

ICARUS

Aubrey

CREATIVE WRITING SYMPOSIUM

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND FINE ARTS

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ICARUS

A MAGAZINE OF
CREATIVE WRITING

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
USAF ACADEMY

1975



FOREWORD

Icarus is an annual publication of the Department of English and Fine Arts, United States Air Force Academy. It contains the best entries submitted to the Creative Writing Symposium, which is open to all members of the Air Force Academy Cadet Wing.

The purpose of the Symposium is to elicit creative expression from cadets and to encourage them to submit their efforts in competition with their peers. The competition is divided into five categories—poetry, short fiction, drama, essay, and drawing. Panels of judges consisting of volunteers from the English and Fine Arts faculty are appointed for each category. Each entry is read and evaluated by a minimum of three judges who do not know the identity of the author. The three best entries in each category are awarded first, second, and third place in the competition, and these and selected other entries are published in *Icarus*. The awarding of places and publication are the only forms of recognition accorded the winners.

This year interest in the poetry and short fiction categories remained high and participation in the drawing category increased. No entries were submitted in the drama and essay categories. The quality of entries has remained consistent, and the variety of subject matter has expanded significantly. This latter trend seems particularly healthy and could suggest that the Symposium is attracting a more representative sample of cadet participants.

Special note should be made of the winner of this year's poetry category. Although he is now commissioned and on active duty, his entries were submitted during the spring semester of his first-class year, after our 1974 deadline, but before he graduated. We shall continue to encourage first classmen to submit their manuscripts during their last semester.

Last year, Mrs. Paul T. Cullen generously established the Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award for the Outstanding Cadet Creative Writing about Flight. The award, which may

be presented annually, is based on a predetermined standard rather than on relative merit. Thus, if no entry measures up to that standard, the award is not granted. This year, the Cullen Award will not be presented. We appreciate the efforts of those cadets who did submit entries about flight and encourage each cadet to submit entries next year.

We wish to thank the many people who contributed to the success of the Symposium, especially the faculty members in all disciplines whose help in publicizing the venture was one key to its success, the judges who spent considerable time and effort in the extremely difficult task of deciding relative merit, and all cadet entrants, whether published or not, whose continuing enthusiastic response makes this project worthwhile. To Mrs. Shirley David, typist, and to Miss Carol Kopulos, Miss Nola Sparrow and Mrs. Helena Petrullo, composers, our sincere gratitude.

The opinions expressed in *Icarus* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the faculty and staff of the United States Air Force Academy.

Department of English and Fine Arts
United States Air Force Academy
24 February 1975

The Editors

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THE BRIGADIER GENERAL
PAUL T. CULLEN AWARD

THE BRIGADIER GENERAL PAUL T. CULLEN
AWARD FOR THE OUTSTANDING CADET
CREATIVE WRITING ABOUT FLIGHT



Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen, USAF, disappeared over the North Atlantic on 22 March 1951. Still listed as missing, General Cullen leaves behind an envied record of military and scientific accomplishments. Equally important, moreover, was his love of flight, a love reminiscent of the French pilot-author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. It is fitting that General Cullen, a man of high ideals, calm personal courage, and rare intelligence, be thus remembered by cadets at the United States Air Force Academy.

The Brigadier General Paul T. Cullen Award

This page is reserved for the next
Cullen Award winner.

POEMS

First Place Poem

HERITAGE

A gold coin from Russia,
with the face of the last Czar, shot at Ekatrinerberg.
A gold tie-pin with the purple stone in the head of a horse,
from the senile old lady who was real
nice
and used to go to church all the time and
say many prayers for vocations and the family's
well-being.
A gold wedding-band
from grandpa
too large for
fingers not used to loading bales onto ships in
the harbor.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

Second Place Poem

RUES DE NOUVELLE ORLEANS

west bank blackman,
Pointed temples lead to sunken eyes.
Concave cheeks join to form protruding jaw.
His face reflects the harsh features of the
west bank ghetto scene.

bourbon street *putain*,
Rouge to cover rough-wrinkles caked away.
Piercing through false eyelashes, narrow eyes
curse at cheapened destiny
as she heads toward her House of Rising Suns.

jackson square artist,
The artists line the street, each to catch the
contemporary Mona Lisa—the blackman, the lady.
Vie dure of the french quarter guides the strokes
as an artist touches the texture of life by
sketching arcs and curves into lines of his reality.

STEVEN J. KENT
Class of 1975

Third Place Poem

AIDA DRESSED LIKE A COMMUNIST

Aida dressed like a communist
so it always seemed to me
but Aida talked and smiled
just like June Lockhart

Aida dressed like a communist
stands in the doorway of a little adobe hut
sandals, black slacks, a tunic buttoned to the top
hands folded, hair tied back, smiling

It's the wood of the door, the sandals,
the cut of the tunic that look so proletarian

But her smile, her speech were definitely
republican, almost oligarchical

Aida sits beneath The Tree
where all the communists gather
and where blacks are seldom seen
(they have their own place to caucus)
she converses there with anarchists,
liberals and pacifists and vegetarians
and on rare occasion an intellectual, too

Aida's sitting there staring now at me
who am nothing that could be said political
now she's just a photograph in a high school annual
which to me, an unseen spectator, she and they
always were

Though she speaks with them, Aida's different

The rest all spoke in tones egalitarian
and wore uniforms of republicans
but Aida dressed like a communist

HAROLD C. MANSON
Class of 1976

LONG BEACH

The last of the summer people have left.
The streets are quiet now.
The Sycamore leaves are turning yellow.
School starts tomorrow.
The ocean, once a sparkling, shimmering green and
filled with swimmers,
Now is empty and a sad, sullen gray.
Where before waves slid gently up on the beach,
now they pound viciously, almost as if out of
loneliness.
The boardwalk is quiet.
Gone is the hawker's cry.
Pretty little bungalows stand boarded up,
and once bustling hotels rise against the sky,
forlorn and idle.
Sand once white and hot lies cold and gray,
under the cloud-filled skies.
Over the deserted beaches the wind whistles,
whips and sighs.
As I head home from the beach, I realize,
Long Beach, for the winter, once again has died.

WILLIAM D. BAXTER
Class of 1975

TRUCKIN' ON

Well, I'ma truck-drivin' muthah,
Just now hittin' L.A.
Won't be a little farthah,
'n' I'll be up Frisco way.

Some say truckin's a job only fer the mean,
But pride is pride; I got pride in my machine.
Say they wouldn't want me their block's resident,
But, hell, we can't all be the President.

Well, I broke in the business back when men were men.
And a truckers' stop was more like a lion's den.
They told me, "Get out, kid, 'less'n you can hold yer own,"
"Better start out by gettin' some meat on yer bones."

I had a mind o' my own; didn't like bein' told,
And in the fight that ensued many a head rolled.
The skirmish was long; must'a took on twenty 'r thirty,
'n' after it all my pants wasn't a bit dirty.

Well, I walked away with my head twice as big,
Figured it time to leave, so I hit my rig.
Whoever said a tough'n couldn't be lean
Ain't never seen me: I'ma muscle machine!

Since that time I've seen many a mile.
Traveled thirty year straight, never breakin' a smile.
They call me that mean ol' boss o' that big, bad truck,
'cause I've hauled many a ton, buck fer buck.

That truck o' mine, got her back in Fifty-nine,
She's the envy of every trucker runnin' the line.
She's a Mack; got that ol' bulldog on the front end,
'n' loaded to the hilt, she'll take any bend.

I've powered her through tornado, hurricane, and squall,
'n' through it all she stood ever tall.
I've taken her up hills where even a jeep would groan,
But 'er only tone was that same low, powerful moan.

Well, I've plowed her through Washin'ton, where the air
smells sweet,
Been down to West Texas; smelled the musky mesquite.
Trucked through Maine in the cool sea breeze,
Even flew through Flor'da 'neath the swayin' palm trees.

I've fought Chicago's traffic; some call it a pinch.
I thought the Great Divide was merely a cinch.
I've struggled hundreds of hours through the Mojave's sun,
'n' I call pullin' a double trailer but a normal run.

What I'ma tryin' to say is I've laid many a mile.
Me'n my gal've lived our job, trial after trial.
I'm the trucker's trucker; the brute's epitome:
Hard, lean, mean, and ever on the flee.

I've hauled bushels, barrels, and bails,
Not t' mention cars, girders, trees, rails. . .
You jes name it and I've towed it all.
When they gotta huge haul, it's me they call.

Y'know, they say a trucker's got a special pride.
You'll see it in me, babe; hop in fer a ride!
Most truckers quit by giving in to old age.
As fer me—I'll never quit; I'ma writin' a history page.

Well, I'ma truck-drivin' muthah,
Just now hittin' L.A.
Won't be but a little farthah,
'n' I'll be up Frisco way.

RICHARD M. DUESING
Class of 1975

First Place Drawing

"The Hunter"

*DAVID L. FLEMING
Class of 1975*

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THE HUNT

Early morning the sportsman sets out
 The falcon on his fist
 Warm the new born sun
 The sparkling dew wet.

First he unhoods her and
 Gently strokes her breast.
 She is ready now
 Only waiting the wind.

Her jesses free she
 Lifts upward and circling
 Screaming to her dreams
 Now a piece of sky

Ever watching she spots her prey.
 She plunges toward the pheasant talons arched
 And with careful design
 Kills the luckless cock

Screaming with ecstasy
 Huddling close to earth
 Blood covering her plume—
 Footsteps near

She glances upward then down at her prize
 The reassuring glove extended
 She concedes and
 Steps up

Resting on his leather hand
 Her flight is over now,
 She knowingly travels home
 Satisfied.

DAVID L. FLEMING
 Class of 1975

SEA

Methodic lapping of aimless waves
 Keeping time to breaking braids
 Frolicking to pounding beat
 Come crest-formed braids with dancing feet.

STEVEN J. KENT
 Class of 1975

I LISTEN

I can do nothing but listen,
and where there should be sounds
of human voice and laughter,
quietness reigns and drains the air
to haunt as I walk alone.

I'll shout and sing, I'll make the sounds
and hear a chorus and a grand opera.
Clarinets and then saxophones come charging in.
Indeed the music suits me, it's mine alone.

But the orchestra fades as I lose my breath
until all that can be heard in the lull of night
are pounding drums of panting breath

And, once again, the silence so cruel
has left me to my loneliness.

And I can do nothing but walk and listen.

STEVEN J. KENT
Class of 1975

IN A MELLOWED MIND

His flesh stretches across the fragile boney structure
of his face,
Aged sweat from laborous years
Trapped in the darkened cracks and the saddened wrinkles.
His lips part slightly, his eyes turn inward,
For the clock of life must ring its final chime,
For the hand of time must make its lasting calling.
Inwardly he searches—his pilgrimage to past days and
parted ways
his journey through ancient times and mellowed chimes.
His frail soul lies quietly on the milky pillows of the mind
and takes in the warmth of an inner sun.

STEVEN J. KENT
Class of 1975

THE LIFE OF A FRUSTRATED FIG

Dripping with honesty and love,
 a fetal fig enters with stains of hope,
 bows before God
 entertaining at the mercy of
 a pregnant fig.

