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The drawing on page 21 is by John Klemen, and is the winner of the art contest.

The cover photo was taken by Tom Kasper and is the winner of the photography contest.

The center photo was taken by Jim Kilps; the poem,Back Then, was written by Mel Arnold.

The picture on page 28 was taken by Mr. Paul Fox.

ODE TO THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Lonely boy
 leaning on a tree

Rejected
Dismissed
Feared
Hidden
Mocked
Neglected

Watching life pass you by

And your response, my child?

Acceptance
Reaching out...
Delight!

Let us go to school to you, my boy.

Sr. Francis Assisi

SOMEWHERE

Somebody loves me, somewhere.
But you don't know—
No, you don't care—
All you see is you.

I used to be—I still am.
Why can't you understand
Like they did—like I do—
like you should?

Somebody loves me somewhere
And after I leave maybe you'll
Love me too.

Greg Bauer

Crumpled
falling leaves
grasp at the wind
desperately seeking a hold
with transient
strife.

Only a few
glide
down
in
resignation.

It speaks,
whispers a question
within.
Does this exemplify...
life?

Diane Gerstbauer

HIDDEN MESSAGE

Seeds planted
Soon grow
Hopefully
Sun-nourished
Blossom to
Fruition
Literary
Making for
Understanding, comprehension
Self-acceptance
Expression (free?)
Of your own
Seeds of life
Yielding perhaps
Painfully
Bitter fruit
But fruitful nonetheless
Because being
BLACK FRUIT
Therefore sweet
In spite of
Bitter
: "Sub-text!"

FOR: HU. 210

Sister Francesca

UNTITLED

The skinny
 Doe-eyed ebony-colored
 Youngster runs thru the alley
 Clutching his prize possession.
 A long ago discarded toy of the
 Sad-faced youngster
 Who rides in the big car that
 Brings my Momma home.

To our ebony-colored brothers
 This sad-faced youngster lives in
 Another world
 A world no one not his color can enter
 Unless....they carry a shopping bag
 And wear a white uniform....
 Like Momma.

Helen Randolph

OURSELVES

GETTING

Who are WE?.... ta ke a good look!
 Where are WE? look around!
 What are WE goin' to do?.. ..Think!
 What does WE mean?

Deborah Clay

TOGETHER

TRIPPING

Return the love I give you
 Care more for me
 than I am able
 to care
 Hold me, cherish me....
 Walk with me to the
 Earth's end
 Come see

the sun
 with
 me.....

Beverly Jones

BROTHERS

TO SISTERS

Speak Black brothers
Tell what's on your minds
Listen, Black sisters
Give your brothers some time
His words are not for himself
But rather for you
Yes, brothers have done sisters wrong
But that's no reason for you to do the same;
You sisters must keep yourselves together
And help the brothers do the same

Heartaches, setbacks have caused him pain
Retaliation, loud soundings won't take
THAT away.
So, listen Black sisters
Give some brother your time.
Then you can speak and tell him what's on
Your mind with words FOR him, not against him.

Michael Ware

AN APOLOGY

Your persistent voice pleads
Like a festering wound
Running with bitterness and hate;
The scar not yet healed
Widens and oozes with pain,
Burning with anger, the voice
LOUDENS
Teeth grit white as the race you hate;
You scream lashing words to ease your hurt.

I hear you and I listen
(Not always understanding)
But I offer my hand to admit
Our mistakes
And you only slap it away.....
Still, I apologize!

Dean Haklin

LONELY

How quickly she looked away in almost flirtish embarrassment. She was sitting a few tables behind me as I pondered upon her reflection in the quiet barroom mirror. I caught another quick glance and a barely noticeable smile which prompted me to turn on the bar stool. As I stepped off, it swung with a thud and she looked up. I noticed a sparkle in her eyes which matched her brownish hair.

"May I join you?"

She nodded with her eyes and smile.

"I'm Al Spenser. What's your name?"

"Jean Dougan; it's not very busy here today."

"No, can I buy you a drink?"

"A daquiri on the rocks, please."

"Bob - two daquiris on the rocks."

