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Front Cover: Roy Whetnall
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First Prize - Art
Honorable Mention - Art

Nothing here "but blood, toil, tears and sweat." Thanks.

The Staff
True Self

My thoughts run deep,
depth like the
river valley gorge.
My feelings flow
strong and fierce
but still maintain
a sensitive
malleable property.
My mind is a continuous
swift stream
incessantly carrying
out activities.
I am a phantom
desperately wanting
to divulge
my depth
but....
I am vulnerable.
My words and expressions
are a mask
hiding
what is true,
For the mask only
exposes the
shallow
Sharing just barely
enough for
others to
tread the water.
My real self cannot
surface....
I am shy!

Lisa Kline
For The Fall Semester Choir

If you knew how much you
mean to me,
This crazy choir I'm in:
Seems I started singing with strangers--
But now I sing with friends.

Though all of us are different,
I love you, everyone.
Sometimes I feel I see behind
our common classroom fun.

The gentlemen are joking
The ladies quiet and sweet
We have a lovely group of girls,
Our tough guys can't be beat.

I know this may be shocking
For your funny-tuned ears to hear,
But I had to tell you—seriously,
About my thoughts this year.

I've seen a class of singing smiles
And much that you can do--
You made me smile—on stage
and off;
I hope I've done that too.

I've seen a large production
I've seen a worn out cast--
I've been one to feel the feelings
that you bring on;
I hope I'm not the last.

Much I could say, on and on
About what you mean to me--
I will stop—I've said a lot.
But one more phrase I give to thee.

Choir, be all you can be--
This is my final call--
Be you wherever you be,
And May God Bless You All!

Matthew Kennedy
There was a pale drab called 'wan Suzy';
Sun fun made of her a tan floozy.
Soon she turned to night dancing—
Now tanned, with her prancing,
This floozy's a sunburned danseuse.

Prof. Tom Trout
We never realized what his name was until we saw it printed under his picture in the annual. He coached the football team, the girl’s basketball team, the track team, and the baseball team, so everyone in the whole school called him Coach.

If you can visualize in your mind a small mountain, you are close to a physical description of Coach. He stood about 6'4", he weighed about 275 pounds, and he was partially bald. Just seeing him walk toward you from across the school yard sent chills up your spine. Clothes were not one of Coach’s major concerns, so his wardrobe was limited to say the least. Everyday he would wear a tee shirt with Cotton Valley Athletic Department written in a circle on the left breast, a pair of khaki pants slung below his waist, and a pair of high-top tennis shoes. Even though it became monotonous to see him dressed the same day after day, it was reassuring in a way to know that some things never change.

Even when Coach was not in sight you could tell he was near because of his loud, resounding voice. His whispers could be heard from one end of the gym to the other. But the one trait that made Coach unique was his speech. He always talked--so-slow--that--you could finish your Algebra homework and get started on your American History before he could finish a sentence. Getting our homework done was what we usually did in Coach’s Health class, except on the days when he decided to forget which plays didn’t work in Friday night’s football game and teach Health.

Coach’s Health lectures were always hilarious because of his unusual habit of unknowingly mispronouncing or using the wrong words. This malaprop would often have us rolling in the aisles with laughter. One day Coach told us that we all needed to use "Ko-lawg-nee" before coming to school in the mornings. It was only when he said that there--was--nothing--worse--than--a--bunch--of--smelly--boys (he called everybody boys), did we realize that he meant cologne. The class went wild. A few days later he told us that if we didn’t get enough sleep we would come to school "fatty-gyood." He meant fatigued, but when someone tried to correct him he yelled, "What the Hell difference does it make?" and the whole class went crazy again. But undoubtedly the most unforgettable day in Coach’s class was the day Jerry Hayes, our star quarterback, asked Coach where babies come from. He paced up and down the room a half dozen times and then said, "Well--boys--when--a--man--and--a--woman--do--the--thin--there--, they--get--a--baby." I can’t even begin to tell you what happened after that. It was a fiasco. I do remember the principal coming in once or twice and leaving again doubled over with laughter. But Coach was just as calm and laid back as ever. It was somehow reassuring again to know that nothing could shake this mountain of a man.

However, one incident occurred that did change Coach and all our lives. One night Coach and the Home Economics teacher were caught by some deer hunters while parking on Bayou Road. In a small town like Cotton Valley juicy news like that can’t be kept quiet for long, so in a few days everyone in school was talking about nothing else. The scandal raged on for a week or two until a new scandal took its place (three members of the boy’s basketball team were caught cheating on a Chemistry test and expelled from school). We all thought everything would get back to normal after that, but Coach was somehow never quite the same.

Coach and the Home Economics teacher eventually got married, but he was changed. A lot quieter it seemed, and a little sadder. And we had all changed too; we had grown up a little. We realized that people do change, but the unforgettable character of Coach will be unchanged in our hearts and memories forever.

Sarah Todd
A Flower For A Friend

In passing, as from life to life, I wish it were in my power
for I'd like to leave my friend a beautiful flower
I'd like her to know how much I'll always care
and by leaving such a lovely gift, and rare
maybe then she'd understand the bliss of this final hour...

It doesn't make me sad
I'm only unhappy when I think of the things I've had
but life goes on
and drawn by the dawn
I'll leave knowing I've made one glad...

In seeing, as day by day, I hope for better things
I hope for sunshine and what a warm thought brings
and in sitting in a quiet meadow reflecting about living
I gently nip at flowers worth giving
For beauty goes on as a Robin with the first breath of Spring sings...

I love so much of life, at times, I feel misplaced
but I'm glad to know the space I'm taking's easily replaced
maybe by one kinder than I
I only hope that one will try
for only with laughter is pain erased...

In living, as year by year, I asked only for strength
and at the end of the twenty year length
I can't believe how lucky I've been
to have had in my life such a beautiful friend
It's been a life worth living...

I have always seen the things to come
as if my life were mysteriously undone
when I looked ahead
it was as if I knew one day I'd be dead
but no matter how far away I am, I'll always feel the warmth of the sun...

In dying, as from body to being, I have but one desire
to know my life was not wasted as a moth above a fire
to know I left some portion of myself
maybe not to all, but just to someone else
for any love, false or true, will bind and never tie...

