

**WRITES
OF
FELLOWSHIP**

**CONNECTICUT
WRITING PROJECT
SUMMER FELLOWS
1988**



The Connecticut Writing Project offers opportunities for growth and professional development to teachers of writing in all disciplines who recognize the worth of using writing as a means of learning any subject matter. A program of The University of Connecticut Department of English, the Connecticut Writing Project is affiliated with the widely-acclaimed National Writing Project, which now has 166 sites in this country and abroad.

In the project, experienced classroom teachers are trained as Teacher/Consultants in an intensive Summer Institute where they share their expertise and practice writing themselves. Then, during subsequent school years, they present workshops on composition theory and practical strategies for teaching writing to teachers in participating districts.

The approach has proven effective by generating widespread interest in good writing and by upgrading students' abilities as writers and learners. For further information about the Connecticut Writing Project and its programs, please write or call the director:

Mary T. Mackley
Director, CWP/Storrs
The University of Connecticut
Box U-25A
Storrs, CT 06268
(203) 486-2328 or 486-5772

or

Faye C. Gage
Director, CWP/Fairfield County
The University of Connecticut
Library Building, Room B20
Scotfieldtown Road
Stamford, CT 06093
(203) 968-2213

WRITES OF FELLOWSHIP

An Anthology

by

The Connecticut Writing Project
1988 Summer Fellows
Fairfield County

Connecticut Writing Project
Stamford, Connecticut
1988

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Katie Aime, A LONELY FRIDAY NIGHT 1
Wilhemina Christon, PASSING THROUGH 3
Kate Dickstein, THE SALAMI SALESMAN 5
Carmel Fabian, NO ONE HAD EVER 6
Janice Garvey, IF, ON THE OTHER HAND 8
Mary Ann Hume, ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON 10
Roberto Ilardo, HOUSEGUESTS: HOW NOT TO BE 12
Kathy Shaughnessy Jambeck, THE FAIRY RING 14
Helen Kveskin, AN ARGUMENT FOR INDENTURE 18
Tedd Levy, VACANCY: INQUIRE WITHIN 20
Janet Mackenzie, INCONTRIBUTIBLE EVIDENCE..... 22
Lynn Maginnis, THE SLIPPERS 27
Christine Potk, 'Twas THE SUMMER BEFORE FALL 29
Marc Selverstone 31
Lois Smith, THIS COULD BE 33
Genie Wells, My dearest daughter, 36
Robin Young, INTRUSION 38

PREFACE

Katherine Morton, in a piece that appeared some years ago in The New York Times, spoke of stories as the way we make sense of our lives; an idea that has been echoed by many, including such recent theorists as Lil Brannon and Robert Coles. The idea is hardly a new one - story tellers have provided mirrors for our experience as long ago as history records. Many of us have had those stories reflect and even shape our lives - we recognize our odysseys, those journeys through time and space in search of a "home;" we echo Job's complaint as we deal with the unearned pain of cancer; Aids, our own mortality; we watch and worry as our children re-enact Holden Caulfield's loss of innocence; and we wince as advancing age brings us into empathy both with Lear's distorted judgement and with his rage against an unaccommodating universe.

Too often, however, we become so impressed with the richness of the stories we read or hear, we neglect to tell our own stories. Maybe that's because, as teachers, we are so aware of the genius of the Homers or Shakespeares that we demur in their presence. Certainly we don't presume to place our doodles next to Rembrandt's drawings. Our aesthetic judgement sits like a gangolye, presiding imperiously over the entrance to the cathedral of writers.

But there is another, a better reason than competing for literary recognition that we should write our own stories. The act of shaping those stories makes us, I believe, more human. The stories of my family, my neighbors, my students are the tales of people who share - or let me glimpse - the fears, aspirations, hypocracies, paradoxes, fantasies, lies, dreams and failures that make up our lives. In learning to tell their stories and mine, I come, not necessarily to a better understanding of life's meaning, but at least to a sharper focus on life's experiences, to paraphrase Joseph Campbell.

Each summer at the CWP Institute, I witness a group of teachers who experience the enrichment of research, workshops, reading, conversation, collaboration, and each other. All of these are significant activities that will put the participants into new pedagogical stances and challenging professional paths. But the writing of their personal experiences, their beliefs, their perceptions, their stories is the heart of the four weeks together. Some have written before; a few have never shared more than a thank you note; some will publish; a few will join writing groups; some will not write again; but most will agree that it is the sharing of ourselves in writing that establishes the human contact and gives the group a cherished glimpse into the human experience. Some of those stories are told within. Enjoy.

A Lonely Friday Night

by Katie Aime

Louise sat in her small studio apartment curled up on the couch watching the rain falling in sheets on the streets and sidewalks of Baltimore. Her cat was similarly curled against her thighs, content not to be petted, content just to share Louise's solitude.

In the next room the green cursor light blinked on the computer screen, waiting for Louise to return and resume the third draft of her doctoral thesis.

"Shit!" Louise exclaimed to the cat. "Just shit, shit, shit! This weather is shit, my thesis is shit, I'm shit! I'm tired of being cooped up in here, day after day, with you, my lovely pussycat, and that stupid paper. To hell with deadlines! Who does my advisor think she, is demanding that I get this next draft to her by Monday? This paper is going nowhere...Worse than that, I'm going nowhere...I've got to take a break, get away from my work, get back in touch with my life."

Louise's lassitude was suddenly interrupted by the telephone ringing. She jumped up, rushed in to the next room, sat down in the chair in front of the computer, and reached for the phone.

"Hello?"

"Louise? Hi, it's Paul. Listen, Laura and I are spontaneously throwing a party. Mary came for the weekend, and John and Dave showed up unexpectedly to surprise us all. Right away we thought of calling you. You've got to come. It'll be just like the old days in Harlow House. It'll only take you forty-five minutes to get here. Bring your sleeping bag. You can spend the night. Laura is planning to call Karen, and I'm going to call Mark and Peter. Who knows, sweetheart, maybe something will finally click with you and Mark. You know you want it to. What do you say? See you in forty-five minutes? Don't give me any excuses about having to work. You know my philosophy--somehow it all gets done."

Louise's head was whirling. She never had been able to refuse Paul. God, he was a smooth talker and still so handsome, even if he had married Laura.

"Louise? What do you say?"

"Well, Paul, I don't know. The third draft of my thesis is due on Monday, and I'm really stuck right now. I was just thinking that I need a diversion, but if I come to your house that will mean the whole weekend, and I've got to write twenty-five more pages for Monday."

"Jesus, Louise, you're thirty years old. You spent four years of college turning down invitations. What's going to become of you? Your computer can't be too exciting in bed."

"Ouch, that hurt," thought Louise. "He always did know just where to strike."

"Okay, Okay, Paul, listen. I'm going to work for another hour and then I'll be there. I promise. If I'm not there in two hours, send out a search party."

"Great! I knew you'd come. John said you wouldn't, but I knew you wouldn't let us down. I can't wait to see you."

"I can't wait to see you either, Paul," Louise whispered in the empty receiver.

She slowly picked up a copy of her second draft, but she wasn't thinking about what she would write next.

My friends are really important to me. Have I forgotten that? Actually, I'm kind of surprised Paul called. I haven't talked to any of those guys in months. They used to be so important. Have I really lost myself in my work? Is my thesis really that important?

Her eyes focused on the words on the page. "Yes, this really is that important to me," she said to herself in a low voice.

She turned to the computer and began to type with a frenzy. The words and ideas seemed to rush out of her in a way she'd never experienced before. She almost felt as though she were watching a stranger at work. As the words rushed on, one into another and another, so did the hours, and Louise seemed to be one with the chair and the computer. She would pause at the end of a paragraph, and a new idea would crowd into her head, forcing her on and on into the night...

