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# *Anthology*

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# Anthology

Spring 1985

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A Publication of the English Department  
Gary Streit, Chairman

Members of the department are patrons of the magazine.

## 9

My feet were both covering the magic-marker number 9 on the gym floor. Some of the other guys were there already, but they were sitting on the bleachers or just standing near their numbers. My legs were tired from locking my knees, but Mr. Bowker had told us at the beginning of the year to stand on our numbers when we came in.

The snap on my gym shorts came undone again. I turned to face the wall, my feet still covering the 9. I sucked my stomach in and fixed my shorts by putting a piece of my T-shirt between the snaps. I turned back around.

Most of the guys were there now. Everyone was taking turns jumping up to touch the net on the basketball hoop. I stood and watched, just like all the girls on the other side of the gym. I didn't pay much attention to the girls though. After all, "she" had another P.E. class. It was sure lucky for me that she did. If she had been there I would have tried to touch the net. I had tried to touch it once, but then went and stood on my 9 again.

Bryan LeMarr came over to stand on his 10. The top of his head only came up to the bottom of my nose. I watched him to see what he was going to do. He looked up at the top of the bleachers with wide eyes. I looked as he pointed with one hand and covered his mouth with the other. I didn't see anything but the dirty gym wall behind the bleachers and a few gym mats. I felt a sharp pain and Bryan yelled "Gotcha again, you big dummy" as he ran away. I stood on my number 9 and rubbed the red mark on my chest.

A loud "tweet" sounded and all the guys ran to get to their numbers. I was already on mine. Mr. Bowker came out of his little cubbyhole with his clipboard in his hand. He had on his brown sweats. That meant tomorrow he would wear blue. He walked out to the free throw line.

"Boys, Coach Musgrave from the high school wants to know how many of you eighth-graders want to play high-school football next year. Everybody who does come up here and sign the sheet so he can send you some information about practice and equipment pick-ups. Don't forget to write your address."

I watched from my 9 as all the guys who had jumped up and touched the net crowded around the coach. He held the list over their heads until they stopped grabbing for it and got in line. The minute hand moved from the three to the five while they were signing. I kept trying to go out to stand in the line with all the others even if my shorts wouldn't stay up and even if I couldn't touch the net. My feet were glued to my 9 though. All I could do was lean forward.

The coach took the list from the last guy. "Is that everybody?"

"I think Richard would be a good player," I heard Bryan say from his 10. My smile deflated when he laughed after he said it. Coach Bowker walked right over in front of me. He looked down past the whistle he always had in his hand and said, "Well, how about it, Richard? Do you want to play football next year?" "yeah!" And I stepped off my 9.

—Richard George

## The Descent

I'm at the top now  
my mind racing  
a quick surveying glance  
push off.

Take it easy at first  
bend and cautiously descend  
pace quickens  
weave b

a  
c  
k  
a  
n  
d  
f  
o  
r  
t  
h

Watch out  
a deceiving mogul  
sail over and land steady  
I've gained control now.

The slope levels out  
I glide  
then slow to a stop  
I've completed another exam.

—Carol Turner

# Once Those Brackets Are Gone

In my bedroom is a dresser and sitting on top of that dresser is a great big mirror. It's not just any mirror, it's my mirror. Every morning I get up and peer into it, reminding myself what I look like. This has been going on for quite some time now and I've occasionally wondered if it was time for a new one. I have to admit that this one does the job but it's not attached quite right. It leans forward slightly, like an old man, all hunched over and tired. We bought it when I was a kid. Back then, it stood proud and erect. If you looked in it sideways, everything was reflected perfectly. I used to hang little college pennants all over the brown wooden frame. It was my dad's collection and he gave them to me to put up. He never went to college but I figured they were important because he collected them. As a young boy I'd see myself surrounded by all those pennants. I didn't spend a lot of time in front of the mirror, just enough to plaster down an unruly cowlick with a little spit and then I'd take off for school.

While I was in fifth grade I discovered that the crack between the glass and the frame was perfect for wedging in baseball cards and other stuff. In time, all of the pennants had been lowered, folded and put away. All those hopes and dreams of the future had given in to the demands of consumerism. The new image I saw was full of surprise packages and bonus offers. Every time I got up and looked at myself in the mirror, I saw Mickey Mantle, Batman and everything else that the 7-11 hopes you'll grow up to be.

The mirror endured the onslaught of paraphernalia that cluttered my life. It stood bravely in the face of acne, puberty, and the annual May Dance. Who knows when the little brackets that held it up straight got lost. I have a feeling it was the first time I moved out of the house. At least that's when I began to see things differently. The mirror didn't take that real well. It went through radical changes at that point. Everything was stripped from it. When I moved it into my new apartment it looked bare and lonely so I decided to cheer it up.

