



**unicorn**

# unicorn

UNICORN is published quarterly  
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All submissions must be accompanied  
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Shorter fiction is preferred, and no  
more than five poems per submission.  
We ask that you also include a  
brief, biographical note.

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## Pan Haunted

Any early morning  
You could catch a glimpse of  
Hatless, dirty, soaked with sweat  
Muscles rippling  
Pan.  
No, not the maligned  
Pan of the nymphs but my Pan of flocks and herds  
Pan the planter. You might not recognize him  
Unless you are seraph-eyed enough to see  
The wildflowers even when there are none. I have  
Seen him come in a manner vaguely Apriline  
Ears slightly more pointed and tawny furred  
With a leafiness somewhere in the eyes.  
This early morning he came  
Living through surprise and unpredictable things:  
An early yellow crocus  
Two grey doves sitting on a fence, and  
A little black mouse curled up asleep in the bird seed.  
Tomorrow he will come through  
All the tangible evidences of love. Yes, even  
Through the most fragile and delicate and  
Wistful things. Why he is even known to plant  
A poet here and there.

---Bridget Manney

## Play

A woman  
stares at me  
across the room.

She  
and the room  
are one shadow.

The curve  
of her thigh  
and the other lines  
of the night  
do not move.

I do not.

Moonlight  
is caught by the wet  
of her eyes and lips  
like a prize.

I push down the covers  
but now I am less certain.

There is a woman,  
  
there is the light  
play of the last quarter moon.

---Jack Holmes

## Hot and Cold Running Water

---Harvey Abelson

The hot water filled the small bathroom with its vapor. The moisture twisted toward the skylight and left a warm film on the mirror, walls and porcelain. The early morning sun beamed through the skylight. The vapor diffused the rays and created a texture of fog.

Two exhausted bodies lounged in the bathtub with their eyes closed. Their legs intertwined as they faced each other through the thick atmosphere. Her head was supported by the tiled wall. Her back nestled against the slope of the tub. He stretched to her left to avoid the jabbing spigot. The crown of his head rested at the junction of the walls. He labored to open his eyes and strained to see his watery companion. The fog-like atmosphere and unfocused eyes hid her from view. He closed his eyes. His mind wandered back through his fatigue to late Saturday night.

"Hello! Phil, you goin' to the Gallery tonight? Great! Meet you there."

In front of the mirror, he combed his hair for the umpteenth time. He straightened his fashionable leather jacket that was too light to protect him from the cold. He took a last look at his unbuttoned shirt and nodded to himself in agreement that the correct amount of chest was exposed. He tried out his best smile, and he was off.

As he parked his car, he snubbed out the remains of a joint. He breathed deeply in anticipation of his entrance into the club. Nearly blinded by his self-consciousness, he moved to a vacant bar stool and ordered a shot of bourbon with a beer chaser. He gulped the hot confidence and began to relax. He straightened himself upon the stool and sipped his beer. He surveyed the dim, varnished pine and leather room for familiar faces.

Disappointed, his eyes came to rest on those of the girl seated on the next stool. It seemed to him that she had been watching him since he sat down. Embarrassment rose in him. He broke out with his practiced smile and exclaimed, "Hi, how ya doin'?"

"O.K., how're you?"

"Great! Can I get you a drink?"

"Gin and tonic."

He turned away and ordered her drink and another for himself. He returned his steadied gaze. He saw round eyes which glowed green from a round, strawberry complexion. Her mouth smiled in a way that left her other features static. It was her wondrous eyes surrounded by the slightest hint of black pencil that attracted him. As the banal conversation of work, school, and interests introduced them, the money flowed over the bar in exchange for drinks that heightened the tension between them.

He recalled getting into his car with her, but the ride was oblivious. While in someone's townhouse, he was supplied with drugs and alcohol that further clouded his mind and fueled his desires. His attention was now distracted from her eyes to her denim clad waist and rounded hips which he would casually caress when the opportunity presented itself. Emboldened behind his cloud of drugs, he moved his lips to her face. His small kisses ended with a moist kiss on her lips. He felt her respond. He pulled away. His eyes asked her a demanding question. He received a flashing green answer.

As if chased, they left the party. He drove to his apartment. The move to the bedroom was smooth and quick. They helped each other remove their clothes. They grasped each other's straining bodies and ended the tension that had been doggedly following them.

The chill of her foot on the inside of his thigh brought him back to the bathroom. He felt the cool water. The comforting vapor had condensed to chilling droplets. The sun's cold rays illuminated his companion in detail. The hips were too large for such a small girl. Her waist too thick. His eyes were struck by the crawling blue vein which showed on the chalk-like palor of a smallish breast. Her face and mouth drooped lasciviously. The black pencil line had melted over her cheeks. Drab eyes were again following him.

