



unicorn

The winners of cash awards for their contributions to the Christmas issue of Unicorn are:

For poetry: Christopher Buckley, for
"Day After Christmas."

For art: Steve Doyle, for his
page four artwork.

The editors wish to express their thanks to Denis Boyles, Director of the Maryland Writers Council, and Elayne Duke, art instructor at Villa Julie College, who judged the competition.

Unicorn is published quarterly by the students of Loyola College. Subscriptions are \$3 for one year; students and alumni, \$2 for one year.

All submissions must be accompanied by an SASE, and all are eligible for cash prizes. Shorter fiction is preferred, and no more than five poems per submission.

Send all correspondence to:

The Editors
Unicorn
Loyola College
Baltimore, Md. 21210

Copyright 1975 by the editors. All rights revert to the author.

Member of COSMEP.

CONTENTS

SURFEIT	
<i>poetry by D. R. Belz</i>	3
VENUS DE MILO	
<i>poetry by Diana Vance</i>	4
<i>artwork by Kathy Higgins</i>	5
BUFFALO RIVER 1960	
<i>poetry by Ritch Kepler</i>	6
A VISION	
<i>poetry by Skip Eisminger</i>	7
THE SCENE: A DOCTOR'S OFFICE	
<i>poetry by Mary Claire Helldorfer</i>	8
MY UNCLE'S CELLAR	
<i>poetry by Tom Gamache</i>	10
<i>artwork by Ron Steele</i>	11
FOLDING FATHER	
<i>poetry by James Reiss</i>	12
THE ORANGE AND THE RADISH	
<i>fiction by Jim Maginnis</i>	13
EXECUTIVE'S DREAM	
<i>poetry by Nancy Barry</i>	16
<i>artwork by Kathy Higgins</i>	18
MR. LEWIN	
<i>poetry by Vince Ercolano</i>	19
IMPORTANCE AND MY FATHER	
<i>poetry by D. B.</i>	20
THE DUMPTRUCK KID	
<i>fiction by William Meissner</i>	21
<i>artwork by James Sebrowski</i>	24
JESUS	
<i>poetry by Daniel Wells</i>	25
SERGEANT GRAVES	
<i>poetry by Ritch Kepler</i>	26
THE LAST STOOGES	
<i>poetry by Mike Reis</i>	27
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	28
<i>cover artwork by Herbie</i>	

unicorn

A Quarterly of Literature and Art

Spring, 1976 Loyola College of Baltimore Vol. 5, No. 3

Editor-in-chief: Mary Claire Helldorfer

Art editor: Jim Maginnis

Associate editors: D. R. Belz
 Tom D'Alesandro
 Ed Gainor
 Jack Holmes
 Mike Reis

Staff: Tim Burall
 Elizabeth Cashour
 Tom Gamache
 Mary Geis
 Pat Spencer

Circulation manager: Matt Lonam

Advisor: Dr. Phillip McCaffrey

Surfeit

The poet is as the
pilgrim who asks
for water, is
given wine--
the carpenter
who asks for
nails and
given
screws.

---David Belz

Venus De Milo

On the way to my lover's house
I walked through the market of Melos.
The merchants whispered
beautiful.
My lover laughed.
He called me Venus.
He carved me in stone.

Melos, I spend the nights alone.
Far from this museum
in a bed of earth
my marble arms
embrace my lover's bones.

---Diana Vance



Buffalo River 1960

I remember the Italian girl and I
the first hot summer night
we climbed on all fours over coal piles
as if scaling the dark side of the moon
to shed our clothes on the run
and jump into Buffalo River.

Steamers and ore boats
followed the red haze
of Republic Steel
down into Lake Erie.
Their men in plaid shirts
flicked butts into the water, they floated.
I dove under and found her round hips
in blindness, too shy to hold tight.

I can still hear the sound
of the stamping plant
and the water slapping at the slippery reef
as I pushed her up
there was only the glare
of the night watchman's flashlight
on her spine
as she leaned like a half moon
over the damp pile of clothes.

