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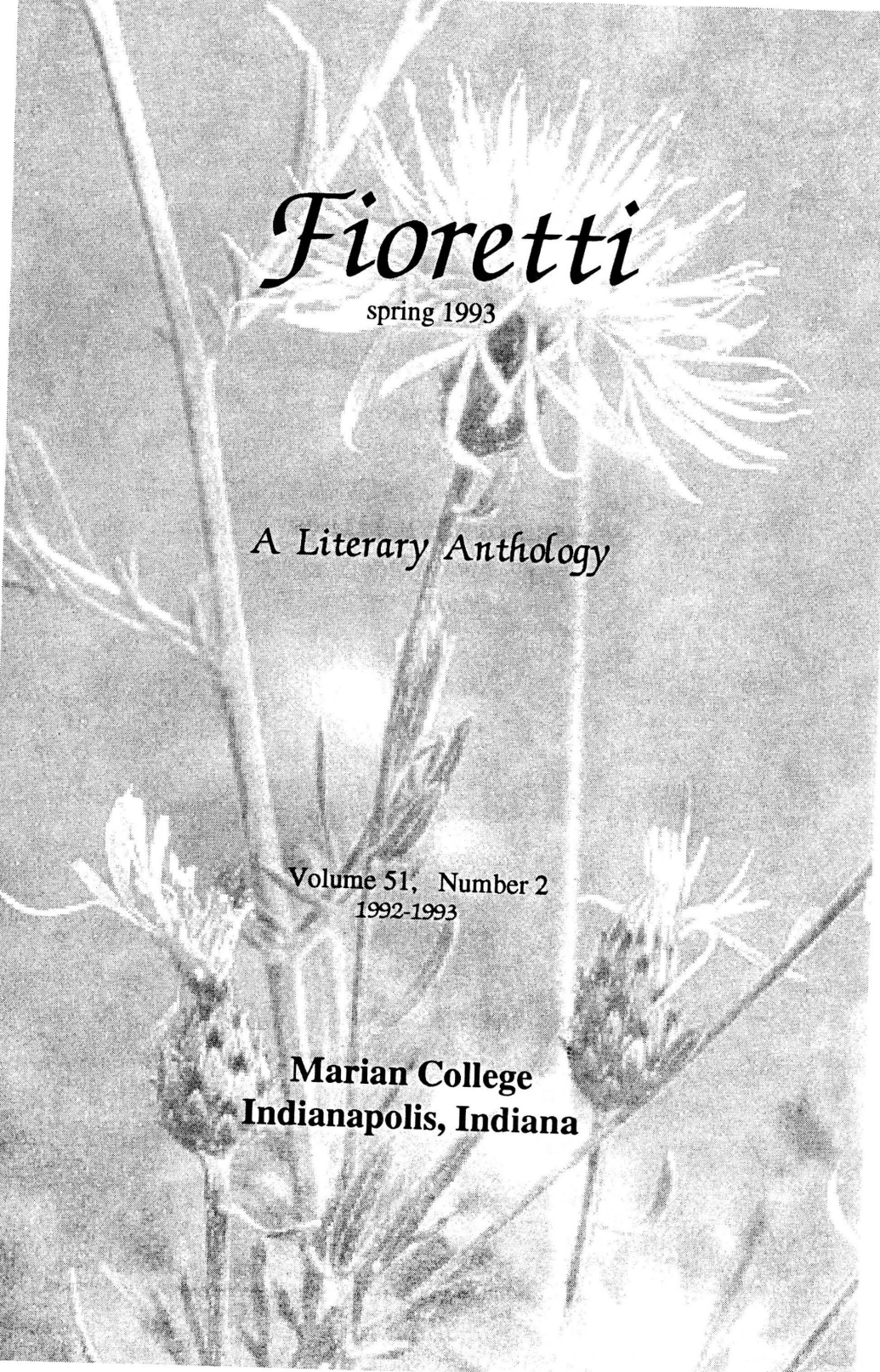

# *Fioretti*

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# Staff

## Co-editors

Jennifer Miller

Claudia Struewing

## Assistant Editors

April Duff

Stephanie Fort

## Advisor

Sr. Stella Gampfer, O.S.F.