He was embarrassed to have her examining him. He was hurt when she coldly asked, "Will you take me home?"

## Learning to Play the Accordion

you wanted a guitar but somehow ended up with that  
ridiculous box of air you didn't practice enough  
each lesson was a fumble of agony your teacher  
exasperated and silent reached a thick hand over  
your shoulder pointing at notes you hunched to peer  
at guessed wrong he sighed like the last drawnout note  
as the box closed

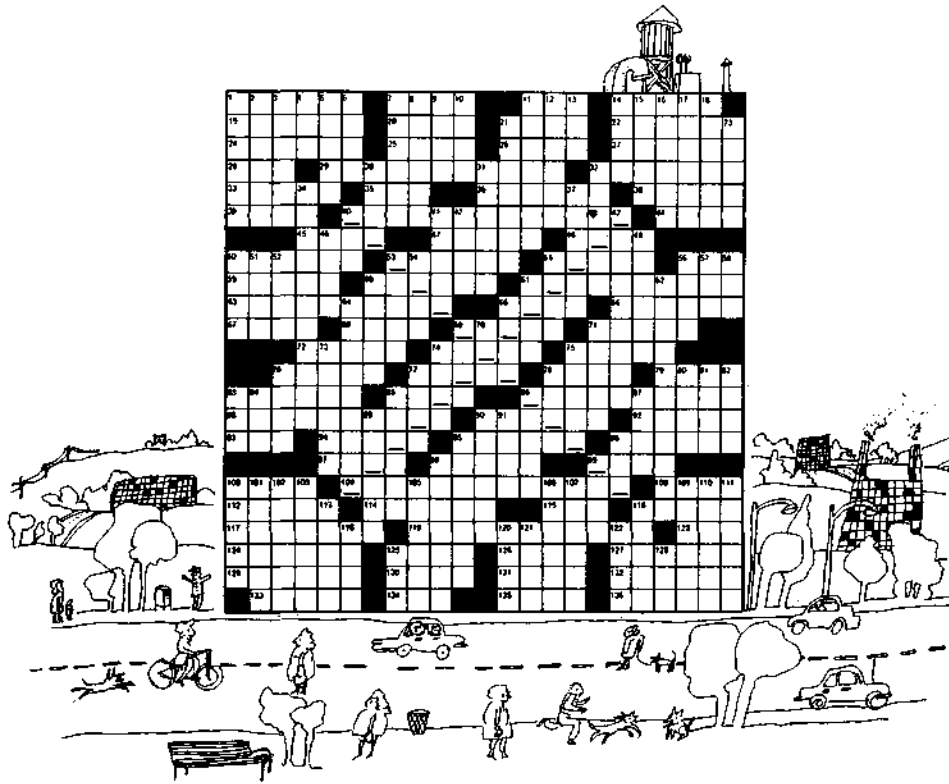
at the first recital you began ok but then you became  
aware: the sound coming from you wasn't the same as  
from the others and you tried to catch up or slow down  
it was all blurring and the others seemed to be leaning  
as far away from you as they could will it never finish

it did of course and you were in the back seat on the  
way home your father cleared his throat your mother

said what happened? you said you didn't know you looked  
down at your helpless hands lying there no use to mention  
the guitar

later when your mother died you wanted to say what happened  
no answer just the squeezed air in the room coming in  
going out in a sigh of wrong notes

---Eugene McNamara



## **In the Balloon Factory**

Rushing to daylight. Late for work.  
I am bicycling desperately. Ahead of me I see myself.  
No shirt on zipping along no hands not  
wondering if the balloon factory is hiring again.

Then at noon. Lunch in the balloon factory.  
Stella rolls an orange on the table. Slowly  
Makes it easier to peel. The orange like a tart balloon  
opens and the air is full of its taste.

Afternoon. Killing time. Slumping towards.

Overtime. The machine slides in an ecstasy of oil.  
The rubber stretches in orbs, drooping flaccid  
in resigned heaps at the end of the line,  
sorted into boxes labeled blue and red and the  
machines rise in higher ecstasy and finally fall  
falling fall into sudden silence. The balloons  
wait for celebration.

---Eugene McNamara

## Monopoly

The dice fall from my shaking hands  
Onto the green of chance.  
The dots multiply and decrease,  
Never, never the roll I want.  
I land on your property,  
Or worse, am stuck on Parking Place.  
My hotels vanish with assessments and mortgages,  
Until you buy me out.  
You always miss my lots with a tricky move.  
Money exchanges hands,  
And my spirits fall  
With the loss of my utilities.  
Your glistening roadster passes my wheelbarrow,  
Again, and then faster,  
You whizz by waving a triumphant hand.  
With a condescending smile,  
You endow me with mocking yellow money.  
The game goes on,  
Until you land in jail.