As the cat wound its way back and forth between her legs, rubbing against her ankles, Louise jerked awake. Through the window the red line of dawn was fading into the purples and blues of morning.

She stared at her computer in horror and whispered to the cat, "Oh, no, what have I done?"

PASSING THROUGH
By Wilhemena Christon

The day was bleak, hot and long during the summer of the Boston Strangler. Numerous young ladies had been savagely slaughtered, and the mystery that surrounded the deaths haunted the residents and any brave soul who dared to venture into the city under seige. The media constantly reminded the nation of the brutal, senseless murders. Naturally, a blanket of fear and foreboding hovered over the city and caused people to go out in groups, to look over their shoulders constantly, to be cautious of strangers, and to be indoors before dark.

It was this scene that greeted the young girl from the South. En route to New Hampshire, she had been warned about all of the evils and pitfalls that she might encounter, and her travel plans had been carefully plotted so that she would pass through the city during the day. However, fate had its own way of thwarting man's plans. Not only did she not get to Boston during the day, but her bus was also late. As a result, she missed her connection and had to stay in Boston overnight.

Recalling the news reports and her family's warnings, anxiety began to set in. Looking around the terminal, she saw street people who seemed to be either sizing up their next victims or securing a place to sleep for the night. Offering to help her with bags and obviously realizing that she was out of her environment, a red cap pointing out several of these people warned her that she should not talk to them or go anywhere with them. During this time, concession stands and booths began to close. Her boy friend who lived in the city was not at home because she was merely supposed to be going through Boston. Friends from her hometown were at home and would welcome her, but the girl had to get to their home on the other side of town.

What was she going to do? Ruling out spending the night in the station, she had to make a decision. Should she venture out into the dark unknown streets alone, or should she trust the two bus drivers who said that they were going to take their buses to the depot in the section where her friends lived and would take her to their home? Gripped by fear and relying upon her faith in the basic decency of man, she rationalized in her native way that since there were two of them, they would not harm her. So she boarded the empty bus with these two men. True to their word, they took her to the Roxbury section, walked with her between the two of them to her friends' apartment, and waited for her to be admitted.

After the greeting and settling down, she had time to reflect upon what she had just done. Although she knew about the peril that

stalked the city and had been warned against talking with strangers, she had to decide with whom to place her trust. Thank God, this time fate was kind and protective.

THE SALAMI SALESMAN

by Kate Dickstein

It never seemed in any way unusual to me to have a salami salesman come to our door. Once a month he came, carrying a scratched brown leather suitcase. It matched his hair, beard, hat, trousers, coat and shoes. His visit was anticipated. It's regularity comforting.

We were the only German Jews in our apartment house. Others were scattered sparsely throughout the borough, so that it must have taken a special devotion for the salami salesman to make his monthly trek from the Fourth Reich, the name we gave to Washington Heights in upper Manhattan. It was there, on the hills of the Hudson River, that refugees like us sought to replicate their lost homeland. We were adventurers. We lived in the Bronx where we were forced to give up our immigrant ways. The salami salesman made sure that we didn't assimilate too quickly. He traveled across the Harlem River Bridge by trolley car and then walked any distance needed to make his calls.

Once at our door, he was ushered into the kitchen with great regard. Tenderly, he placed his worn suitcase on the table, snapped it open with a magician's flourish and stepped back to enjoy the ensuing compliments from the family. The aroma of wursts of all sizes and subtle shades filled the room. The grip was crammed with German delicacies that had the distinction of being kosher. The inner lid of the leather bag was fitted with elastic bands of varying sizes. These held ring and cervelat wursts and other firm varieties, while the base housed the more perishable liver and tea wursts, and sometimes an array of coldcuts, neatly sliced, and elegantly arranged on white butcher's paper.

The salami salesman was offered tea in a glass, saved just for his visits. We did not observe the dietary codes, so he took no food from us. He sat with my grandfather a while to discuss the news in the "Aufbau, The Reconstruction", a newspaper read widely by the newly arrived refugees from Germany. This ritual pause in the transaction caused the rest of us to fidget and foottap, for we were all impatient to choose our favorite morsels from his crowded grip.

When, at last, we did, and the salami salesman had stuffed his wallet back into his overcoat, we walked behind him to the door and nodded our aufwiedersehens. Once gone, we marveled, as always, at the high quality of his products. Where in the Bronx could such delicacies be had? Certainly not on our street, with its little grocery stores on either end. Wonder Bread and processed cheese were their staples. As for salami, it was unthinkable to buy the celloghane, imprinted garlic-kind. It was ersatz, we agreed. We had our own salami salesman, and were connoisseurs in such matters.

NO ONE HAD EVER....

by Carmel Fabian

It was a crystal clear fall morning on the Cape. Allyson had come to Wellfleet to escape. Her dearest friend had flown over a thousand miles to be with her as counselor...comforter...friend. The sky was the color of sparkling blue sapphires, deep and penetrating. She rose a 6 to be the first one to walk the beach. She was lonely, and always felt that the ocean was soothing. The sound of the waves carried her away as if lifting her through to eternity. She wanted to forget, release every moment of wrenching pain out into the crashing waves.

It was Gregory's wedding day. Oh, how those words engulfed her heart as if to squeeze it dry.

For the past nine months, she had chosen to ride this roller-coaster--a risk--a chance she knew she had to take. She owed it to herself to find out. She had convinced herself to fight for him and yet knew that the consequences could be devastating. He had chosen to marry someone else.

Allyson let her mind lapse back to that first time they spoke. For months they had crossed paths continually, both knowing the other existed but neither acknowledging it until finally, Gregory approached Allyson in conversation. He asked all the right questions, reflected upon her every word and displayed a sensitivity and respect for her womanly personage, unlike the usual characteristics of men in her past.

Conveniently, yet not, Gregory's residence only a mere glance from Allyson's workplace made it compelling for him to visit her daily. Their conversations were connections of the mind as if they were speaking into mirrors and getting to know themselves for the very first time. Allyson had fallen in love with Gregory and he with her. Her hands shook when he entered a room and her body trembled as he left. She looked for excuses to say his name. Every moment with him, she treasured.

Likewise, Gregory was ecstatic over Allyson's mere presence. Her smile lightened his heart and as he had once told her, it was his means of making it through a day. Although he was a strong, gentle man always viewing the positive side of life, Gregory too felt a sadness...a deep emotional ache that always tugged his heart as he left her.

Yet, they found themselves arranging times to be together and each time the same thing--they sat talking and laughing for hours over childhood memories, their friendships, occupational feats, music and shared moments of thoughts and fantasies of each other. He told her she was beautiful. She knew he loved her. Physically and mentally, they made love several times, each being more intense than the last.

But then his decision...she knew one would have to come. He was getting married.

Grief was overwhelming for Allyson. She was powerless over a decision she viewed as total error. As much as she loved him, she couldn't understand why. Stages of anger came and went. Frustration was immense. She wondered if the yearning and aching void would ever end.

Almost a year has come and gone. Allyson stood gazing out the open window by her desk. She knew she could have easily stood for hours aimlessly staring at Gregory's apartment. It was a beautiful crystal clear spring day. It reminded her much of the one on the Cape. From his second story apartment, she could see the outline figure of his body looking out at her as he often did. He lifted his arm to signal hello. Knowing their eyes had met, she returned a wave. At that moment she felt the tremendous surge her body felt whenever he touched her. No one had ever overpowered her being with every thought and movement of love as Gregory had... and she wondered if anyone ever would.

IF, ON THE OTHER HAND

by Janice Garvey

It was still there, of course. The object of her Dilemma. The Cause of her Indecision and Source of the hard pressure behind her eyes and sticky wetness dripping from her knees. Still there. In the center of her mother's kitchen. On the small oak table her grandfather had made -- a gift to her mother on her wedding day. Placed on that table with care, she knew, next to the daisies her mother had brought in that morning from the garden. Still there. Still mocking her. A personalized Invitation to the Fall.

