three day journey
 In Hell)
 Then arose from the grave
 Has died for us.

The Easter-lily has wilted
 From that eventful day,
 Yet He lives on,
 Sitting and waiting.

Waiting for us to heed the comforter,
 Sent to guide us along the way.

Now it is over,
 And the cold bed of clay
 Has beckoned;
 Yet our soul floats freely,
 Waiting for the marriage feast.

Glorious day.

Gemette McGuire

EPITAPH

So, fisherman,
 With all your grit and will
 You're going to tackle dogmas,
 Reach out through the centuries
 And trample kings.
 Are you sure you have the
 stomach for it?
 What right have you,
 Who's never had the learning,
 To tell us how to live?
 Don't say it's not your word
 But His--almighty His.
 We've had your kind before
 Certainly,
 But we'll be damned
 If we'll have your kind again!

John M. Good

Hymnal---Despair

COMPANIONS

#7

We walked through wonderlands
Of man's great rise
Kicking skulls and torsos
From our path.

Looking into my comrade's face,
There shown in empty sockets
And upon his lipless mouth
A giant smile--profound.

Dancing a rickety dance,
He bellowed to the ground
Obscenities of devotion--
We laughed.

Bill Armstrong

I hear bells
It's time for church
And all the people gather

Remember when we rode
With dirty faces, unkept hair
About those crowds
Exhausted from a night of drink
Of love, of bed and dirty girls
Exalted at our rejection
Of simple hours and families

Next week I go for coffee
To be sure a dirty face
A bitter taste
Will smirk those around
As I greet the sun
With a sacred smile

Jim R. Harris

UNTITLED

A man came to my door one day
And said that he had lost his way,
So I butchered him and hung him
Up to dry. And I chastised him
And said that he must know
That this was the way to save him.
He died, hanging upside down,
Blood running in his eyes and on
My glassed-in patio.
I wept and cut him down
And deified him.
But he did not move or blink,
So I sacrificed his body
To the misty gods that I had
Read about somewhere.
And then I screamed
And beat my hands upon the wall
Until they broke
And lay shattered at my feet.
Sonny Hyles

DEVOTIONAL

The bell shrieked, and all the walls
Wobbled within the eerie space,
And all the people stood in files
And placed their hands high
And promised goodness, and honesty,
And God's love. Then God said,
"Have all love me and pay respect,
And suffer, and give, and hope,
And be blessed." Yet one man,
Hiding in the corner of a hall,
With stuffy dress and multicolored tones,
Said quietly, "No."
And the bell stopped.
So all the people turned and looked
With nodding satisfaction on the scum.
They whispered saintly actions,
With arms outstretched they called aloud
For fiery vengeance from the Lord.
And then they gathered 'round the trouped one,
Picked up his state with eager hands,
Above their heads they carried him
Majestically bound,
Onto the funeral pyre.
A leader came from within their midst and read.
A mother cried into the placid frowns,
To bare her gentle heart.
A realist, a man of action,
Stepped sternly from the crowd,
Picked up the torch and placed it to the wood.
They all fell back respectfully.
An awe rushed through them and a fear.

The bell shrieked and they turned their backs
As the walls wobbled,
As they smiled and raised their hands,
And promised.

John M. Good

DON'T FORGET. You've been kind enough to look at some of our work, now let us look at some of yours. Our address again is PENTAGRAM, c/o BOX 5445, S.F.A. STATION. Let us hear from you.

Science; the Absolute

DAPHNE AND CHLOE

#11

o one in paradise, the world seems grey
 and patterns and designs are thrown away
 o make a din of noise and clatter.
 here is no tranquility.
 Yet in a garden, hidden and dim,
 Daphne and Chloce, in ignorance, swim
 And while away the hours
 Amidst the grasses and the flowers
 Where not a boot or shoe has traveled
 And no trucks and men have graveled
 Or oil-slicked inroads snake their way
 Into the subtleness of their day.
 They frolic in the water, never wondering
 To finish some insignificant job
 Or, from some day or evening, rob
 A second of their time. They are taken
 With each other, never needing eggs or bacon
 In the morning or beef or stroudle
 Or chicken noodle
 In a can
 Or a moving van
 To carry petty possessions
 Or a shrink to cure obsessions
 Or a travelog,
 A catalog.
 Daphne and Chloe, cloaked in simple beauty
 Never strive to do their duty
 To a world of mass production
 And scientific deduction
 Full of air pollution
 And substitution
 And things as yet without solution.
 From the water a reflection
 Of their loveliness undecayed
 And upon each face a recollection
 Of youth and fervor unafraid.
 Their grey disheveled hair
 And wrinkled brow
 Show not a care
 Or a hint of how
 Their bodies looked before their backs
 Were bent and their ears went deaf and sacs
 Appeared upon their breasts.
 They stumble off and then they rest.
 Their aging bones and toothless grin
 Can never show just who they've been.