A life is worth more than the finality of death
there should be a smile in one last breath
and no fear of the unknown, or regret for something not shown
for there should be only Peace left...

jacQueline McCabe-Tonsor
Dear Eve,

Sorry you had to move! Guess it couldn't be helped. If you remember, I tried to warn you you were treading on mighty thin grass. I don't know why I was dumb enough to believe it wouldn't happen. It happens every time! Try to be nice to people and it backfires every time. When you get down to the Nitty Gritty, you were just as guilty as I was - maybe more so.

If you will recall, I warned you not to blab to Adam. What did you do? "Adam, come here, I have something to show you!" I knew right then the jig was up! When I saw you two running around in those silly fig leaves, I knew it was a matter of time.

In the first place, if you hadn't been so damn curious, I couldn't have tempted you. But did you take the blame? No way! I heard you telling it was all my fault. Naughty, naughty!

If that had been the end of it, I might could forgive you, but I'm getting the short end of the stick. Things are really getting out of hand - or maybe I should say foot. I don't have either of the aforementioned now and to add insult to injury, I have a bad case of the B.B. (blistered belly).

Lady, you really handed me the old shaft! My life hasn't been worth a plug nickel in ages. In fact it ain't safe to venture more than three feet from the old tree. I have personally been maligned, hunted, skinned, stomped, bruised, battered, shot, speared, kicked, stoned, clubbed and chopped in the last few years. This has just got to stop! It has gotten so lately that I am getting a complex about the whole mess!

How would you like it if every time you were out just moseying around, minding your own business, you created a scene? Think about it, Girl. Do you get the picture?

I've heard through the grapevine that the old worm is just before turning and all your stomper buddies are going to be the stompees for a change. I think you better pass the ole' good word!

Hope you and Adam are comfortable in your new digs. Miss you and all that jazz!

Love ya,

Slither

Elizabeth Gilland

First Prize - Essay
Goodbye Summer

When green gives way to flame, and the heat of the sun is tamed--
When the robin's egg sky gives way to the cold azure of a killer's eye--
The rain becomes sleetin, the trees join in weeping,
   They sing to summer
"Goodbye..."

Angela Eaddy

Johanna Ryan
Half past nine. Time for two half pints: they definitely weren't coming. I'd been stood up. Typical, bloody typical.

At this time of night, Bannerman's was usually chock-a-block with rowdy university students. But this night the pub was suspiciously empty. And it occurred to me that tomorrow the architects, most frequent patrons of Bannerman's (and every other drinking establishment in Edinburgh), all had oral presentations. Could it possibly be my friends were studying? Over the rim of my Bass Special I'd been observing my fellow drinkers: a mellow lot, die-hard intellectuals flaunting their superiority over university demands. God forbid that an oral presentation should keep them from their ritual pint or ten and public school debates, but my, how silent they were this evening.

Having analyzed every person in the room purely by their expressions and giveaway body language, I turned to the old gent beside me. From the corner of my eye I perceived an Army posture, rigidly perched on a Bannerman's barstool. Definitely a Saville Row shooting jacket. As he paid for his double Glen Morangie (no ice of course), I noticed delicately masculine hands with nails I immediately attributed to a manicurist's art. "When I saw the tie I felt already I knew this man: I recognized it as being that of Oxford's renowned of academics. (I had been privy to elitest rumor.)"

"May I buy you a drink, Madam?"

My inquisitive glances had not been very subtle, apparently.

"I would be delighted. A Glen Fiddich, with a finger of water, please sir." He could afford my expensive tastes.

"An inferior malt whisky, young lady. And you ought to leave the water. It reveals your true self," he pronounced in an unmistakable Eton lilt. Or was it Harrow?

"Pray tell: what are you inferring, Sir?" This was promising to be a remarkable conversation; already I recognized his type.

"Glen Morangie is supreme among whiskies. It is perfection. You drink an inferior malt and then insult yourself further by diluting it with filthy water. It shows your breeding." This said looking me straight in the eye. His were blue, and very, very piercing in that weathered country face.

"You, Sir, are a snob."

"And you, Madam, are ill educated." Somehow his tone belied his words. This disarming honesty, also known as rudeness, presented an unusual challenge, one I could not ignore.

"None can compete with that tie, I admit, but breeding and education enable me to recognize you as the penultimate uppercrust English snob. Immediately you conformed to the stereotype, and I daresay the more I learn about you, the more definitely I will be proved correct." I knew this Lord (for there was no doubt he was anything less) would eventually get the better of me, if only on the merit of his years.

"I can forgive you your youth, but you really must come to understand the world as it really is, my dear. Your generation persists in the belief that all people are equal and rational and have the same rights. How wrong you are! I am a snob, since you used that term, because I recognized the fundamental differences between you and me. I am a duke. What are you?"

"I am a writer, a poet. But how comes a duke to a place such as this in the lowly cowgate of this heathen city?" I was suspect of the validity of his story, but I was enjoying myself too much to ruin his charade. And if I fueled the fire of this conversation, I might earn another Glen Fiddich.

"You were quite perceptive in your remark about my tie. You will realize, therefore, that I cannot reveal anymore to you on that subject. Suffice it to say that this elitest group of men - no woman could possibly qualify - recognize one another for their supremacy - intellectually, emotionally and physically. Now and then we meet, but we are not a social group. We merely offer support in a world where the vast majority of people are inferior to ourselves. You call yourself a
poet. Well, this excursion into the world of the masses was meant to reaffirm my faith in my own superiority. I see I will succeed, for poetry is the most base of all the arts."

My immediate reaction to this insult was to scream vicious retorts, but that would only have proved him right. So matter-of-fact were his pronouncements delivered, that one could hardly be anything but fascinated by this country squire's attitudes.

I felt I had to defend myself: "In my work, which I deem entirely beneficial to the community, I elicit genuine emotional responses, giving people opportunity to empathize, to express themselves through my writings. I long to hear what is so despicable about, first, my being female, and second, my being a poet." I did not wish to argue with this stalwart of old world conservatism. I only wished to know his reasoning.

"You are a poet and you are a female. If a person is female, then that person is emotional. This poet (indicating me) is a female. Therefore this poet is emotional. In your writing you draw literal pictures of unrestrained emotions, desires, and instincts. The excitement you cause is irrational and very female, very weak, and always at the expense of reason. And reason, young lady, is the soul of all that is desirable. Ideas, ideals and perfections are things for which I strive. You instigate moral corruption by advocating that a man give vent to his emotions and desires."