## Artistic Design

Claudia Struewing

## Thanks to

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## Up and Down

*by Kurt Cleeter*

Sometimes it does not take much to cause the brain cells to begin activity. One day last summer while I was roaming around a shopping center, I saw two women talking, and as I went past them, one of them said, "I'm going up north to visit my parents this weekend." The other one replied, "You should do that. Family is very important. I went down south to visit my brother a couple of weeks ago." Although some people might say that their speech may not have been grammatically correct, it did illustrate how people think about "up" and "down."

There can be no dispute that what is "up" to one person, may be "down" to another. A man sitting on a chair may look down at his bulging stomach, but a child may look up to see it. Most of us accept that "up" is in the direction of the sky and "down" is in the direction of the Earth. Now, "up north" and "down south" is another matter.

Many people, at least in the northern hemisphere, have the attitude that traveling north is "up hill" and traveling south is "down hill." It is easy to understand this feeling, since all globes and maps have north at the top and south at the bottom. Everyone knows that top is up and bottom is down. Just for ease of explanation, forget that the Earth's axis is inclined about twenty-three and a half degrees and imagine that the north pole is at the exact top. A person standing there could consider everything "down south." But what about the person standing on the south pole? Is everything "up north?" This seems to be a contradiction because if he digs a hole down in the ground and goes all the way to the north pole, he has gone down to get up to the north.

As I said, it does not take much to get the brain to begin thinking. but going down to go up; what will they think of next?

## Fringe

Damn this spring wind!
Forceful as it is fragrant,
Blowing through the hair of pert young girls,
leaving behind only the smell of their perfume.
Loudly I play the music,
yet only the wind I hear.

Let me listen to the music and truly hear!
Alas, it calls forth that seductive, distracting wind,
A mere bird's song to others, but in my head a hellish music.
Alert am I to its call, though finding it less fragrant,
I no longer sense the presence, on its breath, of perfume.
No more does it pass through the hair of young girls.

I turn quickly round the room at the sound of those girls.
Is that their innocent laughter that I hear?
Could that be the scent of their perfume?
Do they bring a softer wind?
Are the flowers they bring more fragrant?
Could I experience once again their thrilling music?

"Never again," answers the lecherous music.
It is the music of primitives that is unknown to young girls.
It is alluring. It is appealing and fragrant,
forcing me forward, its true nature to hear.
I claw my eyes, no longer seeing the damage of the wind,
yet I still smell it laden with perfume.

*I think of the young girls and their sweet perfume.*
*I dream of springs past and the hopeful music.*
*I hope for redemption to come from the old wind.*
*I cry for the lost innocence of the young girls.*
*I touch the bloody stumps of my ears, no longer do I hear.*
*I smell the air and claw my nose, the air is no longer fragrant.*

*Only my touch. I cannot feel that which is or is not fragrant.*
*I can only dream, once more, of their perfume.*
*I cannot touch that which one can only hear.*
*I can only in my head sing my own music.*
*Rapture still! For I could caress the hair of young girls.*
*But it is gone, and their skin dried and cracked by the wind.*

*So faintly now I hear the old, innocent music.*
*I smell the fragrant perfume of a thousand girls.*
*But all I can touch is the razor hand of the spring wind.*

–Dylan Roahrig

The clerihew is a time-honored poetic construction that possesses a jocular mischief all its own. It consists of two couplets of irregular meter commenting upon the person named in the first line. Edmund Clerihew Bentley (1875-1956) invented this form as a means of quietly exercising his mind whenever openly riotous behavior was likely to be frowned upon.

--L. Atwood

*Mr. Mark Hall--*
*Stranger than all.*
*He has a bat tacked to his door*
*And also duck wings and more.*

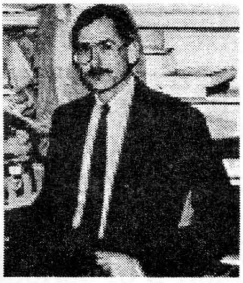
--Nick Shanz

*Madonna the queen,*
*Boy, can she sing!*
*She strips just for fun--*
*Gee! can I have one?*

--Dan Zielinski

*James Goebel,*
*Laterally mobile,*
*Endlessly praised the Romantics*
*And even forgave Shelley's semantics.*

--Alex Swifden



*Doctor Appleby,*
*Professor of Psychology,*
*Could make his students call him "king"*
*Using classical conditioning.*

