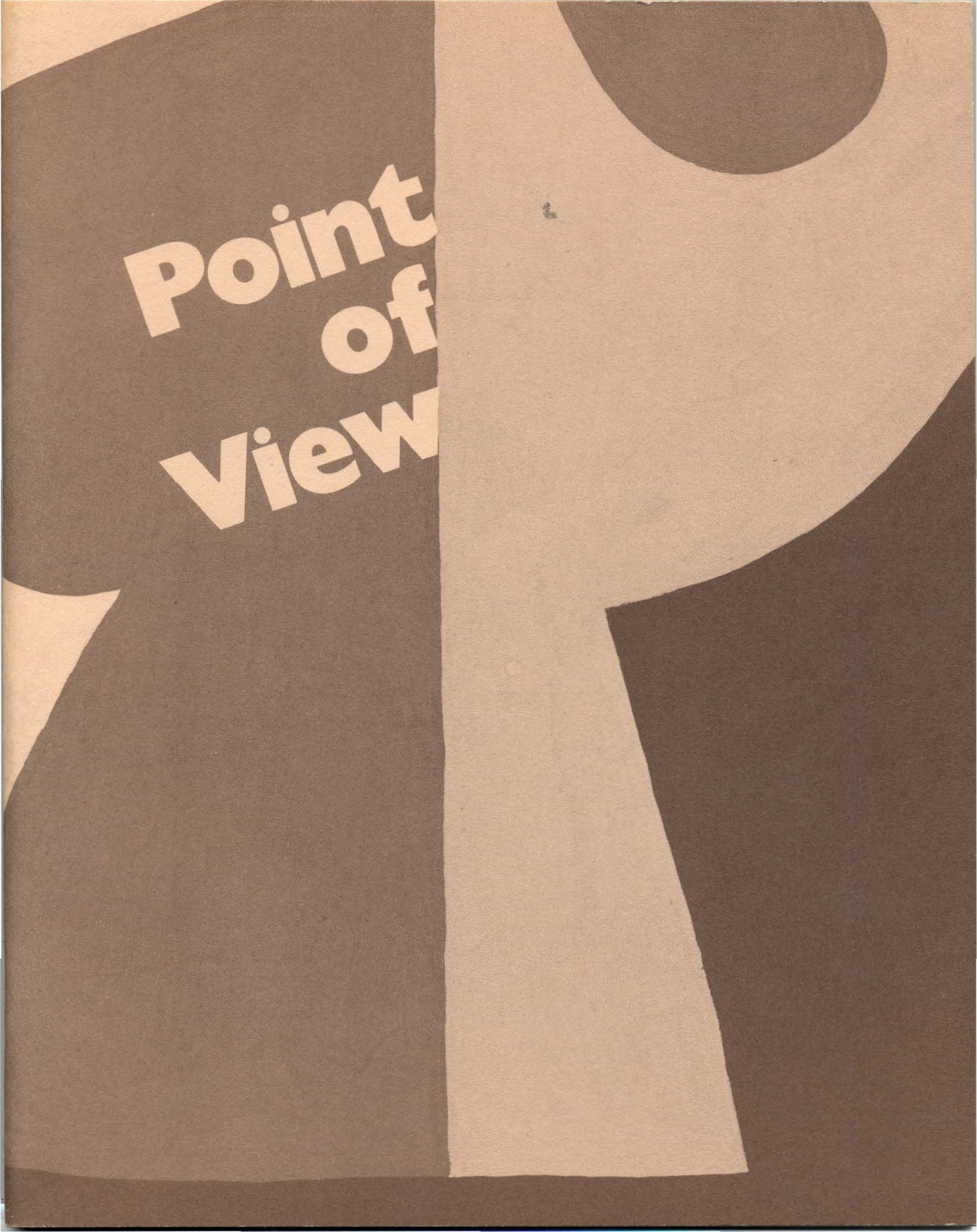


**Point  
of  
View**

The background of the page is composed of large, abstract, geometric shapes in two shades of brown: a dark brown and a light tan. The shapes are irregular and overlapping, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text 'Point of View' is printed in a bold, white, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right, positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page.

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## A High School Classroom

Al Balaz

A high school classroom.  
The fluorescent tube encrusted ceiling;  
Shining varnished desks in rows;  
A young, suited, monotoning teacher,  
His chalk clicking and scuffling along the blackboard,  
Trailing white;  
Restless bodies, rustling papers.

A boy is stretching and yawning in his seat.  
A friend spits  
And the spittle lands in the middle  
Of the yawning chasm  
Of the yawner's mouth.

The stretch stops, a forward lurch.  
His disgust furrowed face, his inner revulsion.  
He revolts at the alien spittle,  
Forgetting his mouth is full of his own saliva.

Secret snickers.  
The teacher turns quickly,  
Faces cherubic faces,  
And queries, "What is going on?"

Roy Stafford



## Lines of Feelings

Leslie Keress

Lines of feelings written on paper  
Explodin' like a volcano  
As the red hot, steaming lava runs  
Over screaming life.

Feelings are too weak to remain in  
                                Silence,  
Even without paper the poem  
                                Is still there  
                                If you are.

## I Think I've Been

Victoria L. Hale

I think I've been  
Your easy chair long enough  
My upholstery is worn and ragged,  
My legs ready to collapse.  
I'm afraid  
I must ask you now  
To go sit somewhere else.

# Late Last Night

Victoria L. Hale

Late last night  
I tore you apart  
With my tiger's teeth  
But found I could not swallow  
Your conscience.

So I let it remain there  
In the darkened doorway  
Among the other indigestible organs  
Your brain  
Your heart  
And your left hand.

# Final Point

Wendy Cristoph

Yes  
The game is over now.  
You  
Scored the final point,  
You  
Had the last word . . .  
Last laugh  
Last thought.  
The game?  
Love  
At which  
I seem to be  
A loser.  
Maybe  
I should read the rules  
Again,  
Let's play  
Once more . . .  
Maybe  
Just maybe  
The next time,  
I'll make the final point  
And the score will be  
On my side.

Mark Byckowski



# It's Hard

Linda Patterson

With spring coming, it's hard to think of leaving.  
The snow will soon be gone  
(It's been here for too long),  
And the grass will soon need mowing.  
While it's cold and empty here, I could go.  
I'd leave you and everything,  
Just to be warm again.  
But now, as springtime nears,  
You look better to me  
(Just like it used to be),  
And I guess I'll stay till fall.

With spring coming, it's hard to think of going.  
The kites will soon dot the windy skies  
(To see you flying one would be a surprise),  
And the mothers and buggies will litter the parks.  
Since it's still cold here, I could go.  
I could easily leave you behind,  
Just to feel the sun.  
But I'm starting to smell the flowers,  
And I just missed the bus  
(I was thinking too much of us).  
I guess I'll stay till fall.

Roy Stafford





## A Wingless Flight

**Leslie Keress**

On these frozen, cold winter days,  
And empty blue skies as if,  
But obviously not a warm summer sun  
Of running days, swinging ways,  
Winter still plays

As the wind secretly hides and blows  
My dry covered face,  
And the bare trees naked  
They are without shivering at ease  
With all seasons to embrace,  
And erase  
    The coming.

The coming cuddled and curled up  
Makes a death wish so pleasant,  
But tomorrow flames as circling  
Seasons pass I drink yet another hot cup  
Of chocolate.

On these frozen beginningless winter days  
Minutes crawl away to leave me stranded  
In the palm of my own wrinkled hand.  
I cunningly fly out of sight my cancelled ways  
To yours.

Red lips and a blind walk left me  
As yours to question how?  
And why my feet never touched  
The ground?

## Definition

**Wendy Cristoph**

What are you?  
Who are you?  
A cackling  
Smelling of tobacco  
Brown eyed  
Weasle like creature . . .  
Breath of brandy  
Kiss like candy  
Incoherent fool . . .  
Wrinkled hands  
Tired feet  
Whiskery mustache  
Tickling my nose  
Coordination like a  
Grizzly bear . . .  
Shoulder-length  
Wind blown  
Hair  
Muscular  
Natural  
Timberman  
You . . .

## Her Eyes

**Kenn Pearson**

Sheltered by a wild strand  
Of shadow-colored hair  
Was the moist mystery  
Of my love for her.  
Closed  
    To keep me out,  
Or closed  
To keep her in?

# Freezer

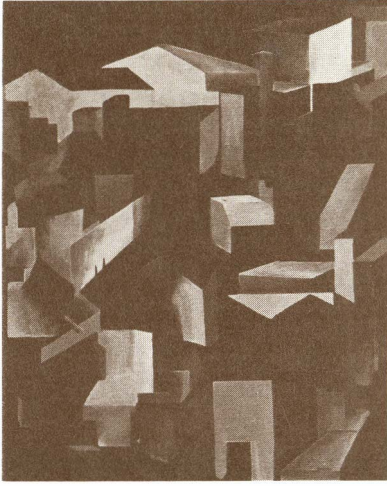
Jeanne Watson

Freezer loaded down and full  
Like a thirty year old virgin—  
Ready for anything, but only half alive  
In which frosty, icy packages of suspended foods  
Wait for higher degrees to give them life again  
And us life.

All our glorious green dollars  
Have filled your churning bulk  
Big white cube  
With forgotten wrapped items from the land of once-enthusiasm  
Enveloped like old love letters—  
Once thought of so well  
And now, very rarely.

Pieces of meals  
Looking for a menu  
Looking for a deft hand to nurse forgotten offerings  
Onto face-reflecting plates  
In colorful array to tempt our sated appetites

Freezer  
Great white King  
Reigning over our civilization  
Making our skin and fat and bones  
We feed thee  
And bow low to thee.



Carolyn Dodson

# Your Name

Kenn Pearson

Your name reminds me  
Of the quiet hours  
Of early morning  
When my thoughts lie  
Just beyond  
My grasp  
And rain plays  
At the clouded window.

# Mingles Barr

Jeanne Watson

He thinks I'm a lady  
I'm a lady, you bastard  
But what would you know  
Wrapped in your dry look  
Alone with your Mitchem  
A hit on the young ones' circuit  
I'm a woman  
And bloody  
And needing  
And you think I'm a lady, baby.



# Pappa

**Beverly Burton**

He grabbed the child's arm and jerked him up from the floor. The man's powerful grip pulled the floppy marionette without effort. He fell back into a large arm chair and pulled the child to his chest, wrapping his huge arms around the tiny, whimpering body. The three-year-old murmured quiet sounds and clung to the father's neck.

The child was extremely underdeveloped for his age. His skin fell in great folds on his arms and legs which were covered with marks and bruises. His face was sculptured with shallow, deep-set cheeks and large swollen eyes already red from tears the child was crying just moments earlier. His clothes, donated by a neighbor, hung around his body like the skin. A white T-shirt covered him like a dress, and the little dungarees were gathered at the waist with large safety pins; the cuffs rolled up to meet his bony ankles. The mismatched socks and disheveled hair was common to his appearance. His battered little fingers clenched his father's collar. He whispered softly to the large man, "Pa . . . Pa . . ."

