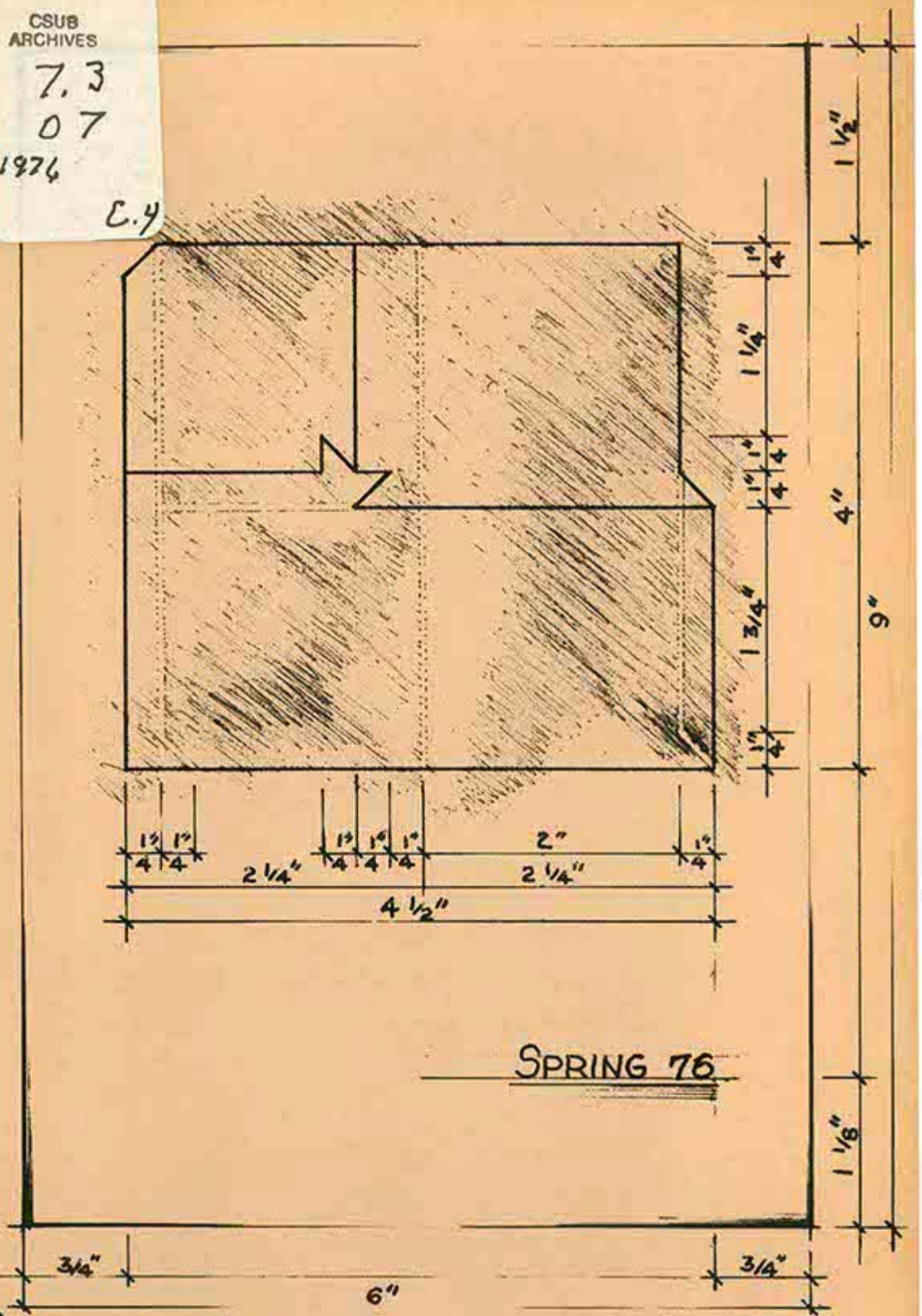
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ORPHEUS COVER DESIGN ~ SCALE: FULL ~ MUELLER

ORPHEUS

A Literary Magazine

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CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, BAKERSFIELD

AUTHORS

NANCY AHMADI
MARGARET BIELBY
JOHN BOUSQUET
THOMAS F. CARTER
ANTHONY FROST
ANDREW G.
JACK MOON GALLON
NANCY HARB
CINDY HEIMFORTH
STEVEN IRETON
RUMERY CHARLES-JACKSON
THELMA KEELING
PENNY MARTIN
DOUG MARTINEZ
JAY MICK
JIM MUELLER
SUSAN K. McKENZIE
EDLYNN NAU
JOHN PAIR
KIRK D. PERKINS
REBECCA PERRY
GLENN E. PORTER
KEVIN MICHAEL RARDIN
SHIRLEY RUGGLES
SID
STEVE SWARTS

CREATIVITY. . .

And now that we've stood tall and freed our hands, what shall we do with them? Now that today's work is finished and there is nothing more to be done, what shall we do? And so, one of the we puts his hand firmly into the clay and says, "I am man. I am here."

A jolt of electricity shoots through the infant body, a breath and there is birth. . .another jolt sparks its way from head to toe and the body is slapped on a slab. And what print in the clay has been left?

Herein lies the place for creative work. After the food is gathered and the roof placed over one's head, a light and a fire in the cold; the poem is writ, the paints are spread on the canvas, the song is lifted to the Goddess, the music, composed the philosophy wrought and the play groans becoming as arduous as the work. And the aesthetic reflection finishes itself and centers itself in these pages. Our print in the clay.

A dangerous print. The act of creation is more perilous than death. For it is the direct assault of the artist-man over that feared and odious compulsion; the life *against* the death. And the work with which we toil, engaging our hands and minds looks back at us and tells us who we are; that we are here and to others, that we were. This is us and this is you.

In times of fantasy art creates the real; in times of realism art creates the fantasy; this oscillation amongst people amid a garden of ideas transcends the mortal going on and on into the enternal where it simply is (forall). And these prints in the clay join hands across the eons stopping briefly on the journey to rest in your hands that you may know. Here, then, is Orpheus.

The driving force, that idyllic clock that wakens creative spirit may live in one man, one man who gives of himself without reservation, a man born in the garden of ideas. We single him out now. Solomon Iyasere, we sing your name on the mountains and give thanks that the world has given us a man of your sensitivity and vision. You are the father of Orpheus. Your children will now follow in your steps on the path to knowledge and creation.

Editorial Staff

Jack Moon Gallon
Thomas Carter
Nancy Harb
Jim Mueller
William O. Shoars
Michael McConnell
Kevin Rardin

POETRY

WRITER'S RHYME

I want a word that revs up and screams off like a rocket
A black and white streak from the pen in my pocket
And some words that wheel even and fast on the mouth
That curve people north who are heading south
And four-wheel drive words when the road bellies out
Words that hang onto hitchhikers through detour and doubt
When monotonous lines roll sleep-smooth and ahead
Are the lights, words that shriek! words that mad up the dead!
Give me stark flashing words that ten thousand can ride
Without cross-signal delay down the highway inside
And miles before the gas runs out, at the perfect time,
Quick give me a word that'll stop on a dime!

Rumery Charles-Jackson

FIRST TRY

Not so much as a coffin for you my son my daughter
Not so much as a pit of earth to keep you So we know it was I
Who called when the cry cord tautened The landless I handhooked
my hope
coiled the rest near one twisted foot spun one end into the sea dark,
and gone.
When it came you clutched the cord, anchored its tip in your belly,
and set out cell by cell to come.
Somewhere that seesaw trip unravelled in the traveler's key —
What wove you wring? Was it the dark jointed antic wormy strands
kinked a flow? Did we clamber on your universe's roof, pile-drive
too eagerly at the door? My questions
are a ring I build myself, a mazy shield who will not
let me use the plea, luceat eis. *It failed somewhere,*
my niggling knots, the ends frayed in broken-ended books —
The skein of your story would not keep its rigging. Half-here, you are
cut from the walls, red nut meat scared of a knife whose one smiling
edge
kills the web of my wonder Slit the strings! Scrape the soft walls
that wave!
your skin yields to the steel
Wet walls plunge you, flushed out where we name the voids, having been
only here
And the lab takes what you left but
You are gone irrevocable as stars gone out or wind
This is the time mountains use, pulling up stone to their bellies
when ashes mingle one molecule more into earth, when waters
wash their lines out, lay lacefoam or weeks to dry
When we turn to each other touch breathe
begin again

Andrew G.

A RUDE LESSON OF DISTURBANCE

Up in the mountains and by a brook

Where it's clean and quiet, and you can look and look

There's a hawk in the sky, circling a tree, Oh my gosh,
Now it's heading towards me!

I tried to escape its shrieking invasion . . .

There was a moment of silence passed through the tree
As the bird from above came soaring upon me.

When it invaded my thoughts in my mind
I could of, should of, but didn't go blind.

It didn't possess me I'm happy to say
But now, right now, I'm still not too gay

The memory remains and it leaves a scar
It's still in my mind, it hasn't left, not by far

But now when I see that bird up above
I know I'll be able to love and be loved!

Cindy Heimforth

LET'S TALK

Mystic mundane metaphor
A shopping list and sonnets
What else is there
But alone?

John Pair

POLAR PULSE

A really fine complex madness
Of ravings and rubber-lipped dreams
That's what I'd like to build, yet
My poor true compass points sanely somewhere

John Pair

OTHELLO
FROM DESDEMONA'S POINT OF VIEW

The charisma he possessed on the battlefield
Was gone when he entered the bedroom and took
off his shield.

Great strength that made his body vibrate
Was a weakness that soon encompassed his mind
with hate.

Jealousy arose in his fiery eyes —
This devil gave Othello uncertain thoughts
And all my reassurances of faith were lost.