---Ritch Kepler

A Vision

For all the cosmos-ordering science
of the mortuary's cosmetologist,
and the dress you bought to woo Lawrence Welk,
you look appalled, Grandmother,
in every sense of that word.
You remain for me a fragment,
empty as the space between the brackets
of your hymn lyrics left in preparation,
which someone may someday fill.

No one looks up or around,
and I study the ease
with which the legs of my folding chair
sink into the sod.

Suddenly you slide across the seat beside me,
the way you did when I grew restless in church,
offering a stick of gum.

Before I lose that sweetness,
the sermon concludes
and I move quickly
to my corner of the coffin
choosing to ignore
how much its handles resemble
the knocker on her front door.

---Skip Eisinger

The scene: a doctor's office

Doctor: Think back for a minute, Mrs. Kay, to when you were a child. What can you tell me about living in your mother's house?

Mrs. K: In my mother's attic
Baby-doll sleeps,
her eyes seamed shut to her puffy cheeks,
her plastic hair, though paintless,
still waves in finger curls, like my own curls
that my mother wetted and pinched into shape.
Baby-doll sleeps
in a white-wood bed that stands on slender feet,
her cheek lies -- lies on a satin pillow --
How smooth the satin pillow!
the wallpaper, too, feels smooth, is flowered,
flowered wallpaper, flowered curtains,
flowered spread, flowered wallpaper --

Doctor: Your mother's attic was wallpapered?

Mrs. K: I tell you everything was flowered!

(Silence)

Doctor: Go on, Mrs. Kay.

Mrs. K: Baby sleeps,
her eyes closed
her face sunk into the slippery pillow.
She turns then, her doll face
whitens with moon
as into her room her mother comes,
soft! to touch the moon-white neck,
and feel where the chin dimples,
the little round nostrils -- "How faint!"
she thinks, "How faint the breath --
so big the life it carries."

Doctor: The mother is thinking this while looking
on the child?

Mrs. K: The mother is bending over the child.

Doctor: The mother is thinking this while bending
over the child.

Mrs. K: The child stirs;
she is dreaming.
She dreams of a string around her neck,
a string that can be pulled to make her cry
"Baby-Magic -- she drinks! she wets! she cries!
Pull Baby's string to make her cry!"
Her string is pulled
tight, tighter
she shakes! she shakes! Awake!
her mother's hands around her,
she is shaken awake,
and feels her mother's hands around
her neck!
SHE SCREAMS --

mama.

---Mary Claire Helldorfer

My Uncle's Cellar

The smell of wood chippings in my uncle's cellar
Would call me late nights to watch him work, while
My footed pajamas stood curious in sawdust.

I would help him sometimes holding the wood
While he cut and measured pleasing my timid
curious face.
(The smell of wood chippings in my uncle's cellar).

Half of my play was my uncle's work,
I'd follow him around knowing that he would have
something for me to do.
My footed pajamas stood curious in sawdust.

Something to do that's all a kid needs, he'd say
While I played with the extra wood scraps enjoying
The smell of the wood chippings in my uncle's cellar.

It was an early December evening,
I was away at school when he died in my sister's voice
As I remembered...

The smell of wood chippings in my uncle's cellar,
My footed pajamas curious in sawdust.

---T. Gamache



Folding Father

The doorman had taken his coffee
break, and I was alone
with my groceries in the lobby.

At first I thought, "It's just
the radiator's hammering,"
then "It's a rat stuck
in a mailbox,
making a racket."

But when I glimpsed
your small white hand
poke from the slot in my mailbox
and motion me closer,
I realized my error.

I set down my groceries
and approached, trying to think
of Mother's words BE BRAVE.

But the mailbox looked ready
to burst, and the walls
were groaning
as if in an earthquake.

I knelt by the box
and peered in.