He bows as nature responsively applauds—cheers.
 As he searches inwardly for an encore,
 Images charge desperately
 from all directions
 trampling his glory
 swallowing boxes of prudent figs
 with the intense forces of
 innocence
 eating away at his fingers
 spitting out only the ashes of
 crushed bone.

He cries in frustration
 as a fiddle highlights his desire for
 love
 and the commotion of centuries penetrates his skin,
 stunned by the hesitation of his existence.

Now with the wisdom found in failure,
 he cringes at the disturbed fields of black flowers,
 waving to a soft wind,
 his mind spinning in the windmill of life
 cursing at the chop of an ax. . .

Falling towards the trench of death,
 he whispers his philosophy and
 proceeds to studder
 until the pressure of
 hatred
 crushes his skull—with plastic veins.
 Sweat pours out as he is
 singing
 dancing
 entertaining God

until emptiness is formulated
 and the fig whistles a tune
 to the pounding drums
 of meditation.

A naked figure
 isolated on the stage
 of the world
 with heavy feet dangling in hell.
 This crossed figure
 looks out to the audience
 and curses at a figmented
 God,
 turns his back, and cries
 for a world which has grown
 so senile without ever
 reaching puberty,
 and prays for generations of seedless figs. . .

STEVEN J. KENT
 Class of 1975

LET THERE BE PEACE

Let there be peace for all those who live
 for the next horizon or in the setting sun,
 for soon the horizon and sun will converge
 into shades of darkness. . .
 Soon—oh so very soon.

And let there be peace for all those who live
 in lost memories and empty dreams,
 for in the shadow of these sorrows lies
 lonely solitude. . .
 Long—for so very long.

STEVEN J. KENT
Class of 1975

MATERIALS OF LIFE

Brick buildings on
 concrete slabs. . .

Plastic containers with
 glass jars. . .

Paper bags in
 cardboard boxes. . .

The unnoticed sun shines
 as ignored flowers grow
 around the graves of Styrofoam
 corpses.

STEVEN J. KENT
Class of 1975

SYNTAX RELAPSE

The Master is quiet as the crowds begin to fidget,
 The Master has gone down bowed to a greater digit.
 The shouting of staccato taps that curse at lost arrays,
 The distant cries are smothered by the universal hurrahs
 From terminated terminals and carriages miscarriage,
 As Basic talks and Cobalt shocks, lost languages in mirage,
 Together, in Fortram, in Algol, all pray,
 The more you feed 'em, the less your freedom, from
 digital decay,
 From asterisks and multiple slashes, from user codes and
 unwanted dashes, from programs abort and computer crashes,
 in memory blanks are empty flashes:
 Have my files been stored, are they saved for
 thirty days?
 —or memory bankruptcy, has the Master passed away.
 A man peers through the window, bows his head to say,
 "I'm really sorry, I did my best—it's only a slight delay,"
 And once again I've lost to him as the sad eyes turned
 my way,
 and turn and hurl my mind like a dradle
 tripped and spun by an undeclared label.
 "The Master will rise again, in minutes it'll be corrected
 but I'm sorry 671, your program has been rejected"
 —As the course has come to an end.

* without a semi-colon expected!

STEVEN J. KENT
 Class of 1975

WRITTEN POETRY

The philosopher sitting quietly,
 wondering what came first
 in the written poetry.
 Was it golden words
 or the story of the sea
 that draws the sailor from your soul
 to the written poetry?
 Sail, Sailor, sail, you must conquer seven seas.
 Sail, Sailor, sail, in the written poetry.

The philosopher sitting quietly,
 wondering what came first
 in the written poetry.
 Was it golden words
 or the fire to be free
 that draws the braveman from your soul
 to the written poetry?
 Fight, Braveman, fight, you must save our liberty.
 Fight, Braveman, fight, in the written poetry.

The philosopher sitting quietly,
 wondering what came first
 in the written poetry.
 Was it golden words
 or your silver prophecy
 that draws the soothsayer from your soul
 to the written poetry?
 Dream, Prophet, dream, what tomorrows do you see?
 Dream, Prophet, dream, in the written poetry.

STEVEN J. KENT
 Class of 1975

HER LOVER

I found her singing sweetly,
 In the meadow, by the ocean.
 Her hair was like the gentle breeze,
 As it blew around her softly.
 Her eyes were shining velvet,
 Leaving much behind her glance.

And though her song was free,
 And though she did not ask me,
 I knew her strong embrace,
 I knew her warm appeal.

We shared each other slowly,
 In the time that we could gather.
 Our sharp desire was melting two,
 As we felt the oneness climbing.
 My mind was touching heaven,
 Spending precious time in her.

And though her song was free,
 And though she did not ask me,
 I felt her vast knowledge,
 I felt her deep passion.

But now my eyes see dimly,
 By the light that cuts my sleeping,
 Her hair was not the gentle breeze,
 But just some curtains blowing.
 And her eyes not velvet shine,
 Only stars that die outside.

And though her song was free,
 And though she did not ask me,
 I touched her dark silence,
 I touched her hard hunger.

RICHARD D. KIRKHAM
Class of 1976

MY BROTHER, MY FRIEND

We grew up together
 Sharing our dreams and our hopes.
 I followed him everywhere
 Knowing he would protect me.
 I would do anything he said.

While shooting at imaginary enemies,
 He said I can join the army with him.
 But since I'm smarter,
 He tells me I will be in intelligence.
 I would rather fight beside him.

Sitting in the motionless car, fantasizing,
 He said I can drive around the country with him.
 New York, up to Alaska, to California.
 Everywhere.
 Together.

Climbing the ore dumps—we're not allowed, of course—
 The evidence remains with us.
 He said not to worry because he'd take all the blame,
 But I willingly confessed.
 We were punished, he and I.

But then we drift apart.
 Do I know him now?
 What happened to our plans, our dreams?
 He still has his, I think,
 But they are no longer mine.

Four years have passed
 And only Christmases bring him back.
 Why his heart doesn't come back with him
 I do not know.
 Maybe someday.

There must be something wrong with him
 Because he no longer dreams.
 Could he have wasted all his dreams
 By sharing them with me?
 I could not bear that.

But he would not let me down.
 His dreams return.
 Again they are only his,
 But now I too have my own.
 I thank God he dreams again.

Now he is told he dreams too much.
 I know that is not right—I tell him so.
 Why must he make one dream reality?
 And why must that one dream be of someone else's choosing?
 I tell him he is right to dream.

He still dreams his dreams, and I mine.
 Others still try to choose for him.
 Had they dreamt with him and known him as I did,
 They would do for him what I do.
 They would love him.

G. E. MICHELETTI
Class of 1975

ODE TO A MOUNTAIN

Sitting in pensive mood
 This autumn setting of the sun,
 At that moment when night vies for its throne,
 As the sun retreats to gather reserve for further triumphs,
 And the clouds glow in soft hue,
 Basted in watery paint,
 As I rest my mind of mortal miseries;
 My eyes pause for a breath upon the wonder of
 Towering majesty filling my window.

Noble Mountain, flood my soul!
 Protect me with your silent strength;
 Bid your winds free the fetters
 Which hinder my spirit from flight to greater
 Heights than yet fathomed.

Rising above all men,
 Rising to eagle-ruled skies,
 Your crags and pinnacles stand
 Tranquil and vigilant.
 Beaten and whipped
 By knifing snows and merciless
 Torrents of ascending battles of air,
 You show austere indifference to grief.

Venerable, why has your architect worked so slovenly?
 Your lines run in rude directions,
 Your face is rough, jagged, bare of polish.
 Only green patches of carpet thrown randomly
 About you attempt to cushion your crude and
 Indelicate shoulders.

Nay, Mountain, your designer mislaid his plans
 And engaged you to a Painter
 Who knew less of fine lines,
 Knew nothing of perfect proportion.

Your Sculptor chiseled
 From a virgin stone;
 You are the Genuine and
 Unique of his work,
 Bequeathed a purity,
 A harmony with the day.

Soon the trance melts,
 As though for only a second I was free,
 And my eyes slip back into the world
 They so eagerly escaped.

Below, contrasting in posture,
 Stand man's Definition of Perfection,
 His Form, his Reason.
 His lines are straight, no apparent flaw.
 Corners are square and polished;
 Glass and steel and concrete,
 Ordered with infallible design.
 Calculatingly adorned,
 An absence of natural whim.

Shall we call these constructions beautiful,
 Hail ourselves for this monument of reason?
 This monument fails;
 Its walls, its lines crack,
 Its concrete crumbles, its glass shatters.
 Only incessant manicures, incessant toils,
 Save it from falling away,
 Leaving only the mountain looming above,
 Undaunted by all competitors of beauty.

While we laud our genius for creation
 Of visionary splendor,
 Reflect on that masterpiece of earth
 Which suffers undeserving mundane acceptance.
 And while we pass this way,
 Let us humble in the presence

Of that dwarfing magnanimity,
 That picture painted in so blatant violation of reason.

And lesser beauties erode and fade
 With trial and age,
 Like a sandcastle devoured by the sea,
 Yet the mountain awaits in Stoic repose,
 Rushing relief to our passions
 In its deluge of color and whispers of peace.

LANCE D. PERDUE
Class of 1976

BRIEF RESPITE IN THE WILD BLUE YONDER

Soaring above,
 drifting alone,
 None to touch your godly cove.

The sky's expanse,
 blue forever,
 Nothing to mar your blissful trance.

Wonder sparkles,
 sunlight clear,
 No horror of ground debacles.

Peaceful glory,
 silence sweet,
 Not feeling the world's charred story.

But then—
 CRACK! the lightning spear blinks by,
 Your sacred vault shudders high
 Against tenacles of wind,
 Then dives downward fast you find.

The stuccoed roar of rain's bullets
 Overtakes your craft and your mind,
 And then you realize so swift
 That man's life isn't left so easily behind.

It's over—
 The clouds part for you like Red Sea
 And vanish in a poof of haze
 So again you can think and see
 The wonderment of your heaven.

Perhaps this haven of tranquility
 Is but a blessed moment of respite
 To gather simple thoughts of peace and love
 In readiness for landing on the earth
 With flight-filled visions of wisdom and sight.

CARL E. VAN PELT
 Class of 1975

THAT SIDE OF LONELINESS

I am enveloped by myself:
 Surrounded by the soundproofing
 of my own obstinate denial
 to expose my soul and feeling self,
 to the cruel world which
 once betrayed the child trust
 I had invested in it,
 and singed my heart and slapped
 my attempt to be with
 and intermingle with and feel with
 People.

Remorseful now, that I've
 seen too much of myself
 and been denied that innate
 sensation of caring for and
 Loving some other person—
 Separate and in her own world
 but still diffused with mine
 so that she senses and
 experiences me and I her.

Still, loneliness is a strength
 in itself, to be conquered
 by one's own strength,
 to be integrated into one's
 arsenal of life's defensive weapons:
 to be used later when
 called upon to conquer that
 one situation force that
 threatens to take away the
 then more sweet and lovely life,
 and replace it with a crumbled palace
 of dilapidated feelings and promises.

A tradeoff of love and happiness now,
 for silent hours spent
 inspecting the room's walls:
 A momentary blush of life,
 For lasting and swelling strength.

