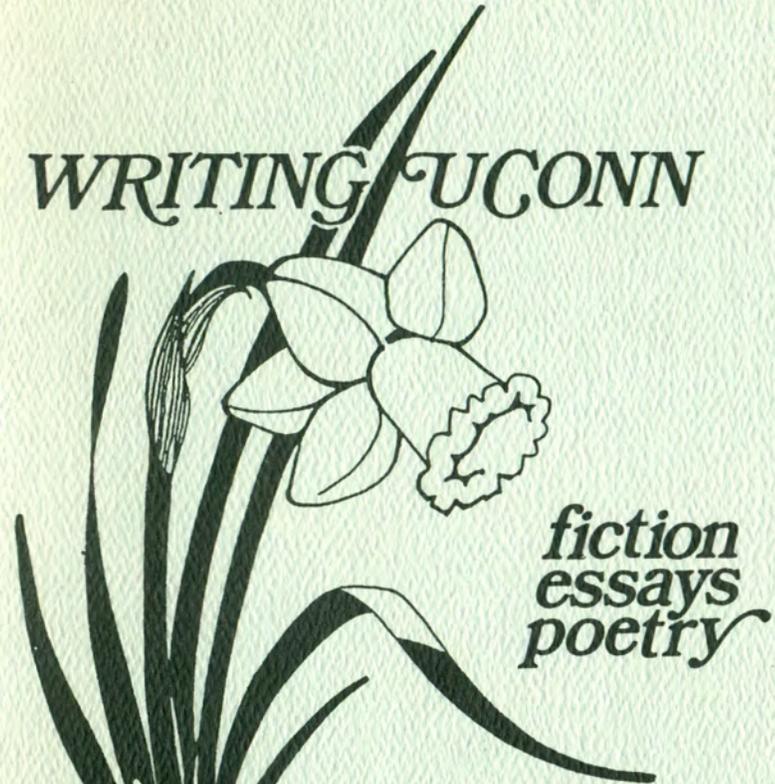


WRITING @ UCONN



*fiction
essays
poetry*

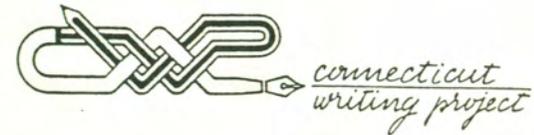
Spring 1989

*the connecticut writing project
and
the english department of the
university of connecticut*

This seventh issue of WRITING UCONN has been prepared by Matthew N. Proser. The cover design is by Pat O'Hara of the UConn Co-op. Jennifer Rafferty typed the manuscripts, 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. 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.



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LONGING TO TURN UPWARDS
A Short Story by Margaret Shannon

I thought Vanessa was a goddess. She lived down Forest Road past the grape vines, in part of an old house. She was a goddess of the Grapes and she lived alone. My mother couldn't understand why she didn't have a boyfriend. She was very beautiful--silver hair, blue eyes, and silver dangling from her ears, neck, and wrists. We'd met Vanessa at our laundrymat a year ago. Now she babysat me while my mother went to night school twice a week. I had another babysitter in the morning before school, but that woman was just a mother with two kids and a husband.

One evening, when my mother left me at Vanessa's, she was on her front steps drinking tea. As I left our car, I heard birds. Looking up, I saw dozens of black birds along the telephone wires. I felt lessened by their sound. Their jeers overlapped so that I could never hear one full complaint. It was like the loud ticking of crickets when you're trying to sleep. Vanessa looked peaceful.

"Do you think one leader told them all to meet here or do you think a few of them got together and others came along and joined them?" I asked.

"I called them here, Leslie," she said.

"Oh. How'd you do that?" I said, laughing. I loved it when she told me stories, but I always let her know that at nine years old, I was too old to believe them.

"Last night I dreamt of a bird named Major that I had as a child," she said. This morning I looked deeply into that field and gathered its force into my one-point. Then I expelled the energy into the clouds. Then, Leslie, my sweet, I whistled. I whistled for...oh...a good twenty mintues. My jaw still hurts from it. When I got home from work they were here."

As the sky turned pink, I began to hear a pattern in their song. I told her that I heard three groups of calls and she agreed. The noise no longer bothered me. I felt that we were guests at a secret meeting.

When we went indoors Vanessa asked me what I wanted to do. Her apartment was crowded, mostly with plants and books in dark wood cases. An eleven-year-old tree bent and

grew along the ceiling. I wanted to read, but I felt it was rude so early in the evening. We usually did things together for awhile and read later. She had no television.

"Why don't I give you a massage?" I asked.

"A back massage? Well, all right, but why don't I show you how to give a face massage instead?"

My eyelids twitched as Vanessa's fingers smoothed my forehead. With her breath so close, it was hard to keep them shut. When she gave me back massages, I would fall asleep as she pressed my shoulders until they fell from the bone. Now my thoughts followed her every move, and I tried to remember what my nose and cheeks and chin looked like. After awhile I relaxed, and when she was done, my mind was resting far beneath my skin. I expected my eyelashes to brush against hers when I found the strength to open them. I was surprised when I saw her face far above me. Relaxing was one of the important things I learned from Vanessa.

Sometimes my mother and Vanessa would have tea in the late afternoon when they each got home from work. As the sun lowered behind the trees, casting our legs in shade inch by inch, we soaked the last warmth out of Vanessa's steps. I loved Vanessa most when she talked about places she had visited. My mother didn't. She always drove home complaining that Vanessa lived in the past. She wished Vanessa would forget about her life before her ex-husband left her. It was best when Vanessa and my mother talked about politics. They talked about education, women running for offices, and the need for cheap apartments. They complained bitterly that the cut-offs for housing loans were too low. Often, they talked about men--how women had to be independent financially because men would leave them.

"I never have time to go out anymore," said my mother. "I don't know if it matters though. All the men I've met are such selfish little boys. They leave their wives and then they don't want to get married again."

"I know," said Vanessa. "But my boss seems like a nice man. He's fifty and he's still married."

"Yeah, see. All the good ones are married," said my mother. "I think you have to find the

right person when you're young or that's it."

"I *loved* getting married young," said Vanessa. "We had *such* good friends at Berkeley. Did I tell you they had a reunion last month and they called me? It was *so* nice. It was just so great to hear their voices.

"Did Robert go?" asked my mother.

"Oh yeah, he could easily afford it. But you know, that didn't bother me much. I even liked talking to him. It's amazing. They're still together, all three couples, except us of course. But you know, I'm just glad we went to Europe when we were young. We almost didn't, because, you know, we didn't have any money really, but we knew if we didn't go *then* we'd *never* get there. We met *all* these *great* people. *Everyone* was *so* wonderful. And we went to Spain...and Rome...and Florence. We were in Rome on New Year's. They have this funny custom. Have you heard this? At midnights they all throw things out the window--anything, even big things like chairs!"

"Don't people get hurt?" I asked.

"No, Les. Nobody's outside," she said.

"Yeah, my marriage was nice," said my mother. "And thank god I have Leslie to keep me going now, but I'll do things differently if I get married again."

"Really?" said Vanessa. "What was he like?"

"Oh he was a nice person--very smart, very intense in his work--and he loved to play with Leslie. And he cooked and did things...but I should have done more. I should have worked or something...I don't know. It seems like such a long time ago. I guess I was too dependent on him."

"Once was enough for me," said Vanessa.

"But you're not that old, Vanessa. You could get married again."

"Yeah, I know, but I don't think that I was meant to get married again," she said.

"I sure do," said my mother. "Leslie deserves a good father."

"Mom...," I said.

"Well you do," she said. "Not one of these selfish nothings, but someone decent. Besides, I'm tired of being alone!"

