

WRITING UCONN

fiction
essays
poetry

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P.O.H.

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This second issue of WRITING UCONN has been prepared by Matthew N. Proser and William Sheidley, with the assistance of Barbara Rosen. The cover design is by Pat O'Hara of the UConn Co-op. Julie Launhardt typed the manuscript, and the booklet itself was produced at University of Connecticut Publications.

Our objective remains the publication of the best student writing done at UConn, and we once again invite undergraduates to submit work for consideration. In this issue we have also included two pieces of graduate writing which seemed especially pertinent to university life. Regrettably we cannot print all the good writing we get. We wish we could. But we promise to give each submission a thoughtful review.

We hope that through the pleasure WRITING UCONN gives, all students will come to make good writing a real part of their lives.

SHADES

Lisa Brush

Gwenn sits down and slides all the way over to the window, catching her jeans momentarily on the vinyl piping that runs down the middle of the bus seat, but then slips smoothly across until her knee presses against the metal side of the bus. It is early, and normally this bus would be crowded with the pale, closed faces of commuters riding downtown, but it is Saturday, so the silver whale of the bus carries but a few Jonahs, all of whom she is certain will be belched out onto the sidewalk with her at Dupont Circle. At first, like any good commuter, she stares out the window, watches the pattern of shadow and early morning sun across the capital, and pretends not to notice how beautiful it is. But slowly the play of light and color breaks through the faded commuter gaze. She begins to watch the passing panorama with a more animated eye.

The bus pulls around the Circle, and her side of the bus, which had been in the shadow all the way down, is flooded with a sudden cascade of southern winter sunshine. As she looks out, she notices a splintered rainbow dancing at close range whenever she turns her glance at a certain angle to the window. She lifts her sunglasses for a moment, to see if it is the bus window that creates the effect, and then realizes that it is the glasses themselves. Squinting a little, she holds them up to the light, and sees that they are scratched in short, straight lines that criss-cross the lenses. She reaches automatically for a corner of her sweatshirt, recognizing as she does so that it is precisely that habit that caused the damage in the first place. She rubs them anyway, places them back on her nose, and looks out again. No better. The bus has stopped; she has to leave the window, and as she steps down off the bus, she thinks, I really have to buy a new pair of sunglasses.

Now that she knows her glasses are interpreting the world through a pattern of fine scratches, she looks a little more carefully at the familiar Circle. A quarter of the way around, she knows, there is a drug store where she can buy a new pair of shades; she sees it, especially the reddish-orange sign that lights up to compete with the sunshine of the Saturday morning, as though for the first time. She cuts

across the center of the Circle, where the statue of that old patriot Dupont sits chipped and streaked with pigeon droppings, and notes for the first time that the glasses make a halo around his burly shoulders. She wonders why she has never noticed that halo before. The scratches must have been there for a while. Why had the old man never before taken on such an other-worldly aura?

At the huge picture window of the drug store, the sun glitters and sends back a perfect reflection. For a moment she stops and sees: worn blue sneakers, the toes peeling. Jeans dark at the seams and fading at the knees to the color of the clear winter sky behind her. Maroon wide-wale corduroy jacket, oversized and baggy at the shoulders. Peeking through the unzipped jacket, a bright yellow sweatshirt silk-screened with a picture of a rising sun behind a stylized Japanese woman emblazoned with the words, SUSHI: BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS across the chest. Next a squarely-set head, blond curls, a cock-eyed grin, the self-mocking smirk of a young woman before a full-length mirror. Finally, a pair of brown-lensed, gold-rimmed sunglasses. She and her girlfriend Chris had bought matching sunglasses the summer before. She thinks for a moment about the two of them standing and laughing at the door of Chris's house, trying to figure out whose shades were whose there on the table in the entry hall. The cock-eyed grin fills out, becomes an even, toothy smile, as she thinks of Chris. As she turns from the window to enter the drug store, the sun glints off the scratches on the lenses, the broken rainbow leaps again, and she wonders if Chris needs a new pair, too; wonders where she is these days. She pushes open the door to the drug store and walks in.

Inside, the drug store smells like stale candy, paper goods, mouthwash, tobacco. The stand with the sunglasses crouches in the corner between the register, the magazine rack, and the front window. It is a squat, octagonal column of plastic, built to rotate on wobbly casters, with vertical rows of sunglasses displayed like beetle wings in an entomologist's collection. The top half of one of the display panels is a mirror that reflects back the interior of the drug store, the unnatural glimmer of the fluorescent lights and the cluttered aisles, with a faint greenish hue. She tucks her scratched sunglasses into the inside breast pocket of the jacket and looks at the mirror for a second. In this light, her eyes look very big and almost yellow, with very little pupil. She winks first one eye and then the

other, slowly opening and closing each eye in succession, and then blinks quickly and thinks of the shade in her room, the flesh-toned blind that rolls up with a rapid clatter when she reaches over, pulls down, and then lets it go every morning.

She recalls different eyes she knows: hers, an ordinary blue, darkly rimmed irises with flecks of yellow at the center, wide open all the time. Chris's, dark brown with enormous black pupils, warm and looking like burnished wood. The eyes of her cat, Mescaline, vertical-slit feline eyes of luminous green. The eyes of her father, whose blue depths she had so often plumbed for the sign that would tell her once and for all how she could tell he was in there, loving her. Those motherly hazel eyes into which her mom had once asked her to gaze: "What do you see?" "Me," she had responded, hesitantly, and her mother had looked disappointed and said, "Not literally, don't look at the reflection, look for me...."

It was the tale of miscommunication between them, coming back again. She blinks again and sees in the mirror that there is a bright edge to her eyes now. She looks away.

The variety of frame designs and lenses on the display rack is endless. There is a pair that reminds her of the first pair of sunglasses, brown tortoise-shell frames, round, with brown lenses. Lost one summer at camp. There is a pair like the black plastic-framed ones her father used to wear, and she had commandeered once they went out of fashion; her brother called them her Patty Hearst glasses, but she liked to think they made her look like Bobby Kennedy. She picks up a pair with lenses the color of begonia blossoms, glances at the mirror and realizes she has picked out the sole pair of rose-colored glasses on the rack. With a chuckle, she returns them and picks out another pair, large grey plastic frames with dark lenses. They make her look like a fly. She remembers wondering what it would be like to see as a fly does, remembers seeing photos in a LIFE book about what animals see, remembers sitting in class on some sleepy afternoon and wanting desperately to know how other students could possibly think the way they did, what they could see through those eyes that could make their worlds so different from her own. She cranks the stand around and checks the selection on another panel.

As she tries on another pair--silver-frames and blue lenses with shading graded from top to bottom--she catches the reflection of the wide-angle

mirror at the back of the store. She turns to look at it directly, and sees herself small and fore-shortened. She wonders if people ever panic, glancing in distorting mirrors and feeling unsure of how they really look. The blue lenses filter and make everything in the store look like an underwater cityscape, blend shadow and substance just enough to make the stacks of merchandise into distant buildings of an industrialized Atlantis. Fingering the rose-colored glasses again, she recalls a teacher who spoke of filters, of attitudes and outlook on life, of objectivity and how it is impossible to maintain, and thinks, you create whatever comes between you and the world.

There is one panel left, and she sees that there is a pair there just like the pair now cradled in her pocket like a crippled bird. A new pair--there is no chip on the nosepiece, the earpiece is unbent and unchewed, and the lenses are clear, clean, unscratched, with no distortion at the edge of the left lens where her pair has curved under the stress of repeated droppings. With the new pair on, the Polaroid tag dangling from the frame, she looks out the window. It is the filter she is used to, the view she knows, but something is different, missing. No rainbows.

The realization brings back the crooked smile. She returns the last pair to its proper place on the rack and saunters back outside, old glasses perched in their rightful place. The rainbows dance.

Lisa Brush is a Junior and a University Scholar. She wrote this in an informal tutorial with a member of the English department.

POEMS BY D.R. ABERCOMBIE

La Cité Flamboyante

It rained every day on the flat roofs of Rouen,
leaving a mist that gave each pore of brick,
each layer of slate, a chance to breath green
with moss or mold.
The ivy climbed easily on the moist brown walls.

There were shops just for umbrellas.
The most beautiful was on La Rue Jeanne d'Arc.
But I could never buy one there. There,
where even the church in the Vieux Marché
was decorated and built in forms of flame.
Joan of Arc would never have carried
an umbrella.
How could she have burned in such rain?

A crowd of black umbrellas
makes up the morning stream as I pass
over the rain glazed stones.
A mixture of turquoise and red clay
reminds the lowered lids
of sea and earth in Rouen.
All is arched in rows across the street.
I look for an umbrella
only to protect myself.
The facade of the Palais de Justice
stares at me with all its war holes;
empty eye sockets, witnesses to
what I have never seen.

I find a small plaid umbrella rusted and worn
in a trashbag outside a home built of flint.
One golden spoke sticking out
and I remember my father,
talking about the last World War,
when children ate from trash cans
in the smoldering debris
as American soldiers stood round barrels of flame
throwing scrap filled lunch bags into the Seine.

Techno-Romantics

I get up
 without the buzz of alarm
 the call of mother
 or your hairy arm
 I see instead
 slits of light
 through slats of bamboo
 I feel day breaking
 on my Picasso body
 still too young to assemble
 myself with a factory mentality
 in a room cube I lie
 surrounded by my first landscape
 pink and soft rapture
 I am the fruited part of a still life
 seedless plump and green
 breathing patiently
 in a composition of glowing
 simple forms
 round solid square hollow
 I am alive
 in this prepared nature
 morte and you
 in bed
 will wake up late
 in the afternoon
 to an evening of remote control
 and buttons
 behind the type-set machine
 and video tape
 making the news of real life
 which took you away
 from my dream garden
 leaving me with a fear of atoms
 and platonic bonds
 there is an art in distancing the self
 from those things
 that make it grow
 I go to work
 with what I have
 with the same clumsy hands
 some color and canvas
 a mind that tries
 to put things in perspective
 develops slowly
 from a stem
 still green
 I send out vines
 that wrap around the world
 in search of a seed
 and the ripeness that was
 supposed to be

At Brunch

The blonde haired man is talking
 about Proust. How he stayed in
 a room with the shutters pulled in
 writing about one memory
 for a very long time,
 undisturbed,
 having only one servant, one person
 to bring him food.

"Because," I concluded, "Art is more important
 than life." (Serious artists know this).
 I drink coffee and say things
 that I do not mean. What do I mean?

I think of the sleepless child
 at Combray
 troubled with the books
 dreading the smell of the stairway.

A waiter comes with our breakfast.
 The blonde continues with a jest:
 "If only this omlet were a manifesto."
 Then he cuts into the folded egg.

"To make our private art public,"
 I say in one breath,
 and sigh.
 Imagine all of us in our different rooms
 writing about one conceit.