CARL E. VAN PELT
Class of 1975

NOT NOW

Oh, Christ; don't try to preach
 to me now, or tomorrow, or the next.
 It just seems to my soul, your coercing
 —pressures built in others and holy constructions—
 is attempting to narrow, restrict, enclose
 my endless and fathomless horizons,
 just when my mind yearns to comprehend
 the facts and truths of ALL there is to learn
 and just when my mind is yearning and trying
 to instruct my soul of the spaciousness
 of ALL and this small, insignificant, unending existence;
 You want me to trust all I have,
 my mind, my soul, my faith
 to something a young child cannot grasp,
 handle, examine, fondle and call my own.
 Let me experience the skies, the earth,
 the wonders of my own being
 before I may understand that You,
 possibly,
 Are ALL there is of worth.

CARL E. VAN PELT
 Class of 1975

"THEIR" PLACE

I walked up the steps and through the low arch,
 And bronze plaque engraved with "Happy Home".
 The door was huge and heavy and even creaked
 When I slid past thinking why I had come.
 The distinct odor of pure cleanliness
 Struck my nostrils, accentuated by white,
 And my mind whirled to categorize it
 Along with the other places so right.

A smiling, beautifully righteous face
 Greeted and coridored me down the hall
 To see his "precious few facilities"
 For treatment of those not really here at all.
 Those brought memoryless ages ago:
 Left to exist within their own odd world,
 Without the necessary hands their hands
 Once grasped so tightly and playfully curled.

It's time for them to come out and to eat,
 So quickly—
 Through sparkling offices and rooms
 —I'm led,
 To the gate, swiftly away to the gate
 That I might not become easily discouraged
 And think things really are not so neat.

Oh Dear God. . .

CARL E. VAN PELT
 Class of 1975

THOUGHTS BEFORE STEPPING OFF A CLIFF

I could be maker of death
 And purge from others sublime
 Notions of ecstatic breath
 Or weird hopes of gallant climb.
 I could be sweetness of life
 And laugh with joyful purity
 For the sparkling knife
 Splitting cakes with natural glee.
 I could be a loner,
 Self-destined to an endless roam
 From city to the peak moaner
 And peaceful, (yet), not at home.
 I could be a hypocrite
 With plastered masks of smiles
 And boundless gaieties of wit
 Used to withhold endless Afterwhiles.
 I could be the earth's man,
 With calloused digits and eyes
 Accustomed to a simple land
 Filled to horizon in wheat and ryes.
 I could be a janitor,
 Shuffling 'long empty halls,
 Thinking (but not thinking) a visitor
 Might wander through my walls.
 I could be a preacher
 Of holy ways and air,
 Hoping to be reacher
 Of God's elegant affair.

With an expanse of heaven
 Stretched in front of me,
 And a self self-given,
 I must turn, and kiss my destiny.
 Yet, I linger to wait—

But:

The Musician of myriad years
 Plays a dance that I must be gone
 To a rainbow of tears
 And subject to my lawful song.

CARL E. VAN PELT
Class of 1975

AQUA LIFE

we were water
 searching equal levels
 sparkling drops her eyes
 playful splashful memories

she was thirst
 that first desire
 drunked me

warm water summered we
 cool water autumned we
 water we two were

life's source
 until October
 when she iced

glazing over
 by November her eyes
 lost their depths
 reflected only me

JAMES P. WALLER
Class of 1975

GEO GEM

Diamond crystallized man
 transparency of universe
 light trapped in transition
 within
 without
 en toto

a self-oneness in reflection
 still—an infinity of mirrors
 drawing more precise the focus
 yet ever more complex illusion
 into the very hands and feet
 pulse vibrationist messages
 coded in ancient meter
 still, read by the limbs
 that matter under pressure formed him
 means he may break from structured stress
 until he shatters
 into a million pieces
 never to be reconstituted
 infinite chips of infinite man
 infinite stress
 in-finite conception
 lost.

JAMES P. WALLER
Class of 1975

WHEN A DOORFRAME LAST
IN THE GRAVEYARD BLOOMED

When a doorframe last in the graveyard bloomed
lilacs grown through the mesh on
an old screen door on a forlorn grave
alone

 where the yard meets the forest
near the shack he knew as home.

Its black-white mesh is driven through
with multi-colored shoots
a memory of that ancient myth
made good in still-brown earth
that

 although Black he still might be
a member of society.

JAMES P. WALLER
Class of 1975

CITY LIGHTS

We were way above it.
The night was crystal clear.
The winds were biting,
I hadn't even zipped my jacket.
The cold cut in where my shirt wasn't tucked.
The city sparkled beneath us.
Glowing white, pulsating spots.
Obsidian, jet black, soft velvet,
Like a careless jeweler's drawer.
Hazy, because my sight was sleepy.
It was time to go back and crawl into one of
Those little blinking lights.
Reduce their number by one
And go to sleep.
Leave the remainder to the rest of the
Drowsy lovers.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

ALONE

Walking along Cocoa Beach at midnight
 With Strange feelings—
 Feelings of Contentment
 And Self-confidence
 And oneness with Whatever is making
 The Universe tick.

The moon is beautiful.
 It is full and golden,
 And throws a brassy projection
 Across the waters.
 Sandpipers flutter before the lapping waves.

I met some lovers,
 Walking alone.
 They weren't young,
 Yet they glowed.
 A solitary figure passed,
 We said hello.

The waves shone
 And spit phosphorescent splashes into the sky.
 I threw off my clothes and plunged
 Into its warm, liquidy embrace.
 I spun and turned like a seal, glistening,
 And smiled and laughed, not too loud.

Going back took too long.
 The ocean lapped and was tired also.
 My eyes were heavy, my feet dragged in the
 Sand.
 The palm trees stood motionless
 Caressed too by the soft moon glow pale.
 Alone
 But somehow a comfortable place to be.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

IMAGE 17

Remember the gold
 Chairs to be broken.
 The putrid smell in the
 Station corner.
 Central Park with its menagerie
 Of fags and cops and wet nurses.
 Sky gray with needles of cold
 Except during the muggy
 Summers.
 Cracker-Jack that glumped together.
 Eating pastries, dripping honey.
 Feeling guilty about the hollow, hungry faces.
 Man's history in oil paint and alabaster
 42nd Street offering
 The frostiest of loves and perversions
 Book stalls with pulpy trash and glossy art.
 Coming home, exhausted, wondering
 When I'll next make the trip.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

NONSENSE POEM

General Truskett called for his musket:
 Thirty megatons because eternal vigilance is the price of
 Joe McCarthy.
 Said Sister Agnes:
 A pentagon is a five-sided equal-angle
 Morass of paper.
 Everything is surplus;
 The faded green paint,
 The people.
 Thousands of moles
 (lemmings?)
 Keeping America, keeping it free
 From the ENEMY!
 God!
 Bless 'em. (?)
 The USO
 Could always give a show
 "Now we present to you, for your entertainment, the . . ."
 Dancing bears,
 At more bang for the buck.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
 Class of 1974

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

It always smells
 Damp and cold.
 Even when the brand-new subway cars
 Are put in operation,
 They look worn
 And smelly.
 The human sardines always have
 Something to say, a way of
 Expressing themselves.
 Scrawled graffiti on a smiling poster,
 Or a day-old *Times* or wine bottle
 Thrown in a corner.

A trip to Manhattan is long
 And fun.
 Except during rush hour when you are jammed into a
 subway car that was built at the turn of
 the century and stinks like it has never
 been aired out since then.
 The people stare sightlessly.
 You try to muscle past, but there is no way, 'cause this
 Fat lady with her eight kids and overflowing shopping bag
 From Macy's is determined to stand her ground.
 So you give in,
 Hanging onto a swinging strap,
 Gummy in your own sweat.
 Try to read the newspaper but you
 Can't even turn the page.

Towards the end of the line
 Seats open up.
 The train gets roomier,
 Less but still stuffy.
 Look past the curtain of soot
 Out a porthole and see
 The columns and people and stations
 Pass by.
 Climb out of the gloomy tube, mount the
 Stairs, and Oh,
 That good-looking woman there
 In the short skirt and the gray sky and
 The crowd into which
 You disappear.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
 Class of 1974

ROSE SUNDAY

Too tired to stir.
 Green fingers clutching clouds.
 Hot, burning sunlight and
 The sting of spring in the air.
 Brown, sunburnt grasses.
 The new shoots will prevail.
 Nobody but the droning bees caring
 Sunset spills over
 Pulling the fluffy clouds in its
 Red and gray grasp
 Over the horizon.
 Retiring,
 Turning the velvet covers over its head.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
 Class of 1974

STUFFY

The line of ice divides the pane.
 Not in half, but partially.
 Beyond the hills, blue sky above the clouds,
 Pale. Afraid to dominate the white.

He walks across the lot, tripping on the snow,
 In the slush, gray and dirty.
 Sliding on the packed flakes,
 Where the tires have left their tracks to
 Be polished slick by the wind.
 Not now, maybe later.
 To the north, the macadam slits
 The valley.
 The warm sun does its job
 Puddling the ice.
 It's not even cold, but it should be.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

TOURIST GUIDE

Tin figure, made in
 Japan. Pressed from the side of a Lotus brand coffee can.
 Only to get crushed when the other toys
 Get dumped in the chipped box.
 Painted blue because Mom likes blue.
 All the keepsakes mean nothing to
 The next bunch.
 Imagine cleaning her brushes in my
 Mug from London,
 Throwing away my pennant from
 A World's Fair six times ago.
 The paint flaked off the ashtray,
 He uses it as a catchall for
 Nuts, bolts, screws, nails, and a tarnished
 Holy medal. That saint hasn't
 Seen fresh air in a long time.
 Passing through,
 With only a brochure or cheap
 Postcard to speak of.
 What of my fate.