--Kerri Leffler

**Stranded on Xernu**

*by Mary Jackson*

I'm trying to find refuge for us from the heat coming from the twin suns of the planet Alpha Minor Six. My race is called the Regals and my protector is a Corpus named Unie. I am of humanoid form and do not fight because my protector fights for me. My protector and I were separated from our section during a battle with the Axtols and Leptillians yesterday on the continent Xernu. I was wounded and could not keep up with them when they retreated. The Axtols thought I was dead as I lay still, and I motioned to Unie to stay hidden until they left. Unie and I are biologically linked. We make coenzymes that the other needs. We are totally dependent upon each other when on the battle field, but in times outside war, artificial coenzymes can be given to us.

One sun sets two units of time before the other. A sun is setting now and causing the long eerie shadows before us as we slowly wander along. The flat dusty plains are painted with deep purple and golds and rich reds. It would be beautiful if things were different. Unie is much braver than I; he is not sure that every shadow is a Leptillian ready to attack and finish us off. I know that every step hurts him, and we both fight to keep walking as we are weakened form the heat and injuries. It will soon be time to make a blood transaction. The vegetation is brown and sparse but surprising tall, seeming to reach for the suns. It does not provide us with much shade or protection from the Axtols. I feel the end is near for us if we do not get help soon from our section.

Unie brushes up against me with his feathery back and growls softly. I have been very close to him since I was a boy. I am touched by his affection and unwavering protection and loyalty. I ruffle his light green feathers and am grateful to have never seen his

sharp gnashing teeth turn upon me in anger. We were raised together as a fighting team. I am the director and planner while Unie is pure fighting beast. We communicate by a series of complicated sign language and vocal sounds. Corpus can catch the wind and descend upon their prey, hovering above them while they attack. In the last few months I've seen the Leptillians, the huge, thick-skinned, and snakelike protectors of the Axtols, fight the Corpus and have seen many on both sides die. Protectors mainly fight protectors in battle, but you will be the next victim if your protector is killed or unable to defend you.

Unie an I are symbionts. Without each others' coenzymes, many of our bodily reactions would not occur fast enough, and we would die. If we were unable to exchange our coenzymes form our blood supplies every eight units of time, neither of us would be able to survive during war. We were separated once before for nine units of time and I began to feel dizzy, almost drunk. If Unie had not shown up, we both would have gone into shock and died. Unie and I are as close as Regal and beast can be. Unie would die fighting for me, and I have often thought I would die for him as well. Mostly he listens to me, but sometimes I listen to him too. The sun is still beating down on our tired bodies, and we are getting weaker. Unie clamps his teeth onto my pant leg and pulls, almost tripping me. I respond, "Hold on; we need to find a place where we will be safe from the Axtols and those dirty Leptillians." We need about one unit of time to complete the coenzyme transaction. "Over there--behind those rocks," I say.

I pull off our arm patches and snap the connectors. We lean back and sleep, feeling much better as we awake.

Unie quickly runs to look around the rock, in response to a noise. It is a group of Leptillians and

Axtols coming toward us . Panic shakes me as I desperately try to fight, but I indicate for him to wait. The Axtols are advancing upon us. Out of the corner of my eye I see a Leptillian spring toward Unie. "Unie!" I yell out--but it is too late. The Leptillian would have torn his throat out if I hadn't pushed the ugly creature away from my friend. Unie turns around hissing and hovers in the air above the Leptillian. The Leptillians and Axtols are moving in on us as the second sun sets and everything is covered in darkness.

## As Time Goes By...

You sit and think of me.
A certain voice,
A particular laugh,
A warm smile
And you think of me.
Images of me
Of us
Become clearer in your mind
And a smile –
Or perhaps a tear
No.
No tears...
And I am there again
Again in your arms
And in your heart
Again in your heart
Again I am in love
In love with everything
Everything I see in you,
Everything I feel for you
Everything I know of you.
I am in love with you
And for that moment I am real to you I am there...
But slowly I fade away
Leaving you with your memories
Alone
With what you knew.
The smile slips away
And suddenly the memories blur...

And so you sit and think of me.
No tears...
I am still in love with you...