After my mother got her Master's, she started going out at night. She went to dances with Parents Without Partners, which she said she hated, but she complained that there was nothing better. At first Vanessa would go with her. She would come over while I was curling my mother's hair. My mother would ask Vanessa if her makeup looked all right, which embarrassed me. Then she would ask her if she should take her white purse or her black velvet one. Vanessa always asked me what I thought.

Later Vanessa stopped going out and my mother went alone. She left me at home without a sitter, assuring me that the neighbors were right on the other side of the wall. She complained that Vanessa was lazy and too timid to try new things. Angry that my mother kept me from seeing Vanessa, I said that it shouldn't matter what Vanessa did. Vanessa liked staying at home better than going to silly dances. "Oh what the hell does she know. She never had kids!" my mother yelled.

"You never make sense," I said. "Why don't you ever give me a reason?"

After I badgered my mother for weeks, she gave in and brought me back to Vanessa's, although she said that a twelve-year-old was too old for babysitters anymore. Now, however, Vanessa was no longer free to babysit any old night. She had joined her own group. When my mother heard this she said nothing, but two weeks later she invited her over for tea again. Vanessa was excited to tell us about her new group.

"It's kind of a philosophical group. We had this great discussion on feminism. So far we've planned to talk about environmental problems, vegetarianism, and how to combine spirituality with politics," she said.

My mother considered herself a feminist. She also cared about the environment and had canvassed for the clean-up of a waste dump last year, but she was always disturbed by vegetarianism. A former neighbor of ours encouraged her children to tell non-vegetarians about the evils of eating meat. My mother associated vegetarianism with arrogance and always referred

to this neighbor as "that nosy know-it-all-veggy."

"It sound interesting," said my mother to Vanessa. "Is it strictly discussion? I mean, do you ever do anything more...social?" I was scraping a penny along the steps, resting my head over my knees, staring at the black hairs on Vanessa's legs.

"Oh, sure." said Vanessa. "About once a month we have pot-luck dinners."

"Oh, good...great," said my mom. "Are there any men in the group?"

One Friday Vanessa said that I could spend the night with her, while my mother went to a party. The next morning Vanessa woke me up at daybreak, with soft music that slowly got louder and faster. Finally, she dragged my legs out from the covers and stood me up.

"Leslie, if you dare go back to sleep, you are testing my magical powers."

Confused, I got dressed. She returned with a bagel and hung a camera around my neck. We went out into the fields and she taught me how to focus the camera. The wet grass reached my knees. She warned me to balance my picture with respect to the amounts of light and dark. She insisted that I shoot two rolls of film. Enormous crows cawed back and forth above the sweet smell of grapes. As the sun began to warm the air, and little kids screamed on their tricycles, we went home. Vanessa promised to develop my pictures in a friend's darkroom. We had a second breakfast as we leafed through one of her three photo albums. As she walked me home, along her long dirt road, she asked if I knew why weeping willows weep.

"Because their leaves are too long to turn upwards," I said smartly.

"Leslie, even an old lady of fifty-one has more imagination than you!" Vanessa said.

"Weeping willows are weeping out of loneliness. They are more sentimental than most trees, and older. They remember the old times."

"Is it true that they're older?" I asked.

"When have I lied to you?"

"I know, but really, is it true?" I said. She ignored me.

"So, since they remember the old times, they remember when the world wasn't as serious. They remember when men and women were different. You see, Leslie, long ago, in the Lower

Pleistocene Age, men and women did not live together and women did not take men's names. Women lived together with the children and men wandered alone or in groups."

"Did they have houses?" I asked.

"No, in fact women didn't have permanent houses either," she said. "They moved from place to place gathering their food and they had sex when they chose. Men and women often paired off, but the men would live with their sister and her children, when they weren't wandering, rather than their mates."

I looked at her with my straightest face to test whether she was at all serious. She ignored me.

"So since men were freer to do as they pleased, they weren't tied up with business like so many are now. Instead they climbed trees. Yes, Leslie, men climbed trees. That is why the willows weep. They miss the times when men, and sometimes even women, had the time to climb trees."

"Well, even if this is true, it doesn't make sense," I said, teasing her. "Children still climb trees, so why would they be lonely?"

"It's not enough, Leslie. It's just not enough." She seemed sad, so I stopped trying to prove her wrong.

That afternoon, I found our family scrapbooks. I insisted that my mother stop cleaning and look at them with me. We had not done this since I was very young. Now that I was more interested, her enthusiasm had waned. When I asked her to tell me about various people, she complained in a listless tone that I wouldn't know them anyway. Finally she squeezed her lips together and stopped talking. She stared at me defiantly. She made me want to shake her until her wide eyes fell out of her head. I strode heavily across the room yelling.

"Why don't you ever tell me anything? Why don't we take any pictures anymore? Look. Look at these ugly pictures." I grabbed a framed picture of myself in first grade when I had short hair and no front teeth. Then I banged the wall, knocking another picture down, breaking the glass. My mother was next to me in a moment, shaking my arm, twisting it.

"You little spoiled bitch. You don't know anything. You think you're so smart. I know where you're getting all of this. From Vanessa. Know-it-all, radical Vanessa! You're just like her. Well listen, sweetie, her husband didn't die leaving her with a spoiled brat, did he?"

I twisted myself loose and ran into my room, slamming the door so it shook the house.

"And this is my apartment, not yours. I pay the rent, so don't slam *my* doors!" she yelled.

My mother and I sulked for a while. Then, as usual we pushed our anger to the backs of our minds. I continued to go to Vanessa's and my mother occasionally invited her for tea and once even for dinner. One afternoon they began to talk politics again. By now I was included more in discussions.

"Vanessa, did you see the first candidate's debate last night?" my mother asked. "I watched the Democrats, but after ten minutes of the Republicans I was so sick I had to turn it off."

"Mmm. No, I didn't know it was on," said Vanessa.

"Oh yeah," I said. "You wouldn't believe it. This one Republican...uuhm...what's his name Mom? Anyways, he actually had the nerve to complain that everyone is being too pessimistic about AIDS!"

"I'm not surprised," said Vanessa. "Really I can't get interested this time at all. I just feel that none of them discuss any of the real issues facing our world."

"Well, that's true." said Mom. "We hardly get to hear their views at all."

"Yes, but that's not what I'm saying." said Vanessa. "None of the real issues would be discussed even if the media wasn't in the way. I just don't think I believe in representative democracy anymore."

"Well even if you don't like any of them, you have to vote against the worst," said my mother.

"I just don't care," said Vanessa. "They're all almost equally bad." My mother was quiet and just drank her tea. I decided to stay out of this discussion. They argued until our bodies were entirely in the shadow of our roof's overhang. Before Vanessa left, my mother promised to go to one of Vanessa's meetings sometime.

"I'll be damned if I'll go to one of her meetings," my mother said later.

"Go Mom. You promised."

"What a goddamn anarchist. Why doesn't she work for some real cause?"

"Mom, leave her alone." I said. "There are a lot of people with causes. Why can't you just appreciate her imagination?"

"Yeah. I will when you stop taking after her," she said. "You're just so easily influenced."

Soon I went to high school and forgot about feminism. I thought a lot about Vanessa's dislike for our system though, and I decided to become a vegetarian. My mother quit Parents Without Partners and dated less. She became disgusted with our government as it grew more and more conservative. Her new dream was to move to Australia or at least to a town with more single men.

Margaret Shannon is an eighth semester English major. She wrote this story in English 246. It won second prize in the 1988 Jenny Hackman Memorial competition.

POEMS BY TERENCE ROETHLEIN

Dumbunny

One ghost inside me rusts
my knuckles and my eyelids with his weepy sighs.
Knocking on my sternum,
he keeps my heart pretty flaccid
and his hard brassy rings are cold on my skin.