"It's o.k. baby, everything is all right now. Just stay close to pappa and everything will be happy. Pappa will take good care of you now baby . . ." He placed one large hand on the child's head and pulled him close to his own neck.

The man stretched his long legs in front of him. His coarse black hair fell on the child as he bent down and kissed the tiny head. The child snuggled into him and closed its swollen eyes with contentment. The man rocked the child. His rough, calloused hands kept the child tucked within the man's arms. He continued rocking the child from side to side until his whole body carried the motion. He looked away from the quiet infant and glanced towards the floor. The tears which filled the man's dark eyes hopelessly fell to the ground.

It was the sound of the sirens which diverted his attention to the window. The man jumped up from the chair, causing the child to tumble from his lap to the floor. From the window the man could see three police cars lined up in front of the apartment building. The child crawled to the father and grasped his pant leg with his tiny fist. With one large step the man moved away from the window causing the child to lose



Anne Woodard

his grip. The man turned back towards the window with a swift turn, never noticing the child he barely missed tripping over.

“Pa . . . Pa . . .” the child whispered through cracked lips which were chapped and dry. The man glanced down.

“My poor baby! Pappa did not forget you!” He knelt down next to the child stroking the infant’s head as he spoke. “There are lumps here, poor baby. She should not hit you like that. She will never again hurt you, my child.” He pulled the boy close to him again. “She told me you were such a bad boy, not you, my baby!” The child snuggled close again, being covered in the huge man’s arms. “She told me you were clumsy, and you kept falling and getting bumps and bruises, but that wasn’t it was it, my baby; she gave you those bruises, and hurt your eyes and lips and arms.” He again rocked the child and gently touched the bruises. “Pappa caught her today though; I saw her hit you. I should have never believed her, but I came to help you, my baby. Your momma won’t be able to hurt you any more.” He closed his eyes and held the child tighter and tighter with every rocking motion.

There was a loud bang at the door. Startled, both the father and son opened their eyes.

“Mr. Johnson!” a voice called through the door. “What’s going on in there? One of the neighbors heard a gun shot!” The pounding became louder. “Are you in there? Is everything all right?” The father pushed the child aside and got on his hands and knees crawling across the floor. The shouting and banging became louder and more voices joined in the yelling.

“This is the Police!” one voice yelled. “Let us in!” The man reached over the limp woman’s body, and picked the gun up from the floor. He stood up and wiped the blood from the gun onto his shirt. The child outstretched his arms towards the man and cooed to be picked up. With the gun in one hand, he picked up the child from the floor and held him in the crook of his other arm. He could hear the voices outside, and the door began to splinter from the pounding.



“Mr. Johnson, we know you’re in there! Someone heard what they thought was your wife screaming, then a gun shot go off! Let us in, or we’re coming in after you!” The man moved to the far corner of the room and pointed the gun towards the door.

“Pa . . . Pa . . . ” the child whispered.

“Yes, baby, it’s o.k. Pappa will take care of you from now on, everything will be like it’s ’sposed to, we’ll find a new momma and everything will be so grand, we’ll have . . . ” Before he could finish, the policemen burst the door and flooded into the room. They stopped right inside the door though, and stared in horror at the bloody body of Mrs. Johnson sprawled on the floor.

“He’s got a gun!” one officer yelled.

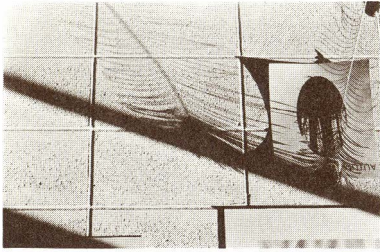
“I’ll hurt the child!” the man screamed. “Go away all of you! Leave us alone!” One officer stepped forward and the man pushed the weapon into the child’s side. “I’m telling you, I’ll hurt my baby!” The policemen moved back towards the door while the man slowly stepped across the room. When he got outside the door, he quickly pivoted on one foot to turn around to face the men in the doorway. He slowly began backing his way down the building stairs, never relieving his stare at the cops or taking the gun from the child’s side.

“Look!” he began to shout. “The boy’s half dead already! She would have beat him to death, too, if I hadn’t come in to stop her, she would have beat him to death!” The child cooed again and the father looked lovingly towards him. “You see, my baby, we will leave this place and be happy . . . ” A policeman came behind him hitting fast and hard. The child and the gun fell from the man’s grip at the same time. The attack succeeded and the huge body fell off guard and lost its balance. The policemen at his apartment door came running to the top of the stairs, one grabbing the child from the floor. The infant screamed, reaching his outstretched arms towards his fallen father.



Arlie Weiss





Tracy Monko

“Pa . . . Pa . . . ” His little voice became hoarse and his cries became whispers. The man’s head throbbed, even his knees gave way beneath him, and he went falling down the stairs. He tumbled step after step, rolling over and over. He felt his body become weak and limp as he struggled to stop the fall. His head kept bumping the sides, railing, and steps as he fell down the staircase. He tried grabbing the railing, but his once powerful arms could not even get within reach. He hit the bottom hard and laid in a heap when his descent had ended.

“B . . . aby . . . my . . . baby . . . ” The child’s gasping and raspy screams only echoed in the man’s head which already was beginning to feel hollow and empty. Two officers pulled his arms behind his back and tightly latched the cuffs, but the man could not even feel them on his wrists. The same two cops pulled him up from the ground, one officer on each arm. The huge man gave no resistance to their restraints. His head fell back in exhaustion.

“B . . . a . . . by . . . ” The officers dragged him out of the doorway. The child had not caught his breath. His body was thrown into convulsions from his dry, raspy heaving.

“Hey little guy, it’s o.k. Calm down, o.k.? It’s gonna be all right now.” The officer holding the child pulled him closer to his chest trying to comfort the little boy.

“We’ll take you away from that mean old man; he won’t be able to get you now. We’ll make sure he won’t hurt you any more. Hey Sam!” he yelled to another officer. “Will you take a look at this kid! How could anyone beat a child like this? For Christ’s sake, look at the shape this kid is in!”

“Yeah, there ought to be a law against parents like that . . . ” The child slumped into the officer’s arms from exhaustion.

“Pa . . . Pa . . . ” he whispered.

Michael Erikson



# Belchley Business

Tony Alexander

## A One-act play

### Characters:

Mr. Robert Belchley: President of a large conglomerate, paunchy, balding, in his 50's, wearing suit and tie.

Miss Frances Spinner: His secretary, prim, stuffy type, in her 40's. Efficient. Probably has held this job for ten years or more.

Mr. Joseph Anderson: Owner of a small hardware business, small in stature but physically strong. Decent type, a man with some scruples in the world of backstabbers and connivers.

**Scene:** Belchley's office, with his desk a little to the right of center stage. On the desk are three phones, a cigar box and a stack of papers. Belchley is seated behind the desk, in a leather-cushioned but not overwhelming chair, facing the audience. There is an open window, in back of him and slightly to his left, through which can be seen other tall buildings and bits of blue sky. The back wall should be the stylish wood paneling many offices sport. There are a couple of chairs in one corner of the stage, against this wall. All characters enter stage left, where presumably the door to the office is just out of the audience's sight. Belchley is seated at his desk holding a large cigar in one hand, a phone receiver into which he is yelling in the other. Miss Spinner enters.

Lisa Carlson

Belchley: *(Yelling into the phone)* I don't care about your problems on that end, dammit, I've got a business to run, and if you don't like the way I run it, you can leave any time! *(He slams the receiver down)*

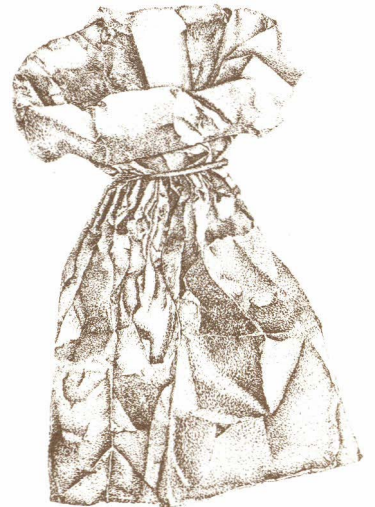
Spinner: Who was that, Mr. Belchley?

Belchley: My mother. What is it, Frances?

Spinner: I need your signature on these papers, sir. *(She puts a couple of papers down on his desk. Belchley takes a puff on his cigar, then tosses it over his shoulder out the window and begins looking the papers over)* Nice shot, sir.

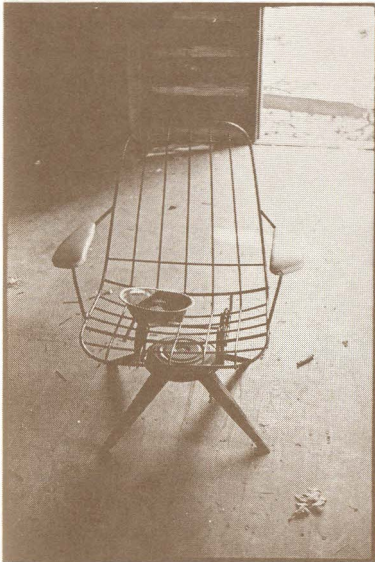
Belchley: What are these papers for?

Spinner: Nothing.





Thomas Pritts



- Belchley: *(Very impressed)* Oh my gosh, I had no idea they were so important! *(He takes a pen out of his suit pocket and quickly scribbles his name on each of the pages. He then hands them back to Miss Spinner)* See that these are sent out immediately, Frances. *(Miss Spinner hurries out)* I hope they get there in time. *(He picks up a phone receiver)* Get me Bill Kline at the Republicrat National Committee. *(Pause)* Hello, Bill? This is Bob Belchley . . . Yeah, you too! How's Louise? . . . Good, good . . . Listen, Bill, I've taken care of the whole contribution business . . . Senator Mundt will get the money through several small businesses, I'll send you a list . . . Yeah, that's the beauty of it, with this system they won't even know it! . . . Oh well, I try . . . Now is the senator going to go easy on this pollution business? . . . Great, Bill, great. Listen, I'll see you next week when I come up there . . . Yeah, so long, Bill . . . I will . . . Good-by. *(Hangsup)* Boy that's a load off my mind. *(Enter Miss Spinner)* What is it, Frances?
- Spinner: Mr. Anderson is here to see you.
- Belchley: *(Slightly alarmed)* Anderson? What does he want? Did you tell him I'm not here?
- Spinner: Yes, but he said he'd wait.
- Belchley: *(Annoyed)* What the hell! Oh, send him in!
- Spinner: Yes, sir. *(She goes out. Belchley pulls out a breath freshener aerosol, gives himself a quick spray, then folds his hands on the desk and tries to look affable. Enter Anderson, looking slightly worried)*
- Belchley: Joe, it's great to see you! *(Smiling warmly, he gets up, sticks out a hand, they shake hands)* Sit down, Joe, have a seat.
- Anderson: *(Takes a chair from the corner, puts it to one side of Belchley, sits down)* Thanks, Mr. Belchley.
- Belchley: *(Sitting down again in his chair, swiveling to face Anderson)* Make it Bob, Joe. Have a cigar. *(Indicates the cigar box)*
- Anderson: *(Still sounding unsure)* No thanks, uh, Bob.

