



unicorn

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UNICORN is published quarterly by the students of Loyola College. Subscriptions are \$4 per year.

Artists are encouraged to send their poems, stories and artwork for consideration. All submissions must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and all are eligible for yearly prizes. Line drawings are especially sought, shorter is preferred, and no more than five poems per submission, please. We ask that you also include a brief biographical note.

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We're sure you've noticed that we're considerably late with this issue. Sorry. We hope we've made it up to you with what we think is a very solid issue. Thankx for bearing with us. Enjoy.

Note: Deadline for submissions for the Winter issue of Unicorn is 28 November 1978.

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cover art by John Padukiewicz

Gathering at the Tree

A tree exploded on our land.
It was a fountain overhead,
a silent rush of limbs and leaves.
Its spread was slow beside our festival;
for years we were uninterested.

But then my father's tent was hung
with knots and shadows curling down,
and quiet, heavy, giant leaves
in soft descent, a blanket on us all,
but loosely woven, loosely thrown.

Dan Johnson

Stray Things

A reliable wind turns
in our city, like a tribe
moving off again. It touches
some of the low square stones,
knows the concern
of men and women
learning care.
It carries song:

I was there when
you were born,
I remember the good times,
I am strong in you tonight.
The flowers in your hand
are mine. I own your
faces and your thoughts.
They are stray things.

Dan Johnson

Ten Years Ago

it wasn't Rumpelstiltskin
or even Rip Van Winkle's little men
when the rumbling started in the ground
and shook me to the marrow of my bones

I was 14 or 15
with clean brown hair and pink ribbons
walking home from high school
in Pleasantville, New York
(you know, the place
where Reader's Digest has its mailbox)
and suddenly a huge blackgreen tank appeared
maybe on maneuver
all the way from West Point
maybe lost
rolling down Bedford Avenue
wheellessly terrifying
and taking a right at the light

this was the 60's
you must realize
so I'd seen them on TV
in miniature over cornflakes and steak
but this was the first time
I'd seen a real one
close-up
and felt the monster power
and feared the smell of tons of metal

and I got to thinking
what would happen
if Pleasantville
were in Czechoslovakia or Viet Nam
instead of Westchester County
and I were carrying schoolbooks
in another language and said
the wrong thing or looked
the wrong way and all I loved
including myself
were crushed underneath that tank
and this were an everyday occurrence

that was the 60's, as I said,
another generation, people tell me;
but as I write this poem
on the official anniversary
of the end of the war in Viet Nam
and realize
it still hasn't fallen on a Monday
I'm glad about that tank
and the way it made me feel,
sick inside with a blackgreen sickness,
sick, sick to death

Katharyn Machan Aal

May 4

To my students I recall the killings at Kent.

Whispers search for meaning in the classroom:

One shy voice remembers a song by Neil Young,
"I read something, somewhere . . . ," another said.

Perhaps they do not matter much,
the dead

The living have endured

and what once was a nation's horror,
a nation's curiosity,

is now green grass
on a spring day.

I think: On the Kent campus
some students are beginning to gather
to remember—

Here in Maryland
the river is warming

And big blue are being caught
in the bay for lunch.

Michael S. Glaser

Cliffs

Joseph G. Krowska

The lone figure stood on the rock outcropping, and stared across the river at New York City. He moved his head slightly and he could see the cars moving on both levels of the George Washington Bridge. The last time he had stood on this spot years ago the lower level was still under construction. With his hands deep in his jean pockets, and his denim jacket collar turned up to block out the chill of the October air, he continued looking across the Hudson. This one spot in all the world had been an inspiration to him and, even now after all these years, it still managed to take his breath away.

Andre remembered so much as he took the path up to his childhood hideaway. The old trail was still there, though overgrown with weeds, and he doubted that many others knew of this spot. An occasional rusted beer can was strewn in the brush, thrown from the higher cliffs above by some youthful drinker, no doubt, but nothing had really changed. There were rusted beer cans back then, too. It seemed that time had stood still here, as if nature never intended it to be spoiled by more than an occasional beer can. Though New York's skyline showed some new buildings, everything else appeared as he had left it.