D.R. Abercombie is an English Education major in her
 8th semester. She wrote these poems in English 246.

OCTOBER NIGHT

Mike Fiorello

She applies deep red lipstick to his lips.
I turn my back to them and pull off my jeans. I slide on my camouflage pants.

She glosses his lips and brushes his cheeks with rouge. His strong brown face does not look feminine.

Pulling on my camouflage shirt I look to the gold tequila, wicked nectar, and the plump lime. They disappear and the shirt comes down over my head. I walk over to the trunk. On it stands the bottle of tequila. The lime, the salt shaker. I pick up the serrated knife beside the lime.

She warpaints his cheek with stripes of white and red.

I slice the lime just before I hear a rap at the door. I answer the door and lick the side of my fist.

At the door is my girlfriend. Her sleeveless dress, black, sequined, nearly forms a rectangle, yet conforms to my girlfriend's waist and hips. A long doubled string of pearls, fake, hangs around her neck.

I turn around and salt my hand and she follows me into the room. I lower my hand not dropping a grain of salt and pick up the shot glass next to the serrated knife. With my other hand I break the seal and fill the shot glass.

I want it to be simultaneous as I run my tongue along my shot glass and down the shot and bite on the tart lime in my other hand. I realize how harsh the tequila is and I feel I should bite the lime, but I have already, like wanting to pull your hand from hot water after you already have.

"Can you tell what I am?" she asks. She has a tie around her hair and hanging down the side of her face and bright red on her lips and a beauty mark in eye liner near them.

My roommate's girlfriend sprays his hair silver.

"You're a flapper," I say.

"Oh good."

I tear up a T-shirt in strips. I drip blood, corn syrup and dye, on the white. I call my girlfriend over to tie a strip around my forehead, then my arm, and my leg.

I offer my roommate a shot.

He runs through the steps, salt-shot-lime,

smoothly.

My girlfriend cuts off circulation in my leg but sends blood coursing to my groin.

Turning up his denim collar my roommate grins. His girlfriend begins working on her make-up.

"Lie down on the floor," he says.

He picks up the tube of fake blood, squirts a few shots on my chest. "Get up, let it drip."

I stand up and the blood drips over my belt and hits my groin before it stops. I pour another shot of tequila. My roommate's girlfriend in her mini-dress keeps me hard. My girlfriend in her black stockings is sexy.

My roommate in his red lipstick grins at the two of them, turns to me, and I grin at him.

Mike Fiorello is a 4th semester English major and wrote this piece in English 146 and 246.

POEMS BY JIM WALLACE

Ice

melts
then clatters

bones in the tomb
of some missing hero
a shock alone
in an empty room
one dim light
and a dog

Chance Meeting

A black crow on our white toilet
Screams with my undressed mother
But not half as loudly.
Flustered and frightened it flaps
Against walls and the mirror
Tumbles soaps and perfumes
Then follows the light out the open window
And my mother stops dancing.

Mallards

Brown spots squat on the ice
Men and women
toss them stale scraps
Bread tames
and holds them.
But again in time
the willows mature
Golden robed dancers
who spin in the chill breeze
And the air trembles with the tense
staccato rush of wings
For they remember
and the change tempts them.

Tar

Gasps of rich heady fumes
Intoxicate
When spinning tires
Kick and scatter
A thousand black specks
Sky flashes by
Mailboxes and trees
Browned kids with bright keds
And crewcuts and cards
Slapping spokes
Kickstands and whitewalls
Tear unhardened roads
Freckle bright fenders
And rims and the backs
Of thin pumping legs and
White tee shirts
Fierce dogs and huge hills
With thick winds and trouble
To come just because

One Little Indian

Howling coyotes and flickering campfires and cattle and
I wonder about you tonight Tonto, the most tactful of savages.

He led you over the red-gold sun-stroked land,
Over mesas, past box canyons and bluffs, over your land, his conquest.

Smiling tightly you politely followed his
Instructions, quickly answering with "Yes, Kimosabi."
Leaving behind the life of tomahawk and buffalo for that
Virtuous, pompous silver bullet pusher.
Every minute of every day riding together, how did you
Refrain from shooting out his too-blue eyes with his six shooter?

And why were you never gauche enough to ask him
Why his people were slaughtering yours?
As you rode into the sunset with your damned dignity,
Your fathers died with theirs.

Jim Wallace wrote these poems in English 146 and 246. He is
an 8th semester Business Administration major.

HE SANG HIS DIDN'T HE DANCED HIS DID

Peter Goodrich

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did

- e. e. cummings

Outside it was 98 degrees and steam hung in the
spanish moss. Inside it was 88 because of the air-
conditioner. Whenever a person came into the Blue
Goose Bar he got a swivel of angry stares for letting
in some of the hot night air. Nicholas Dowd was
rubbing a glass of bourbon and ice against his fore-
head and watching his friend Willy Engers sink one
ball after another. The balls cracked on the worn
green felt and shot into the holes with authority.
He shook his head, handing his pool cue to a man who
had left a quarter on the table, claiming it for the
next game. The balls were racked and a new game
started. Willy and Nicholas stood side by side
watching and sipping bourbon.

Nothing had changed in the Blue Goose since the
forties, not even the names of the black men shoot-
ing pool. Their fathers had all played pool there,
and worked at the shipyard across the river. Now
the sons came to the Blue Goose at night and spent
their days building the same shrimp trawlers at the
same shipyard.

"Now ain't you glad you didn't go cuttin' off
them fingers?" Nicholas asked. "Can't shoot pool
with stumps...man wants to cut off his fingers...
Lord Almighty."

"Maybe I'd shoot better with stumps."

"Willy tryin' to cut his fingers off?" someone
asked.

"Yeah, he was gonna run 'em through the table
saw today," Nicholas said matter-of-factly.

"What for?"

"I don't know what for, but he was about to do
it. I come up from behind and grabbed him just in
time."

"Thanks, Nicholas," Willy said. "You my hero,
man."

The door opened and a short man named Freddie
Bates walked in with a mullet net over his shoulder.

In spite of the heat, he was wearing a wool cap, a big grey sweatshirt, and grinning. Silence fell as he made his way between the pool tables. A heavy man named Martin was leaning over one of the tables, having just made a shot. When he saw the net Freddie was carrying he frowned and slowly straightened up. "So you're the dirty shit stole my throwin' net," he said, tightening his grip on the pool cue as if he would swat Freddie on the head with it. He took a step forward and Freddie stepped back.

"I didn't steal it, man. I found it this mornin' when I was pickin' oysters. Somebody left it on the riverbank. I'm just bringin' it back to you."

Martin snatched the net from Freddie's shoulder and began examining it, lifting the string of lead weights as if it were a string of pearls and inspecting each fold in the netting. "There's a tear in it!" he exclaimed. He sprang at Freddie. A few of the men tried to hold him back, and in the fracas Freddie escaped out the door.

This caused laughter all around. Martin sullenly picked his net up off the floor where he had dropped it, and leaned against a pool table silently regarding the ripped netting. "You know," he said. "Most people'd rip a mullet net an' fix it. But Freddie the only fucker I know who'd steal a net...rip it... then give it back to the dude he stole it from so he'd fix it...then come back an' steal it again."

"He ain't goin' to try to steal it back," someone said.

"I bet he do steal it back," another man said.

"He ain't gettin' it again, the little shit," Martin grumbled.

"That Freddie a touched little dude, man."

"He crazy. You see that woman he been livin' with?"

"Hoooo--she must weigh four hunned pounds!"

"She coyote ugly too."

"That's how come he need Martin's net, catch enough fish to feed a woman like that."

"Man, you see him at work, the way he goof off? He don't even show up but two, three days a week, sometimes never. And he don't never get fired. I don't understand it."

"Fuckin' Uncle Tom, man."

"He just clown around in front of that old man and the old man laugh and laugh."

"Only time I ever seen that old man laugh."

The pool game ended, drinks were finished, and the evening passed. Willy and Nicholas walked home by the

docks. On this side of the river, the black part of town, there were shabby docks and the low storage houses of the shrimping fleet. Across the dirt road were palmettos and dark pine forest. A couple of dozen trawlers lay rafted along the pier with nets hung from their spreaders, drying. Some had broken pumps and listed to one side, giving them a crippled look. Everything was shabby and cluttered. The deck-lights of a rust-streaked shrimper were on. It had just arrived from a week at sea, and the crew was unloading heavy wooden boxes of shrimp and crushed ice. They manoeuvred the boxes under hanging cables and over hatches and gunwales onto the dock. There was the smell of shrimp and diesel fuel; the drying nets reeked of the ocean. Willy and Nicholas watched.

"Remember we went out on the RACHEL C.?" Willy asked.

"Yeah, that was some job--two weeks out sittin' on that deck in a pile of shrimp, pinchin' their little heads off. And in the end I got twenty-three bucks pay. Man...I was seein' shrimp in my sleep. Sharks come up in the net...fire coral... that was a good job all right."

Willy laughed and turned to continue home. "You wanted to go as much as me."

Further along the river were some little docks with charter boats for hire. Willy followed a path there of bleached oyster shells that were so white you could see your way in the darkness. "C'mon," he called to Nicholas. "I'll show you somethin'." Nicholas followed.

The charter boats were silent in their slips, and no one was around. Willy took hold of the sternline of a boat and hauled it closer into view. It was old, but sound, and had a handsome shape. It had been painted over so many times that you could peel off pieces of paint as thick as shoe leather, and still find more paint under it. Willy sat on the edge of the dock with his legs dangling over and the line in his hand. "What you think of this boat?"

"It's a shitbox," Nicholas said, a little annoyed that he'd been detained for this. "Old Dickerson's boat, ain't it?"

"He sellin' it."

"What's he askin'?"

"Two thousand."

"Oh c'mon! That piece a junk? He been usin' it 'bout thirty years."

"Engine's only five years old. Palmer diesel."

Nicholas sat down, lit a cigarette, and handed the box to Willy. He scratched his beard for a while,

flicked an ash into the water, then looked curiously at Willy. "I can't believe you thinkin' about this piece a junk. You ain't got no money to buy it. The bank won't loan you none cause the charter business ain't any good, you can't make enough runnin' charters to pay off no loan."

"If I lose a couple a fingers at work, compensation'd be about two-three thousand dollars."

"Oh man!" Nicholas threw his cigarette in the water as if he were spiking a football. He got up and walked partway down the dock, stopped and kicked a piling, turned back around and was about to say something, then stopped and leaned against the piling, arms folded. Slowly shaking his head, he started to laugh under his breath, and then out loud. "Man, you as crazy as Freddie."

"Who's crazy? That's crazy, wantin' to run charters, have my own boat 'stead a workin' in that shipyard for that old man?" They walked back on the oyster shells, arguing, and turned toward home. Willy was hot and tired. He didn't want to argue, he just didn't want Nicholas to save him from the table saw any more.