I felt I was witness to a museum piece come alive. He was sincere. He was real, but totally unbelievable.

"I have no answer for you. Perhaps my age, my inexperience prevents me from finding the words to dispute your argument. But I do not want to dispute it. I want opinions like yours to exist so that I may be reminded of how practical, how realistic I am. You are remarkable, Sir Duke. However, You ignore the emotional side of man, male and female, altogether. And that is unreasonable. It goes against reason to ignore that fundamental precept of human nature." He had touched a raw nerve and it was only my good humor which prevented a further verbal lashing.

"You have been most entertaining, my dear. I have done all I have set out to do tonight. I return to my Duchy, a fervent believer in the superiority of my breeding. It has been a pleasure. Good evening."

And with that the tweeds and the silks glided across the room and out into the night. I sipped at my inferior, watered down whisky and caught the eye of a wayward architect, a fellow artist and corruptor of human minds: an old friend. He ambled up to the bar.

"Who the hell was that old codger?"

I suddenly remembered how much I liked my friends.

"Plato revisited," I said.

Johanna Ryan

First Prize - Short Story
One-Minute Commentary

Alcohol--some of us owe our lives to it. Nine months after the party, we came into the world, little Jimmy Beam or Niña Colada.

In a resort area some of us owe our livelihood to alcohol. From distributors to waiters, our income would dry up if our customers did. And who does not profit indirectly from the sale of beer, wine and other liquor? Money that somebody lays down for alcoholic beverages gets passed from hand to hand to pay for the car, the groceries, the kids' shoes.

But we can all be touched by alcohol in another way. We're all just a telephone ring away from learning that a stranger has turned someone we loved into a memory. Each of us is little protected by a red light or a yellow line when the driver of the other car -- or of ours -- is deeply into Happy Hour.

So if we have to lose control to alcohol, better between the sheets than behind the wheel.

Prof. Randall Wells
Love is a Game Show

We eagerly await in the audience,
Each of us desperately hoping
That Johnny will call our name
Cheerfully beckoning us
To come on down and play The Game.
Sometimes...if the price is right...
We get to spin the wheel of fortune
And maybe go home with the Grand Showcase.
But if we just can't make a deal
We wind up with a zonker
Like an ugly dude with a large honker.
Me, I patiently collect my consolation prizes
In the hopes that I can trade them in for
A chance at winning it all.

Strictly Anonymous & Little Sister

Do You Know?

We live in a very cold sometimes hot and black world. Some of us are white, some are black, some dingie and some are replaced when they get too old to beat together anymore. Some have a silver head and in some places no one lives there anymore. We are all different shapes and sizes. In the morning we have to get up and the layers being beaten together with no consideration at all. After that we get splashed with a white, cold substance that we enjoy very much, because it makes us healthier and whiter. Sometimes we get drowned with a hot, black liquid and it makes us very dirty. Then we have to be cleaned and we get the hide torn off us with hundreds of clear thorns, on a long colored stick pulled and pushed over our short, fat bodies. When the middle of the day comes usually around noon we have to grind ourselves together again. Then we get pocked, podged and stuck with by a short wooden splinter. Then the night falls upon us, and we have to grind ourselves together once again. Then it's back to the cold splash that comes upon our bodies. After this we get abused by the clear, hundreds of thorns again. Then we get washed off with a colored substance to help us from losing our uniqueness, and to help guide us to a more whiter, healthier and harder world. I was going to say who we were but I forget. Do you know?

Jeaneen Jordan
Her

I cannot have her,
so I want her more.
My deepest obsession,
that is the core.
Everywhere I turn,
a reminder is there.
I'm beginning to realize
that life is unfair.
To be separated
from whom I long,
I'm reminded of her
when I hear that song.
I remembered the good things,
and forgot the bad--
but is it her that I love,
or what we had?

"My passion for the rose
is only exceeded by my passion for thee."
A thought which has passed many times
as I have felt my rose had been found,
Only later to compromise my love having
discovered the thorns.
In a search of greater depth, I have
reconsidered.
The rose has its beauty;
the rose has its thorns.
But what of the daisy;
where lie the daisy's thorns?

Jeff M. Parker
Another Day, Another Dollar

Ah, well...another day, another dollar! Those poor fools! Too bad everyone isn't as smart as I am!

I think I'll play a round or two of golf before I begin my next "mission" maybe I'll be "inspirationalized" out on the course.

Ooops...my car failed to start on the first try. I'm tired of this old Caddy anyway; I think that the solution to this problem is a Mercedes. (Of course, a Mercedes costs, and someone has to pay!)

A healing crusade...why not? I've tried everything else. I even made a little extra cash on the university deal. It won't hurt to try!

You know a sponsor is what I really need. That way the television time won't cost me as much, if anything at all.

Ah, what a cute grandchild I have. He smells so good--like a real clean baby, and he's so soft! Thank goodness for Johnson and Johnson Baby Oil!

That's it! Johnson and Johnson Baby Oil! I could hold a healing crusade and pass off regular baby oil as "anointing" oil; that way I get my show paid for, and Johnson and Johnson would get publicity! Great!

What if Johnson and Johnson won't participate? (I could always give Wesson or Crisco a call!)

Great! Johnson and Johnson have decided to participate in my famous "healing" crusade. Watch out Ernest Angsley--here I come, there ain't no stoppin' me now! I'm on a roll!

Maybe I'll get more publicity (therefore, more money,) if my son co--stars in my upcoming event. Double the healing, double the money!

"My dear friends, brethren! Are you ill? Do you ache? If so, just send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address on your television screen. Within ten days you'll receive a packet of oil in the mail. Don't cook with it or rub it on your baby's bottom! This is not an ordinary oil--this is 'anointing' oil. Just place a drop of this super oil on your aching body part or forehead. We'll pray for you! When you write for this, be sure to include the descriptions of your aches and pains! In doing so, you'll be sure to receive more healing power! Thank you! God bless you!"