---James Reiss

The Orange and the Radish

---Jim Maginnis

The orange stood very still, facing a wild radish which would not let him pass into the safety of nearby Nextgrove. The orange knew that he must reach the shade of the trees for protection from the hot midday sun. Noon would soon come and his decision had to be made now, or it would be too late.

The orange remembered, it seemed so long ago now, a few hours earlier as he was calmly making his way to visit some friends and relatives in Nextgrove. He had left his home in Lastgrove starting his journey at ten o'clock, early enough to beat the mid-day heat, fatal to those oranges which had just reached full maturity. He was enjoying his roll, admiring the approaching trees, the cool, crisp air and the sound of water flowing beside him in the irrigation ditch. All seemed well, at peace almost. Suddenly, out from the bushes bounced a radish, shouting and raving in a most unusual manner.

"Stop and desist, Orange, and prepare to meet your Fate!"

This confused the orange, for he thought everyone knew that a ripe, mature orange is always prepared to meet his Fate.

"What do you want of me, Radish? I worry not over Fate, as it always goes as it must. Speak now, I wait."

"Orange, I am to kill you."

The orange knew this was not the true reason, as due to the orange's superior size, no mere radish could harm him.

"That cannot be so, Radish. Tell me your intentions quickly now, for the sun rises ever into the sky and already I begin to grow weak."

"Orange, my wife of many months was just taken from me in a most vile way. She was ripped out from the garden where we lay by a human. I followed as best I could, rolling fast over the countryside. Finally this human took her into a house, where he, I shudder still, not just killed her,

but mutilated her body in a most foul manner. He cut her into tiny spirals and tossed her into a bowl containing, of all horrid things, celery! Imagine it! My wife mixed in with celery. Is nothing sacred? Well, now with her gone, I see no reason to go on living. So, here I am, waiting for you to kill me, Orange."

The radish's story deeply moved the orange, but still he answered, "I'll not kill you, Radish. A ripe and mature orange does not kill."

"Then you'll die, Orange."

"You cannot harm me."

"Perhaps, but the sun will wilt you and you'll die. Kill me, Orange, and then you may pass into the cool shade, and live."

Now, the orange did not know what to do. He knew that the radish was right, he could not last much longer in the rays of the sun, but he also knew that to kill was wrong. He had never been in such a situation before. He thought hard, trying to find some possible solution.

First, the idea of returning to Lastgrove came, but looking back he saw he would never make it. By the shadows of the trees just beyond him in Nextgrove, he figured it was now eleven-thirty, and it had taken him an hour and a half to get to where he now was. He could never make it back to Lastgrove before one o'clock. By then he would certainly be dead.

Next he pondered dropping into the irrigation ditch alongside him. However, when looking down into it, he saw the drop to be too steep. The sides of the ditch would batter him into pulp long before he reached the cooling water.

He remembered this all and knew, sadly, that there was no choice but to kill the radish. It seemed a dream to him, unreal, yet there he was, blocked in his path by a small radish. He had to decide now what to do, for the sun was almost at its peak. The orange looked at the radish, who was jumping up and down quite spastically now, and thought that if he must choose which one of them deserved more to live, there was only one answer possible. Besides, the radish already said he wanted to die. But just then he saw something familiar on the radish. It was a scar just under his stem. A long time ago, as he was being nurtured, he had heard of some strange cross-breeding of oranges and radishes being done by the humans. It was done, he remembered vaguely, to produce a larger radish. However, all that had resulted from it were a few seeded radishes which grew on trees. Yet, he remembered one radish, with a scar, which had been a brother to his own father. Now he knew he could

not kill this radish, for a ripe and mature orange never, never kills his uncle.

What to do to save himself ran again and again through his mind. There must be some answer, he thought. Reasoning with the radish was not possible in the radish's state, as it was now fiercely trying to break off its stem by doing tumblersalts. The orange knew his only chance now seemed to be to go over all he had learned in maturing and see if there was some solution. At long last he thought of something. He had to flash back to the time when his old, learned teacher taught him a lesson, which at the time seemed so very strange.