The shipyard was a whirling noisy cloud of dust during the day. There was always the whine of big drills and the screech of saws. The circular saws had blades on them the size of pizzas so when you clicked one on the centrifugal force made it hard to hold, as if it were a helicopter trying to take off. Sawdust settled thickly everywhere and floated continuously in the air. The weather was so hot most people elected to breathe the dust rather than wear a mask.

Three trawlers were under construction with their sterns to the river. One was all ribs, another partially planked so the ribs showed only at the top. The third had the deck house on it, and people were starting to paint the bottom. Some Cubans dumped buckets of fiberglass resin on the deck and spread it around with mops, trying to cover the plywood with an even layer before it hardened. It was the consistency of honey, with a chemical odor that carried all over town. Sawdust settled in the resin, and the resin stuck to the Cubans' shoes, pants and hands. Men carried boards and sheets of plywood in every direction.

Willy was at the far end of the shipyard, surrounded by stacks of cypress boards. They were kept under a corrugated metal roof supported by steel posts. The table saw was in the middle of the area, and Willy was

cutting out panelling for the deck house. He turned off the saw and looked around to see if anyone was looking, then raised the blade a little to where it would easily sever two fingers. He was measuring his ring finger against the height of the blade, about to turn the table saw on, when a voice came from behind the fence. "Hey Willy, what you doin', man?" He turned around, annoyed. It was Freddie Bates crouched in the bushes on the other side of the chain-link fence.

"I'm tryin' to cut off a couple a fingers," Willy said flatly.

"Oh, the compensation money, right?" he asked with a grin. Willy nodded. Freddie surveyed what he could see from the fence, stepped back into the bushes and checked the road on the other side, then returned. He jammed a rock under the fence to pry it open a little and said to Willy, "Before you do that, man, can you hand one a them boards to me under the fence?"

"Help you steal it? You don't even come to work, and then you come sneakin' along the fence wantin' people to help you steal boards!"

"I only need one. Shipyard won't miss it."

"Well, what the hell do I care?" Willy said. He took a cypress board off the top of one of the stacks and slid it under the fence. "What you want this for?"

"I'm buildin' me a skiff. I done made a smoke-house already and I been smokin' mullets an' sellin' 'em. Now when I have me a skiff I can go out in the salt flats, catch enough mullet to do real good. Man at the market been buyin' all I can bring him, he gonna start shippin' 'em off. Good money."

"Here, take two." Willy slid another board under the fence. "What you usin' for a net since Martin got his back?"

"Oh, I get another one someplace. You ought to go mullet fishin' 'stead a choppin' those fingers--make just as much as you makin' here. Whoops here comes the old man, I gotta go." He slid out of the bushes and was off down the road shouldering the two boards.

"Get the hell to work. You ain't gettin' paid to stand around!" old Leonard Grimes shouted. "That table saw been shut off five minutes now, what the hell you been doin'?" In spite of his age, Grimes was a big man. His face was red under the white, foreman's hardhat. He had a knife slash mouth, and his eyes were cruel. He turned around to leave, and noticed the table saw. "You got this blade set

too high. How many years you been workin' here and you still don't know what the fuck you're doin'."

"Never got a raise in all that time neither."

Grimes spun around, furious. "If you don't like the pay, boy, you can always quit."

Just past the edge of town there was a mobile home in a clearing in the pine woods. It was the old kind, with the curved shape to each end, and very small. The rusty tin covering was coming apart at the edges and the plywood under it was rotten. A newly constructed smokehouse stood nearby like an insurance building next to a ghetto. A little bigger than an outhouse, it was well made of yellow pine and cypress from the shipyard. Freddie's fat woman was leaning inside the doorway filling a basket with smoked mullet which hung on the walls. Her name was Ruby, and she very much enjoyed her trips to town to do business with the men at Williams Seafood. They depended on her, and were always glad when she came in with merchandise.

In the middle of a pile of old paint cans and wood scraps were two saw horses with the skiff lying on them. Freddie was busy planing a board to fit the bottom.

Ruby had started along the dirt path toward the road to town when she passed Willy going in the other direction. She was surprised to see anyone from town out that way, and hoped it didn't mean trouble. They exchanged quick greetings; they didn't know each other by name, only by sight.

"I guess you quit then," Freddie shouted when he saw Willy coming.

"I guess I did."

"Still got yer fingers?" he asked, grinning.

"Still got 'em," Willy said, holding up his hand and wiggling the fingers. He walked around the smokehouse looking it over. "How much room you got in this thing?" He opened the door and looked inside.

"Lots. I built it big."

After a while Willy said, "Make a deal with you. I decided to go mullet fishin'. You let me smoke my fish in here and I give you some to sell and I sell the rest."

"I need some help on this skiff bad. How 'bout you give me a hand with this then you can smoke all the fish you want in there. More the better, Williams' Market want to get enough to start shippin' 'em."

Willy looked the skiff over. It wasn't too bad a job. A couple of things had been done wrong and needed changing, but the rest of the work would go

fast. He could do it in a couple of days. "Okay, you got a deal. How come you got all these paint cans?"

"Oh these," Freddie said, kicking some of the cans out of the way. "I went down to the marina to see if they had any paint they didn't need no more. All they had was a bunch of old cans with a little bit left in 'em." He rolled some of the cans around with his foot. "They all different colors, but there's enough here to paint the whole boat. I was going to mix 'em all together, make one color, but I think I'll paint it a lot of different colors instead. I like that better. If you help me build this you can ride down the salt flats with me an' we can both throw nets outta the boat. Should do pretty good. Two men rowin'd be a lot faster, too."

Willy agreed, and the boat was finished in a day and a half. In the afternoon they started cracking open the old paint cans. They painted the seats Turquoise and when that ran out they switched to Interlux Oyster Grey, then to Marine Buff. Freddie insisted on cleaning the brushes after each color so that everything would look sharp. They mixed Malachy Green with Flat White for the floorboards. It made a sick green. On the inside of the boat they didn't want any colors that would reflect the glare of the sun. On the outside they used the bright colors; India Blue, Sunset Yellow, Sea Green Enamel, High Gloss White. The skiff looked like a patchwork quilt.

Ruby had been watching this progress from the doorway of the trailer with increasing interest. "Why don't you paint some decorations on it?" she asked. Rummaging around in the paint cans she found some Fire Engine Red and began painting hearts and diamonds on the sides of the boat. Then she found some High Gloss Black and painted clubs and spades against the lighter places. "It's like a bokay of flowers," she said.

The next morning Willy and Freddie carried the skiff through the woods to the river. It didn't leak much when they put it in. They dragged it up on shore and went back to get the oars and nets. The sun was coming up orange and violet down the river past town when they pushed the skiff off into the slow current. They began to row down river; neither of them could row very well.

"Where you get that net? It's Martin's ain't it."

"No, I finally bought my own. Martin'd be comin' lookin' for me if I stole his again." They had two

stryofoam coolers with ice for bringing back the fish. Willy felt a sense of adventure being on the river this way.

As they came abreast of the shipyard some of the people working on the trawlers noticed the curiously colored skiff slowly passing. As more and more people saw it they stopped what they were doing to watch. Drills and saws shut off; the usual noise decreased. A crowd gathered on the stern deck of one of the trawlers and there were workers standing along the shore and on the docks.

"That's that crazy damn Freddie Bates. Who's that with him, Willy?"

"Where'd they get that skiff?"

"Lord, will you look at the paint job on that thing."

Leonard Grimes and the other foremen were yelling at the men to get back to work. Some of them laughed at the boat as it went by. Others didn't think it was funny.

"That Freddie Bates crazy."

"Willy, he used to be a good man."

"They both crazy."

The rowers were becoming better synchronized as they went past the shipyard, and soon they were gone around a bend and down toward the salt flats where the mullet were.

Peter Goodrich is an 8th semester English major. He wrote this story on his own.

POEM BY DAVID BRIDGES

Suburban

Late in the night,
darkness rolls unseen in tides
in and out of fencegates
and carefully landscaped trees.

I lie in bed,
propped against my brass headboard,
novel in my hands,
smoking low-tar filtered cigarettes.
Late, my wife comes to bed,
wearing a fitted nightgown
smelling like a flower shop.
Slowly, softly, she kisses my dry lips,
descending towards my warm breath.
The book drops.
Her body floats
in hazed and defused light,
like a gull in a stiff breeze,
towering above my nude body
shimmering against our stained sheets

Near morning, when the clouds glow,
and the light's hue sprays itself
on the metal and plastic
of our suburban neighborhood,
she nestles warmly against my pale body,
and sleeps heavily near my heart.
This is indeed a dangerous life.

David Bridges is a 9th semester English major.

POEM BY SARA NELLER

Flying through space, Ozmiroid

There's a black* thick edge
between me and
me on a big rock
in an ancient green housecoat
in the summer for hours that's where I sat

*black is heavy air, mercury
around us in shadows and eyes
in a soft layer over my white* legs
and yours its a gap with no conscience
no gravity at all colors
Where all the answers to one question are

*the white legs that I wrapped my arms around
so tight that day in the country
where we were all so new* and sharp inside
each morning

Sara Neller is a Sophomore. She wrote this poem
in English 146.

FIRE WITHOUT A HOME

Daniel Davison

There is no fire. But an incendiary energy
escapes from the room at the top of the stairs of
the Kappa Kappa Gamma house, and sends a kind of
heat around the worn corners of the closed wooden
door to melt a hole in the bitter December night.

The grandmotherish room behind the door is not
ablaze, but done in quiet earth colors and neatly
stuffed with old furniture. Some is antique, and
anything with a horizontal surface is crowded with
womanly knickknacks--each figurine and hairbrush
charged with Mollie's energy.

Elemental reggae music finds every space in the
room, as does the light which is focused through
Mollie Robinson's blue eyes: "This is my place.
It's me, it's mine. It's where all my junk is and
where I feel comfortable," she says with mortised
and tenoned words, as she sits Indian-style on the
white quilted spread of her hand-me-down wooden-
frame bed.

And she fits in like another painting among the
prints of Monet and Seurat which cover the walls.
Like the characters within the French scenes, she
is round and well-defined, and her cherubic face
and poodle eyes are framed by a short blonde curly-
top. Like a cameo, her reflection hangs in a silver-
framed mirror behind her on the cream wall.

Beside her, the top of a 100-year old night
stand is the only space not covered with gewgaws--
it holds only a white dial telephone. Mollie plucks
an open envelope containing the November phone bill
from beneath the phone.

"The phone company sent me a note: 'Miss
Robinson, You've been making excessive use of over-
seas toll services.'" Mollie said, her voice sud-
denly officious. "I thought that was a privilege
that came with the phone as long as you pay for
it...not that bad this month really. Only \$237.69.
Mom and Dad help me with it."