One youth lingers
 Outside a complex
 Of buildings, computers
 Drawn by Huxley
 To be sure,
 While other youth
 Grown old with
 Their own disassociation
 Hurry about inside
 To the tune of IBM.

The day so sweet
 Fall the season
 When crumpling leaves
 Disturb all reason
 The sun shines ripe
 Warming a body not
 Yet ready to leave
 The comfort of a
 Small confining place,
 The temple where he worships.
 Not yet ready to work.

"Personnel" it read
 And he heard someone mutter
 "Now what can we do for you"
 Outside a chuckle
 "Poor fools. I shall sit
 Cross-legged by the sea
 Dreaming of times
 When Man, in hand
 With the elements
 Ate from his own back-yard
 And I shall sing
 'Now what can we do for you?'
 Jim R. Harris

Sonny Hyles

PAST A POINT

Jim R. Harris

Whatever the experience, life goes on.

Jekinson couldn't really remember where he had first heard that, but it kept running over and over in his mind now, as he played with sweat on the window. It's funny about lines like that, lines that have some poetic quality for you, and how they seem to spring up at the strangest times. Well maybe they are not really strange times for the thought, but simply poetic times. Perhaps winter or summer, or some season has just come on the scene, or you've lost a lover, or maybe it's just one of those nights, and something someone has said or something you've read comes to mind again and again. It's hard to get things like that out of your mind. That's the way it was with Jekinson tonight.

"Who has the seeds?" A fix would be good now. It's been good all evening. Been a long time. No, not really. Just seems like it. He ground the flower seeds in the tiny pepper box, and swallowed them.

"So it's Jekinson. Thought you said your name was Dailey?"

"Who are you?"

"How many times do I have to tell you? My name is..."

"Never mind. I know. I'm sorry. It's just that you talk so much I get confused."

And she really did. For God's sake, she talked a lot. And this guy that was driving was a real nut too. He didn't talk, but the way he kept turning around and looking back, you would think someone was following him. And the girls next to him squirmed about making the car seem a capsule of confused movement.

It had rained earlier in the night and there were little puddles spread all over the streets. Jekinson took note of them and he looked down at the street waiting for one to shoot by, bright with the light of all-night gas stations. He pretended the water was really the source of the light and there were little cities beneath the pools where it was never dark and the cities had tiny people who were always happy. That's the way he would have it if he could--always sunlight, no booze, and no people who talk too much. People who talk too much always come at night, he thought. Ever notice that? The sunlight seems to stifle peoples ability to talk.

Jekinson took another pinch of the seeds. Flower, flower, on the wall...

"I would never have dreamed it, Price Jekinson."

What had happened? He looked down to his hand resting on his left knee. He liked to rest his hands on his knees when he had something important to think about, but it was so crowded here that only one hand could be placed in the reflective position. What had happened? There had to be a logical explanation. Then he thought of another sentence. "When we are born, we cry that we are come to this stage of fools." Somehow it seemed to tie in with what he had been thinking--life goes on, the puddles of water. And he felt satisfied.

end

THIS COLLEGE TOWN

Joe Bobb

A graduate student working toward his Masters Degree in the sciences recently related a story of an experience with the Nacogdoches police department. An officer stopped him for "questioning" and the student took issue with the officer over reasons for his delay. The policeman took offence with the "smart college kid," and the student nearly had to bend his knees to the policeman--he had to beg off being taken to jail.

It is obvious that the near-illiterate policeman was prejudiced against the student, who wore glasses and had an air of intellectuality about him. This particular policeman is typical not only of the law enforcement in Nacogdoches but of the town's peoples and organizations in general. Elderly women attempt to censor magazines that have been accepted throughout the country. Merchants and waitresses, who gladly take the student's money, sneer at having to serve the "fresh, smart students." Nacogdoches citizens are biting the hands that have made their town as prosperous as it is.

It is a backward, stifling, anti-intellectual, strickly East Texas air that surrounds Nacogdoches. And it is choking any progressive attempts on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State College. How far can a college progress intellectually, how far can it extend its sphere of influence when it is fenced in and ruled over by townfolk who seem to distrust and disrespect "those wild kids who go to the college." How will this college ever cease to be the school dwarfed among the pines when the people of Nacogdoches continue to believe that students are a necessary nuisance? What chance does this school have of attaining a university status when its professors are forced to live among people that consider them alien money?