---Katie McGrath

## The Great American Pastime

---Bob Farmer

Perhaps never is the distinction between disciplines of learning so keen as when college students vacation together. I am reminded of a jaunt to an ocean resort I took several years ago with a number of friends. Final exams had just ended and we were all in need of relaxation.

I remember the pre-med students lying on the beach, reading organic chemistry texts, boning up for the summer semester. Pre-meds seemed to always be taking organic chemistry. Then there were the accounting majors. They were inordinately obsessed with time, I thought. They set their alarm clocks each night, stayed in the sun a prescribed number of hours, and counted the days until they went home to their summer jobs (which they had no doubt secured back in February).

There was one other group at the beach, the humanity majors, to which I belonged. We thought of ourselves as free-spirits, merry-makers and fun-lovers. The pre-meds and accounting majors described us as frivolous and lazy. No matter.

We returned home a couple of weeks after the others, when our money ran out. My father greeted me at the dinner table my first evening back with unmistakeably fatherly advice. "Son," he said, "maybe you should think about doin' something this summer for a change--like gettin' a job!"

"Yeh, well, you know, I'm gonna be pretty busy with my writing and all," I replied.

He was unimpressed and by the time dinner was over he had given me several leads. None of them were too appealing--the hardware store, the gas station, the supermarket, so I decided to do some looking on my own. If I had to work, I thought, working outdoors would be less painful.

The following morning I went to the bureau of recreation and parks. I was led to the office of a Mrs. Buckwald. "No, no I'm sorry," she said, "the summer jobs have all been filled."

No doubt by accounting majors, I told myself. Well, let 'em have 'em anyway. I rose to leave. "Thank you, Mrs. Buckwald." "Sure. Sorry I couldn't.... Wait! I'll tell you what I could do. I don't have anything now. No, that's right, I don't."

But I could give you a job in September, when everybody goes back to school. Almost everyone quits then. Either on evenings or weekends, whatever you want. If you'll do something for me. It's really not that big a thing."

Mrs. Buckwald had a strange way of speaking. She began very slowly, and lulled you nearly to sleep. But she spoke more quickly the longer she went on, leaving you baffled with a mumbled string of words.

I sorted through what she had said until I understood. "Well, a, what do I have to do?"

"How about managing our girls' 12-14 softball team. Not that big a thing. Two evenings a week, three at most. Mr. Kline, our old coach, he's gotten sick. And it's important to the girls, you know. Not the softball, but well, the things it teaches a young girl. Working as a team, taking instructions, gettin' along with each other. And the exercise is good, too. All kids gotta have exercise. What do ya say?"

I thought for a minute. Well, it would get me off the hook at home. I'm doing it because nothing's available, and this way I'll have a job in September. When September comes maybe I'll find another excuse. And only two evenings.

"Yes, Mrs. Buckwald," I said. "You've got a deal." "That's alright Mary Sue, you nearly hit it. Now keep your eye on this one." I had lectured to myself before leaving home. "These are girls," I'd said. "No need to take it too seriously. No need to get excited, or even try to win, for that matter. Just play 'em all and let 'em have a good time."

Mr. Kline's illness had come at an inopportune time. This was the team's last practice, with the first game just four days away. But he had left me some notes on the different players. This was a nice gesture, and I expected things like "Cathy is very shy," or "Margaret likes to be called Peggy." But instead I opened the folder and found reports like: "Wills, Carol. Hits and throws righthanded. Line drive type hitter, to all fields. Handles pitches low and away well, but is a sucker for high, tight ones. Best position is second base. Fields cleanly. Goes very well to her left. Weak arm." I began to wonder about the nature of Kline's illness.

After practice, I called the girls over. I told them how well they all had done and how promising the season looked. Finally I told them that we weren't going to worry so much about winning or losing. We were just going to have fun, and if we won, fine. The girls' faces twisted into puzzled expressions. They looked at each other, then me, and then were gone.

I was not through, though. The parents had come to pick up their kids, and most of them wanted to talk to the new coach. Some just wanted to remind me that Rosedale's 12-14 girls' softball team had been the champs six years running. Those I could handle. But then there were those parents who told me how well their daughters could play. "Some little player, my Nancy," said

Mr. Rhodes. "Been playing organized ball since she was six. Way she fields the corner, it'd make ya think Brooks Robinson was there. And hit! Boy, she has some sweet swing. I like seeing her bat third or fourth. Plenty of power in that little girl."

