



J. Lindner
81

Editors-in-Chief: Susan McIntyre
David Zeiler

Assistant Editors: Valerie Macys
Marcia McCombe
Louie Ruzzi
Mary Jo Weigman

Advisor: Dr. Phillip McCaffrey

Editor's Notes:

Cover art by John Lindner and poem
"Pegasus" were contest winners in the fall
of 1981.

UNICORN

**A Bi-Annual Publication
of Literature and Art**

Spring 1982

Vol. XI, No.2

Loyola College of Baltimore

CONTENTS

PEGASUS.....	1
Laura Brookhart	
UNTITLED.....	2
ellen b. la corte	
BIRTHDAY BOY	3
Louie Ruzzi	
SUMMER DUSK	4
John Herzich	
PENCIL DRAWING	8
Arleen Campo	
THE MAN WHO SHOT THE PRESIDENT	9
Katharyn Machan Aal	
ANTIDOTE	10
Susan Winchurch	

BELFAST	11
Bob St. Ledger	
SIDESHOW	12
J.B. Goodenough	
COLLAGE.....	13
Karen Rasco	
THE BEAR IN THE DUCK BLIND	14
Rob Hardesty	
IN AN ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT .	15
Frannie Lindsay	
CREDIBILITY GAP.	17
Pat King	
PHOTOGRAPH.....	18
Ron Hooper	
PAINTING MYSELF.....	19
Brian Lyles	
DEATH OF AN OLD WOMAN.....	20
Lindsey Michaels	
words they do not own.....	26
Dawna Maydak Andrejczak	
sister	27
Theodora Snyder	
PHOTOGRAPH—DAY NURSE.....	28
Marcia McCombe	
REVELATIONS.....	29
Susan McIntyre	
A THOUGHT	33
Joseph Tilghman	

Cover Art by John Lindner

PEGASUS

"Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face among a crowd of stars."

William Butler Yeats

Dogs: stop your singing
For Pegasus does not dance
He rages,
crashing on the moonpath
where the dark side meets the light.
His mighty head heaves,
one eye frothy, wild and white
one eye black and dead as space
and cold.

You chill the hounds.

He pounds the rocks to dust,
a doom passed on by his jailer sun:
Some death which is the dying moves,
Makes eternal hammers of his hooves.

Sniff out the wings, can't you?
And howl at the moon
Whose face his racing shadow sweeps
For Pegasus is not a statue
And has clapped me with his mighty
head.

Laura Brookhart

The
tree's branches
reached out to
grasp
the beauty of
the sunset
and no more succeeded
than I,
in understanding
my love
for
you

ellen b. la corte

"BIRTHDAY BOY"

Right before
The flick of the switch
A squeal
Froze his finger.
Opening the cover
He held his nose
Peered inside.
A quivering clump
Of crumpled newspaper
Caught his eye.
As he reached for the rubbish,
A feverish cry
Echoed off the walls
Of the metallic womb.
From beneath the print,
Two watery brown eyes
Peeked out.
He gathered the babe
Into the warmth
Of his flannel shirt,
Wiping a rolling tear
From its soft, ink-stained cheek.

Lou Ruzzi

SUMMER DUSK

I stared at the boards of the back porch floor, some of them long, others short and uneven. The heads of the short nails stuck out of the planking so that I could run my feet up and down the boards and search for the nail that stuck out the most. The wooden floor was painted grey, but where there were chips and peels I could see the black wood underneath. My eye travelled from the floor up to the short, wooden wall that enclosed the porch, making it nice and cozy. There was a huge crack in the wood where I had smashed a porch chair up against it last summer, but I was never yelled at because there were so many other cracks in the wall. The chairs were real old, too, all rusted with cushions that were faded and ripped.

My father was sitting upon one of these chairs next to the wall, his after-dinner coffee resting on the banister, steam rising from the cup. He sat like he always did with his leg draped over the other, the **Wall Street Journal** folded neatly and held up high so that it hid his face. Every time he finished turning a page his right hand would reach for the coffee cup, lift it to his mouth, and then he would blow on it. I always heard him blow on it very gently, but I never heard him sip it. He would just blow on it and then put it back on the banister. I asked him once why he never drank it. He had looked at me kind of confused like he didn't know what to say.