Andre reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a partially crushed pack of cigarettes along with a disposable lighter. Placing a cigarette in his mouth, he turned his back to the river and the cold wind, cupping his hands and lighting his cigarette. He placed the cigarette pack and lighter back in his pocket, and turned once more facing the river. As he inhaled, he watched a tug pushing a barge up the Hudson. It moved slowly, fighting the current of the river. He wondered why the tug's captain didn't tow the barge, but what difference did it really make? The tug moved along, but at the rate it was travelling, it would be at least an hour before it was out of view.

He looked down between the outcropping and the face of the granite palisades, and just below his field of vision stood the ledge. He straddled the outcropping and the face of the palisades and climbed down to it. The ledge was wide

enough to lie on, unobserved from above, or below, and many times he had hidden here from the Park Police when they chased him. He knew they were attempting to catch him and frighten him with a tale of another youth plunging to his death from the cliffs, but they never did catch him, and he wasn't afraid of falling.

There was a fissure in the rock that went back about twenty feet, sheltering him from any foul weather, or the police's attempt to trap him. Once they had actually stood on the outcropping and he had heard two of them cursing because they had failed to catch him. The thought of that day brought a smile to his face. He had laid in the little enclosure for over an hour making sure they had gone. Yes, Andre decided, those memories were not easily forgotten.

He sat down on the ledge, his back to the outcropping and stared up the Hudson, flicking the half smoked cigarette over the edge. The smoking cigarette would travel at least a hundred feet down before it struck a solid surface.

Andre sat there, watching, no longer chilled by the wind which couldn't reach him here. He placed his elbows on his knees, pulling his legs close to his chest. Cupping his face in his hands, as he had done so many years before, he looked within himself, and remembered.....

"Hey Andre, are you coming, or are you staying?" his older brother, Bob, shouted up the steps from the seat of his bicycle. He mumbled under his breath, wondering where the hell Andre was. He thought he was right behind him as they walked out of the apartment.

He turned his head to holler up the stairs again, but didn't, because Andre was there.

"Listen, are you coming?" he asked again.

"No, I told you before I don't like Jack. He pokes fun at me because I'm small," Andre answered, leaning over the railing on the stairs.

"The hell with him. He just does that because you're smarter than him. If you were bigger he wouldn't say anything to you. Com on, we'll have a good time, and Tony promised to bring a couple cans of beer."

"I don't like beer. It makes me burp, and I get dizzy in this heat."

"Okay, okay, you stay then. I'm not going to drag you over there just to hear about it later. Tell Mom I won't be

home for supper, but don't tell her where I've gone. Don't say anything about anything, just that I'll be home by eight o'clock."

"Alright, but don't get drunk. Then you'll be in trouble, and Mom will say it was my fault; that I knew where you were going," a slight pleading in his voice as he talked to his older brother.

"I promise," Bob said, and then wheeled his bike across the parking lot and up Route 9W on the shoulder, against the oncoming traffic. Andre watched him until he disappeared into the bike path that went through the woods. He turned and walked across the roof to the screen door. It was neat living above a diner, and good because Mom worked there as a waitress. Now that school was out he could eat lunch and supper downstairs, and make some money when they were really busy with busses coming back from Bear Mountain, and West Point.

Reid's Diner stood in the southbound lane of Route 9W, and did a thriving business from truckers, and tours to the scenic spots along the Hudson. There was plenty of money to be made in the summer, and Andre couldn't get over the fact that last weekend he had made thirty-five dollars in tips. The Reids were nice people, and now that they had moved, his mother and the short-order cook, Evans, ran the diner. The Reid's cousin, or some relation like that, came once a month to do the books, and check the stock, and always left with a big smile on his face. That usually meant that business was good. He was a fat man, and he always gave Andre a silver dollar. He seemed to like to see Andre smile when he handed it to him, and later as he drove away in his big Cadillac, he waved and laughed.

Andre went through the kitchen and down the hall to the bedroom he shared with his brother. He picked up a book, and sat on his bed fanning the pages, looking for something he hadn't seen before. He put the book back on the shelf above his headboard, and decided to go downstairs and see if Evans needed any help.