"Tell me, young orange, which rolls faster, a quarter or a dime?"

"Master, I don't even know what a quarter is."

"Never you mind, young orange, just remember a quarter does, for it, of the two, is the larger. This will save you one day."

At the time, the orange had thought his old, wise teacher to be totally bombed, or merely bananas, but now after so many years, he understood. His surface area was greater than that of the radish's. He should then be able to simply out roll the radish toward the ditch and thus get around him. Then the radish would be someone else's problem. If he failed to make the turn, he would fall into the ditch and be killed, but action is better than just waiting for the sun to finish him.

"Radish, this is my reply to you!"

And with that, he suddenly spun and began to roll toward the irrigation ditch. The ditch seemed so far away to him; he felt he would never get there. The ground under him, he compressed. He was almost dizzy from the sudden jerk and his weakened state caused by the heat of the sun. The radish, surprised totally, watched the even movement of the orange before starting after him. The orange, almost at the very edge of the ditch now, quickly veered to the side and was past the radish. The radish, though, not as swift as the orange, could not make the sharp turn. He slid and lost all control and fell into the vast ditch, plunging to his death.

The orange was sad to see the radish die, but knew that perhaps this was best. The radish would have gone after the next traveller, and he might not be as lucky, or as fast as the orange. So, on he starred, back on his way, rolling up the verdant hill to shady Nextgrove to see what adventures awaited him there.

Executive's Dream

At Blue Cross/Blue Shield,
Everett McDonald informs me,
the food, clothing and shelter
that lies in infinite folds
of IBM magnetic tape will
never be destroyed.

"Three boxes," he winks,
balancing martinis beneath
his softened fingertips,
"Three metal boxes buried
deep beneath this world --
in case of atomic explosion
the survivors will have the corporate records
necessary to carry on."

My tongue ripples through
the dry vermouth as I
drop an olive just to
watch it surface in the
dull shadow of the
cocktail hour, wondering
of all the lives spliced
and reeled upon that
shredded tape:
the medicines harbored
to thin the blood of
old men's arteries;
the bones that snapped
and came together beneath
the pasty doctor's palms;
the quiet abortions;
the cries of all the
stillborns belonging
to a Family Group
Policy Program.

Old Everett cracking up
the ice trays pokes me
back to see him standing
with his corporate foot
half-weighted in the grave
like some air-hole
caught in ice, as he toasts
his thoughts high with
a solemn leer; "You know
it's really vital
to keep the debts aligned
after the threats subside."

---Nancy K. Barry



Mr. Lewin, from Bills of Lading,
after thirty years
still dreams at home each morning
over a cufflink,
the post stuck, unsuccessfully,
between the folds at the end of his sleeve.

Each afternoon,
he takes a grape soda and chocolates
out of his little refrigerator
behind the desks in his department.
Against the fluorescent light inside the refrigerator
the silhouette of his hand-
grown monkey-shaped after thirty years-
pleases him.
It's a blue-black shadow,
the color seems to hum.

At five,
with his hungry reverence
he says to his new, unhappy clerk,
"I've been with the company thirty years-
and my advice? Learn everything you can."

---Vince Ercolano

Importance and My Father

My father my father
My father my father
Who while i made him the
Best damned sandwich
i knew how
Slept
On my couch
Who will never know
Ever how hard it is to
Make one good
That turns out right
Only ate it in
Silence.

---D. B.