"I drink it," he told me. "It's hot—I don't want to burn myself."

Then he had gone back to his paper and never said another word about it.

I was watching an ant try to crawl up the wall, looking at him disappear in and out of the cracks that must have been like the Grand Canyon to him. I heard the rickety screen door open and out came my sister. She was carrying a large bowl of rocky road ice cream and she sat down next to me on the glider, falling all over me in one of her silly moods, my arm all sticky from her ice cream hands. She kept twirling the ice cream around in the bowl trying to get it to

melt so that it would become liquid. Then when it melted, making a big chocolate mess, she would drink it, pretending it was like coffee, and being just like my father.

"He never drinks it," I told her.

She just giggled and kept stirring, not understanding. Every night she would come out with her ice cream, which I didn't mind so much except she always messed up the rhythm of the glider. I would just get this big, metal monster swinging real fast and hard on its supports when Marybeth would come along and ruin everything. Then I would have to get her to stop fidgetting and start all over, my father yelling at me because of the clanking that it made. Marybeth was only five and so she didn't understand that it was my glider really. Every summer when we came down to visit grandma she would take the cover off so that I could sit in it and rock. This summer she even had it painted for me, a bright yellow that made the porch come alive and made the glider look brand new. It still made that wonderful clanking sound like a train when it first starts to chug along and then gets louder and louder till it's almost deafening.

While I rocked, I watched the trees in the backyard sway and toss with the wind, their round, green tops waving back and forth like broccoli that's being shaken. I always liked to watch them because they were so tall and mighty and I couldn't imagine any storm knocking them down. They must have been a hundred years old, as old as this house. Every summer I watched them, but it had taken me a long time to notice how they were all shaped in a semi-circle around the house just like an in-field circles home plate. I felt protected by it all.

Grandma came out of the kitchen, dragging a heavy chair with her. I didn't understand why she did that when there were two porch chairs that she could sit on, but she always did it anyway. "Johnny," she would call out, and right away I knew she was talking to my father because he was Johnny and I was John Joseph.

"That's terrible what's happening with all the riots, huh, Johnny?"

"Yeah, Mom, we had them in Baltimore. It's scary what's happening to this country."

They kept on talking like that, but I really didn't know what they were saying. They always talked about such things—current events, Mrs. Giles called it—but I didn't see the importance in it.

I looked at the bees flying around their nest, the one right behind the can of lighter fluid on the roof beam. They would dart in and out of the honeycombs making honey or maybe fixing their nest. Right now they were quiet and lazy, not causing too much trouble, but around noontime they would buzz and fly around crazy trying to sting everyone. Grandma called them "little devils" and told me to stay away from them, but whenever she went to town and my parents weren't around I'd go after them with a broom. Already I had killed three and hadn't been stung once.

"How ya' doin', John Joseph, you rockin' in your rocker?"

"Yeah, Aunt Jean, just rockin."

"That's nice."

Aunt Jean sat down on the steps right next to my grandmother. Marybeth had gone back inside, but I guess auntie didn't want to ruin my gliding.

"Don't sit there, Jean, you'll dirty your dress. A grown woman sitting like a kid on a stoop. Go sit next to John Joseph. Go on."

My grandmother and aunt didn't get along on account grandma wouldn't let auntie get married to a truck driver name Joe Barrett. So now my aunt lived with grandma and all they did was fight. Dad knew what was coming so he got up and went to help mother with the dishes.

"Go on, get up," repeated my grandmother.

"I can sit here if I want."

"You're as stubborn as a mule. You'll never listen, will you? When you were a little girl your father should have given you the belt more often."

"Oh, what do you know. You're an old woman. I can sit here ya' know, I live here too."

"And you don't, neither. This is my house and you'll obey me."

My aunt made a funny whistling noise under her breath and she got up and walked around to the front of the house. I saw the blurry movements like someone walking in slow motion when auntie walked in front of the porch lattice. I didn't want to look at my grandmother with her face all red so I just looked at the floor, rockin, and gliding. She went back inside to take her pill. I just kept rocking and glidin', looking at the floor.

John Herzich



THE MAN WHO SHOT THE PRESIDENT

What did the man who shot the President
dream last night? Bullets? Blood?
Or the sound of fame, his name
broadcast a hundred thousand times,
dancing on people's tongues?