He ran out letting the screen door slam, jumping two steps at a time down the stairs, and then around and in the side door of the diner. The long counter stretched out in front of him, but there were only a few truckers there, and one of the booths was occupied by four girls in their late teens. He saw his mother serving them malts, and walked down the counter and into the kitchen.

Evans was busy on the grill, but he looked up with a smile and said, "Where you been, Andre, out with your girlfriend?"

"No. I don't have a girlfriend. All they want to do, anyway, is sit around, hold hands, and kiss. Later I'll have girlfriends."

Evans laughed, running his fingers through Andre's blonde hair, messing it playfully. "Soon you'll be out with the girls, and then you won't have no time to help me anymore."

"Don't say that. I like helping out down here, and Mom says I shouldn't be running the cliffs. Bobby shouldn't have told Mom I go there. Now she keeps an eye on me, and she always questions me when I come home."

"That's because your Mother loves you," the black short-order cook replied, lifting platters with hamburgers and french fries up to the serving window and ringing the bell. Andre's mother picked up the order, and Evans spoke to her, "Millie, get me a nice cold coke on your way back, and you better get one for this boy of yours. I'm going to keep him busy peeling potatoes for me this afternoon."

Andre sat on an empty milk crate next to the icebox, and listened as Evans spoke to him, waiting for the sodas to come. "Now you listen. Your Mom isn't feeling good this afternoon, so that young girl, Clair, is coming in to give a hand, and I want you to help me back here for awhile. We've got to make another fifty pounds of french fries in case we get hit with them busses from up New York State on their way back to the city."

"What's wrong with Mom?"

"Well, she's had a headache since this morning, and aspirin doesn't seem to help. She works too hard and should take a day off, but you know how she is."

Just as he finished, Millie walked through the door with the sodas. "What you been up to?" she said, handing Andre a coke and smiling at Evans as she gave him his.

"Nothin' Mom, there's nothing to do, so I figured I'd come down and help out. Bobby told me to tell you he'd be home at eight tonight, but I don't know where he went. He took his bike, though."

"I hope he didn't go by Tony's house. Everytime he goes over there he drinks. Well, I can't worry about that now. You give Evans a hand back here, and later on we'll sit down and have a nice dinner that Evans is making especially for you. It's sort of an advance birthday present."

"Customer just came in," Evans said, looking through the serving window.

"I'll get it. I hope Clair gets here before any of those bus loads I saw heading for the mountains this morning start coming in. They're due in another couple of hours, or so," Millie said, and walked through the kitchen door to take the customer's order.

And so the afternoon passed, with Andre peeling potatoes, slicing them in the french fry slicer and blanching them so that they wouldn't blacken in the refrigerator. He sat on a milk crate, watching Evans cook, and listening to all the tales of people Evans had met over the years in the diner business. He loved hearing these stories, and even more, sharing this hot July afternoon with his mother and Evans. Millie kept running in and out, and Andre could see her headache was getting worse, though she never complained. It was there, he could see it in her eyes, and he hoped she wouldn't work too hard.

Two bus loads of people came in around four o'clock, and the diner was filled for the next hour with people eating, talking, and laughing. Andre took a bus box, and a clean sponge and went out front for awhile, cleaning off tables, and dumping the paper plates and cups in the garbage. He then sponged the table carefully, and placed any tip that was left on the tables into Millie's, or Clair's, tip box behind the counter. Millie smiled at him from across the diner and he felt good inside. He didn't mind working, he actually liked it on days like this. In two more days he would be thirteen, and he'd have a party, and all the people from the diner would come. He knew that Evans was getting him a transistor radio, and he would take it to the cliffs with him and listen to the music. He didn't get lonely up there, but he wanted a transistor radio in case he ever did. Next summer, Evans had promised to teach him how to cook on the grill, and everything that was connected with the diner. He wanted that more than anything, just to spend the rest of his days here in Reid's with Mom, Evans, and the regular customers that stopped in. This was his world, one of constant changing, and people, but he didn't spend every minute here. The cliffs called him, and he went, running along them, hiding, and sitting and thinking in his secret spot. He felt better when he came home afterwards, as if he had spent the afternoon with an old friend, leaving with a good feeling inside.