I began to shove concert tickets into the crack. Later on came backstage passes from all the rock and roll shows in Chicago. I pasted those right on the glass. The mirror was getting a lot of attention now. Friends would come over and stare at it for a while then walk a way commenting about how much they wished they had what the mirror was now wearing. The more backstage passes I stuck on it, the more my friends examined it. There was one problem though. I was getting so much stuff stuck on my mirror, I couldn't see myself. I had to sort through all that paraphernalia just to catch a glimpse of me. There was one space right in the middle large enough for me to see my face and I was careful to leave that open.

One morning I woke up and my girlfriend had scrawled "I LOVE YOU!" right in the middle. She used a thick black magic marker and had just about

covered the space I had left to see myself. I could see through it. But at the time, I didn't want to. The word LOVE covered my eyes and the top part of my head. The Y in YOU streaked across my cheek like a scar and I rubbed across it to make sure it wasn't real. For some reason it scared me. I left it there for the next several months. It was hard to see who I was. Not only that, the minute I walked away I would forget what I looked like. I knew it was still me but now I had to fill in what was missing from the reflection. I tried hard to remember what I really looked like. My memory kept sending up images of Mickey Mantle, Batman and college pennants. I was confused.

I finally had to take everything off the mirror and start again with a clean reflection. I spent a lot of time cleaning it off yet I can still see the faint outline of the scar. Sometimes I stare in it and wonder why as I rub my cheek. It still leans forward and it takes some adjustment on my part to see things reflected perfectly yet with such a clear picture, it's hard to walk away and forget what I look like. I don't think I'll ever be able to find those brackets. You see, I've never seen a mirror quite like this one and once those brackets are gone, they're gone.

—David Carlson

## **Sterility is**

built-in desks  
and computer card tests

cement walls  
and dim lit halls

assigned seating  
and dull books for reading

seven-thirty classes  
and weekend passes

but saddest of all,  
glamour and vanity  
based on textbook christianity

—Cynthia Youngman

# Buy American

Curtain drawn. Lights fade to ON. Home of Rev. Reginald Jerry P. Rootnell. Kitchen. Table, two chairs, white refrigerator. Rev. Rootnell, 32 years older than his cold cup of coffee, is seated on one of the chairs. Hands folded loosely beside his plate of scrambled grade Bs, he calls upon his Maker.

Rev. Rootnell:

Oh Lord, I'm 32 years old and sick of life. I've been mugged three times patronizing the subway in this wretched city. I told myself I would buy a car. So I did. Yesterday while creeping through traffic, my car died. I spent 30 minutes waiting for the chance to push my car over to the median. Cars behind me were honking and a guy motioned for me to come over to his car. I figured he was a mechanic and was about to offer help. When I leaned over and looked into his smoke-filled Continental, he instructed me to do something that I'm sure is anatomically impossible. After my car was out of traffic, I popped the hood and was smelling a burned-out engine when three native Chicagoans approached me and gave me further instructions. After handing them my watch, billfold, tie clip, cuff-links, Swiss army knife, engraved Cross pen, and my wing tips (which my parents had just given me two weeks ago!), they jogged back to their car while frequently turning back, pointing and laughing.

(pause)

God, You called me to come preach here five years ago. I've tried, I've really tried to keep a good attitude, but I can't take any more persecution. Have I done something wrong?

God:

What kind of a car were you driving?

Rev. Rootnell:

A Subaru, why?

(pause)

God:

I let you off easy.

Lights fade to black. Curtain closes.

—Jay Martinson

## It's in the Cards

When it comes to love,  
I'm always dealt the  
Old Maid.

—Lysa Johnson

# Home Is Where the Heart Is

I found my way to the big glass doors and searched the darkness. There was no sign of Maggie. When I stepped outside, I walked into a wall of humidity and instantly remembered I needed a bath and a bed. Twenty-four hours on a plane put me 9,000 miles from home. I was tired. I was tired of airplane food, smiling stewardesses, and crowded airports. This was Singapore! And I was too tired to care.

"I need sleep," I told Maggie when she pulled up. We drove to a wonderful hotel that had all the luxury I needed—a hot bath and a comfortable bed.

The next morning we left for Jakarta Indonesia, where Maggie lived. It was only a short flight from Singapore, but a long wait in customs. "They're crooks," Maggie whispered. "You just have to wait it out unless you pay."

A shifty-eyed customs agent fingered his black moustache and looked at us accusingly. He began his search and when he hesitated in my tote bag, I grew pale. Were aspirins considered illegal drugs? My heart stopped beating until he finally waved us toward the parking lot where Maggie's car waited.

I leaned back in my seat as she drove, assuming my role as the foreigner. It was like traveling through a *National Geographic*, seeing dark-skinned people shuffling about in the heat, a bare-breasted mother nursing her child. It was hot, humid and dirty. Grass huts and weary vendors dotted the sides of this new highway that overflowed with tiny foreign cars. They honked endlessly, weaving in and out, cutting us off. I kept braking. Maggie laughed. "Relax, you'll get used to it."