And we talked.

"It's a lovely day; let's walk

It was a dry Autumn day with a breeze that left a chill in the shade. As we sat on a bench watching reddish leaves fall by, I touched her hand, then held it. We small talked and felt warm in each other's eyes. I leaned to kiss her lips and knew things would go well.

I looked into the mirror again and she was gone. Such is the way with a lonely man's fantasies.

Gary Hall

Silent, lurking behind dark shadows,
Negations of negations watch
the contradictory movements of
 confused lives
Caught in traps baited with
 ladies and tigers
 beauties and beasts
 companionship and loneliness
 love and hate;

Confused lives, all of us—
none of us knowing
tangible definitions,
definite emotions,
assembled dreams,
yet all of us aware of
the thinness of the lines
 separating
negation from negation

Pat Paquin

WHISPERS OF NORTH WINDS

Gently she stroked the costume with a four-jointed finger, smiling happily as silver-lavenders rippled and shimmered up and down the soft feathers. Tonight she would be the Windlith, the winter creature, the night creature, born in the crystal caverns of the high mountains, flitting through the night air crooning songs of sleep to the North People and brushing hot cheeks with cool snowy wings only to die and melt away with the first rains of spring. Slowly she slipped into the gauze and warmth and feathers and stared at her reflection--a single arched eyebrow frowning over lidless eyes, a bony body encased in feathery garb. She was satisfied. The guests would be properly admiring. Quickly her face received the last sprinkling of silver dust as the Catleth stretched, yawned, and announced that the first of the guests had arrived. "Thank you, Catleth. And Catleth, please be amusing tonight." She knelt down and murmured into a silky, round ear, "Please, my most beautiful and clever Catleth." The lashed eyes flickered for just a moment and, slowly, the tiny legs tucked themselves under the golden fur and the Catleth slid across the floor to the door.

The door slid open and into the room on the whisper of sparkling air glided legends of the past, fantastic in their curling cornucopia ears, wild glaring eyes, dagger-sharp claws, and gowns that floated around thin bodies. As each one filed silently by, she made polite exclamations over each costume and then introduced them to the Catleth who let them into the next room softly lisping out remarks that were met with giggled delight.

The room glowed and rippled with a thousand violet lights that cascaded within the walls. Gay, haunting melodies wove themselves among the lights and the air was scented with excitement and warm, heady drinks that swirled within crystal horns. In a corner a group gathered to watch fascinated as the Catleth blinked lidded eyes and, bored, fell asleep. "Simply fantastic. The creature can actually close it's eyes." In his sleep, the Catleth chuckled. Outside the snow fell.

The Windlith glided toward the Catleth and once more whispered into a round, silky ear, "Sing for us, Catleth." The wise eyes blinked and the gold fluff slid off the couch to the floor. A hush fell and a hundred pair of eyes turned to stare at the lonely ball of fur. Somewhere the melody lost its gayness and the tempo became wild. The Catleth began:

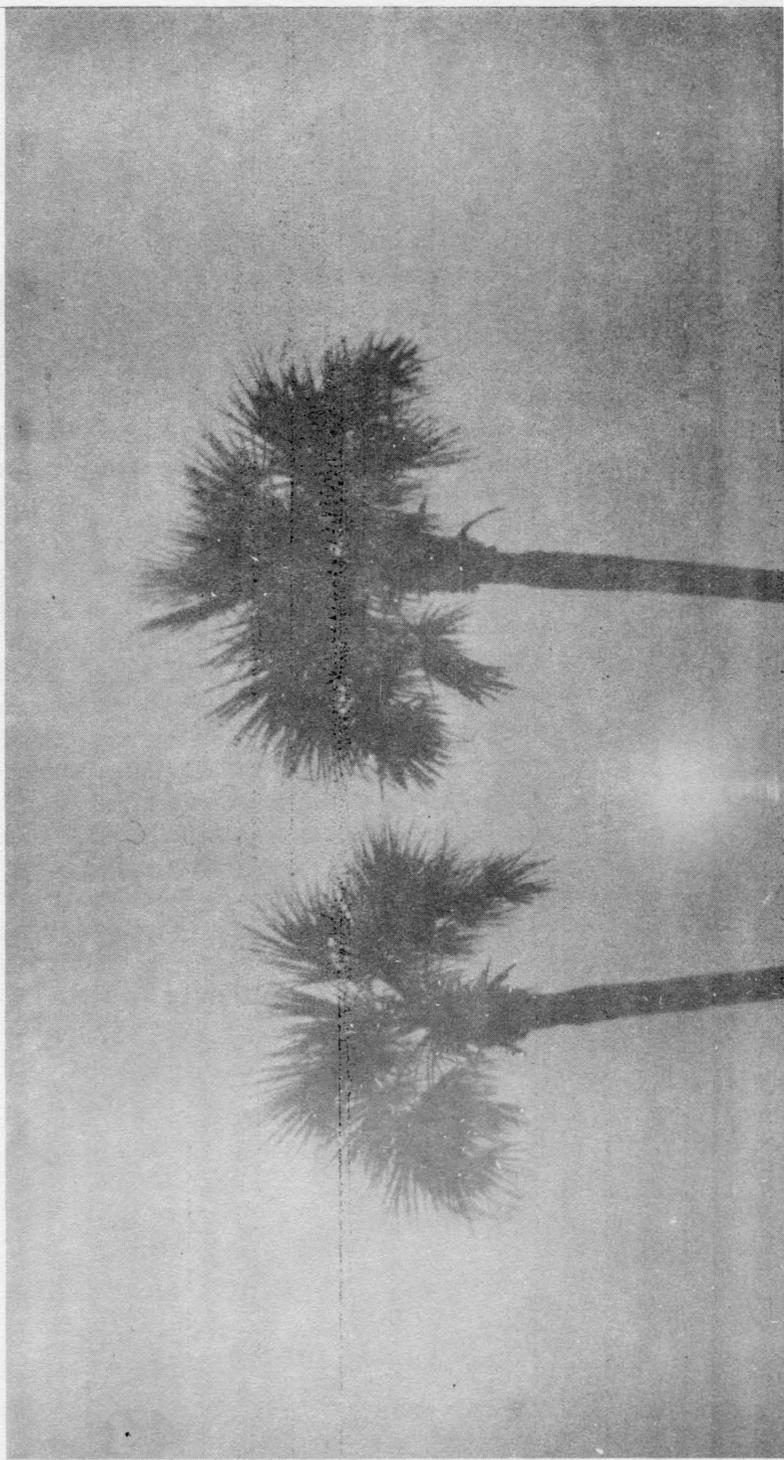
From the caverns of the Windlith, from the marshes of the Lun, in their shadows it lies hidden, from the shadows it will come. Twisting, turning, spinning, whirling, from the Shadows it will come.
To the mountains of the North Ones, to the icy splintered peaks it will wander, it will summon the North Ones whom it seeks.
Calling, questioning, never resting, for the North Ones whom it seeks.
In the caverns I have sought thee, in the marshes wild and free.
Now come to my home, come away with me.
Chilling, freezing, never ceasing, again, again, the Mist will call.
Those of winter, those of snow, hear the summons, fear to go.
But the calling Mist is urging and they leave their ice and snow. Haunted, staring, bright eyes glaring, now they leave the ice and snow, in the violet depths they'll fade, beckoned on to some dim glade.
Lost in shadows, lost in gray, no longer catching sight of day. In the morn the snow world glittered, with the sun the iced lakes shone.
But none could see the crystal witness, to the Green Glades they had flown.