Belchley: Well then, what did you want to see me about?

Anderson: Well, uh, Bob, you know that deal we completed last month? You know, where my firm sold your company all those hammers? Well, today—

Belchley: *(Interrupting)* Not my company, Joe; I thought you understood, I'm just acting as an intermediary in this business.

Anderson: I know, Mr. Belchley, I was just saying it that way for convenience.

Belchley: *(Sternly)* I understand that, Joe, but I want it very clear that I really had little, if anything, to do with this, okay? *(Realizing he may have been a bit too pushy about this, he suddenly becomes affable again)* And hey, make it Bob, my friend. Sorry I interrupted; please continue.

Anderson: Well, anyway, we got . . . the company's check for two-hundred-fifty grand. Why they wanted a hundred thousand hammers I'll never know. I thought they only made baby food.

Belchley: I think they're, uh . . . branching out.

Anderson: Yeah, maybe. Anyway, when I got to the office this morning I found that my secretary had written out a check for \$15,000 to Senator Mundt's campaign fund! When I asked her why, she told me the president of the baby food company told her it was part of the deal! I thought that maybe you, as the intermediary, knew something about this.

Belchley: *(Looks overly puzzled momentarily for Anderson's benefit, then gets a smile on his face, a little too suddenly, as if he comprehends the situation perfectly)* Oh, of course! Joe, I thought you knew about this, didn't they tell you?

Anderson: Why . . . no . . . tell me what?

Belchley: *(Laughing tolerantly)* Well, Joe, this check business is a fringe benefit for you! Don't you see? This \$15,000 is actually going to be sent back to you. Everyone knows Senator Mundt doesn't accept contributions from businesses, but by sending the money to him you won't have to pay taxes on it!



Anderson: (Confused) I don't know . . . I've never heard of this law before . . .

Belchley: (Confidentially) Not many people have, Joe; it's a tricky legal loophole. Only a few of the most astute businessmen know about it, partly because it could backfire if it wasn't handled right. But the president of the other company told me, Joe, that he was so impressed with you that he was going to let you in on it.

Anderson: (Impressed) Really? Well, gosh, as long as I can get out of paying taxes this way, why don't I make the check out for the entire two hundred grand?

Belchley: No, no, heh, heh, don't do that, Joe. You see, this is a legal loophole, but if the amount is in excess of fifteen grand it's illegal. Now

Anne Woodard





you wouldn't want to end up in the slammer, would you? (*Belchley stands up*)

Anderson: *Following suit*) Why no, of course not. I wouldn't want to do anything illegal. (*He chuckles; Belchley does also*) Well, I'd better get back to the office and see that that check gets mailed out. Thanks a lot

Belchley: (*Shaking hands with him*) Glad I could clear this business up, Joe. See you soon, I hope. (*Anderson goes out. Belchley sits back down, relieved*) Phew! (*He gets a cigar out of the box, flicks his lighter. It goes out before he can light the cigar. Belchley gives the cigar a funny look*) This cigar's no good. (*He tosses it over his shoulder out the window, then gets a new cigar, lights up and puffs on it, leaning back leisurely in his chair. Suddenly he sits up*) What can I do now? I'm a big executive; I should be doing something. (*He tosses the cigar out the window, starts twiddling his thumbs, looking very serious and intent. He stops suddenly, moves his hands apart on his desk*) There. Glad I got that out of the way. (*Enter Miss Spinner*) What is it, Frances?

Spinner: Sir, should I file the—

Belchley: (*Sudden revelation*) I know what I can do! I can flirt with my secretary! (*He leaps up, walks over to Miss Spinner and attempts to grab her, but instead stumbles and bumps into her, sending her reeling*)

Spinner: Oof! What are you doing? (*She runs behind his desk; he tries to follow*)

Belchley: What does it look like I'm doing? I'm flirting with you!

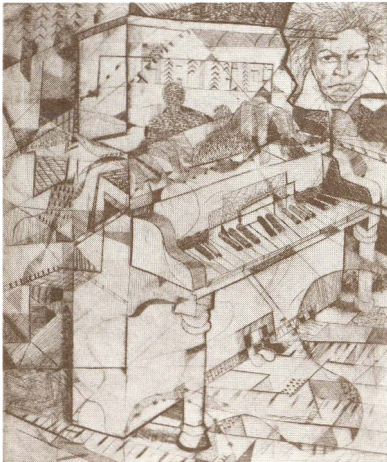
Spinner: (*Flustered*) You . . . you can't! (*She makes a dash for the door; he catches her at stage left*)

Belchley: (*Leering evilly*) Why not?

Spinner: Because . . . because you have to launder some corporations!

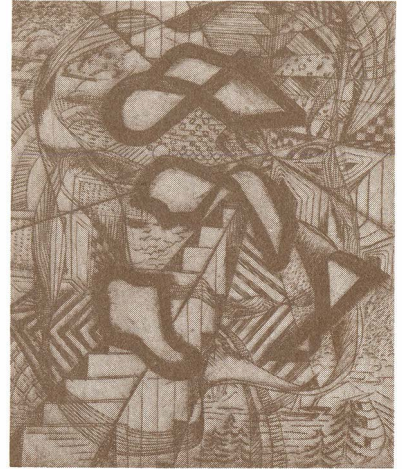
Belchley: Oh yeah. You're right. (*He walks back to his desk, sits down*) Besides, I can't flirt with you. You're too ugly to flirt with. (*Offended,*

William Calkins



Miss Spinner gives him a dirty look and goes out. Belchley picks up a phone, dials a number, puts a handkerchief over the speaker, and disguises his voice) Hello, Chin's Laundry? This is Uck Foo. I'm sending over three corporations; I want you to launder them immediately! (He slams down the receiver, giggles uncontrollably. After calming down he picks up another phone) Get me Nelson over in accounting. (Pause) Hello, Nelson. This is Mr. Belchley. Listen, did you launder those last corporations I sent you? Good, here's a new batch; take these down . . . FoulSound Records . . . Bull's Eye Rifle Company . . . Country Style Dairies . . . and Cowflop Manure, Inc. No, no, CowFlop! FLOP! . . . Yes . . . When can you . . . by this time next month? Good. Keep up the good work, Nelson. (Hangs up. Takes a paper and pencil out of a desk drawer, starts jotting down numbers as he mumbles, thinking out loud) Let's see, if I'm taking in \$800,000 a week with this armaments business, I can double that by selling to both sides . . . Then with sixteen dummy corporations, that comes to a hundred grand apiece . . . hmm, that's too much . . . I know, I'll start another charity fund and filter some in through there! We'll have to go through London . . . (Sounding immensely pleased with himself) That's it, that ought to do it. Yeah! (Picks up a phone receiver) Frances, call a meeting of the board for two this afternoon. (Hangs up) We'll put my plan into effect immediately. (Pause) I can't wait till two o'clock; then I'll have someone to play with! (Pause. Then, suddenly dismayed) Oh, no, it's not even close to two o'clock! What'll I do until then? There's nothing to do, I hate this job! What'll I do? (Enter Miss Spinner)

Spinner: Sir, do you want lunch in here today?  
 Belchley: (Back to normal) Yes, Frances, I've got a very heavy workload, I've got no time to go over to McDonald's, ha, ha!  
 Spinner: (Giving him a funny look) All right, would you



Mary Lou Shepherd

like me to send over to the QuickyDeli for sandwiches?

Belchley: Yes, fine. I'd better not get pastrami though; I'm supposed to be on a diet. *(Pause as he decides what to order)* I'll have a cottage cheese sandwich on rye and a Diet Pepsi. *(Miss Spinner, looking disgusted, goes out)* Hmm, let's see, what can I do now? I wish I had my electric train set here . . . Hey, that's a good idea! *(Takes a memo pad out of his suit pocket, scribbles)* Bring . . . choo-choo . . . to office . . . tomorrow. Good! *(Puts memo pad back in pocket)* Hmm . . . I guess there's no need to change the story; I can still tell Anderson the whole scheme backfired and we can't get his money back . . . Maybe I should call Nelson and give him these new corporations I want laundered . . . Oh, that's right, I already did that . . . Good man, Nelson . . . One of these days I'll have to go down there and have him show me exactly how they launder a corporation; it sounds like fun . . . Maybe I'd better look at the advertising account for—*(Enter Miss Spinner with the lunch from the deli, still looking disgusted)*

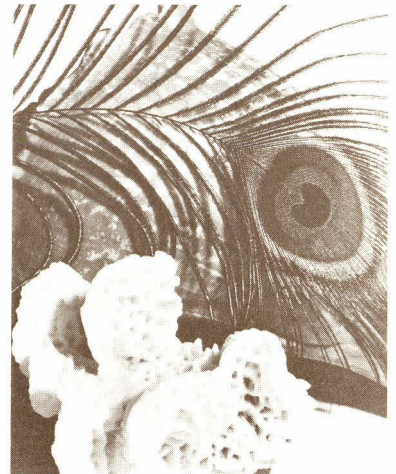
Spinner: Here's your lunch, sir. Cottage cheese on rye and a Diet Pepsi.

Belchley: Thanks, Frances, you can knock off for five minutes.

Spinner: *(Sarcastically)* Gee, thanks a million! *(She goes out mumbling)* Guess I told him!

Belchley: *(Unwraps sandwich, takes a bite)* Yecch! *(Tosses it out the window as with the cigars, then downs the Diet Pepsi in one long swig, burps loudly, and tosses the can out the window)* Well, that was good. Time for a nice after-meal cigar. I think I'll have one of those Havanas. *(Smiling, he opens a desk drawer, takes out an expensive Havana cigar, lights up, leans back, takes a few leisurely puffs, then tosses it out the window, but this time watches it sail out. Looks delighted)* Yeah! Now that's what I call a good cigar! *(Enter Miss Spinner, looking concerned)* What is it, Frances?

Tracy Monko







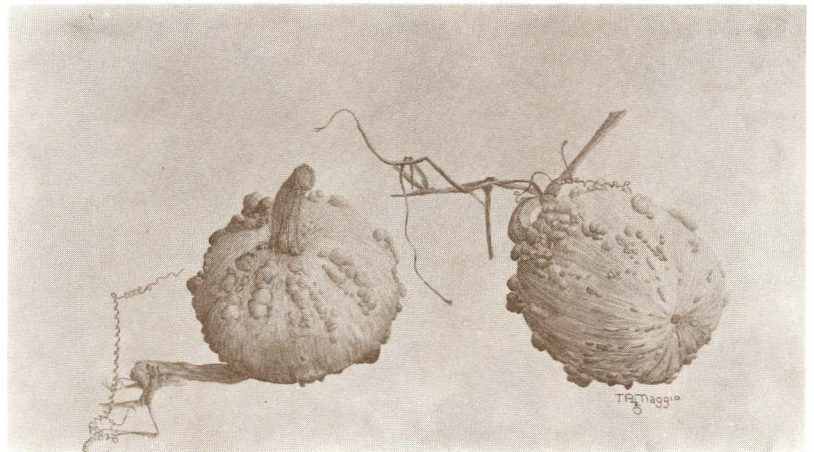
James Hildwein

Spinner: Sir, I just heard on the radio that Mr. Anderson was indicted by a grand jury for illegal campaign contributions and using the postal system to commit a felony!