The other, smaller,
hops from my haircut to my nipple to each fingertip
Back and forth, a charge
slipping on the fingernails.
This is the same one who
makes me move, and think about you.

This second one always wears bright corduroy
while the first is see-through.

A real ghost.

I want to say Quick I need an exorcist
when he's around, but it's just a
feeling.

I can't see him.

Whenever a car passes

I think the driver's got a shotgun.

Lo mas pequeno
scratches my earlobe
when you're around.
I must pay him to haunt me.

Tribute: Frontiersmen Plath, Kerouac and Arbus

Let's move now!
You the Americans
after the dried patriotism jelly
was scraped off the bullet molds.
To read you and to look at your photos
is to really know what pumps
in you?
Smokey smells in your skins
from short lives spent
soldering your art,
tattooing it in
for others to see, now
must be dusty. What
baked in your brains
after realizing
you couldn't tell it face to face.
Too much, too loud, the familiar echo
distorts, and frightens.
All of you--three or four decades
pickled in gall.
Not to mention sobering baths
of urine, alcohol and print developer.
Who can really know--
Who last prayed in your catacombs?

But my thumbly hands do recognize the texture
of your stainless steel deathwishes
caustic wedding bands
poured on your fingers
molten
at birth.

Sylvia--your head in the oven

Jack--your tongue in the bottle

Diane--your bisected wrists fauceting the tub

Immortals

When you went like that

you poured gasoline

on death's funeral pyre.

Terence Roethlein is an eighth semester Journalism major. He wrote these poems for himself.

POEMS BY KELLY DONOVAN

Hitchhiker

You start off
In the right direction,
Thinking you are really going someplace fast.
Thumb cocked jauntily,
Long braid tossed over one shoulder,
An easy grin
And a swinging stride
That eats the miles.
Forgetting the weather's
Not your friend,
And every road's
not as smooth as Highway S.
how many rides are going the wrong way?
how many cars pass you by
While the cold rain slowly soaks
Through your denim jacket
Weighing on your shoulders,
Until your sure step is merely a mask
For the hesitant stumbling of the mind?

When your destination is unknown,
Any road can take you there.
After all the lonely rides
Down twisting, bumping backroads
And one-way streets leading to
Dead-ends,
you will stumble on the road not taken,
The one less traveled by.
The one that takes you
Where you need to go.
That place where someone waits for you,
Keeping lit lamps in the windows,
And a hot meal ready on the stove.

Breaking Points

"You're not romantic"
Slips out.

Before my tongue is through
Tripping over my teeth,
I want to cry out, "Wait!"
And swallow it back.
It is too late.
It fills the air between us,
A violent fist
knocking you over the edge.

There is a terrible crash.
I cover my eyes,
Afraid to see you lying in pieces on the floor.

Why am I so careless
With fragile things?
When I was five,
I dropped my mother's Lenox vase
On the kitchen linoleum.
The pieces skittered across the floor,
Under the refrigerator.
Weeks later they lurked in the shag carpet,
Waiting for my unsuspecting feet to find them.

How can I fix
The thing I've broken?
I want to sweep you up
And glue you whole.
But too many pieces
Are still missing.
Every step I take
Is filled with their jagged menace.

Kelly Donovan is an English major. She wrote the first poem for English 246 and the second poem for herself.

POEMS BY STEVE GUGLIEMI

Fanny Burney Destroys Her First Novel
(June, 1767)

"All of it, Fanny,
all of it," her father says.
"Put it all in."

Fanny is at the hearth
tearing page and page
from her novel.
She puts them in.
the fire pushes
up and along the blackened stone
then collapses, open-mouthed,
around each page
as it is laid across the wood.
She tears another.

"You understand, Fanny.
Honor is important,
as is respect."
Red faced and puffy,
he watches.
His straight mouth
is hidden by his moustache;
his eyes by the yellow mirrors
of his spectacles.

She doesn't choose to reply,
but tears another. Only half
rips out; she works the rest
with her finger tips, to show him
she can do it.

But the story! her sisters cry.
it was a beautiful story.
Fanny wonders if she can remember
all she wrote--the words--
if she can write them all down again:
under her carpet;
under the jelly labels;
on the inside of her petticoat.
She tears.

"Put it all in, Fanny."

She lowers the half-empty binder
into the orange mouth of the fire.
It holds its hard shape for a moment,
then crumples to black from the edges in.

He grabs a poker and leans
over the fire to inspect.
His spectacles slide over sweat
and his moustache dangles
over the flames.

If only it would catch,
thinks Fanny.

"There, now that wasn't bad
at all. Come, now. Smile, Fanny.
Go up to your room
and act like a lady."

Up she goes, closes the door.
She's not going to cry,
but she clenches a fist,
nails digging palm flesh.
"Act like a lady," he said.
She walks to the window
and draws the curtains closed.
"Act lady-like."
She unbuttons her dress, and slides her shoulders
out through the top,
wanting to blossom like a brilliant lily
pushing
up and out
showing stamen, petiole, all.

I. Mrs. Ramsay and Charles Tansley, Walking

"As for her little bag, might not he carry that? No, no, she said, she always carried *that* herself."

1.
As they walked
the houses fell away on both sides
and the two came out on the quay.
The whole bay spread before them.,
and Mrs. Ramsay could not help exclaiming
"Oh, how beautiful!"
For the great plateful of blue water
was before her; the hoary lighthouse,
distant, austere, in the midst.
And on the right, as far as the eye could see,
fading and falling, in low soft pleats,
the green sand dunes, with the wild
flowing grasses on them, which always seemed
to be running away into some moon country--
uninhabited of men.

2.
Under the influence of that extraordinary emotion
which had been growing all the walk,
had begun in the garden when he wanted
to take her bag, had increased in the town
when he had wanted to tell her everything
about himself, Charles Tansley was coming to see himself,
and everything he had ever known
gone crooked a little.

3.
That was the view, she said,
stopping, growing greyer-eyed,
that was the view
that her husband loved.

4.
He would like her to see him gowned and hooded,
walking in a procession. A fellowship,
a professorship, he felt capable of anything.

5.
Artists had come here, she said.
Only a few paces off stood one of them,
in a panama hat and yellow boots,
seriously, softly, absorbedly,
for all that he was watched
by ten little boys, with an air of contentment
on his round face gazing, and then
when he had gazed, dipping;
imbuing the tip of his brush into some soft mound
of green or pink.
All the pictures were like that, she said,
green and grey, with lemon colored sailing boats,
and pink women on the beach.

6.
It was this:
she was the most beautiful person
he had ever seen, with the stars in her eyes
and veils in her hair, with cyclamen
and wild violets--

7.
what nonsense was he thinking?
She was fifty at least; she had
eight children--

8.
stepping through the fields of flowers
and taking to her breast buds
that had broken and lambs that had fallen;
with the stars in her eyes and the wind
in her hair--

9.
He took her bag.

10.
A man digging in a drain stopped digging
and looked at her, let his arm fall down and
looked at her;
for the first time in his life, Charles Tansley
felt an extraordinary pride; felt the wind
and the cyclamen and the violets, for he was walking
with a beautiful woman.
He had hold of her bag.

II. The Boat Ride, to the Lighthouse

"...[Lily's] feeling for Mr. Ramsay changed as he sailed further and further across the bay He and his children seemed swallowed up in that blue, that distance."

1.

It was like that then,
the island thought Cam,
drawing her fingers through the waves.
She had never seen it from out at sea before.
It was very small; shaped something
like a leaf on end.

2.

So much depends then,
thought Lily Briscoe, looking out
at the sea which had scarcely a stain on it,
which was so soft that the sails and the clouds
seemed set in its blue,
so much depends, she thought,
on distance.

3.