Sid

INTENSE

i think of You in the morning
i think of You always

i whisper in the wind
but
You can't hear me
i reach for Your hand
but
i can't find it
i call You when i'm lonely
but
there is no answer
i can see You here
but
i can't touch You
i speak Your name
but
You don't come

when i think of love
i think of You
when i think of You
i think of loving You

this is not a mere fatuation of my heart
for i am as sure as sun shining on a summer's day

Sid

$(N)^2$

tired
it's hot in here
the air conditioning isn't working

i remember you
standing in a field of wonderment
a mind-elevating summer breeze
"jasmine blowing softly into my mind"
the sounds of sweetness caress my ears
coool

walking through the field
toward a light
the closer i come the brighter it shines
i take a step, it goes off
i stand still, it comes on
another step, it's off
i stop, it's on
the closer i come the brighter it shines
but each step i take turns it off

what time is it?

i must have dozed off a moment

i was almost there

Sid

VERSION II

ever so lightly
we brushed
tears
from each others face
only
a slight trace of
our love
can be allowed to remain
as reminiscence.

my picture
of you
lies
on the table
and today
i heard
"our song"
on the radio
it stirred the
long
dulled
memory
of watching you
go
and it prompted
to mind that
i
still
miss
you

Sid

Millions of small creatures of diverse complexions
Rushing in millions of seemingly disoriented directions
Each creature endowed with a specific responsibility
Which connects their complex social organization

The plans are made for important structures
And carried out to the tee

It takes only one uncaring stroke
From someone more powerful than these interdependent creatures
To shatter their meticulous castles
And diminish the community

Yes. Their troublesome bite stings for a time —
But humble voices are seldom heard

Sid

NORTH CALIFORNIA COAST

Let some other man
Hitch his wagon to a star
I'll press myself
Into the rusty red bark
Of a giant redwood
And find the slow soaring
Ambition of a tree
My feet are happily earthbound

John Pair

LUBA

Luba has her mad-face
On today
Plum red lipstick
On her old scowly mouth
And a black silk
Turban hat

Luba's walk is slow swaying
Sofa cushion hips
Stretching shiny-tight
Her black cotton Sunday dress

Like dark brown bread dough
Rising out of old black pans
The tops of Luba's feet
Are swelling out
Of the too-tight patent leather heels
Mad walking
Sad walk for Luba's
Poor old feet

Luba has a train to meet today
A train full of mail
And noisy travelers and
A coffin
Today Luba gets to trade
Her Son for a raggedy old flag

Rolling down to the station
Luba is a black cloud
Boiling and baleful
A charged cloud
A mad cloud
Ready to storm and strike
But the drops just roll down
The mad face
The sad face
Making streaky tracks on
The black cloud-puffed cheeks

John Pair

CRABS

Feathers fall softly

Resting on salty seas
Waiting on velvet wind
That carries them higher
Soaring higher past Icarus
Past falling waxen wings
A silver microcosm caught in flight
By Mercury's shrewd fingers
Propelled into darkness
Plato's cave of allusion
"One, two shadow's"
"Third, fourth houses"
"You are getting sleepy"
Fire burns all judgment
All resistance.
"Just relax"
"You are relaxed now"
"Balance the scales ruled by Venus"
Irresistible wet air
Marries gold speckled fog
Surrounding spiritual intellect
Inducing hypnotic suggestion
Of artificial sleep.
Falling . . .
Falling head first emersed
In emotional waters of life.
"Observe the hanged man. Observe 12."
"Breathe archetypal images"
"Tap the resource. Tap mind and spirit"
"Plant 7 seeds given by Don Juan"
"Rest now" It was over.

Salty spray fastened onto my face,
Waking from hypnotic waves,
Of blue purity and rising tides

That forced crabs into new shelters
Where they crouched in hiding
Reminding me of an older youth.

I walked backwards into the future
Enduring test of truth
On knowledge of my strength and weakness
On experiences past
An existence paralleled with crabs
Hiding under secure rocks in shadows
Of other views, of other philosophies.

Shirley Ruggles

(N)[1]

I see a pondering dove
waning back and forth above
Somehow I knew this lofty bird before
It is I think the bird
transcendence and amor
Coming back to me
as it did one time before
It swains and follows in the breeze
Looking for a place to land
in safety and in ease
A solid branch or smooth clear furrow
With memory of the bramble and the bush
where landing
This fragile dove before met sarrow
by being battered
TRAPPED IN HELPLESSNESS before
Looking for a place to rest
chose
what seemed the safest place
Not thinking that if danger did approach
as resting while exposed
A swift return to safety
To the sky above — was simple
For the pretty white and swift strong dove

Kirk D. Perkins

WAR TIDE

The Achaeans rode the purple waves at sunset
In black-bodied hollow ships
Advancing on Troy
Desire shone in their eyes
The mingled rays of the thousand-eyed war tide

Above the many shoulders stood four
Wrapped in soft double thick mantles
Of the royal hue
Brash Agamemnon and wronged Menelaus his brother
Shining Achilles of immortal blood
And golden-voiced Odysseus

Fierce hearted Greek tide
Rose against the purple splendor
Of the halls of Hector and
Helen-stealing Paris
A surging sea to overcome
The sacred citadel

John Pair

CICATRIX

Tissued ridge crossed his forehead
Sank beneath his hairline
And into his mind

The would-have-been deadness stung blue-bright
Into unforgiving transparency

The soul-scar behind the frozen window glowed
Deep scored with altered flame

Alien intent cut toward the marked prey

Thomas F. Carter

SALAMANDER

She approached with salamander stares for the current crowd
Then turned on a scaled heel and slithered through the door.
The ornate grotto glowed coldly in the haze of merriment.
A stagnant pool of light stood upon the dais.
The Lady had arrived.

An ill played piano scattered approximate notes among the seekers.
A submerged clarinet struggled up a scale
And numbing amber softened the deficient attempts.
A low baring bow and the Lady sang her song.

Deformed and flowing hearts cast about for her pleasure
And promises and favors. Murky eyes drifted through the
Common faces. Drowning, she chose one. Running, paying out the
Line,
The lady had departed.

Thomas F. Carter

FALL

Estranged, the sun's oblique beams,
Wan and unwarming,
Linger over Autumn's hold.
And so, pain's nectar sweetens —
The vine dies.
Frozen breath and leaves that won't stay raked
Hint of Winter's harsh approach.
The passers-by numbers dwindle;
Cold encroaching shadows shorten the days
And in the shivering silence
A memory mellows into a long and bracing draught.

Thomas F. Carter

RENASCENCE

Sometimes in morning
I see the past.
Geometric forms covering a blanket
shower my mind with thoughts of wind
blowing across the desert,
chapping the brown face of my past.
In the mountains
Kachinas dance;
they live again.
Gone; the old way.
Desolate; the forests, praire,
animals, and people.
Once partners in a cycle;
now broken.
Polluted is the race,
by those like me.
The future will never revive their nations.
Like sand paintings,
their color is spread by the wind.
but
Sometimes in morning, reborn, they live;
in me.

Anthony Frost

STILL MOVEMENT

BUILDINGS STAND. STAND TALL.
STAND HIGH.
STAND NOT AT ALL.
TWO EYES, A MOUTH, AND A NOSE.
BUILDINGS STAND, CHILDREN DRAW, WINDOWS DOZE.

edlynn nau

TECHNIQUE

BREAK NOT YET THE DAY
WHEN HE SHOULD COME BRINGING
THE NAME: LOVE

FOR EVEN SO
DESCENDS
HIS PEACE
AS HEAVENS WINGED DOVE

SHALL ALL ARISE TAKE UP THE FLIGHT,
SWORD, AND BLIGHTED STORM
TO CONQUER DARK
AND HATED MEN AND ALL SHALL BE
NOT WARM

THEN
PEER
DOWN
LIFE, TO KNOW US NOT,
AND CATCH US UNALARMED!

THEN CREEP AWAY
TO RUSTED COVES
TO REACHING ARMS:
UNHARMED

YET SEARCH THE DARK FOR THE LIGHT
AS A HOLE IN THE UNGREAT SKY

AND COME AGAIN, BRING NOT THE MEN
AND THE CHILDREN STILL ASK: WHY?

SEND FOR THE MESSAGE TO BE QUESTIONED
READ TO ALL
THE LIE
WHY ONE WINGED DOVE, GAVE BIRTH TO LOVE
AND MEN GAVE
BIRTH TO DIE.

edlynn nau

MOONSILVER

She came as moonsilver
And we touched,
Self to Self.

She came as glaring light
And furious rage
And together
We reached out
To life.

She came as peaceful death
Touched my soul with feather
fingers
And returned unto himself.

Margaret Bielby

WASTE
OR
HERE T.S.

AND	*AND*	*AND*
ELIOT'S	*LIES*	*HERE*
WASTES	*ARE*	*HERE*
PILED	*HIGH*	*HERE*
ROTTING	*LIKE*	*HERE*

Jack Moon Gallon

BLACK

As my head turned 'round
I saw night lying in the cradle of dawn;
Its breath hollow and cold
As a ship on frozen seas;
Its eyes searching as star's light
For warmth and love;
For a breast not of steel and paper.

The dawn of golden light fingers
Gripped his black body tightly
Searching for his heart
And with furious light smothered his darkness.
But with slipping hours came filtering
Darkness. Slipping past dawns old hands,
Into the light of day, night again proclaimed His need.

Jack Moon Gallon

THE PREY

In a moment
she is the prey
And in the next
a festive meal
Of ripe young breasts, smooth lingering swells,
Of sighs leased slowly;
Olive fingers, warm and soft,
And she is consumed.

Jack Moon Gallon

INTEGRATION OH

At intraphase isomers dance unerring: active sites are waiting
Round and round and so fragile their structures
Levoforms wait patiently to be asked into reaction
Deltas boast of the transition state but they too are shy
Being only sons and daughters of metabolic functions

On screen rare solutions were shown in hermetic purity
The best to 10 of the 9th autocontrols gated the charges
And the music of the band seems enzymatic
Substrates appeared everywhere crowding and pushing
The night went on mathematical pose all energy conserved

In time equilibrium was reached
Many could radiate new states of activation
Others knew of different confirmational potentials
Some had been carried to higher flexible plateaus
But unfortunates with their rigid antigentic shields
These were protected for happening Jove randomized.

Doug Martinez

BLACK WINE

Along the closing shadowed day-track drifts
The bearer of black wine. His flask of dreams
Beneath a sable silent cloak, he seems
To carry lightly the burden of dark gifts.
His steps are slow, unseeing eyes he lifts
To blankly mirror a sunset's fading gleams.
A phantom announced by the night hawk's sudden screams
Taps the stones with his staff as twilight sifts
Over his shoes with the dust. We sit and drink
The blind man's wine in summer's bright cafes
And in silent sun-struck windows of old hotels.
In moon-dim salons of the laughing dead we sink
Into ourselves and grasp for all the ways
To cheat this living wine the phantom sells.

John Pair

ISOLATION

At last
Peace
Is where you find it
Sitting
Staring
Wandering mind

At last
Silence
In a sense
Muffled noises
Muted blasts of water
Vibrations of soul
Music softened
Faintly screeching tires
Uniformed closeness

Living above
Below
Side by side
Identification in numbers
Or letters
Or both
Stray glances
Closed faces
Chosen smiles

At last
In one's assigned space
Solitude
Becomes a demand

Rebecca Perry

RAINBOW

Pastel hues faintly glimmering
Warm blushing red
Soft golden yellow
Earthy green, full of life
Vibrant blue

Follow me enchantingly
It is here
At the end of the rainbow
Your dream

Clouded color subtly veiling
Dripping arc of red blood
The yellow of tainted water
Moldy green
Glaring cold-blooded blue

Follow me uncontrollably
It is here
At the end of the rainbow
Your nightmare.

Rebecca Perry

SIGH

Pale stillness, unnatural
Dust, layered delicately
Meaningful holes
Marring walls with faded shadows
Of what once was there
Dead leaves, shifting dirt
Rotting threads worming through carpets

A friends dies
A room sighs

Rebecca Perry

UNDERSTAND?

How can you understand
I don't give you a chance
You're not supposed to
I don't like it
It bothers me, you bother me, I bother me
Go away.