Belchley: What? It can't be! (Pause) Oh my gosh! He'll guess what . . . no, he won't figure it out . . . Frances, if anyone should ask, I don't know Mr. Anderson; is that clear?

Spinner: Yes, sir. (She exits)

Belchley: (Picks up a receiver, dials a number) Hello, Bill? Bob again. Did you hear about Anderson? . . . Yeah, I think so too, just to be on the safe side . . . You better do it; I wouldn't trust anyone else . . . No, that won't be necessary; just send him on a paid vacation to Brazil . . . Tell him he's trying to get support for . . . for international baby food exchange . . . No, Anderson won't figure it out . . . So long, Bill . . . uh huh . . . bye. (Hangs up. Just as he does, Anderson bursts in, enraged, wild. He goes over to the desk, puts his face about two inches in front of Belchley's, and begins shouting)



Terry Maggio

Anderson: *(Pounding his fist on the desk)* What the hell have you set me up for?

Belchley: *(Frightened, trying to be evasive)* I . . . I don't know what you—

Anderson: *(Grabbing Belchley by the collar)* Don't give me any more of your bullshit! I called the baby food president and threatened to implicate him. He said it wasn't his idea, that you were behind it!

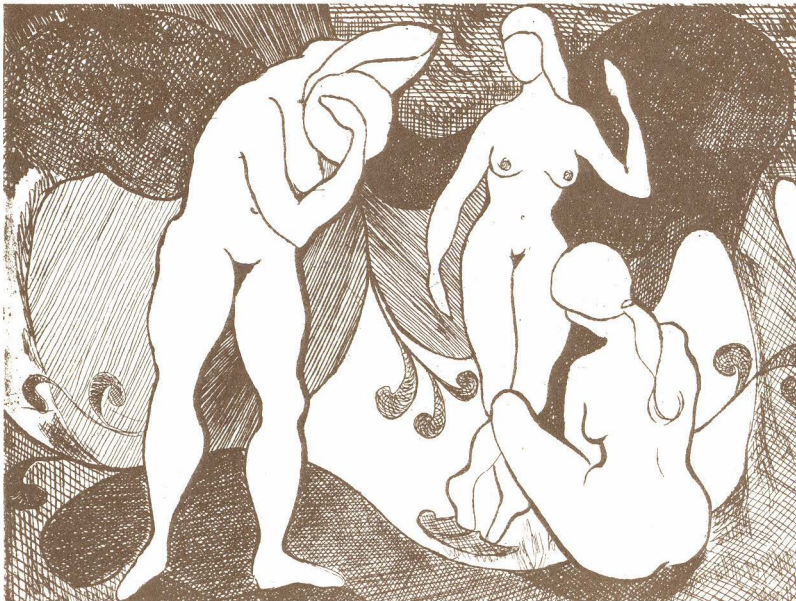
Belchley: He . . . He's lying!

Anderson: *(Lets go of Belchley)* I thought so at first, but he explained it all very clearly to me. *(Pause)* How could I have fallen for it?

Belchley: *(Trying to console him)* Don't feel bad; lots of people have fallen for it. I never meant for you to get caught though; I'm awfully sorry—

Anderson: *(These condolences have made him angry again. He recollars Belchley)* Why did you do it? *(No answer)* Never mind, I can guess why, you . . . I'm gonna turn you in. Just tell me, where did you get the two hundred grand? Out of petty cash?

Lori Peddicord



Belchley: I . . . I got it in a very simple way. I temporarily laid off one-third of the employees in each of three of my smaller companies. I had the company presidents give the recession as an excuse. Of course, the layoffs were at different times; I'm too clever to have all three companies act at the same time. *(Proudly)* Pretty good, huh?

Anderson: *(Amazed, appalled)* You fired thousands of people just to get the money for a political deal?

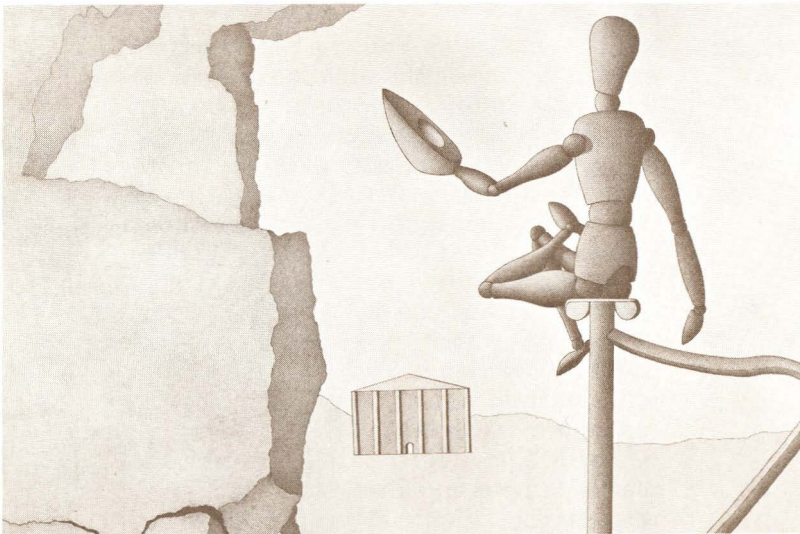
Belchley: What are you so upset about? They've all been rehired; they were only out of work for a month or so! And anyway, who are you to talk; you didn't mind taking a dubious tax deduction for yourself! *(Miss Spinnerenters, unnoticed by the two men)*

Anderson: You said it was legal!

Belchley: And you wanted to believe me, didn't you?

Anderson: Well, I thought you . . . hey, wait a minute! That doesn't matter anyway; you made the whole thing up! *(Pause)* Maybe I did something wrong, but why should I apologize when big crooks like you do more wrong in an hour than I do in a lifetime?

Belchley: *(Smiling)* You never really objected to it until now. Do you fools seriously think I'd have



James Hildwein





**Nick Brown**

gotten away with all this if any of you had really tried to stop me? You could have, but you were perfectly willing to play my game. *(Belchley's words hit Anderson hard. He turns toward the audience, a stricken look on his face)*

Spinner: *(Scornfully)* It serves you right, you subversive!  
Anderson: *(Miss Spinner's epithet rekindles his indignation. He turns back toward Belchley, speaking quietly but strongly)* You say you'd never have succeeded if anyone had tried to stop you. All right, then, I'm stopping you now. You'd better come with me, we're going to tell the whole story to the District Attorney for starters.

Belchley: *(Frightened again, but more so)* I don't wanna go! This is most upsetting!

Spinner: You leave my boss alone.

Anderson: Stay out of the way lady, your boss is going to jail. *(Anderson grabs Belchley by the arm, tries to pull him out from behind the desk. Suddenly Miss Spinner runs over yelling, picks Anderson up and tosses him out the window. Anderson's scream is heard. Long pause. Belchley, shaken, goes over to the window, looks out, comes back. Long pause)*

Belchley: Well . . . good work, Frances. You've put an end to a most upsetting situation. *(He pauses to think. Miss Spinner's appearance is slightly the worse for having strained herself picking Anderson up, but she looks no more concerned than if she'd swatted a fly. Belchley's voice is now very businesslike again)* We'd better issue a statement to the press . . . take this down. *(Miss Spinner pulls a memo pad out of her blouse)* I have known Mr. Joseph Anderson only a few months, since we completed a business deal together, and we became close friends. Today he burst into my office and told me he'd been indicted for illegal campaign contributions. I was shocked. I couldn't believe it, but he told me it was the truth, and then he ran over and dived out the window. My secretary and I tried to stop him, but it was too late. I can only say that this is a deep tragedy,

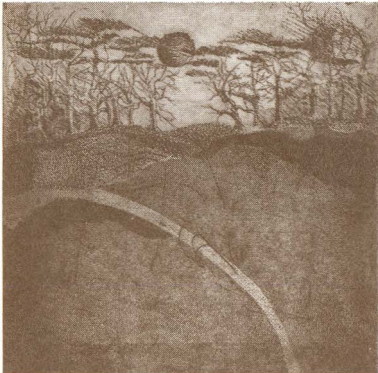
and that Mr. Anderson's death can be a grim lesson to all businessmen everywhere, that sacrificing ethics for profits is not worth the risk . . . No, scratch that last part.

*(Miss Spinner erases it) Change it to, "sacrificing ethics for profits is a tragic mistake that hurts us all."* *(Pause as Miss Spinner finishes writing)* All right Frances, get that ready. You'd better call the police too. Try to sound shocked.

Spinner: Yes, sir. *(She exits)*

Belchley: *(Goes over to desk, sits down, picks up phone, dials)* Hello, Bill? It's me again. Anderson found out, came over here and tried to take me in. We had to get rid of him . . . You talk to our baby food man; he was ready to give it all to the D.A. . . . Now that Anderson's gone I think he'll keep quiet, yeah . . . No, no vacation now; he'd better wait a month or so . . . Okay, Bill . . . So long. *(Hangs up, picks up another receiver)* Miss Spinner, cancel all my appointments for today. *(Hangs up)* I get to talk to the press today, goody! *(Pause, looks at his watch)* I wonder if I've got time for a cigar?

Deborah Emmel



# A Song for Solomon

**Al Balaz**

Your navel is an island  
In a smooth milk white sea.  
The ripe swelling of your belly  
Curving, flowing  
Into your fecund inverted delta,  
Richly robed in black silk,  
And bejeweled with gleaming drops  
Of clear ambrosia.  
Descending further,  
Melting into the smooth fullness  
Of your robust ivory thighs,  
Voluptuous in their shining voluminosity.

The fortunate curvature of your buttocks  
Contrasts with the deep arc of your lower back,  
Which arc swells upwards, joyful,  
Following the course of your supple spine  
Into the soft solidity  
Of your shoulders, neck, and back,  
Kissed and caressed by their ebony lover—  
Your hanging hair, hair which falls,  
Lightly skimming your breasts' taut firmness,  
Tracing their swellings  
From Prophetic beginnings  
To nipples' ends,  
Nipples which rise from their beds of red,  
The same red as that of your luscious and lush lips.

We clasp,  
And sate our thirst  
With long drafts from full lips.  
Our yearning bodies  
Search and revel greedily.  
We undulate like the waves in the sea,  
And I crest and break,  
Spewing white onto the wet shore.