The cliffs would call him and he'd go, slipping away, hoping no one noticed his absence. He went there in the winter too, but hadn't been to his spot now since Bobby told Mom on him. Bobby had gotten even because he thought Andre told

Mom he was drinking beer. He didn't need to say anything, Bobby came home drunk and later was sick, real sick. Mom sat up with him, even though she had to work the next day, and she waited till he was feeling better before she said anything. She didn't holler, or punish him, then Bobby told her about Andre and the cliffs. She looked at Andre with worry in her eyes, and made him promise he'd never go there again. He had kept that promise, but it was hard. They kept calling to him.

The pace slowed after the busses left, and he went back into the kitchen to help Evans, while Clair helped his mother. Evans told him he better grab the broom and sweep out front, and Andre pulled the big push broom down from its wall rack. He swept behind the counter first, and Clair came up behind him.

"Here, Andre," she said, holding her hand out to him with folded bills in it, "take this. If it wasn't for you cleaning those tables I wouldn't have made it this afternoon."

"Thanks."

"Put it away, and get something for your birthday. I'll be there at the party," Clair said in a low voice, so that Millie couldn't hear. It was supposed to be a surprise, but Evans had told him earlier that week. He smiled, and put the money in his pocket, returning to his sweeping as Clair busied herself making some iced tea.

"Andre," Millie called.

He turned and saw her with Nancy. Why does Nancy come all the way down here to the diner, he asked himself? Nancy always seemed to know when to catch him there. She was alright, he knew her from school, and the only thing that really bothered him about her was the way she seemed to always follow him around. She'd have made a good detective, she always seemed to know where he had gone, and who he had been with. His mother liked her, so Andre treated her nicely, though he didn't want to.

"Hi, how you doing?" he asked as he walked out from behind the counter, broom in hand. He walked to the booth where Nancy was sitting, talking to his mother.

"Andre, you take a break and I'll make some ice cream sodas for you and Nancy. Go ahead, sit down," and she walked off to get the sodas.

He sat across from Nancy, and he looked at her and saw that far-off expression in her eyes. Cow eyes, that's what he called her. She always looked at him with those cow eyes, but

he'd be nice to her, because they were in the diner.

"So your birthday's in a couple of days, anything special you want?"

"No," he answered, as Nancy leaned forward across the table towards him. She was a year older than Andre, but was in his class because she had been left back a year. She had come from Pennsylvania, and when she started school, she took the empty desk next to him in his classroom. She was smart, though, and he didn't see why she had been left back. She always had the right answer to all the questions the teacher asked.

"How come you always come down here to get a soda, isn't the Blue Roof closer to your house?"

"Yeah, but they don't make sodas like here, and it was a nice day for a bike ride. I just figured I'd see what you were doing, and how your Mom was. It isn't that far when you ride a bike, and in another couple of years my father's going to get me a car. Then no place will be too far away," Nancy said. The look in her eyes was one that seemed to say he'd never get away from her once she got her car. His stomach turned at this thought, and he didn't say anything as his mother brought them their sodas. He stuck his straw in and tried to punch a hole through the thick ice cream without bending the straw, but he failed to do so. Nancy just sat there, sipping her soda and not taking her eyes off him for a minute.

Millie sat down, and went into some small talk with Nancy about her mother and father. Andre finished his soda and went back to his sweeping, but felt Nancy's eyes on his back. He avoided looking in her direction, and was glad when he was able to get out of there. He escaped into the back, and stood there greatly relieved that he was able to hide from her in the kitchen. She'd never follow him into the kitchen.

The diner closed at nine, and after all the cleaning up was done Andre sat at the counter watching Clair and his mother cash in their tips. Bobby had called earlier and asked Mom to stay at a friends overnight, and she had let him, but Andre heard her telling him, no drinking.

Evans had made him his favorite for supper, and they all sat around eating chicken and getting their fingers greasy. After that, they laughed, and Mom kept talking about Andre's girlfriend, Nancy, though he told her Nancy wasn't his girlfriend. She had said Nancy thought otherwise, but then the conversation swung around to the day's business, and Andre

felt better.

Millie counted out her tips, stacking them in dollar piles, every so often placing her hand on her forehead and rubbing. She still had her headache but she acted as if nothing was bothering her. Evans had put out all the diner lights except those by the register, and stood there in a brown suit smoking a cigar, talking to Millie and Clair. Andre placed his head on his arms and rested on the counter, thinking about his birthday.