When we turned off the main road I took a deep breath, and then we hit our first pot-hole. This government didn't think much of road repairs. Maggie maneuvered the car expertly, but we still hit more holes than we missed. "Will I get used to this too?" I asked. We bumped along for several minutes before we reached her house. To my surprise, an Indonesian maid greeted us.

She was small, but not very thin. Weren't people starving over here? She had long black hair, but it was bushy, not soft and smooth. Her white blouse was dingy, her skirt wrinkled. And she wore sandals on her dusty feet. Her face was round. Slightly slanted eyes studied me and a childish smile beamed with eagerness—an eagerness to please. Maggie introduced us. "This is Sulami."

"Selamat pagi," she nodded shyly.

"Good day," Maggie replied and the little maid shuffled off.

"So you've got a maid now," I teased.



"For \$20.00 a month you'd have one too!" Maggie said. "Labor is cheap here, Lauren. You'll find a very different way of life. So, what do you want to see first?"

"My bed—I'm tired already."

Maggie understood. "It took me a couple of weeks to get my body clock reset. It's the middle of the night back home. Come on."

We walked through a large living room with glass doors all along one wall. I could see the lawn and it was 95 percent dirt.

"Guess you don't have to mow too often," I joked.

Maggie laughed. "No, but the gardener comes weekly to trim the bushes and . . ."

"You have a gardener?"

". . . and to cut the bananas off the banana tree."

"You have a banana tree?"

"This isn't Chicago, friend. Welcome to the tropics!"

The bedrooms were upstairs. They were roomy and comfortable and the hum of the air conditioner lulled me to sleep. Maggie woke close to dinner and helped me unpack. "Just throw your dirty clothes over there. Sulami will wash them tomorrow."

"What does she do, take them down to the river and scrub them on the rocks?"

"Very funny. We have a w-a-s-h-i-n-g m-a-c-h-i-n-e."

I soon found myself in a combination laundry room/bathroom outside the kitchen door next to the maid's cubicle. There stood a washing machine, looking like it came right out of a Sear's catalogue.

"All the comforts of home," Maggie said. "Just don't drink the water!"

Just then Sulami shuffled by. Dinner was served.

We sat down to an exotic feast, pleasing to my sense of sight and smell. Spicy chicken and rice, papaya, bananas and a strange mix of herbed vegetables were piled on my plate. The spices tingled in my mouth and lingered there long after dinner. But my pleasure turned to an intestinal disaster by bedtime.

"Why don't we have hamburgers tomorrow night?" I asked Maggie. And then I said a rushed "Good night" and headed for my room.

I always hoped for a restful sleep each night when I went to bed. But the twelve hour time difference between Indonesia and home continued to gripe me. By mid-afternoon I was completely out of energy, needing a nap, and at 3:00 A.M. I'd wake up ready for action. Sometimes the air conditioner would hum me back to sleep. But often I would hear curious chantings outside my window. I'd listen for awhile and wonder, until I fell back to sleep.

One night, curiosity wouldn't let go and I decided to creep downstairs and spy. I looked out the kitchen screen door and saw what I guessed to be a party. Several Indonesians were visiting Sulami and some strange-looking food was scattered here and there. A half-eaten smoked fish looked right at me from a plate near the door and I felt discovered. Off in the darkness, over the protective wall around the houses, I heard voices chanting again. Sulami and her friends faced the wall, knelt down and began chanting too. In the middle of the night they all partied and prayed! Sulami noticed me and beamed a smile. I wanted to run and hide, but she was already shuffling over. "Selamat pagi," I stammered, red-faced.

"Selamat malam," she corrected, for it was now night.

"I need a drink," I continued foolishly, as she understood little English. I pointed to the bottled water, poured a glass and backed out of the kitchen. "See you," I said. She smiled and I escaped to my room.

It was late morning when Maggie finally roused me, fed me a quick breakfast and hustled me over to a Batik store. Indonesians are famous for this unusually designed cloth. This store had stacks of t-shirts, tablecloths and napkins, racks of skirts, dresses and shirts. It was a tourist's heaven. I spent an hour trying on and looking around. But the lack of air conditioning finally wore me out and I signaled to my friend. Instead of heading for the exit, she dragged me to the back of the store. "I want you to see how they make Batik cloth," she said.

We walked through a small room to a doorway where the floor turned to dirt. I looked up and saw a dozen Indonesians working at the Batik process. The women sat on stools, designing the cloth with hot wax. The men labored over large steaming vats of dye. It was stifling hot under a low canopy that sagged in the middle. The sun beat down around them and several chickens pecked at the dirt floor. One by one the workers looked up and smiled at us with great pride. They had those beaming smiles—that same eagerness to please. Maggie sighed, gave me a hug and we headed for home.