# Il y en a d'Autres

**Al Balaz**

En Russie,  
Une Juive,  
Morte,  
Repose dans une fosse,  
Nue,  
Ses seins pointent vers le ciel,  
Ses cuisses,  
Entrouvertes,  
Invitent l'air.  
Le vent caresse ses cheveux, ses membres.  
Elle regarde fixement, impassible.



# Somewhere

Sandra Elkins

Time, the judge; Time, the healer; infinite Time  
    Why suppress the joy of knowledge in my mind?  
My time is the beginning. How will it end?  
    Shall I struggle forever, my ways to mend?  
If I am honest and search for the path,  
    Will I find the answers somewhere at last?  
There must be room for me in that special place,  
    Somewhere. In the distance it looms, in time and space.  
A home for minds with more to give,  
    Where love and creativity live.  
A place of learning, of openness, almost holy,  
    For us to work, and strive, and crawl to, slowly.  
The task is mine, to make this place I seek  
    With help from others, not timid or meek.  
We'll see it soon, in tomorrow year;  
    It's so close now—I feel it near.  
The doors will open for the special few.  
    Believe with me, there will be room for you.

Mark Byckowski



# The Voice

Katherin Clements

Can't you hear the woods a-callin',  
While you're baking him his pie?  
Sleepin' out with leaves a-fallin',  
With a roof of moonlit sky.

With the winds a-sorta a-singin',  
Through the branches of your mind.  
You can see the fire a-crackin',  
Living colors, dear and kind.

Can't you see the palm trees swayin',  
Over on the distant shores?  
With the hula maidens playin',  
As you finish every chore.

Could you climb the highest mountain?  
Could you sail the roughest sea?  
Could you walk that winding road,  
That's wandering aimlessly?

Do you feel the urge for searchin',  
Though not travels that you seek?  
Have you ever been a-roamin',  
And heard, "Mom, when do we eat?"

# Magoo's Girls

Jeanne Miller

## A one-act play

### Characters:

- Sue: A sixteen-year-old high school junior.  
Mary Beth: A sixteen-year-old high school junior.  
Jackie: A new member of the junior class.  
Irish: A Negro classmate with a very strong Southern accent.  
Agatha: The class "misfit."  
Theresa: A conscientious class president.  
Magoo: A near-sighted "ancient" nun garbed in full habit.

**Scene I:** Classroom. The room is set up in conventional classroom style: individual student desks, a teacher's desk and chair, a blackboard. Along one side of the wall is a window.

*(As the curtains open, the girls are all – except Theresa – rummaging through the teacher's desk drawer. All the girls are in uniform. They are looking for letters addressed to each of them. The letters have already been opened and some are badly cut up. While the girls are trying to find the missing pieces, cut out from the letters, they are commenting on the condition of the letters. Theresa is standing off to the side, obviously not approving of the "goings on")*

Theresa: *(Stuffy)* You should all be ashamed! If Sister thought your letters were DECENT she wouldn't have cut them up. As class president, I must report you for your actions.

Mary Beth: I never thought that "LOVE, JOHN" was indecent, but it gets cut out every time! *(She reads the front of an envelope in her hand. She shakes the enclosed letter open; it is full of holes)*

Sue: *(Sing-songy, glancing over the letter)* Oh, THER-EEE-SA! There's a letter here for you.

Theresa: *(She tries to grab the letter as Mary Beth waves it in the air away from her)* Give me my letter! Give me my letter!

Irish: Well! Well! What you know? Theresa got herself a UN-decent letter. *(All the girls tsk-tsk and make shame on their fingers at Theresa)* And she took it right out of Magoo's desk!

Theresa: *(She gets the letter)* That's another thing I should speak to you about. The name is Sister Mary Maguello, NOT Magoo! *(All boo and hiss)*

Irish: Sit down, Theresa. *(The clattering of Rosary beads is heard)*

Sue: It's a black-and-white! *(All scurry to get their letters back in the desk drawer and to get to their seats)*

Magoo: *(“Floating” to her desk chair)* Good afternoon, ladies.

All: Good afternoon, Sister Mary Maguello.

Magoo: Before class, we will have “mail call.” *(She takes the letters from her desk drawer and reads off the names with her eyeglasses nearly touching the envelopes)* Mary Beth! Theresa! Agatha! *(Pause)* Jackie, I'd like to see you privately at my desk. *(She spreads out three letters on the desk as Jackie approaches)* Choose ONE.

Jackie: *(Confused)* I don't understand.

Magoo: You received three letters today. You may only choose one – All these letters are distracting you from your schoolwork.

Jackie: But, Sister, I've been getting straight A's. And usually I don't get any letters at all!

Magoo: Take one, or none.

Jackie: *(She picks one up and walks angrily back to her seat. Mumbling)* At least I got to read them all.

Magoo: Now class, we'll begin our lesson in penmanship. Good Catholic girls are distinguished by their penmanship! *(She goes to the blackboard and begins to write)*

Sue: *(Waves her hand high in the air for a moment. Finally says out loud)* Sister! Sister!

Magoo: Yes, Suzanne.

Sue: Sister, *(Coyly)* are you sure I didn't get a letter today?

Magoo: No! Sit down.

Sue: *(Waving her hand again)* But, Sister, I just know that John would have written to me on my birthday.

Magoo: *(Goes to her desk and takes a letter out of the drawer. She holds it delicately, away from her,*



*between her thumb and index finger*) Yes, Suzanne, you did receive a letter from John, but you may not have it.

Sue: Why? I didn't think he said anything wrong!  
*(She cups her hands over her mouth)*

Magoo: Yes?

Sue: I mean, uh, John never says anything, er, uh . . .

Magoo: After class I plan to incinerate it.

Sue: *(Puzzled)* Sister, I don't understand.  
*(The class grumbles)*

Magoo: Epidemic!

All: Epidemic?

Magoo: Yes, epidemic. The gentleman who wrote this letter, wrote it from his sick bed. He says right here in the letter that he has chicken pox germs, you'll infect the entire school.  
*(All grumble and moan among themselves)*

Magoo: *(Loudly)* There shall be no intercourse among the students!  
*(All the girls attempt to stifle their laughter)*

Magoo: *(Gets up and begins to walk out)* On second thought, I'd better incinerate this letter now and wash my hands. Practice your penmanship until I return.  
*(All break out in loud laughter)*

Mary Beth: *(Mimicking)* There shall be no intercourse among the students. Fat chance!

Agatha: *(As she walks over to look out the window)* What does it mean, anyways? Intercourse?  
*(The others pound their heads at the sound of her naivete)*

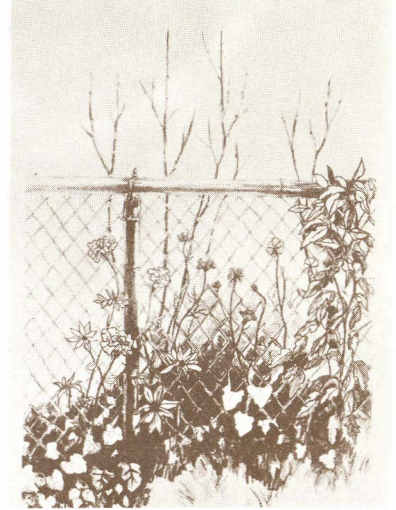
Irish: Agatha, ya' know when Sister told us about boys?

Agatha: *(Looking out the window. She has a pen stuck in her mouth and only takes it out to talk)* Yeah?

Irish: Well, intercourse is when a boy looks at the reflection on your pearls to see down your blouse.

Agatha: Oh?

Irish: Yeah. Or like when ya' go out to a restaurant with a boy and sit at a table that is set with a white tablecloth—and it reminds the boy of bedsheets.



Catherine Dressel

Agatha: Oh, OOOOH! It's dirty? Gee, I think I intercoursed my cousin last year when he took me out to lunch!  
*(All shake their heads and groan)*

Agatha: *(Makes an inhaling scream. All run to the window to look out)* It's a boy. It's a real live boy!  
*(She grabs her throat and exhales a scream)*

Theresa: Agatha, what's the matter?

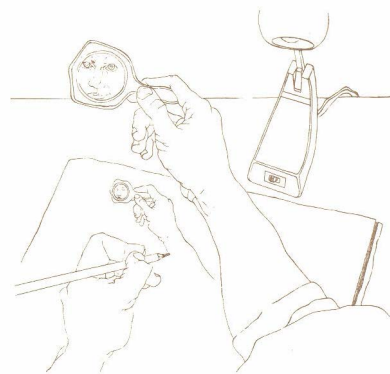
Agatha: The pen. *(She holds it out in front of her for all to see)* I swallowed the top to my pen!  
*(Dramatically)* Help me, I'm gonna die!  
*(All begin to pound her on the back)*

Theresa: Help, girls, let's get her to the office. *(They begin to drag her out)*

Jackie: *(Humorously)* Don't worry, Agatha. It'll pass.

Agatha: Pass what?

Jackie: *(Sarcastically)* Your nose, Agatha. Blow it out your nose!



Dennis Donnelson

**Scene II:** Bathroom and Dormitory. The bathroom is a painted-on backdrop which will rise during the blackout to disclose a four-bed dormitory.

*(Sue, Mary Beth, Jackie, and Irish are all huddled in a bathroom stall. Smoke is pouring out the top of the stall. The girls are in their pajamas and robes.)*

Jackie: I'd like to see the condition of the letters that we send home. The nuns can't censor those, can they?

Sue: They do. But if they see any complaining, or "darns," they give you the letter back to rewrite it. That way, eventually, your folks get a nice rosy picture of their happy little girl at convent boarding school.

Mary Beth: You and your folks will gradually learn what not to write in letters. When I first came here my mom wrote me a letter that Magoo went "bananas" over. She called me up to her desk and hummed and hawed for the longest time. She didn't know how to break all the terrible news to me that my mom had written.

Jackie: What terrible news?

Mary Beth: Uncle Joe had disappeared and no one knew his whereabouts. Carol and Steve had gotten a divorce and Carol was carrying JOHN's baby. John was in the hospital with amnesia and did not even know who Carol was . . . and stuff like that.

Jackie: How awful! You really had your share of bad news.

Mary Beth: No, not me. That's what the nun thought, too. My Mom was just keeping me up on the daily soap operas. *(They all giggle)* Magoo wrote my Mom that, quote, soap operas are not the encouraged extra curricular here.

Jackie: Well, what is extra curricular here? Do we EVER see any boys?

Irish: Only the way Agatha saw 'em.

Mary Beth: Hey! Did she ever find the pen top?

Irish: Nope! She's still waiting for it to pass.

Jackie: What about the dance Friday in the gym? There's going to be boys there, isn't there?

Sue: Nope. It's all girls.

Jackie: What?

Sue: All girls, Jackie. The tally reads: "Freshman-Sophomore Waltz . . ."

Jackie: WHAT!

Irish: Yeah. And last year my "soul" got to me during a cha-cha with a senior. Sister said I was wiggling my hips. I spent two hours the next day peeling potatoes in the kitchen to work off the demerits she give me. All that—and it wasn't even spent on a guy.