The antique night stand holding the weathered
phone is Mollie's command post, from where she co-
ordinates her many responsibilities. She is social
chairman of her sorority and recruitment coordinator
for the Board of Governors. ("I'm trying to con-
vince the BOG prom committee to hire a reggae band
for the prom. It is not going over well.")

She coordinates the big money-raising phonathon for the Student-Alumni Advisory Board, and maintains her position in the honors program as well as in the national honor society, Mortar Board.

She also holds down a 20 hour-a-week job as a dispatcher for the UConn fire department, and has published some pieces of student writing. "I'm 100 percent busy all the time," Mollie says as the phone rings.

Mops (her sorority sisters call her) also phones mother and father in London. "They moved there soon after I came to UConn," Mollie winks her left eye slowly for emphasis, and from habit. "This is home for now. I don't have a home town."

She was born on Feb. 14, 1962, a Valentine to a 20-year-old mother and 21-year-old father, both students at Auburn University in Alabama; both eager to get out of the south. To that end, Mollie's father found a job with Burlington industries which required him to move often.

"Dad was raised in Tuscumbia, Ala., and he had an instinct to get the hell out of there. His job let him do that," Mollie said. "Both my parents had conservative, stereotypical southern upbringings. And they rebelled in that they wanted to leave."

Within months, they had moved again. This time to Roadhiss, N.C., a tiny town, a bump on a log, and they shook that off fast. And then the Robinsons moved from town to town, yanking Mollie from north to south and back again: Greensboro, N.C. for Mollie's early grammar school; Summit, N.J. for fifth and sixth grade; then across the state to Glen Rock for the seventh grade to the tenth.

"Finally, I graduated from high school in South Boston, Va.," Mollie said. "I really wanted to fit in. But I didn't. We were moving from south to north, and from north to south--that's as difficult as moving to a new country. The people are so very different."

Directly after high school, Mollie entered college. "I started at North Carolina State. And my parents moved to Connecticut while I was there--no fair!" That was the last straw. Her parents had already moved Mollie through six towns and more neighborhoods, and somehow, had maintained their traditional attitudes on bringing up children.

"My parents tried to bring their strict southern upbringing into their marriage and child-rearing. But with us moving around so much, it was difficult, even wrong for my parents to apply the consistent values of their childhood to our changing, mobile

lives. And it just didn't work," Mollie said.

"I just totally rebelled against it--I went bonsai for several years," Mollie said. "For a time I drank too much, did some drugs, and destroyed parental property, like cars. I was physically and verbally hostile to my parents. I was angry. When I look back through my diary (which she has kept since age 13), I can see drastic changes. There was a lot of 'hate mom, hate dad, hate, hate, hate!'"

Then, during her summer after her freshman year at North Carolina State, came a transition. She recorded it in her diary, and a somewhat fictionalized version in Tobacco and Moonpies: or How I Built Fortitude One Summer, which appeared in Writing UConn, 1983.

"It was the end of my freshman year from NC State. I had a boyfriend there. But naturally come summer, one goes home to the family. And my family had moved to Connecticut, which was all new to me. It was summer, and I got a job at a daycare--I hated it--I called my boyfriend all the time. And I was fighting with my parents. I was unhappy with the situation, especially after enjoying the new freedoms of college. At home I had to live up to expectations and curfews."

"Then I made a radical decision in my life; I was going down to South Boston, Va. to live with my boyfriend and get away from home. That was almost a breaking point between me and my family," Mollie shook off her penny loafers, and let them drop to the antique carpet.

"My boyfriend already had a job as a reporter, and was keeping really crazy hours. I was playing 'poor me' games because I had had the romantic idea that we'd be together a lot. Instead, I was alone a lot."

"The people were very different from my cosmopolitan family; small town, earthy people." Mollie pursed her lips and looked down at the quilt, and traced the zig-zag threads with her finger. "There was also a lot of segregation between black and white. The town was mostly Protestant, and there was family tradition there; many of them went back hundreds of years, and they talked about the past as if it happened yesterday."

"The only job I could find was working in the tobacco fields...with kids I had gone to high school with when I had been in Virginia." She paused. "At first I was depressed about being away from my family."

"So I found a job, and got myself up every

morning at five o'clock. I had never done anything like that before in my life--working hard was good for me. I was getting sweaty, getting dirty, getting really strong," Mollie said, and she paused. "I worked hard and would come home totally beat. But still, I had a job that I worked damn hard at. I was doing well at it, getting along with my boyfriend, and living away from my family. I had made a decision to leave my family. That was difficult, but I had made it and things were working out."

"I needed some autonomy, and found it," Mollie said. "The experience has brought me closer to my parents." But mother and father are in London, at the other end of a thin telephone line. She visits on Christmas and during the summer. "Dad's company pays the airfare."

"I'm very close to my mom, but less so to my father. He's more of a mystery to me than my mom," Mollie said. "His work is 85 percent of his life. That's the one subject he can talk about comfortably. He'll inspect the material on the pants legs of my friend's jeans and say, 'Do you know what weave this is? My company makes this weave.' He's a trip."

"My life is really here. And I want to have fun with it," Mollie said. "I like talking with people, getting together with friends for any reason, and just chatting." She stood up and turned for a moment into the mirror: "I love dressing up in old clothes and hats, and shoes, and gloves. Then I'll hop in the car and go somewhere...anywhere."

Slowly, she turned, and looked down at a toy Gumby on her dresser which was hidden in a trivia forest.

"When I was little, the family was at the dinner table, and the smell of burning rubber wafted in. 'What is that smell?' my father asked. My brother started crying, and I ran into my room. He had wrapped my Gumby around a bare lightbulb, and nothing was left of him but the wire skeleton. I have never forgiven my brother for that one," Mollie frowned. "...The originals are worth money," she said.

Mollie sat back down on the bed. "I just want to have fun with my life," smiling again, and explaining her scheme and ambition for starting a macro-catering business some day. "I want to set up parties for corporations and organizations--with everything from pink ice cubes to pink flamingos if they want them." Now she is ebullient. "It's down the road for me, I see it as a big money maker. It would be a hell of a lot of fun--that's my main goal--to have fun,"

Mollie said.

Her two-way plane ticket hangs by a red thumb tack on the small bulletin board near her bed. "Sure, I'm homesick sometimes. London is really on fire, alive. Yet it is so old, has so much tradition," Mollie said.

"But it is not my home. Nowhere is."

Daniel Davison wrote this in Journalism 212. He is a Senior in Urban Studies.

Me and Jim

You and me'd chip in on beer
and our piss would mingle on the black wet leaves.
The two of us would pass a joint back and forth in your room.
Simon and Garfunkel and smoke filled the space between us
and we wouldn't say a word.
What the hell can I say in a letter?
Should I mail vodka,
risk sending a half-smoked joint?
Could you synchronize your time zone
and put on S&G's Greatest Hits
the same time I do?
When they play "El Condor Pasa" on the radio
I remember the skip on your record.
What more can I say?

Square Cool Room

I tell myself in the cool stillness that I'm losing my mind.
I don't tell my doctor.
We both know terms neither one speaks, angst and complex.
I don't diagnose myself and he doesn't diagnose me.
So it's quiet.
Images crawl in the rorschach of the rug.
I know what he'd say anyway. Letting it slip
is the easy way out.
He shifts in his chair, makes eye contact when I look up.
If I speak I lose. That's how it feels.
A game of ping-pong begins on the table of the spoken words.
He won't let me forfeit.
Instead of telling him I'm crazy I tell him I'm anxious.
He's glad I'm talking and asks me why and I tell him
school and girlfriend and that's the court he plays on.
In the silence I'm screaming inside,
but I'm bound by the reality my words created
and he begins reality coping. I sit scared and silent
as he dissects my words and we begin building
with words and he tells me that in reality I do seem anxious.

Seeing Myself at Thirteen

I stand in front of the mirror,
naked and pale and hairless,
and long for a time when my blood will surge with hormones,
thickening and hardening my muscles,
darkening and twisting the light fuzz between my legs.
Then I'll carve myself bicep curves,
a line down the center of my chest,
a rock-hard stomach. I'll drive and get a job
and go on dates with a blonde
as pretty as the ones in Penthouse.
I always have hardons and I'm sure
I'll never be impotent when I have sex.
Someday I'll be able to grow a mustache and stop jerking off.

Birth Control

I want to pour the Jose Cuervo
down the drain or down my throat
but we're saving it.
She looks comfortable sleeping in my bed.
Tonight she named our ghost babies, not yet born or conceived.
To be kind I should have said, "You'll die in childbirth
if you have your way. If you have my babies
they'll tear your insides out."
She's on the Pill. She lies dreaming and I rest easier.

Our ghosts Joseph and Daniel got her wet tonight.
They'd fill her as I filled her and someday
her womb wouldn't be big enough for the three of us.
First Joseph then Daniel would stretch her out
and I wouldn't be big enough for her.

I'm afraid of the creation of my own nuclear family.
I couldn't wait to leave my father's house.
He got his training in the army but never went to war.
My mother had been raised to be a mother
and was feeling unfulfilled.

We haven't cracked the seal on the tequila.
Tomorrow we'll drink to our second anniversary.
On our first when we lost our virginity,
she was so tight
she didn't want to let go and I didn't want to feel the cold.
She'll help kill the bottle tomorrow,
leave it empty, a dead soldier.
That will loosen my tongue and I'll tell her.

Mike Fiorello wrote these poems for English 146 and 246.

EXCERPTS FROM THE SUMMER VACATION ESSAYS

Michael T. Calvert

At some point during our peregrinations through the educational system, we have all been compelled to compose an essay on the topic "What I Did During My Summer Vacation." What most people do not know, however, is that the summer vacation essay is not a recent invention; nor is it confined to the American school system. In fact, this essay topic has been employed for centuries by harried school teachers to quiet their unruly charges, who usually return to school in September full of unspent summer energy.

Following years of painstaking research, some of which actually involved going to the library, I have compiled the previously unpublished summer vacation essays of some outstanding writers into a collection entitled The Summer Vacation Essays, soon to be published by E.D. Mutton and Co., New York. Excerpts from this forthcoming book are presented herein.

Notes From My Summer Vacation
by Fyodor Doestoevski

I am a sick camper... I am a spiteful camper... I am an unpleasant camper. I think I have athlete's foot. However, I am not really sure if I have athlete's foot. If I do have athlete's foot, I won't treat it and will let it get worse, until it crawls up my legs and engulfs me. Why? None of your business, which is to say, just out of spite!

The food here is terrible, and we eat each day in a lugubrious mess hall. My friend Sasha--well, perhaps it is better that I not call him a friend, rather, this acquaintance of mine, Sasha--refuses to eat and is losing weight rapidly. He can hardly afford to lose weight, since he is already painfully thin, which is the result of his nervous, high-strung nature. Such, I fear, is the inevitable outcome of our modern Russian society, a society that places the intellectual accomplishments of an individual above his spiritual well-being.