He came from one place or another,
blond, red-haired, with silver cuff links
glinting in the cameras' lights.
Smile, half-smile, eyes sleepy-sexy
with some twisted satisfaction.

What did he hunger for as he grew up?
Hotels? Rain? A man who could be
movie star and king? Fame
eats from the inside out.
A President with perfect teeth
whets such an appetite.

Katharyn Machan Aal

ANTIDOTE:

I hadn't meant to fall in love;
But there was such music playing,
That I lent an easy ear...
And there, in soft angel form,
Was something strong and vulnerable...
And I caught it in my hand like a star,
And let it melt.
And it gave me new eyes,
So that I can now see
All the imperfect music of
This terrible, tender world...

City lights and black shadows
Were not so new to me,
Fraught with emotion as I was.
But the angel eyes gave me new ways
Of feeling the dusky remembrances,
And the special horror
Of being so alive in the soul;
So ready to cry,
So anxious to cling
To whatever seems somehow good.

Love awakens the mysteries,
And gives us power to see them...
Thank you love,
For making us unhardened,
So open-eyed, so easily hurt...
That is good—
It gives us poetry.

Susan Winchurch

BELFAST

The weeping willow's long, delicate branches
reach down
to the ground
and dance in the breeze on the deep dark green grass
Soft orange roses sway in the wind on the thorny bush
sighing
buying beauty
and brushing lightly against the white house

The white house sparkles in the sun's rays; its windows
rattle
then shatter:
inside a steel tank blunders, crushing a doll's head

Bob St. Ledger

SIDESHOW

You have paid your pennies:

Now tell me

Did the amazing armless boy
Gather peonies in his hands,
Hide his face in the petals?

Did the dwarf princess
Reach upward, pick an apple
From the highest branch?

Did the dog-faced man
In his mirror meet
Adonis, weeping?

Did the two-headed calf
The night before it died
Low for the two moons in the sky?

Now tell me.

You have paid your pennies.

J.B. Goodenough



THE BEAR IN THE DUCK BLIND

The Bear In The Duck Blind

The sun was rising above the autumn marshes and the hunter was already in the duck blind.

He was dry but cold as he sat in the blind he had made from the reeds around him.

He nipped at his Brandy as he stared through the slats awaiting for ducks to come flying. But none did.

He sounded his true-tone northeastern mallard mating call in hopes of attracting great flocks. But none came.

The sun became warmer and his bottle less full. He grew stiff and anxious. He grew stiffly drunk. He blew on his birdcall and reordered his decoys. He added fresh reed to his handmade lean-to.

He waited and waited for ducks to come flying. He used all the tricks that he knew. He tried whistling, eating lunch, napping. He even rattled off a prayer to Saint Francis.

No ducks. Not one lousy duck. How unfair!

The afternoon sky grew tired and dull. He rounded up his decoys. He packed away his gear.

In a burst of anger and shame all at once—to return to the cabin with nothing—not one!—he raised his fists to the heavens and cursed at Saint Francis—and there—there in the sky was an object—'twas flying—with wings and with feathers. It came and it landed—a sparrow upon the lean-to.

He stared at the sparrow and clutched at his shotgun. He played with the hairs of his mustache.

In a move quick as lightning he dropped his bagged decoys and leveled the gun to his eye. He pulled at the trigger. He pulled more than once. He had shattered the lean-to. He had leveled the reeds. He didn't find the sparrow and he didn't care.

He returned to the cabin quite drunk and quite pleased—to tell the old fellows what had transpired that day between him and the bear in the duck blind.

Rob Hardesty

IN AN ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT
for Bruce

I have touched too much here, and must go:
a warm adjournment and the slow
calamity of morning hands
still blacked-out, knocking things
off surfaces. I woke, tears first
in your hands that were a bowl
too soft to hold me. Wands of rain
had changed the windows to evasions:
rooms inside an empty weather.
Or paintings of them, or of nothing
that portrays this.