She could see it clearly through the window of the kitchen. She was, wisely, she thought, keeping her distance. Out of sight out of mind, her mother always said, forgetting that absence, more often than not, only served to make the heart grow fonder.

She entered the kitchen, approaching her nemesis with care. Circling slowly and cautiously around the table like an arthritic old dog trying to determine the advisability of tangling with a known enemy. Certain of defeat, she retreated.

Sitting alone in the corner of her mother's kitchen, surrounded by copper-bottomed skillets and coffee mugs from every city her mother had ever visited -- or wished to visit -- she wished she were Odysseus tied to the mast. Eternity passed by. Eternity and whole families of ducks, each with blue ribbons, parading endlessly, but obediently, before her. Marching across potholders, dish towels, clay canisters. Marching up the cracked cookie jar, finally finding safety within folds of the calico curtains her mother had made during the gray afternoons of the previous winter. She wrapped both arms tightly around her knees, biting her lower lip until it hurt, the sweet wetness of warm blood lingering in her mouth.

She considered her options. If, on the one hand, she left now, her self-esteem intact, she would go forth with the rest of her life with an increased sense of self-respect and self-worth. Her confidence would be renewed. She would write the definitive All-American novel. Redford would buy the movie rights. She would play Blanche DuBois on Broadway. She would spend an evening with Barishnykov from which he would never recover. She would marry rich.

If, on the other hand, she weakened, she would surely marry poor. She would spend the rest of her miserable life stalling smudged receipts onto Caldor bags. She would wander around the store aimlessly, in brown polyester pants with elastic waists. At forty, she would marry the prematurely bald man who stacked the shelves in the shoe department. Her only son would be born without a chin and have difficulty with math. His teachers would never understand him.

If she weakened, this once, she knew, she would weaken always. She would outgrow the polyester pants. At Christmas, when she went to Newark to visit with her in-laws, she would wear her green velvet bathrobe, festively disguised with a big red bow deftly designed from the bathroom shower curtain. At forty-five, her husband would leave her for the toothless young slut who worked in housewares.

She smiled, caressing her grandfather's table with her fingertips, smoothing the wrinkled tablecloth with her open palm, gently moving aside her mother's daisies.

With one hand, she shook an angry fist at her maker -- With God As My Witness, I'll Never Eat Another Chocolate Again!!!

But with the other hand -- the honest hand -- she slowly raised the very last piece of double chocolate German layer cake to her quivering lips. One leg bent demurely at the knee behind her.

She took her first bite.

And looked forward to the Day of her Divorce.

ONE SUMMER AFTERNOON

by Mary Ann Hume

When it first happened there was a movie that ran in my brain. Every time I closed my eyes the pictures flashed frame by frame through my consciousness. It's been five years so that seldom happens now. When I'm riding my bike and a motorcycle roars past I am frightened and I remember, but otherwise I guess I've stored the memory in a safe place in my mind.

That July late afternoon had the hot sleepy quality of summer weekends near the beach. The sun roof was open to the sky, the radio was humming, and I was zipping back from the store with ice and dessert for the little dinner party we were having later. I down-shifted as I approached the corner near home.

I slowed for the corner, and for an instant my eyes met my neighbor's. She and her son were standing next to their bikes, waiting to cross the quiet street.

I negotiated the corner and shifted as I drove up the small incline. As I was doing this a motorcycle coming in the opposite direction passed me, veering close to my car. I looked in my rearview mirror and saw him strike one of the bikes. The cycle went down and so did the bike. There is a frame of the movie that used to play in my head that showed a figure lying in the road curled on its side, wearing navy blue shorts and white sneakers.

I pulled over to the side, carefully put on my brake, parked on the incline, and ran screaming into the house across the road.

The only people at home were the kids. They were almost adults, old enough to help, but I felt guilty about what I knew I had to ask them to do. "Call for an ambulance," I screamed. "You have to help me!" They threw sheets down the stairs because I told them we'd need clean rags.

I wasn't sure who was lying in the road. The mother and son were similar in size. I walked closer and saw it was Yuki whose eyes only minutes ago had met mine. She lay very still and looked very peaceful, except that blood was oozing from under her head. I stayed beside her in the road for a long time. I was afraid to touch her and afraid not to touch her. I knew she was dying. How did I know she would die? I don't know. I knew I thought that maybe there might be something I could do to stop it, but I didn't know how. Where was everybody? There was no one anywhere around. I just crouched in the road and waited. Where was the ambulance? Why didn't they come? Where was David, her son? Was he hurt and hiding somewhere? Why did I have all this responsibility alone?

The motorcyclist and his passenger, a girl with beautiful long red hair, sat on a stone wall and the kids I'd summoned comforted them.

Finally, Larry, Yuki's husband, came running to the corner. I tried to prepare him for what he was about to see. He too crouched in the road.

Where was that ambulance? The cyclist walked over and picked up his bike, muttering something about trying to find the police. He came right back, alone.

Finally the ambulance came. I screamed at the paramedics to hurry and they yelled back, "Calm down, lady!" Then they saw Yuki. They put her in the ambulance and Larry climbed in too.

I went home and in a short time I hear waiting and shrieking coming from the Parkers' house. Yuki was dead.

Yuki's parents flew in from Japan. They walked to the corner, stared at the road, and wept.

I went to the Parkers with some food. Yuka, Yuki's daughter, was struggling to save an enormous jig puzzle she and her mother had been working on. I helped her slide it onto a board and put it under the couch. She wanted to talk. She talked about the fight she'd had with her mother the day she died and how she wished she could tell her she was sorry. I told her her mother knew that. I remember saying that hardly a day went by when I didn't fight with one of my daughters. Then we talked about the fall. She was going to Duke and her mother had been helping her shop for school. Should she still go? My daughter was going off to college that fall. I told her that if I'd been the one killed I'd want my daughter to go. She did go and graduated from Duke last spring.

The memory of the pain of that day is slight now. I go past the corner everyday and seldom think of what happened there, but every once in a while the movie plays again in my mind.

HOUSEGUESTS: HOW NOT TO BE

by Roberta Ilardo

"We'll be passing through, and we thought we'd stop by and visit for a week." When my best friend, Diane, called from Colorado to give me this news, I found myself feeling genuine excitement and genuine alarm. How does a family sporting three teenagers "pass through" for seven days and seven nights? By the end of their stay, their visit had become a mathematical nightmare. There was the mental countdown of the number of days remaining, divided into the number of times nine people shower during an incredibly humid week, times the number of towels my machines washed and dried each night. Added to that was the amount of food we consumed at each meal, minus the money in my checkbook.

RULE 1: Invite yourself to your friend's home without regard to the length of your stay or the burdens it may impose. They will be happy to see you.

My husband and I soon observed that Jordan III, our godchild and his parents' pride and joy, their only son, displayed remarkable traits. Wherever he went, wails and shrieks of angry complaints enveloped him: "I didn't do it!" or "they're always picking on me!" At night in the privacy of our bedroom, I counseled my husband on the inadvisability of strangling Jordan III. I kept having a recurring nightmare, however, of my husband, a psychotherapist at that, walking between two officers of the law muttering, "I had to do it--- I had to do it."

RULE 2: Allow your host family to assume responsibility for disciplining your children. After all you're on vacation.

When my cousin, George, and his family visited from Dover, Delaware, Duffry, their Golden Retriever, was an unexpected addition. As my cousin began to enumerate Duffry's outstanding qualities, I watched the dog first-hand circle my family room and claim his territory.

RULE 3: Allow your uninvited pets to have full reign of the host home.