--Jennifer Bohler

**Breaking the Habit**

*by Kerri Leffler*

Several years ago on a lonely winter night a friendship was made. When I first met my friend, Sy was his name. I had no idea that we would grow to be so close. I had just picked him up for companionship during a long drive. My intentions were to abandon him after the trip. But there was something about Sy that captivated me. Something made me want to hang on to him, keep him around for a while, see where our relationship went.

Soon after the trip, we began spending time together. The amount of time we shared started out small. We would get together every couple of days just to get to know each other. I only wanted to be his friend because that way I would always know that I could end things with him if I ever decided I didn't care for him. And most of the time, I didn't care for him. I would neglect him for days or weeks, and often, when we were together, there were things about him I despised. Yet there were other things I was growing to love. These things helped forget all that I didn't like about Sy, as often happens in a friendship.

Before I knew it, we were together just about all the time. When we were apart, he was all I could think about, and I longed for him. I tried to make sure that we never had to be apart. But, as my growing dependence on him developed, I could not see it. When others accused me of being dependent, I denied it. I still knew in my mind that I could leave him anytime I wanted and never look back. But at the time, I didn't want to leave him. I simply enjoyed his companionship. Sy was a great friend. When I was depressed or lonely or stressed out, he was always there to quietly reassure me. We went to parties together, on trips together; we studied together; or just laid around together.

Then one day I felt that we were growing too close. I was starting to feel suffocated and scared. I decided it was time for us to part. I had to move on, and I needed to be free and independent. But every time I tried to leave Sy, he coaxed me back.. He had a grip on me that I resented, yet could not resist. For several months, I endured this stifling relationship. Then the time came for me to make a decision. Either I learned to live with him, or I left him once-and-for-all. As much as I hated it, I knew I would be better off without him. He had gained too much control over me.

So, I began phasing him out of my life until the day came which I decided would be our last one together. The moment came to say good-bye, and not a word was spoken. I took him into my hand, and then placed him between my lips, crumpling up and tossing aside the package he came in. My flame licked his tip as I sucked, and then I took him back into my hand. I inhaled his cool,smoky flavor,and slowly exhaled. I repeated this process--between my lips, inhale, hold, exhale. I savored every moment, until it was done. And at that moment I threw him down and squashed him out of my life forever.

## Lost in Life

*Doctor, lawyer, pothole filler?*
*No, none of these.*
*Wizard, warrior, psychotic killer?*

*Would someone help me, please?*
*Singer, storyteller, perhaps a tailor?*
*Could I be one of these?*

*Painter, writer, maybe sailor?*
*Someone please tell me,*
*What the hell should I be?*

--Nick Glikis

## It's Just Another Day

*by Jennifer Bohler*

Steadily she watches time crawl in her final class of the week. as usual, Jen has taken only a few scattered notes down in one and a half hours. Finally she closes her notebook and tucks it away in her backpack where it will no doubt stay until the next class.

Walking out of the building, she participates in a bit of small talk with some of the other girls. They bring up such things as the weather, events for the weekend, and the all-around attractiveness of their witty and bizarre professor. Laughing a little, she and the others say goodbye and go their separate ways back to their rooms to prepare for the evening festivities.

She says hello to any familiar faces she sees walking by as she steps into her dorm. Her first stop is her room to drop off her things and, most importantly, check her machine for messages. There is a call from a friend, Ann, who is talking of going to a big party at another school and wants her to go. Typically, her message is about three minutes long and she is speaking at an approximate rate of one hundred words per second. Jen rolls her eyes, smiles and then walks upstairs to visit her friends. First she checks Tiff's room, then Blair's, but sees no sign of either one. Mel is her last hope and as she swings open the door, she is not too surprised to find all three of them there waiting for her.

As she makes herself comfortable on Mel's bed, the usual information is exchanged. They talk little of their classes. For the most part they sit and gossip about who was with whom andwhat so-and-so was wearing. The four girls laugh a little and exchange more stories about the oddities of the day, but Jen feels herself pulling away again. She sets her dazed

stare on a nearby tree outside. When she works up the energy moments later, she makes plans to meet them for dinner and then excuses herself from the room.