Two hours after practice was over the parents were through delineating their daughters' merits. I saw no way our team could lose.

We lost our first game. My superstars failed to live up to their advanced billing. We fielded poorly and hit worse. I told the girls not to worry about it. They did their best, everyone got to play, and 13 to 8 was pretty close anyway. That night I got a call from Mrs. Buckwald. She wanted to see me the following evening, at about seven o'clock.

I walked into a hornets' nest. "There he is, there's that jerk!" "Come here, you son of a bitch, I got something to tell you!" Mrs. Buckwald somehow got between me and the angry horde. I was sure they had brought tar and feathers.

"It seems," she understated, "that some of the girls' parents are upset."

"What the hell's wrong with you?" one gentleman asked. "'Oh no, don't worry about winning. That's alright, you lost close. Let's all have fun! Pinko Commie!"

"Thought I told you my girl played center field," another said.

"Hey, yeh. All that time wasted talking. I said Nancy played third." That one I recognized.

"I'm sorry," I offered. "I didn't know it was that important that the girls won."

"What," they screamed in unison. "What's wrong with you!"

Mrs. Buckwald promised them I would shape up, and never allow Rosedale to be "embarrassed" again. My life was spared.

I watched my step the rest of the season. "Let's murder these bums," I'd say. Things went smoothly, relatively speaking. We swooped through our regular schedule, and won in the semi-finals. The championship game was all that was left.

It was a tight game. The lead changed hands like a ping pong ball in a heated volley. Going into the bottom of the last inning we were down 16 to 13. We rallied to pull to within one run, with the bases loaded and two out.

It was at this point that Cindy Pawner said "Coach, do you know I haven't played yet?" Cindy was the team's worst player, and I had deliberately refrained from looking at her down the far end of the bench.

"Oh. Well I thought maybe your ankle or something was hurtin'."

"No, I feel fine." Of course she would feel fine. "My parents came out to see me and everything."

"Don't cry kid, please," I was thinking. Cindy could not play softball but she'd have a career in the soap operas, I

was sure. "Alright, Cindy, get a bat."

I pulled Nancy Rhodes out of the game. I was surprised not to feel her father's hands around my throat. I suppose he was just that shocked.

Cindy took three sorry swings. But she managed to hold onto the bat the last time, at least.

"Strike three!"

I saw the mob filing out of the grandstand. I left the bats and balls and ran to my car. I pulled away just before the parents, some carrying bats, had a chance to settle the score-

Mrs. Buckwald phoned the following day and said that she'd been mistaken. There wouldn't be any openings in September.

## **the GUTS AND FROGHAIR NIGHTLY**

dying elephants will gladly give their ears  
for the back and front covers.  
uncut leaves of tobacco will jump  
from the soil and do nicely as pages.

illiterates will burn their page  
with delicately sparked pine needles.  
frogs will shed their hair to dress  
scorched tissue with meaning.

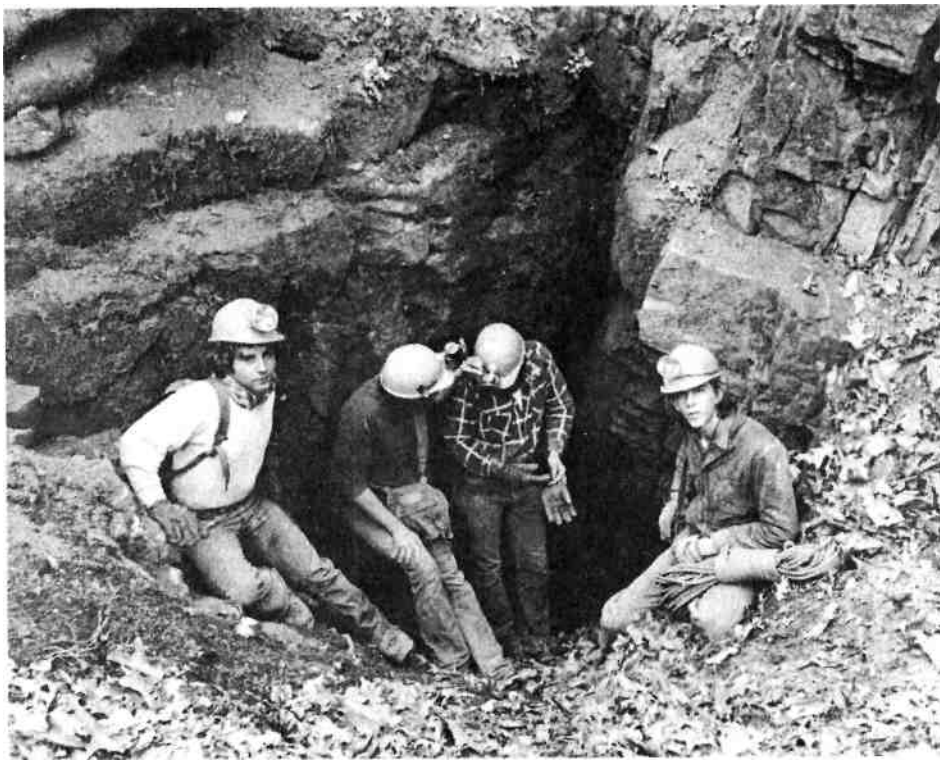
children will send in their ideas, and  
fierce spiders will spend themselves trying  
to recapture innocence in artistic webs.