John and my husband were co-authors under a contractual deadline. Many weekends found John and his opera-singing girlfriend as our visitors. John, a very feeling person, couldn't get enough of Beverly -- and there was an awful lot of her, at least 40-triple D's worth. He and Beverly would often excuse themselves throughout the weekend. My two impressive daughters were always wide-eyed as they observed Beverly and John emerge from wherever with a sated smile on their ruffled countenances.

RULE 4: Do not concern yourself with discretion, discipline, or restraint; your hosts will adapt.

John had an insatiable appetite. I always marvelled (no, that's too positive -- I always was astonished) at the amount of food this one person could consume. One night, after dinner, as I was pondering this very thought, a bloated John appeared in the kitchen. He immediately started to act very strange. He stood there in my kitchen loudly smacking his lips and simultaneously moving his head slowly from left to right. He resembled a bird, which I thought was apropos, being that birds consume twice their weight each meal. Finally, in an emphatic tone, John uttered a solitary word: "Chocolate!" He uttered it again: "Chocolate!" Pause. "I feel like a big dish of chocolate ice cream!" I told you John was a feeling-type. Instead of acting on impulse and pounding John on his extended stomach with my fists (Woody Allen, where are you?) I meekly asked whether coffee ice cream was an acceptable substitute. As long as it was smothered in chocolate syrup, was the counter retort.

RULE 5: Eat as much as you please; your hosts won't mind and remember, special orders don't upset the host family.

When I arrived home from school one Friday afternoon, my parents' huge car was already planted firmly in the driveway. They had arrived safely, but earlier than expected. When I entered my abode I was immediately perplexed by the scene unfolding in my living room. A closer perusal confirmed my worst fear. My daughters and my father were rearranging certain pieces of furniture in my living room, orchestrated by my mother, to establish, "a better, more classic look."

RULE 5: Don't hesitate to improve upon the decor of your host family's home according to your taste. They have probably been waiting for someone of your expertise to come along and make things right.

My father prides himself as being a connoisseur of fine foods, so I take great pains in the preparation of each meal. I remember one's veal cutlets, pounded paper thin, fried to golden perfection, a fine arugala salad, and steamed broccoli with a lemon wedge. My mother commended my efforts, but my father leaned forward and remarked in sotto voce, "Your mother! She can eat anything!"

RULE 6: Feel free to be critical of your hosts' culinary efforts; after all, you have to eat there.

After long years of living in a lake community, I have finally figured out a solution to the houseguest dilemmas: spend the summer away or join the Connecticut Writing Project, which affords no time for summer houseguests.

Chapter VI

THE FAIRY RING

by Kathy Shaughnessy Jambeck

Morgan traveled onward. He made his way through forests of ancient trees, through thickets and undergrowth, and across rushing brooks. As sunset approached, he decided to call it a day, eat his supper, and settle down for the night. In need of some water, he laid his pack down, took out an acorn shell, and set out to look for the stream he heard bubbling nearby.

He would have to hurry because he didn't want to be traveling about once the owls were out hunting. He found the water, filled his cup, and turned back to the spot where he left his pack.

Walking quickly, Morgan's attention was suddenly directed to his right. There was a strange sound coming from a spot just beyond a group of oak trees. It was very difficult to figure out what it was. It was like a light shimmering of tiny bells in the breeze. A strange melody slowly reached his ears, but it was so faint he had to stand perfectly still and slow down his breathing to hear it. The mystery of it was irresistible, and Morgan found himself drawn in curiosity.

He crept up to the oaks, and just beyond them, in a little hollow, Morgan could see a wide circle of mushrooms growing up out of the carpet of pine needles. The light in the forest was very dim by now. Only a few sunbeams found their way through the branches above. Morgan squinted his eyes, turned his head this way and that, trying to make out what might be down there. Watching ever-so-carefully, he began to see little flashes of light moving within the circle. They seemed like bright wisps softly weaving in and out through the air just above the ground. Morgan could now tell that the music was coming from them. He had never heard anything so beautiful!

As he listened, he could hear tiny voices singing to the music that the movement of light seemed to create. Next he could see that there was, in fact, a tiny body in the center of each spark of light. With a gasp Morgan realized that this must be a group of woodland fairies, and he stumbled upon their fairy ring! He clapped his little paws together with joy! What luck to have come upon such a rare sight!

Clucking to himself, he decided he would just spend a few minutes listening and watching. He laid himself down on the forest floor making himself very small, and propped his head on his paws. He then closed his eyes and listened to the fairy song.

Not much time had passed, when he thought he heard his name being called. The sound was soft but steady. Feeling drawn to the circle, Morgan moved forward to the dancing lights. For some reason, he didn't feel frightened. He passed within the circle and looked around himself at all the delicate little fairy people who were dancing in the air, laughing with one another, and smiling at him. They were so beautiful!

He sat down on the soft pine needles and watched and smiled back. He thought to himself, "These fairies are so wonderful! They are like shining rainbows and glittering stars! Aren't they just like dreams?"

Just as that thought came into his mind, one of the fairies broke from the circle and came floating toward him. It was so lovely. Its body was nearly transparent, delicate and slender, and shimmering with light. Fine shining hair trailed in the gentle movement of air around it. What seemed like wings on its back were actually waves of light quickly moving in and out. It was not like any bug Morgan had ever seen!

The fairy looked at Morgan with large, bright eyes and smiled gently. It moved closer, looking deeper into his eyes and said, "Hello, Morgan."

Morgan gasped. "Hello," he answered shyly. "I'm very pleased to meet you." He paused for a moment and then asked, "How did you know my name?"

The fairy smiled and said, "I know you very well because I live inside you. I am a dream you have."

Morgan was startled at this. "You live inside me? You are a dream I have? What do you mean?" Morgan asked.

The fairy explained, "Well, all of us fairies are dreams that people have in their hearts. When you wish for something for a long time and want it very badly, that wish grows bigger and bigger and becomes a dream." Morgan looked interested, so it continued, "You have been wishing for your life to change, to be something other than a timid mouse. That wish has turned into your dream to be a brave knight."

"Oh!" Morgan exclaimed. "So you are my dream to be a knight?"

"That's right, and I live in your heart."

"Well," Morgan questioned, "if you live in my heart, how come I can see you out here in front of me?"

The fairy explained, "This fairy ring is a magic spot in the forest. You happened to discover it by accident. Not many people even see fairy rings. So you are lucky enough to see me, your dream, appear in front of you. I called you over to meet me."

"Oh, I'm so glad that we could meet! I was beginning to wonder if my dream to be a knight was real or not. I have been very upset and sad about it."

"What has made you upset?" the fairy asked.

"Well, I had a battle with a great serpent yesterday, and I killed it. You would think that would make me feel like a brave knight, a hero. But I didn't feel like a hero. I felt bad. So that must mean I'm a coward and not a hero at all!"

The fairy smiled but looked concerned. "What made you decide to kill the serpent?"

"I had to kill it or it would have killed me! I knew I couldn't escape by running away because I wouldn't be fast enough. I had on my sword and shield, and they are very heavy. If I wanted to live, I had to kill the serpent." Morgan was upset. He sat twisting the tip of his tail between his paws.

The fairy nodded with understanding. "So you believed you had no choice. I think you were right. You had to do what you did." Then the fairy added, "And usually not having a choice makes us feel unhappy about what we do."

The fairy's words seemed to calm Morgan. He thought for a moment and said, "That's right. I think that's what happened. I didn't have a choice. I guess I imagined that doing things like killing a great serpent meant being brave, and that being brave would make me feel happy." The little mouse looked sad once more.

So the fairy asked, "You don't think you were braver?"

Morgan thought for a moment and then answered, "No . . . not really. It was just that the serpent caught me by surprise. And as I said, if I tried to run away, it would have killed me for sure. I had been waiting for days to fight with my new sword, so I was ready to battle with it. But I felt so empty afterwards. I didn't feel good at all! And I don't know why."