Now she sits alone in her room. She decides not to return Ann's call and hopes that she doesn't call back. The muffled sounds of voices are gradually tuned out. Painful memories of the rape roll in like thunder preceding an ugly storm. The fear and anger she feels sends chills up her spine. She had trusted him, and he had used her trust as a weapon to manipulate her. Soft teardrops warm her chilled flesh. She remembers how vulnerable and frightened she felt. She remembers wanting to fight or to scream, but he had sucked all of her strength out of her. Her pride, her dignity, her confidence are things she struggles to feel again. The woman inside of here is fighting and is screaming, but the little girl inside is shaking from fear and lacks the strength to merely hold up her head. She is ashamed and has locked herself in a room of blackness. The woman cries out in a fit of rage, but all Jen can bring herself to do is hug herself gently and curl up in a ball to cry.

Before long she has rocked the little girl to sleep, and she finds the strength to stand. The little girl is tucked in, and the storm has passed, hovering in the back of her mind. She picks her keys up off the dresser and opens the door to her room. As she steps out to close it, she locks the memories in behind her. There is no telling when they will haunt her again, whether it will be a month from now or tomorrow. But as she glances at her watch, she realizes that she was supposed to have met her friends for dinner at six and as usual she will be late.

**The Shameless Nightmare**

*by Jennifer Bohler*

He wipes the salty beads of sweat from his bushy brow. The guys smile and pat each other on the back. He is psyched for the big game against their biggest rival, Higgins Wate University, on Saturday.

He tucks himself into his '92 Acura Integra, a small gift from his family...perhaps an early graduation present, though a year and a half is fairly early. He drives on through his campus of rolling, peaceful hills, smiling and waving at all of the familiar faces. The warm gentle air races through the thick black mane on top of his Roman god-like head. As he pulls into the parking lot of his colonial style dorm, he gets the usual dreamy-eyed looks form the women walking to and from their classes--and as usual they go unnoticed in his modest mind.

More mail awaits him as he walks to his tidy desk. Letters upon letters from universities all over the country accepting him for their graduate programs spill from his deco-file. The fact that the could go anywhere doesn't even phase him. The message light on the answering machine blinks twice. One message is from his worried mother, who wonders if he is spreading himself too thin, and one is form his fraternity asking him to help out. He gives his mother a reassuring call, tells her he's taking the night off to get some rest, only to call the fraternity and commit himself for the night to hazing timid pledges.

The dried sweat has now been chiseled away after his steamy shower. He puts on a favorite CD and plops down in front of the television. Various magazines lay scattered on the coffee table, obviously the work of his laid back roommate, who has taken the week off to get "away from it all."

For once in his day he is still, quiet and alone, but his mind keeps going. He is faced with the

decision to drink or get stoned... a tough choice to make. Slowly he removes himself from the couch and heads for a particular cabinet, a familiar cabinet, across the room. His bold arms pull a nearly full bottle of Jim Beam and a small Cleveland Browns shot glass from its innards. He walks back to his comfortable couch and keeps a close eye on the time, remembering his devout loyalty to his frat brothers. The first shot of whiskey goes down surprisingly rough as he recalls a horrifying memory.

Angrily he slams another shot; he tries to run away. He still cannot admit what he has done to her even though it haunts him each and every time he is alone with himself. But he knows. Somewhere inside he knows that he has taken advantage of her; he knows or he wouldn't be running. She suffers now, and he wishes he could take her pain away--he wishes he could earn her respect again. But he can't, and he won't; at times like these he wonders if he can live with himself and surprisingly he can...because he denies.

The night grows on like the sorrow of a young girl's cry. The frat house never sees him. The bottle is empty except for the last drops which drip slowly onto the cold floor below. He sits like a dummy, his head tilted back and his mouth drooped open. It's a shame he'll wake up with his head like a time bomb and little traces of dried drool on the sides of his face.

## Enlghtening Experience

Morning -
A blinding nightmare.
Penpoint to spotlight
Slits in my eyes
Continuously moving through
My retina, giving such initial
Pain that I scream
As its rays cut
Through my vision.

--Corey Cleary

## Redwoods II

*Standing tall in the morning sun*
*The Redwoods never falter.*
*They are always strong and always secure*
*How I envy them–*
*For I am but a little girl*
*Not too quick to make decisions*
*Sometimes feeling weak and vulnerable*
*How I envy them.*
*I walk over to embrace the Redwood*
*To absorb its mightiness if I can.*
*But I step away and realize*
*How cold it is to touch, how hard–*
*While I am warm and soft*
*So I embrace myself instead.*

--Jennifer Bohler

## The Mysterious Yellow Rain

*by Greg Waning*

It was a normal day at the office when the phone rang and my partner Wilson picked it up. By watching his facial expression, Iculd tell that something perplexing was being discussed and would need our immediate attention. After the phone conversation, Wilson said, "Well Bill, we have ourselves a real stumper this time." As we left the office, he began expaining the next problem facing Wilson and Dunn, Scientific Investigations.