In each one, the particulars
stand there like graffiti
seized by all they do not mean:
faucets, vases, ferns and women. Nothing
to be afraid of. That is what
stands out. Doors shy green
and opened a little, like skirts
that cover legs of light,
one toe testing the fresh air
for a cool non-shoe near stairs.
Doors that lead
in downward sequence to more
painlessly new rooms.
I want to talk to you

for hours about each one.
A panic of details
shakes my dream off, and I am wakened
in a weak rush of forgetting.
A week explodes into its separate days.
The single pictures.
I almost see my hands' ends
shutting cupboards, taking down
each frame and shooing women
down the stairs, then checking things...
Almost. Those doors in exits' clothing:

gone. I've entered, talking about doors,
and meaning

talk to me

about departure and escape.

That door that was
a dress draped on itself, on long
sad legs. You left, aloof on legs
like that. You stopped
once, turned, locked out,
your eyes impossible.
Safety had gone out of them
in a rush of bright gray, like sleet.
The subject has stopped
changing now. By this window,
only snow evades us.

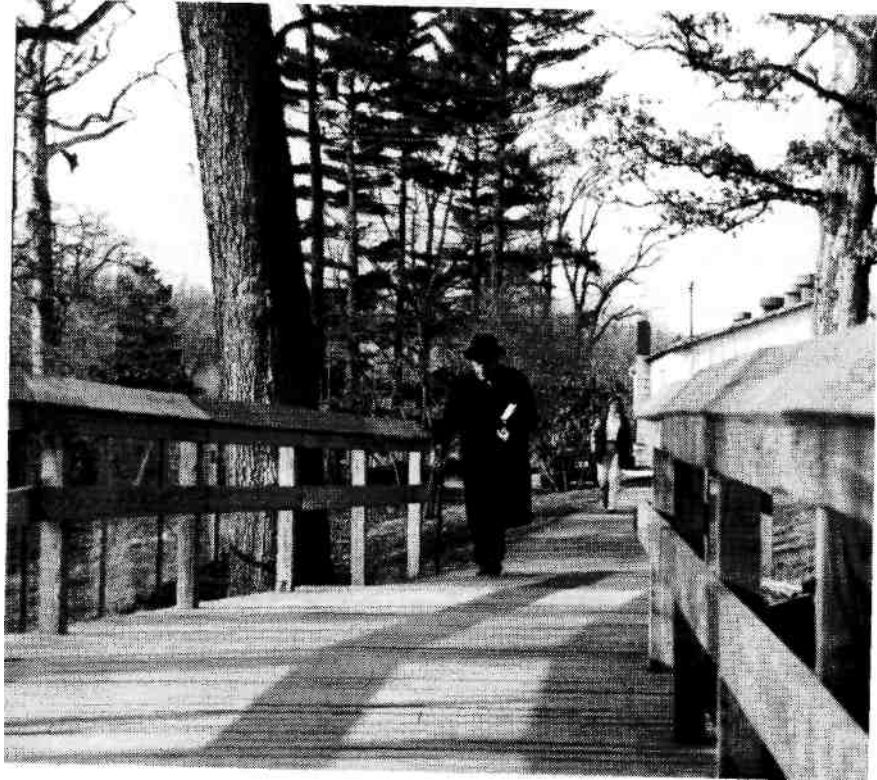
The elaborate closeness
of breath and body exacts us. This
is no dream
to pretend in, it's the last dream:
the good excuse
for crying. Tell me
everything about the long restraint
of days arriving before any
future tense can frame them
yet. The days that are not days,
but avoidances, survivals
of time. Because now
I have to widen the space-
heater for a warmth that I can bear
to get dressed in. I have to
read and check the weather.
I have to clean and write
a letter. I have to talk
to you about all
but this departure, this
need to change the subject, this hope
that you will stop me.

Frannie Lindsay

CREDIBILITY GAP

How can I ever explain to him?
He shouldn't have turned so white
When they wheeled me into the delivery room.
Would he understand if I asked him to remember
That last game in the year his glory ended
And mine began?
I can still see him running for that touchdown
With his ankle sprained,
Grimacing and sweating
And glowing
As the cheering filled his ears.
But who would have guessed that one tiny baby
Could yell louder than a whole stadiumful
Of football fans?

Pat King



PAINTING MYSELF

(Reflections on Charles Burchfield's
"August Evening")

I painted myself
in a farmyard place
that smelled of old-time
garden green.