Nevertheless I am truly alarmed about Sasha, who I fear has contracted some sort of morbid nervous illness. He sits alone on his bunk all day, idly staring at a ceramic ashtray he made during our first weeks in this awful place. He has told me that he feels if he stares at the ashtray long enough, the

object will begin to make some kind of sense; and this, he added ironically, would be the first step toward making sense out of his own existence. And still he refuses to eat.

"How can I eat that slop they serve?" he screamed at me the other day. "It makes me ill!" When I observed that not eating would also make him ill, he retorted: "Yes, I know that! Don't you think I know that? But then, you see--" and here he drew me close to him and smiled a knowing smile, "--that is my decision, and not theirs!"

"Besides," he added, "--and perhaps you will think me mad when I tell you this, and it may very well be true that I am mad-- I think they're trying to poison me! Yes, I do! Have you seen that cook, with his shifty eyes? He hates me, that cook does! Oh, don't think that I don't know he hates me! And why should the cook hate me, do you ask? A very sensible and proper question, that! Well, why not? Why not, indeed?"

"If you can't eat the food here, why not buy some of your own?" I asked him.

"Why? I'll tell you why! Because I have no money, that's why! Do you know that I even pawned my last prized possession, a gold locket given to me by my sainted mother, the most wonderful woman who ever walked on the earth? And do you know why I pawned it, eh? I'll tell you why! To buy a comic book! Yes, a miserable comic book! For that I pawned a locket with a picture of my mother inside it, the locket that she put around my neck with her own hands before I went off to this miserable place! 'Be good, my little one, and make me proud of you,' --that's what she said to me as she put the locket around my neck! And now look at me, just look! What have I got to show for myself since I've been here! All I've done here is make this miserable ashtray!" With that, he fell to the floor, weeping abjectly.

"It's a very nice ashtray," I told him. "Why don't you send it to your mother? It's very finely crafted."

"Oh, certainly, I know that!" he said with sudden vehemence. "I'm very good with my hands-- I've always been good with my hands! But what good is that if I can't earn money, answer me that! Oh, it's all well and good to say money's not important, as long as you have it!"

"Perhaps you could give lessons," I suggested, but he only shrugged irritably and went back to staring at the ashtray. And last week, he drowned in the lake, but that is not my story....

A Clean Well-Lighted Summer
by Ernest Hemingway

This summer I went to camp. It was a good camp, and it was on a lake, and there were boats. They were small boats, but they floated, which was enough.

Each day we ate our meals in the mess hall. It was a clean, well-lighted mess hall, and the root beer was good, and there was lots of it, although the food was very bad.

The food was so bad that my friend Bill did not like to eat it. "You know," he said to me once; "This food is bad."

"What the hell, Bill," I said. "What the hell."

"But the root beer is good."

"Yes, the root beer is good."

"Did I show you the ashtray I made in crafts?" he asked me.

"Yes. It's a good ashtray."

"It ought to be. It took me long enough to make."

"What the hell, Bill. What the hell."

Every day I went swimming in the lake, and that was good, although I like floating in the little boats better. Sometimes Bill and I would go out on the lake and go fishing. We took with us some of the bottles of the good root beer and drank it while we floated on the lake.

"This root beer is good," I said to Bill one day while we were fishing.

"Yes," Bill said. "The root beer is good, but the fishing is bad."

"Yes, the fishing is very bad."

"But the root beer is good, and the water is wet."

"Yes, the water is very wet."

"Did I show you the ashtray I made in crafts?"

"Yes, you did, and it's a good ashtray. But I'm sick of looking at it." Then I took the ashtray and threw it in the lake.

"I wish you hadn't done that," Bill said, and then he jumped over the side of the boat into the lake.

"I just remembered, I can't swim," Bill said. "And this water is very wet and very deep."

"What the hell, Bill," I said as I drank some more of the good root beer. "What the hell."

A Perfect Summer Vacation for Banana Fish
By J.D. Salinger

If you really want to hear about it, about what my

lousy summer vacation was like and all, then I'll tell you. I won't tell you about everything that happened, I mean, some of the stuff that happened was pretty private, if you know what I mean.

I think what I'd really like to tell you about, though, is about this guy Wanamaker, who slept in the bunk above me. Old Wanamaker. Jesus Christ. Wanamaker was pretty strange, but the funny thing was, I sort of liked him, in a funny kind of way. I guess the thing I really liked about him was that you could sit around with him and shoot the old bull without feeling like you had to say something gorgeously witty all the time. He was certainly a peculiar kind of guy, though. For one thing, he had the lousiest personal grooming habits of anyone alive or dead. He hardly ever combed his hair or clipped his fingernails, but the one thing that really drove me crazy about him was that he never rinsed his mouth out after he'd brushed his teeth. I used to stand there next to him in the can, after I'd finished brushing my teeth, and I'd watch him brushing his lousy teeth, and when he was done I'd wait for him to rinse his mouth out, but he never did.

One time I even asked him about it. "Hey Wanamaker, old kid," I said. "Doncha ever rinse your mouth out, or what? Jesus Christ."

"Ah, go rinse your own mouth out," he said, touchy as hell. What a witty guy. But after that I never asked him about rinsing his mouth out, I mean, he got really sore.

Another interesting thing about old Wanamaker, he made the most goddam gorgeous ashtrays you ever saw in your life. It's pretty funny, when you think about it, that a guy with such lousy personal grooming habits could make such beautiful goddam ashtrays. But he did, I'm not kidding.

That's all I want to tell about. Just sitting around thinking about camp makes me feel depressed as hell, if you want to know the truth. That's pretty funny, too, considering that I didn't even like the lousy place all that much when I was there. The funny thing is, I kind of miss some people from camp, like old Wanamaker. It's pretty funny and all, when you think about it.

A Summer Vacation Symposium
By Plato
Translated by U. Will Rue

Socrates: I went down to the lake last week with Agathon, son of Marathon, to make sacrifices and

offer up prayers to the goddess.* While there, we were kindly offered an opportunity by young Plato and some of his friends to join in a discussion they were having on the nature of eternal justice. The question put before us was this: What is the nature of justice, and how may it be determined? Xenophon expressed the idea that justice is the interest of the stronger over the weaker.

That is a most interesting opinion, Xenophon, I said, but perhaps you will help me by clarifying one or two points, since I am somewhat confused.

Of course, Socrates, gladly, he replied.

You are familiar with the eating place here, I said.

Yes, I am.

And you will, I think, agree with me that the food served there is very bad?

He thought for a moment and said: Yes, I will grant you that.

And will you concede also that neither you nor the other campers like to eat this food?

Certainly not, he said, if it is bad food.

Very well, I said, let us examine what we have established. There is an eating place here, and few, or none, of the campers like to eat the food served there. Are we agreed?

Yes, certainly. But what has all this to do with the nature of eternal justice?

I beg your patience; in time my argument will reveal itself. Now, Xenophon, answer me this: How many campers are there in this camp?

Oh, several hundred, I suppose.

And how many counselors?

Several dozen, or fewer.

And would you say that, despite the superior strength of the counselors as individuals, taken as a whole, the campers would be capable of overpowering the counselors?

Undoubtedly.

Then why, I wonder, if the campers are collectively stronger than the counselors, do they continue to eat the bad food? Please answer me that, as I am rather confused on this issue. If justice is indeed the interest of the stronger over the weaker, how may this be explained?

I suppose it cannot, he replied.

Then, my dear Xenophon, the answer must lie elsewhere, and we must search for it.

At this point Telephon interrupted the conversation.

* Probably Athena--M.T.C.

One moment, Socrates, he said. I must say that although you have led Xenophon to disbelieve his own argument, I think the principle of it is still sound, for at this camp the counselors rule not by their superior physical strength, but by their superior age and wisdom.

When Telephon made that remark, there were nods and murmurs of agreement by the others.

Ah, I see, I said. Then it is not just physical strength you refer to when you say that justice is the interest of the stronger?

No, I believe we should substitute "more powerful in their intellects," said Telephon.

I am glad we have cleared up that misunderstanding, I said. You must forgive me, since I am an old man, and not as quick and perceptive as I used to be. So we have established that justice consists of those with more fully developed minds ruling over those with less wisdom?

Yes.

Does it not then follow, as night unto day, that philosophers should rule?

I cannot deny it, Telephon said.

In that case, I said, shut up. Now, consider this ashtray....

Michael Calvert is a graduate student in English.

Erskine Carter

Sam Johnson disliked junior faculty on general principles. They were loutish, overly ambitious and particularly young nowadays. Pampered, too, the insensitive wretches. The anti-everything groups of the Sixties and Seventies had been unbalanced and unwashed, but at least they possessed some spunk, unlike their spineless counterparts of the Eighties whose thin veins were clogged with ballpoint droppings. Tearing their work to shreds was as fulfilling as feasting on doughnuts holes. Boring, a cat scratching at stiff, dead birds. Ruining Michael Lockwood, however, had been a singularly pleasurable experience. Professor Samuel T. Johnson disliked his juniors on principle, but he hated Michael Lockwood. He despised Michael Lockwood so much that he almost regretted destroying him.

Almost, but not quite. A phoenix would soon rise from the ashes of that immolation.

The shadow cast by Lockwood's suicide rivalled the gloom draped over the English Department the day Hemingway finally blew out his brains. Sam had never liked the Old Man - or his Sea - and his jokes concerning the oedipal complexities of Papa's literary family had earned him the silent treatment from his American Lit. associates. Actually, Sam loathed all his colleagues. Their shallow articles and word processor fanaticism merely highlighted their simian perceptions. They were Yahoos and they thought like Yahoos. When Sam finished his book on Swift and put the critical world on its knees, they would come crawling and begging for an honorable mention. Straw men, he detested them all.

In fact, only two passions afforded Sam any pleasure: his active hatred of Michael Lockwood and the special relationships he enjoyed with select female students. The former was but a fresh memory, however, and Sam's most recent conquest showed signs of guilt, insecurity, and a love-me-forever attitude that was always the cue to send them packing with a broken heart and cut out another choice filly from the swelling herd. Young women of the Me generation could persuade themselves to any lengths to seize that almighty A plus and a first class recommendation.

Sexual harassment? Women's Lib propaganda. It

was no more than fair barter for goods and services. Except for Amanda, of course. Amanda had been... Amanda was...different.

A big, fringe benefit fiasco, perhaps, but it certainly transcended what waited at home. Doris had been turning Sam's stomach since the day she announced her pregnancy thirty-four years ago. The arrival of Samuel T. Jr. metamorphosized her into a fat Medusa. Doris was a Yahoo, too. A she-Yahoo.