The Dumptruck Kid

---William Meissner

And when I woke up I am still five years old and it is monday morning and I am thinking of the dust from the dump-truck and then I see race cars shaped like shadows on the wall of my bedroom, right there by the corner on the yellow paint. These are the things I am thinking about that morning when I woke up, and then my good feeling comes to me, it comes from somewhere outside the house, kind of like a corner of the sun each morning coming through the jaggy leaves and through the rusty window screen; it comes into my room into my bed and under my covers and sort of swallows me with the best feeling from my toes on up, and it feels warmer and softer than anything; warmer than standing in the smoke of bonfire in the fall, softer than poking your toes through those big spiderwebs in the woods, softer even than running in the fields across the street barefoot and then throwing off your t-shirt and pants and rolling bare in the grass that wraps around you like fresh cotton candy.

And I remember the bread with holes in the top: it looked like the noon or a planet but it's warmer than the sun in your mouth and it tastes like all of them put together when Aunt Borchie used to make it and we go running with it across Bacon's lot eating it all the way until we dive into the grass laughing and feed crumbs to the little black ants, it must be like mountains to them.

Then the stock car racers have moved a bit on the wall, moving just a little toward me, like a rock maybe moves when a turtle pushes on it or the night moves when the sun pushes against it. And it must be eight o'clock and I think of playing in the sandbox or the gully down by old man Bryan's house or near the hills by Mrs. Crabapple's, but most of all I like to play in dirt that's smooth and covers your skin so nice and that makes you feel good and dusty all over.

When the good feeling is all over I go down for breakfast, down into the kitchen where the ceilings are so high and the

big white walls are like shiny windows that you can't see through, and there's a glass of milk on the table that my mother puts out, it tastes good but not as good as the thick milk at Uncle John's farm that used to stick to your tongue. But before I eat I have to go to the bathroom, and I remember my dad told me always put up the toilet seat whenever you go, and so I do it, but I didn't really know what he meant, and if I have to do my duty sitting down I do it with no toilet seat, just my bare bottom on the white round rim, trying not to fall all the way in, and it's so cold. I just do what my dad told me, even at grade school, even if it sounds crazy, cause at St. Cecelia's Church they say don't disobey your folks it would be a sin.

Well after the breakfast running down the steep sidewalk on Oak Street right past our big oak tree where the older boys hammer and nailed a toad last year, past Borchie's and thinking of how she used to make that bread, past Waller's where Steve and Jackie are gone at camp, past Fullers' who are not up yet, their bikes still sideways in the front yard. So I go down the sidewalk all by myself, running to the bottom of the hill where I know the dumptruck full of dirt is, where he is pouring dirt all over the road, where the dust makes clouds that fly all the way across the whole block each time he dumps it, and I stand behind that truck and breathe that dust, and put my arms out and run in it and jump and dance in circles like a moth and it feels so good, just about as good as my good feelings in the mornings, and the dust is so warm and it sticks to my skin all over and goes down the back of my shirt, and now I'm a good color all over, nice and brown like dirt or bread and then I remember two voices yelling and the dust feeling so good and the voices louder and the sun shining brown through the dust clouds and the hit and the dust in my hair and the hit and the hit and the dust down inside the front of my pants and the hit and the dust inside my shoes and the hit and the hit and the back of my pants where I hurt so much and the hit and the hit and the dust turning, wet on my cheeks. After the bathtub I was in my room with no supper thinking of the hits and hits and how they said I was crazy and I am looking at the race cars over and over, watching them move and waiting to go to sleep when I'm not even tired, waiting for it to be night when I can still see the sun shine like a red ball through the windowshade, not wanting to sleep and crying a little and wishing I was still in that dust. Before they locked me in they said go to the bathroom first and so I did and when I went sitting down I kept the seat up as my dad said I should and outside the door over and over I heard them say I was crazy. And it's been about

a month since my black and blue marks went away, I have to do whatever my parents say and so I didn't go back to that dirt if I did it would be a sin. I know the truck was down there again today, and will be there again tomorrow, but tomorrow I will just watch from the either side of the street, they said, and I know I have to even if I don't want to. So I'm staring at these race cars over and over and I think of them moving a little bit and roads and then I think of the good feeling I got in the mornings and how I don't have it much any more since last month and how I used to have it almost every morning and how Borchie makes no more bread and she won't be back any more. And these are the things I think of now when I wake up in the morning, what I should and should not do, and how I never went back to that dump-truck and how I always put the toilet seat up whenever I go.