There was no sound by the register, then a grunt, and Andre turned to see Millie lying in Evans' arms. Andre ran around the counter, but Evans motioned him to get a wet towel. Evans told Clair to call the police, and Andre knew something terrible was happening; he wanted to cry, but couldn't, not here.

Evans held Millie's head in his lap and, in a few minutes, there were flashing lights in the parking lot. Police, and some men in white from the ambulance squad came in with a stretcher and they lifted Millie onto it. They covered her with a blanket, and the police questioned Evans and Clair as they followed the stretcher out to the waiting ambulance. Andre wanted to go with his mother, but Evans said no, and told him to help Clair close up, he'd call from the hospital. Andre watched as the ambulance and the police cars traveled down the road, sirens screaming, lights flashing, leaving a cloud of dirt in the parking lot. Clair had shut the lights, and was locking the door as Andre turned to the diner.

"Come on, Andre, we'll wait upstairs in the apartment for Evans to call. I'm sure there's nothing wrong, your Mom needs a long rest, that's all. She puts too much time in the diner working," Clair spoke, trying to put a reassuring tone in her voice.

There was nothing to think about as he followed her up the steps, only Millie, nothing mattered, only Millie. He walked through the apartment and sat in the darkened living room. Clair turned on the T.V. for him, but he didn't watch it. He heard the sound of traffic coming and going on the highway, and he waited for them to bring his mother home.

He must have fallen asleep because, when he looked up, Evans was standing there above him and he was lying on the couch. He looked behind Evans for his mother, but Clair was there.

"Where's Mom, Evans? Is she alright?"

Evans stood there, and in the dark Andre could see the glint of dampness on his cheeks. Evans spoke slowly, the laughing voice that seemed a part of him was gone. His voice was very low, but Andre heard each word clearly.

"Your Mom is dead. They said it had something to do with that headache she had, and" his voice trailed off in Andre's mind.

Andre walked out into the night, Evans followed, but Andre ran as he came out onto the roof. He ran down the steps, across the parking lot and highway, and into the woods. He ran in the darkness, the brush slapping his face, scratching him, but he didn't care. He crossed the Palisades Thruway to the woods and cliffs on the other side, and only when he ran out of breath did he stop. Tears came easily then, and he couldn't believe the words that Evans had spoken. Mom was alive, she couldn't be dead. It was a lie, a lie, a lie.

He knelt down by a tree, sobbing, and the breeze from the river reached him and swept across his cheeks. He heard it echo in his ears and it called to him. He walked now, knowing where he would go. It was the only spot in the world where he could be alone, and no one else knew about. The wind rose and blew through his hair, speaking gently to him, and the tears still flowed. He didn't follow any path, but walked through the shrubbery, around trees, and over rocks. He crossed the road that went down to the boat basin, then up to the high cliffs, the moon lighting his way. He climbed down, and stood on the outcropping, and climbed down further to his ledge.

It didn't make any sense, why God, did she have to die, why did You take her from me? He sat down and leaned against the outcropping, questioning, and finding no answers. Sobs racked his body, and all the questions swam in his head, making no sense. He wanted to die too, to die and not feel this hurt anymore, to die right here where no one would find him. He looked over the ledge and down into the blackness. Standing up, he moved towards the edge to take that step into eternity

Andre raised his head, looking up the Hudson, and lit another cigarette, as the last rays of light began to fade. Millie was dead, long gone. Things had changed after her death, everyone had seemed to want to forget, and Andre never could. Life was different, he had gone to live with his grand-

mother, and the diner slipped away. Over the years, everyone who had any memory of that period, disappeared. The last one he had any communication with was Evans, and by then Andre was in prison. As each person left, their destination lost in the years that passed, life was harder for Andre to live. And then there was no one left, and life made no sense, it became a grotesque joke played on him.

He believed in God, but what troubled him was why God let people be born to suffer? If pain was here on this visible plane, why didn't He just keep us on His level in a state of Non-consciousness? Sometimes that state of "non-existence" appeared and tempted Andre. The lure was never stronger than a thought, but that small seed made things difficult. The question weighed on him. Today he had made a commitment, and stepped over that ledge in his mind, into the darkness, the nothingness. It was the memory that made it clear now, and the ghost was gone.