I flowed with the strokes
of green-gray grass,
whispered with the water
that softened my paper,

while over my head
the rolling sky glowed
a beautiful shade of
transparent black.

I walked around my
newly-painted barn and
looked at the trees who
only said, "Where are the birds?"

I waited and watched,
but I didn't paint birds,
or crickets, or lonesome
frogs singing in the pond.

I was the sunflower
that touched the night clouds,
growing with my work,
forgetting about the heat.

So I held my head
above those things-
those lowly blades of grass
that faded into the foreground.

Yes, I was the
sunflower that laughed
and smiled in the face of
a dark August evening.

THE DEATH OF AN OLD WOMAN

Stella Ford had a problem; she'd lived long enough to grow old. Now her husband was seven years dead, his children were busy with children and grandchildren of their own, and she was left alone to die in the farmhouse where she'd been born and lived her seventy-five years.

It's not that those years were unhappy ones, but there were problems. Her twin sister had died at an early age, her mother from that grief. Stella became her daddy's child, his friend, companion, and only love. He never remarried. She took care of him, he of her. Neither ever found a suitor strong enough to break their bond.

So by her thirty-fifth year, the farmboys and watermen had long abandoned their quests. Stella was a spinster, the mistress of her daddy's farm, and she was happy. But her daddy died with the second World War. She found his body behind the plow horse—cold, pale, a stranger. She was alone and helpless. Her world changed.

A waterman, a widowed man with five grown daughters, started coming often to work her land. He was fourteen years her senior. A strong, hard-working man, he was like her daddy. When he'd asked her, she'd married him.

Together their lives went well. Ruric worked the land when seafood was scarce and the water when the land was dry. Stella tended her garden and gathered eggs. There was never much money for extras but they never wanted for food or a sturdy house. Ruric saw to that.

Time passed without many problems. Every now and then, one of his children would come back to visit. They'd bring their families and stay a day or two. "How was the oyster season daddy?" "How long before you finish your new boat?" "I hear that the last storm did a lot of damage to the crab population." Ruric has spent long hours six days a week on the water. When each child was born, someone would hang a sheet from the upstairs window. He would see it, know that he had another child, and work that much

harder. He barely knew his children. They barely knew him. Stella was just a kind stranger.

But, Stella and Ruric were happy. They'd sit around evening and talk. He'd be whittling decoys and smoking his pipe. She'd be sewing feedbags into quilts. As they got older though, their eyes went bad. He stopped his whittling, she stopped quilting, and they spent their evenings swapping crossword answers in front of the TV. Stella spent her days waiting for Ruric to return. He still worked the water.

Yet, one morning Ruric didn't go to work. Instead, he found a doctor. Tests showed lungs that were black and damaged. There was no time. Five weeks later, he was dead. His children gathered; their children were re-introduced. And Stella was alone, with a house full of strangers.

After the funeral the children talked to Stella about her plans.

"Stella, what would you like us to do?"

"Nothing darlin. I expect you'un have done all that can be done. Can't nobody bring him back, so I reckon I may as well just let the Good Lord look after me now. I'll be just fine."

She began sobbing but quickly checked herself.

"Have you had any time to make plans?"

"No, there ain't nothin special I wanta do."

"Do you have enough money to stay then? why don't you come stay with one of us?. At least you won't be by yourself."

"No darlin. This is my home. I was born in this house and I expect I'll die here too. I'd just be under foot all the time."

"But how about money; will you have enough?"

"Oh yes. I'll still get my pension from the bank and there's all Ruric's savins upstairs. He didn't never trust banks but he's kept it safe. It ought to be fine for all I'll be needin, so don't fret none. You've got your own families to look after."

No one knew how much money there was. To Stella, who had been looked after her entire life, the green stacks were a treasure. So after a week, the children left.

Stella slept on the sofa downstairs, jumped at every noise, and rarely went out. Her dog stayed beside her. Her garden and chickens died. The children called less frequently. They sent cards on holidays with little notes attached. Stella propped the photos around her after reading the letters.