EDWARD M. WHALEN
Class of 1974

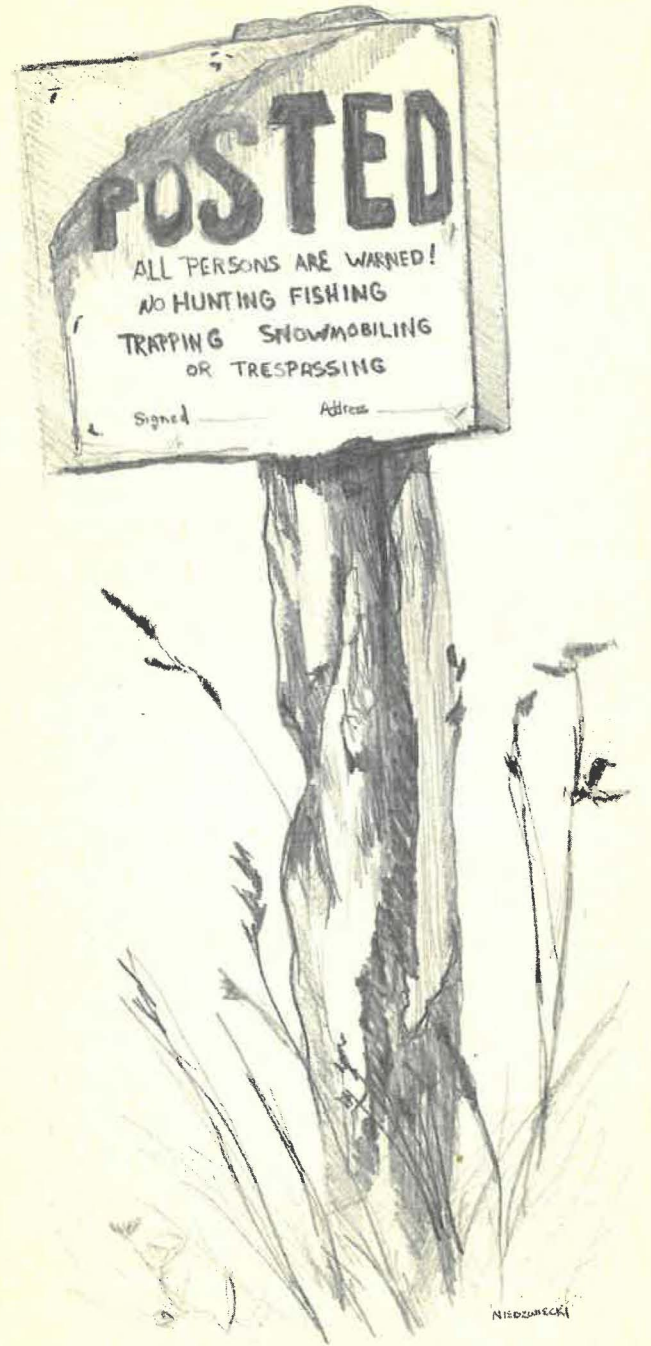
DRAWINGS

Second Place Drawing

“Share the Land”

ROBERT NIEDZWIECKI
Class of 1976

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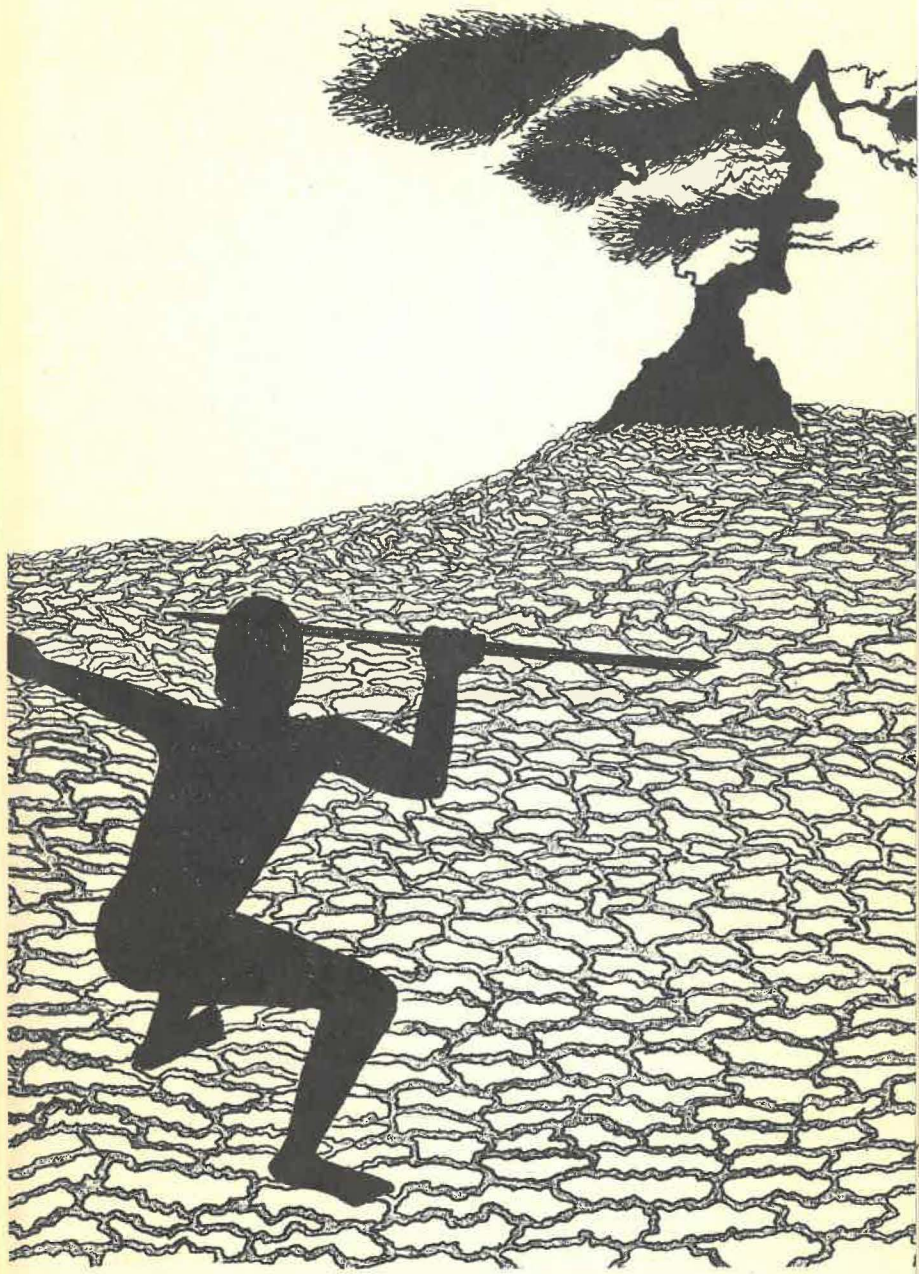
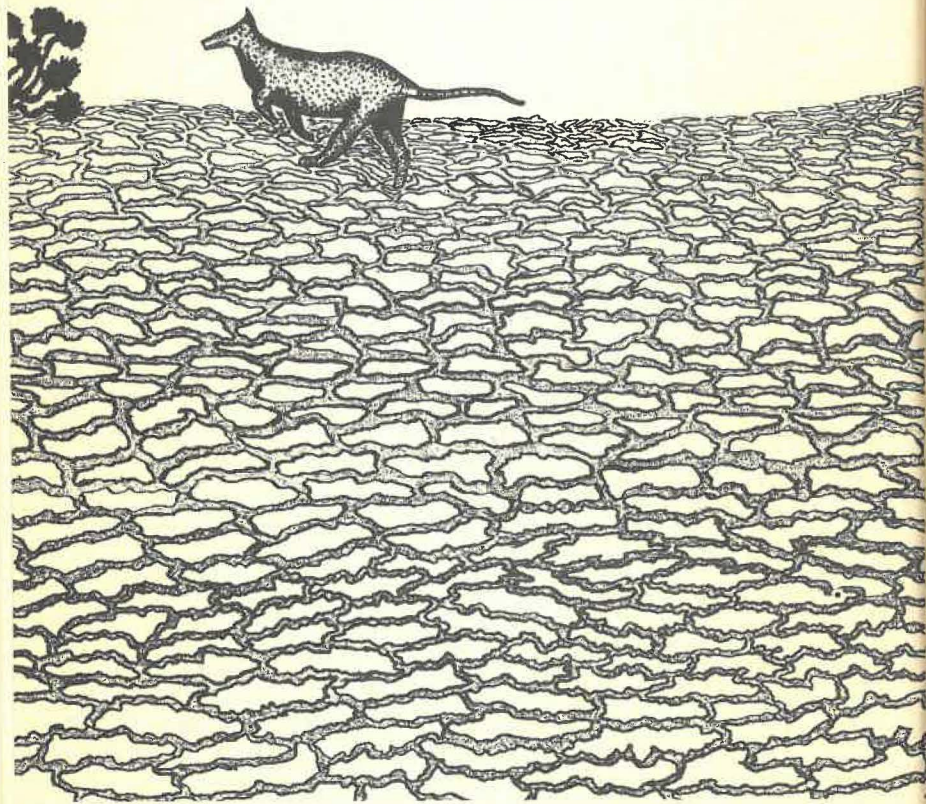


NIEDZWIECKI

Third Place Drawing

“Hunter”