So we took a little boat,
Cam thought, beginning to tell herself
a story of adventure about escaping a sinking ship.
But with the sea streaming through her fingers,
a spray of seaweed vanishing behind them,
she did not want to tell herself seriously a story;
it was the sense of adventure
and escape that she wanted,
for she was thinking, as the boat sailed on,
how her father's anger, her brother's obsession
with their compact to resist
their father's tyranny to death,
and her own anguish,
all had slipped, all had
passed, all had
streamed away.

4.

The sea without a stain on it,
thought Lily Briscoe, still standing
and looking out over the bay. Distance
had extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it.
she felt, they were gone forever,
they had become a part of the nature of things.

5.

Cam gazed back over the sea,
at the island. But the leaf
was losing its sharpness.
It was very small; it was
very distant.
The sea was more important now than the shore.
Waves were all around them,
tossing and sinking,
with a log wallowing down one wave; a gull
riding on another.
About here, she thought, dabbling her fingers
in the water, a ship had sunk,
and she murmured, dreamily
half asleep,
how we perished each alone.

6.

Now they could see two men on the lighthouse, watching
and making ready to meet them.
In complete readiness to land
their father sat looking back at the island.
With his long-sighted eyes
perhaps he could see the leaf.

7.

But what could he see,
Cam wondered. What was he thinking?
What did he want?
She and her brother both wanted to say
"ask us anything, and we'll give it to you."
He might be thinking, we perished, each alone,
or I have reached it, or
I have found it.

8.

"Bring me those parcels," he said.
He rose and stood in the bow of the boat,
very straight and tall,
for all the world, her brother thought,
as if he were saying, "There is no God,"
and Cam thought
as if he were leaping into space.

9.

"He must have reached it," said Lily Briscoe, aloud.
Old Mr. Carmichael
who had been basking there
in the sun, stood beside her, looking
like an old Pagan god, shaggy
and with weeds in his hair.
"They will have landed,"
he said, shading his eyes with his hand.
He stood there,

as if he were spreading his hands
over all the weakness and suffering of mankind;
she thought he was surveying,
tolerantly and compassionately, their final destiny.
Now he has crowned the occasion, she thought,
when his hand slowly fell,
as if she had seen him let fall from his great height
a wreath of violets
and asphodels which, fluttering
slowly, lay at length upon the earth.

Anna's Danse Russe
(in honor of W. C. Williams)

"Anna,"
he said,
"is so ugly,
like a blob of white dough.
I get sick when I see her.
I actually get sick!"

And I thought of Anna.
Anna naked--
enormous and white
before her bedroom mirror,
yellow shades down.

She begins to dance.

Head thrown back
shoulders shaking in a seductive frenzy
her flesh
ripples in silence
through buttocks
through thighs
breasts clash
then leap to extremes
clashing
leaping
while the belly moves whole,
one in the center of it all.

She giggles
as she tries to subdue her skin.

Hands on hips
fists clenched
legs apart
she smiles into the mirror
and is certainly the happy genius of her household.

But Anna!
Anna with clothes on--
she laughs and gets up for more ice cream--

But if someone else laughed!
Or if someone told her
about the 'blobby-dough' appraisal of the body
or--
much worse--
if I told Anna
that I know she does the danse--

that afternoon
when she gets naked
and stands before her mirror,
shades drawn past the sills,
something in Anna will be trembling--
her heart, perhaps--
and those words

will close down on either side of it
like frozen tweezers
pop it open like a sore,
And Anna Naked will dance no more.

Steve Gugliemi took first prize in the 1989 Wallace Stevens Competition. He is a sixth semester English major. He wrote these poems for English 299.

THE BENTON'S THIRD WORLD

A Personal Essay by Richard Gechter

What can literature possibly have to do with going to visit a museum like the Benton? Well, in fact, a visit to the Benton Museum has quite a lot to do with what we were discussing in Third World Literature. Every Tuesday and Thursday, we debated some aspect from our reading about the "Third World" and attempted to analyze the traditions, life-styles, humor and struggles that the inhabitants of this underdeveloped world continually face. Inevitably, as we reflected upon the oppressed state of those who live in underdeveloped nations, we breathed a sigh of deep relief when realizing that Americans are, in comparison with others, fortunate. However, as we read stories such as Somers' "The Fall" and De Queiroz's "Metonymy, of The Husbands Revenge," we of the First World readily said that there exist religious faith, love of heavenly images and personal sacredness in everyone.

On both of its floors, the Benton Museum displays portraits exhibiting the spiritual beliefs and sacred personal feelings, as expressed through eyes, mouths, and facial expressions, that exist in all cultures, everywhere. Both floors emphasize that there is a spiritual, as well as physical essence to human beings. For instance, upon viewing the first floor painting entitled, "Saco River, North Conway" (which is part of the New Hampshire Art Exhibit), we see that the trees, water, and mountains are being "watched over" by the blue-white heavens above. If we look hard enough, we can almost feel a divine presence quietly regarding the serene stillness below. Later, when we ascend to the museum's second floor, where we find "Gods, Saints and Demons-Sacred Images From India and Tibet," we meet a divinely-inspired teacher in the Opaque Watercolor on Cloth entitled "Laama Phags-Pa." This teacher, or lama, is dressed in a long-robed ecclesiastical

garb and his eyes appear to be glazed as if he is engrossed in some unworldly or spiritual thought. The city in the background, though painted upon green grass, is, simultaneously, part of both earth and sky. The "heavenly city" depicted here may be the artist's way of stating that our earthly lives are only temporary, ephemeral states and that, eventually, all things must defer to an other-worldly, spiritual realm.

The images from the "New Hampshire Art Society Exhibit" and those viewed in "Gods, Saints and Demons..." both convey religious significance, heavenliness, and the mystifyingly intriguing. These are seen, for example in the oil-on-panel portrait of Mahalia Tilton or in the frightening eyes, in the second-floor opaque watercolor on cloth entitled "USHASITATAPATRA." But it would be false to say that the images on both floors have exactly the same meaning. Unlike the aesthetic beauty that is apparent in the New Hampshire Art Society's paintings of white clouds, green grass, and beckoning mountain, several paintings in "Gods, Saints and Demons..." contain devil-like figures that may well represent the spiritual anger possessed by those living in India or Tibet. In "Ushnishasitapatra," the woman's "thousands of eyes" have become an unnatural (or supernatural) form of winged plumage for her that allows her to ascend to the heavens. However, at the bottom of the painting, she becomes transformed into five small, devilish beings who, because of their fiendish appearance, a first world inhabitant might naively surmise must symbolize the "Third World" peoples' bitterness concerning their undeserved plight.

A second way in which "New Hampshire Art" and "Sacred Images" differ is through the manner in which mythological and human characters introduce themselves to us. The personal portraits in "New Hampshire Art" exhibit people, such as Mahalia Tilton, who are masking their personal feelings--or, perhaps, are not allowing their sacred inner-feelings to become publicly visible. This is conveyed through an uncertain shift of the eyes or position of the mouth. Conversely, the characters in "Sacred Images..." portraits, such as in "Kali on Shiva Shava,"

project themselves through power and the sword. In this painting, there is also the presence of cats, who in some cultures were believed to be sacred animals. Also, the men who are seated on either side of the mystical circle containing a triangle have become embedded in two block-like articles of faith on either side of the circle at the bottom of the portrait. Hence, they have BECOME blocks, just as Kali, the female sexual energy, has become part of her uplifted sword.

While "Mahalia Tilton" and "Shiva Shava" are alike because they contain a certain spirituality which helps the viewer appreciate both works, they are also very much opposed to one another in the sense that weapons, animals, and religious symbols are never an extension of the personality in "New Hampshire Art." From this difference, we can conclude that while all art forms, in all cultures, may be similar in some respects, no two pieces of work from two differing cultures--or perhaps any culture--can ever be completely the same.