Morgan looked to the fairy for an answer, but it only added, "Just think for a moment about everything you have said. I'll bet you can probably figure out why."

Morgan paused and looked down to the ground. He thought over the battle and their conversation. He cocked his head to the left and

added, "I'm not sure. But I guess that maybe if you do something you think is brave, but you have no choice, it can give you a make-believe feeling of courage. You may think you are some kind of a hero, but in your heart you feel you are not. That's what must make you empty and sad. That must be what happened to me." He nodded his head at this.

"You are a very smart mouse, Morgan," the fairy said smiling. "So then what do you think courage means?"

Again Morgan paused. "I think maybe courage means choosing to do something that is risky because it might not work out for you, but doing it anyway." He smiled, pleased with himself.

"Oh Morgan," the fairy beamed. "That is just what courage means!"

Morgan wiggled his whiskers and flicked his tail with delight. But almost immediately a shadow passed over his face. A nagging doubt reappeared in his mind. The fairy noticed and asked, "What is it, Morgan?"

He answered, "I don't know if I'm capable of being brave. I don't know if I can act with courage. It's such a scary thing. After all, I am a mouse. Mice are never brave! My family tried to reason with me. They tried to explain that what I wanted was silly. Maybe they were right. Maybe I'm being foolish . . ."

To Morgan's surprise the fairy started to move away from him, back into the circle. As it moved it said, "Morgan, believe in the power of your dream. Knowing you have a dream is the first step to becoming a hero."

Morgan didn't want the fairy to leave. He shouted, "Wait! Don't go. Please don't go. I don't understand. I need you to stay with me! Help me! I'm still afraid!"

The beautiful one burst in a flash of light before fading, and as it went, it said to him gently, "Dear Morgan, I am always with you. From long ago and into forever."

The light vanished with only a slight trail of sparkles left to shimmer in the air and then vanish, too. The music was gone, the magic was gone. All that was left was a tiny mouse asleep in the center of a fairy ring.

AN ARGUMENT FOR INDENTURE

by Helen Kueskin

I am in pursuit of Bill, as in recent years I have been in pursuit of Mark, Craig, and Robert. In each case, our relationship has followed the same script. There's the initial search, often an introduction via a mutual acquaintance. Then the first shy meeting: "Are you Mark? Hi, I'm Helen." The tentative gropings ("How are you today?") and the casual encounters in public places ("How's it going?").

Gradually we move to new levels of comfort with each other. And the partnership peaks. Daring triumphs, and anything is possible: "Ok. Let's try it! I'm ready for a new experience," or more gently, "I'm really glad I found you." The heady days, when you know he's around, he's available whenever you call.

And then one day, when you do call, he's not there. A distant and detached voice says: "There are others, you know," and you think, "Humph! That's all very well for you to say, but you just don't understand how devastated I feel." How can she say there will be others? No one ever understood me the way he did. What a bitch!

The despondency, the depression, the despair. The "Oh my God, what an I going to do without him? How could he leave like this, without a word? Where has he gone? How can I find him? Why do I always choose these roustabouts?" And then the desperate phone call to his friend David.

"David, do you know where Bill is?"

"Well...he did leave a number where he could be reached...but don't let anyone know I gave it to you."

"Thanks, David."

The phone call, heart pounding. The answering machine: "We are out right now, but if you leave your name..." And I leave my name, but I know it's in vain. Bill won't call back. Neither did Mark, nor Craig, nor Robert. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. "This isn't fair." I fume to myself. "Just as I was getting comfortable, just--in fact--as I was beginning to take the relationship for granted, the fellow walks out."

Six weeks later, I initiated a timid phone call to David. (Why does the woman always have to call first?) The rendezvous is set for 4:30 in the afternoon, a mutually convenient time. I arrive a little flustered, and the cycle starts anew: "Hi, David. I'm Helen. How are you?" The only ripple in our early rapport happens when he accuses me of being paranoid, but at this point in my life I handle

that observation with equanimity. "You're right, David," I say. "I am paranoid, but I want you to do it just the way I like it."

Hairdressers should be assigned to one hair salon for life.

VACANCY: INQUIRE WITHIN

by Todd Levy

She doesn't live here anymore but this empty room is filled with trinkets of times past. There's nothing, actually, that a casual observer would think different from that of any other active teenager's room--a single bed, a desk with a student lamp and radio alarm clock, a bureau and a small child's chair painted white enamel. One wall holds a good size mirror and another a bulletin board with those giant push pins. The remaining space is filled with large posters, one saying "Ski Colorado" and the other "Hang in there Baby!"

What always filled the room for me was just a little pine piece with four drawers that her mother antiqued on a spring weekend. It seems as if it was only a few years ago. I remember the bottom drawer held so many stuffed animals and puzzles that it took special planning to close it.

"Pumpkin," I remember saying, "could you put your toys away?"

It was the top of the bureau, though, that displayed life's valuables. In the midst of the clutter one could find a wide assortment of prized possessions, including a child's wrist watch with several extra bands and a gold locket, both birthday presents from proud grandparents.

"Jennifer," I remember telling her, "don't you think you ought to get the thank you in the mail?"

Half in and half out of a basket are some well worn bicycle gloves with their mesh tops, leather palms, and open fingers. Then there's the box of bandaids that covered her knees and soothed the pain.

"Jen, honey, it will be all right."

There's waiting solution for contacts and an empty eyeglass holder. Nearby, a metal elephant with oversized ears displays several sets of earrings, including gold hearts, plastic flowers, and pair of have-a-nice-day smiling faces. A flute mouth piece is ready to roll to the floor.

"Jennifer, maybe you could practice after homework."

Also claiming space is a pack of photos from last summer, a cloth covered box with plastic hair clips, and a basket stuffed with colored combs, L'Oreal, Marathon mascara, Lip Lickers, nail files, a match book cover from the Three Bears, some cologne, and one dried bottle of Maybelline nail polish.

"Jennifer Beth, you aren't going to wear that, are you?"

Surveying this topside accumulation like Lady Liberty overseeing the huddled masses is a ceramic lamp. A plastic cup with a University of Maryland decal saying "Go Terps Go" holds salves for curing or covering a young girl's skin worries. Nearby is a bottle with a few pennies, an oval shaped tin with some shells, some buttons, and a movie ticket stub.

"Jennie," I remember saying, "be home before twelve."

She's graduated from college and is married now, but I wonder if she remembers. No matter. She doesn't live here anymore.

INCONSPICUOUS EVIDENCE

by Janet Mackenzie

Even before his father died, Edward was living on the edge. He never did have a job, his family said, because in his senior year at Columbia he had had a breakdown, spent some time at Bellevue, and moved home with his parents. He had been to Spain once and wanted to become a Flamenco dancer.

So, he lived in the suburbs with his parents, spending whole days alone in his own room. He rose at noon, spent two hours in the tub, and dressed in black. Perhaps if his clothing choice had been his own he'd have dressed differently, but his mother, scarred by the Depression, bought all his clothes at the thrift shop.

Edward listened to the radio. He listened to Carlton Frederick talking about selenium, its absence, and cancer. He telephoned neighbors, friends and his parents' friends to warn them about this danger. He cautioned mothers with young children against having their babies routinely vaccinated because his naturopath had said it was unwise.

A moonchild or Cancer himself, he explained theories of behavior in terms of Astrology. He cornered people at neighborhood gatherings discussing recent changes in weather, global politics and moral tone in terms of Astrology. He spoke with fervor and conviction. Initially people listened to his lucid arguments and precise diction, but as he droned on, moving from Astrology to Scientology, to the misuse of power, to Fascism, his listeners rolled their eyes.