A few days later my friend left me on my own while she ran some errands. Sulami had disappeared somewhere and my day of relaxation soon turned to boredom. I decided to invade whatever was beyond the protective wall around these houses.

I walked to the end of the dirt road and could see a village around the corner. A few Indonesians gathered near a hut talking and laughing, suddenly quiet as I approached. I took a deep breath, my heart pounding. "Selamat pagi," I choked out.

"Selamat pagi," they sang in unison, nodding slowly as I scattered a group of pecking chickens with my presence.

A familiar sound reached my ears and I turned quickly. Little children were playing with large hollow dried reeds, cracking them together in a rhythmic pattern. This is what woke me every morning like an alarm!

"Hallo, hallo!" they called excitedly. And they gathered around me like I was a new toy. I couldn't understand one word they said, but I saw the innocence of their smiles. I felt the acceptance in their touch. I smiled and patted a few heads. Then I walked toward the edge of the village down by the canal.

I had heard about the canal. It was the Indonesian life-line. They used it for cooking water, drinking water, bath water, laundry water, and toilet water. The government was in the process of developing a sanitation system, but millions of villagers needed water—any water—now.

An old woman was at the canal doing her wash, wringing and twisting a worn, but colorful dress. She was wearing one just like it. It hung loosely on her bony frame. I stood staring as she spread the garment over a bush to dry in the sun. When she had it just right, she flashed me a toothless grin, picked up another dress and followed the same technique. A vendor's call broke my trance and I jumped out of the way. Not-so-fresh fish hung from his cart, their dried-up

eyes looking on with indifference. I returned his smile and then returned to the house, feeling a strange peace.

Two days later my vacation ended and I was faced with good-byes. As we packed the car, Maggie said she hoped the highway wasn't as wild as usual. "Relax," I said, "I'm used to it!" The car was loaded.

Sulami had shuffled over earlier and was now standing close by. It was time to go.

I turned toward the little maid. "See you," I said and tears began crawling down my cheeks. She hugged me tightly and patted my cheek. I looked at her childish face and got into the car. She stood at the roadside. When we hit our first pot-hole I looked back, and I carried her beaming smile all the way home.

—Sue Nockels

## KOOL

There's only one way to play it.

KOOL

Wherever the music is hot the taste is,

KOOL

At any tar level there's only one sensation  
this *refreshing*.

KOOL

This brand of life is,

KOOL

Milds King 11 mg. tar, .8 mg. nicotine,

KOOL

Filter Kings 17 mg. tar, 1.1 mg. nicotine,

KOOL

There's only one way to play it.

KOOL

Warning: The Surgeon General has determined  
that cigarette smoking is *dangerous*  
to your health.

KOOL, Real Kool.

—Mark Blaschak

# My Place

I noticed, about a year ago, when I walked out to my favorite place to sit and read, that for the first time that year some of the leaves on the trees were not completely green. They were beginning to die, and yet I hadn't noticed until after I had seen a few dead leaves blowing around on the ground. I don't suppose the leaves knew that they were dying—had been dying—since the day they had come, full-blown and green, earlier in the year. Death comes slowly, and does not announce its arrival until it had already gone away with its prize. Death never told Grandpa much at all until the moment he fell off the log he was sitting on, talking to me. Death let Grandpa know when he hit the ground, already cold, but not before. It seems as if he died so quickly, although I guess he had been dying for a long time, but just didn't know it until after he was through with living. Even though the leaves are dead now, I think I won't tell them to do anything different than to hold on for dear life, just like they're already doing.

The path out of town and through the woods was still clear of most of the few leaves that had fallen, so the walk to my reading spot by the pond was a quiet one. I took a familiar trail through the woods, one that most people take and nearly everybody knows about, but I still called it my path. Ownership of something like a path isn't so much in who uses it, but in how it is used and what it is at the end. That's why I called it mine: I was the only one still living who took that path to go and sit by an old rock near some logs next to a pond just to read.

On that day, I made my way to a certain special log and leaned back like I usually did to take in the view. Down there by the pond I couldn't even tell I was near to town. There weren't any city noises or city problems to worry about; just the geese who hadn't yet migrated south, and me with my book. The view of the pond seemed so much nicer when I didn't think about the city. It isn't a big city, to be honest: it's just a little town. And it wasn't so much the number of people in town I wanted to get away from as it was the few people there who bothered me. But there, by the pond, they couldn't spoil my view. Grandpa taught me that, and Grandpa sure knew what he was talking about.

"Just look in front of you, and don't think about nothing else," he'd say, so that's what I would always do. Just look ahead and enjoy the view.