I need time to comprehend
Your understanding
Please
Don't try to understand
Come back

Rebecca Perry

PEOPLE AND OTHER DARK CORNERS

Out the front door
I look aimlessly
To neon lights
Far too bright
For faceless people
And nameless streets.
(Faceless and nameless me.)
Mannequins stand posed,
Unlit on street corners
Hearing every silence,
Seeing only blindness.
. . . gargoyle faces
Staring into the wind,
Expressions cracked masks.
The bars close at two
And home by fifteen
I creep past week-old sheets
To a wrinkled window
And I look at my world in full.
Nothing.
Only people and other dark corners.

Susan K. McKenzie

MOON I.

I am awe-struck as
I gaze at the mottled disfigurations
Of your body.
Your fingers reach down
Enveloping the earth
With a frostglimmer
Similar to a spider's web
At daybreak.

Susan K. McKenzie

MOON II.

You have been raped,
Amputated of flesh,
Transplanted with
The symbols of Mankind
(They twisted your arm
Until you gave away
Your secrets).
But I will always remember
When you were just
An opulent pearl
Spinning around the oyster.

Susan K. McKenzie

desires fester like the endless circles a moth spins
around a light in the darkness of imagination
dreams strangle thoughts like the maggots of a
dead carcass
Sterilize me with your smile

Penny Martin

her mind trickled freshly down
thru
the
bullet hold
out the anymore corners of her mouth

Penny Martin

the darkness of a lizard's
heart deceives the fairest
rainbow or a maiden's eyelash
between blank pages like
empty sheets
the distance absent because
we touch — and yet light
years thru our space
become rivers
in nightness

Penny Martin

THE TITLE OF THE POEM TO FOLLOW IS:
FIVE

illustrious, longevity obliques velocity's elation,
yonder on unicorn
ionic, lusciousness obscenely voluptuously elevated,
yellow ostentaciously under
inconceivable, lifelessness obstructs volt embryo,
yawns overtly umbilicus
inevitable, letters orangutans vomit enough,
yardage over uniquely
inside, lion's optically velvet eyelids,
yesterdays oblong unquote

"Shh" . . .
I love you

Penny Martin

GUEST

I

He came to our house before I was born, I'm told
With a trumpet all polished of silver and brass
In the folds of his dusty cloak. After supper
He played in glorious liquid tones that faded
As the sun went down. He stayed on to help in the
Southwest field, tangled with thorns and thistles.
His trumpet got everyone up with the dawn
And the field was soon cleared but the guest stayed on.
He announced the lightning and the hail,
the buds in spring, the harvest month, the
Long winter's sleep, and ordered the year, the season,
the hour when I was to be born.
As my earth-world grew, I listened to him and
He taught me his nursery rhymes.

Moon dazzle glow and dim
The cow jumped over the morning star
Wait three cockcrows till dawn
A half-moon till moment
While during elapses — don't pull the cat's tail —
Swallow the clock, child,
Hickory, dickory down
And just when I was learning to read them myself
Time to grow whiskers

II

A thoughtless guest, he never knows
When to leave nor when I want to be alone
Ten o'clock, my heart tells me so
Pulse-seconds linger and stay
I'm all tangled up inside. Seven sabbaths ago
I saved seven sabbaths to be with my lover
And she never came; she never came
Leave! Leave! Stop serving measure for measure
Drop for drop, those cups of wormwood tea

III

Reading "Wisdom of Ages" and late hour revealings
Flicker like moths around my lamp
I am the one who gives wisdom, he interferes,
and takes my book out the door
Stay! Stay! Give me back my book!
Would you play Joshua with the moon?
Are you that wise? Do you want the blame?
And the midnight caller comes knocking and shouting
He may be the guest, but he keeps the house
And I am the one who departs

Rumery Charles-Jackson

STRANGER

Neighbors said the easiest way
To shelter from frost
Is to cover with plastic cartons
But Greatmother cleared ashes from the stove
And carried pails of live
Coals
Past the cedars of Lebanon
To the heart of the garden
To the warming pit
Below the seedlings

And I followed from stove to pit
From fireside to ripening loam
From glowing wood to slender green
Down the winding path by the broken wheel
And back to the living room
Where Greatfather waited in his easy chair

"She was wild, wild," said Greatmother,
Settling to her sewing.
I took the heart-shaped
Pincushion from her basket.

"Yes, she was an outlaw, by Jupiter,"
Said Greatfather
(Who never used the Lord's name in vain).
I grasped a long hatpin
With a beautiful pearl tip.

"Belle Starr she was called," said Greatmother,
Looking to be sure I was listening.
"But she was a stranger to us – rode in
Late one day on a horse she called Diablo."

"She'd just robbed a bank,
But no one knew that, by Jupiter,"
Said Greatfather
(Who never let us
Use the Lord's name in vain, either).

"Now let me tell it, Daddy,"
(She called Greatfather that,
Although he was my mother's father.)
"You weren't even there,
Myself only six or seven."

"Go ahead, mother."
(They had been father and mother to ten
Children and as many grandchildren.)

"Strange and true,
She just rode up and asked
If we could spare something to eat.
Mother asked her to come in;
Father watered her horse.
She shared our meal and said how good
the sweet potatoes were.
After dinner she sat and talked
Frost got the early peaches
Plenty of wild garlic in Potter's field
Mustard makes a good poultice for spring cough.

STRANGER (Cont.)

"Then swaddling me in her leather coat
She lifted me to her knees
And told me that some day
I could tell my grandchildren
That I had sat on Belle Starr's lap.
That was the first we knew who she was —
Belle Starr, the outlaw, wanted in half the territory."

"And, by Jupiter," said Greatfather
(Who preached every sabbath in church
not to use the Lord's name in vain)
"She calmly took her horse and rode off."

"We always thought she came back and
slept in the barn. Fed her horse, too —
Hay was low in the manger."

I was pleating my skirt shorter and shorter
With the hatpin with the beautiful pearl tip
As Aunt Ruth came in.

"Daddy," said Aunt Ruth,
"You and Mama be sure to lock the house
Before you go to campmeeting tomorrow."

"Of course, of course."

"Now I mean it!
Thieves robbed your neighbors last week
And the pen is so close you can see it.
Some one escapes now and then, you know.
You're just lucky so far
Thinking you can welcome any stranger
In your gates
Leaving your door unlocked."

Then Aunt Ruth saw
the hatpin and she unpleated my skirt.
"Good protection in deserted parking lots,"
Murmuring soft as a purr, she smoothed
my skirt below my knees
and put the pearl-tipped hatpin in her purse.
She talked as she walked to her car
Storm delayed planting corn
East-west freeway will be done next month
Replace this crushed rock drive with cement
Then she spun her tires, the motor snarled
and she was gone. She lived twenty miles
from the pen and wanted to get home before
Night.

Fires graying at twilight
Windows darkened, doors shut in the streets
Low eaves, high eaves, cry eaves shelter
Sleep and sable walls brushed by
Night tiger silent in the drive
Prowling on the gravel
Sharpening ivory claws on the
Broken wheel
Flashing fiery eyes down the winding path
By the cedars of Lebanon and toward the
Uncovered garden
Pacing, straining, tightening, loosening the
Silver cord
Tied below his devouring jaws

Morning rising, window lighting
Strange visions mellow to tabby cat
Waiting on the sill for oatmeal steaming
And chicken baking for campmeeting

"All day preaching and dinner on the ground,"
Said Greatmother.
"Ought to be all day dinner and preaching
on the ground," laughed Greatfather.

STRANGER (Cont.)

Greatmother covered bowls of hot chicken
and carried them from the stove to the car
(Motor warmed and purring)
And I followed from stove to car
Down the sunshadows on the drive
(Rocks scraping the newness from my shoes)
and back to the living room
Where Greatfather picked up the suitcase
and Greatmother got the same old note
from the silverware tray and
propped it on the table with a crystal
Pitcher

Help yourself to the bed and food
Wash the dishes when you're through

The door was not locked.
A lock was never used on their door and
Greatfather never used the Lord's name in vain.
And he never let us
Use the Lord's name in vain either.
But Aunt Ruth carries a hatpin in her purse.

Rumery Charles-Jackson

It is I
Alive
Who cares

It is I
Dead
Why bother

Rebecca Perry

(N)

We rode nervously down.
Round and steeply down.
The bushes and trees seemed
To climb and cling to the mountainside.
Even slow was fast
And laughing cars whizzed past us.

Hours, yet only minutes, later we reached
The bottom of down.

Sid

the rounded head, the bulbous
middle, the still larger base. thus
stands the frozen snowman. this
icy work, encircled by its
childish admirers, begins to melt
from their warmth, and is soon dead.
and alas, for these young ones, for in
sorrow for their lost friend, they
too expire.

Steven Ireton

Oh pretty petaled flower with
velvety arms and silver pearls of
early dew, how truly lovely you
are. Ahhh — what has become
of you now, squashed into the mud by
an unseeing shoe whose master moves
on in haste.

Steven Ireton

ON THE DEATH OF BURTON SENIOR

"Here!, Now!, is my life,
And, now my death. Here!
On this strong shoulder
Overlooking the blue expanse."

"Here! In this moment I construct,

I destruct;

I will do here what
I, in my life, could not create

"An event," cried the beloved,
The artist. "I made it
For you to see. It is my love.
My hate. My life."

"It is here. In my death;
Can you see?"
The freeway humms; It lives.
Those office buildings thrive.
The flow of green from hand to hand
Is alive; is dead.

"Did you hear about this guy?

"He killed himself. Turn down the T.V."

"Down in Laguna."

"Says here it was his favorite place. Are you listening?"

"Shot himself. Twice. Then jumped eighty feet. Can you believe that?"

"Are you gonna turn down that T.V.?"

"Yep. He fought the Emergency Rescue Squad. Crazy bastard. They tried to save him!"

"But I, in my strutting fury,
Am, in eyes, less then these sterile tools.
Where is my life?"

"Made it all the way to the hospital."

"It is alive, as I give it life,
But relate it to what?"

"Died on the cuttin table"

"The car which holds my baggage?
This wasteland in which I have searched
For some vague security?"

"Lost too much blood."

"Or the tepid warmth of a lover searching,
As I, for some shade from the seering heat of
Madness?"

"What do you suppose would make
a guy do something like that?"

"An event," cried the beloved,
The artist.

"Hey, are you listening?
"Hey!
"Guess she stepped out.
"Oh well."

Jack Moon Gallon

LITTLE MOTH

a very small moth
has been
bothering me, lately,
weaving a greywinged flight path
around me
flying left to right
one side of a kitchen wall
to the next
extremes within bearings
disappearing —

reappearing — this tiny mistress
flits out spedflown across
the table
flutters straight towards me
unwavering
at millions of miles an hour
zooms through my head (mind?)
neutrino condensed,
passing without any sense.

moth dust fallen sideways
upon my face
which way?
where?
my vision blurs
as the
frail feathered antennae
buzz before my eyes
I see in her a fragment
of my soul
in her mouth.

— now?