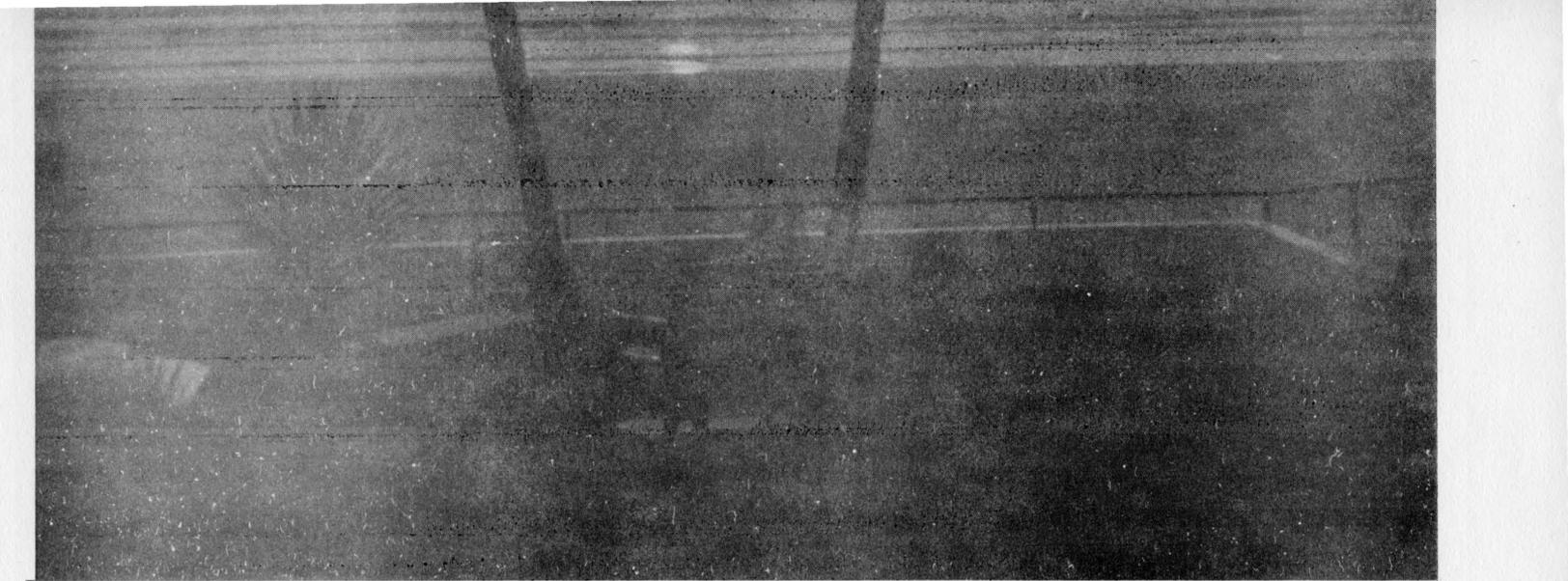
All eyes gazed hypnotized into the drooping eyes of the Catleth. All figures continued swaying to the lispig chant that had died and faded away. The music changed. The time was gay and laughing; partners were grabbed. It was a silly song and nothing to think too long about. No one saw the Catleth slide silently away and fall asleep with a secret smile on the wise old face.

The snows fell. Inside crystal horns were filled and refilled and couples laughed drunkenly, clutching and swaying against the others as they whirled around the room. Then, softly, from outside the snow-muffled world, there came a lament, a plea, a command to follow. They listened and were afraid. The laughter began anew, louder and forced, and frantic to drown out the persistant call. The music swelled and throbbed and the couples danced faster, becoming fantastic blurs of hot reds and blues and tangerines. Somewhere from the midst of the blur there came a tinkling of a hundred crystal horns as they slipped from relaxed fingers.

In the morning they were gone, silver feathers, masks, and gauzy sparkling stuff strewn on a crystalline floor. The Catleth opened drowsy eyes and allowed itself a contented smile before giving one long yawn.

Sue Fullerton





BACK THEN

*I was a happy man
back then.*

*I dreamed of walking
on white sand,
and kicking empty cans,
and putting shells in a pan
while holding your hand.*

*But now the tide has gone away--
leaving marks upon the sand
Making me feel like a small craft
in a large bay*

Oh God--why didn't you stay?

THERE WASN'T ENOUGH TIME

I. Routine:

I woke up with a start, and in one frantic, habitual motion quenched the alarm that had spewed forth those atrocious reverberations. Dammit, I thought, another six hours wasted. I lit a cigarette, opened the window, and thanked God for tobacco and sunshine.