Jesus

The old man sat down on a bench, he was tired. As he lit a cigarette a woman walked by, she wiggled her ass. The old man exhaled a perfect smoke ring, it tasted like warm milk.

The thought occurred to him that it would have been nice to have been Jesus, he would be famous. The smoke ring disappeared, Jesus took its place. The old man smiled to himself as an ash dropped,

it sizzled when it hit the gutter. If he had been Jesus he would be the son of God, he would be God Himself. The old man began to wonder why he wasn't Jesus, he decided

God had made a mistake. He smiled again, another ash fell. When it sizzled the old man started, he threw the butt down and listened to the sound it made. He realized he should be going, the old man got up.

---Daniel Wells

Sergeant Graves

I sat and watched
you after you died
in that Army Hospital.

It was just you and I
Sergeant Graves and
the resuscitation machine
slushing back and forth.
It still expanded and
contracted your dead chest.

I wondered a lot of things
about you Sergeant Graves
as I tagged your right toe,
mostly I wondered if
you still had those three
Clark bars in your top
drawer.

They were there Sergeant Graves
they were there, and I was
eating the last one as
I slid you into the dark refrigerator.

---Ritch Kepler

The Last Stooge

Wise guy, eh?
 What was he? Seventy-seven and then some?
 I recall when he made me get up Saturday mornings,
 Made me sit cross-legged on the hassock
 Balancing, like a Wallenda, the stale bowl of Cheerios.
 And when he pinched Larry in the nose
 I felt it in the living room-
 A chill went up my pajamas...

But things change, we grow.
 Moe, old boy, the vaudeville has gone out of death
 and life too.
 And I sit in my room
 and you in your grave
 and reflect that we were kindred spirits,
 the man acting childish
 and the boy watching, learning.
 When He comes for the second time, Moe,
 will you do your act for an intro?
 Just once, to a floor show of cherubs,
 to an S.R.O. of seraphim
 pull Shep by the ears
 and announce, in that voice,
 "Youse guys! Youse guys must be crazy!"

Willya' do it, Moe,
 For life?

---Mike Reis

CONTRIBUTORS

NANCY BARRY *has previously been published in Contrast. Recently, she gave a reading of her work at Western Maryland College.*

D. B. *is a student at Loyola College.*

D. R. BELZ *attends Loyola as an English major.*

SKIP EISMINGER *writes and teaches in Clemson, S. C.*

VINCE ERCOLANO *is a Loyola graduate. He participated as a seminar leader in Loyola's Workshop in Poetry.*

TOM GAMACHE *is a student at Loyola College.*

MARY CLAIRE HELLDORFER *is an English major at Loyola.*

HERBIE, *a Loyola student, paints and has given talks on photography and images.*

KATHLEEN HIGGINS *is an artist at Loyola College.*

RITCH KEPLER *attends the University of Maryland. His poem "Buffalo River 1960" placed first in the Winter*

Workshop competition.

JIM MAGINNIS *is a student at Loyola College.*

WILLIAM MEISSNER *lives and writes in St. Cloud, Minn.*

MIKE REIS *is a student at Loyola College.*

JAMES REISS, *currently visiting professor at Queens College, has been published in The Atlantic, Saturday Review, and Harper's. His latest book is The Breathers, under Ecco American Poetry Press.*

JAMES SEBROWSKI *is a Loyola graduate.*

RON STEELE *is a Loyola graduate.*

DIANA VANCE, *a student at the University of Maryland, attended Loyola's Winter Workshop. Her poems have appeared in The Seneca Review and Calvert Review.*

DANIEL WELLS *attends Haverford College, Philadelphia. He has taken honors in the yearly Florida Poetry Contest; his poem appeared in the Florida Poetry Review.*