Richard Gechter is an eighth semester English and Political Science major. He wrote this essay for English 218.

POEMS BY CHRIS JOPEK

Night Vigil

Dearest,

Shadows dragged across your walls

all night; I have not slept.

It is finally morning and the too-bright sun

pierces my eye-slants.

You say I remind you of a ground mole

trying to burrow from the light.

I see my father in the backyard, on his knees,

crawling alongside paths of unearthed grass,

planting pieces of chewing gum into holes that dot the lawn,

like I once fed potato chip-communion to my pets' graves.

"It's so the moles choke on it and die," he told me,

(someone told him at the office),

unwrapping the final pieces from the economy-sized pack.

Throughout the day, I dream about the moles,

their velvety fur running under the earth,

with eyes "reduced" or "absent" as the encyclopedia says,

their powerful shoulders and sensory hair

protecting them from bumping into the tunnel walls.

I'll keep vigil with a candle on the backporch
and try to catch a glimpse of one of them.
and perhaps some hints about journeying,
leaving only traces of uprooted earth behind,
without choking or bumping into walls,
knowing and going only by what I feel.

Excerpts from:

A Letter She Wanted to Write

Mama, my beliefs are dying,
sometimes I cannot even pray.
Ancient, rusted chimes:
my words are dry bones
that rattle through the half-shut window.

I climb to the temple at daybreak.
The mountains are lost pieces of myself
scattered across the ocean.
Mt. Fuji is hidden,
the Emperor is dying,
and I chant sutras in a foreign language,
weary of wandering boat-dock cities,
trying to learn from the water's movement how to stay in rhythm with myself
and those who I want to love better.

I search the thousand gold Kanon images
for the faces of people I miss;
finally I find Babcia, Dziadek, Uncle Jan,
and their faces sing to me in Polish,
laments from the sixty days on the train to Siberia
and I try to understand with my head tilted back,
arms outstretched, I long for quixotic stars
to fill me with light.

That night I tried to drink myself to sleep
and our dead became tall megaliths
with worn, chiseled faces circling above me,
a collage of old yellowing photographs
I had forgotten about.

I dreamt we sent their bodies out to sea in long kayaks,
and I, a small child, held up my birch-tree-arms,
wanting to be held in your already-too-heavy-silence,
wanting to cry out some kind of lament.

I run from gold Buddha to wooden Buddha to
buddha-bellied trees.

The earth is almost five billion years old, Mama!
My fingers grope to touch its braille,
long to be ridden of such lostness.

The Ema tablets are seen to be offered up in fire,
so many prayers scribbled out in different hands, languages:
one asks for a safe return from such a beautiful country,
one wants the simplicity of a stone.

The sunfish are hanging out to dry in the boat-village.
I want to ask the woman my age
hanging out her family's clothes how she feels,
what she sees, if the mountains are magical to her,
but only the yellowing shirts wave.

The natives' expressions are concrete buildings with no windows,
perhaps the windows have been broken,
I don't know, but this space between us overwhelms me
until her little boy runs up to her
kissing tiny flowers
and I am so filled with awe
I'm not sure what to say about it.

I cannot talk today.

Twenty-one times I tried,
my sentences falling apart somewhere in the back of my throat
or mind like lumps of mud in a child's drip-castle
sometimes mixed with pieces of seaglass.

I am watching the birds today:
falling, floating, sculpting the December-wind,
skimming the mirror of sea,
sure I am one of them,
misincarnated, speechless, and wing-frozen.

Cut off my legs the other week. Tired of run-
ning and kicking. Felt like there was no place
to go, Mama. I'm starting to miss them,
staring into the oak I spend my days
wanting just to climb it, be inside it,
touch all its leaves. It fills the whole window.
Tatus had said Dziadek lay in a bed

in an Italian hospital for months,
shrapnel in his head, kicking his legs,
and always stayed bitter. Well, I anoint
myself with a thumbprint on my forehead,
knowing it's not just me, offering black
ashes, soft dust, in machine-gun-clamor,
tired of kicking yet wanting legs back on.

This is my elegy of glass houses.

I have walked over the poets' bones in Westminster Abbey,
have been to the houses of ancient kings,
to the pyramids and Sphinx,
to where Gandhi's ashes were set free;
touched the grass there.

We put the ashes of a teacher into the sea tonight,
sent roses out to follow them
and in short, I was afraid.

I remember watching the Greek fishermen tenderize octopus
by smashing them against stone
and how I, too, longed to be made softer.

As a child I put caterpillars into glass jars,
filled them with green leaves,
poked holes in their ceiling
so they could have stars at night to count and pray to.
I watched their silk cocoons rot,
buried them in the backyard

with funeral rites, wooden crosses.

I, too, have lived in a glass house, writing poems,
dreaming myself blue silk wings to release me
into magical flight,
waiting for someone to smash my house against stone,
make me softer.

Eighty percent of the world's population
lives in Third World countries.

No one ever told me
just as you never told me steak came from animals
and let me think it grew like tomatoes in gardens
around thin pieces of wood
and I couldn't talk to you for days.

I am ashamed at myself for eagerly counting off days
on my pocket calendar,
for faltering in front of people
I don't know how to talk to, what to think, how to feel.
My nightmares are staged somewhere in our old house
On Hayden Avenue and its backyard of wooden crosses.
Once I was a wild rabbit under the porch,
once a pigeon on the attic roof.

I cut out the pieces of myself I am tired of
and I stand on the mountain at daybreak again
to let the sun pierce through the holes in me.
I am a shadow puppet. Mama,
can't you see the artistic images and how they move?
This is my dance of Shiva.

Sometimes I wonder who it is I am writing to
and I long to touch you,
to be held in nights of still sleep,
tumbling in quiet dreams
of holy places I can't remember,
to be cradled in your lap
on all the drives to New York you'd stroke my hair
and awaken me when we arrived at Baka's grave
and I still can't forgive myself for not being able to cry there
or speak to her in Polish.

Is it just me?
Things are so difficult and lonely.
I remember the children in India,
how strong they were, pulling on me,
three on each of my arms,
calling me "Mama,"
wanting chocolate, soap, or a pen.

So many circles of gods here,
I am dizzy with uncertainty.
How I long to bring the energy inside these circles home,
send this letter without it troubling you,
speak to this old woman wanting to sell me a puppet.
Will the gods descend to lift me up to the sky
like in El Greco's paintings
when I choke trying to describe this moment to you?

A seagull tonight dives into the polluted sea
under the factory lights.
I want to put my cupped hands
around its white stomach,
feel its heart beating;
I long to tilt my head back to the awe of tall trees,
drink the holy cup of sun,
I want to be drunk with warmth,
tell all these things to you,
bring you a bottle of the rain I wandered in,
the expressions of the children
playing ball in the stone streets.

Perhaps alone I will enter the gateway
a million miles down the road
and bow to the older spirits,
peel away my shoes,
dance in the ashes of the temple,

finally ready to enter the world.

I don't know.

I still have a mouthful of birds

and it hurts to swallow, Mama,

tomorrow

I will set them free

though I still don't know

what any of this means.

Trousseau

Dearest,

I'm so bitter I'll hurl the stones in me

at all the windows, lie in piles of glass,

imagining how you used to clothe me

in laughter, picnics in the tall, cool grass.

Bleeding, I'll feel alive and race barefoot,

climb books in rooms of shelves, hoping to find

new thoughts so I can sleep, feel good,

Spit up and leave my angry words behind.

I'll walk through entries of my journals,

feeling it is not me after all this,

I am worn out at the knees, rather dull,

forlorn, I wander barely even miss-

ing you. Perhaps a mere change of poets' phrases,

I lie in my trousseau, sharp white pages.

Chris Jopek is an eighth semester English major. She wrote these poems for herself.