II. Synesthesia and random thoughts:

It was such a breathtaking scene. I stretched farther out the window in order to capture the full spectrum of the vivid surrounding sensualities. A warm, dry breeze, the chiaroscuro-panorama caused by the intense vernal sun and the accompanying shadows, the acute odor of ripened animal excrement, and the conglomerated polyphony, arising from the daily farming routine—all converged to form a mental crescendo. It was intense, yet euphoric. I took another puff of my cigarette.

I was precariously balanced on the weather-worn sill, but it only added to the excitement of having my torso completely engulfed by the exterior atmosphere. I watched in fascination as the ashes from my cigarette swirled and tumbled during their flight to the ground below; I realized that they too were victims of gravity. Wouldn't it be splendid to be weightless. I wondered if Issac Newton smoked? (The story of the fig dropping on his head did seem a little far-fetched. He probably pondered upon cigarette ashes, but history books might find this explanation of his inspiration somewhat anti-climactic.)

On the ground below the window, I noticed an energetic insect scurrying among the flora. Aiming carefully at the creature, I slobbered, but the expectorate disintegrated before it reached the ground. I wondered why I even tried; I was never a good spitter, and after all, the bug deserved to live.

III. The beginning of forever:

The door behind me had been silently opened, but I knew Peter had entered the room, for the moans and squeaks inherent to the ancient wooden stairway had disclosed the syncopation of his footsteps. "Are you ready?" he asked.

"Gimme a couple more minutes."

"Very well, but please hurry—the others are waiting."

I acknowledged; he smiled and left. I pulled my body back into the room, went to my closet, and scanned the wardrobe. What should one wear when being presented to Him?

IV. Evanescent being:

The coroner and his assistant entered the room, paused only to momentarily survey its interior, and proceeded to examine the corpse. Simultaneously, they removed worn, ring-bound notebooks from their coat pockets, and inscribed their remarks regarding both the paraphenalia discovered at the death site and the general condition of the body; they affirmed the probable cause of death was narcotic overdose. Each carefully closed his notebook. Turning to his assistant the coroner said, "Well, doesn't look like this rain is going to let up. I know it's late, but what ya say we stop on the way home and drink a beer?"

V. Salvation and Eternity:

I wept. I took a final drag off the cigarette and crushed its flame on the wood of the window sill. Life was so beautiful, but I blew it.

Peter was still waiting in the hallway. I walked towards him; he extended his hand in a gesture of sincere encouragement. I smiled and said, "Let's go."

John Klemen

MAROONED

Meet Zeke.
He installs back seats in cars.
Not for Ford, which years ago
had a better idea
(called the assembly line),
but for Cadillac.

Zeke drew first air
in Appalachia
but left West Virginia
six years back
for the factories of Detroit
and a bit of the better life.
Now he hits the clock (late),
swaps dirty jokes
with the boys on the line
calls the Yale foreman a yokel,
picks his teeth on coffee breaks.

Zeke is a cell of silence
marooned in a sea of sound
He moves (without motion)
on endless waves
of conveyor belts,
rocks and rolls
the furious rhythms
of industry,
dances the desperate dance
of American technocracy.

One day after coffee break
Zeke inserts something
beneath the back seat

of a golden Coupe de Ville,
clutches a crazy smile inside
for the rest of the week.

A month later
the vexed owner
of a golden Coupe de Ville
at last locates that rattle
beneath the seat---
a Coke bottle.
Inside, scrawled in grease,
a note that reads:
"Well, what the hell!
You finally found it
you rich sonofabitch."

Joe Kempf

FOR THE GOOD TIMES

And those were the good times—
I guess

Looking back now
Trying to be conspicuous
In our inconspicuous youth
Wanting to be heard and seen
In our unwatched youth

But, those were good times—
I guess
Feeling back now
We heard each other
If no one else did
We saw each other
If no one else did

Yes, those were good times—
I guess
Thinking back now
What we saw and heard
Had little meaning
We were too busy
Trying to be meaningful

Still, those were good times—
I guess.

Gary Hall

TRYING

WHAT IS REAL?