Jackie: Boy, this is a real house of virgins! What's so great about virginity anyway?

Irish: Got me. It takes a UN-virgin to make a virgin, don't it?

Jackie: Irish? I've been dying to ask you a question.

Irish: Yeah?

Jackie: Where'd you get the name IRISH?

Irish: Well, my mom found out they was a little prejudice here. Ya had to be IRISH to get in!

Mary Beth: Hey, let's Vaseline and Saran Wrap the toilet seats.

Jackie: What's it do?

Mary Beth: It drives the seniors stark raving mad when they sit down. The Saran Wrap holds the "deposits"

up level with the seat. See? You wrap it around the bowl rim and then put the seat down and vaseline that. *(A loud bell rings and the lights black out)*

Sue: Whoops! Lights out! We'd better get to our beds for roll call. *(At this point there is a scurrying about and quiet snickering. The backdrop rises to reveal a dormitory. Lights come up halfway after the girls are in their beds)*

Magoo: *(She appears in the doorway and chants)*  
Praise be Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Suzanne.

Sue: *(She returns the chant as do the others)* Praise be God in heaven.

Magoo: *(Chanting each time)* Praise be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Jacqueline.

Jackie: Praise be God in heaven.

Magoo: Praise be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Mary Beth.

Mary Beth: Praise be God in heaven.

Magoo: Praise be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Irish.

Irish: *(With "soul")* Praise be God in heaven!  
*(Magoo exits)*

Jackie: *(There is a voice off stage that baas "Maa-maa")*  
What was that?

Mary Beth: Shhh. It's my little sister's doll that I brought from home. *(She pulls it out from under the cover)* Magoo thinks that someone is homesick. It's been driving her crazy for months to find out who.

Jackie: Do you . . . Do you ever get homesick?

Mary Beth: Nah! For what? Parents who don't want me and can't "handle" me?

Jackie: Is that what they said? They couldn't handle you?

Mary Beth: Yep. Why are you here?

Jackie: I guess I'm sort of an orphan. I used to live with my mom, but she died.

Irish: *(Rosary beads are heard clattering in the background)*  
Shhh! It's Magoo! *(They all huddle under their covers)*

Sue: *(Pause. softly)* She gone yet?

Irish: I think so. Let's break out the birthday party.

Jackie: Huh?

Mary Beth: Jackie, if you're gonna survive here, you're gonna have to learn some tricks. *(She walks over to the window and opens it)* Brrr. It's cold out there. *(She sticks out her head and begins passing containers back)* Ice

Carol Sterner





cream! Pop! *(She goes under her bed and comes up with a sack)* Pretzels!

Jackie: Where'd you get all this stuff? *(They all begin to eat)*

Irish: We stole it! While the nuns were at Vespers, we stole it from the kitchen. It'll keep out on the roof for days if the weather holds out.

Jackie: Hey, this ain't bad. *(There is a shrill scream offstage)*

Sue: Oooooops! Better cool it, gang. We just caught ourselves a fish in the john. The black-and-whites will be looking for the culprit in seconds. *(They all dump their empty cartons into the sack and leap back into bed. Lights go down)*

Mary Beth: *(Quietly)* What are we gonna do tomorrow, girls?

Irish: *(Pause)* Hmmm . . . Hey, Theresa won't be around to snitch tomorrow—she got a doctor's appointment in town. I've been dying to get into the permanent records file! *(Blackout)*

## The Apple Dibbly

Paula Tierney

Once there was an Apple Dibbly living all alone at sea.  
His scales were purple, silver scribbly, shimmering, shining  
off his knee.

A pointed head and floppy ears balanced an elephant nose,  
While muscled arms and workworn fingers dangled at his toes.  
Green plumes and feathers, interspersed, sheltered head to toe,  
This magnificent creation—from rain and sleet and snow.

We saw him coming—my buddy and I. He was almost to the shore  
Before we flipped a coin to see who would sound the Roar.  
The Roar lets all the Wimblies know there's fighting now to do.  
This time they ran the other way. I did, too—Would you?  
We ran for hills and caverns hidden deep in jungle.  
The huts, the food, the wells, the wives—LEFT OUT—now THAT'S  
a bungle.

Barb Kenyon



The raft touched down near the edge of town not far from  
sacrificial table.

Dibbly waddled out quite proud and quite stout just as soon as  
he was able.

We watched him from some darkened leaves, not long, before I fear,  
A keen, uncanny sixteenth sense told him we were near.  
His trunk stood up like a periscope—Upwind, Downwind, dropping  
now to ground,  
Then all at once his floppy ears flapped twice to pick up sound.

Ourscout, brave, golden soul, tucked in the leaves of a tree  
Was routed out and smashed to the ground. (I was glad it wasn't me!)  
I'd seen enough. This party's too rough. Headed to Mookiloo.  
Would stay, of course, if but one in our force would tell me  
what I could do.

Vines tore at my legs and orchids my eyes, I made for the rise quite  
fast,  
But forty or more, panting and sore wise guys quickly passed.

Mookiloo (a dead volcano) opens secretly toward the sea  
I'd have made it there safe with the rest of them if it weren't  
for my old trick knee.

Ouch! Tumbling—rolling—villageward, with hardly any sound  
Voice caught in throat, hands over eyes A WEAPON NOW I FOUND.  
Quick speed, quick speed and voodoo prayers could give me quite  
an edge

The Dibbly seemed to find amusement teetering on a ledge.

Our altar stood upon a ledge formed in the wake of a quake  
By rolling hard behind his knees his life I'd likely take.  
Muck . . . just my luck. A duck landed two feet from his hand  
He petted it, then patted it and seemed to think it quite  
grand—changed his stand.

Missing my mark completely I landed KERPLUNK in wet sand not killing  
Or even scaring him. His feathers I only fanned.

Cursing and swearing, not really caring (expecting my life to  
be through)

To my great surprise and with tears in his eyes the Dibbly said,  
“How do you do?!”

How do you do that—roll down that hill—a brave heart beats in  
your chest.

Tell me your secrets and I'll teach you mine over cheese and  
crackers and wine."  
Sensing his meekness and obvious weakness I told him that would  
be fine . . . just fine.

The Wimblies came running (their blue bodies sunning) a feast  
for their guest to prepare.  
They called out the Pimplies and Potbellied Simplies, the sight  
would make anyone stare.  
How Rare! The tables alight as fires blaze through the night.  
You'd think we'd all nary a care.  
We sang and we danced as Dibbly drank and then pranced until  
finally he put down his stein.  
With very strong line (steel tempered and fine) we tied him to  
nine trees in a line.  
It's hard to believe we could weave and deceive, but look overhead  
at our sign—"SUPINE—ON DIBBLY CARCASS WE DINE!"

## A View From the Window

**Angelica Ruival**

**A one-act play in two scenes**

### **Characters:**

Lester White: Nearing fifty, with glasses. Conservatively  
attired with sport jacket and ascot.

Nancy White: About forty-two. Motherly face. Pleasant,  
warm look. Wears a classic shirt dress.

Rusty White: Seventeen—their daughter. Wholesome look—  
dressed up as becomes the fashion of the day—  
jeans and shirt.

Reverend John Baker: A good friend of the family. Premature  
gray beard in a kind face. About forty-five.

### **Scene I**

Living room of a comfortable middle class home. The entrance to the room is from the hallway  
located at the back-right side of the stage. The left wall has a fireplace with burning logs. In front  
of it is a sofa. On the back wall, but not against it, facing the audience are two comfortable chairs  
with a table between them. Immediately next to the fireplace on left front of stage is a reclining  
chair and a table with a reading lamp beside it nearer to fireplace. On the right wall are bookcases

and a bar table or cabinet near the door that leads to the dining room and kitchen.

Place: A state of the Union.

Time: 6:45 of a Friday evening in cold late fall.

As the curtain rises Mrs. White is seen seated on the chair near the sofa. She is embroidering or knitting. Her husband enters from the dining room with the ice bucket and sets it on the bar. She looks up and addresses him as he goes to the sofa and sits down.

Nancy: What time is John coming?

Lester: He should be here soon. We agreed on seven.

Nancy: I'm dying to hear his comments on the Johnson's divorce—  
It's so unexpected.

Lester: What really makes it incredible is that they waited all  
these years. I guess they stayed together because of  
the children.

Nancy: They shouldn't have waited. They've only hurt the  
children more that way.

Lester: Why Nancy, I'm shocked to hear you say that. You  
can't possibly approve the crazy goings on of today's  
world. I wonder where it will all end. Statistics  
show that more people are getting divorced than married.

Nancy: I know, Lester; it's awful. Too many children with  
only one full-time parent. But learning now what the  
Johnson's have been through, I, in their place, would  
have done it sooner. It's terrible to expose children  
to bickering and suffering.

Lester: I realize this is an extreme case but I wish couples  
would try harder to live together in peace.

Nancy: I hear Rusty coming—Let's not discuss this in front  
of her. I see her worried lately.

Lester: Really? I hadn't noticed—but then I'm not around  
her as much.

*(Rusty comes in from the hall and greets them trying to put a  
cheerful note in her voice. She sits next to her dad on the  
sofa nearer to the audience.)*

Rusty: Hi! Mom, Dad.

Nancy: Hello, dear.

Lester: Hi—Hon—Have a good day?

Rusty: Yes, more or less. My history exam was a cinch.

Lester: Then, why more or less? It should be great!

Rusty: I'm afraid the exam didn't take up the whole day.

Nancy: Did something happen that upset you?

Rusty: Well . . . not to me . . . but I am worried.

Barbara Soroka





Lester: What about, Rusty?  
 Rusty: *(A bit forced)* A . . . friend of mine.  
 Nancy: Who?  
 Rusty: I'd rather not say. You see it's a very personal problem.  
 Lester: *(Forgetting that they were not going to discuss the Johnson's divorce)* Oh, I bet it's about Cynthia Johnson.  
 Rusty: No, Dad, Cynthia isn't worried. She's pleased the situation has come out in the open.  
 Lester: What sort of friends do you have? How could she want her parents separated?  
 Rusty: The kids have seen so much fighting that all that they now want is a little peace and quiet. I guess I agree. I couldn't put up with you and Mom hating each other.  
 Lester: My God, what is the world coming to. *(The bell rings)* There's the bell, I'll get it. It must be John.

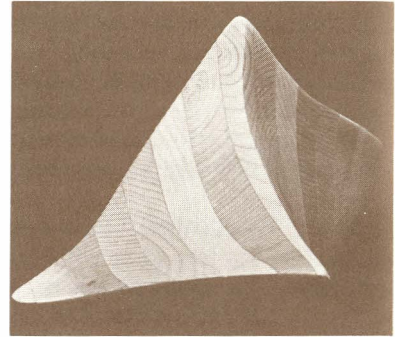
*(He gets up and goes to the hall to greet his friend. Mother and daughter continue talking.)*

Nancy: What is your friend's problem?  
 Rusty: She thinks . . . she's quite sure she might be pregnant.  
 Nancy: How awful! Can't she marry the boy? How old are they?  
 Rusty: Oh, he is old enough. He probably would, too, but she doesn't want to tell him.  
 Nancy: Why not?  
 Rusty: She feels she's too young and doesn't really love him.  
 Nancy: How could she get into a situation like that, then?  
 Rusty: *(Wondering tone, as if not understanding)* I guess it was a moment of weakness, or tenderness that got her into it. Maybe more like feeling lonely and needing someone.