Sam propped his cordovan brogues on his tidy oak desk and twiddled his wax handlebar moustache while he stared out the bay window overlooking the horrid duck pond. A few Canadian geese were puttering about in the muck with the resident mallards and their spouses. The unseasonably warm November had delayed their southern journey, but the weather service had promised snow tonight. It had been a perfectly rainy afternoon for a funeral, right out of Wuthering Heights. Almost too perfect. Michael Lockwood's cowardly exit had been treated with heroic dynamics. The Department closed for the day and every last sadfaced professor, graduate and undergraduate major attended. Sam wouldn't have missed it for the world. No one except himself and possibly Amanda realized the extent of his involvement. Smithers the tenure chairman might have suspected something, but Smithers was too embroiled in a nasty little triangle with a physics professor and her husband to raise any excremental imagery over Michael Lockwood. So, Sam had masked his delight and looked as mournful as a toppled tombstone. Suppressing his laughter was difficult when Frank Rush delivered the eulogy. The "cruel hand of Fate" part almost broke him, but Sam was a consummate actor. He even managed half a dozen crocodile tears.

Of late, Lockwood had fancied himself a scholar of the supernatural, particularly the Gothic. His dissertation was some humbug on the occult in KING LEAR and MACBETH, three hundred pages of poppycock about madmen and witches and preternatural forces shaping human destiny. His most recent work on Coleridge was scandalous and Sam had pointed out the weaknesses and possible plagiarisms to Smithers who took it to the tenure committee. That, and the dirt he dug up from Lockwood's past, had iced the tenure refusal. Lockwood's appeal might have succeeded, but that was no longer a moot point. Any further debate was quashed when the wick was snuffed on his candle.

The chapel bells chimed half past five. Sam extracted Amontillado and two crystal glasses from a

bottom desk drawer. Ironically appropriate, he thought, recalling Lockwood's impassioned defences of that charlatan Poe. Amanda would arrive in a moment from the obligatory post-funeral festivities. The pain in her green eyes would crown his triumph. He poured himself a glass and swallowed it in one draught. Michael had abhorred sherry. Pretentious pig piss, he called it. Michael was pure scotch with a side order of beer and pretzels. The only class he ever had was a roomful of bleary eyed students.

Spiked heels stabbed the tiled hall floor like tiny, heartless icepicks. That would be Amanda, dressed to the nines and swishing through the corridor like an elusive, beautiful bird. Sam unpropped his brogues and hastily lit his briar pipe. Initially, its symbolic nature had attracted Amanda. She once claimed to love the tobacco's fragrance as well, but that was simply another of her charming equivocations. Even her self-assured approach belied her timid knock.

"Come in, Amanda. It's on the latch."

The door swung open and revealed Amanda standing in the dark hallway. Sam's stomach knotted with desire. Amanda always looked ravishing, but black rendered her absolutely stunning, a Circe to Doris' Medusa. Her skin was as white as fresh snow and her crimson lips as full as an open wound. Green eyes concealed behind oversized, rectangular sunglasses, she was trembling a little. Fear? Rage? Sam couldn't be certain. She brushed her scarlet nailed fingers through her golden hair and popped her black umbrella into the mahogany stand. Sam left his swivel chair and held out his hand.

"Please sit down, dear. Sherry?"

Amanda eased onto the end of the daybed and crossed her legs sullenly before searching her small velvet purse for a cigarette. Her sheer black stockings accentuated the snowiness of her smooth knees. All her undergarments would be midnight black, Sam thought, pouring the Amontillado. Lacy and diaphanous, clinging to her firm body like finely woven silk nets.

"You've come a long way, my dear," he joked, offering the sherry and sitting beside her. "When did you take up smoking?"

Amanda squashed her cigarette under a spiked heel and hurled the Amontillado into his face.

"None of your business, Sam. None of your goddam business."

Sam's hand instinctively became a fist which he diverted to his Harris tweed pocket where Doris had

consigned the customary handkerchief. No fuss. He would act as cool as her frigid heat. He wiped the sting from his eyes and calmly refilled Amanda's glass which he clinked with his own.

"To your indomitable spirit, my dear," he toasted, resisting a gentle stroke on her saucy knee. "Please try to drink this one. It's much too precious to be tossing about."

"Too precious to waste on you, Sam," she hissed through her sharp white teeth.

Amanda drank the sherry like a rose sipping sunshine. The Amontillado bloodied her crimson lips and she dabbed them dry with a black lace handkerchief. She placed her glass on Sam's desk and sat on the bay window seat, dangling her legs like two perfectly formed pieces of porcelain.

"Michael loved this weather," she said huskily, tracing tiny hearts on the fogged up window panes. "He used to say he only felt life in the midst of the mists."

Sam chortled impatiently. "More of Michael's Gothic claptrap. Didn't you ever tire of it? I certainly did."

Amanda's lips curved into a mocking sneer. Sam detected an angry green flash behind the sunglasses. How he adored her temper!

"I know all about that, Sam, you weak, jealous old fool. You may have fooled everyone else, even the police, but not me. I know."

Sam feigned astonishment. Amanda was bluffing, of course. She knew nothing.

"Cut the 'who me?' crap, Sam. I'm not one of your starry eyed sugar babies anymore. I've grown up. Michael helped me see through you without uttering one word on the subject. When I think of how I almost tumbled onto that daybed three years ago, it gives me the creeps. Jesus, you're a rotten bastard."

Tears escaped under the sunglasses' frames. They shone on her ivory cheeks like tiny diamonds before cascading onto her crimson lips. Sam's repressed desire exploded inside him. Amanda was defenseless. Perhaps some comfort would break her completely. He stood up, smiled kindly and moved slowly toward her.

"You truly miss him, don't you? He's gone, my dear. He took the most selfish way out and hurt you unforgivably. I understand your feelings completely. Michael and I had our academic differences, but I loved him, too. We can't keep looking back, however. Life is for living. Michael wouldn't want us agonizing over him like this."

Standing directly above her, Sam had Amanda right

where he wanted. She was as still as a quiet pool of water in a dark forest. Almost hypnotized by his charms, he thought. She had never really loved Michael. His youth, his charisma, his affection for her had misguided her truest feelings. Sam had attended to that, however. Things would be as they almost were three years ago before Michael Lockwood barged into their lives. He had Amanda back. Michael Lockwood had never existed.

Sam placed his hands on Amanda's shoulders and drew her into his arms.

"Don't you touch me, you bastard!" she spat, raking her scarlet nails across his left cheek. "Don't you touch me!"

She raked the other side and a stream of blood ran down Sam's neck and dammed at the top of his starched collar. Doris would be furious, he thought, stumbling to the daybed and wiping the wounds with his handkerchief. The greeneyed witch! His cheeks were throbbing and burning like a thousand red hot needles had pricked them.

"You pathetic little worm," she said coldly, extracting a white envelope from her purse. "Revenge wasn't enough, was it? Telling him about us, the nothingness of us! wasn't enough. You had to ruin him and make him take his own life. He left this for you. Read it."

"How could he leave anything? The police evidently found nothing."

"He gave it to me two weeks ago. Michael had precognition, remember? I wish he'd used it to kill you instead."

Sam relaxed a little and accepted the envelope. Supernatural hocus-pocus. Amanda didn't suspect the truth, then. He knew he had been careful. Amanda would see the light eventually. Sam had nothing but time to kill now. After all, he was a tenured professor. He could do as he pleased.

"I'm touched," he said sarcastically, opening the envelope and removing a single sheet of paper enclosing a gold medallion on a matching chain. "What the hell is this?"

"Figure it out for yourself."

A bibelot. An ancient gold coin engraved with a large bird, a pelican or albatross, with an arrow pierced through its breast. Probably very rare and very valuable, or a clever fake. An extremely odd legacy.

"How quaint," he murmured, studying the paper.

Two bits of verse were handwritten in neat Gothic script. The first was from Coleridge's RIME OF THE

ANCIENT MARINER. Misquoted, no less. Frightful, not rightful, if Sam recalled the text. Michael's scholarship had been birdbrained up to the very end.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a rightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"What the devil as I supposed to make of this?"

"Read it all, Sam."

Just as the moth seeks the flame,
The worm returns.

"Goodbye, Sam. I hope you burn in hell forever."

Amanda swished round and vanished into the hallway like a black dove soaring into a dark cloud. The sudden reversal of his plan stunned Sam. Unable to move, he stared at the Gothic script and the last words burned a fiery trail in his mind.

Just as the moth seeks the flame,
The worm returns.

Whom had Michael quoted? Sam's scholarship was deserting him like a faithless lover. Where had Amanda gone?

Sam searched the empty hall. It was as grim and somber as the inside of a black cat. Amanda might never have been here, except her abandoned glass still sat on his desk and Michael's final message tainted his hands. She had come and gone, all right, and she would pay for his wounds and humiliation. She had grown more like her husband than he ever believed possible.

Sam crumpled the paper and relegated it to the waste basket where it belonged. He drank five successive glasses of sherry and heaved the empty Amontillado after the Gothic drivel. The liquor augmented his anger. He would leave now and on his way home he would stop by Michael Lockwood's grave and pay his final disrespects. Amanda wasn't going to rob him of his triumph. His vengeance was even more meaningful than his complete possession of her.

To prove it, he draped Michael's medallion round his neck and clasped the golden chain. Coleridge, albatrosses, rimes with no reason, Michael was always the dreamer. Hurrying into his cashmere overcoat, Sam ambled down the corridor and stopped near the stairwell where he spotted a stained lace handkerchief. He folded it neatly and placed it in his pocket. It smelled of Amanda and Amontillado. He would have her eventually. Things would return as they were. He would swear it on the grave of his

dead - make that murdered - nemesis.

The chapel chimes tolled six when Sam passed over the wooden duck pond bridge. He noticed a large, obscured form perched on the marble stone commemorating the university's recent centennial. The creature scattered into the mist with a few disturbed ducks before Sam could mark it. He cursed the flapping wings. They evoked crimson talons raking like daggers across soft, open flesh. The bleeding had ceased, but his cheeks still burned like two erupting volcanoes. Thank heaven Thanksgiving break began tomorrow and he would only have Doris to explain to. His bloodstained shirt would be her chief concern anyway. She would regard his wounds as probably well-deserved and erase them from her shallow mind. It was a shame he couldn't erase Doris. She had always been a nagging itch at his purpose.

The cemetery's iron paled gates were still ajar after this afternoon's service. For some inexplicable reason, Michael's family (Amanda, presumably) had requested his burial here and the university acceded. Amanda was probably apprehensive about asking the church. Michael was Roman Catholic, non-practicing but a papist all the same, and the Romans frowned upon planting suicides in their consecrated ground. If they only realized the truth! For one excruciating moment in his office, Sam had honestly feared that Amanda had worked out the puzzle.

Her ignorance simply proved Sam's point. Amanda knew her husband less well than she claimed. Michael Lockwood, romantic fool that he might have been, would never have taken his own life. His will to live was the major stumbling block. Michael had required a little outside assistance.