There weren't any trees on the other side of the pond, so I could see for miles, especially when I got up on top of the rock. From there I could see all the way past the cornfields and to the next woods. I could see a lot down by the pond, too, but there I liked to look at things closer to me. I'd see fish bobbing cautiously, to avoid the geese, and the geese swimming just as carefully around the darker parts of the pond to stay away from the big snapping turtle that lived in the rocks in the deeper sections of the pond. Before I ever started to read I would be sure to look all around the pond to see it good so that I could read without stopping if I wanted to. That's what I did that last time I was there, too. I tried to keep reading without looking up at the view, and that's hard, because it's such a nice view.

I sat there, by that special log of mine, and started to read after taking in the view. I didn't get very far, though, before the geese on the pond started to make so much noise that I had to stop reading. Either the geese had wandered too close to the turtle's spot or the turtle had moved from where the geese expected him to be, because the geese were all screaming at the turtle. The geese kept it

up for a while until finally the turtle left to go back to his deeper waters. But the geese didn't stop their noise-making. It almost seemed as if they were being noisy just for something to do.

I put my bookmark into place so that I could try to get them to stop. I tried everything, it seems, but they just kept right on being noisy. Finally, I started throwing rocks to get their attention. That didn't seem to work, either, until I tried throwing them closer and closer, and then I decided to hit one of them, just to startle him and make him shut up.

I looked around for just the right stone to throw. Right there where I had been sitting I found a nice one. I pried it out of the ground, cleaned it, and took careful aim. Then I let go of it and let it sail to the bothersome geese. It smacked one of them hard on the side of its head. That poor goose shrieked with a startled, painful cry, and then rested, calm and still on the surface of the pond. The rest of the geese started squawking even louder before quieting down to a low, mournful and rhythmic honking.

I looked around, embarrassed, even though I knew there was no one around. I stared hard to see if the goose would move. But he wouldn't and he never did. I felt my face and neck slowly start to burn with shame. I felt like so many leaves smoldering in a street gutter. Just then, the big snapping turtle came to the surface and snatched the goose down to the depths of his home.

"Well, at least something good will come of all this," I said as I turned back, away from the pond, and to my book.

But in the excitement of it all, my bookmark had fallen out. I had lost my place, so I decided to go home.

That was a year ago, and I haven't been back to that private place of mine since. I don't know if that path belongs to anybody now or if the geese still swim there. I don't think about that pond much anymore, but I was just reminded of it when I saw some of the first leaves of autumn turn brown and found myself wondering if the leaves are really dying sooner this year, or if things just seem that way.

—Philip Davisson

## My First Day

All packed up  
New yellow pencils  
Pink gummy erasers  
Fat crayons  
Round ended scissors  
Fat lined paper  
A Mickey Mouse painting smock  
A nap mat  
Excited  
Ready

—Marty Erickson

# A Snob For All Seasons

Mark Emerson moved toward the director's desk while throwing his script on the floor. The director's exasperated face showed this was the fifth time Mark had walked off-stage to complain. The other members of the cast were agitated as well.

"I simply refuse to do a scene that entails the punching of my face!" Mark pompously shouted.

The director, who had remained calm, finally lost control and stood up while slamming his fist on the desk.

"That does it!" he exclaimed. "I am not going to re-write an entire production for your satisfaction!"

"Then I'll quit," returned the overly-confident actor.

"Then quit," the director stated after regaining his composure.

After a self-righteous walk out of the auditorium and a look of disgust, Mark headed toward the lunchroom. He leaned against the south wall of the cafeteria and watched the students as they got their lunches and found places to sit in the spacious dining room. Looking down on everyone in the room, he thought about how childish and idiotic they were. He was glad he didn't have to behave like them.

"I am astounded at the cretious boobs that pace through this area thinking they have the remotest form of intelligence!" he sternly said to himself.

Everyone that walked by the end of the room saw the majestic stone-faced Mark. They immediately noticed his looks of disapproval every time an undesirable walked by and the way he nervously ran his fingers through his wavy brown hair when he thought someone was daring to examine him.

A far, out of the way, evacuated table caught Mark's eye. He approached it and sat down while his mind began to wander. Losing weight occupied his thoughts. His two-hundred pound physique was all that kept him from a career on Broadway. Height was no problem, he thought to himself. After all, he was nearly 5'7. Diets were not Mark's cup of tea. The various plans are impossible to stick to, Mark rationalized.

A group of nearby students caught his attention. He envied them as they sat together enjoying themselves, but then thought that coterie and cliques were childish. This caused him to angrily leave the lunchroom.

In his next class he sat all by himself in an isolated corner of the room. A scruffy student who had arrived late had no choice but to sit by Mark. He looked toward every other seat in desperation to find another spot but he couldn't. As he sat down several members of the class were laughing and giggling to each other.

The guy wore a smelly old jean jacket and ragged pants. His hair was all over his face, and his smoke breath, along with other various odors, was more than offensive. He kept staring at Mark with a look of disbelief on his face.