Gradually, she forgot the names on the photographs. She closed the heat ducts to the upper floors. The guest rooms stood empty and cold. Occasionally, letters would come, but she'd forget who sent them. People would remind her to pay bills. She washed her dresses in the sink and forgot to cook her meals. When a stranger offered her hundred dollars an acre, she sold all forty-five—except for the land just around the house.

The dog died. After a while Stella began calling the children. She'd talk, repeat the things she'd just said and talk about being alone. When she hung up she'd call right back and say, "Hello, I was just thinking about you. How is everyone?" The children hired a woman to stay with Stella.

Again Stella became a mistress. The woman told her when and what to eat, and when to wash. Stella ate what and when she wanted and still washed her clothes in the sink. All day, Stella would ask the same questions and repeat old news. Her hands shook; her voice trembled. Within four months the woman left to nurse a sick relative.

So the children each started sending ten dollar bills with their cards. Stella's calls became less frequent. Meals-On-Wheels arranged to bring her a hot meal each day, but Stella forgot to eat it. The trays were returned half full. She forgot to take her heart pills. Or, at least, she forgot whether or not she'd taken them. The one morning, she took two pills, washed some clothes, and took two more. The glass was left setting on the table while she took a nap. Stella woke, saw the glass, and remembered to take her heart pills. She was unconscious when Meals-On-Wheels arrived.

The hospital called the children. Two went down to visit. But, the reports were not good; acute malnutrition, depression, and senility. It was clear that Stella could no longer live alone. The children spent two weeks attached to long distance lines. They had two choices: either Stella would come to live with them, or else she'd be placed in a home. The children debated. Finally, a doctor called one morning at seven a.m. and asked what they wanted done with Stella. She was ready to be released. He was told that each child would be willing to keep Stella for three months at a time. The doctor checked with Stella and called them back. It was fine with her. For two weeks, strangers had told her what to do, what to eat, and when. She would do anything to get out.

Early the next morning the children came. They took Stella home shut off the water and electricity, cancelled the newspaper, and took out the phone like their husbands had instructed. Stella sat on the sofa, still in her robe. People swarmed around her pelting her with questions. Stella sat mute except when forced to speak.

"Stella, you've got to help us. We don't know what you want us to take."

"Would you'uns want the flowers then? That spider plant in the den's covered with babies."

"No thanks Stella, I've got enough. Should I pack the spider plant?"

"No darlin. If you'uns don't want 'em, I'll just water 'em all before we leave. They'll be all right till I get back."

"Well how about clothes? Which would you like?"

"Now I don't expect I'll be needin that many. My old dresses should serve right well. Of course, if you're plannin on going any place fancy, I'd better take a good one. There's one up in my closet."

"How about if we take some afghans and quilts then so that you'll feel more at home?"

"Darlin, you don't need to be troublin yourself about me. I'm sure you won't have the space for all my old clutter."

"Stella, we've got room for whatever you want. If you want something, tell us."

"Well, I would like that blue afghan there in the den. It's right worn and I expect I ought to be ashamed for people to see it. But it was Ruric's favorite and I like to throw it over my legs when there's a chill."

"Anything else?"

"No darlin, you'uns just take whatever you want. I won't be needin that much."

So saying, Stella stared at the hardwood floor and people rearranged the world around her.

Finally, one of the children packed Stella's life into a car and drove off. She watched out the car window as her home disappeared. Leaves gathered in patchwork beside the gravel. Scorched field stocks stood on the sides, ransacked by autumn's harvest. At the highway everything blurred and Stella fell asleep against the car door.

Later, hours later, Stella woke to the city's stop and go. Bricks and bodies eased past. Stella moved away from the door. Finally, the car turned on to a side street and stopped. The woman from behind the wheel came to help Stella into the house.

Once inside, she showed Stella to her room. "This will be your room, Stella. Make yourself at home while I bring in your things," she said. Stella sat down on the wooden chair by the closet and looked around. Silky pink curtains stood open to expose white sheers. A floral spread covered the bed in military precision, and stuffed animals huddled atop shag carpeting in one corner. From the closet, mothball smells escaped to mingle with the outside staleness. Stella leaned back against the chair and voices crept down the hallway to her room.

"I didn't know that you were bringing her here first," a man's voice said.

"I wasn't going to, but Ruth said that she and Luther didn't think that Stella should be left alone yet. They were going to take her first but they're both still working," the woman responded.