I can see you in my mind
Among my life's confusions
Are you real within my thoughts
Or one of my illusions?

Are the questions in my heart
Those I can not show?
What is real and what is not
Does anybody know?

Sherman Crouch

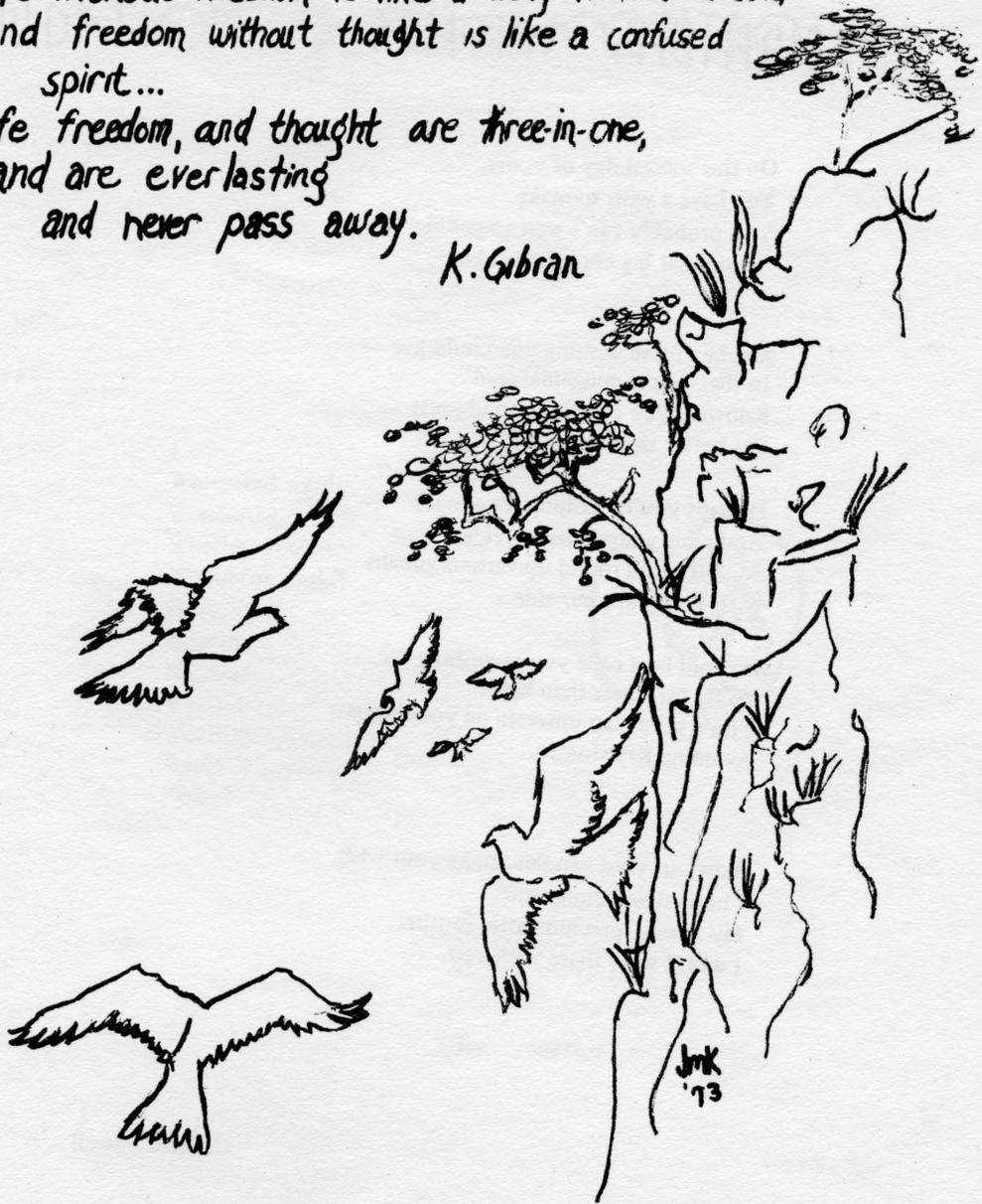
a blade of grass
a spear of green
shoots its fragile way
Towards heaven.