Inside the cemetery the mist had thickened into a clammy fog as dense as an English pudding. Michael's gravesite was located in a small corner under a shaggy weeping willow overlooking the university's corn fields. Most of the headstones were crumbling from years of neglect and decay. Faculty were seldom buried here now. Unlike Michael, they usually passed on emeritus and fertilized exotic spheres such as Florida, California, or a tiny plot in England or France. Sam favored cremation. He hated worms, anything that shimmied or crawled. The supernatural was man's invention, but organisms in earth, water and air were real. Burning was the ultimate purification. One life, one death.

The flat, seven foot stone across Michael's grave was an unexpected surprise. The monument people worked quickly. They would probably engrave a

saccharine inscription immediately after Thanksgiving. Sam spread his cashmere coat across the damp marble slab and sat on it. He lit his briar and enjoyed a few reflective puffs. Why people feared this place before death was beyond him. Gothic claptrap, the junk Michael Lockwood had touted. Reality was hard and now. Like the book Sam would publish on Swift. Any other considerations were Yahoo thoughts.

Sam blew smoke rings through smoke rings and watched them dissolve into the blanketing fog. With Michael beneath him and all inquests closed and forgotten, he hadn't a care in the world. Except for Amanda, of course, and he would deal with Amanda in due time.

Michael hadn't batted an eye Friday night when Sam broke the news about Amanda and him. In fact, he laughed and tossed off his scotch in a neat quaff. His carefree blue eyes were always irritating, but never so much as when Sam knew they were mocking him. The study in Michael's house suited him to a tee. Gothic, absurd, disorganized. His essay on Coleridge's supposed last draft of the Ancient Mariner was the same. Michael bastardized everything he touched. Killing him was the only open route. Sam had exhausted every other alternative.

"Do you think I'm blind, Sam?" he asked seriously, his rich voice filled with contempt. "I've known you've had the hots for Amanda since the day I met you. What kind of fool do you take me for?"

Sam ignored that opening. "Did Amanda tell you?"

"Nope. Didn't have to. I know your type, Sam. You're a dime a dozen on a college campus. You think you can prolong your youth by deflowering a coed or two every semester. It's kind of pathetic. Do you know how old and dirty you look?"

"Amanda loved me, though. She was different than the others."

"That's bull, Sam. She despises you. You're just pissed that you never got into her pants."

"I love her, Lockwood, and I mean to have her. You're through in academia and there's nothing you can offer her now."

Michael laughed contemptuously and poured more whiskey.

"Another sherry, Sam? How did your namesake put it? 'Why, Sir, sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in nature.'"

"Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish verse, And brother Coleridge lull the babe at nurse."

You're finished, Michael."

"Touché. I suppose you're referring to that underhanded business you pulled with Smithers and the tenure committee. It won't work, Sam. The review board'll smother it once I get my day in court. You surprise me, professor. For a giant of the eighteenth century enlightenment, you've got a microcosmic imagination. My interpretation of the "Ancient Mariner" and all the investigative research is mine alone. You haven't got a Long John Silver leg to stand on with that plagiarism rap."

"No, I don't suppose I do, but you'll have trouble worming out of the rest of it."

Michael's eyes boiled like angry oceans. His laughter was low and bitter. He proposed a mock toast and drank off his scotch neat.

"I've got to give you points for that one, Lord Queensbury. But the depressed, suicidal angle doesn't hold water these days. We're liberal around here now, but I guess you've forgotten."

"Not when it involves hushed up psychiatric records and two years of institutional confinement. How you buried that is beyond me."

"I'll roll with those punches, too. I was a messed up kid on drugs with no sense of responsibility. It was a long time ago, Sam."

"Responsibility's the key word, my terminated friend. Smithers' committee doesn't want tenured staff who don't have it. You read their letter of denial, didn't you? Of course. So did I."

"Stuff it, Sam," Michael snapped and poured more scotch.

Sam held out his glass for sherry. Michael ignored it, however, and slumped in his armchair facing the bookcase crammed with a mixture of occult and cheap paperback thrillers. Evidently, the chloral hydrate Sam had poured into Michael's whiskey bottle had begun to work. He pulled on latex gloves and administered his own sherry which he swallowed very slowly. He walked round to Michael, who was frozen to his chair like a stone statue staring into the end of time. Sam closed Michael's eyelids, removed the glass from his hand and exchanged it, the Johnny Walker bottle and his sherry glass for the identical replacements he had brought in his coat. Amanda would return from her seminar in two hours. He had to move quickly.

Sam ran a hot bath, undressed Michael and eased him into the steaming tub. Michael's razor was on the sink. A straight edge, no less, fit for opening the veins of a traitorous Roman senator. Or any punk

obstacle, Sam thought crudely, raising Michael's left arm and slicing vertically five times across his pale left wrist. Only wolf criers cut horizontally. He dropped the straight edge into the water.

The blood spurted from Michael's veins like an indignant red geyser. Sam plunged the arm into the bath and sat on the toilet seat. Michael was chloralized, but his arm was jerking like a wounded bird. Red clouds spiralled and fumed through the clear water, turning it light scarlet. Michael's eyelids suddenly popped open and two yellow beams seemed to glow in the pale blue depths. They went out and Sam knew it was finished. He dropped the empty chloral hydrate bottle on the bathroom floor, tidied up all traces of his presence round the house and slipped across campus to his office. By the time Amanda reached home, he was gloomily watching Dallas with Doris. J.R. Ewing would have approved.

No one had thought to question his whereabouts that night and now nobody ever would. Dejected by discovery and tenure rejection, Michael Lockwood had ended his own life with drugs and a razor. It was so pat, so complete, even the suicide's wife believed it. A closed book, like the one Sam would publish on Swift. Killing was easy if you figured out the variables. Sam was surprised he had never considered it before.

The night had grown colder and the unfriendly dampness of Michael's slab was invading Sam's buttocks. He knocked the dead ash from his briar and stood up and stretched. Goodbye, Michael, he thought, turning round for one last look. I hope the worms are at you already.

A cold wave of dread spread through Sam's bowels. Inscribed in Gothic script, the misquoted verse had appeared on the marble stone.

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a rightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

Sam shut his eyes and put his hands to his throbbing temples. A red light exploded inside his mind. He wrenched open his eyelids. The script was the same, but the words were different.

Just as the moth seeks the flame,
The worm returns.

A sudden breeze rustled through the overhanging willow. The weeping branches lashed for his face and sent sharp cracking volleys through the silent night.

Sam's heart missed three long beats. The willow was trembling as though the earth would disgorge it and the ground seemed to be crawling away from him. He might sink down to Michael at any moment. He looked at the slab and saw only virgin marble. The earth stilled and the violence of the willow was reduced to a gentle swish of long, sinuous droppings. The medallion round his neck felt heavy and eternal. He couldn't unclasp it. He picked up a thick clump of mud and splattered it across Michael Lockwood's tombstone. His imagination had run away for a few seconds, that was all. He buttoned up his overcoat and started off. Looking back was pointless. He was finished with Michael Lockwood forever.

The fog had smothered the cemetery like a Victorian funeral cloak. The path to the gates was well-trod, however, and Sam reached them with little difficulty. Strange. The gates were pulled to, the iron palings strung with heavy chains and a large padlock. Campus security had likely done it when he was buried in his thoughts. Sam swore under his breath and tried vaulting over the four foot stone wall. He fell badly and heard a crisp, sickening snap. Pain blinded his vision and the night went red, a red darkness that smelled of fever and scent.

His left wrist, damn it. He had broken his left wrist. More angry than hurt, he headed toward his office. How in the world would he manage to drive his car?

The visibility was so poor that Sam's feet were swallowed by fog at each step. The chapel chimes tolled seven. They sounded different through the fog, like sea bells. He should have reached the duck pond ages ago, but he sensed no evidence of its proximity. He felt as though he was walking down a steep incline, but that was impossible. The campus was as flat as Michael Lockwood's extinguished dreams and besides, perceptions always distorted when pain prickled the consciousness. Instead of attempting to drive, he would stop at the office, dull the pain with Amontillado and telephone the hospital. This was a piece of bad luck, but by no means a Shakespearean tragedy.

But the steep, sloping path was troublesome. And it irked him that he couldn't recall it turning from grass to sandy dirt before it entered the bridge over the duck pond. Had he taken a wrong turn? Another fork in the trail? Gone off course in the fog?

Impossible. There were no turns, no forks, no other courses. The pain in his wrist and his shredded

cheek were to blame. And the Amontillado. He had to keep a level head.

"Michael loved this weather. He used to say he only felt life in the midst of the mists."

Damn Michael and his medallion that wouldn't come off. And damn Amanda for her spectral presence.

Sam heard the soft, slapping sound of water lapping at something solid. A faint light was burning through the fog, probably the one he left on in the office. His feet touched wood and he felt the bridge tremble a little. In three or four minutes he would be clumsily opening a new bottle of Amontillado with one hand. God, how his wrist ached.

"There's the swab! Bind him fast, lads!"

"Aye, he couldn't stay hid in the hold forever. Lash him to the mast!"

Five or six powerful arms grappled Sam and hauled him across the bridge. He tried to scream, but his mouth was choked off by a brutal fist. He tasted blood. Thrust against a thick pole, he was bound tightly with heavy rope. The wooden bridge swayed and rocked uneasily like a large ship. The fist left his mouth and he shouted angrily.

"If this is a fraternity prank, it's not funny. I'll have you expelled for this."

Humorless laughter and low murmurs. Sam could see nothing but fog and the faint light to his right. His bonds were relentless and pinned his wrist so fiercely he thought all the bones would disintegrate. Someone spoke audibly, his voice coarse and thickly British.

"He's ravin. Been drinkin bilge water, I warrant. Heave him over the side while there's time. That oughta satisfy em. He's the one's done the killin."

"Aye! Aye!"

"Hold on, lads," said a voice with authority.

"I wanta word with him."

"Talk to him then, Pete. But be fast. Or we're all doomed just like the captain."

"Aye!"

The voices were angry and scared. Hobnails clopped across the bridge. A hulking shadow emerged from the fog and a monstrous face peered into Sam's. The man looked seasoned and rugged, like a pirate, a patch over one eye and a red kerchief tied round his greasy black hair. His teeth were yellow and broken and his crooked nose mushroomed with syphilitic sores. He drew a glimmering dagger from his breeches and held it to Sam's throat. His voice rasped and his breath stank of opened graves.

"So, ye didn't feed yerself to the fishes after all, eh? By him that died on the cross, ye shoulda. We're all payin for yer sins now, ain't we? What am I gonna do with ye, ye stupid oaf?"

"All right, you've had your fun," Sam stammered fearfully. "Let me go now and I'll forget everything."

The man laughed, spat into the fog and pricked Sam's throat, drawing blood.