Mark was doing the same thing. He could not believe such a creature could possibly exist. He scanned him head to toe many times and kept rolling his eyes back in amazement. Mark looked directly into his eyes and gave an undeniable look of repulse.

"What's your problem fat boy?" the long haired guy shot back.

"Nothing," Mark hostilely replied.

The guy then leaned over toward Mark and let out a tremendously loud burp in Mark's face and returned, "Now you do chubbs."

"You unsophisticated plant-witted goon," yelled Mark as he stood to his feet. "Can't you find another recreational pastime?"

The guy's face turned beet red as he threw back his chair, slammed Mark's books to the floor, and hurled his fist into Mark's face. Mark's eyes grew to the size of frizbees as he hit the floor with great velocity. His head began to throb, images fading in and out of his mind. Everything was swimming around him and his head became heavier and heavier.

The students in the class laughed at Mark as he slowly picked himself off the floor. He staggered out of the room holding his bloody mouth and headed toward the nurse's office. The last thing he saw as he left the room was a large group of students patting the guy on the back for his act of violence.

The teacher whose class Mark had just emerged from walked toward the class, which happened to be in Mark's direction. He noticed that Mark was bleeding and wondered what caused it. Knowing that Mark was in his class, the teacher approached him carefully.

"Are you all right?" the teacher asked.

"Perhaps if you were in your class at the assigned time, these events would cease to take place!" Mark accusingly barked at the teacher.

"What events?" returned the teacher.

"I've been hit, you buffoon!" he screamed as he stormed toward the nurse's office.

The teacher, stunned by that last statement, stood confused for a moment. He wasn't sure whether to laugh or be upset. He then concluded there was no way of telling anything when Mark was involved. No one knew him very well, or cared to. The teacher went on his way.

After recovering in the nurse's office, Mark regained his composure and majestically paraded down the hall toward his next class—alone. He didn't care that he had no friends. Even if everyone in the world punched him and hated him, Mark knew he was star material. There was no need to change. Mark believed he needed no one, and was glad. To him there was not one person worth knowing. He then sat down in his next class, looking down on everyone.

—Steve Gerhart

## Flight

Streaking silver jets  
are awesome; but nothing like God's  
floating butterflies.

—Mike Heckman

## Music . . . Sorta

The center of jazz  
Kansas City  
tight music  
kinda pretty  
sorta mellow  
a little wild

Band playin'  
a different beat  
mid-west  
kinda neat  
sorta cool  
a little swing

Improvisation  
with a sax  
trumpet, drums  
rhythms max  
kinda hip  
sorta different  
a little me.

—Nanci Aylor

## Broken Vows

When the spell was broken  
it broke with a snap.  
I awoke as from a nap to  
find the dream  
I had been dreaming  
an illusion after all.

Suddenly I was my real self,  
Cinderella after the ball.  
It was quick . . .  
It was final . . .  
Like I imagine the soul  
leaving the body after death  
I loved you . . . loved you not  
all in the same breath.

—Jennifer Arnold



# Chiller

"C'mon in," I heard a voice say from the other room. Grasping the door handle, I pulled it towards me and the springs connected to the screen made a loud creaking sound. The living room was dark, unoccupied. Turning left, I headed through the kitchen toward the light in the den. "The kids have had their supper," she explained, "and are almost ready for bed." Grabbing her coat and purse hurriedly, she started for the door with her husband, stopping once to yell back "there's groceries in the refrigerator—help yourself to whatever you want. We'll see you later."

Turning back towards the den, I glanced at the clock. Quarter till nine. The two kids would be going to bed at nine, so it was going to be an easy night. Looking down I saw two pairs of eyes staring up at me. I knew it was my move. "Well boys, it's up to you. You have control of the TV till bedtime. Your mom says you have to go to bed at nine o'clock so you've got about fifteen minutes."

The kitchen clock clicked whenever the hour hand moved. Nine o'clock. "It's about that time, guys," I said. "Do you want a glass of milk before you go to bed?"

Fifteen minutes and two storybooks later, I shut off the light in the hall and walked back to the den. Even though the TV was still on, the house seemed quiet. October. It was still warm enough to go without running the furnace, but it was cool enough to feel the chill in the air. The wind rustled outside and made the boards on the house rattle. I walked to the back door. The back of the house faced an empty field and in the middle of the yard was a huge oak tree that cast shadows across the porch. I shivered and turned back to the light of the family room. The TV Guide listed a movie coming on that sounded interesting. A suspense thriller. Deciding whether or not it would be a good idea to watch it, I studied the other options. Another movie was on but it had started an hour earlier. The other channel was showing a series rerun. I'll start watching the horror movie, I thought. If it gets too scary I'll just change channels.

Grabbing the blanket on the couch, I curled up in the corner seat and focused my eyes on the television. The movie was called "Halloween." It was about a babysitter being terrorized by an escaped killer with a knife on October 31st. I kept reminding myself that it would probably be best to turn the channel and watch one of the other shows but after the first 45 minutes I was too involved in the plot. I was also getting more reluctant to move.