His father, a prominent artist, was failing. Edward took him to meetings of evangelists, clairvoyants and faith healers because conventional medicine had no effect. His father died anyway.

At the memorial service Edward's brother, Matt, a lawyer and a politically active man, spoke for a half hour, thanking people personally for having come to his father's service. It was strange hearing him rattle off a hundred fifty or more names of people in the church. He did not mention Edward.

Several months after the memorial service, Edward began calling people to tell them that he had inherited one third of the estate, his brother, who had written the will, had inherited two thirds of the estate. Some people encouraged Edward, who still lived in the family's house, to challenge the will.

Because his energies lagged, he did not challenge the will. He went to primal scream therapy, talked with everyone about Reich and

his orgone box, practiced deep relaxation and continued to listen to Carlton Frederick.

Edward saw a shrink now and then. He enjoyed the long train ride to New Haven and the chance to meet people on the trains. Sometimes he didn't come home for a couple of days, having become intrigued with a new friend. His mother would be delighted and would offer to support the pair. But he always came home after a week.

One woman whom Edward admired was a tall and intense anthropologist who wore moccasins and braids. Although she was interested in American Indian culture, she had a consuming passion for Sufi beliefs. She meditated and ate only macrobiotic foods. She worried about her special friend the Babaly, who was being kept prisoner in some jail in India. Sometimes Edward brought his friends to visit his parents' friends. One woman whom he brought sat on the sofa, ignoring all attempts to engage her in conversation, while she ate all the oranges from the mini-orange tree which was on the cocktail table. When she had denuded the tree, she began to write letters on some stationery she pulled from her handbag. She refused all offers of soda, wine, beer, lemonade or bottled water because the chemicals used in producing and bottling them were so toxic.

Edward's mother, Ida, a woman in her mid-seventies, began telling friends that she was worried about what would happen to her forty-five year old son when she died. She was trying to set up some sort of trust for him, which she bank, or her reliable son, the lawyer, could administer. She did wish that Edward would marry, but honestly, she didn't know what was wrong with him.

Edward's mother, bought another house, on the shore. She wanted Edward to move into it with her. The house had a basement apartment, she said that Edward could have his friends there. Edward didn't like the new house, he wanted to stay in the house his father had lived in. He refused to move. His mother, Ida, humored him, and rented out the basement apartment to a tenant, who actually didn't want to live in it either, and spent her time upstairs in Ida's quarters.

Edward continued to live in the old family house, which his brother, the lawyer, wanted to sell. Edward wouldn't hear of selling. His brother and mother allowed him to live in the old place for several months, but after awhile, Ida began to send for items of convenience from the old house which she knew Edward would miss. Edward hung on. Finally Ida and her son, Matt, the lawyer, decided to rent out the old house, telling Edward to move into the studio.

Edward began a campaign of calling friends and explaining that his brother was a crooked lawyer who had taken 2/3 of the estate, in addition to hefty commission on all of the sales of the paintings, and that he kept all of the unsold paintings in his home under his children's beds. Further, Edward went on, the house was unfit to rent

out, his mother would be sued if she rented it out. He was going to call the real estate board of New Canaan and report his brother for unethical conduct.

The friends originally listened with surprise, compassion and curiosity. Edward continued talking on the phone. People who had tried to appear interested at first, left their phone on kitchen counters, unloaded their dishwashers, shined their shoes and watered plants while he railed on the phone. Accepting a phone call from Edward meant giving up a minimum of an hour. But, he was convincing. People told him to challenge the will.

Edward moved to the studio on the property next to the family house. The family house was renovated. It was rented out to a woman who had a law degree. Edward telephoned one of his mother's neighbors, Dulcie. Dulcie was kneading bread. Edward was convinced that his brother, Matt, was putting his mother into a bad legal situation. The roof of the house leaked. It should never be rented in this condition. Wouldn't Dulcie call his mother "She'll listen to you" and dissuade her from renting it out? His brother was a charlatan; his mother would suffer. Dough on her hands, Dulcie held the receiver on her shoulder, numbly, trying not to soil the receiver with sticky fingers. She suggested that Edward contact a lawyer about a landlord's responsibility. She gave him the name of her friend, Ellie Schumaker. Edward thanked her and hung up.

Dulcie thought about poor Edward. It was clear that he was being gyped out of his inheritance; only two heirs and one gets 2/3, simply because he is married and has children? Where's the justice in that? She remembered how Matt had caddged their father into signing the will with, "What would he do with the money, anyway? He has no wife, no children." Ida spoke of Edward as "different". Sometimes she alluded to his time at Bellevue, but like most parents, she hoped daily that Edward would find himself, even though he was forty-five. Dulcie liked Edward. He was interesting and terrifically knowledgeable about art. Going to a museum opening with him was like wearing headphones wired to John Canaday, Phillip deMontebello and Kenneth Clarke, at once. All the conversations, observations and instincts he had heard his father and his father's friends voice, he owned. It was exciting to hear the reverberations of so much serious thinking and reflection.

Several days later, Dulcie returned from the beach with the girls to find three messages from Edward on her answering machine. She fed the dogs, cats, gerbils and rabbit. She started dinner. After stopping an argument between the girls, she listened to the third message again. Edward had mentioned the police. Reluctantly she telephoned him.

He answered the phone on the first ring. He spoke with clarity, authority and precision. "My mother's life is in real danger", he

said. "The yardman, Peter Strelczyk, has a criminal record. He has been in jail for being a con artist. His moll has broken into my mother's house and left her scent of cheap perfume in the new tenant's bed. I'm sure they've had sex in the new tenant's bed. His sister works for my mother."

Dulcie listened, eyes glazing..the pasta had one more minute before she could drain it.

"The reason my mother is in danger is that this criminal, Peter, has a sister who works doing housework for my mother. She's a lovely woman. Her name is Marta. She has very high morals. She is naive, though. She made the mistake of changing her will to make her brother the sole heir to her fortune."

The timer rang for the pasta. Dulcie held the receiver against her shoulder and grabbing two oven mitts, poured the steaming pasta into a colander. "Umm", she responded. "This sounds serious, Ed, why don't you call the police?"

"Well, I can't do that. You know the police are controlled by the Mafia."

Dulcie, still cradling the receiver on her shoulder, began to chop onions and parsley. "Have you called Ellie? What did she advise?"

"Actually, I didn't get through to her but I intend to."

With a little edge in her voice she told Edward to write down exactly what he had told her just about the house and the will and send it to Ellie. "Send a registered letter, return receipt requested."

Docilely, he agreed.

Just the next day, as Dulcie was carrying in a tray of hors d'oeuvres to the living room and trying her best to be a good hostess to her husband's new boss, the phone rang. It was Edward.

"You know Peter is planning to do in his sister to inherit that money", he began. "I don't know what to do to protect my mother, but if I tell her about the danger Marta is in Peter will come after me."

"Edward, I can't talk now. Write down exactly what you're telling me and then you can send a letter to the police or Marta, I've got to go."

Several days passed. Dulcie forgot about Edward, Peter and all the dangers inherent in having changed a will. The phone rang. It was Edward. "This is going to blow you out of the water." His diction was strangely colloquial; usually it had a faintly archaic twist. "I have a tape here which talks in specific detail about their plans to Kill Marta."

A sick dread clutched Dulcie. Edward was an innocent, if this was real, he hadn't any business trying to play hero. "Do you mean you went there and taped their voices?" she asked. "No, I went to see a clairvoyant. She was exceptional. I never even mentioned my fears about Marta and Peter and my mother. She talked about how they planned to do Marta in. I taped everything she said. This clairvoyant is very lovely lady. She also foresaw the attempt on President Reagan's life, but she kept a very low profile about it. As a matter of fact, she never advertises her services because certain criminal elements are out to get her. She's very reasonable. She only charged me \$50 and I spent an hour with her."