At last! Only four more days until the big crusade! I'll be so glad when this is over. You wouldn't believe the complaints I've gotten from the postal service -- how was I supposed to know the little bags would break. At least I don't have to read all those greasy letters!
Well, tonight's the big night! I musn't forget to send for my suit that's at my tailor's. I need to call "the chip off the old block," too!

Oh God! Why don't these people just go home and watch me on t.v.? They weren't supposed to congregate here like they are! These t.v. lights and makeup are baking me! Only fifteen more minutes to go!

A week later. What!?!? Just tell them to contact my lawyers! How was I supposed to know that he was allergic to the oil? It wasn't my fault her cut became infected because of the oil? Listen, that oil did not have a guarantee! Don't call me, call my lawyers! (I'm sure they'll know what to do -- they're used to this kind of thing!) You'd think by now I would be too!

Paula Richardson

On a dark thundering Thursday afternoon, during the last few hours before the Passover celebration began, Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth on a tree which He created, and finally died at the hands of men whom He created and loved. Since then, we, his creations, changed the day of crucifixion to Friday, mingled the event with rabbits and eggs of a pagan fertility celebration, changed the name of the holiday to Easter, and further corrupted His death and resurrection by exalting the torturous cross to a place of veneration. All this we have done in the name of religion, following the Pharisees that Jesus despised, and then tried to force a coexistence of that deplorable religion with Christianity. Two-thousand years couldn't change the religious spirit of man; and we dare to call ourselves His worshippers.

After He was dead, the religious ones hurried to remove the body and place it in the darkness of the tomb, so that touching Him would not render them unclean for their religious holiday. Today, we still try to place Him in some dark recess of our lives and minds, so we might exalt our religion above our worship of the most high God.

Donna N. Cassagnol
There was a young student at Coastal, who made the following boast: "I'll not write a paper, or burn a late taper, yet I'll graduate summa cum most'1."

Prof. Tom Trout

The Bad "D" Student
Feeling as great as the wind
I blew the top off the exam
Some wonder how, being the "D" student that I am.

Powerful teacher unknowing to herself
Ms. T's encouraging words given from her heart impressed me - I am somebody.

Dorthula Green
"The professor," they said, "is an excellent man,
Do take his course if you possibly can."

So I signed myself up, all intentions were good.
I'd study so hard, I knew that I could.

To discover the themes of Shakespeare and Conrad,
Poetry next - it could not be that bad.

Prepared for a lecture on narrator and style,
I'd read it all well, gone that extra mile.

So little did I know, the lecture would not be
On books nor poems, but fishes of the sea.

Oh woe betide to you, landlubbers in his class!
Study up your reels, your flies, trout and bass.

Never will he lecture on authors small and great.
The most you'll ever learn - all about bait.

One day he'll surprise you, he'll give a quizeroo
On books you have read, and good luck to you.

From all that I remember, I just want to say,
Unless you know fishing, sorry, no "A",

Extra credit is given to students so few
Who name the best golfer Teacher once knew.

For all you poor writers who One-oh-Two must take,
Get yourself a boat - go fish in the lake.

Then I also suggest you watch the football games,
Learn about tactics, learn the players names.

You'll have to read the book to pass his final test,
But knowledge of fishing, that plan's the best.

Good luck you poor students who have no other choice.
Mark well these words, this anonymous voice.
RENGA: SEASONAL OBSERVATIONS

Speaker One: Spring waltzes quickly promenading verdantly; showering flowers.

Speaker Two: Summer dawn ascends glad soft-muted harbinger of bright buoyant days.

Speaker Three: Sunny summer day quietly warming fruit-fields: life-giving goddess.

Speaker Two: Summer sunsets prance with multi-colored spangles, splashing contentment.

Speaker Three: Speckled foliage sharply paints mountainsides; fall's fluttering gold-hues.

Speaker One: Fall's abundant crops restlessly await gleaners' rhythmic cognition.

Speaker Four: Winter's icy flakes drift joyously, aimlessly scattering dew-drops.

Speaker One: Gray blizzards spreading warm, monochromatic quilts: hibernation rest.

Wilma Lucas
Ever since this world of ours began, Man's been killing off his fellow man, cursing and swearing, and threatening the other side, as he waves flags and symbols saying Peace To All Mankind.

Eugene Gibson
The End

Almost suddenly a thunderstorm rolled up in the august sky, then GODS and GIANTS clashed in primal rage and threw fire at each other till they were hoarse and blue in the face rehearsing Ragnarok.

Into the wind black ravens flew carrying messages; and the sun before it died arc'd a flaming bridge across the bruised thunder which somebody climbed to growl in a trumpet.

It's all over, I said. I believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth. (I said it all the way through this time with my mind on it), but the ravens laughed and said sing a hymn which I couldn't do because my mind was paralyzed.

Then the two ravens on their way to the East River said: blessed is he who cometh in the name of the UN; and the dragon gnawed at the root of the ash, and the three hags that watered it jeered in toothless augury, and God was being chased by a wolf and might die.

I was scared, not so much from the fireworks, but that I might not have fought my battles well, and the buxom ladies on their skysteeds might not come a-swooping.

The sky fell down at twelve o'clock and cassandra and chickenlittle were right; then the rainbow caved in and judy garland was wrong.

Save me! (I cried to the ravens), but all they said was: we are experiencing network difficulties, please stand by.

Wayne Chestnut

First Prize - Poetry
A Pair of Jeans

1.

Between her Levi's and beside,
The yet-unnoticed floor I spied.
Its neuter squares of green or gray
Grew potent by that narrow splay.
Defined against each dark blue wave
It took the shape of swells concave.
A grid symmetrical, each half
Combined in one celestial graph.
O tiles and trousers, together bound
In unity! O figure and ground!

2.

When the child's swing reached the end of its southward arc,
It tugged out the frame.
So against the obstreperous inclined pipe to the north
She languidly leaned,
Bestowing her tautened Levi's loosely around it.
Stiffly it shuddered
When the child and I felt our insides suspended aloft.

Prof. Randall Wells
In my youth I studied love that I might
Know exactly its cause and how to deal
With this strange pain-joy most youths claim to feel
When a woman's charms dim their reason's light,
Young love comes in bits, each a new delight,
Each woman loved for some unique appeal.
But when all are found in the youth's ideal
He thinks his a case of love at first sight.