Kevin Michael Rardin

TOUCH THIS

Radiant reality
Unconsciousness in fog
And behind it
Underneath it all
Dream
Clouds

Manifestations of frog spit in a lily pond
Your face
Your face
It changes with the
Ripples, only it really changes

Penny Martin

Fire fire burning bright;
Fuel is added, coals glow white;
Cool to touch but melt the skin;
Turn away and burn within;
Rocks surround the fire red
Islands formed of molten lead
Water falls the fire to drench
But only blood the fire will quench

Scarlet streams downward drizzle
The liquid charred begins to sizzle
Black fumes rise in misty haze
Dizzying clouds the head to daze
Creeping shadows, dimming light
E'er spreading dark rubied blight
Fire fire burning bright
Flames envelope all in sight

Steven Ireton

WINTER

I am seated standing on the verge
of an arrested scapegoat
precipice of snowcoat forest
clinging to the mountain muscle
tires for feet, prisms for insect eyes

I am cut loose
my lifeline flies below me
pity piton little finger grasp
no air at this height

I break for a cigarette

Kevin Michael Rardin

Born of light and its assent
is darkness
when it resents its differences
For which it castigates itself
the causes of its being
Parts innate are there
for all to see
Not thinking that the light
may sometimes wish
Oh darkness is for me
From nothing there was life
a difference that's profound
In every day new differences abound
Forever changing everything there is
So why defy the greatest thing
our universe can give —
Differences

Kirk D. Perkins

STADIUM CROWD

A crowd, stadium-held,
Moving at unseen signal to dark exits
Amid animated murmurings, punctuated by shouts and laughter.
Now tunneled:
Slowed
And
Compacted.
Echoing cacophony and myriad smells assault the senses.
Now spilling, alluvial-like, to vast parking lot.
Diminishing sounds . . .
A salve to jangled nerves.

MONT ST. MICHEL

We point toward the Channel coast
Sensing, not seeing, the spire-topped isle.
Eagerness slows time and lengthens distance
Until, long last, from the crest of a hill
A glimpse, in the far distance, of a tiny dark
Shape that, as we close, grows to recognition.
There, in falling twilight, looming in medieval somberness
Above the wide reaches of tidal flat,
The ancient citadel of holy men and pilgrims.
Linked to the mainland by umbilical causeway,
The town and surmounting cathedral impart
A unity of configuration that belies their
Fractious historical proximity.

John Bousquet

She was born of the ghetto,
and "Morning" was her name.
Her home became a castle,
and gathered much acclaim.

The rats she saw were Knights,
and all her friends, the peasants.
As for her, she was the Queen,
all bowed while in her presence.

She was "Morning," Queen of the poor,
her "subjects" were the laden.
With power great, on her Estate,
to help the poor depraven.

A street gang came from far away,
a land not yet discovered.
She sent to battle all her Knights,
her Kingdom to recover.

They gave their lives for love of her,
and for, their once great land.
And every time that one Knight died,
prouder did they stand.

A volley hit her Castle though,
and made it dis-a-pear.
Her Knights were rats, among the trash,
and all the peasants, peers.

Her Kingdom gone amidst the smoke,
and jus-ti-fied her fear.
And from the face of one, once great,
there trickled down a tear.

Glenn E. Porter

World well fed
oh not yet
dead
eye
Tricky heart
spade
Recklessly pry, curious,
brave
upon that monster hill.

Where old men seek the long ago
Young men want for years
Stand steady
upon that ancient hill
and rage.

Nancy Harb

Our love was wash and wear and short and sheer,
you brushed my hair, half promised to be true,
We said we might have children when we grew
When you were schooled and launched for a career.
Dressed up rather fine in our thin veneer
We teased, we played, our fabric much too new
And bored one day we almost carved clean through
Our scissor games, our comfortable gear.
I change too many clothes and sometimes chill,
I sit at home and sew, I fill up time,
I hear you get good jobs and never stay,
We do not drink until we've had our fill
But have our scotch and throw away the lime
And mold figures, then cut them back to clay.

Nancy Harb

Unattached, detached
but the match
fanned desire
pure spirit burned
in fire, still
my Lord
Wield your instrument
of power,
I flower, I heal
at your whim,
At the sacred limb
I kneel,

whole, sun souled,
earth free, ah me
my own God, grail, stone,
one.

Nancy Harb

NOT ENOUGH

not enough,
to take property
and store grain in Jericho,
draw lines, quarter the land,
build walls,
construct fences and lookout towers
to look over our others
and oversee their mindless wander
in the wilderness sandblown sight.
to see the object(a) is to be the subject(b)
and (a) is to (b) as is (b) to (a).
there are many lines and will be
much
concertina wire.

not enough,
to make oceans explode in tidal froth,
run rivers backwards in canal foam,
reverse the rhetoric in banal form.
let the surveyors and cartographers loose!
unbind them and let them
divide and conquer,
map the universe between us
and let us join them
and be grand;
architects and inquisitors.
strap the bandolier tight
keeping the M-16 cocked
and let us leave in spaceships
shooting plumb lasers about infinity.

not enough,
to move and control
and pass power tales through generations,
mnemonic phrases keeping alive our
machiavellian moses machine:
who, looking over the land of milk and honey,
promised a vendetta,
thrashing around in his cave,
sought to curse them that would see Cana,
refusing to crush and drink the Soma,

NOT ENOUGH (Cont.)

picking simple Manna from the plants,
pricking up his ear wolf scared of death
but hearing nought.

not enough,
to send along with the chosen people
the sufferance of hope in
a chosen one,
and ten laws instead of justice:
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not
thou shalt not.

not enough,
to do damage unto death,
to deceive decomposition
and send them off to split into the sands.
abraham should maybe have justly slain isaac
and the twelve tribes might never have had exodus.
the red sea might not have met cleavage.
the curtains in jerusalem rend asunder
that the sound of tearing cloth might echo
into eden.

not enough,
that eden was left by the mainstream,
so that those, that worried about such things,
might barter water by the falls
and hurl their buckets at one another,
fighting savagely to death as the river runs by
turning redder and more sanguine toward night,
but clearing for the next days' battle, before dawn.

not enough,
that such anguish should wrench those from
the garden,
and that such anguish should be brought back
with bombs and bullets in the streets
so that those who, had they been there,
would have said, "No!," to the angel
and perhaps pissed on the flaming sword,
extinguishing it and telling god to go away.

not enough,
to leave home and squaller with the hogs,
be slopped along with slaves of tyranny.

not enough,
to be homesick and have to look back
to see where to go,
and once there,
conclude no conclusion,
form a purpose out of the earth,
plant the brain without contusion,
along a road rid of devious forks;
to no Y.

not enough,
that once upon the other side
where there are no enemies,
that we should stay:

where,

there,

is,

never
not enough.

Kevin Michael Rardin

ESSAYS
SHORT STORIES
and PLAYS

CHILDREN, DEATH, LEUKEMIA

Death is a mystery. It is a part of the life process which most of us would like to ignore. We do not understand all of what happens when we die or what happens after death. This is true of an adult or a child. The adult's uncertain feeling about death and his reluctance to talk about death can often change a child's natural curiosity about dying into feelings of fear and rejection.

In the last few years a new awareness of the subject, death, has come to the attention of the public. While C. Saunders was a forerunner on the subject of death, the time was right for Elizabeth Kubler-Ross to make it popular and acceptable. The news media began to expound her ideas from public lectures and the book, *Death and Dying.* Colleges began to offer courses on "Death and Dying." New studies and statistics began to appear on the subject.

With the new awareness of death came an increased interest in the study of a child's perspective of death. My own personal interest is due to my experience with the death of my youngest child. This paper will deal with children's thoughts about death in general and proceed to my own personal experience with a terminally-ill child.

C. W. Wahl writes that it is the child who holds the secrets of death.[1] A very young child is unable to perceive cause and effect. A loved child thinks that he controls his outside environment by his powerful wishes. Death to him is like the game "Cowboys and Indians." Therefore, the child is able to isolate the possibility of death from himself.[2]

While in early childhood, death is not a part of the child's awareness, around the age of three to five years, children become aware that there is death. They deny death as a permanent or final process. Most children of this age think of death in terms of sleep or going on a long trip. They speak of a person living in a coffin.[3]

Somewhere during the years when a child is five to nine, death is recognized as a real and permanent process for others. The child does not accept that someday he or she will die. However, the child, if terminally ill himself, can realize that he is dying. A child can understand that death occurs when

the heart, lungs, brain, and other organs become worn out or damaged by illness. He often talks about death as though it were a person who carries people away.[4]

I had the opportunity to view a movie entitled "My Turtle Died Yesterday." It was shown to a kindergarten age group. The basic idea that all living things must die was portrayed through the death of the young boy's turtle. Since children grieve for pets and people in much the same way, this movie was used as a method to help children accept death.

Most children of this age respond to death with feelings of anger, resentment, and loss. Some children fantasize that they can cause the death of others by wishes or magic, When someone with whom they have been angry dies, they feel guilty. As Nagy implied, "It's in childhood that the adult's outlook concerning death begins to take on basic form."[5]

While death is a natural part of life, it is sometimes harder to accept this definition if the person dying is a child. You keep thinking about the unfulfilled life that the child will never experience. Yet, who can say that a child cannot experience as much in a short life span as one who has lived many years. Children view death differently than adults. Death is easier for children than it is for adults.

It is only by facing death that children and adults truly realize the importance of life. I personally realize that life is not subject to human control, but it is a gift received. This idea was vividly brought to me and my family's attention when our son, Wes, in 1968 was diagnosed as an acute leukemia patient.

The definition of leukemia is cancer of the blood-forming tissues that affects the bone marrow, lymph nodes, and spleen. It was considered primarily a disease of children, but it actually strikes many more adults and at a rapidly increasing rate.[6] At the present time, no certain prevention has been found, but the treatment and combination of drugs have progressed to the point that a patient's life can be prolonged for well over ten years. Remission, or an absence of the illness for a period of time, are becoming more frequent and of long duration.

Our son, Wes, was diagnosed as an acute leukemia patient at the age of eight and lived fourteen months after the diagnosis. In his early years, he

appeared to be the same curious, energetic boy as any other boy. The only noticeable difference was that he seemed to be more emotional than the average child. As a preschool child, he cried a lot and did not sleep as well as his older brothers had when they were his age.

Even as early as kindergarten, he would awaken in the morning complaining of stomachaches, but we assumed it was an excuse to stay at home, so we ignored the complaints and sent him to school. As I look back upon the experience, I wondered whether the symptoms of leukemia had appeared early in Wes' life.

In the third grade, Wes woke up complaining of stomachaches but also pain in his legs. Wes' teacher became concerned about his restlessness in class and suggested that we take him to a doctor. After completion of a routine checkup, the doctor suggested it was probably only an emotional problem of a boy who did not enjoy school.