He climbed up from the ledge, the outcropping of rock, and stood on the higher cliffs. He turned and looked back across the Hudson, the chilly wind of the October night blowing across his face and through his hair, watching the lights of the skyline come to life. It was still a beautiful view, not so mystical anymore, but still beautiful. Andre turned and walked away, leaving the ghost here, where it had belonged all these years.

Word Intimate

Folding and stapling
 Into the night
 We word more to one another
 Than we put into our two books
 Folding and stapling
 Folding and stapling
 Into the word-leaving night

Emilie Glen

The Devil's Fiddle

In the long grass we crouched,
poised as bullfrogs that boasted of night.
The moon lit the fishing strand
we had tied to a drain
on the cottage's crest.
With bow resin we rubbed our line,
letting our neighbors' mythmares wake them
to the sad whorled spacelessness
of the stilled lake shore.
One oar spooned the water; barn bats screeched
their crazed lexicons; but nothing more.
Pouch-eyed our neighbors
ambled dumbly through parlor and porch,
faces unfamiliar with this hour.
Our bravura done, we sliced our string
with a fishing knife
initialed in the grain. Half open
its blade cast a silver accusatory finger
from our neighbor's palm
in the grasshopper-thick morning.

William Dubie

The Rose Garden No Longer Blooms

Every morning
Forever after,
The Duke and Duchess woke up
To delicate croissants
On Sevres plate.
The man became a habit,
Ashes dropped
In the Victorian grate.
The clock ticked
Slowly.
She was cool and elegant,
Every inch the lady
Who had cut her ties
With vibrant things.
Of Edward now
She says
Yes, I'll join him soon
In the rose garden.

Laurel Speer

Strange Fruit

Strange cargo is carried
over tracks through Alabama.
Two white girls in a boxcar
stretch out on straw and spread their legs
for nine Negro boys, down south,
and those girls still ride their train.
Strange fruit hangs from magnolia trees
in Alabama, and nine black bodies
rot, down south, in the rain.

Robert F. Whisler

Jerome

The colors are brown. Shacks tilt with hills.
Others relax, no longer fighting, gone soft.
The hotel stands highest, but all are empty.
Visited by others like us, all things are gone
From within to be sold or kept on mantels.
The store offers only buttons and rusted iron.

The loom at the back of the store, beside
the blue wood stove has the only colors.
The shuttle's click as the woman pulls it
Echoes the old clash of pick and bar underground.
Dark tunnels have woven a fine knot of air.
From the shack we thought empty, an old man
Leads an army of cats, talking to them
With the quiet murmur silence gives us.

The weekend traffic passes on through.
Only a young couple with earphones and broom
Metal detector mine this town now, spoon in hand.
From Jerome, we look down to Cottonwood
Where we thought of staying and building.
Leave those thoughts and listen to the wind
Embrace this wooden town. Imagine only the
woven patterns of tunnels dark beneath us.
This is the town that remains for us.

Paul Morris

I drop grey pearls in your eyes,
and drip red blood on your lips;
I interlace flax 'tween endless strands,
and carve ivory fingers' tips.

I pour sweet cream on your shoulders,
and rouge petal pink rounded cheeks;
I dabble honey 'hind fleshy lobes,
and live for the day you may speak.

Catherine Connor

The Children of Sodom

The women of Sodom,
twenty years after,
went mushrooming
with the women of Gomorrah.

Many good friendships were formed.

They packed picnic lunches
during fine weather.
The young women
met on the plain near Gomorrah
and the housewives swarmed
bringing blankets and wine
and many children.

While the women gathered mushrooms
their brown children ran
in wider
and wider
shouting circles

looking for Lot's wife
who was salt forever,
not much to look at,
and so small!

They carved initials and ran back,
each child hiding its knife,
with pockets full of salt.

The children went home
and in bed
ate salt
wondering what God was.