old women will place their rotted teeth,  
carp they found sleeping on the beaches,  
cow intestines and donkey tails  
into a salty handkerchief--our centerfold.

butterflies will develop mystic photos  
by rubbing off kisses they received  
from napping truck drivers.

our subscription fee will be paid by dream.  
while you're asleep, we will trade a copy  
for your pillow.  
there will be many untouched pages yet to fill.

---John J. Peterson



### **By Night in Pittsburgh**

The clock strikes two  
and, under the covers, I pretend to sleep.  
When Jake gets home from the Bessemer works  
he leaves his boots on the scatter rug  
and tiptoes in  
to see our baby.  
Hand on cribpost, he whispers  
his own, old lullaby.  
"Sleep, my baby, sleep.  
Your Daddy's tending the sheep.  
Your Mommy is cooking Schnitz today.  
Daddy's keeping the bugs away.  
Sleep, my baby, sleep."

Snug in the dark, the whole house grins.  
Jake is off his shift.  
Mommy, for one, 's on a gossiping flight  
and won't be back till late tonight.

---Mike Reis

"And so the word of stone  
Dropped on my still living breast.  
No matter --somehow I shall cope..."

-Anna Akhmatova (1939)

The word of stone  
from an unforgiving sphinx  
blows across the desert  
and gathers  
at your feet.  
In time, you cannot move.

The wind ebbs and flows.

A nomad steps out of your eyes,  
flings the linen sunset  
over a shoulder,  
nods acknowledgment  
to the ancient rocks  
and follows the wind.

---Ginny Friedlander

## An Excerpt from SUDDEN DEATH: Ch. 6

— Brendan O'Dare

"What's that all about?" Ben asked pushing his shoulders back as if trying on a coat. Not hearing an answer, he continued: "Out in the hall--the Jesus freak?"

He pushed the formica table against two desks in the front row unconsciously asserting his authority. A student with blonde bush hair raised his hand from the closing vice of the table and desk.

"If I was prone to speculation," the student riveted with bookish animosity, "I would suggest it's a reaction to the guest lecture of Nena and George O'Neil."

Ben looked down on him coldly after picking-up a modular podium from the floor behind him then banging it down on the table top.

"You mean you are prone to speculation," Ben riveted back, "and your speculation is that it's a reaction to the lecture of Nena and George O'Neil!" Ben went for his army sack of books, notes; intent on breaking through the student's academic pretensions, he focused his attention again on the student. "And now that we've gotten that far," Ben said following through with his interrogative, "who are they?"

The student's tone was sardonic: "I believe their the co-authors of a 'how to book'--an academic study."

Not seduced by his humor, Ben pulled a slab of papers from his sack then straightened them by hitting them against the podium.

"What's the title?" Ben asked nonchalantly.

"Open Marriage," he replied curling his lip.

"That's right," Ben said distantly, remembering the partially read flyer in his mail. "The Anthropology Club?" he asked vaguely.

"The Faculty Club!" the student snipped back exaggerating the pronunciation.

"Yea," Ben said remembering, then trying to place the student's face, "invited by our swinging faculty for better student-faculty--" Ben hesitated for a word.

"Fucking," the student inserted testing.

A pristine silence engulfed the front of the room. Unalarmed, Ben went for his sack and pulled out a computerized class list, delaying his comment before the alerted forefront of the class. He remembered the face, the photograph. The student could have passed for his double.

"And you're?" Ben asked looking over the list then taking another glance at the student.

"Bates, sir?" he returned respectfully defiant.

"Bates," Ben repeated, laughing at the rhyme of his counterpart.

"An 'A' for your choice of words," Ben said interrupting a burst of laughter from a gossip of coeds in the right front, "and an 'F' for picking the words out of my mouth." Ben smiled, "There'll be no effing in here," he said looking up from his feigned writing on the green and white print-out, "unless, of course you're married!" He spoke through the laughter that belled down the aisles. "Is anyone in here," he paused lifting his hand like a magician, "married?"