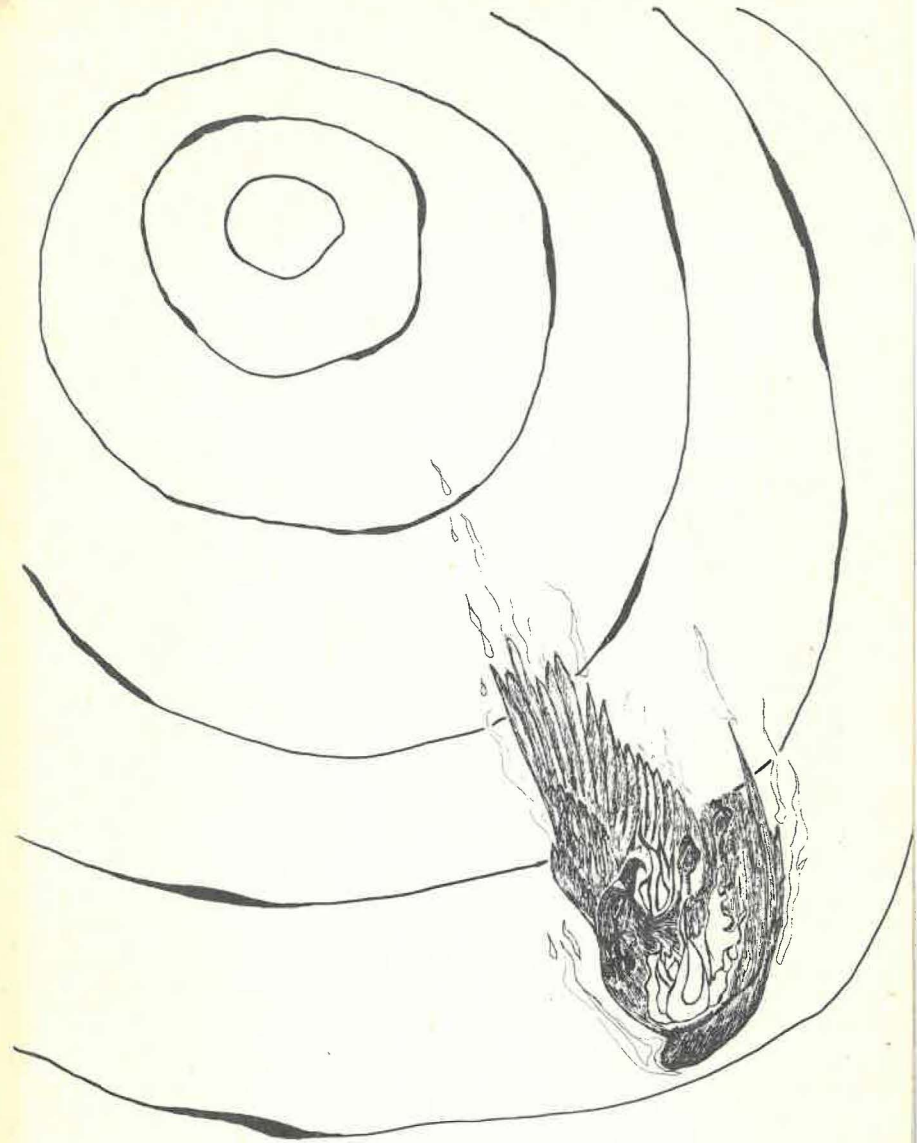
STEVEN S. McGUIRE
Class of 1977



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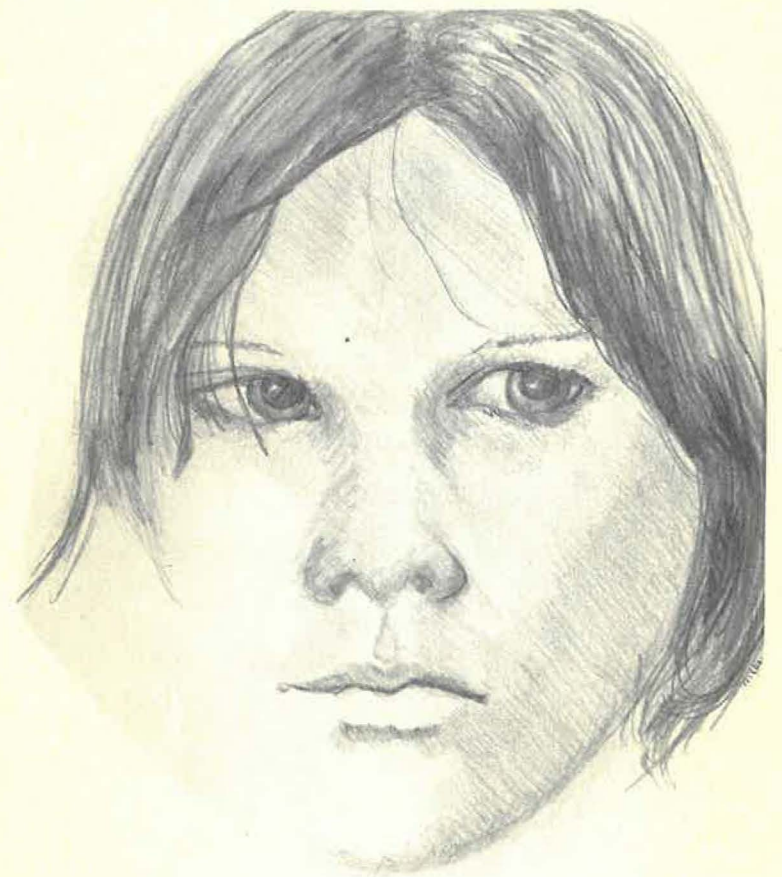
"Flight of the Phoenix"

DAVID L. FLEMING
Class of 1975



FLEMING '75

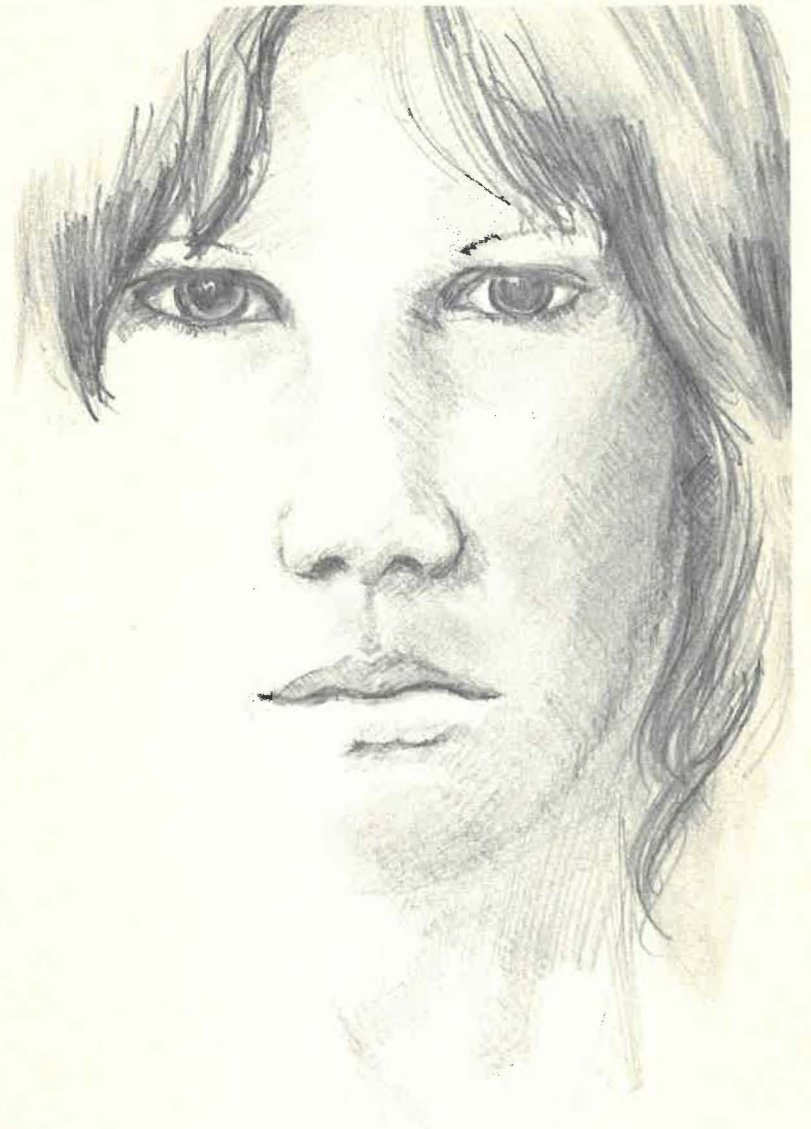
“Jean Elizabeth”



ROBERT NIEDZWIECKI
Class of 1976

"10,000 Miles"

ROBERT NIEDZWIECKI
Class of 1976



SHORT FICTION

THE UNWANTED ELEMENT

The tears well up in his brown eyes and stream down his cheeks until they finally drip off the end of his square chin. He is sitting on a yellow bench facing white swinging doors which are the entrance to the dressing room. His nose is flat and brown, with large nostrils. His ears are large and his lips are thick. He owns a two-inch scar on his left cheek and has closely shaven, wooly hair. He is well built with rippling neck, chest, and tricep muscles. He has a slim waist and sturdy legs.

He has just lost. What a long road it has been, and all for nothing. He would still be a nobody and nobody would ever know the name of Tommy Holley. Now what was he going to do? What in the world is a dumb, washed-up nigger gonna do in this world?

Behind the bench are rows of lockers. Behind the lockers is a weighing scale surrounded by more benches. The room is painted yellow and is square in shape. Over the swinging doors hangs a dark-green tassel with long fringed ends. There is another door, behind the scale, which leads to a simple bathroom and then to Tommy's room. The room is very small, about ten square feet. There is a large bed against the far wall. There are no windows and no pictures in the room. The room is painted blue and the light bulb is unshaded. There is a small table next to the bed. A comic book is the only article resting on the table. There is an open suitcase on the floor next to the table. It contains nothing but shirts,

pants, and towels. Tommy's toothbrush, razor, etc., are kept in his locker. His room is only temporary.

Why had he let that sorry wop beat him? As his mind searched for the answer, he began unlacing his red gloves, and then his black boots. Bobo Medici, he thought. Bobo Medici—Bobo Medici—“BOBO MEDICI,” he yelled. “YOU MOTHER—. I mustn't,” he mumbled quickly. One thing Muma said Dad had always insisted on was not to let the kids cuss. It was not that Tommy felt that cussing was wrong, but his Dad thought so. If Dad thought so, then it was so.

Marvin Holley, formerly a successful amateur boxer, had been killed in a riot while picketing a tobacco plant. Tommy had only one memory of his father and that was when he was four, back in Hornyak, Alabama. It was Tommy's birthday and Dad had gotten off the night shift so that he could celebrate it with him. Tommy was given his Dad's green boxing tassel from his boxing robe. The same one that hangs over the swinging doors. His father was killed nine days later. Sammy, his oldest brother, said that Dad went crazy from boxing, and that's why he got killed at the riot. Sugar! The day I believe Sammy is the day I turn white. Muma says that Dad was wrangling with a cop and the cop smashed his brains. Muma—heck, I don't wanna think of her for now. Poor Daddy. Tears well up in Tommy's eyes again as he looks at the tassel hanging from the wall. He envisions his father's warm smile over it. Good old Hornyak—sure ain't like New York. Bunch of dumb city-slickers here. “What was so great about Hornyak anyway, Mr. Holley?” Tommy asks himself out loud. Two older brothers pounded on you all the time, and one bitchin' muma, and no daddy and a poor beat-up house. But I showed 'em, I showed 'em. I lifted weights 'til my arms almost fell off and I beat my brothers good. Look at 'em now; old men! Sammy is twenty-five and Junior is twenty-three. Ha! Look at 'em now.

As Tommy kicks off a boot he thinks: Shiny black boots. Black. Ha—He He Heeeee! Black. A black losing to a wop. He! He! But why the second round? (Feels jaw). Advertizing, man-o-man. My jivetime stinking brother is making it big in

advertizing! 6'1”, and I still whipped him good. But admit it—he was always good at cute phrases. Boy, could he make Muma laugh.

“I don't feel too hot,” Tommy says to himself. As he reclines on the bench, his thoughts turn to Junior. I guess Junior sorta looks like Dad, a little. Kinda looks like that old picture of Dad that Muma showed me. I guess he ain't that bad a brother. He was a fullback in high school. What a fatty—5'9”—180 pound fullback. Daddy would'n appreciated him. Didn't even make all district team. No killer instinct. Heck, he beat me when I was little, didn't he? Had to show Muma that he could take Daddy's place—he and Sammy—why did they beat me for? They wouldna been that badda brothers. Yeah, but Sammy could sell himself. Still remember Sammy acting like he was on a commercial one time, saying, “Yessir I'm black folks and I'm a new product just come out—but don't let me bein' black bother ya. Black is beautiful. Right? Right on! Left off? How's about Right off—right off a cliff. But you honkies at home are probably saying—yeah, nigger, but white is wonderful! Especially in Alabama! White on—white on—white on! But I'm cool as a goose on a moose on the loose in a noose on a caboose: Honkie! And you should buy one of me. Why spend money for one when they can work for you free?” Sammy sure could rattle it off. Sammy was right a lot about black and white stuff. Pretty slick. Was always into black culture in high school: “Did you white folks out there know that black folks buy more Jergens lotion than anybody else? Why? Cuz our legs get chappy. That's right—dry out—get flaky—like dandruff. Did you whites know what cornrows were for? To grow an afro, dummy. Did you honkies know that blacks have smaller lungs than whites and that's why we can't run long races? Kip Keno? He's from high altitude, dummy. But we burn y'all in sprints and basketball. Know why? What? No, not cuz we swing through trees. Minus five points, honky—cuz our heels stick out an inch longer than y'alls. That's why we gotta buy larger shoes and wear all them sixteen layers of socks—to fill in everywhere but the heel,

dum dum. I thought honkies were s'pose to be smart?" He's pretty smart—graduated from Syracuse—Junior paid Sammy's way by workin' in a warehouse. They stuck together. Never helped me though did they! Huh? Did they? Finally had to beat their butts. But still, they had made it—and in Alabama too. I bet that cop that killed Dad was white, I just know it. Goddam I hate whites—oops, sorry Dad. Only nice white guy I know is Wade Simmons.