Lyn Stefenhagens

the one time we agreed

We knew it was the time we loved
outside.
Mountain birds hung in thin sharp air.
Sun pressed me between your knees . . .
Quilt-softened needles imprinted my skin.
We knew it was that time
of the sunset and the lovesweat
and the long sweet grass.

Afterwards, when tests proved positive,
We knew what had to happen
and convinced each other often
of the logic of our choice.

In predawn rain
I bring you to hospital smells
and go away.
In the maternity ward window
a baby, blue
but still a baby.

I try for breakfast.
Coffee goes down
but the omelette is an embryo
and toast shows teeth.

I shower at your apartment.
Water shaped and warmed by my body
slithers down the drain.
I lie in bed and watch shingles absorb rain
darken to red
until it's time.

I go to a florist. I bring cold daisies
and say nothing.
You are given a dittoed sheet
that instructs you on how you will bleed.

Eliot Fried

leafed bean poles
stripe my pillow
as
an oriental moon
beams silver comfort
through
a Japanese screen
of
ink-black trees.
browned skin milked,
eyes pearl-glazed:
my lover's hand
on
my illumed breast
as
he sleeps:
ignorant of all beauty
save mine.

Catherine Connor

I Am No Swimmer

2.

Rescued again,
the thumping on the chest,
the pinched nostrils
and warm breath blown
into the reluctant lungs,
we recover,
give thanks and leave these beaches
embarrassed.

The crowds wander away,
beginning to look at bodies
and lusting faintly in the heat.

I have walked into the city
still without color,
aching to stop people on the street;
I could tell them my life story,
taking only a minute of their time—

I pass them all,
leaving them to windows.

Gary Fincke

I Am No Swimmer

21.

Easily,
I dug
and my toes made designs
I believed were constant
in the sand damp, obscure
beneath a dock—

the loud feet would not find it,
the spray of noise splashing
over the obvious shore—

the taunts of deep water
were absent,
 living in some other town—
I could wade into neck high water
without some strange buddy;
I could grasp the side
of my dock and work
my way toward
twenty feet
without whistles.

The number rang loud,
shaking my grip somehow,
too slick for my fear.
I sank and rose,
sank and rose,
seeing the ties,
reaching with the hand heavy
with dying, yet quiet.
I sank and rose again
and touched the wall
that had lifted me,
that lifted again
like the planting
of a clever sting—

I am the dupe for every ploy,
the hand eager for the purse,
the withdrawer of full accounts
before sense settles in—

Beneath the dock my prints were secure;
I left the lake knowing they would stay
forever.

Gary Fincke

CONTRIBUTORS

KATHARYN MACHAN AAL *hails from Ithaca, NY, and has authored The Book of the Raccoon.*

CATHERINE CONNOR *first appeared in Unicorn this past summer. She joins our editorial staff with this issue. Welcome!*

WILLIAM DUBIE *recently graduated from Salem (Mass.) State College, where he edited Gone Soft (now Soundings). We like his poems enough to promise you another in our Winter issue.*

GARY FINCKE *has had other excerpts from the "I Am No Swimmer" series published previously in Unicorn. Another poem sequence of his came out this summer as a book from Centergram Press.*

ELIOT FRIED *is an old friend of ours from CSU at Long Beach. He's consistently interesting.*

MICHAEL S. GLASER *writes us from St. Mary's College of Maryland, but hasn't told us what else he does there.*

EMILIE GLEN *loved our last issue, loves our name. While we're not quite ready for any permanent commitments, we do enjoy hearing from her.*

DAN JOHNSON *edits Window. His poem "The Physicists" appeared in our last issue. Obviously, we think he's good.*

JOSEPH G. KROWSKA *writes from the Yardville (NJ) Correction Center. Cliffs, in our humble opinion, is one of the finer prose works to appear in Unicorn.*

PAUL MORRIS *has sent us several very enjoyable poems. We hope to give you more of his work in the future.*

JOHN PADUKIEWICZ *graduated from Loyola last year, has maintained close ties with our staff.*

LAUREL SPEER *tells us she's had more than 150 poems published, as well as a chapbook.*

LYN STEFENHAGENS *has become a Unicorn regular. And she's nice to us, besides.*

ROBERT F. WHISLER *has sent us some strange fruit before, but this is undoubtedly the tastiest.*

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