"So this is how it is," thought Dulcie, and she began to polish her nails.

THE SLIPPERS

by Lynn Maginnis

I open my eyes and glance at the clock. The lime-green numbers appear to say 5:40. I get up, do a preliminary washup routine, throw on some clothes, and glide my feet into my light blue New Balance Walkers. By now, they feel comfortable and cozy, like old friends. As I tie them, I glance at the pair of men's slippers resting comfortably nearby. I remember!

Slippers! It could not have been anything but an accident to encounter someone walking around in slippers, in broad daylight, during the summer of 1965. It was the summer of love beads, long hair, The Beach Boys, and "Blowing In The Wind". It also became the summer.....I remember those slippers!

I was a student at a university that summer of '65. The school was situated on the shore of sparkling Long Island Sound. I was fortunate to have a dormitory room which overlooked the front walkway of the building, and the park and seashore beyond.

One afternoon, while in my dormitory studying, I heard guitar music drift through my window. When I looked out, I noticed a small gathering below. What was going on outdoors seemed much more inviting than the anxiety and physiology I was studying! Running down the stairs and reaching the front walk, I noticed a group had gathered around a young man playing his guitar. Although he was a "handsome specimen", what intrigued me most was his friend standing nearby. He had hair with strawberry highlights which glistened in the sun. He had a smile which seemed to say hello without having to say it. He had a sparkle in his eyes, and, he wore slippers! Not even moccasins or sandals, but the kind of brown leather slippers into which you sink your feet and flop around the house!

I noticed a friend standing in the crowd, joined her, and whispered.

"Who's the one in the slippers?"

"He's really nice," was her response. "Want to meet him?"

The sparkle in his eyes made me want to say yes, but I wasn't sure about those slippers! In 1965, most people did not walk around in slippers!

I, again, glance at the slippers resting comfortably on the rug. My husband rests peacefully, enjoying his last minutes of sleep before the alarm awakens him. This memory of our first meeting fills me as I walk down the stairs and open the back door. I feel the coolness and smell the freshness of the morning air. My New Balance Walkers help

me to glide into my thirty minute morning workout. The moment makes getting up before most humans worthwhile.

TWAS THE SUMMER BEFORE FALL
by Christine Polk

"Twas four weeks in the summer, where down in the cold,
Seventeen of us met; and we were all told
All about projects, and requirements and such,
And the work that we'd do -- so much, oh! so much.
For it's us who'll do workshops for others out there.
Theory and practice -- that's what we'll share.

We got Britton from Bob's dialectics from Del.
We talked of Berlin; understandable? Well.....
Then, Libby came in with Brian and conferred.
He read and discussed, and was no way deterred.
By all of us teachers. Then onto the plan
Of our workshops. Designed so all understand
The theory, ideas, and how they can be
Transferred to the classroom. Yes, that is the key.

But time is the one thing I find that I need.
I listen and write and confer at such speed
That I'm just overwhelmed at all of this learning
And end up the day, by just simply yearning
For quiet, for reflection. But it just is not there.
After cooking and parenting, I sink in a chair
And wonder how Ann can do workshops so much.
And ponder on subjective criticism and such.

Bravest Lynn was the first, with her tapes and her slides.
And then there was Kathy with her ethical guides.
Christine and her lens began the next week.
"Personal meaning," said Marc, "is what we should seek."

Lois asked us to write about all the good stuff.
And Kate wanted to show us that although it was tough
To get special Kids to trust and then share and then write.
They will if you gentle them, and not get up-tight.

The issues of gender were Helen's concern.
We wanted to talk, but we couldn't get a turn.
So we discussed over lunch about women and men,
And how we'd never thought about all this 'till then.

We wrote of our first love, at Mena's request.
Then talked of the story, and then chose the best
Title for an essay. She wanted to show
How better transactional writing will grow
From expressive. Then Katie used free-writing again

But she was concerned with right and left brain.

The folders appeared by magic it would seem.
The office staff counted paper by the ream.
They were wonderful; copying and collating it all.
They smiled at every job, the huge and the small.

Then Carmel showed us how to build trust.
Before using groups, it's an absolute must.
Roberta showed us how writing will link
To literature and get students to think.
Genie's workshop followed that theme right along,
Put writing with reading, you cannot go wrong.
We listened to Robin and writing-to-learn;
And with Janice, the wonderful whales had their turn.

MaryAnn thinks there's something beyond
The five-paragraph essay; but you can't wave a wand
And hope that students will write in an organized way,
Even if they know what they will say.
With Janet we liked working with metaphors again,
And proved that writing really wasn't a pain.
We waited so long to hear Ted have his say.
We enjoyed him no end on the very last day.

Meanwhile, we are writing narratives and fiction
To read-around each Friday, with wonderful diction.
We wrote to persuade, we wrote about writing.
Which is what this piece is. But it's all rather frightening
To think that it's over. And now it's our mission
To do all this stuff; to get the permission
To share with our colleagues, and spread the good word
That learning's a process. It's not so absurd.

We want students to try to make their own meaning.
It's part of our job, to help in weaning
Of students away from being so passive.
Now we know how. It's not really that massive.

And we'll always have Faye to ask what to do.
But she'll never tell us. "It's just up to you".
And we thank Del and Faye,
For the wonderful way,
They have guided, and taught us, and helped us to see
That CWP is as neat as can be.

by Marc Selverstone

It was a bit overcast as I made my way out to my car. Just beyond the fence, same spot everyday, it's the white Honda with the personalized plates. Take me home baby, for it has been a day.

As I approached the car something seemed different--it was sitting there as it always does, but it had been touched, caressed by a loving hand. There on the windshield, secured by the wiper, was a rose--an unfurled bud of red petals supported by a long green stem. A rush of warmth came over me as I plucked the rose from its mooring, surveyed the lot, and ducked into my mobile. It was as if I had just walked into a dream, or onto a movie set. I knew it was her.

My afternoon plans would have to be changed. I headed out, on the road, with the tunnel-vision of finding her, wanting contact. It could be the touch of her hand, the liquid gaze of her eyes; I wanted her that afternoon.

And there she was. Her mom had told her to get a job and that's just what she had done--pumping gas at the local Amoco station. She looked so cute in that outfit with that flowing brown mane draped over navy jump suit. "Wild Thing..."

"I, uh, need some air in my tires" was my line as I pulled over to the corner of the station. Actually my tires were a bit low. "You wanna help me out?" As we moved to the far side of the car, away from the road and the station office, we knelt and kissed.

"Thanks for the rose--that was yours, wasn't it?"

"I hope so--expecting anything from anyone else?"

"No, no."

"Did you like it?"

"I loved it. I had to come over here to see you. I just wanted to touch you."

As I placed the caps back on my tires, we exchanged parting glances as she moved to service another customer. With a smile I started my car and began to drive off. Then, with a flash of Hollywood, I took her rose that was resting on the front seat and placed the stem of it in my mouth. "Thinking of you." That I was as I headed home.

To tell you the truth, I began to feel a little ridiculous riding around with a flower in my mouth, so I took it out and held in my right hand as I drove, not wanting to break contact. As I came to a light I downshifted, clutching all the while to my symbolic mate.

THIS COULD BE...

by Lois Smith

Tragedy--with one fatal shift the entire bud had burst, as if it had been decapitated from the stem. I saw the bud rolling about on the front mat and a wave of anxiety swept over me. Is this a sign? I had an intense need to rejoin bud and stem but realized that my efforts would be futile. Putting the stem down I picked up the bud and held it to my lips, feeling it, and her, melt with me. I kissed it and caressed, being ever so gentle when shifting, placing it on the seat in traffic, cupping it close to me on the open road.