Nancy: Well, that's no reason . . . *(They're interrupted by the arrival of Lester and Reverend John Baker)*

*(John greets first Nancy and then Rusty with a peck on the cheek and sits on the chair near the fireplace)*

John: Hello, my lovely ladies. Why so serious?  
 Lester: I'm afraid we got into a juicy subject tonight. We were talking about the Johnson's divorce when I went to open the door—but first let me get everybody a drink. What will you have, John? Nancy?  
 John: Scotch with water.  
 Nancy: *(Hesitates)* Sherry . . . no, you better give me some bourbon and water.  
 Lester: Oh, you're really worried now? What about you, Rusty?



Michael Mattox

Rusty: A coke will be great, Daddy. *(As he goes to the bar to serve the drinks the others resume the conversation)*

John: So you've got the Johnsons on your mind. Nobody knew anything about their problems so they really shocked the community.

Nancy: Rocked it, is more like it!

John: Why, Nancy, I've never seen you so outspoken before.

Nancy: I'm afraid I have a lot on my mind. But . . . let's forget the Johnsons. Rusty, do you think we can discuss what we were just talking about with John?

Rusty: *(Worriedly looking at father who is still at the bar)* Well . . . I don't know . . . yet Reverend Baker might have a solution.

Lester: *(Returning with drinks and not having heard the last two comments by Nancy and Rusty)* What are you getting at Rusty? How could John or anybody for that matter help the Johnsons now? *(He gives Nancy her drink and then turns to John with his)*

Nancy: *(A little hesitantly)* I think, dear, I'd better explain that as you went to open the door, Rusty and I got to talking about a problem a friend of hers has. *(Beginning to wish she hadn't started the subject)* It seems that the girl is . . . might be . . . pregnant.

Lester: *(Almost dropping the drink he is handing to John)* What! Oh my God—Rusty, how can you associate with such people! A seventeen year old?

Rusty: Yes . . .

Lester: At that age your mother was sewing, playing the piano . . .

Nancy: Lester, don't go on in that way. Times have changed.

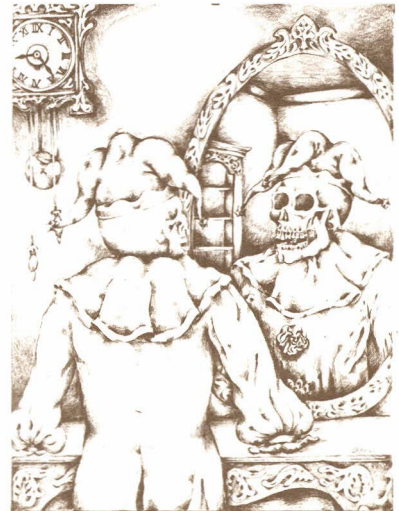
Lester: *(About to go to the bar for the other drinks. Sarcastically)* Do you mean to say that now it's fashionable or the thing to get pregnant in high school?

John: Now, Lester, I'm afraid we're getting too excited and missing the point.

Nancy: What I mean to say is that at that age, in our days, we lived a quiet sheltered life . . . with family reunions, radio concerts, going to town to see a ballet. Oh, you know a family then meant togetherness.

Lester: Sure—now we don't care about our family. Is that what you're saying? *(Goes to bar to get other drinks. Hands Rusty hers and sits down on sofa as the conversation continues)*

Dan Bowens



- Nancy: No, I'm not saying people don't care. They always will but they get too tied up in other activities like bowling, bridge, PTA, tennis . . . you know . . . everybody is busy. They don't spend as much time with their children.
- John: You have a point there, Nancy. Everything started because of the need for more income. Housewives began to work and be less at home and the ones who didn't go to work found something else to do . . . and . . .
- Lester: *(Doesn't let him finish—excitedly)* That's it! I always said a woman's place was in the home!
- Nancy: Yes, but a man's place then should also be home after six. The problem is that the men started working longer hours or having drinks with the boys. All in the best tradition of "Public Relations" to increase their income, and their women became lonelier and started searching for something rewarding.
- John: It's a vicious circle—one problem raises another. You, Rusty, you're young and can see it through your friends. How do you feel?
- Rusty: I'm afraid I can't tell how it was before, but now I see everyone reaching for someone who isn't there. The mothers who work are too busy or tired to discuss their children's problems. The fathers are never around.
- John: What about the mothers who don't work?
- Rusty: I'm afraid they're not satisfied with their lot either and aren't much help.
- Nancy: Why, Rusty . . . I don't work and I try to be home whenever you or your brother might need me. Do you think I'm unhappy or unwilling to help?
- Rusty: Well . . . since you ask. Yes, you're not up on the times. What I mean is, you see things differently.
- Lester: This is no time to be disrespectful to your mother young lady!
- Nancy: No, let her speak, Lester. I asked her. What's more, I know that no matter how hard we parents might try, we'll never be completely accepted by our children. That's the wheel of life. You just have to learn not to expect gratitude.
- John: You're right there, Nancy. In all my years of work, sometimes counseling my parishioners—both parents and



youngsters—I found that to be true. Nobody is ever satisfied. Oh, they'll try to mislead you sometimes. Not all people are honest when it comes to showing their feelings. We grow up in a society that tells us to BE POPULAR, BE LEADERS, BE SATISFIED, BE RELAXED. It gets to the point where everybody tries to show everybody else that they're just that while underneath everyone has doubts, worries . . .

Lester: *(Trying hard to score a point)* We have to teach the young to be successful. There are too many people in the world and they must race to the top.

Rusty: *(Really wanting to participate now)* The top, Daddy? Why must we concern ourselves with being on top? Why not just try to be happy?

Lester: Because if you don't strive for the top others will grab it and where will you be? Down at the bottom. With a bad job there is no money; with no money you can't buy what you want or need.

Rusty: I still think us kids would hope that everybody would worry less about money . . . and a little more about us.

John: You've a point there, Rusty. I hear that *all* the time from the youngsters. They miss companionship, real talks with their parents. Which brings us to the need of youngsters for warmth, romance, etc. They sometimes confuse it with sex and in their search end up like your friend, considering abortions.

Nancy: Do the parents of your friend know about it?

Rusty: *(Startled)* No. She's afraid to tell them.

Lester: I'm not surprised. It's a shock for any parent. But then, who knows, they probably haven't paid enough attention to her. It shouldn't surprise them.

Nancy: Why, Lester, I'm sure all parents deep down care for their children and would be terribly concerned.

Lester: Yes, but how revolted they must feel! How disappointed . . .

John: *(Steps in)* However they *feel* about it they should help their daughter make the right decision.

Lester: *(Sarcastically)* Yes, say, "Dear, that's no problem—we can get rid of it in a jiffy," and have her in the same boat two months later.

John: Now, Lester, human nature isn't like that. The poor



child must be suffering greatly. She finds herself in an incredible situation and wouldn't be inclined to the same mistake.

Lester: All the same, if it was my daughter I wouldn't know what to do. Why I think I'd lose faith in my child and . . .

Nancy: Lester! How can you say a thing like that! We have to learn to be compassionate and . . .

Lester: What for? If you don't have set rules, there is no sense of values. Children don't know where their parents stand and become burdens to society.

John: Now, Lester. We are getting away from the main point of the conversation. Nobody becomes a burden to society because of an abortion. It should be a private matter. A decision between those concerned. A husband and wife, if the couple is married, or the woman herself for that matter. You know that the new law requires the husband's o.k. What if he wants it and she doesn't think she can cope with it?

Nancy: Then her decision must abide. After all she's the one who will carry it, nourish it, center her life around the child.

Lester: But an abortion is wrong on principle. It's a life you're taking away!

Nancy: But it might be better to take that one—not born—than ruin the others. Oh . . . it's such a long subject. Let's change it.

John: (*Noticing how worried Rusty has looked throughout the conversation*) If you don't mind, Nancy, I'd like to pursue it a little longer. I'm more worried about the young girls since the law went into effect. Before it, they could go to a reputable hospital and have a legal abortion. Now, because the law requires the parents' consent and they're afraid to face them, they seek anyone willing to do the operation. They sometimes fall into the wrong hands—unscrupulous people that don't have the know-how or hygienic conditions required. I'm really worried about those cases.

Lester: I would never expect a man of the church to talk the way you do.

John: First of all, we're human beings, Lester. We under-

stand folly and take pity.

Lester: I wouldn't pity someone that gets into such a spot. That's no way for a decent girl to behave.

John: Every day I see decent girls, as you call them, getting into all kinds of sordid problems; worst of all is the dope addiction. It's usually a product of the environment they're in.

Lester: If that's the case, how can we cope with it? How can we help change society for the better?

John: That's a tough question. People love to talk about the "good old days" but they don't do a thing to bring them back. Probably the best thing would be to see what it is we're missing. Then arrange our time so that we can do them. Nancy mentioned family reunions and a more sheltered life. Maybe we could set aside at least two hours every day to be with our children. It might also help to give our children less freedom. What do you think Rusty? What would you say if you couldn't date until say, sixteen or older?

Rusty: Oh, gee, I don't know. If everybody went out and I didn't, I'd be miserable.

John: That's right. But you said *if*, which means that if everybody was treated the same you wouldn't feel bad, right?

Rusty: Now, let me think . . . We always want to do what the others do—so you're probably right. Maybe we wouldn't mind if we were all in it together.

Nancy: I always felt society puts too many strains on youth. We push them too much. Expect them to grow too quickly . . .

Lester: *(Cutting in)* So you're saying, John, that permissiveness is at the core of the problems of our youth.

John: Well, I wouldn't put it that emphatically, but it might have some bearing on the problems we face.

Nancy: *(Standing up)* This conversation is getting terribly deep. Let's go to dinner and find a more cheerful subject. *(All get up and move towards dining room)*

Lester: *(Grabs John's arm)* Yeah, let me tell you, John, about the great investment I'm considering . . .

*(Mother and daughter exchange a meaningful glance as if with*

Sheila Wells



this statement everything that happened was erased from  
Lester's mind.)

### Curtain

#### Scene II

(Same setting. The time is 11 p.m. two weeks later. Nancy  
and Lester are agitated – walking back and forth.)

Nancy: Rusty promised to be here at eight. She must have  
had an accident. She always calls letting us know  
where she is.

Lester: Nancy, don't worry so. She's probably caught up in  
a traffic jam. You know how things are before  
Christmas.

Nancy: That's what worries me. Everyone is so jumpy, they  
don't look where they're going most of the time.

Lester: Well, this weather doesn't help much either. Some  
streets are quite slippery from yesterday's snow.