Timidly, an arm raised; two more followed. Stopping his count at the third in recognition, Ben introspected.

"Angela, right?"

The girl shook her head still under the hood of her raincoat.

"You're gone to give it another shot?"

"yes," she grinned.

"You're not leaving us?"

"No," she said pulling down her hood, beaming and unfolding her hair through her fingers. It was long, red. Susan George; it was the mouth, the protuberance of her lips--glossed.

"Good, how's the nursing business?"

"Fine," she flirted.

Ben dodged her eyes, "No--seriously, I don't care what you say in here," he grinned, "as long as it's logical and relevant...." The glass laughed. He caught himself drifting mentally back to the runic note inserted in his logic book the semester past. He looked back at her. She smiled. He excused it as a reaction to his wit. He swallowed.

"...My name is Ben Adair," as if admitting guilt, "I am a Philosopher," oppressing inhibition, "a logician," self-doubting. "I suppose with my background, I can be pigeon-holed as nothing else," the rhetorical style of Dylan Thomas. "Doomed and predetermined to carry-out the unerring myth of a stumbling, head in the cloud philosopher," he sought for his own voice. Bates was scanning through a tabloid, the American Poetry Review --unimpressed. "Maybe a modern day philosopher king with an Alka-seltzer," ad-libbing, "and still holding out!" Bates unattentive, hemmed in by obliging chuckling, folded the paper, daydreaming. Unintentionally, Ben cornered him with the eyes of the class by watching him momentarily. "Well anyway," he said setting himself up, "putting the rhetoric and self-indulgence

away for the year," smiling, "sometimes I think I'm a logician. That's the premise. The conclusion..." he said dryly, "therefore I am. Or, I think, therefore I am!" The room filled with uncertain laughter. "I think T.S. Eliot said that?" Ben added as an aside, scratching his head, bemused.

Bates laughed. Part of the class picked up his cue. Waiting for the laughter to subside, Ben unzipped his flight jacket, then spoke with the pretense of not understanding:

"Why did you laugh?" he said addressing the class. He raised his hand to his chest in anticipation of a rising hand. "No takers?" He began his follow-through. "Well--"

"It was a good joke!" Bates interrupted.

"Thanks," Ben nodded, "for assuring my comic prowess-- but can you give me more data?"

Bates shrugged, "Well everybody knows that it was Descartes who said 'I think, therefore I am', but you inferred it was T.S. Eliot--by stealing a line from Bob Dylan...I don't know?"

Pleased by breaking through, "How does that song go?" he continued, "Well winter time passed and it seems everybody's havin' them dreams. Everyone sees his self, walkin' round with no one else--"

"Half the people can be part right all the time, some of the people can be all right part of the time--but all the people can't be all right all the time--" Bates broke in impersonating Dylan.

"I think Abraham Lincoln said that," Ben added.

"No--that's not it, I think it was another song--I don't know."

"Do you know what album it's on?"

"Highway 61? I don't know. All my records were destroyed. I had a fire."

"Anybody hurt?"

"No."

"Death by fire," Ben said distantly.

"Yea," Bates shrugged.

Someone giggled. Bates turned in his seat to trace it.

It was Angela, beaming. She was watching Ben.

Ben pushed his shoulders back, "Esoterikos of Pop Culture."

Bates looked back at Ben, offended by the category, the distancing.

"I'll have to look it up--play it," Ben said. "Why did you laugh, Angela?"

"I don't know!" she giggled, "I laugh a lot."

The class laughed with her.

"Oh," Ben wisped through his nose, then turned for the blackboard and a piece of chalk. "Bates was on the right track!" he began writing, "the argument was a kind of joke, a play on words; it's what we call in logic an 'equivocation'--a logical fallacy." He reconstructed the argument on the board.

IF I THINK, I AM (A LOGICIAN?)

I THINK I AM A LOGICIAN

THEREFORE, I AM A LOGICIAN

"Now!" Ben said mentally going over what he had written, "at first glance you might not get it, but with a little time and horse sense--most of you shouldn't have much trouble picking out the problems with this argument.

Ben walked back to his desk. "And if you don't see it --don't worry about it. That's why I'm here--to help the would be Icarus out of the Labyrinth!" he said playfully.

No one responded.

"Isn't anybody into Greek mythology?" Ben smiled. "Ah, come on now! Yeats," Ben slipped, "you're holding out?" Ben prodded, "Angela, you don't take time out between cardiac arrests to read Joyce? Coronary Care, right?"

He pointed to her, holding the chalk like a cigarette. She nodded in smiling affirmation.