Donna Bruns

Life without freedom is like a body without a soul
and freedom without thought is like a confused
spirit...

Life, freedom, and thought are three-in-one,
and are everlasting
and never pass away.

K. Gibran



John Klemen

BIRTHDAY WISHES

On this special day of yours,
You have a wish to make.
You probably can't wait to gobble
Your great big chocolate cake!

Maybe you're wishing you could live
In that "most congenial spot",
Knowing you could duel and joust
Far better than Lancelot.

Perhaps you're wishing for a mask
And a big white horse to ride,
So you could round up various villians
With Tonto at your side.

It could be a cape you're wishing for,
To fly far faster than light.
You'd scour the universe on your quests,
Avoiding Kryptonite.

Blow out your candles, make your wish,
I hope it will come true.
My rowdy, precious little brother,
I wish I were there with you.

Cathy Caldwell

TREPIDATION — BEYOND CONTROL

I
Whispered warily
Wondering
Whether you
Would (or could?)
Hear
Here in
My heart
Where I
Woefully (wounded?)
Warily Whispered
“Why?”



Sister Francesca

WON'T

Once in an age a man finds a golden locket
—something very special to the birth of his freedom
and key to eternal happiness

He doesn't wish to lose this locket
nor does he will this treasure any treatment unfitting
a goddess. She brings his dreams to fulfillment
and his expectations to a close—a joy no one,
no face can match nothing can destroy it.

Within this locket lies the truth of a man's heart
and the destiny of his soul.

His spirit clings to the catch, waiting for it to open.

Ron Seibal

DIFFERENT

Short Story Contest Winner

The year was 1959. I had finally reached the age of maturity. I had just turned six that year. I learned something that I knew I would remember for the rest of my life.

It all happened during that summer. One day I was outside playing with some of my friends. We played for a long time and then we all went home for supper. As I walked down the street singing to myself, I saw Joey coming from the opposite direction. Joey was a very good friend of mine, so I called out to him. He looked up at me, and then he did the strangest thing. He crossed over to the other side of the street, and then he started running without saying one word. I really thought he was acting weird. When I got home, I told my mother about it. She told me not to worry because he was probably just upset about something. Since I knew my mother was the smartest woman in the world, I believed her and forgot all about the incident.

As the days went by, I never saw Joey any more. It was as if he had moved away, but he had not. I decided to go find Joey and ask him why he did not come and play with me and my friends any more. I went looking for him; I found him at the playground. I called his name, and he saw me and started running. I decided to chase him to find out why he was running. Finally he stumbled and fell. I ran up to him and asked him why he was running. He would not say anything, so I asked him if he had gone crazy. He looked up at me and said, "Listen, I did not want to have to tell you this, but I guess I had better. My mother said that I can not play with you any more because you are different." Then he got up and kept running.

I watched him until he disappeared. I stood there, and all I could do was keep repeating the word "different, different, different" over and over. It sounded like a loud echo in my ears. I started walking slowly down the street with a frozen look on my face. I thought to myself that maybe I had just imagined that he said that. No, I could be wrong, he had actually said that he could not play with me any more because I was different. I looked down at my skin, and for the first time I realized that I was different. It really hit me hard. It was like a slap in the face. I was Black, and Joey was not. I had never thought that my being Black would make a difference, especially to Joey or his mother. I had the biggest lump in my throat. I went back home to my room and just sat there staring at the wall not wanting to believe what I had heard. My mother asked me what was wrong, but I could not tell her because I was too hurt.

The weeks went by and soon summer was over. I saw Joey occasionally, but he was always with his friends and I with mine. When school started we were in the same class, but I never talked to him. In fact, I hardly talked to anyone. I had built a wall around me, and I did not want to let anyone in. Then one day Joey told me he wanted to talk to me. He asked me why I never talked to him. I told him it was because of what he had told me, that I was different. He looked at me and he said, "I am really sorry about that, but my mother told me I had to stop playing with girls, and since you are a girl that left you out."