"Ye're not really daft yet, are ye? Just some tomfoolery, eh? It don't matter, matey. After what ye've done, there's no way out. Ye've gotta pay, laddie buck. Ye've gotta pay the full price."

"For what!?" Sam screamed. "For what!?"

Sam looked down. He was naked except for a pair of torn, stained breeches and Michael's medallion.... Michael's medallion was no longer there. A large, green pelican was draped round his neck. Stiff and rotting, one naked eye glaring into Sam's. The stench wasn't the man's foul breath...it was Sam who stank like an opened grave.

"I...I..."

"Or yer arm all broke where I smashed it after ye killed the blessed bird with yer wicked bow? Damn ye to hell. Ye've brought the mist and the fog and the sins o' the world and ye'll pay."

"Aye, aye, aye," the other voices echoed, clapping toward Sam and assuming grotesque shapes in the heavy fog. "Kill him now, Pete. Feed him to the sharks and set us free."

A dozen sneering corsairs gathered round Sam. Cursing and shoving, they spat in his face, yanked his handlebar moustache and mercilessly pinched his exposed flesh. Pete drew a black lace handkerchief from Sam's breeches and crammed it into his bloody mouth, stilling his weak protests. Sam's mind was a wild carnival, his thoughts divebombing from dizzying heights and smashing to nothing on a fractured floor. A heavy musket butt crashed into his shredded cheek and the faint light in the fog dissolved into darkness.

Sam awoke and the faint light was a red ball of blood burning through the mist and hovering over a ship's prow. The morning sun, he conjectured groggily, testing his bonds and discovering escape still impossible. His body was so beaten he doubted he could move anyway. Littered about him, the filthy crew was asleep on the deck. He could distinguish Pete slumped over the helm, a dagger handle protruding from his broad back. Sam wondered how he was still alive and suddenly discerned that Pete's shipmates were awakening and moving toward him. He

tried to scream, but the handkerchief was still stuck in his mouth. The water slapped against the hull, but the ship wasn't moving.

The poem, he thought. The poem, the poem, the poem.

The mist rose and revealed dead water as green and blue as a witch's oils. Sam heard a rushing sound in the copper sky that made his heart as dry as dust. A strange apparition appeared between the ship and the sun, flecking the sun with bars, as though the ball of blood was peering through a dungeon grate. Nearing quickly, its sails glancing in the sun like gossamer wings, a skeleton ship approached, a woman at the helm, another figure cloaked in black striding the captain's deck. The ship hung in the air like a frozen dream and the crew of two embraced and pointed at Sam.

The woman was Amanda, but Amanda of another world, another time. Her lips were red, her looks unbridled, her hair like yellow gold, but her skin whiter than leprosy. 'The nightmare life in death who thicks man's blood with cold,' Sam remembered, his heart pounding so hard that the dead albatross' beak pecked savagely at his heaving chest.

"Amanda!" he screamed silently. "I love you, Amanda. Save me!"

The naked hull drew alongside and the woman accepted two dice from her shrouded companion. She cast them and triumphantly threw up her arms.

"The game is done! I've won! I've won!" she shouted and whistled three times.

The black hooded figure raised its arm and let it fall like a judge's gavel. The sun's rim dipped and the stars rushed into the darkening sky. A fierce whisper charged across the dead sea and the specter ship shot into the heavens.

Sam lifted his head and fear drank the blood from his heart. The stars were dim, the night thick, and Pete's dead face gleamed ghastly white over the motionless helm. One after another, the crew turned their faces with a horrifying pang and cursed Sam with their empty eyes. One by one, they crumbled like broken dolls and dropped to the deck with a heavy thump. Sam watched their souls fly from their bodies and every soul passed by him like the whizz of a razor slicing a path through soft, pale flesh.

The poem, the poem. Sam fought through his fears and snatched what fragments he could.

And a thousand thousand slimy things lived on; and so did I,

I looked upon the rotting sea;
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

Sam thought about prayer, but the fierce whisper drove that hope into the sky and sea which lay like dark weights on his blistered eyes. Cold sweat melted from the dead men at his feet whose empty, open eyes still cursed him for the murdered bird round his neck. The sea turned crimson and water snakes moved in shining white tracks beyond the ship's shadow, and when they reared, the elfish light fell from them in hoary flakes. They coiled and swam closer and every track was a flash of golden fire. Sam's bonds writhed like the serpents and burst from his body with a scintillating crescendo. He staggered across the deck, gripped the slick rail and the albatross dropped from his neck and sank into the sea like a lead bomb. He tore Amanda's handkerchief from his swollen mouth and shoved it into his breeches.

Free, by God. Free! Sam collapsed on the hard planks and fell into sleep like a soul drifting into the arms of an angel.

He awoke in the rain. Lips wet, throat cold, breeches pasted to the skin, he stood up and moved, but his limbs had no feeling. So light, he thought, a ghost, the rootless prisoner of a roaring wind that shook the sails and startled the upper air into life. A hundred glittering fireflags danced between the pallid stars and the ship's sails sighed like saw-grass. Lightning split the sky and rain poured from one black cloud that edged the bloody moon. The ship lurched forward and the dead men groaned collectively.

Ignored by the crew, Sam stood against the rail, his confidence buoyed by hope and the poem. He couldn't die now. Fate would protect him. The dead men wheezed and rose without speaking or moving their vacant eyes. Pete steered the helm, the dagger waving in his back like an unbalanced compass needle. The other mariners raised their arms like lifeless tools and worked the heavy ropes. Sam laid hold and pulled as well, but no one spoke to him. Soon, he thought, soon it would be over.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"

Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,

Which to their corpses came again,

But a troop of spirits blest.

Dawn broke across the horizon like a bucket of spilled blood. The crew dropped their arms and

clustered around the mast. The ship moved slowly and smoothly and the sails rustled like a hidden stream, but no breeze stirred across the deck. Sam's heart was wet with hope. He would pay no more. Port and home lay within reach.

The dead turned their eyes on him and Pete looked up from the helm. The flesh on his face was lime green and two black beetles crawled from his eye sockets, blinked at the red sun, and scurried back into his rotting head. Pete opened his parched mouth and forced words through his broken teeth with a swollen, black tongue.

"Paid? Ye ain't begun, matey. We're all sufferin' forever." 'Tis the ghost ship now, lads. Look o'er the ocean!"

The sea bubbled dark clouds of foam and the ship stood still for a heartbeat. Then, with a short, uneasy motion, she stirred backwards and forwards half her length and let go like a pawing horse bounded straight for the sun. The movement flung the blood to Sam's head and he dropped to the deck like a scuttled anchor. Pete tore the dagger from his back and advanced from the helm.

"After him, lads! Throw the scab over the deck!"

"No!" Sam screamed. "No! The Hermit first. It's not that way in the poem! The Hermit!"

"Hang yer bleedin' poem. Ye'll be a hermit, all right. In Davey Jones' locker," Pete snarled, wrenching Sam's broken wrist so brutally that the stars exploded in broad daylight. "Hang ye for ever bein' born. Feed him to the fishes, lads!"

It's not right, Sam thought foggily, turning end over end in the troubled air, sky and sea fusing around him like a great open grave. It's not right.

He plunged into the salty sater and sank, sank, sank. His eyes clamped down like iron hinges and tiny fish nipped at his naked ankles. He struck sharp coral and felt crimson knives raking his face. His right hand touched something cold and stiff and rotten. The albatross was with him forever. The bird, the bird, the night would never end and there would always be the bird.

The fog had almost lifted when Sam floated into shore. The breeze had done it, he thought, welcoming the sweet sighs singing through the reeds and fanning across the tranquil duck pond. An emerald headed mallard swerved in and out of sight and Sam felt a pang of kinship, an understanding that swelled his heart with the attainment of alien knowledge. He had paid, all right, a million times over. That was why his voyage had been terminated so abruptly. He had

paid and like the mariner he would live with what he had done and never dispute the unknown again. A terrifying experience, but more than a fair price for fulfilling his hate and lust. Now he could go home, face Doris and prepare the way for Amanda. He had a score to settle with her, but first they would return to the way they once were.

Sam pulled himself onto the crunchy beach. His clothes were intact and Michael's horrible medallion still dangled round his neck. His wrist felt like a torn chunk of volcanic lava and his face...he didn't want to think about his ravaged, shredded face. He would wear those decorations like Heidelberg scars. He had been through hell and back. Michael Lockwood was child's play. Nothing would ever hinder him again. He rose to his feet and assumed a shaky balance.

The chapel chimes tolled seven o'clock. That was odd. He had walked onto the ship at seven o'clock. Something was moving in the woods. Sam dragged himself to the bridge.

She drifted from the trees like her sister specter on the ghost ship. Red lips, unbridled looks, hair like yellow gold, arms whiter than leprosy. 'The nightmare life in death who thickens man's blood with cold.' Behind her stood a black hooded figure which raised its arm and let it fall like a judge's gavel. The hood parted slightly and Sam saw blue eyes flashing deep in the sockets of a white, grinning skeletal head.

"Amanda? Michael? Amanda?"

"You'll burn in hell forever, Sam," she hissed through her sharp white teeth. "Your journey's just begun. 'Pass, like night, from land to land,' you bastard!"

Amanda pushed with the strength of ten and Sam fell from the bridge onto the stout marble pillar commemorating the university's centennial. His head met the stone with a thick, sickening thud and split open like a melon dropped from the crow's nest of a tall sailing ship. He clutched his throat and felt the bird, rotten and stiff. It fluttered its wings and broke its chains for the sky. His hand tightened round the gold medallion and Sam Johnson's life poured into the inscrutable sand while he watched himself walk down the bridge into the arms of the vengeful crew who would sail by his side and torment him for eternity.

He lay there until morning, Thanksgiving Day, and following the holiday weekend, the English Department donned black for the second time in a week. At the

two widows' insistence, he was buried in the plot adjacent to Michael Lockwood's. It had been a tragic affair, but at least they could depend on Amanda Lockwood to carry on her husband's work. Samuel T. Johnson, however, was irreplaceable, and so was his book on Swift. Among all of his meaningless papers, they were unable to find a single note on the subject.

Erskine Carter is a graduate student in English.

POEM BY TERI PETTINATO

Where I Was

Dark night, icy road.
Dad drove on and on.
Small stuffy car.
I, little One, in the backseat
between Tony and Michael.
Car smell, plastic odor.

The car stops.
Someone's house towers
on a high wall of snow.
Bright porch lights.
A lone street lamp makes snow
yellow in the blackness.

Shadows of bare trees
dance on the snow.
Mom's strong arms wrap
the small bundle of me.
Her thick coat itches my face.
Her perfume, that usual Mom smell.

The house slowly comes nearer.
I remember the smell of wood and smoke.
Happy voices hurry us inside.
Dim lights, a blazing fire.

Teri Pettinato is in her sixth semester as a Photography major. She wrote this poem in English 146.

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