"Shame on you!" he grinned, as he reached for his stack of papers. "While you're all mulling over the riddle of my identity crisis," he laughed, "I'll hand out your first assignment for those ardently still searching for the Truth," he said with Biblical implications, mocking. "Who was it," he said handing the stack to Bates, "who said God wasn't dead," then dryly, "just missing in action."

"That's bad," Bates said confronting his black humor.

"Thank-you," Ben returned, feeling no guilt.

"Did you know he was dead?"

"Who?"

Bates, "Phil Ochs."

Adair, "No," struck again by the thought of his own mortality, he felt the squeeze of nausea in his gut. Suppressing it, the desire to make amends, "He was a very talented songwriter?" the need to immortalize, "a poet." Ben went over himself for his menthols. They were in his back pocket, crushed--Kools. He picked one out. Straightened the bending hook of the paper, put it to his mouth, lit it. He gazed out the window, pensive through meandering smoke. The sky was dark, ominous, a rumble of thunder outside. "Anybody hear a report on the weather?" He thought of his example of 'false cause'. "On the way to school today," he thought of Johnny Carson, absurdity, "I was stopped by a hawk, flying low on my way across the field ...here," he drifted inside himself, thinking of hail, "Anyway it was a common happening among the ancients to predict the weather by watching the flight patterns of birds," he lost his thought, the stream of arguments, he felt high, someone coughed, he turned back to the class, they were eyeing one another nervously, an arm was waving in the air, Angela was smiling, he tried to force an order on his thoughts, his lecture, "so what I was getting at was an example of a logical fallacy," remembering he was ahead of himself, he panicked, "you'll find other examples of this fallacy

in your reading assignment for this evening--you can pick up a syllabus on my desk on the way out." Ben felt a draft of cold air on his face, he was sweating, nervous perspiration. "Oh, yea, if anything should happen to me--the weather I mean--and I'm not here, don't leave unless you see a note on the board. I'll leave a message with my secretary, to put a note on the board--my car's not that dependable in wet weather." Ben tried to be cool amid his chaos, "Now someone had their hand raised?"

"I think I have the answer?" A heavy blonde, T-shirt--no bra.

"What?"

"About your crisis?"

"Oh," Ben disoriented, "yea you're?"

"Donna Crane."

"Donna...", he repeated going over his list, pausing, stalling to regain control of his class.

"You can call me D.C.--that's what my friends call me!"

The class laughed, she recoiled in embarrassment.

"D.C.--I like that," he feigned fondness to quell the uproar.

"Thanks;" put at ease.

"No--I like the name, it's electrifying," his attention not leaving her, for helping him out of the predicament.

There was a boo, then cackle.

"Chalk two up for the day!" Bates laughed.

Ben reached behind and tossed him the chalk, "You've gotta pay to play!"

"I'm not keeping score," Bates returned, letting the chalk roll off his desk to the floor.

Ben smiled, looking back at the ledge. He shrugged, "All right! Since we're out of chalk--that's the premise--we'll call it a day, that's the conclusion."

The class laughed. D.C. applauded with the girl adjacent, wearing an identical T-shirt, U. of M., brunette, frail. Ben glanced down at Bates, then spoke rapidly, "Oh, yea, don't forget to read the letter I passed out in class. It's an excerpt from the newspaper. We'll solve the mystery with logical explanations at our next meeting. You can try to solve it on your own at first, and if you can't solve it, read the assignment in the syllabus. You can pick one up on your way out--thank-you!"

"I had to let the last one go," Bates grinned.

Ben smiled then introspected, "Bates," again serious, "How did it happen?"

Bates looked up from his stacking his books, "Oh, that --suicide. He told one of his friends he 'couldn't write any more.'"

Ben leaned on the podium, reflective, "Pathetic," he said.

"Prophetic," Bates returned not looking up from his books.

Ben agitated, "What makes you say that?"

"Free association," with a look of fear, "the rhyme?"

"You write poetry?"

"Sometimes--you know how it is--when lightning strikes the podium?"

"No, I don't?"

"When it happens, it happens," he shrugged, standing up to put on his coat, "when you're finished, you're finished."

Ben looked down at the table at the remains of his assignment sheets. The wind vibrated a window of the classroom, it droned like the dinning of pipes. Ben gazed out at bare swinging of trees, the invisible wind. He thought of his father, the void abyss absent of stars, life. The cold. He turned back to Bates. Gone. He had left his coat.

### Cinquains: Low

Old friends:  
limp flowers lie  
on a pebbled Maine beach,  
just out of reach of the surging  
sea-tide.

Lost love:  
like sweet spring soil  
you took my seed that night-  
the frost came as fear that something  
might grow.