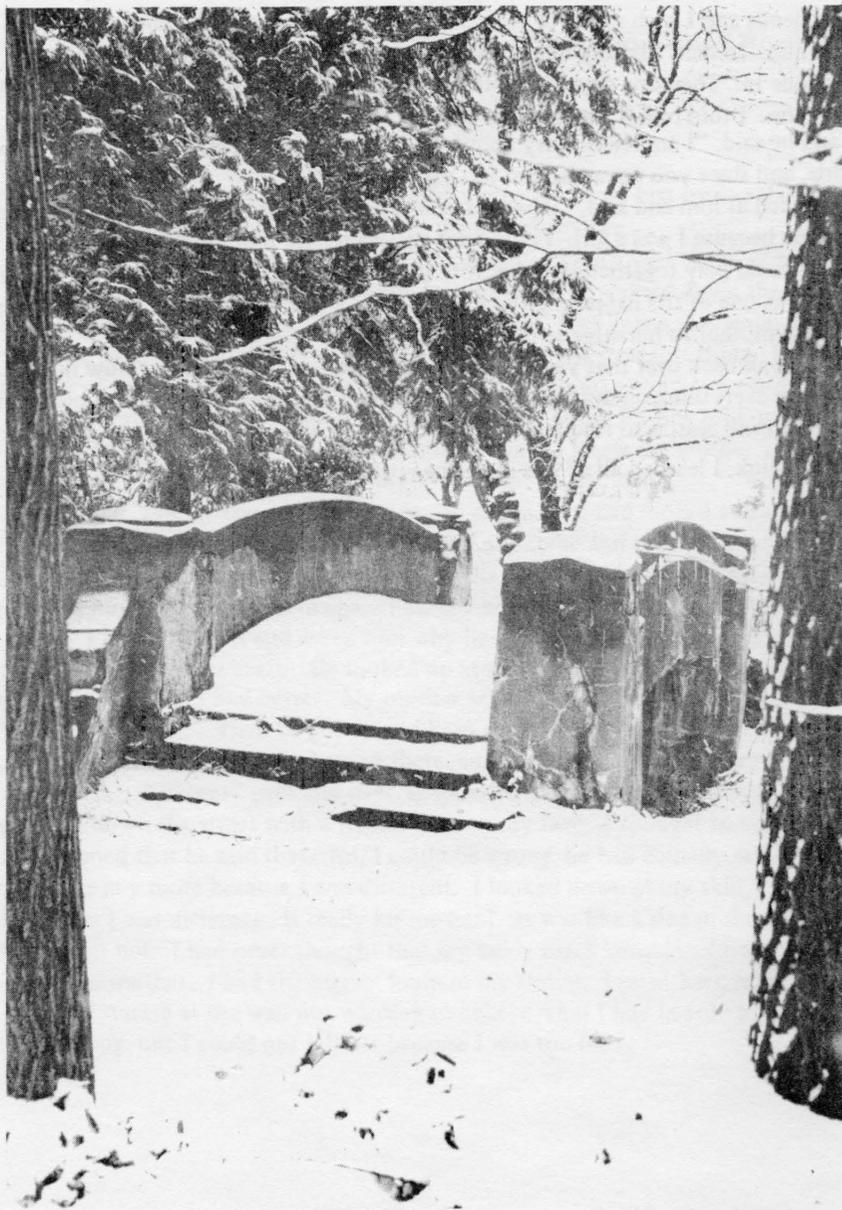
I looked at him and said, "What did you say?" He told me again that he had stopped playing with me because I was a girl. I could not believe it. He told me that now that we were in school we could play together again because there were a lot of games for both boys and girls in school. I was one of the happiest girls alive. In fact, a few weeks later I received an invitation from Joey's mother to his surprise birthday party.

As I think back over that year, I realize that I learned a lot. I know now that I can not always blame everything on my being Black. I learned that even though some people may not like me, that is no reason to find fault with everyone. I also learned never to jump to conclusions.

Just think, I learned all of this at the beautiful age of six.

Denise Evans

DIFFERENT



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