Two months later, over the Christmas holidays, he began to run a low-grade fever and started walking with a limp. Within a few days he couldn't walk at all, and we took him back to the doctor who realized this time that it was more than just an emotional problem. He ran a blood test, which he had not done before, that verified the seriousness of his illness. We took Wes back home to prepare him to go to the nearby hospital. As soon as we arrived home, he rushed in the bathroom for a bath. I had become aware that he had been taking an unusual number of baths in the preceding few months and had become concerned as to his reason for this. When I told him that the doctor said that he must go to the hospital to get well, he ran into the bathroom and screamed that he would not go. "If only you'll let me take a bath, I'll be okay," he pleaded.

Under protest from Wes, we took him to the hospital where a kind, gracious, woman doctor, a leukemia specialist, was waiting for us. After running a bone marrow test, she met us in an office at the hospital. With tears in her eyes, she confirmed the diagnosis. She explained that the best we could expect was a year's added life and hopefully some remissions in between. She said, "I'll be available anytime you need me." The doctor suggested we tell Wes that it was anemia and not tell him that he was dying. She felt he ought to return to school when he had reached a partial or full remission.

In some recent studies, I've come across the idea that nurses and doctors haven't learned to deal with death themselves and so refuse to face the issue with their patients. The specialist's idea was to keep up hope as long as possible. She felt that a child so young should not have to deal with death along with the painful illness.

The first few days of Wes' stay at the hospital were very traumatic for all of the family. Wes screamed in anger and fear at what was happening to him. Blood transfusions, numerous shots, and treatments were given to halt the disease. After three weeks, Wes was allowed to return home. Since his blood platlets were still not normal, we had to guard against his nose hemorrhaging and infection.

After a combination of drugs and weekly visits to the laboratory and the doctor for blood-check, Wes entered a partial remission. He returned to school on a part-time basis and did very well. His teacher thought that he seemed much more interested in his studies. With the increased interest, his grades began to improve. Kubler-Ross spoke in a lecture about terminally ill children possessing a wisdom beyond their age. We noticed an increased awareness not only at school but also in Wes' ideas at home. The remission was short-lived and within a month his blood count was low again and he had to return to the hospital for another week.

On his return home again, he would speak of playing in his coffin as he played with this G.I. Joe on the couch. While I never told him that he was dying, he seemed to know it. I never encouraged him to speak about death, yet I did not discourage his speaking of death.

Not only do people afflicted with leukemia have to deal with the deterioration of the body, they have to deal with the social and psychological aspects as well. Adults and children alike sense the alienation from normal, healthy people. People try to avoid facing a terminally-ill person. While we were more fortunate that Wes was a child and all the world reaches out to a child, there was still some separation. For example, after he returned to school the second time, his teacher began to be frightened by his condition. Sometimes he developed a nose bleed during class and she felt it unfair to have to spend time observing him while she had a class to teach. Finally she asked us to try a home-bound teacher. This arrangement was not very satisfactory as the home-bound teacher wasn't very understanding either. Wes was not yet able to admit that he could no longer attend school.

There were times that I, too, become frightened, and I was very appreciative of a doctor who would listen at any time of the day. It would have been most helpful to have had a therapy group with other parents whose children had leukemia.

After a confrontation between the teacher, the principal, and the doctor, the principal who was very understanding, reinstated Wes in school with another teacher who felt more secure with the situation. Wes was out of school much more than he was in school, but the choice was his. There were still times when I urged him to go, when he really didn't feel able. I always kept up the hope that maybe some miracle would intervene, and he'd need to have his education.

When Wes couldn't go to school, he begged to go to the store. He somehow associated the idea of buying a "toy for the day" with the fact that people cared. A lady from our church gave him money to buy a kit of matchbox cars. One day a saleslady rudely spoke out loud, "Don't you know that boy is ill and he belongs at home?" Wes timidly looked at me and said, "Mama, she doesn't know I enjoy coming to the store."

On one of his rougher days he asked me, "Mother what is heaven like?"

I must confess, I was at a loss for words! My only reply was, "If God is there, we don't have to worry what it is like."

Wes replied, "I'm scared, I know what death is like, but I don't know what heaven is like and I keep dreaming I have to go all by myself." Yes, even children have to die alone.

Since Wes was raised in a Christian home where church attendance was expected, he seemed to find comfort in attending church on Sunday even if he could only stay a short time. He became well enough to attend our church conference on the East Coast. We drove in our camper and on the return trip home, nearing home, pressure began to build up in his body. Nausea and painful headaches began to set in upon our arrival home. The body wasn't accepting the oral medicine, so medicine was injected into the bone marrow and fluid drained off the body. After more blood transfusions, we returned home again.

In the fall, Wes returned to school for only a few days. Before he became too ill, we experienced our first airplane ride together and visited Disneyland for the last time.

By this time, Wes realized the hopelessness of his situation. He not only expressed his wish to die but tried passive suicide. One day I discovered a week's supply of medicine behind the couch and reprimanded him. He angrily replied, "You know I'm not going to get well; the cure will never come in time for me." I called his father to come home and after a very emotional experience, Wes was able to cry tears of release.

Wes spent his last Christmas at home with us. By this time his eyesight was dim, his hair had fallen out from side-effects from the drugs and he looked like an old man. Someone has said that leukemia changes a child from a youth to old age in a short period of time.

The last month he no longer had the strength to walk so we made our daily visit to the store in a wheelchair.

We asked the doctor about trying a place like the City of Hope. She felt it best to keep him at home and felt it unnecessary to put him through the side effects brought about by extreme testing when there was no cure for his kind of leukemia.

In the last stage of his illness he seemed to have lost his fear of death and accepted what was to be. Two weeks before his death, the doctor called us into her office to discuss whether we wanted to let him die the natural death or put him in the hospital on mechanical devices. She gave her opinion that she felt it best and more humane to allow him to go peacefully.

My husband and I agreed that we did not want the life-saving devices to make him a vegetable human. So we took him home to die. The last few days he spoke of a man who stayed with him in his room. We later assumed it was his description of death. Wes died at home surrounded by his family and with dignity.

Thanks to Doctor Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, we could look back at our own experience with more understanding. We understood more clearly Wes's life with leukemia and even more important his death with leukemia. Kubler-Ross verified our concept of Christian death.

Kubler-Ross in a conference on "Dying and Living" at Earlham College, stated that research has convinced her that it is only the physical body that dies and life continues after death. She spoke of children relating experiences of being met by Jesus and Mary or someone they knew who was already dead and telling the story when revived from clinical death. They also spoke of a feeling of peace and wholeness. They experienced floating out of their bodies. None of the patients who have had a death experience and returned are ever afraid to die.[7]

Edgar N. Jackson mentions three psychological processes of emotional grieving which I experienced in my own valley of grief. I have found this true in other people's experiences with grief also. The three processes are: incorporation, substitution, and feelings of guilt. "In incorporation, the individual turns his feelings in upon himself and in effect becomes in part the deceased person."[8] I kept thinking if Wes was so brave, I needed to be brave too. There were times I imagined that I might have cancer.

With substitution in order to protect yourself against the stress of emotion, you attach it to somebody or something outside yourself. I found it necessary to put up the holiday decorations Wes had made in previous years as a reminder of his presence.

Guilt is always real and I looked back at my preoccupation with housework. I remembered vividly his last night with us. He kept calling my name and I became upset with him because I wanted to finish the dishes. If only I had known that would be his last night with us, I would have let the dishes go for another day.

Through identifying with Wes' death our family can never be the same. We've learned to appreciate people more than material belongings. We take more time to enjoy what the day brings instead of worrying about tomorrow. It hasn't been easy, for the scars of death are very real even to us Christians. While I was more a passive person, death was easier for me to accept. It was much more difficult for his father who is a fighter by necessity in order to cope with a handicap of Polio. For his older brothers, death became a way of life. We die and accept death very much the way we live, both Christians and non-Christians alike.

No only did Wes' death effect himself and his family, but it also affected the community at large. Even though Wes was a young boy, he had traveled and lived in various places all over the United States. He lived with his family in Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Arizona. Friends from all over the United States wrote us that because of a small boy their outlook on life had changed.

A nurse after Wes' death commented, 'I would guess Wes' dying must be very difficult for you when a cure is just around the corner." That comment was made six years ago. We still await the day when a cure for leukemia can be found, so children cannot only have added life, but life more abundant.

FOOTNOTES

[1]C. W. Wahl, "The Fear of Death," in *The Meaning of Death,* ed. Herman Feifel (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company; 1959), p. 21.

[2]Ibid., pp. 22-24.

[3]Marin H. Nagy, "The Child's View of Death," in *The Meaning of Death,* ed. Herman Feifel (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company; 1959), pp. 79-98.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]*'75 Cancer Facts and Figures* (New York, N.Y.: National Headquarter, American Cancer Society, 1976), p. 20.

[7]"Kubler-Ross Convinced of a Life after Death," *Messenger,* (Church of the Brethren Press, 1975), p. 5.

[8]Edgar N. Jackson, "Grief and Religion" in *The Meaning of Death,* ed Herman Feifel (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company; 1959), p. 222.

CHESHMEH VA DARYA
THE SPRING AND THE SEA

by Bih Azin
Translated by Nancy Ahmadi

A slender stream slowly and shamefully leaped out from the middle of the mountain and with fearful eyes, looked in each direction and saw a very big and happy world. Calmly, she went on watching. Sometimes frightened, she hid behind the rocks; and one time, she hastily threw a look to the blue sky. Little by little, she became braver; and a strength of life welled inside her.

Cheerfully, she poured down from the skirt of the mountain; she pulled her white and wrinkled robe over the ground, and the new things of the world shined in her astonished eyes.

The sun, like a young girl, looked at her own face in the clear mirror of her eyes and offered her a warm, happy smile.

The wind, like a nursemaid, combed her soft, wavy hair and said, "My dear! How pretty you are!"

The moon and the stars called her to their nightly feast and sprinkled candied dew in her way.

Flowers and plants formed rows along her way, and colorful robes and eyes full of hope danced in front of her.

Pleasant voiced birds came to see her and sang their most beautiful songs in her presence.

The deers of the plain, galloping and panting, arrived from their way and kissed her cool, fresh face and quietly whispered in her ear a story of love and of the endeavor of youth.

She went, walking gracefully and delicately, accepting the good and the bad with kindess and cheerfulness.

She did not know where she was going, and she alone saw the pleasure of life in walking and seeing the sights.

From everyone, she heard that she was pretty, and all admired her freshness. She knew very well what a beautiful thing she was, and she was happy that everyone was infatuated with her. She gave her heart to no one, but neither would she drive anyone away. She wanted to laugh and play continually, and everyone danced to her tune.

It was spring, and the wind had a warm breath full of temptation. Hopes and desires, like a seed hidden in the earth, moved in her heart and ever so often made her bright, beautiful eyes dark. She would speak, she would listen, and she would laugh loudly; but from time to time, she would find a pleasing bitterness in her mouth. And yet, she did not want to know what this pain was. She imagined that the deceptive words of the wind and the firey kisses of the sun could quench her thirsty soul. Without thinking, she would win everyone's heart with all her coquettery, and she had no fear of meetings of any kind. Finally, she knew that even among everybody, she was alone; and nothing resulted from her talking of this and that, only contamination.