Wilson began where the caller started, by saying. "Here's the situation: everytime it rains, some of the people in this area develop yellow skin blotches, that become red and irritated. Some people have a stronger reation than others." He continued, "Another problem that they are facing is that if the sun comes out immediatley after it rains, all the metal surfaces become pitted--except aluminum and chromium."

After several hours of travelling, we finally knew we had arrrived when we saw the new chemical processing plant just outside of town. Once in town we inquired as to who we should talk to, in order to gain some information about the mysterious yellow rain. We contacted several individuals who complained about being afflicted with a skin condition that was a chronic problem after a rain storm. One individual stated, "After any rain storm that I have been exposed to recently, I wake up the next day with yellow blotches on any part of my skin that had been uncovered." He continued by saying, "I am a lucky one though, I have a relatively light reaction; the lady across the street breaks out over her entire body, whether directly exposed or not." Wilson and I then proceeded to interview the lady, and she gave the same symptoms and problems already mentioned by the caller and the man across the street.

Wilson and I decided to do a little research into the exact symptoms. We wanted to find out if there was a prior history of this condition in this area or elsewhere around the country. After spending a couple of hours in the library, we turned up some startling clues. First, Wilson mentioned the possibility of acid rain contributing to the problem, and we agreed to look into that possibility. Another reference that I turned up concerning the yellow blotches dated back to the Second World War. The article stated that one side effect of research on nitrogen-metal alloys caused similar symptoms that we were encountering. The article went on to discuss possible causes but was eventually labeled "Unsolved: Inconclusive Evidence."

Now that we had some possible leads, we wanted to track them down. First, we went to the local weather station and inquired about the possibility of acid rain causing the problem. The meteorologist said, "The redness and irritation could be cause d by acid rain, but he yellow blotches are not a common side effect, as far as I know." But he did give us a simple test to perform on the water to see if there was acid present. Sure enough, when tested, the rainwater contained acid, although when further tested the acid was not of a type that was commonly found in the local rain.