Youth, I advised, be wise, do your duty.
Now is the proper time: So begin it.
Protect your heart from a woman's beauty.
Your prize is peace: Therefore try to win it.
Don't trade a kiss for so rich a booty.
Walk over love or you'll fall in it.

As a young man I continued to pry
Into the mysteries of love and sex
And found both a more pernicious hex:
Women of twenty want marriage - that's why.
Mature love, is esteem, and who'll deny
More noble than the romantic complex,
Yet also enduring and apt to perplex
A man who liked freedom as much as I.

Young men, I admonished, don't you tarry.
When love comes along in a frilly lace
Pack up your bags and commence to carry
Them onward, onward with a rapid pace.
If a woman is intent to marry
Even cover your tracks: don't leave a trace.

When I was forty - a dangerous age --
Chimes from Liberty Bell began to bore,
Just when reason, I thought, had closed love's door
And love was locked safely within its cage.
So this war with love I continue to wage,
A battle redoubtable as years before
When the sap flowed strong in the sycamore
And when it will end, I can't presage.

Middled-aged men. I said, why should you fear?
There's nothing to lose but your graying hair.
Though marriage may not mix with your career
What's wrong with - say - a platonic affair?
Why love a woman? Ask a mountaineer
Why he climbs the Jungfrau...Because she's there.

Prof. Gerald Groves
Nocturnal Snowfall

I stand alone and watch the snow
    Smooth o'er the scene not far below
And hide the leaves that covered all
    The ground with Mardi Gras last fall.
It paints the dirty fences white,
    Conceals the path of woodland sprite,
Then turns cold rocks to piles of down,
    Drapes scrawny spruce in feathered gown,
And etches powder-sugared ponds,
    Turns branches into silver wands
Converts a brazen, glaring light
    To spangled chandelier by night.
It muffles each distracting sound
    From chapel bells to baying hound,
And changes all the twinkling sky
    To velvet black, so human eye
Finds no excuse for wand'ring past
    Such wonder--disappearing fast

Donna N. Cassagnol

Inner Sight

Blessed are those whose eyes can see
Some good in all that has to be,
Some spark of love in hearts of hate
Some kindness in the hand of fate.
Rare gems of wisdom oft which lies
Behind the old and faded eyes,
The years of joy and blissful mirth
Beyond the anguished pangs of birth,
And those who use their last drawn breath
To thank the Lord for restful death.

Janet M. Barwick
A starlit night
dominated by the spectral moon
and centuries of tradition
is interrupted by the brisk breeze
which dances among the shadows
only pausing to rock the trees
and rap window panes.

The door opens
allowing the musical sound
of man and nature
to unite the dimly lit house
and stir the inhabitants
into life.

No longer clinging
to the background
of orange and black
the strange creatures
release themselves from obscurity
by finding a partner to join
in flitting across the floor.

Introduced by the sounds within
Vampirella and the mummy
come to know one another
completely
through a slow dance
filled with thoughts never spoken
yet still received.

Never wanting to let go
even after the music stops
their eyes continue the encirclement
first began when their fingers touched
hands grasped
and eyes closed to the world.

Time has passed
but the feelings remain
as the dream continues
and they prepare to meet
once more.

Since their first meeting
they have changed
but only on the exterior
because they are now stripped
of artificiality.

Now their protection has disappeared
with the costumes and romantic lights
which have been replaced
by common garments
and a brilliant sun
designed to erase obscurity.

Sitting by the window
and watching
the stillness of life around her
she remembers
how they almost met again.

The sun was out then
and he was waiting
she knew
because she saw
paused
and ran.

Why
she thought
as she remembered
her departure
and cried in disbelief
thinking of how impatiently
she had waited
for this lost moment.

Startled
by the simultaneous rattling
on the window
and the door
she returns
from her thoughts
wondering
what to do.

She knows
that the wind has returned
and has brought him along
and the dream
too has returned.

The door opens
and he stands
in the sunlight
awaiting
her next move
watching
as she lifts her eyes
to meet his.

And the dream
blows
through the trees
among the shadows
and twilight comes
with stars
shining bright
fingers touching
hands grasping
and eyes
closing to the night.

John D. Walker
The Fog

The heavy gray fog
curls around each corner and crevice
searching for its vanishing
dusky mate
Leaving behind wisps of shrouding gray
only to disappear itself
before the harshness
of newborn day.

Carolyn Gobbel

Honorable Mention - Photography

Steve Eaddy
Death on Schedule

The British have eleven commandments instead of the traditional ten. "Thou Shalt Be On Time", is inserted somewhere behind the second, and ahead of the seventh in importance. At any rate, most Englishmen believe being late is a grievous, if not a mortal sin.

The queen might appear stark naked in public, the sun might not rise, that they could overcome. An English train late? Never!

The daily commuter to London, resplendent in his homberg and umbrella, sets his watch with the train; therefore, if the 3:01 train arrives at 3:02 his timepiece is fast. It is as simple as that!

I will admit to a few exceptions. A nuclear attack, an earthquake of at least nine on the Richter scale, or the sudden death of the reigning monarch might slow things up a bit, but one can be certain by the time the train reaches its next stop, the problem will have been corrected, and the train will arrive on schedule.

Last summer in London, I witnessed such a phenomenon. Standing at the rail in Victoria Station, poised and ready to board the southbound 16:05, which translated means the 4:05 p.m. I noticed it was exactly 4:01.

As I set my luggage down to get my ticket in hand, I turned and nodded to a couple standing behind me. They appeared to be in their sixties, and had the unmistakable look of American tourists. It was not their looks which impressed me but their apparent fondness for each other. They were smiling and holding hands. The husband volunteered that they were on their honeymoon. After forty years of marriage and rearing a family, the two had finally managed to afford the long delayed trip. We chatted another few seconds. The gate suddenly opened, and I lost my new friends in the crowd.

I found my compartment, settled my luggage, opened my purse, found my lighter and lit a cigarette. By this time the train should have started. It hadn't. A second later, I noticed two Bobbies running down toward the engine, and a moment later I heard the wail of a siren approaching. Fifteen seconds later, two station attendants passed my window rushing a flat baggage cart in the same direction.