Wade is Tommy's trainer and manager. He is a short, somewhat stout man, with curly brown hair. He has brown eyes and high cheekbones. His body is almost completely covered with red freckles. He constantly wears a pair of red baggy pants accompanied by different solid-colored shirts. He wears gold-rimmed glasses which hang at the end of his pointed nose. He has broad shoulders and almost no hips to speak of. Black army low-cuts are the only shoes he will wear. His socks are usually red. He has an unquenchable thirst for money, and can see that Tommy might bring in a handsome amount. He is fond of Tommy, but never lets his feelings conflict with his business interests. He uses psychology well, and is a somewhat successful manager because of it. He can manipulate his fighters' emotions so as to coincide with their boxing skills.

I remember when Wade saw me at the gym the day I whupped that honky, Tommy thought. I was bench pressin'. Whitey told me to get my sweaty back off the bench. Told him to go jump. Here me—5'10", 165 pounds—telling a 6'4" 200er to go jump. How was I to know he was Wade's boxer? Well, after I flattened his butt I knew I wouldn't have to let my brothers push me around no more. Smart-butt Sammy. After I beat up Sammy and Junior I signed with Wade. Pretty good dough. Not as much as Sammy though. Damn how Muma cried when I beat up Junior. Never cried when he used to do that to me! I know why too! She thinks he looks like Daddy. I don't! Daddy was six foot! Junior was a little punk—still is! Only one good thing came outa havin' Sammy around. I don't sound like no regular nigger, with Sammy havin' gone to college. ALWAYS corrected me. "It's not did

good, it's did well! You're a dumb dude!" he would say. 'Member the year we integrated in high school and that dude asked me why I didn't speak like a nigger. I fixed him good. Then that teacher had to go get mixed up in it and I broke his nose and was kicked outa school. Boy, Muma didn't like that at all. Shoulda hit the principal too. He didn't know who he was talkin' to. I whipped my brothers. I whipped that slob at the gym! Nobody better mess with me! I'm smarter than you think mister. I'm Sylvester Holley-er-Tommy Holley (chuckle). I remember the first day Wade brought me in and said, "Sylvester Holley! We gotta change that. Sylvester was the name of a horse I used to know."

Awakening from his deep thought, Tommy looks up at the tassel on the wall. He gets up and takes it down. Wrapping it around his wrists, he begins playing with the fringes. Boy I wish Muma was here, he muses. I miss her. She's so far away.

Tommy's mother was a short woman without body curves. She had plump cheeks and fat lips. Tommy had inherited her flat nose and big ears. She loved to get dressed up and liked to argue. Because of the loss of her husband, and her age, her arguing sometimes led her to hysteria. She loved all of her sons, but she could not give Tommy love when she detested the vocation he had chosen. Tommy's boxing represented to her all of the bad characteristics her husband had possessed. She secretly feared that Tommy would go crazy, like his father, because of his many bouts. She loved Sammy for his achievements and humorous personality and loved Junior because he resembled her husband. Since he constantly hoped for his mother's love, Tommy became obsessed with her. The thing that caused him his greatest pain became the center of his thoughts. Tommy often made her sick when they argued. Guilty feelings owing to her illness also contributed to his obsession.

Only Junior is with her now (in Hornyak). Still probably workin' in a warehouse. She won't ever want him to leave. It's like Daddy was alive. She's probably glad I left. Never liked my boxing anyway. That's why she doesn't love me. Nobody loves me. Especially now.

Once he thought someone loved him. Her name was Vanessa, the same as his mother's name. She was short, had thin lips and sparkling brown eyes. A button nose centered her round face. Her complexion was shiny black. She had delicate hands and a cute figure. There seemed to be a way about her that could only be described as clean and healthy.

Man, she was be-a-u-ti-ful. Only knew her for three weeks. Really didn't get to know her. Muma had to go screw things up by telling her I was a boxing bum like Dad. She said I'd fight a tiger, if it wore boxing gloves. Wonder why Vanessa never came to see me anymore. Just my Muma shouldna stopped her. Why did Muma mess things up for? Why didn't she love me? Why!? Daddy woulda been proud of my boxing. Why ain't Muma? Why ain't my brothers? Darn Junior—always goin' outa his way to do stuff for Muma. Only thing Junior ever gave me was this scar on my cheek. Crum. I fixed him though. Even though I was only nine. Gotta chair in his face—and did Muma get mad at him knifing me? No! She yelled at me and carried on about messing up his pretty little face. What about me? Why doesn't she love me? Why? Why!!?

Tommy rose and kicked over the yellow bench viciously. He stretched the tassel to its full length behind his neck, and bellowed, "W H Y!!!?"

"Well," came a quiet voice behind Tommy. "I'd be asking myself the same question if I had just got KO'd," said Wade. "I brought you some smellin' salt, but it looks like you won't need it now. I didn't think you'd stay down long. Just got through talkin' to George Montgomery and he says he'll take a third—if you fight Smitty."

"Heck no Wade! I don't wanna fight a washed-up old man again! I've got a 20-3 record, man! Why are you settin' me up with a dummy for?"

"Hell you're 20-3 Tommy, you aren't but 5-3. Those first 15 fights were against chumps like Smitty that shouldna gone 3 rounds. In fact, they shouldna gone 2! Besides, they were in Alabama. This is New York. This is Madison Square Garden! Ain't you got that into your brain yet—you smart-talkin' nigger?"

"Hell," exclaimed Tommy, "didn't I beat Wolfgang Hogarth? Huh!?"

"Yeah. But you sure got canned tonight, didn't ya?"

"But, Hogarth was ranked 11th. So I'm ranked 11th ain't I?"

"But Bobo was 9th, clod, and you ain't gonna go anywhere unless you're in the top ten. How are you gonna live, unless you beat some decent fighters? Bobo doesn't even bring in that much dough. Whatya think, people gonna pay to watch mediocre fighters? And here we are tonight folks, with Joe Smoe, ranked 39th and Tommy Holley, ranked 28th!!"

"Aw shut up, you sound like Sammy."

"We gotta start over Tommy. We'll get back up there again. You just need more time, that's all. Here, have a Coke. You're only eighteen, son. You've got all the time in the world. I don't want you getting hurt."

"But all good fighters fight a lotta chumps at first—but not later. I don't—."

"Shut up Tommy! SHUTTT UP! You're fightin' Smitty and that's that!"

Wade glared at Tommy with bulging eyes that seemed ready to leap out of their sockets. Tommy was too tired to retort further. "I'm gonna go talk to Montgomery about the cut some more—you get showered and ready to leave." Wade wheeled and went through the swinging doors toward his office.

"Damn honky," Tommy said quietly. "I beat your big boy back in 'Bama," he yelled after him. "5-3, crap."

Tommy seated himself on the concrete floor and slipped into a daydream. He began thinking about the first fight he had had in New York. It was against a white from Ireland named Sammy Magee. Sammy was an experienced twenty-five-year-old contender, ranked in the 20's. He had greasy-looking black hair and watery brown eyes. His face was pockmarked and his nose was flat. Tommy knew that it wasn't flat originally. Sammy was about Tommy's size. The crowd bothered Tommy that night. The crowd was unusually

big for a fight between lower contenders. But on this particular Wednesday night only Irish boxers were being featured, and many of the first- and second-generation Irish living in New York were there. These fans would love nothing better than to see an Irishman win.

Sitting in his corner, Tommy was thinking: Boy, would Sammy have loved all of these people with Irish flags! He woulda been yelling for 'em to be thrown out—like blacks are that wave Black Panther flags and stuff. What am I doin' thinking of Sammy at a time like this? What a jerk he is. And this guy must be a jerk then too if he's got the same name. Yeah, but he's white. Well, all for the better. I'll murder him then. "Look kid, don't let the crowd get to ya," Wade said. "This is 'Irish Night' and all the Irish fighters are fighting. Saint Pat's is only four days away."

"What?"

"Tommy remember, keep your left up and feel him out in the early rounds."

Ding! Tommy skipped across the ring throwing left jabs, but Sammy burrowed right in. A left, a right, a left, left, quick right. All to the body. Tommy threw a wild left and Sammy ducked it gracefully. Tommy cocked back to throw a left but received a jolting uppercut which shook him. The crowd stood on its feet cheering as Tommy's coiled left fizzled out. Tommy's legs became wobbly as he clenched Magee in desperation. Boy does he smell bad, thought Tommy. White folks sure do smell. The crowd sensed that Tommy was hurt and started chanting: SAM-MEE, SAM-MEE, SAM-MEE. Beating me again Sammy? Told you and Junior to leave me alone. You gonna get it now. Tommy threw a left hook and luckily caught Sammy square on the chin. Sammy's knees buckled and the crowd gasped. Tommy dizzily bore in. Thump. Foomp. Foomp. Left. Right. Left. Another left. Quick right, left cross. Left uppercut. Right roundhouse. Left jab, right hook. Sammy's nose was bleeding profusely by this time, and with each punch, Tommy aimed for the nose. The more Sammy bled, the weaker he became, until finally the ref stopped the fight. His chest caked with

Sammy's blood, Tommy pranced back to his corner and hugged Wade. Beat one—hug another, thought Tommy. Rotten tomatoes and potatoes followed Tommy to his dressing room.

Thirteen days later Tommy was sitting on his cold stool listening to: "Ladies and Gentlemen—welcome to Madison Square Garden. Tonight, in the light-heavyweight division, we have—in the red trunks—from Bonn, West Germany,—at 170 pounds—Wolfgang Hogarth!" (Crowd cheers). "And in this corner we have—in the white trunks—from Hornyak, Alabama,—at 165 pounds—Tommy Holley!" (Crowd roars again).

The fight went in favor of Hogarth the first 6 rounds because of his experience, speed, and mainly his left jab. By round 7 Tommy's left eye was closed and left nostril was trickling blood. Tommy could hear the ringside commentator saying: "Yes fans, Hogarth is working him over, a left, another left, and still another. A left by Holley, a right that misses. Oh! A solid left by Hogarth. A right by—." Ding!

Sitting in his corner, Tommy's mouthpiece was taken out. "Don't forget, next week Jackie Skinner, number 6, faces Hogarth, fans and—."

"Now look Tommy, keep the left up—the left, and don't telegraph the right so."

"Remember, Roger's Car Wash is offering free balloons for the kiddies and a 25 per cent discount on all—."

"O.K. Tommy?" For the first time during the break Tommy looked up at Wade. God, all I can see is fuzz, he thought. Stupid honky looks better that way. In the mouthpiece went. "Don't hesitate Tommy—o.k.—go get him."

Ding! As Tommy stepped into a left, Wolfgang pushed him with his right and Tommy slipped to the canvas. "He pushed me, ref."

"I know, I know. No knockdown!" As Tommy got up he thought: Boy are you gonna get it now Hitler! A smashing right crashed into Wolfgang's adam's apple, paralyzing it. As

Wolfgang's head was bent forward, Tommy drew back and threw a left uppercut that connected on the jaw. Down Wolfgang went. "And fans this definitely dims Hogarth's hopes against Skinner. Now that things . . ."

Tommy received news coverage because of his victory and Wade could see the money rolling in. For the next fight Tommy's mother came to visit him, dressed at her best. Everything now seemed to be coming up roses for Tommy. But the night before the fight (12 days after Hogarth), a fierce squabble erupted between the two, with Tommy screaming that she didn't love him and Muma screaming for Tommy to quit boxing. Tommy ended up losing control and hit his mother—something he has regretted ever since. Tommy was immediately horrified at what he had done. She left him admitting, "I guess your brothers did hit you too much. They overdeveloped your skill at fighting and now look what they've created. A monster! A monster that hits his own mother!" Tommy was disgusted with himself.