Have you ever looked at the local newspaper? Typical stories include a front page announcement that the manager of the local discount store will speak in a near-by town at an important meeting of the W.M.T. sewing circle. Or perhaps you would rather hear from page two that Aunt Sally's relatives from West Texas visited her last week at route nine. Students and teachers must go to a Dallas or Houston paper to read even the least relevant news. This necessity carries with it a feeling of isolation. The newspaper in a community where the processes of higher education are conducted must not remain a small town paper, but must cater to the needs of the educated or assist in the hindrance of any further education.

Uneducated minds running a town's police department, elderly women attempting to censor the student body with Victorian ideas about sex on the news stands, and newspaper officials who write to please antiquated communities hanging on to the skirts of backwoodsmen ideas, will kill a college even as that college doubles its enrolment yearly.

SPECKS

The specks are far away,
Needlepoints pricking blackness,
Letting through the light
Of millions of years ago.

Receding into the distance
Like long, narrow tunnels
Colors of white, red, and blue
Dancing dart into sight.

A great red giant bursting forth
Proclaims age-old secrets
Of life amid rumbling beasts
Blind to their calling.

Bill Armstrong

Breezes off the Sea

THE SEA

I,
A wanderer in this dreary land
Stand looking upon the white,
Flowing sand,
At the loveliness of the sea.

Whitefoam rushes
White and black,
Crashes on the age-seamed rocks,
Then recedes,
Lapping gently at the Earth's bosom.

The thick-skinned
Foam hides the peacefulness
Of ancient cities and wrecked
treasure ships
Lying in undisturbed sleep.

The high rise
Of tide displays unrestrained rage
In angry winds.

I stand alone
Upon the shore,

And Wish.

Gemette McGuire

SIREN

The water lashes angrily
In slanting, slicing rain.
The rocking pitch of deck beneath
Reveals our lives' wet bane.

The skies are cast with angry clouds
Their middles torn asunder
With flashes--ripping, fiery ones
And deafening, rolling thunder.

Into the distance moves the din,
Replaced by smooth blue seas.
The phosphorescent glow of life
Appears with soft sea breeze.

It curls about my arms and throat,
Caressing hands of love,
To lure me back with Circe's charm
To the crashing hammer of Jove.

Bill Armstrong

Notes on Melancholy

SYMPHONY FOR BASS VOICES

#21

Solitary station--
 Burnt--
 In trains--
 Seeds between tracks
 Whisper silence
 And the bass murmur of winter winds.
 Nostalgia lives with metal monsters,
 Littered with copper-colored disease,
 And spreads its ignorant cloak of
 serenity.
 Imagine only thirty years back.
 Sonny Hyles

Should I say that now
 the time has come,
 when warped faces turn about
 to view a soured soul?
 Should I say
 it's time to descend,
 close all the mocking pages,
 leave, make ready,
 to mate with some roots of grass?

How far have we gone?
 Around the block,
 when ports and airports
 restlessly waited the arrival,
 so many miles away.

How many have we known?
 One, two, surely enough.

How much have we felt,
 how many emotions unknown?
 Too many to climb, or
 remain here where I stand.

I do not count you out.
 Back to your own,
 perhaps a different, better shape.

Tomorrow I'll wear my yellow shirt.
 Tomorrow, tomorrow
 things will be different.
 Jim R. Harris

WITH YOUNG TIMOTHY'S PASSING

He always ran caught up,
 Bright flowers, paintbrushes dancing,
 Chattering past his ears
 Leading soldiers and enemies
 And secret places sheltered from
 the rain,
 Wet, wonderfully sticky,
 Covered with ants and muck and
 smells,
 With a dog and a bird,
 His and God's if he'd thought of it,
 To the edge of the woods
 And down in the dirt.
 He ran a thousand times
 Knowing but once.
 He gathered in this world
 And wallowed in his innocence
 With a dog and bird,
 His and God's if he'd thought of it,
 And if he hadn't, will now,
 And know it better than us.
 John M. Good

DAYDREAM

Chico stood with hands on hips,
 And watched the train go by.
 "One day I'll ride that train,"
 he thought,
 "Then I won't be someone who's
 cheaply bought,
 "To pick these pears and peas.
 "I'll get a suit, and go to school,
 And do just as I please."
 Chico smiled, skipped a rock along
 The road, then walked towards town
 And smiling Maria.

Gemette McGuire