"What did she say about leaving?"

What could she say? She sure couldn't stay there. It's us or a nursing home. We'll just have to make her realize that she can never go back there."

"That's not going to be easy on her."

"I know, but what else can we do?" There was a pause, then the woman continued. "If you bring in the rest of her things, I'll go fix Stella something to eat."

Back in the room, Stella's eighty-nine pounds sat dwarfed like a child in her daddy's chair. She just stared out the window past the falling flakes, as her daddy plowed the field.

Lindsey Michaels

words they do not own

we are better lovers than friends
they say
safe behind polished glass
they who would stay the night
and still throw the first stone.

letters leap
from their scarlet tongues
fly like fire
through the trees in your backyard
keeping your wife from sleep.

late at night
she hears their voices.
they frighten her
with accusations
and the secrets of lovers

as words they do not own
fall from their mouths
like stones
breaking hearts like china promises
easily as windows.

Dawna Maydak Andrejczak

sister

sister with eyes like the storm
your beauty pierces me
as does your silent suffering
what makes you clasp
your ivory fingers
in such fierce endeavor
not to cry out
so lovely in the tumult
of your pain
even the witch-black
tendrils of your hair
are eloquent
sister with eyes of green and gray

Theodora Snyder



REVELATIONS

Laura entered the house slowly, reverently, as if approaching a shrine. The living room was dark, shades drawn against the sunshine of late afternoon. Brightness would be a desecration. The shapes of sheet-draped furniture surrounded her. She walked around the familiar room touching the backs of chairs, a lamp, a vase, the old piano. She looked down at the worn carpet and noticed that it was dirty. She stood in front of the bookshelves scanning titles, recognizing almost every one. What memories they held. She had spent hundreds of hours in her father's lap listening to him reading from his huge collection of favorite stories. From the portrait on the far wall the serious gray eyes of her father gazed out at her. Laura turned away quickly, lips trembling, and made her way to the kitchen.

The light was better there and Laura sank into the nearest chair. She opened her purse, dropped her keys in, and pulled out the large white envelope addressed to her in her father's hand. She held it for a moment, staring out the window at the big oak tree. Smiling, she remembered begging him to build a swing and crying when he pushed too hard. How she loved him. They'd been so happy here together, just the two of them.

That's how it had been ever since she could remember. Just the two of them. And an occasional housekeeper who never seemed to fit and didn't stay long. Father had only worked a few days a week. His lithe body draped in elegant suits, he seemed almost a stranger on those days. He hadn't always been a businessman. He had been a dancer long ago, but the subject was taboo. The other days he spent with his tiny daughter, showering her with love and laughter. They had always shared a love of the house and often they cleaned or cooked or painted or worked in the gardens side by side, safe in their own little hiding place. Now here she was with a letter instructing her to sell the house after choosing the furniture she wished to keep. Also enclosed was a small bronzed key. The letter said that

there was a trunk in the attic which could be opened with the key.

Laura left her coat and purse in the kitchen and, key in hand, climbed the attic steps. The long neglected door creaked on its rusty hinges as she pushed it open. The attic was just like any other attic. It was dusty and full of cobwebs, and only a trickle of sunlight penetrated the dirty window. The usual array of discarded toys, broken furniture, old clothes, and books were scattered around. And there, under the window, was the trunk. The sloping ceiling made walking difficult, but Laura quickly crossed the room and sank down on her knees beside the trunk. She inserted the bronzed key and turned it until she heard it click. Finally she was able to lift the heavy lid and see her father's treasures.

On the very top, carefully wrapped to avoid yellowing, was a beautiful wedding gown. It was made of yards of ivory satin and lace. The neckline was high and prim and the sleeves were long and straight. It looked as if it had been made for a small woman. With the dress were a pair of matching slippers and a long veil. Enclosed in a leather folder was a wedding picture. The woman was petite and pretty, auburn hair swept up in curls, green eyes sparkling. She had a small, upturned nose and a shy smile. She stood straight, chin up and shoulders back. She had an air of grace and charm about her. Laura stared at the picture, enchanted. This must be the mother she had never seen, the woman her father had never spoken of. This was the memory that made the pain flicker in his eyes and caused the deep sighs he tried to hide.