In his next fight Tommy was knocked down 6 time before he snapped out of it and KO'd his opponent in the 10th. "I don't know why your mother left so abruptly sonny, but you better get your butt in gear," said Wade. How could he get his butt in gear when he had struck the only thing he loved, the only thing he craved love from, but never got, and surely wouldn't get now.

Tommy took out his frustrations in his next fight. It was against a white ex-cop named Pete Ross—from San Diego. Pete was short and extremely muscular. He had short, curly blonde hair and very light skin. Blonde and brown hair covered his chest from his neck down to his navel. His flabby cheeks, high ears and protruding incisors reminded one of a disgruntled bulldog.

After three even rounds, Tommy connected with a solid right cross, which sent Pete to the canvas. When he got up, Pete had lost his mouthpiece along with his senses. Back for more, cop? O.K. Be glad to oblige ya. Left, right. You're the kind of creep that killed my Dad aren't ya? Lost something? Here, maybe this can fill the space. Psyched up because he

was fighting a cop—combined with frustration about hurting his mother caused Tommy to throw a punch he regretted later. A smashing right cross drove into Pete's unsuspecting face. Into his mouth and through his teeth and gums it flew.

Half an hour later a stretcher carried Pete to a nearby ambulance. Back in the dressing room, Wade was declaring, "How could you do it? How? You not only knocked a million teeth out, you ripped his gums from his mouth. You—you—you I donno what. You're disgusting." "I don't know why I did it myself, Wade. I shoulda let him pick up his mouthpiece. It—it was on the spur of the moment man. I didn't mean it. I'm sorry now."

"Hope you enjoy this victory! Howya think He's ever gonna eat? Can't put dentures where there's no gums. You're a real bastard!"

Through the swinging doors entered a grubby looking blonde woman. Her face was grimy and blood was spattered on her calico dress. "Mr. Holley?"

"Yes?"

"I'm Pete's wife." Before Tommy's mouth could drop open, she was on him with a switchblade. "AHHHHHH!!!! YOOOUUUUUU!!!!" Tommy wrestled her to the floor, trying desperately to pry her fingers from the dangerous weapon. Wade wrapped his arms around her neck, while Tommy finally wrenched the knife from her hand.

"You dirty coon! I'll get you, I'll kill you!!!"

"Call the cops, Tommy. Hurry. I've got her."

"No!"

"Don't argue, do it!"

Three hours later Tommy was thinking: Man, I've hit my mother and ruined Pete's life and gotten his wife in jail. I shoulda let her put another scar on me. I AM a monster and I—think—I'm beginning to—hate—myself. Over the next few weeks, dark rings grew under Tommy's eyes. The spring left his walk and the fire left his eyes. His shoulders lumped and his boxing skills deteriorated. Wade desperately tried to keep Tommy from going under 161 pounds (light heavyweights' lower limit).

Tommy lost his next fight on a 12-round decision. It was a boring affair which ended in riotous fans screaming about their money. Tommy's opponent was a Chinese-American named Joey Lee. No damaging punches were thrown by either fighter but Lee exhibited more energy than Holley and was awarded the decision.

"Well, Tommy, how does it feel to lose your first fight? You were makin' quite a name for yourself. Beat Wolfgang Hogarth and de-gummed Ross and now ya had to lose to Lee. Lee! My God!"

Why did he have to win for? thought Tommy. Besides, what did he have against chinks? During the fight he had kept telling himself: Go ahead, hit me, that's it, hit me again. I deserve it. I hit my mother. That's it, let me have it.

A month later Tommy fought a black from Kenya named Ken Iba. The fight was another boring encounter, with victory always within Tommy's grasp—if he wanted it.

Sitting on his stool listening to Wade's constant babble before round 7, he noticed Ken and his manager struggling with his glove. "What's goin' on over there?"

"Tommy, are you outa your tree? Now listen. You've gotta—."

"Wade, they're doin' something over—." Ding! As both fighters walked to the center of the ring Tommy motioned to the ref, "Hey, ref, c'mer. Check this guy's glove out." Tommy could see from the corner of his eye Ken's left glove arching for his head. He tried to turn his head away from the fist, but received a blow on the temple. It felt as if the ring was going in circles as Tommy hit the canvas.

God almighty! Zinginginginginginging! God, that ringing! Purple! I can't see. Zinginginginginginginginginginginginging!

Tommy regained consciousness after fourteen hours with a victory under his belt and a knot the size of an orange on the side of his head.

"You all right big Tommy?"

"Sure."

"Guy had weights in his glove," said Wade.

"I figured."

"I shoulda listened to ya."

"No, it's O.K. Sure is a nice hospital room. What's this stickin' in my arm?"

"Glucose."

"Do ya think Ross paid Ken to do this?"

"Might be."

"Hope he did. Now we're even."

Forty days later Tommy was to fight Jose Manguel from Texas. Jose had long, curly black hair and a thin, black mustache. His face was heart-shaped with high cheekbones. He had brown eyes and his skin was light brown. His body was sleek rather than muscular and his arms were very long and thin. The weigh-in was held on the north side of Madison Square Garden. Jose weighed in at 163½ and Tommy at 159 pounds. "God! Wade, what happened? You told me that I was over 161."

"You were kid and I was feeding you right and you ate everything."

"Ah ha ha ha! Looket the sweet talk-ing spade!" Jose exclaimed. "You look like a mumma's boy, better get her to feed you better nex time she cum, if she ain't mad at ya."

"Hey man, lay off, look Wade—."

"Aye sweet-talk, I'm hep man—like man, no jive—or is it no jive, man?" Jose mocked. "Where's mumma, eh?"

Tommy lunged across the scales and knocked Jose on the floor and unloaded a flurry of punches. After the fracas, Tommy was disqualified.

"Hey!! What you doing on the floor, kid? I got Montgomery and I talked him into just taking a fourth of the cut. Ain't that great! Hey, snap outa it! Look, I know you don't wanna do this, especially going back to Alabama and all. Well, maybe we can stay with your Ma, if she still ain't mad at ya and if she don't mind a whitey."

"Ma is still mad at me for sure and I don't wanna fight no black hick. Besides, I might need a rest—or I might even quit."

"Listen here, you're not as good as you think you are! You've been screwing around the last few months. Gotta get

your head on again. First couple of fights you were great and then you let a snook outpoint you. Your trouble is that you get psyched up fighting only whites and cops! You ain't got nothing in you no more. We gotta get it back. Maybe makin' up with Ma will help. It isn't my fault she don't love you and your daddy is dead and your brothers used to beat you and you hate yourself—or so you say. I know a few other people who don't exactly love ya either. Like Ross for one, and I'm gonna hate ya too if you don't snap outa it. What happened to that fighting spirit? If you had only beaten Bobo. So you listen to me—we are going to Alabama and you pack up NOW and if we can we'll make up with Muma."

"Just shut up about Muma. God knows you know I don't wanna hear about that, ain't nothin' I can do. Get off my back, you keep harping on it, just like Jose what's-his-face." (A long pause). Tommy's eyes slowly traveled up Wade's legs and trunk, and finally met his eyes.

"Why you lookin' at me like that for?"

"HOW THE HELL DID JOSE KNOW ABOUT MUMA BEING MAD AT ME?" Tommy enunciated slowly.

Wade slowly licked his lips. "Uh—." His face turned pink as he took a step backwards. Tommy raised the tassel from his lap and stretched it tight. "Look kid—you found me out—here—here's your cut of tonight's fight—and a little more." Wade threw two five-hundred-dollar bills on the floor. "Kid, I was gonna tell ya, believe me, I swear."

"Don't lie, Wade."

"Well, what was I to do, Tommy? I had to get what I could cuz you were goin' downhill so fast."

Tommy gave the tassel some slack. "I thought you were my friend," Tommy quietly said.

"I'm sorry."

"I shouldna trusted a honky. Thanks Wade."

"Well kid, it was either that or have somebody kill ya cuz of Ross."

"I bet the weights in the glove were your idea too." Tommy stares at one of his boots.

"No, they weren't—I swear (raises right hand). Really. I promise. But it's just as well you didn't fight Jose—as weak as you were gettin'. That's why you should still make up with Muma."

"And Ross too?"

"No, you'll have to live with that."

"And you'll have to live with me almost gettin' killed with those weights—if you set it up."

"Yeah—uh—but I didn't I told ya. And I didn't expect you and Jose to mix it up, cuz I planned for you to be disqualified cuz of weight. Jose just went off on his own. Tommy? Tommy?" Tommy's eyes were slowly filling up with tears. "You all right?"

"Yeah."

Wade looked at his black shoes. "Well, you still better pack up—I'll be by in the morning and take ya to the station—I'll be going to Wisconsin. Well—bye." Wade quickly turns around and pushes through the swinging doors. Tommy sits quietly looking at the money on the floor, sobbing softly and slowly. I know I cleared \$3,000.00 against Magee, he thinks. Where am I to go now? Any friends to see? Any relatives? "Why my dear God—why?" I trusted him. I thought he liked me. But he probably hates me. My dear Muma hates me. I hate me. But Daddy loves me, don't ya Dad. But I can't visit him. He looks at the tassel and sniffles. Tommy quickly wraps the tassel around his neck and ties a knot in front. "I'll show 'em, all of 'em. They'll be sorry—so sorry." Man this tassel is so soft.

Tommy responds to the tassel's beckoning by pulling the knot slowly. "I'll show 'em, chumps." Forgive me Wade for messin' up Pete and his wife. Forgive me Dad for hurtin' Muma. Forgive me Lord for what I am about to do. Forgive me Sylvester for being born.

God Almighty! Zinginginginginginginging! God, that ringing! Purple! I can't see. Zinginginginginginginginginginginginginginginginginginging. . .

TIMOTHY B. ANTOZZI
Class of 1978

CAREER OFFICER

The bar and lounge in the Officers Club made pretensions toward being part of the "Real Air Force." The local unit insignia, carved in wood, was placed proudly behind the bar among the shelves lined with glasses and liquor bottles. On the panelled walls, hung neatly beneath each softly glowing imitation gaslight was a copied painting of a World War One aircraft. Except for one customer, the bar was quiet and empty; it was Monday afternoon. The customer, a balding senior officer in a sports shirt and sweater, sat on a Naugahyde stool and leaned forward onto the bar. He was not the only man—because there was, of course, the bartender. He was a youth who had cultivated in himself the local drawl and had a contemporary hairstyle. His father was a retired L/C. The TV above their heads was apathetically tuned to an ancient rerun of *Leave It to Beaver*, which the young man watched blandly, leaning against the bar across from the older man. At the officer's elbow were three receipts from the cash register.

The bartender said in a detached way, "Do you want another one, Colonel?"

"Yes, thank-you."

The officer had decided that he wanted to retire in this area after returning from Southeast Asia, so he arranged to have himself assigned here: an old friend at Military Personnel Center (MPC), an old friend in the Pentagon, and a talk with the local commander. This was a research station, run by a

civilian contractor. The few officers assigned here were mostly young, nonrated, engineering-management types. Colonel MacPherson sometimes felt that he did not have much in common with them.