The train began to make the familiar sounds of departure. Then I heard the clatter of the baggage cart returning. As it passed, I saw the body of a man, frantically being given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and heart massage by one of the aids kneeling over him. I could also see it was apparently too late. About twenty feet behind, almost running to keep up, was a weeping woman. Her outstretched hands seemed to be trying to catch and hold on to the life which had already slipped away. As she passed my window, she glanced up, and I looked directly into the anguished face of the "bride".

I rose to my feet instinctively, only to be thrown back by the sudden lurch of the starting train. In two seconds we had moved out of sight. Ice had formed around my heart and the melting ice water began to flow through my veins. My knees buckled. My arms and hands were too heavy to lift. I was there but in a strange vacuum.

Far in the distance, the pleasant voice of the porter began to penetrate my ears and I began to the return to reality. "First call for tea! First call for tea! Tea will be served in the lounge immediately! We regret the delay, madame, however, if you want tea, you still have time. We will arrive at Peterborough Station in precisely nineteen minutes-as scheduled!"

Elizabeth Gilland
Little Bo-Peep

Little Bo-Peep is losing sleep.
Oh, what a terrible fate!
She romped in the hay
With Johnny O'Day
And now she is ten days late.

Elizabeth Gilland

Old Mother Hubbard

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard
To get a shot of whisky.
When her husband got there,
The cupboard was bare
And Ma Hubbard was feeling frisky!

Sylvia Wood

Hickory, Dickory, Dock

Hickory, Dickory, Dock
I used to date a jock.
I could not hook him,
The Dodgers did book him.
Hickory Dickory, Dock.

Sylvia Wood

Imagery

Clean sheets--
A fabric bath.

A lemon slice--
A two-toothed grin.

Bare branches against the sky--
Widows to be married again.

Prof. Randall Wells

Summer Rain

The summer rain
with its earthen mushroom smell
ruffles the air and
gives birth to an alien excitement.

I sniff expectantly, instantly alert, and
like the forest doe,
I dart for cover.

Carolyn Gobbel
The Turtle
Self contained hermit carrying his load alone
A self-sufficient martyr.

Delores Cox

Butterfly
Colorful powder on fingertips
Left fluttering and lame.

Kelly Pack

Dreams hide images
vibrant patches, appliqued kaleidoscope quilts.

Wilma Lucas

Karen L (Bugs) Hill
The Flu

Feeling lonesome,
Navy blue,
Deep depression,
Have the flu.

Hair a' stringing,
Nails are split.
Nose is running,
Here I sit.

Bones a' aching,
Have a chill.
Fever rising,
Take a pill.

Need a blanket
For my feet.
What has happened
To the heat?

Call the doctor!
Get a Nurse!
Listen world, I'm
Getting worse.

Need attention
To get well
Asian flu is
Mortal hell!

Kate

I
Dog collars lay
cracked, in the dust
their lines snake from them
through the grass.
Attached to one
a worn brass plate
"Kate"

II
So packed with valor, She
who guarded this ground
who died so many years ago
no one remembers
no one but the ancient gelding
who haunts the barn, alone
who knew her in her youth.

III
and on hot summer days when
the air is haze and dust
you can still see her
darting, black and white
between the legs of horses
a decade dead
out in the empty field

Karen L. (Bugs) Hill

Elizabeth Gilland
The Death of Saint Benedicta

Her body lithe,
his manner bold,
she strode among us,
now,
in the cold
and filthy street
she lies.
no longer
does a breath invade
her body,
stranger
will she never
be again.

Now,
let the spiked wheel
of katherin be
the mark of our
angelic dead,
we
within her haunted gardens
ride,
and find that
now her robe of gilded brindle
has she
cast aside.
and slender body too
for she,
the lady saint, our beloved,
is dead...
but free.

Karen L. (Bugs) Hill

Poor Rich Kid

He was born a rich boy
Always provided with the finest clothes
And the most expensive toys
Went to the best schools that money could buy
So his parents could brag to the other rich

girls and boys.

Poor rich kid
He was the only one
And had to be the one
To make his parents proud
By always being outstanding in the crowd.

He did well at school
Always with the highest grades
But still he wasn't well known
Nobody noticed him when
He walked down the hall
'Cause he was just too small.

Never much of a social life
He was the last to be picked
in any sports team.
Never much for the game of romance
But he was always the best in his dreams
And whenever he took a chance
The girls had to wash their hair
or mend their underwear.

Poor rich kid
Forced to make his parents proud
By being number one among the crowd.

One day his parents found
In his room some marijuana
And kicked him out of the house
He said, "I'm free and I can do anything I wanna."

He settled in a sleazy apartment
And planned a party
Dressed in his best garments,
He bought three kegs of beer
And invited the whole school
Smiling, he said, "They will soon be here."
But no one came
And his mind was never the same.

The next day everybody knew
Of a poor rich kid named Drew
That tried to make his parents proud
By being number one among society's crowd
He jumped and fell fifty floors
But before he met his lonely end
He left a note that read,
"All I wanted was a friend."

Fernando Arce
Voice of Past

The voice
of past
echoes in my mind
chilling bitter words,
they cause tears to freeze on my cheeks,
and the tears take years to melt,
and after they have thawed,
I am left with scars...
in a nightmare-
"he's gone,
  he's gone,
  he's gone"
and it gets harder and harder
to love again....

Katie Kelly

because of Toni

Sula, Sula - groins ablaze with a darkness
As dawn whispers her peaceful chant.
Pigtailed innocence smothered by Hannah's ashes
Lying scattered by the un-Godly mark of Cain.

A soul of kindness is beaten by blackberry briers
Choking out the pure roots that hold rancid waters.
Muddied traces of life were spawned through swollen breasts
Holding milk that flowed with the lava's thickness.

Rippling thighs issued hasty invitations to satisfy the aching.
That led maleness to rape her mind in sensuous strength.
Infant daughter of Fire sparked tender, possessing wants
Towards fallen, cracked idols hastily gathered within.

Oval, mis-shapen delusions envelope her clouded dreams
Mingling with the sly, silent hushfulness of Death.
Each pain in her life became the pathway to a Dawn
As Sula saw the reddened ashes cooling in a misty light.