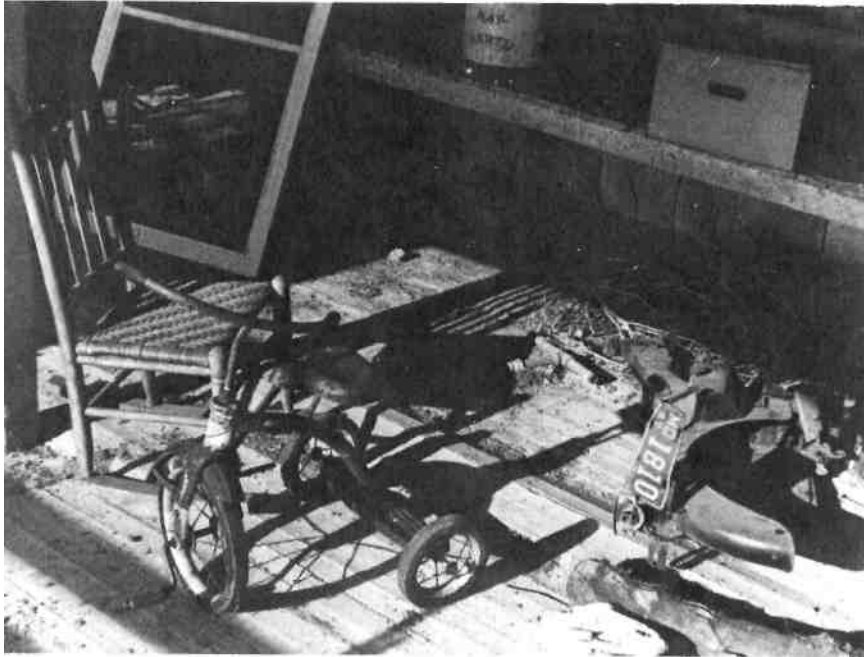
Now I,  
a lone dried twig  
on everybody's path,  
wait for that time when, suddenly,  
I'll snap.

---Mike Schultz

### **On the Last Trip**

On the last trip,  
We took the old  
Upper Hot Springs Highway,  
Stopping at a glass encased  
And rust red pump  
To fill up.  
We were getting close to  
The Dardanelle truss  
And the path down  
To the swimming place.  
Crossing layers of hot  
Round rocks  
We dropped into the water.  
As always, Aunt Emma sat under  
A tree and fixed  
Sugar water and fizz.

---Betty Jean Hendricks



## CONTRIBUTORS

HARVEY ABELSON is a stuntman for a pornographic movie.  
ROBERT C. CHANCE, V has not told us where the other four are.  
STEPHEN DOYLE has appeared in these pages before and still thinks he is going to get paid.  
BOB FARMER has been signed by the San Diego Padres as a third base coach. Bob says he would not let a baby bite a bullet.  
GINNY FRIEDLANDER works in the Office of Public Relations at Loyola. In spite of that fact, she writes and enjoys music.  
BETTY JEAN HENDRICKS lives in Emily Dickinson's home town. We'd like to thank her for giving Unicorn a second try. Not many people do, y'know.  
JOHN HOLMES a.k.a. "Jack the Skipper". Jack was head gopher at Unicorn last year. Jack writes and teaches poetry at Calvert Hall High School. His students caught him working on a poem in class and made him wear it around his nose.  
J. JEFFRIES took the picture on the cover of this magazine. We liked the various textures in the photo. With regard to photo submissions to Unicorn, texture is everything.  
BRIDGET MANNEY lives in Valley Stream, New York. She writes only on Trailways buses, in the seat right behind the driver. She tells us she has been published in a magazine called "Hyacinths and Biscuits".  
KATIE MCGRATH likes to lord it over children who can not tie their shoes. When told she was an English major at Loyola, she said, "Hypotheses non fingo".  
EUGENE MCNAMARA maintains an address in Ontario, Canada.  
BRENDAN O'DARE definitely writes under a pen name. He is writing a novel, Sudden Death, from which "Chapter Six" is excerpted. Sounds dirty.  
JOHN J. PETERSON hails from St. Cloud, Minn. When we peeled his poetry from the ceiling, we liked it. We wish he would send us lots more.  
MIKE REIS is possessed of the devil. He is a History major and enjoys issuing bogus small craft warnings.  
MIKE SCHULTZ is practically the only German major at Loyola. Mike has a Nietzsche fixation and thinks that everything is more or less everything else.  
CHUCK WEISS has appeared in these page before.  
CHARLIE WILLIS took the picture of the spelunkers.

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This issue is dedicated to Jack Holmes, for bringing UNICORN lock, stock and barrel through its second year of quarterly publication (a venerable age as little mags go!).