Continuing on, Laura came across two pairs of worn dance slippers, one pink and one black. Under them was a scrapbook. Rave reviews and pictures of the dancing couple from all over Europe were pasted in it. How beautiful they were together, regal, graceful, the heart of dancing. How often had they rubbed each other's swollen feet, sharing tired smiles? How many hundreds of theaters had these broken shoes been through?

Beneath the slippers there lay in a slim box yellowed with age, two pressed roses, one yellow and one red. Beside them was a card that read, "Good luck in your first performance. I love you, Cory. Peter." The first love letter her father had ever written to her mother. The first time her mother had ever danced in Europe. And two roses, yellow for hope and red for passion.

As Laura went through the trunk she began, slowly, to piece together the things her father had wanted her to know. He wanted her to know about the mother she never really had. He wanted to show her the love and joy that he and Cory had shared. He wanted her to see that his silence was made of sadness, not anger or bitterness. With a tiny bronzed key he had shared with her his deepest secret.

Under the box of roses was an old family bible, bound in dry, cracked leather. In the front was a list of names and dates. The last two entries were Laura's birth and her mother's death. The dates were the same. There was a letter tucked in the front from her grandmother. The letter urged her father to give up the child, to send her to relatives in the west. For the first time, Laura realized that her father had had to fight for his right to raise his child. She knew now what it had cost him.

Looking through the scrapbook again, she found a poem in a woman's handwriting. The note at the top said that she had copied it for Laura's father but didn't remember the author. Reading the poem, Laura felt a great hopefulness swell within her.

"We are but dancers on the head of a pin
Embraced and embracing, we carefully spin
Loving the moments we silently share
Imagining things that we surely not dare
Each other's champion, hero and heroine
Dance 'til we stumble, and then dance again."

They must have brought to their dancing all the love and happiness that filled their lives. Cory must have been sad at not being able to dance even though glad at anticipating the baby. Poor Cory. She died in childbirth. And neither

she nor Peter danced again.

Farther down in the trunk were quite a few articles of baby clothing. There was a yellow dress with ribbons and lace which had stain on the skirt. Her first birthday; she remembered him telling her that he had spilled coffee on her and ruined her dress. He had been afraid that her tiny leg would blister and had sat up with her all night holding ice on it. There was also a blanket made of soft, white yarn which Cory had crocheted during the long months of her pregnancy. Laura fondled the fluffy blanket tenderly. Cory must have really loved her unborn baby. She would have been a wonderful mother. There were a few bibs, a blue dress, and a pink pantsuit as well. Laura carefully refolded everything and delved farther into the trunk.

Near the bottom Laura found the item she had most hoped to find: a photo album. In it were dozens of pictures of the beautiful Cory with Father. Cory and Father on the beach, Cory and Father in Paris, Cory on a swing, Cory and Father in Madrid, Father with his car. Together they must have traveled extensively. The pictures were taken all over the world. In every picture the young couple radiated love and peacefulness. Cory's eyes and smile sparkled and Father's arm was always placed protectively around her slim waist. What a wonderful couple. So now she knew. Father had finally allowed her to bring Cory out of the attic and into her life. Cory. Mother. At last.

Her father had never talked about her mother. Often he would sit by the fire, a book forgotten in his lap, gazing at the flames. Laura had learned quickly not to ask about her mother. She didn't want to see the pain that such questions brought to his eyes. Now she understood that pain. In the fading light Laura sat, holding two worn dance slippers pressed to her cheek.

Susan McIntyre

"A Thought"

The slow honey, the flower's luxurious cream...
A baking hearth, the mind's unrivaled dream.

Joseph Tilghman

CONTRIBUTORS

Laura Brookhart

ellen b. la corte

Louie Ruzzi

John Herzich

Arleen Campo

Katharyn Machan Aal*

Susan Winchurch

Bob St. Ledger

J.B. Goodenough*

Karen Rasco*

Rob Hardesty

Frannie Lindsay*

Pat King*

Ron Hooper

Brian Lyles

Lindsey Michaels

Dawna Maydak Andrejczak*

Theodora Snyder*

Marcia McCombe

Susan McIntyre

Joseph Tilghman

* Outside Contributors