As the show progressed, the main character, a high school babysitter, became the focus of the killer's rage. Gradually, the action built to the climax in the final scene—the night of October 31st. After encountering the man with the knife in the house across the street and seeing the bloody remains of his victims, the babysitter ran back to the house where she was sitting and locked all the doors. As she watched out the front window, the man followed her across the street. She reached for the phone, but it was too late. He had broken in through the back screen door and she saw the reflection of the knife in the hall mirror.

My attention was rivited to the TV. Suddenly, as the man on the screen brought the knife down to strike his victim, the telephone rang. I screamed. It

rang again, but I was paralyzed in my seat. A big gust of wind stirred outside and the house shuddered. The phone rang again. I've got to answer that phone or it's going to wake up the children, I thought. Throwing the blanket off, I ran to the kitchen and picked up the receiver. The other line clicked just as I answered. They had hung up. Maybe they figured no one was home since I took so long to answer. They just got tired of waiting, I reassured myself.

Slowly, venturing down the hall towards the bedrooms, I peered into the children's rooms. Both were quietly sleeping. Shutting off the hall light once again, I glanced into the master bedroom. The window by the bed faced the backyard. The oak tree outside was swaying in the wind and the shadows of its branches were moving across the window. I could faintly hear the volume of the television above the sound of the wind. Touching the walls, I crept back down the hall through the kitchen and back to the family room, careful not to look at any windows.

The murderer in the movie had followed the babysitter upstairs. She was hiding from him in the closet, waiting, with a bent clothes hanger in her hand. Underneath the closet door she could see his shadow approaching. He rattled the knob on the closet door. The sound was louder than usual as I realized someone was rattling the back doorknob. I gripped the corner of the blanket as I heard the door begin to open.

"Well, how were they?" she asked smiling as she and her husband drifted into the house. "Oh, fine," I answered faintly waiting for my heart to stop pounding.

Turning on the kitchen light at home, I set my keys on the table and saw a note addressed to me. "Beth," it said, "I tried to call you tonight but there was no answer. You must have been putting the kids to bed or something. Anyway, the woman down the block in the yellow house called to see if you could babysit for her next weekend."

—Beth Dumey

## Heaven

Children glisten  
in silver robes,  
playing  
HOPSCOTCH  
with  
pure copper pennies  
on  
bright streets of gold.

—Deborah Starkweather

# The Devil You Say

Bob stepped out into the chilled October air. The party was great and he hated to leave. But it was almost midnight and he had promised Mom he would be home by twelve. He was going to be a little late but he thought she wouldn't mind. After all, he had taken Tommy out trick-or-treating earlier that evening even though he didn't want to. Bob hated trick-or-treating. Oh sure, he had liked it when he was a kid but he was almost eighteen now. He was too old for that kind of stuff. Still, he liked hearing the small trick-or-treaters giggling and laughing as they ran from house to house, their cheap plastic costumes crackling in the evening breeze. Halloween would not be the same without them.

As he drove home from the party, Bob looked out into the night sky. What a perfect Halloween—the sky overcast and gloomy, the moon shining through a hole in the clouds giving the landscape an eerie glow. Bob shivered a little and sat back in his seat. He was driving on a four-lane country highway surrounded by forest which came right up to the edge of the road. The trees on either side of the road reached overhead across the pavement towards one another. There was no one on the road tonight except him and another car about a mile ahead.

Bob looked down at the devil's mask lying on the seat beside him. He had worn it at the party tonight. The mask was red and its face was pretty grotesque, Bob thought. The nose ended in a point and had a wart on it. The mouth was curled into a snarl showing fangs. There was a small goatee on its chin and two little horns were sticking out of its forehead. Bob had bought the mask two years ago and had scared quite a few people with it since then. He laughed to himself at the taillights of the car ahead of him and smiled. One more scare wouldn't do any harm, now would it? After all, tonight was Halloween.

Bob grabbed the devil's mask and put it on. He then pushed the accelerator to the floor. After a few minutes he caught up with the car, a big black Cadillac limousine, its rear windows tinted black so the inside couldn't be seen. Bob pulled up beside the Cadillac, rolled down his window, stuck his head out and began screaming as loud as he could. He could hardly keep from laughing all the time he was screaming. He pulled ahead a little more to scare the driver of the limo and as he looked into the front of the car his screaming abruptly stopped. There was no one driving. The front seat was completely empty. Bob could see trees whizzing by on the other side of the front window.

Confused, Bob turned his attention to the rear window of the limo. It was opening. Bob tried not to scream when he saw the face in the window. It was a man's head but all resemblance to a man ended there. Its eyes were glowing a fiery red that pierced the darkness. On its forehead, two little points of flesh were sticking out. It was smiling and it had fangs—long gleaming white fangs. It raised one of its hands, gave Bob a little wave and then said something. Bob couldn't hear what it said but he could read its lips. The lips said: Bye-Bye.