PAISAN JOHN AND THE BISHOP STREET CREW

A Short Story by Josh Garskof

On John De Rosa's first day with A & C Construction, we leveled the dirt where a foundation was to be built. It was hot and he threw his shirt next to our coolers in the shade. He moved with a controlled grace, as he raked the dry dirt. The muscles in his back were gnarled; a bright tattoo of a horned beast chained by four naked women gleamed off his wet back. John had a short beard and shoulder length hair. There was a wild look in his eyes like that haze old dogs get when they go blind. I decided to get on his good side right away. At lunch we got forty-ouncers and sat in the shade.

My house was a block down Bishop street from the construction site. It wasn't long before he regularly came over after work. My roommate, Tomato, got home around the same time, and a bunch of our friends, who were still in high school, would climb in our window and party all day. Tomato and I had dropped out of high school. As John spent time at Bishop street, he got to know the crew and, in the tradition of the group, inherited a nickname, Paisan.

After one Friday night party, he spent the night. The next morning Paisan went out to buy some beer. Everyone who had stayed overnight waited, hungover and silent. Ash trays, bottles, and plastic cups littered the sparsely furnished apartment. Ghandi scratched at the stubble which grew on his shaved scalp. Tomato was bent over, spiking his mohawk with gel. We looked like the survivors of a hurricane that had swept through the musty flat.

The entrance window opened and Alf stepped in. He had a skateboard and proudly showed a bleeding raspberry. Hefenreffer came out of the shower wrapped in a towel. On her way to the bedroom, she knelt down and put on a record, attracting bloodshot eyes to her slender form.

Stymie reached under her towel. She turned and gave him a mock-dirty look, then lit a cigarette, kissed him and went into the other room to get dressed. Stymie wore slacks like old men wear, but his were cut off right below the knee. When Hefenreffer left he turned off her musical selection and put on the *Department of Youth Services*, an extremely fast, hard band. The speaker cones jerked into action as the hardcore tunes blared out.

John climbed through the open window with a case of Piels. He walked to the stereo and turned it down, knowing that no one would complain while he held the beer. Then he opened the case and looked up at the thirsty crowd.

"Lemme get one," said Tomato. He wasn't shy--it was his house.

"What's up?," asked Paisan, tossing a can.

"Wanna take some acid today?" Alf asked Paisan as he caught his beer.

A chorus of agreement rang out. I looked forward to a day of peaceful hallucinations.

"How 'bout you Paisan?"

"Oh, no way man! I took that shit once before. I freaked out, can't take that goddam shit."

Heather, now dressed, walked into the living room. She rolled her eyes at Stymie for changing the music, and caught a beer with both hands. "Come on Paisan. It'll be cool man," she said.

"Yeah, you won't lose your shit, we won't let you." Ghandi's beer exploded as he opened it.

"I'm tellin' ya, yall don' want to see me on that shit."

Well, with a few beers in his belly, Paisan John gave in. Most of us took four hits, but because Paisan was nervous he took one.

Once everyone had dosed, we killed our beers and brought the case to the park. It was early summer, when the hot sun and humidity are still tolerable. The birds were singing.

We laid out a blanket on a green hillside and waited for ecstasy to approach. Under the cloudless sky the city-dwellers gravitated to the park. There were families flying kites and dogs catching sticks thrown by children. A couple sat under a tree, drinking wine from the bottle and

laughing.

Someone passed me a spliff and I took a big hit. The smoke was sweet and delicious. The air was delicious.

"Hey, Rusty, that herb bring on your trip?" asked Stymie.

"Yeah, well I don't know." The words seemed to spill from me, nonsensically. I was beginning to feel light-headed.

All of a sudden, Hefenreffer stood up and wandered over to the other side of the field. She soon headed back with a kid wearing an R.E.M. shirt. He dribbled a soccer ball as they walked.

"This is Joe, we went to elementary school together," said Hefenreffer.

"Hey guys," Joe plopped down on a corner of the blanket and someone handed him a beer. After an awkward moment of silence, "You want to play some soccer?"

"Yeah, let's do it," said Tomato who had played for Cross High. He jumped up and stole the ball from Joe's hands.

Because we were tripping we stayed together, like a school of fish. The whole group wound up playing a game against a bunch of Joe's friends. They were private school guys, dressed in colorful Bermuda shorts and tennis shirts. They watched us carefully as we walked on the field. A box blared Bruce Springsteen.

As we ran around and got our blood pumping, the drug began to take effect. I began to run at the ball instead of ahead of it, following the action from one side of the field to the other.

It wasn't only me. Every time Alf got the ball, he kicked it back to the other team. Tomato took to stomping his feet to try and psyche them out. This lost its effectiveness shortly, but he continued. Paisan John must have begun to feel his hit. He chased the ball--he didn't play a man or a position--he just chased the ball. And every time he got near it, the jock who had it for the other team would fake him out. He muttered and cursed his way up and down the field. "Fucking Yalies."

"They're not Yalies man, they're in prep school," I said.

The other team must have thought that we were handicapped, or more likely just that *they*

were great. No one bothered to keep count, they would score and then get the ball back and do it again. We wore black jeans and high tops, they wore running shoes and shorts. Tomato's mohawk began to flop over to the side and Ghandi's skin head sweat furiously. Alf's scrape was bleeding down his leg and into his sock. Paisan wore cut off jeans and untied work boots without socks. He flew around the field like some huge dumb wingless bird. Hefenreffer watched, drinking a beer and smoking a cigarette.

I was beginning to see everything through a swimming psychedelic film which covered my eyeballs. The soccer ball was a magnet which the other team moved between us, attracting Paisan John who was made of iron ore.

In the goal Ghandi blocked the ball with his body. His skin was flushed red and his glasses sat crooked on his face. Stymie stood in the middle of the field. He concentrated hard on the grass at his feet. We weren't much of a team.

Paisan was getting mad. Sweat poured off his shirtless back, he gritted his teeth. His defined bulk seemed to be carved from a granite block. He flung himself at the ball handler with a fury that began to scare the other team. They took the ball up slower, careful to avoid Paisan by passing the ball. This only enraged him more.

"Goddam, fuckin' Yalie bastards."

A young boy with colorful bermuda shorts and a tennis shirt dribbled the ball down field. He watched Paisan. John kicked at the ball, and the kid moved it to his other foot. He kicked at it again, and the guy switched it again. Paisan's fists clenched and unclenched, making the tendons in his forearms bunch, a tattoo woman did a strip tease.

The boy furiously searched for a teammate to unload his burden on. Paisan lunged for the ball and then took his eyes off the ball for the first time in the game. He used his momentum to sink a fist deep in the kid's cheek. This grounded the boy. John knelt over him, and the boy was unable to defend himself. He tried to get his arms out from under Paisan, but was pinned. John's arms flashed back and forth, fists pounding like boulders in an avalanche. A drop of blood flew from his knuckles and landed on his cheek. Then, abruptly, he stopped pounding on the boy's

skull, and looked up.

The beaten player's teammates had formed a semi-circle around Paisan, giving him a couple of feet of head room. The trippers stood in shock. LSD made us hesitate. I was, at the same time, repulsed by the fight, yet grinning at Paisan's triumph against the private school jocks. Paisan was smiling too, an evil grin, beckoning the colorfully clad bunch on.

Tomato was the first to snap out of his pacifistic acid haze and stand by Paisan. Soon all of our dilated eyes stared back at the circle of jocks. But, when we smiled at them, they quivered. The biggest of their bunch had dropped his eyes from Paisan's. He turned and his comrades followed him away.

"That's it, game over," shouted a preppie, as the two groups separated.

"No shit, ass hole!" laughed Alf.

Our company drifted aimlessly away from the scene, Paisan stood between the two disengaging groups for a second, and then ran and caught up with us.