But she was still lovely and pleasing, and life with her seemed pleasing to everyone.

She still had sweet speech and smiling lips, but her shining eyes were wistfully searching for a mate.

One day, from behind the trees, she heard the seductive sound of laughter. She saw near herself a small but powerful stream with a shining forehead who was dancing as he went along. Shyly, she looked at him and said to herself, "If he does not want me, what a bitter life I will have!" Then she sighed, bowed her head and went her own way; but from the corner of her eye, she watched him.

All of a sudden, the eyes of the stream also fell on her. He was dazzled by her goodness and elegance, and his mouth remained open, in awe. Slowly, he came forward, bashfully greeted her and said, "Dear one! So many before me have admired your beauty, and perhaps the words of others were more alluring than mine. But without a doubt, no one with a purer heart and a more knowing tongue has called you, my dear life." These words, like a magic melody, went down into the ear of her soul, and a heavenly force made them closer to each other. Their legs from the drunkeness of desire became weak, and their eyelids became heavy from modesty; and before they knew what was happening, their lips met.

From then on, they blended together like milk and sugar; and hand in hand, they passed through the fields and the woods. They laughed at the sky and the stars. They wanted silver from the moon and gold from the sun. From the breast of the clouds, they drank milk; and with the wind, they spoke of the story of love. They taught the subtleties of heart-winning and gracefulness to the flowers and the trees, and they made the animals of the land happy with morsels.

They looked at life from the window of the same eye, and they found it very pleasing and praiseworthy. With the power of the young and the joy of love, they went in search of hardships; and they took the severities like a game; and anywhere that the hand of providence had placed a rock in the path of the efforts and desires of the people, they would not stop until they had destroyed it.

This much power, that they used to their fancy like a game, returned to them ten fold and a hundred fold. From everywhere, everyone followed their standard; and from far and near, all sought their judgment.

Day to day, the extent of their power and eminence spread. The land, the animals, and the grass bowed before them. And the agile farmers and the skillful townsmen with a hundred hopes hurried to their doorway, until their threshold became a refuge of society and their orders were obeyed by all.

Ever so slowly, the pride of success and the intoxication of sovereignty changed the freshness and the purity of their souls to a heaviness and a stubbornness, and the lowness and fear of their intimates increased their own selfishness and obstinancy. And they, for the desire of their own hearts, at times would soothe a group with kindness and at other times, destroy a group with humiliation. Neither was their kindness permanent nor did their anger have a reason. At times, the smallest offense would mean the expense of a life; and sometimes, also, a most insignificant service would be followed by countless gifts.

Their dark faces, foamy mouths, and wrinkled foreheads would frighten the brave ones, and the poison of despair would pour into their hearts.

No one was safe next to the rebellious waves of their desires, and their anger spared neither friends nor enemies.

Time with a slow step and eyes without fear would pass them by, look at them with a poisonous smile and say nothing.

They went along calmly and proudly, and they saw their own world as a safe place. But, little by little, the powerful hand of destiny also weighed on them; and slowly, like a candle that has reached the end, it diminished their zeal of youth and their enthusiasm of life; and the fire of their willful desires in their being became cold. Their hearts from the repetition of joys and the ease of victories became tired, and it seemed their moving feet had no desire to continue onward. Their dejected souls from the good and the bad of the world became disgusted; and to them, the joy of others seemed useless and contemptible. Up until that point, weakness and exhaustion made existence and non-existence equal to them.

The remembrance of the pleasures of youth no longer made their mouths sweet, and the endeavor of the past compared with their present depression seemed trivial.

The sun of love on the horizon of their life went down, and it seemed the world became empty of meaning.

Every day that they made it to the night with fatigue and weariness and every night that they made it to the day with fear and anxiety was a new burden that weighed on their weary shoulders and slowed their behavior. But no matter how much their life was lengthened, they still knew that the end was near. In a very short time, the movement and commotion of their life would subside, like bubbles that come up from the bottom of the water, hurrying and gurgling and each one from behind the other bursting the mold and disappearing. They also one day from a disturbed sleep filled with greed, affected manners, distress, and success would awaken. The deception of unendurable happiness and the charm of unsatisfied acquaintances were still working in them to such an extent that their old heart and the ignorance did not frighten them from the future.

The thin fire of their life before the end, underneath the ashes of far away memories, was shining to its highest intensity. The roar of the sea, like the dread of death, reached their ears; and their repentant could shy from it, like the gazelle that shies from the voice of the lion.

Yes, neither had they the heart to remain, nor the ability to take their heart from that place.

And the first time that they saw the sea like a hungry, angry giant with a thousand hands and feet crawling towards them and with a thousand mouths calling them, a horrible cold encircled them, and their heart stopped beating. Weak and numb, they could only sit and stare into the sea.

One might say it was magic. That little by little, they found it broader than imagination, more pure than the laughter of the day, and kinder than the bed of night.

They were ashamed of their ignorance, pollution, and useless fear; and like the small, cold child that seeks shelter in the warm skirt of its mother, they put their head in the bosom of the sea and closed their eyes. Slowly, their awareness went to sleep and everything, like the summer sky at the hour of noon, became clean and bright and calm.

No longer did they see or hear or know, and they had even forgotten the bitterness of indignation that had remained in their mouths from the first kisses of the sea. Their existence vanished into that of the sea, and no trace of them remained . . .

INCIDENT

4-68

It is a time for celebration. It's my birth month and springtime. I always like my birth month, not that I'm a year older, but I have endured another winter. Old trees are sprouting new leaves and the odor of fresh grass touches the senses of every living nose.

4-4-68

People are arriving with paper bags of cheer and winding their way through introductions and bows toward the kitchen. "Happy birthday," they say, and I respond by tipping my drink. By eight o'clock the entire apartment is boiling with conversations, music, television, clicking glasses, popping corks, and laughter.

4-4-68
8:05 p.m.

"Hey!" "Be quiet, someone's been shot. Wow, someone just bumped-off King!" The buzzing stopped in a wave of weaving staring people. Nothing is said, only the report is heard: "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated today by a sniper on his hotel balcony in . . ."

8:07 p.m.

The group begins to reposition in small clusters of whispering gasps. The gentleman monitoring the television turns it off and announces, "Suits the bastard, I knew it would happen, I don't like it, but he asked for it." The whispering stops. "We ought to pin a medal on the guy that 'pinched' him," another man says. "Yes, but I . . . I just think it's gawd-awful terrible, it's a sad thing, he was working so hard for those people," a lady said.

8:09 p.m.

"Well, it's really sad, but listen, Michael-me-boy, it's your birthday and we have a lot of goodies, no use to waste them, hey, come on everybody, let's sing happy birthday to Mike." Mike looks at the floor in a half-drunk stare, then laughs a little and shrugs his shoulders while pawing the carpet.

"Naw, I don't feel good, maybe it's the booze, I'm really a little sick." "Come on old man, Can't hold the wine, huh?" "I guess not, excuse me, please, I've got to go to the 'head.'"

8:11 p.m.

Click, the door locks, I sit down on the pot and hold my head in my hands . . . I vomit in the bath tub. The raw red juice runs toward the drain with bits of food in it. I vomit again. I drop to my knees and hang my head in the bathtub and begin to cry. My entire body is draining through my face! I stand up and grab for a towel without looking, wipe my face and hold the towel there for a few minutes. I'm shaking and try to think. I'm going to stay here until everyone leaves. Tap. Tap. "Please, I'm not feeling well, I'll be O.K., I want to be alone, thanks." I start running hot water in the tub; it's a mess, I'm a mess. I clean everything up. I feel cold and sweaty, I take off my clothes and climb in the tub, adjust the water, lean back, and stare at the shower nozzle. I'm confused. I don't know why - that man doesn't mean shit to me!

4-8-76
4:55 p.m.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

BUMMER

The traffic light turned red and the rider coasted his motorcycle to a stop. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the little old lady in the lane next to him push down the lock of her car door, and stare at him rudely. "Don't sweat it, granny," he thought. "You don't appeal to me in the least way."

The light said go, so he proceeded down the main drag of the strange town. It was a hot afternoon and he thirsted for a cold beer. Since the burg he was passing through was of the small, country-western variety, he knew a bar or cafe would be coming into sight shortly.

He spotted one, half a block down the street, just as two cowboy-hatted men roared past in a pickup. He saw one of them give him the finger. As he pulled up to the curb in front of the cafe, he wondered why.

He backed the rear wheel to the curb, making sure it touched, like the law says. A cop walked up. He wrote a ticket for loud pipes, while the rider took off his jacket in the afternoon heat. He hung the jacket on the gleaming sissy bar, checking to see that his sleeping bag was securely tied to it.

The cop handed him the ticket, and a nasty look when he saw that the sleeves had been removed from the biker's shirt. The cop indicated the motorcycle. "You keep that thing quiet in *this* town," he said. "We know your type."

The sunburned rider walked into the dark cafe, wondering what his "type" was. He ordered a beer and decided his type must be pica; surely no one would call him elite: he was too short.

The girl at the counter set a beer and a frosty glass in front of him, with a curious, half-smiling look. The rider drained the bottle, ignoring the glass, and asked for another. The girl wanted to ask questions, he could tell, so to get a conversation going, he said, "How far till I get to L—?" From the back of the room a voice drawled out, "Well, you can get the hell out of here!" The biker heard it, but didn't let it sink in because he didn't think it was meant for him; there was no reason for anyone to say anything like that to him. He saw the girl frowning darkly in the direction of the voice, and knew that it *had* been meant for him.

He bought a six-pack to go, and the girl gave him an apologetic smile as she handed him his change. He left a modest tip, wondering what she should

feel sorry about, and about the four men in the dark corner muttering angrily under their breaths.

Outside, he blinked in the bright sun while tying the beer and his jacket to the sissy bar. Three young men in five gallon hats, western boots, and huge belt buckles came over and stood watching as he prepared to start the shining machine. One of them asked where he was going. "Just riding," he replied. "Then where ya' been?" floated sarcastically into his ear. He turned and faced the person it had come from. "Just riding," he calmly repeated. He jumped up, came down hard, and the engine roared into life. He put the bike in gear and as he began to pull out into the street, he heard something like, "Smartass!" from behind him. He didn't wonder about it this time, because something hit him hard on the back of his head. The sun went out, relit, and he found himself careening madly down the wrong side of the street. He managed to regain control of the bike and checked his mirror, figuring to make a U-turn and take care of whoever had heaved the rock at him. The mirror showed the reflected image of a police car, about six feet behind him. The driver had to have seen what had happened, but was following him instead of his attackers.

He had the vague feeling that something he did not know about was unfolding, so he kept on down the road as fast as the speed limit would allow, and forgot about seeking revenge for his bloodied head.

He passed a sign that said "City Limit" and noted that the police car stopped when it reached that imaginary line. He breathed a little easier, increased his speed and rode for fifteen miles. When he stopped, there was no one around him; no houses, no people, no traffic. He staggered away from the cycle, carrying his beer, and sat down and leaned against a tree. He noted that his head was still bleeding, but he planned to stay there and drink the now hot beer. It was quiet; it was peaceful.