Nancy: Yes, and then Rusty hasn't looked well lately. She  
seems tense, and did you notice how upset she seemed  
at dinner when John was here the other night?

Lester: I think she's worried about her friend. We couldn't  
keep away from the subject of abortions. Why, at her  
age, I didn't know they existed!

Nancy: I must say I tried to change the subject a hundred  
times.

Lester: Yes, but the new law is in everybody's mind. It's  
like taking a foot forward and another backwards.  
You should see the girls at the office. They blabber  
away all day on the subject! (They sit down as in Scene I)

Nancy: Are they against it?

Lester: The new law? Yes – everybody. Even the most religious  
think it's a private matter. Related directly to the  
woman, that is. They feel that the purpose of an  
abortion is to hide a fact, so why advertise it?

Nancy: I must say I agree.

Lester: I'm beginning to see your point, and I wish I hadn't  
spoken so much against it the other day.

Nancy: Well, you can be an old stick in the mud sometimes –  
the way you went on about decency was . . . downright  
indecent. (She almost laughs)

Lester: Yes, and I am so liberal otherwise. It must be my religious upbringing.

Nancy: We can't get away from that, can we? But out of two wrongs we must pick the best, and a miserable girl married to give a child a name certainly can't make a happy marriage.

Lester: You know, there probably would be fewer but happier marriages if people thought that way. I'm beginning to see things so differently since John talked about the many problems he has encountered. *(The bell rings)*

Nancy: *(Very jumpy)* Now who can that be? Rusty has a key.

Lester: *(Speeds out)* I'll go see.

*(Nancy gets up towards hallway entrance and stands behind sofa as Reverend Baker comes in followed by Lester—they don't sit down.)*

Nancy: Why, John *(with a look of fright)*, what are you doing here at this hour?

Lester: I haven't gotten a word from him.

John: Now, Nancy, Lester, please . . . I don't know how to begin . . .

Nancy: *(Excitedly)* Is it Rusty? Do you know something about her?

John: Yes, I received a call a while ago. She was found at the corner of Main and Washington.

Lester: Found? You mean she's been in a car accident?

John: No—she was found lying on the street.

Nancy: Oh, my baby! What happened to her?

John: She was found unconscious and was taken to General Hospital. The doctor is hoping she'll pull through.

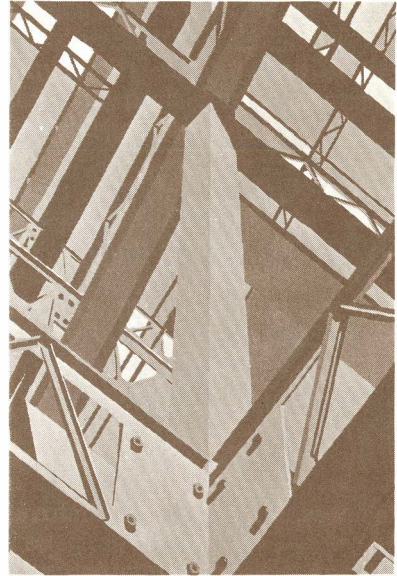
Lester: What happened to her and how come you were called?

John: It seems she had a card in her wallet asking that I be notified if something happened to her. She had an abortion and . . .

Lester and Nancy: *(Incredibly surprised)* An abortion!

Nancy: Oh my poor, poor baby!

Lester: Rusty! Oh, my God. What did we do wrong?  
*(They all hold on to one another for support as curtain comes down.)*



John Tyszko



# The Commuter

Mary C. Fisher

His lovely wife, Adrienne, kissed him good-by and Jessica, his little bundle of joy, brought him his umbrella, because she said that it would rain. He patted her darling head and set the umbrella off to the side. He walked out the door, leaving them behind to their peaceful world of housework and nursery rhymes. The day was beginning as almost every day did, and he smiled to himself with pride, because he was making a good life for his little wife and the one addition to their happy household. The car hummed contentedly along its familiar route to the train station; fine machines they were and he was in love with his. Watching the emblem which seemed to guide the vehicle, he relaxed back for a comforting cruise in stereophonic heaven. The gentle patter of the first drops of a soft summer rain added atmosphere, soothing his body gently into a state of peaceful alertness. He felt confident, secure, and right on schedule.

The rain was beating down hard when he wedged the oversized car into an open space in the auxiliary parking lot, a block away from the station. Although he enjoyed an occasional jog, this frantic dash was not in keeping with his nature, and he scorned the commuters who had innocently stolen every close parking space. The station was cramped; the train late. Conscientious secretaries worried and efficient businessmen appeared annoyed. He watched in amused silence. The ticket-taker was rude, and the man seated next to him was smoking a cigar. The pages of his morning paper were soggy and too difficult to read, so he leaned back and concentrated on riding gracefully with the jerky movements of the train. His thoughts wandered from present and potential accounts, clients, and appointments, to his leisure time and methods of further self-gratification.

He was glad to get to work. The building was familiar, warm, and friendly. Sherri greeted him cheerily as he passed by her desk on the way into his office. He settled back into his black leather chair and flicked on the mellow movements of Bach's Fifth. Moments later, as he was browsing through the morning mail and reports on yesterday's accomplishments, Sherri knocked cautiously and entered, apologizing overly for the intrusion, but she did feel that it was important. He smiled patiently, for Sherri never disturbed him. She

was cute, efficient, and always eager to please. After setting the neatly typed letter on his desk, she quietly slipped out. Considering her to be a good judge of pertinent information, he turned his attention to the new business at hand. It was Joe Burton's letter of resignation.

Joe had been with the company now for five years and was one of the key men in his own department for three. Joe was known for having a real head on his shoulders; he was aggressive and destined to go far. Joe's having always been an excellent worker caused his initial response to be one of shock. His next was of disappointment. He had expected much more out of Joe and found his lack of stamina to be discouragingly inconsistent with his own usually perceptive ability to judge human nature.

He made a call to personnel, instructing them to send up some appropriate resumes. He would have to start to review them immediately to prevent any inefficiency in his department in the near future.

## Non et Decor Non Dulce (Not for Glory or Reward)

Patrick McCarthy

Ezra Pound; A Prose Kinema

Old Ez, folded his blankets  
In the bosom of Saint Elizabeth  
Not for loving her as he ought  
A lady, preserving him from catastrophe  
Ringing the bell under eagle's nose  
Knotted hemp never used

Old Ez, your ship sets sail  
Van Buren turns his back  
The old bitch hold reconcile  
Your mistress hath given you disease  
Sing once more of the white birds  
In the blue waters of heaven

Old Ez, conversing with Napoleon  
Your debtors enjoying some satisfaction  
Usury is muffled under allied cheers  
Sterile hands rubbing greasy plates  
Epic pages, Confucian odes  
Bewilder white coat workers

# Man's Meanderings

Thomas Pritts

He journeys to, no one knows,  
His eyes and thoughts to himself.  
A seemingly gentle creature, God's wonderous gift,  
On foot to tangle his bounds.

The sweetness of the morning dew,  
Flutters of passing wings.  
Raindrops—clinging in the air,  
Slowly sighing, the passing wind.

Gently gripping his inward soul,  
He tosses his head to one side.  
Subtle reflections in his eyes,  
His mind wondering, wandering by.

The creek begins its daily run,  
Trees begin their graceful swing.  
Sleepy creatures wake from slumber,  
The sun wakes most everything.

With concentration he catches his wandering thoughts,  
The heart's a noble place.  
Thinking thoughts this lonely man  
Walks his gentle pace.

When silence is death upon the grove,  
The skies turn a muddy grey.  
The winds lash to and fro,  
And pound their steady way.

He picks a bud beneath the tree,  
Then washes his thoughts away;  
Trying to clean his inner mind  
Of ideas that went astray.

Skies then turn an orangish-red,  
Winds they just die away.  
The only thing left upon the grove  
Are the creatures from day to day.



Barbara Soroka

Placed beneath a wonderous tree  
He turns to look away.  
There in the middle of his path  
Lay dreams of yesterday.

The sun just peeks from 'round the clouds,  
Birds send up a joyous chirp.  
Flowers reach for the heavenly light  
Their kernels just about to burst.

His troubling mind begins to turn.  
His eyes reflect his thoughts.  
Yesterday's hopes and tomorrows dreams  
Lay heaped in a bundle of knots.

The wind blows through his soft gleaming hair,  
His face reflects the sun.  
That today is just tomorrow's means,  
He peacefully walks, though never runs.

# The Picnickers

Pat Richards

My puzzle swims before my eyes —  
The greens of the grass  
And the blues of the sky  
All begin to merge.  
And it's all instantly, magically "completely interlocked"  
As Milton Bradley says on the box.

When I blink, it comes apart again.  
The green grass gapes with brown table top.  
In the corner a long scratch appears instead of the old barn.  
Overall are my tears.  
But the one scene still remains —

The picnickers still smile their endless smiles,  
Safely interlocked on their red and white checked tablecloth.  
If only I could change places with one of them,  
To infinitely, brainlessly smile forever.  
Not to have tears or laughs  
Or any other damn emotion.

A mean laugh escapes my throat.  
As I take it apart piece by piece  
Watching their smug smiles disappear.

Renee Dankert



# The Love Poem

Gregory Cullinane

We've learned to move  
Through each other  
Without touching—  
As if something inside  
Of us were made  
Of crystal—  
We've learned the wisdom  
Of a day at a time  
Without promises—  
Tomorrows are abstracts  
Destined for still-lives  
Of distortion—  
We've learned to speak  
Guarded phrases naturally  
Without strain—  
Knowing that each word  
Will fall on guarded ears  
Painlessly.

We've learned to respond to each other  
Much like Pavlov's  
Dogs.



# The River Soft and Slow

**Kenn Pearson**

Near the river soft and slow  
We lay sculpting clouds  
And never once touching.  
Her voice was the silk  
She wore around her neck:  
“Talk to me,”

With a frown.

And I said, no.

In that sky of hazy despair  
Was the peace of remorse,  
Where I could wander

In self-pity.

Her wetness fell  
In motions, slow—  
Stirring the pang of sympathy.

And the river soft and slow  
Performed feats well rehearsed,  
With us its audience.

I created thought,  
She created ripples  
With pebbles round and smooth:  
“Can I love you?”

Her voice grey-velvet.

And I said, no.

## Monotony

**Mark Maley**

Frozen lips continue to cater  
To your undying desires  
A warm body—a silent smile  
A foolish thought or two . . .

Empty of even emptiness  
Yearning to be replaced  
By something you once read about  
Or heard on the radio . . .

Lightning destroys all hope  
Electric flashes of silver neon  
Tossing and turning—you cry aloud  
Almost too afraid . . .

A laugh which mimicks passion  
Nameless faces lie untouched  
And unseen in the darkness  
Too close to recognize . . .

Be careful to step lightly  
Shattered footsteps lead to emotions  
Walk away unnoticed  
Just another lonely night . . .



**William Rainey Harper College**

Algonquin and Roselle Roads  
Palatine, Illinois 60067