We wandered. But whenever someone happened to move away from the group, we shifted directions subconsciously, staying together. We were as united as any bunch of friends can be even if we moved like cattle grazing.

Paisan was quiet.

We found an old cement bridge on the other side of the park. It was in the process of crumbling and blocked off by a protective fence. Climbing the fence was frightening. When my feet landed on the bridge I took a beer from the case. The rest passed over one by one and sat down on the sun-warmed cement.

Paisan broke the silence. "I told ya guys, I can't take acid. It makes me freak out." He looked frazzled. His huge bulk was slightly hunched and his brow was drawn.

"Yo Paisan, don't worry about it," said Ghandi.

"We're the ones who convinced you to take it, it's really all of our faults," said Hefenreffer. She sat with her feet dangling over the side of the old bridge, smoking a cigarette.

"Those guys were assholes, they had it coming," said Alf. He hopped up on the cement railing and walked it like a tightrope.

After that we didn't talk much. Articulation was near impossible. We watched the world go by, perched high above the ground on the ancient bridge.

Paisan, Stymie, and I went for a walk. We watched the busy crowds and then, as we entered woods, we watched nature. While the people in the sun seemed ridiculous, the forests were wonderfully free. We were amazed. Because of our silence, animals didn't shy away from us. They went on with their business and we watched.

Sooner than possible it began to get dark. The park cleared out. People went home for dinner and evenings of television. Left behind were unclaimed frisbees, charcoal ashes, and potato chips. We went back to the bridge. Then everyone wandered back to Bishop street, to collect money for that night's keg.

Josh Garskof wrote this story in English 146. He is a fourth semester English major.

POEMS BY DAWN L. MARTIN

Stretches of Time

Anyone can miss a dead cat
run over by a mean half-blind-old-man
driving a pick-up truck
And it's just like your heart was crushed
with the bones of that rascal
And the tears just come and come
like a poem
making a puddle around your ankles
That's easy.

Anyone can miss a distant lover
A thousand mile stretch of land
is the bed you share
and simple convenience binds you both
to occupy opposite sides of the world
And you wonder how fast love's noose
will strangle your feelings away
So you wait and you wait
That's easy too.

It's harder though when time is missed
purple wildflowers
lilies
tall green grass
clouds of breath in between voices
sleeping bags and pillows by a fire
confessions in conversations continued from five years ago
drinking vanilla almond coffee
and smoking cigarettes at night

your time runs out
Someone pulled the plug
While you were sitting in front
of the TV set
watching soap operas
that never ever

end

One-Holy-Singing-Woman

We were never taught to think of Jesus
As round and dark-skinned
and bold
(you know the kinda bold I mean-
she don't care nothin bout telling
somebody else's child to comb they head).
Her husky voice hums fleeting excerpts of songs
she don't quite know the words to.
She can feel them, though,
concentrated in the smallest of veins,
A honey-hearted woman who gives
smiles
to the ears of passers-by,
A melody-singing woman who
knows what freedom tastes like cause it's been on the tip of her tongue for so long.
She ain't got nothin to sing about, really.
But still at times
the movement fills her chest up like smoke
And out will come one of those old spirituals
as she snaps green-beans at the kitchen sink.

Detour. Men Working

I am lying in a field
of long-stemmed
purple flowers,
wavy about my head;
their scent
a perfume of secrets.
From this hill peace
is alive;
the thick rolling clouds
with darkened bellies,
the curves of the land
like a woman's body,
the autumn foliage
sharing space
because there's so much,
the trees' long necks
and bushy afros
glowing because no one's
killed them yet
and the brisk cool air pushing
its way up my nose, pumping
my lungs alive.

The grass crawls beneath me
like a lover and
I can almost forget

the rotted filling
inside a child-shell;
a child who cries out hunger
not old enough
to realize this war
as
hell.

Ragged, fortuitous weeds,
severe in beauty
taunt my nose and
I can almost forget
the screams
I heard like-
like sirens
coming from the forest.

They were building a highway.
The trees' insides were splattered
everywhere.

And, man, in his cannibalistic way
collected the guts for
suburban-home-front-yard-decorations.
Even louder than chainsaws or bombs
it was their screaming that I heard

Dawn Lundy Martin is in her junior year and she is majoring in English. She wrote these poems for herself.

POEMS BY BOB ARMSTRONG

The Way Home

The tangled-limb
and-branch-blur
fell

when fields dashed
as white sheets

on the edges
of my snowblind drive.
I thought of winter walks
on a California beach
below the snow that gathered
only on the distant sierra.
During his visits
my father sat
in his sun,
appearing less gaunt
than when he arrived.

Now I stand
over a new grave.
A wreath,
like a needle weft bowl,
gathers snow.
A vector of dilatory
Canada Geese
barks low through the storm.

I've come home.

Apache

She was a maid
in the roughneck hotel.
Anonymous, she neated
my cell-like room
and changed sheets that were black
though I had showered
after being hosed down
with the tools out at the rig.

One day I awoke
to her dark form;
black shiny hair,
almond eyes,
full lips,
and white smile
for the "Mescal Drinker"
who wrote on scraps of paper
left scattered,
with the books, loose change,
and empty bottles,
about the room.

On another morning, in a converted military barracks
seven miles from town,

I woke on soft, white sheets.
A cool desert breeze gently stirred
flowered curtains across my face.
Dogs barked,
children screamed,
an old Chevy rusted
on the gravel yard.
Kitchen sounds
and the smell of biscuits
told me where she was.

A young boy startled me
as he climbed through the window
and fell to the bed with a bounce.
He had her proud, chisled features
but his eyes were green
and hair brown
like my own.

"My son Caleb will be home
from my sister's at any time," she called.

We faced one another in silence.

An anglo reflection
on the glare of Apache eyes.

Bob Armstrong is a seventh semester Civil Engineering Major. He wrote these poems for English 246.

POEM BY KHAN WONG

First Love

Tommy always smoked a joint
After we made love,
Maybe so he could forget
I was a man.
Not a man, a boy, really.

I was sixteen and a fag -
I hate that word.
The sound of it
Sticks to me,
A leech
That doesn't drain my blood;
It fills me
With something I hesitate to call
Courage.

Tommy wasn't courageous.
He hid in pot, then heroin
When his parents threw him out.
"No queers in my house"
Was his father's good-bye.

After "Mom, Dad--I'm gay"
And "I love you" when you really mean it,
Good-bye is the third hardest thing to say.
Tommy's good-bye to me
Was a blank page
Full of words
He was not brave enough to say.

Khan Wong is a fourth semester English major. He won co-honorable mention in the 1989 Wallace Stevens Competition. He wrote this poem in English 246.

POEM BY GILBERT RAPOSO

But I Remember Echo

Snaggled by
the lion's tooth it almost
ripped the
cornea clean and dripped
in it a soft yellow
ochre that might
have been
wine in another
place. He drunk with
passion never did leave
that place but stayed
to become a
flower for a moment himself

Gilbert Raposo is a sixth semester Physics major. He wrote this poem for himself.

POEM BY ELIZABETH A. C. FREY

Have you ever seen a strawberry
Just be a strawberry
As it settles
In the hollow of my
neck --
and then bite it and
Let
Strawberry juice, just juice
go --
But not far because your tongue brings it
back
To Me,
at my mouth or my
breast --
Do you remember how bitter?

Elizabeth A.C. Frey is an eighth semester English major. She wrote this poem for herself.

THE POSITIVE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF JACK'S COURAGE

An Essay by Suzanne Forrester

This year is the centennial of Jack the Ripper's vicious carnage of east London's Whitechapel slums. This unsolved mystery has prompted a century of speculation and wonder, as well as various theories attempting to identify Jack. London at this time is celebrating what seems to be "an unofficial Festival of the Ripper" (Trucco 26). Small-scale entrepreneurs are profiting from "guided Ripper tours," a walking visit to each of the locations of the Ripper's murders. In addition, a local bar, appropriately called the Ripper Pub, is serving a blood-red concoction known as the "Ripper Tipple." One can also buy a T-shirt for nine dollars advertising the festival of Jack.