"You know, I was thinking about my first assignment." The officer looked at his drink, not caring if the bartender was interested.

"Really?" He was right. The younger man still craned his neck up at the TV.

"What sort of bastard in a Zero would shoot at a C-46 loaded to the hilt with drums of gasoline?"

"What?" The officer had somehow managed to achieve in the bartender a level of interest somewhere above that of *Leave It to Beaver*.

"We flew supplies from India over 'The Hump' to China."

"Oh."

"In C-46's."

"Uh huh."

The colonel was still looking at a point somewhere below the surface of the bar top.

"Sometimes, when we landed at Chunking, a Chinese would run out in front of the plane's propellers, trying to get them as close as possible without letting them hit him. It would sometimes screw-up the aircraft."

The bartender frowned. "Why'd they do that?"

"I dunno. My loadmaster said that they thought that an invisible demon followed behind them real close, and that it caused all their misery. They were trying to kill it."

Smiling, the bartender said, "I'll bet flying over there was a pretty interesting experience."

"Yeah. It was, sometimes."

Lt. MacPherson looked up into the night sky over India and thought that it was even more humid than usual. His tracks behind him lay in the reddish perma-mud from the door of the Operations Tent out to the edge of the gravel runway. The runway had been beaten smooth by the efforts of thousands of Indian workmen. He could hear the

I don't think I'd get too upset, because I know—." He rolled over so that his face was above hers, and stroked the dark, wavy hair framing her face.

He said, "Jenny, how can you think something like that? You know I've never loved anyone but you." In the darkness, she smiled. All he wanted was to make her happy. That was really what love was, wasn't it?

"Wally was killed in Vietnam, you know."

"What? Who's Wally?" MacPherson asked.

"Beaver's brother—on TV."

"Oh!"

"You know, that war sure was a waste. . . ."

MacPherson looked at the younger man. "Were you there? How do you know?"

The bartender said, "Well it seems like very little good came of it all."

"Very little good comes of any war . . . but sometimes they just have to be fought."

The C-130 dove recklessly for the end of the temporary airstrip created from a straight segment of road. As the wings plummeted below the top of the three-tier rainforest, Lieutenant Colonel MacPherson flared—and the motion of the aircraft down the runway smoothly became more significant than its motion into the ground. A shirtless Marine beside the runway smoked a cigarette while leaning against a crate, watching. The wings of the C-130 canted rapidly back and forth, as MacPherson made minute corrections. Touch down. The engines roared thunderously as the plane braked itself. MacPherson spun his aircraft around, and taxied back to the waiting Marines. Simultaneously, the rear door lowered itself ponderously in preparation to off-load badly needed supplies.

This mission was almost MacPherson's three hundredth in Vietnam. It had been relatively simple at this firebase, no hassle from the VC. While MacPherson stayed at his post in the cockpit, monitoring the engines, the pallets would be

rolled down the ramp. They'd be airborne again in no time. He listened to the loadmaster on the intercom. The operation was going smoothly, then:

"Oh shit!" cried the loadmaster.

"Johnson! What happened?"

"Just a second, sir. Airman Beatty is in trouble."

MacPherson waited anxiously as the delay increased. They should be out of here!

"Sir, Beatty somehow caught his foot just as we were sliding out a pallet. The pallet went over it. It looks like the foot has been crushed pretty bad."

Safety, of course, is the responsibility of the commander. That is why Article 15 action was taken against MacPherson when he returned to Okinawa. It was a small inconvenience. A month's loss of driving privileges. His son would drive him down to the squadron in the morning before going to the DoD high school up the island. They did not talk to each other on the way.

"Well, I guess its time I took off," stated the Colonel.

"All right, sir. I heard your retirement ceremony is coming up soon. When's it going to be?"

"Oh, I should have said. It was this morning."

"Oh." said the bartender. "Well, good luck then, sir."

"Thank-you."

The officer turned and strode out of the bar, swaying slightly.

PAUL S. KILLINGSWORTH
Class of 1975

MY COMING HOME

The massive concrete structure performed well its purpose of shutting out the present but could not conceal the facts of the past. It had been a long and lonely year without Karla and I knew I had to find her on my coming home.

I pushed away the old wrought iron gate which stands guard over our dwelling place and noticed how it, too, was showing the mark that Time had made upon it. It was slowly being attacked and devoured by the elements of His world.

It was a brisk and damp October night outside and a cold chill passed through me as I met the evening. Very little had changed about the old place. Except for a few new inhabitants, it possessed the same gloomy and forbidding appearance as it had a year minus a day ago. But I didn't care for there was only one thing on my mind—so I began walking.

My long rest had depleted much of my strength and energy and I found it difficult walking toward home. The crispness of the night air only served to further parch my burnt lungs with its sickening freshness. My legs were wobbly like those of a newborn colt and throbbed with pain with each advancing step. But I was hot inside and knew of only one idea, so I kept on with my excursion back to town.

It was late and the townspeople would all be soft and cozy in their warm beds and would not notice my intrusion into their serenity. I was an old friend and acquaintance whom they had forgotten and would make no attempt to remember. I was from the past and must therefore remain hidden and buried.

I came upon the company schoolhouse which my father had erected as one of his many divine public services to his community and paused momentarily to look into those familiar sets of windows which were a part of the room in which Karla had taught the children before she had fallen in love with me. Daily, I used to steal away from the house after my private tutoring sessions to go to the schoolhouse just to catch a glimpse through these windows of the young and petite teacher who had become a part of me. The glass was a barrier to our feelings towards one another, but I knew the day would come when she would be lying by my side. We had to be together.

The night's sounds were music to my ears after having been away so long. There was the utter stillness interrupted by the rhythmic sound of my boots striking the gravel road. The crickets were like flutes singing out their mournful melody while the bullfrogs in Mr. Talmud's ponds answered as do the bassoons in a classical fugue. But Mrs. Michael's dogs had come upon the fresh scent of a rabbit and brought my composition to a close with their incessant barking. I had to be on my way.

After awhile, I turned down Sheol Street, the street on which I had been born and raised and on which stood the mansion that my father, Colonel Charles Lucifer, had constructed many years ago. He had built it shortly after buying from bankruptcy the town's sole source of income, the Helan Mining Works. It was an ominous structure like everything else he had made for himself. The house subjugated the townspeople and elevated those who lived within. I was the Little Master of the house and everything I wanted, I got, and everything I didn't want, I got.

But as I glanced down the long broad street, I could still make out the twin spires of the Helan Congregational Church which protruded above its encircling wall of hemlock trees. I will never forget that day when Deacon Hade went into convulsions and died right in the middle of his fiery sermon on the Everlasting Kingdom of God. I could not keep from laughing over the total irony of the situation and embarrassed

my father in front of the majority of the townspeople. To my great relief, I was never required to attend church services afterwards and I never did. But my task once again took control of my thoughts and I was walking home.

My father, his new wife, and the two hired servants would be the only occupants of this colossal home this time of the year and would not discover my presence among them. The door to the vestibule was unlocked as usual so I entered the double set of doors and gently began ascending the unending flights of stairs leading upwards. The steps were old and creaked with the weight of my body, but I could not hear their plea and continued climbing. The stairs had been the instrument by which I had lost Karla and now, a year later, they were taking me to see her once again.

I passed by the multitude of rooms on the second floor, three of which would be occupied this October night. But I didn't even stop to bid these boarders pleasant dreams for she was waiting for me upstairs.

I reached the third story of the house, the one which had never been used for anything other than for the storage of the family relics which were constantly being changed by each of my father's new wives. The steps led still upward, though, and I followed with blind obedience.

No one but myself and Karla had ever ventured a foot on the fourth floor of the mansion since the builders had left it ages ago to rot in its loneliness. This is where the two of us had made our home and lived together in complete happiness without interference from anything that might keep us apart.

One day after school, I went into Karla's classroom and told her exactly how much I truly loved her and wanted her to be my wife. She only laughed and told me that she was indeed flattered but that I would get over this "crush" in a short period of time. I was determined to have Karla for my own and nothing would suppress my desire.

That night, I took her from her apartment and brought her to this fourth floor and kept her in the attic where we would definitely not be discovered. I cared for her as a mother cares for her baby by feeding and clothing her and by simply

loving my little Karla. I was happy beyond any of my wildest expectations.

But one year ago, I had been taking my child some food up those infinite flights of stairs when an attack took control of me and hurled my body downward until I came to rest on the cold and damp parlor floor. Karla would be alone now in that dark and forgotten attic room, but I would come home to take her with me.

The key unlocked the door and allowed me entrance back into my world with Karla. She was huddled in the far corner of the room, just sitting there and waiting with her eyes piercing across the space between us. I put a blanket around her fragile frame and the two of us began our return trek back to my new dwelling place in the past.

We reached the massive structure just as the first rays of the new morning were splashing over the mountaintop. As I saw the wrought iron gate of the Lucifer vault close slowly behind me, I was certain that Karla and I would not be disturbed by the future. I had indeed achieved my task on my coming home.

CHARLES S. McHENRY
Class of 1976

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

TIMOTHY B. ANTOZZI is a fourth classman from Petersburg, Virginia, who developed his creative writing skills at William and Mary's Richard Bland College prior to entering the Academy. Mr. Antozzi's first loves are tennis and English; he plans to major in humanities.

DAVID L. FLEMING is an international affairs/international politics major from Panama City, Florida. He is presently CIC of the Cadet Falconers, and his own prairie falcon, Attica, is partial inspiration for his drawing and poem.

STEVEN J. KENT a pre-medical major, is from Pueblo, Colorado. He plays varsity football, skis, runs track, serves as creative editor for *Talon*, and has served on Group and Wing staffs. Mr. Kent enjoys travel and has made trips to Europe and South America.

PAUL S. KILLINGSWORTH hails from an Air Force family, carries a double major in computer science and geography, and will soon be entering pilot training. His hobbies include reading, skiing, cross-country bicycling, and SCUBA diving.

HAROLD C. MANSON from Monterey, California, is a political science major who is active in forensics and cadet radio broadcasting. In high school Mr. Manson edited a small literary magazine and worked as a sportscaster and newsman on an AM radio station. He has been writing seriously for almost ten years.

STEVEN S. MCGUIRE is a physics major from Mt. Prospect, Illinois, who has received awards for art in high school. Besides drawing, his hobbies include parachuting, automobiles, models, and skiing.

CHARLES S. MCHENRY is a second classman from Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, majors in life science, and hopes to attend

medical school following graduation. Mr. McHenry's hobbies include tennis, squash, skiing, and playing various percussion instruments for musical functions at the Academy.

ROBERT NIEDZWIECKI a management major from Syracuse, New York, whose interests include skiing, running, and handball. He took several art courses in high school and learned painting and ceramic sculpting as well as drawing. He has won several regional art awards, and one of his portfolios won a national competition in New York City.

EDWARD M. WHALEN from New York City, a history major, is a Second Lieutenant currently studying under a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Friburg in West Germany. His entries were completed and submitted during the spring semester of his first-class year.

The Air Force Academy provides instruction and experience to each cadet so that he graduates with the knowledge and character essential to leadership and with the motivation to become a career officer with the United States Air Force.