The limousine suddenly swerved and slammed into the side of Bob's car. Bob lost control and his car went off the road smashing through several small

trees before finally coming to a halt about thirty feet off the road. Stunned, Bob opened the door of the car and fell out. He couldn't believe what had happened.

A car was stopping along the road thirty feet away. Bob hoped it was somebody stopping to help. He looked up towards the road and choked back a sob. It was the black limousine. The thing in the back seat had gotten out of the car and was walking towards Bob. It had a man's body and was dressed in a spotless, black tuxedo. A dying carnation was stuck in the lapel of the suit. Strung around its neck and flowing behind it like a dark river was a long cape. The thing was still smiling. Bob tried to get up and run but it was no use. He was too overwhelmed by what was happening to be able to do much of anything. The thing in the tuxedo stopped in front of Bob and stared at him. Then it spoke in the most dreadful voice Bob had ever heard. It was like two different voices coming from the same mouth.

"Hello Bob," it said. "Nice to see you."

"Y-Y-You know my name," Bob said, shivering.

"Oh, I know everyone's name at one time or another. I see you had a little accident. That is a shame. Oh please, don't get up on my account. You look fine lying just where you are. In fact, in a few minutes, that will be your permanent position."

The thing reached down, grabbed Bob by the neck and picked him up. He was still wearing the devil's mask and the thing reached out and tore it off Bob's face. "Not a very good likeness of me, is it? Really, I wish they would get it right. I had that wart removed years ago."

Bob forced a sentence out, "W-W-Who are you?"

"Oh come on Bob. You mean you haven't figured that out yet? I thought you would at least be intelligent enough to figure out who I am."

Bob began crying. "I know who you are. You're the Devil! Oh my Go—aaack!"

The Devil squeezed Bob's neck to the breaking point. "You almost said a bad word Bob! Don't ever say that name in front of me! I don't like it and if you say it again I'll kill you on the spot!"

"You're going to kill me anyway aren't you?"

"Of course I am. I was just lonely and needed someone to talk to. But now I grow tired of talking, Bob. I'm afraid it's time for you to die."

The Devil began squeezing Bob's neck again. His sharp fingernails punctured Bob's skin and Bob started screaming. He screamed and screamed and screamed.

Then the pain eased. The Devil had loosened his grip. "Now that's the sound I like to hear. It's music to my ears. You're lucky, Bob. I'm feeling kind tonight. I'll let you live. After all, it's Halloween. It's my time of year to do a few good deeds and letting you live is one of them."

The Devil threw Bob against the wrecked car, knocking him unconscious. The Devil turned and began walking towards his car. "Good-bye, Bob. It's been fun. Who knows. Maybe we'll meet again someday. And Bob, do drive more carefully." The Devil climbed back into his limo and the car took off down the road.

—Daniel Miller

## **Balance**

We played on the see-saw.  
I saw you grow up.  
I see you grown.

I saw you off to sea.  
I can't see you but I once saw you.

The see-saw is unbalanced without you.

—Deborah Starkweather

## **By the Book**

See Johnny.  
See Johnny write.  
See Johnny write English.  
See the empty form.  
See the mindless words.  
See the wasted time and effort.  
See the teacher appeased.  
See Johnny wither and die.  
See           write.  
See the clone.

—Carrie Matson

## **Library**

Some study  
Some chat  
Some do everything but that.

Hustle through the aisles  
Flipping through the books  
Some are there  
Just for looks.

—Deborah DeVidal

## Cover Girl

A large white cloud  
covered  
the sun but you couldn't see it  
because a long white shade  
covered  
the window but you couldn't tell  
because a large white backdrop  
covered  
the camera's eye as it clicked  
for that face  
and you'd never know  
there was  
a little girl  
buried  
under all that  
unless she cried  
but you couldn't help her  
because a long white mink  
covered  
her slender frame  
and stopped  
all of her tears  
from actually  
touching her.

—David Carlson

## A Martyr's Goodnight

When the steadfast stones  
Had produced his peaceful pains,  
Stephen said his prayers  
And went to sleep.

—Philip Davisson

## Definition

Ice cream is  
frozen fat globules dripping  
with sugar  
tongue-tempting and  
throat-soothing.

Ice-cream is  
a dieter's downfall  
smooth and creamy cheat treat  
that melts  
to a nauseating sweetness  
laced with guilt.

—Sue Nockels

## Parents

keep your ha N ds off the wall  
w A sh the dishes  
G o to your room

fi N ish your homework  
t A ke out the garbage  
sweep out the G arage

stop that fighti N g  
A sk your father  
have a G ood time.

—Carol Turner