Many new books claim to have finally identified the Ripper, with suspects ranging from the Duke of Clarence to a deranged sausage maker. Because each theory lacks solid evidence and is instead based merely on speculation, I will leave this unending quest to dedicated Ripperologists. Instead, I intend to examine the positive social effects Ripper's antics had on the city of London as a whole: the development of a new literate class and the increased awareness of the inequalities of London society.

In order to fully understand the significance of the location of Jack's five murders, one must understand the living conditions of London in 1888. The city was class-oriented, with a great distinction between the lower and upper classes. The middle and upper classes were pious and idealistic, preferring not to be aware of social problems in their midst. Prudishness was the style, and Londoners were careful to conceal ladies' legs as well as tables' (Rumbelow 12-14).

The lower classes, in contrast, resided primarily in the East End of London, in an area known as Whitechapel. Ignored by the church and politicians alike, the poor suffered alone. Tenant houses were primary residences, overcrowded and filthy (Cullen 21). Most were hungry,

with little to no public assistance. They also received inadequate police protection -- in fact, extreme unrest existed between the Metropolitan police and the residents of Whitechapel (Rumbelow 30). The lack of more profitable work made prostitution a common occupation in the area.

It was from these slums that Jack took his five victims. They represented their area perfectly: each was a prostitute, middle-aged and drab, and had been married at one time, but was living alone -- either widowed or separated. Sadly, they were all chronic alcoholics in a state of physical and mental destitution (Cullen 4).

By choosing victims from this area, Jack the Ripper seems to have been making a statement against society. Even if this was not his intention, he had two positive effects on the city. First, he caused an increase in the popularization of literature involving murder, which in turn increased the literate population in London (Altick 288). In addition, he opened the public's eyes to the horrendous conditions of Whitechapel slums.

As the public became increasingly aware of and fearful of Jack, easy-to-read sensationalism was dispersed through the upper and lower classes alike, and murder became a "topic of perennial interest" (Altick 288). Eager to read about the mystery of Jack the Ripper and any topics of murder in general, the illiterate class in London began to master and enjoy literature. This was a "goal which the existing agencies for formal elementary education all too often failed to achieve" (288). Literature-publishing firms began to flourish, and London began a trend toward better education spurred by its new literate class (288).

Although The Ripper succeeded in exposing the horrendous living conditions of Whitechapel residents, little was done at first by the metropolitan police to stop him. In a letter to *The Star* on September 24, 1888, George Bernard Shaw wrote:

Now that the Whitechapel Murderer has been so successful in calling attention for a moment to the social question...a single experiment in slaughterhouse anatomy on an aristocratic victim might fetch in around half million and save the necessity of sacrificing four women of the people (cited in McCormick 64-5).

Shaw was correct in exposing the fact that because The Ripper's victims were lower-class, destitute prostitutes, the city officials' first reaction was to ignore the problem. Unfortunately, if the victims had been of the aristocratic class, as Shaw suggests, the precautions taken to stop him would have been much more effective.

Detection attempts made by the London police focused on suspects from the "lower orders of society." "Obviously, no man of education and family background would consort with such low creatures as prostitutes, let alone slay them and cut up their bodies" (Cullen 13). Based on this assumption, the Metropolitan Police force arrested many suspects with little or no evidence against them, but they were all members of the lower class. Members of upper classes were free from any suspicion (McCormick 69). Understandably, the murders continued, and the public began to become angry.

Like Shaw, many other concerned London residents wrote to various newspapers, police stations and the Queen herself demanding that something be done to stop the Ripper. Because he continued to strike in areas that were police-patrolled, many questioned the police force's seriousness and professionalism. Although the Ripper was still able to avoid the police, an important change had taken place among London's citizens. They became aware of the inequalities and prejudices in society, and demanded that something be done to remedy the situation (McCormick 64-8).

Eventually, in response to the public unrest, men's clubs held meetings to condemn the existence of houses of prostitution, and suggested to local philanthropists that they buy these houses and convert them to houses for the poor. In addition, Queen Victoria prodded the Metropolitan Chief of Police to patrol more thoroughly and carefully in the Whitechapel area (McCormick 64-5).

Because the murders continued until November 10, 1888, and then stopped as quickly as they had started, and any clues to the murderer's identity sent detectives in circles, the case became a great mystery. Ironically, Jack left in his wake a newly-literate and awakened society -- keenly

aware of its faults and enthralled by murder. His legacy remains, and Ripperologists will continue to probe into ancient police files on the ever-increasing quest for Jack's true identity. Every century will bring a renewed interest, and entrepreneurs will continue to sell "The Ripper Tipple" as children chant the rhyme:

Jack the Ripper's dead
and lying in his bed.
He cut his throat
With Sunlight soap.
Jack the Ripper's dead (Rumbelow 275).

Literally dead, perhaps, but figuratively alive forever.

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Suzanne Forrester is a sixth semester English major. She wrote this essay in English 223.

POEM BY DAVID SAKOWSKI

Boomerang

I am a boy
again I throw run and catch
my breath
on our front porch,
my boomerang fits my hand
so effortlessly
like Dorothy
coming home.
Trees and children have grown taller
since I've been here
this empty lot
I thought of often
and my boomerang floats
among the clouds
touching heaven
glistening in my eyes
the sun a red ball
balanced on the horizon,
my jacket and tie lay silent
in the soft brown dirt
like my father
who they said
went quietly
in his sleep.

David Sakowski is a Communication Science major. He wrote this poem for himself.

POEM BY WARREN J. AVERY

It Makes Me Sad That the Cross to Bear is TV Parts
(And Cold Nights Spent on Steam Grates)

Making Time Machines
From TV parts
I'm going to
Save the world

With the diodes
My Grocery Cart
For Jesus fills
Wire and Plastic

Stacks of Newspaper
Old radio transistors
For the Apostles
to sleep under

Finding myself in
Bits of garbage
The miracle of
Tinfoil, Dirty Clothes

I beg
For parts
making machines
Jesus waits

Warren Avery is an eighth semester Psychology major. He wrote this poem in English 146. He won co-honorable mention in the 1989 Wallace Stevens Competition.

POEM BY JOSH GARSKOF

Adrenaline

Rain drops splatter the windshield.
Fog overcomes the yellow line
not a car length beyond my headlights.
I push harder on the gas pedal,
and move along a truck's side.

Seat belt locks
car slows hard
steering wheel jerks
An H₂O wall
is sheered
from my tires

*A feather slices
my innards
twists in my stomach
and freezes my heart
mind speeds*

Arms strain
hold the wheel
monstrous truck
guard rail
And then

the wheel rests easy again. As my peripheral
nightmare ends, my heart pounds free.
I turn behind the truck, into its spraying wake.

Josh Garskof wrote this poem for English 246.

POEM BY JEFF STUPAKEVICH

Minor Poet

Consulting the thesaurus
for a few transparent words,
the minor poet chooses only
those with flatted thirds.

Ambiguity is relative;
No poem needs an apology.
A poet doesn't write with hopes
to wind up in anthologies.

The self-inflicted torment,
the war within one's self,
ends in tragic armistice,
undisturbed upon a shelf

Next to other minor poets
now deemed "insignificant,"
but the words themselves don't know
that they fall short of "eloquent."

So call my work sophomoric,
the poems won't know to grieve;
Just let me wear my footnote
proudly on my sleeve.

Jeff Stupakevich is an eighth semester English major. He wrote this poem for himself.

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