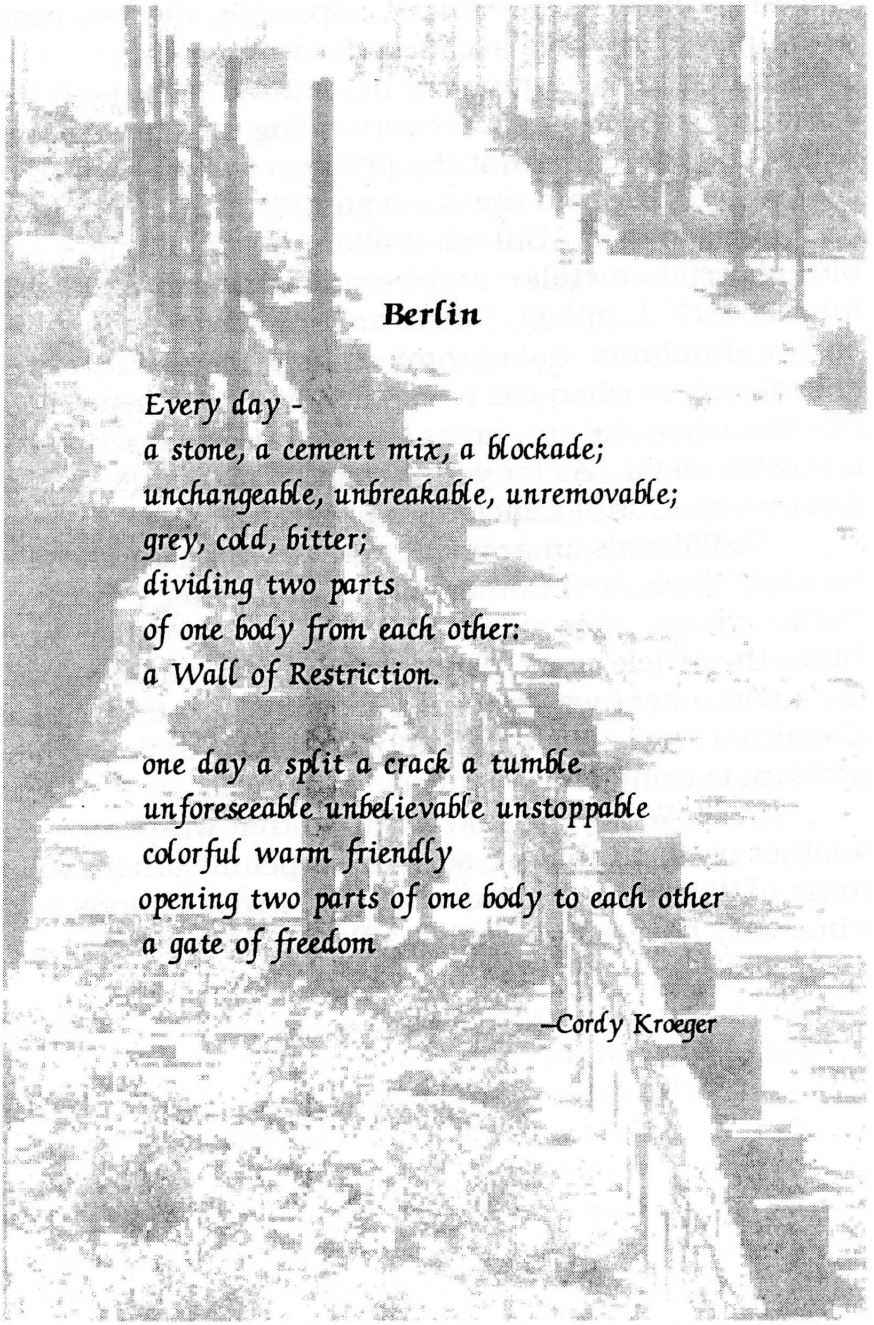
After contacting the local chemical processing plant and consulting a general chemistry text, I told Wilson that the problem was solved. He was amazed that I had solved the problem so quickly while he was still baffled. I replied, "What got me thinking was that account of similar symptoms as this case when research was conducted on nitrogen-metal alloys. I remembered seeing the new chemical plant outside of town, and then I found out that one of their by-products is a nitrogen compound. I then talked to the personnel department and found out that several of

their employees had also reported skin conditions similar to the ones we noticed, especially after working with nitric acid. This accounts for why nothing substantial turned up on the acid rain test, but yet the rainwater was acidic. After consulting the chemistry text, I knew for sure that the problem was nitric acid that was getting into the rainwater."

Wilson said, "But what about the rain only pitting certain metals-- and how did the nitric acid get into the air?" I replied, "Nitric acid dissolves all metals except aluminum and chromium, and the metals are only dissolved when the nitric acid has been heated up--like when the sun heats up the rainwater when it is still on metal. As for your second question, why don't we wait until tomorrow's paper."

To Wilson's amazement, the paper had an article entitled "Nitric Acid Contaminates Rainwater." Further down, after mentioning, the firm of Wilson and Dunn the article read, "The escape of nitric acid into the environment was traced to a faulty filter in the new chemical complex, which has been replaced; the whole problem is completely rectified."

"Well, Wilson," I said, "I guess that wraps up another problem that we solved. Hopefully others will think of Wilson and Dunn, scientific Investigations when they have a seemingly baffling problem."



## Berlin

*Every day -*
*a stone, a cement mix, a blockade;*
*unchangeable, unbreakable, unremovable;*
*grey, cold, bitter;*
*dividing two parts*
*of one body from each other:*
*a Wall of Restriction.*

*one day a split a crack a tumble*
*unforeseeable unbelievable unstoppable*
*colorful warm friendly*
*opening two parts of one body to each other*
*a gate of freedom*

—Cordy Kroeger

As we pass the stapler to the Fioretti's newest editors, we would like to thank the Marian College Community for their support and contributions during the past two and a half years.

To April and Stephanie:Happy PageMaking!!!
Jenny and Claudia

The next issue
of the Fioretti
will be coming out
in December 1994. We look
forward to your contributions
including: photos,
pen and ink drawings,
dramas,
short stories,
and poems.