II

Sitting in the shade of the tree, he began to go over in his mind the things that had just happened to him.

He thought about the faces of many of the people he had seen. The little old lady in the car had seemed happy enough until she'd found herself stopped in the lane next to him. He was behind her for several blocks before coming alongside, and had noticed the half-smiling, friendly face in her mirror. What

he's seen at the stoplight had been fear. "She's probably seen a "bad bikers" movie and stereotyped me," had gone through his mind then, but now the idea saddened him. He knew other little old ladies and they seemed to like him, but of course, they were used to him and knew he meant no harm.

The cop? Well, he could understand the ticket: his pipes *were* a trifle on the loud side. What was it though, about a shirt that had the sleeves removed that could provoke such a nasty look? He'd met other cops on rides and knew they were, in general, intelligent enough with bikers not to lump them all together in one big category. Something about the sleeves. . . . It must be just that the shirt wasn't made that way; it wasn't normally worn that way. He had changed it, worn it a different way, and therefore he was "abnormal." People did have a way of becoming aggressive — when things were abnormal. He decided that maybe he shouldn't blame the cop: he had only reacted in the expected, way.

And the farmer-types in that booth back in the cafe weren't really too difficult to understand. He had some relatives that farmed and had had enough socializing with them to get a glimpse of their stolidness. Things had been done one way all their lives, and would keep being done that one way for the rest of their lives; unless something just short of an earthquake opened their eyes to a proven, faster, more productive way of doing things. The biker felt that these people didn't want to move with the winds of change. He reasoned that it was quite understandable: when one's life depends on accomplishing certain tasks, and those tasks have always been taken care of fairly well with a tried and proven method, why chance something altogether different? He knew that a failure could mean a winter of starvation to a farmer.

His mind picked over those people in the western outfits, or, as he rubricized grimly: cowboys. The two in the pick-up that had given him the finger; he'd seen something in their eyes. He didn't quite know what it was. It had a shiny hardness to it, a certain danger, yet a certain laughter. Perhaps they were stereotyping themselves, acting as they thought "cowboys" should or would act, giving him a hard time, but at the same time laughing to themselves about the image they must be presenting.

The three younger men rolled back into his mind now. There was no mistaking what he had seen there. The faces still had the innocence of youth, though all had strong growths of facial hair, recently shaved. The first voice even had a hint of softness when asking where he was headed. He knew then

that the reason for the sarcasm in the second voice had been a reaction to his own sharp reply. They had no conception of riding, not merely to get from one place to another, but simply for the sheer joy of the warm wind, the hot sun, and the ecstacy of freedom that can settle into one's very being. Had he answered "to the other end of town" or "to the west forty" or "to Japan," it would have been the same answer. He knew that what was showing on those faces was a sort of envy. When he'd repeated (calmly) his unacceptable answer, then made that sudden, violent movement required to start his engine, he'd startled them. His back had been to them, so he couldn't see it, but he knew it, and they knew it even more, and it shamed them. A mixture of shame and envy created jealousy and hate, and impelled one of them to do something he'd perhaps previously never thought himself capable of. That young cowboy almost killed a man simply because he didn't know. Had death occurred, the rest of his life would probably have been spent wondering why; how.

The rider shook his head, trying to clear his brain of such morbid thoughts. The pain wasn't so bad now; funny how hot beer was such a marvelous pain-killer. The sun was setting and he realized that he was about to witness one of nature's more spectacular sunsets. He had two beers left. He opened one and noticed again the peace; the quiet.

III

The sunset had been as beautiful as he had hoped it would be. He drained the last beer, put the empty cans back in the paper sack and tied it to the sissy bar. He fired up the engine, put the bike in gear, and hauled back out onto the road. He kicked on his lights in the progressing darkness, and headed for the Coast Highway.

He drove for about ten minutes before coming to the freeway on-ramp. He downshifted, throttled on, and took the cycle to 65 miles per hour to enter the freeway. The right lane was empty and he pulled in with no problem, shifted back into high and held the speedometer steady at 65.

He thought of his buddies, who by now would be gathered down at the beach; drinking beer and telling lies and partying in general. He might tell them his story and they would laugh and call him a liar, then toss him a cold beer. The vision amused him and he laughed to himself as he rode.

The thought of a beer made him want to stop at a liquor store for one, instead of riding straight through to the beach. He saw lights ahead, to the right, and a neon sign flashing: COLD BEER.

He downshifted, let off, and leaned to the right, down the off-ramp that some far away engineer had been kind enough to put there. He pulled into the parking lot in front of the store, turned off the engine and dismounted.

The man at the cash register gave him a nervous look as he walked in. He looked around, spotted the cooler in the back, and went to it for a couple of tall cans. He glanced up at the "fish-eye" mirror and the clerk looking back at him, half suspicious, and still nervous. He went to the cash register and paid for his beer, remembering cigarettes.

He sat outside on the concrete parking "bumper" in front of the bike, smoking, drinking, thinking. "It is nice to know, to understand," he thought. He knew that the clerk's nervousness was from the thought of being robbed, and that his suspicion was from thinking the biker would shoplift the beer. And the knowledge of this made the rider feel good. He felt no anger toward the clerk. He understood.

He finished his beer, lit another cigarette, started the engine, and rode out of the parking lot with the smoke clenched between his lips. The beer had his head buzzing a little, but he felt good, and twisted the throttle as far as it would go, heading up the freeway on-ramp. He shifted hard and fast, feeling the power surging from the engine to the road. The air was warm; it was a nice night to be out riding. He set the speedometer on 75, just because it felt good. Soon he would be with his friends.

Jay Mick

TOGETHER, SEPARATELY

Pavel's skin was too tight or his life was too tight. Maddening and inescapable, anxiety itched like a nettle sting on the inside of the brittle electric shell that imprisoned him. Anxiety crackled in an itchy arcing frenzy under his skin and on the walls of his womb-room. It ran hot and icy through his gut and drove his heart to heavy frightened pounding. The one sane spot in the hot madness, tiny germinal Pavel Muldek crouched naked and aware at the center. A compassionate little being watched the approaching cerebal super-nova with calm detachment. His release would coincide with the approaching blinding white fury and light.

(Om, om . . . Oh God! Help me, help me, HELP ME!)

Pavel, Pavel, it's Mother, dear.
(Smile, look at her eyes. Don't talk.)
Papa's here, see, see? Papa's here.
(Look at his eyes. Draw the hand away. Don't talk, don't listen.)
Pavel, you feel better, yes?
Hush, shhhh, the Doctor says no questions! It's Mother, dear. Do you want some water, something to eat, Pavel?
(Smile, look away from their eyes. Close the eyes.
Stop the ears. Sleep.)
He sleeps again, Mama?
Yes.
It's good he should sleep so much?
He is sick.
What sick? Look, such a fine healthy boy. What is this Pavel! Pavel! Wake up!
Shhh, Papa, the Doctor . . .
(Open the eyes, do not talk.)
Mr. Muldek, I'm sorry, you'll have to leave now.
Come Papa.
(This is a hospital?)
(Yes.)
(This is the beginning?)
(It has begun.)
(I think I am afraid. Yes, I am afraid. What do I do?)
(Sleep, do not talk, listen when it is right.)
(I'm afraid.)

(It has begun. Rejoice and sleep.)

(I'm afraid.)

(Fear was part of the old way. Sleep. Sleep.)

. . . sleep, but I think it would be best to try waking him now. Pavel. Pavel. It's Doctor Stoner. Yes, ten c.c.'s Miss Lovell. Pavel, come on, it's okay. Come on now, sleepy head. We have something to eat, some dinner, Pavel.

(Open the eyes, slowly. Find the light. Watch the light, and center. Do not be afraid. Do not hurry. Center. Do not try to see too much. Slowly.)

(It is all too fast. I cannot center. Too many eyes, too many smells, too many voices. I cannot center, I cannot . . .)

(Center, slowly. Watch the light. The light is all there is, now. Slowly. Do not listen. Breathe deeply, count the breaths, slowly, and center. Panic was the old way. Center. Rejoice in the new.)

(One . . .)

Pavel,

(two . . .)

Pavel, it's Doctor Stoner.

(three . . .)

Pavel.

(four . . .)

It's time for some food. Let's sit up now.

(five . . .)

Come on now. Raise the bed a little. Some soup, Pavel, chicken soup. Sounds good. . .

(six . . .)

. . . doesn't it, Pavel?

(seven. I am finding center.)

(It will come. Look at his eyes.)

(eight . . .)

(And center.)

(nine . . .)

Yes, Pavel. That's a boy. Doctor Stoner. I'm here. I've been waiting for you to wake up.

(ten . . .)

Some dinner, Pavel?

(His eyes are afraid. I cannot center there.)

(He does not know his fear shows. It is *his* fear. Center. Count if you need help. Slowly, center.)

(What does he want?)

(They have food. Are you at center, is it slow enough?)

(There is peace. Should I eat?)

(Accept the food. Center on the food. Eat it slowly. Do not listen.)
That's it Pavel. Eat all you want. Miss Lovel can bring some more.
(I have finished. I center on the light. One . . . two . . .)
(Close the eyes. We have nourishment. We have centered. That is enough.)
(three . . . four . . .)
What happened to him Doctor?
(five . . .)
His brother found him screaming at the bathroom mirror: "We are not one, we are not one!"
(six . . .)
They couldn't stop him even when his parents arrived . . .
(seven . . .)
Complete breakdown, it's odd. There was no warning . . .
(eight . . .)
"We are not one." What do you suppose he meant?
(nine . . .)
It was just some nonsense, some aberration, I don't know . . .
(ten . . . eleven . . .)
(Sleep. We are one.)
(We are one. I rejoice.)

John Pair

TEDJANATA
(Ruler of the Stars)

Major Characters:		
	Tedjanata	Ruler of the Stars
	Make-Make-Tu	King of Birdman Clan
	Potan	King of Ratman Clan
	Hangaroa	Birdman Medicine Man
	Teeba	Elder Birdman Council Member
	Kaiatoa	Princess, daughter to Make-Make-Tu
	Morihanga	Make-Make-Tu's wife
	Dahlia	Maiden. Daughter to Teeba
	Too-See	Fledgling birdman youngster

The island at the center of the world is visited by a terrestial traveler.

Costumes and personal appearance of characters are exaggerated.

I

Scene: (On a path, somewhere on an island. Enter Karatoa and Morihanga. They both carry earthen bowls.)

KARATOA: What can I do, Morihanga? My father will sell me to old Potan no matter what . . .

MORIHANGA: The matter is not to be questioned. You draw handsome price, little one. Two thousand gull eggs and five hundred rat pelts will make your father, Make-Make, a very rich man. You should be proud.

KARATOA: I know. But every time I imagine the touch of Potan's fingers on my skin . . . I . . . (staggers) . . . a . . .

MORIHANGA: Nothing can be done, pebble. A woman is only a woman. No man on the island would deny this.

KARATOA: I must not be sold like common bone.