Sandra K. Jeffcott
"The Meeting"  Etching  /15  Sonya Spaulding
The Stream of Consciousness While Jogging

At first the tears are warm as they slide down my cheeks into my ears, or onto my neck, but then the shimmering salt water breeze quickly cools them. My knees begin to ache from inflammation. A sharp pain stabs my right side and I ask myself, "Why do I do this?" The part I hate the most is the jarring and bouncing of the body...especially the breasts, and the frightening feeling of anxiety when I cannot calm my breathing. I do it because the best part far outweighs the worst...when my body, breath, and mind are in harmony it frees my soul to think.

The great mother ocean pounds the beach with tunes that harmonize with the warmth of the sun and the salty taste of pain in my mouth. I AM ALIVE! It is a bittersweet embrace of life that floods my being with energy. The wind hugs me and whistles in my ears. The birds swiftly dart away as I approach. All of creation shares a moment of time and space with me as I think. It is the greatest of all gifts...to think!

Today I try to envision God...is she/he shaped like an amoeba or is she/he particles of energy which can be good or bad? When we pray does that draw, like water from a well, more energy into one place?

I stumble into the pain that throbs from my heart for a person who does not care for me as I care for them. Why did I get involved? Why did I care? And give? It feels like they held my heart in their hands and squeezed it until their icy fingers pierced the thin membrane and the blood of my caring is oozing out with every heartbeat...pain...hurt...I cry.

I wish I could fly! The muscles in the birds' wings tighten and bulge as they stretch and glide onto a wave of air. How graceful they are...and how awful the fish odor is today, it stings my eyes.

Anger rises like hot bread in my throat and I want to scream and fling my arms...throwing bottles through glass windows, crash! But the flashbulb of memory goes off and the words "Never let go! Always remain in control" wash over me like a cold shower. I can't ever let go...it is unacceptable behavior!

I am pregnant with thoughts today...thoughts that stimulate feelings...feelings of painful labor and deliverance of Joy. That is why I run, because it is the time for my soul to think.

A.K. Chance
DECISION

I walked up the rickety stairs, my heart in my mouth, and knocked at the door. My mind was whirling. How could I bring myself to consider such a thing? I am a good person. I have always gone to church. I love my husband and children. I take care of them the best I can.

The cold rain beat against the tin roof overhead as I shuddered in my thin coat. I looked at my watch. Why isn't someone answering the door? I hope John remembered to pick up some coal to go with the last few dry logs on the porch. Maybe he'll use the last of the ration cards for some sugar. It would be so good in the tea.

The pot of lentil soup was on the top of the heater and was almost done when I left. So the children would have some supper tonight. He will take care of them. He's a good man and loves his children. His face is set in sadness nearly always now. I told little Joey to watch the others until Daddy got home. He's twelve. That's old enough.

A light comes on in a little hall. The door opens. A pale girl limps out leaning on the arm of an older woman.

"Take two of them pills every four hours," yelled a coarse-looking woman who stood in the doorway removing her bloodstained apron.

"My God," I gasped. "Maybe there's another answer," I whispered as I ran through the blinding rain.

Gloria Wallace

Honorable Mention - Short Story
Brothers

Darkness
surrounded him
as he crossed the river
and entered the woods

Peaceful
not at all like that field
which he had just left...

Tiny fires flickering everywhere
a hazy
smoke-like fog
turning the sunlight
into flashes
of grey and blue

Noise
it was inescapable

United
they were strong

But nerves were lost
as feet thundered
from the clouds

He couldn't run
unlike the others
he remained

Prostrate
watching the feet
move closer

Strange
that some were bare
and others covered

But that didn't matter
not now

He focused
on a pair
of advancing grey knees

And blinked
as he felt the blood
rush to his finger

The grey knees disappeared
a cry
filled the air

More grey

More cries

Frantically
he stood
looking for refuge

And found it
as his blue knees fell
back to the ground

Submerged
by the red river.

John D. Walker
My Eternal Hell

Is it better to live or die
to live in an eternal hell
the flashbacks
the nightmares
the horror never ends
to come back home
not to the home I left
but to a home
mean
hostile
unforgiving
and ungrateful!

Is it better to die or live
to put an end to the senseless fighting
to be buried
burned
shot
who cares as long as it would end
to lay down my gun
and say "I want peace"
not war
death destruction
pain
and sorrow.

Was it right to fight
fight for some unknown reason
some unknown cause
some unknown people
some unknown land
only to come home
for public ridicule
"baby burner"
"murderer"
"bastard"
(can't forget the love of folks back home).

Was it right to fight
to die (at least in part)
fight a war
(sorry, a police action)
for a government not willing to win
but willing to let us die
but we did fight
we did die
the hell with everyone else
the hell with the protesters
we did it
and we deserve something for it.

The war has ended
for those shot down in action
the ones who died
(far too many to count)
were lucky
they don't remember
the killing
the pain
for them the war
has ended.

Not for me
post war depression
flashbacks
loss of mental stability
loss of my identity
no longer the man I used to be
however life goes on
God only knows why
my life is not worth much
but it is about all I have left
God have mercy
on this Vietnam Vet.

James K. Kirkpatrick
My spirit cowers in some base corner
Fleeing the forthcoming pain.

How empty the tomorrows
Should I
Turn and run!

Only once loved,
only once cradled
In the curve of your arm
will give substance
To the years when
Fate deems complete
All that we might have become.

The feeling expands--
grows warm in my chest,
Slips from its shackles,
Forsakes convention and
Embraces the look that
Rests in your gaze.

Kimberly Duncan
Night
I walk through the desolate
Paths of the dark night,
Wishing I knew which way
Led to home.
I sweat, sensing that real danger
Lurks with each step closer
To the warmth of the fireplace.
And yet I indulge, plunging blindly
Forward--closer, closer until
I finally slip into the
Deep, dark abyss of the night.

Clifford Smith II
Age is a tangible thing. I noticed it not too long ago. I no longer remember the exact day and hour, but I remember that it was there - so tangible that I could have reached out and touched her hair darkened by pallid cheeks and etched wrinkles.

My mother was the mother of my childhood. She had not aged. For breakfast she still sizzled bacon and scrambled eggs. She still found the money for that special dress that I had been wanting. She still sent chocolate chip cookies and the ten dollar bill wrapped in brown paper. She still sent, even after I was married, the recipes, jars of preserves, unwanted advice and the perennial ten dollar bill. I knew she was ill occasionally, but I never saw it. She always got better. Perhaps in reflection it was only the excitement or the preparation for our visits that brought the usual flush to her cheeks and glossed over the dullness of her eyes.