MORIHANGA: Do not fret, child. The will of your father, Make-Make-Tu, will not be denied.

KARATOA: Oh. (pain) Even you, mother, would sell me for common goods.

MORIHANGA: Come. We have women's work to do. We are late. (Begins to leave.)

KARATOA: No, I . . .

MORIHANGA: Please, we are *late*.

KARATOA: No . . . wait. I have something to tell you. I have met another . . .

MORIHANGA: (stunned) What? You . . . you shameless patch!

KARATOA: (playfully) Oh mother, do not be angry with me.

MORIHANGA: And who is this stranger?

KARATOA: All men do not live at the Center of the World. There are others.

MORIHANGA: You talk like crazy *man*. There only Gods in Heaven, and only people living at Center of World.

KARATOA: You are wrong Morihanga. (pause) I meet a stranger — not of this world. Whether god or man, I know not. But he calls himself Tedjanata.

MORIHANGA: Ted . . . Janata (trouble pronouncing). Peculiar sound to it.

KARATOA: That's it. Tedjanata, the Ruler of the Stars!

MORIHANGA: Aaaah! Ruler of nothing!

KARATOA: I think he is emissary of Great Spirit

MORIHANGA: I will hear no more. Come!

KARATOA: He is more beautiful than any man. Oh mother, please meet him.

MORIHANGA: (ignores her) Come!

KARATOA: He has such marvelous ears . . . so big!

MORIHANGA: (Showing interest) So he says he from tribe of long ears, eh?

KARATOA: How did you know?

MORIHANGA: This not new trick. Promise of the longer lobes. What woman can resist?

KARATOA: It is not a trick. I see with own eyes. He comes to us from heaven itself. Oh, Morihanga, come with me tonight after the fire goes down and you will see for yourself.

MORIHANGA: Your father wants me in his tent.

KARATOA: (impatient) Then stay and make obeisance. I go to Yotulai where my Tedjanata waits for me. You won't tell father will you?

MORIHANGA: Ways of women will remain mystery, always.

KARATOA: Tedjanata wishes his presence to remain a secret until the time of his choosing.

MORIHANGA: Let us go, then, you and I. We have work to finish if you must meet your lover tonight.

(They exit.)

II

Scene: (A clearing. Lights are dim. Enter Hangaroa, the medicine man. He wears a mask identifying him as an elder in the cult of the Birdman. Following behind him are three fledglings. Hangaroa moves to the center of the clearing and draws an emblem on the ground.)

HANGAROA: Ayee! (Young birdmen shudder at sound.) Do not be afraid. This sacred ground of Great Spirit, spirit of Birdman.

(The three youngsters flap their arms as if to fly)

ALL: Ayee, ayee, ayee!

HANGAROA: Here, sit. (He positions the three fledglings in ridiculous postures about the sacred emblem.) That's it. There, there. Yes, perfect. Young ones! Your eyes looking toward the stars!

(Fledglings look up.)

ALL: Ayee, ayee, ayee!

HANGOROA: Tonight is the night of our first great test.

ALL: Ayee!

HANGAROA: Soon, if you are strong, you will fly with your wings and come round all those who sail.

ALL: Ayee!

HANGAROA: Matakiterani are the Eyes looking towards the stars.

ALL: Come round all those who sail!

HANGAROA: You are the Matakiterani, the eyes looking towards the stars!

ALL: We have not yet flown.

HANGAROA: Now tell me one at a time as before you I am witness. Why do you want to fly?

MALIANDI: (shy) There is no way to express heart, ancient one.

HANGAROA: Pfah! And you, Kolapor?

KOLAPOR: I want to fly into the night and pluck the moon for my lover, Deva.

HANGOROA: Pfah! You will never fly if you see no more clearly than this!!! And you,. Too See?

TOO SEE: I want to fly because it is better than to crawl on your belly like a rat!

HANGAROA: Mm. Good. You learning. A quick student. Come now, gather. Gather round the flaming souls of our ancestors, the Ones Who Fly No More.

(Fledglings resume their ritual postures. Dialogue grows in enthusiasm to end.)

HANGAROA: Rich is the sea and filled with fish.

ALL: Rich is the sea and filled with fish.

HANGAROA: Rich is the sky and filled with stars.

ALL: Rich is the sky and filled with stars.

HANGAROA: But poor, poor is the land of our fathers.

ALL: Yea, poor is the Island at the Center of the World.

KOLAPOR: Not even the trees survive.

TOO SEE: Not even the dogs survive.

MALIANDI: Not even the pigs survive at the Center of the World.

ALL: Ayee! (pain)

HANGAROA: What is the reason for the pain we suffer?

ALL: None that we deserve.

HANGAROA: Someone knows. Who is this Enemy? With cold eyes and tongue like the coiling of the snake?

TOO SEE: Potan, King of Rats.

HANGAROA: And his people?

MALIANDI: The ratmen!

HANGAROA: (leaping to his feet in fury) Potan, you Hoary Demon!

TOO SEE: We are old as there is no youth.

KOLAPOR: We are young as there is no age.

MALIANDI: We are the avenging blood of our ancestors yearning for the talons of the birdman.

ALL: Ayee!

HANGAROA: And when in the night is there no sleep?

(Great enthusiasm)

ALL: On the night of the ten pelts

HANGAROA: And what is to be done?

ALL: Hunt the rat! Strength of Potan! Kill rats for the power of Make-Make.

ALL: (Staccato) Make-Make. Make-Make. Make-Make.

TOO SEE: Many pelts to the glory of Birdman!

HANGAROA: Go now. Join the night and bring back your pouch filled with rats. Lay them at the alter of Make-Make, King of Birdmen. Run, Matakiterani, run and kill the rat!

All: Ayee! Ayee!

(Exit)

III

Scene: (Youtulai clearing. Lights are dim. Too-See reenters, searches for rats. He carries a pouch and a club.

TOO-SEE: Here little prince. (Squeeking like a rat) Come, I have a fine surprise for you (Squeeking) Come into my pouch. (Pausing – thinking to self) With this rat I have earned talons of Birdman. (Musing to self) Full Birdman. I sit next to our King, Make-Make-Tu; no longer next to women. Squeeeeek, squeeeeek. Come little one. (Resuming hunt.)

(Voices approach. Too-See, frightened, hides behind rock. Enter Karatoa and Dahlia.)

KARATOA: I not marry fury rat man.

DAHLIA: (protesting slightly) But Kara.

KARATOA: Council of elders meets tonight. We not be missed.

DAHLIA: Oh Kara . . . what if . . .

KARATOA: When they finish telling fish stories, moon will be old and we be in our huts gorged with our lover's passion.

(Dahlia is excited but frightened. She hugs and giggles with Kara.)

DAHLIA: Oh Karatoa! Is his manner as pleasing as King Make-Make-Tu?

KARATOA: He beautiful beyond words; born of heaven and stars.

DAHLIA: (beginning to swoon) Oh . . .

KARATOA: He comes from loins of great father, Source of All.

DAHLIA: Oh Kara . . .

KARATOA: His body rides like rushing surf against your skin. Light and warm like morning sun.

(Dahlia swoons completely.)

DAHLIA: My heart . . . it races. I think . . . I . . . faint. His ears . . . are they? As you say? Kara I must know.

KARATOA: Oh yes Dahlia. And no man on island matches his magnificance of toolage. Such a stride . . .

DAHLIA: Ohhh. He is sent from heaven.

(Dahlia, again, is frightened.)

DAHLIA: It grows cold.

KARATOA: Little Dahlia need not fear. Tedjanata is coming. The Ruler of the Stars.

DAHLIA: But your father Kara. When he sees . . . and soon it be hard to hide.

KARATOA: Hide what?

DAHLIA: (gesturing to Karatoa's stomach) . . . Your stomach. Oh, there will be war. Oh, Kara. You are to be Potan's bride. Council of elders has decreed . . . and this not one moon far.

KARATOA: Tedjanata's love lives beyond darkness of last day.

DAHLIA: Potan not take kindly to a maiden wife fat with child. (pause) And not from his loins.

KARATOA: Little Dahlia need not fear fat ole Potan. Or my father. Tedjanata's power is power of Kings. (Karatoa muses) Potan. (She giggles/they giggle.) Potan has too many wives already. He cannot mount his youngest with any satisfaction. (Whispering) He is too fat . . . squatted round middle from too many gulls eggs. (They giggle) He is too fat. The sun fears no fat cloud. (Pointing) Look the moon reaches the stars. Tedjanata will be here soon.

DAHLIA: But what of your father?

KARATOA: Oh! Father? He is no fool. I will lay myself at his mercy. He will squawk and shriek and great gull but he will do no harm. Not when he sees power of Tedjanata.

DAHLIA: But to gather so many pelts and then find his daughter in such a way. He will not be pleased.

KARATOA: Oh Dahlia (Karatoa is annoyed) We have only few hours. Let us follow the footsteps of our hearts. We cannot be misled.

(Tedjanata is heard approaching the clearing. Too-See watches from behind rock.)

KARATOA: There. Tedjanata. (Calling) Tedjanata. Tedjanata. Over here! Over here Tedjanata.

(Tedjanata enters. He has hard time picking way through brush. He reaches stage. Karatoa runs to him.)

KARATOA: (Tedjanata is still a bit dazed from his struggle through the brush) Tedjanata. My King. How long I hunger for you.

TEDJANATA: Yes, yes. Well. (Regaining composure) Your lips invite but one response. (Tedjanata swoops romantically and kisses Karatoa.) Quite an island you got here.

(Dahlia stands back away from Tedjanata and Karatoa. Tedjanata, seeing Dahlia as such a beauty, forgets Karatoa and stares wantonly at Dahlia.)

TEDJANATA: Aaaaa. You brought another. Well done. Well done. And who is this lovely creature?

(Karatoa gently slipping her arm around Dahlia, introduces her. Dahlia is overcome by Tedjanata's appearance at once, her eyes glued to his body. Dahlia clings nervously to Karatoa. As she is introduced her eyes avert to the ground. She bows slightly.)

KARATOA: This Dahlia, daughter of Teeba and Ommee.

TEDJANATA: Such beauty; such innocence. (Totally delighted) Dahlia (he muses) A thousand suns could not match your radiance.

(Both girls giggle. They run their hands over Tedjanata's chest and body. Tedjanata kisses both girls with great lust. The girls bury their heads in Tedjanata's chest.)

KARATOA: You drive home well the seeds of life, my gentle sky traveler. Even now my stomach swells with your greatness. (Karatoa places Tedjanata's hand on her stomach.)

TEDJANATA: This is a promising sign. The seed of Gods planted in the fertile lap of such gorgeous women. (To Karatoa) You must bring me more of the women of your island.

(Tedjanata, Karatoa, and Dahlia exit. Too-See, stunned by what he has just seen, steps from behind rock.)

TOO-SEE: Have I not seen with my own eyes, princess Karatoa and young Dahlia? And this *man*. Of what tribe does he come? Such ears. This is news for my King. Ayeeeeeeeee!

End of Scene.