But that day I saw it. I was there. I helped her from the car, her usual supply of energy and advice dormant, the ten dollar bill forgotten. I opened the door. I watched her lean back in the rust corduroy wingback, her eyes closed, a face frozen in rusty silence. I saw not just a tired, pale woman - but my mother, a portion of my life slipping through my fingers, a dawning realization that my childhood, my pillow, a touchstone of my security was not forever as I had always thought - but transient, fleeting. I noticed the pale cheeks, the lines not made by laughter, her yellowing hair; and I left the room before she could see. I felt angry and immeasurably older, not in years, but in knowledge. She would have thought my anger and sadness rather silly. She would have smiled a tired, crooked smile at my childishness. "What did you expect?" she would say. But I knew that underneath she would have been hurt to know what I had seen.
The Sun

A symbol of life
it tells no lies
frequently hides
Slipping in and out
of the clouds
yet never failing
to shine

Katie Kelly

Heartbreak
comes quietly with a smile
and a carressing hand
that fondles the heart
until
the poison penetrates
then expands -- slowly
first gently
so that a calculating mind
evaluates
and decides it's not past toleration
then firmly
and the mind begins to panic
but reasons
there has to be a limit to pain
And finally----
it shatters!
And leaves a murky vacuum called
       Tomorrow...

Donna Cassagnol
Silence

Silence springs from inward thoughts
That pause to mellow
Then baits itself with guarded breath
Yet utters not a sound.

Sue Bookhart

A Special Concert

Dawn lingers
strumming the world
with its softness--
A gift of time
for lovely sensations--
A prelude of wind whispers
and the stirring of leaves.
A command performance
reluctantly yields
to Sunlight's debut
and
whistling kettles.

Delores Cox

Silence

Silence is a vacuum
that doesn't suck or
shatter the riverbanks
Unlike the hurricane winds,
silence seeps into being
like slowly rising flood-waters.

Silence came after the chaos
when our galaxy emerged.
Silence permeates the dark
ridges of the ocean's depths.
Silence enters our lives giving
us respite from life's demands.

Wilma Lucas
Morning

Morning reaching out of the night like
a butterfly from a cocoon, slowly revealing
its myriad of colors--
Captivating the earth with its brilliance
Then mellowing into a soft cuddly
teddy bear of joy.

Dorthula Green
Looking Back

Was leaving home the right choice? People make decisions in their lives in which they wonder what the outcome would be if they had made the other choice. What would my life be like now if I had not left my dad's home four years ago? Maybe, I would have been married and have children now or it is possible I would be attending my dad's alma mater in New Orleans, Louisiana. I feel as if I am Robert Frost contemplating whether the road I took long ago was the right one.

I left the home of my dad and stepmother in New Orleans when I was sixteen. Our family was miserable together as we were always arguing. Dad and his wife were fighting about us kids and my brothers and I just could not do anything right. I left promising myself never to have a family such as ours was.

I lived in New Orleans for several months with friends before I decided to travel North. I had always wanted to see snow. I ended up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where I lived for three years. I met lots of different people and I felt I was finally doing what I really wanted to do. A gypsy family welcomed me into their home and took me under their wing. They, eventually, introduced me to the family for whom I worked as housekeeper for the two children. Anyway, the gypsies traveled on a carnival during the summer months and I was soon fascinated by the magic and bright lights of the moving entertainment world. I was selling and engraving jewelry in Woolworth's at Christmas when I became Joe's housekeeper and the children's legal guardian. Two years later, when Joe decided to move his family to Myrtle Beach in December of 1981, I left Grand Rapids and my gypsy friends behind forever.

What did I accomplish during those four years? I managed to graduate from high school after taking the G.E.D. tests. I learned early that life was rough and that the problems encountered along the way are real, whereas living with my dad, my life was sheltered from these things at sixteen. I felt a sense of freedom in choosing what I wanted to do with my life. I also acquired during this time a mild "street" education through my gypsy friends and the carnival stint. I am also living on my own now without any support from my parents. I am doing it "my way" while attending college. So what is it I regret?

Even with the constant fighting at home, I missed my father, my brothers, and my other relatives in Mississippi. Sometimes, I felt so homesick, knowing that my leaving hurt and worried many people. I love my father and my relatives very much and I did not mean to cause them any grief over my disappearance. But my home life deeply disturbed me, so I did what I thought was best at the time.

I lost out on the whole high school scene. I did not graduate with my friends. I dropped out of high school in tenth grade. I left my friends and the parties behind. I missed the Senior Prom and the possibility of getting a promise ring from a steady boyfriend. I skipped the opportunity of holding a student government office in my last two years of high school. I passed up the chance of trying out for cheerleader in twelfth grade. I missed the senior's privilege of initiating the freshman class at Grace King as I was initiated in ninth grade. I did not get the chance to attend my girlfriends' weddings.
I was disappointed to miss my dad's recent graduation from the University of New Orleans or the chance to attend his alma mater. I was not at my brother's high school graduation this year. I missed my dog, Sadie, terribly. And Mardi Gras went by without me.

Looking back, I know home relations would not be the best. They could have gotten better but then they could have become worse. There is the chance that I might have run away again and again.

There is really no way of knowing what might have happened at that point in my life four years ago. However, it has been intriguing to reflect upon my choice. I came to two roads and "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

Jackie Kilcrease

Honorable Mention - Essay

Words

We should guard the words we speak
And choose those words with greatest care,
For words can cause a world of grief,
May pierce a heart, we know not where,
Words can sting and bruise and smart,
And bring a gush of newborn tears,
Or words can die, or rise and grow
To hurt and live in minds for years.
Words can kill, or bring to life,
The fondest hopes of brightest dream,
Or, words can chill and darken souls
When uttered, though no wrong we mean.
Words can help, can comfort, cheer.
Or often soothe the aching breast,
Can scatter rays of sunshine here
And inspire love and peace and rest.
Words can be like poisoned swords,
Or gifts and blessings in their flight
We draw near Heaven's gates with words
If in wisdom spoken right.

Janet M. Barwick