As I pulled into my driveway I thought about the last half hour and the emotional rollercoaster I had just been on. What an awful feeling, seeing that rose explode and end up helplessly on the floor. Up till then it had really been one of those "peak experiences". Yuck.

I turned off the motor and looked at that rose and stem. I sat, and thought, and sighed, and sat some more. Reaching for whatever I could at the moment, I thought of my Buddhism classes. Release yourself from the material world, from all objects.

Putting things into perspective, I realized that that rose was merely a token, matter used to convey meaning, a transient object in a transient world. With that massive rationalization, I bit my lip and tossed both stem and bud into the trash.

Ama's chubby brown legs stung as she hurried up the hill for the afternoon session after lunch. The November wind was coarse, piercing, different. It had a message. Could this be the day? The clouds looked strange; full and pregnant, as if they had something to give.

Her heavy jacket, even over a sweater, wasn't quite enough. She had grown longer and, unfortunately, wider in the past few months. Momma, in her quiet, gentle way, had spoken about the fact that she was growing up now, and being chubby sometimes made things difficult. She reminded Ama of what was good for her and what wasn't. Ama knew what Momma was saying, and obeyed when Momma was looking. On the other hand, Ama's brothers said, flat out, "You're fat!" They made no attempt to soften their words. They meant what they said.

Last night, Ama had accidentally, on purpose, overheard Momma and her older sisters making plans for the Christmas holidays. She was sure that she had heard something about the Sears' order including a coat for Ama.

Ama crossed her fingers and wished, just in case, that it would be the black and white tweed, with the red wool scarf.

Momma had tried to limit Ama's fondness for epicurean delights. Her gift was not because of a fondness for junk food. She liked the good stuff, like petit fours, almond horns, cream puffs and Thomas' Date Nut Bread. Momma was mad when a mouse invasion in late September centered about Ama's room; most particularly, her dresser drawers. Ama, in order to avoid detection and confrontation, had hidden a cache of her special things in her underwear drawer. They were not things that would spoil; but things like Date Nut Bread and Nestle's Crunch Bars.

The mice found Ama's store and wreaked havoc on the contents. You must understand that Momma's rage was not only directed at Ama, but more toward those uninvited guests that had made their presence known in her home.

Ama had a streak of the "entrepreneur" in her. She had a list of people who wanted things done; like a loaf of bread from the store, stamps from the drug store, a delivery to someone up the street. And then there were the two-cent bottle redemptions! Sometimes, Ama could make as much as thirty cents a week on the bottles. She felt wealthy!

The clouds grew heavier and darker. This looked like the day! As the afternoon session proceeded, Ama's face frequently turned to her window on the world. This phrase was her long before Madison Avenue took it. The trees were bare now. She had watched those majestic elms and maples ever/ year since fourth grade as they claimed autumn in a splendid array of colors; succumbed to bare-boned winter, and then burst forth in their Easter clothes in spring. The bare trees bent in the sharp wind. Even the birds had trouble flying against the strength of it. Today was different; this was going to be the day!

Josh Dranoff showed off this morning. He was really smart, but sometimes he was a bit much. "I'll show him," Ama thought. "Just wait -- this afternoon -- I'll show him!"

How Ama looked forward to Friday. It was almost as good as the show at the Riato on Saturday -- including the funny picture. The newsreel wasn't that great to look at as the country was not doing well in the Pacific War Area. Some pupils recited assigned poetry, some showed drawings done at approved and unapproved times. A few had the courage to sing one of the popular songs from Martin Blacky's "Make Believe Ballroom". Dorothy Negli would surely do "Mariz, Doves." What a dumb song! Ama had showed Mrs. Guinlan her story that morning, before school. For some reason, Ama had felt a little afraid, but then, after the reading, Mrs. Guinlan smiled one of her infrequent smiles. Then she said in her tinkling glass voice, "You may read this to the class this afternoon."

That's when Ama knew that she could show Josh: that's when she knew that this was a special day!

The time for Ama to read her story came. Al Clinkscalles muttered, "Show off," as she proceeded to the front of the room. She looked to the window partly to relieve the tension, and partly to avoid the faces Al was making. Did something drift by the window? In her time, Ama completed the reading. Everyone sat quietly, eyes shifting from Ama to Mrs. Guinlan. Mrs. Guinlan smiled, the class clapped. Al whispered again as she made her way back to her seat. "Big Show Off!"

Ama's window welcomed her. It and the trees were always there, just for her. On this Friday, at 1:40, the window displayed the gift. It was snowing. Just a moment ago it was the thought, now it was a shower of confetti, drifting at its leisure to cover the brown earth and black asphalt that surrounded the school.

Julie DiBlase passed a note. She was so good at it. Mrs. Guinlan never caught her, thank goodness.

"Meet you at the club house after school. Love, Julie"

Ordinarily, this would have been a good idea, but Ama knew, not today!

The bell sounded! Freedom, Friday, the first snow! Ama was filled with joy, excitement, anticipation.

Al waited until he had reached the public sidewalk before he let out a rousing whoop. He hustled past the school property before the first skimpy snowball whizzed through the air. Ama was cautious. "Those boys are such pains!" She slid a bit, joked and squealed, but steadily kept on her way home. She knew who was waiting and what was waiting. She remembered the postman's pledge: "Neither rain, nor snow, not sleet nor hail shall keep the postman from his appointed rounds."

With purpose, she approached the hill -- she slid; she fell; she slid again. So, her shoes were wet. Momma must fuss a little but not too much. Not today!

The path to the back porch waited for first footsteps. Ama stepped, then opened the vapor frosted door. Like a genie, the warm scent laden air wafted toward the cold draft at the back door. She wasn't cold anymore. The wet shoes had been doffed in a matter of seconds. She was being hugged! and bubbling with abandon on the back burner was the tradition -- Brunswick stew. That marvelous, delicious, sumptuous concoction of chicken, sausage, green lima beans, corn and tomatoes in velvet sauce of the most gorgeous yellow.

How did Momma know that it would snow today? How did she have all the things? How did she know? -- but then Momma's are like that! They know!

As time moved on as it has, and will, Ama has replayed this scene in her mind's eye many times. She has told the story to her children. She was twelve then -- a chubby -- fat, to some, twelve.

An unknowing person would say that Ama was obsessed with food. That was hardly the case. She simply liked what she considered best in generous amounts -- be it food or clothes. She couldn't buy clothes but she could buy her "good things." She learned to sew to satisfy her desire for stylish clothes.

Within a few years, the boys caught Ama's eye. Her face developed cheek bones, the knees lost their dimples, the waist was tiny. Ama went to her prom in a frothy lace and tulle, size seven. She had gone "crazons to perfume" -- from date nut bread to salads, but not without adolescent pains, and then some.

There are stories in between; but they'll come at another time.

by Genie Wells

My dearest daughter,

You must think it strange that I am writing you a letter when you are no further away than the next room, sleeping as soundly as you did when you were much younger. But you are not a baby any more. I know that shouldn't surprise me; I mean, I know how old you are, but until tonight I had not really thought about the significance of your age. You are an adult, not only in years but also in self-confidence, in attitude, in beliefs, in knowledge. You know so much more than I about so many things, and I sometimes marvel at your intelligence and your insights.

So why I am writing this letter to you? I guess because in spite of your maturity, I have faced situations that you have not yet faced, and I would like to share with you some of what I have learned over the past twenty-two years since I was your age. Please understand that I don't necessarily expect you to embrace wholeheartedly these insights, not just because I know you will always make up your own mind (which is one thing I love most about you), but also because you are not me. But for what it's worth, just "Keep what's worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, throw the rest away."

First friendship. Treasure your friends, be kind and generous, but don't jump into friendship too quickly. Take time to develop strong, "real" friendships in the Velveteen Rabbit sense of the word. Watch out for the fakes and for those who only take and never give. However, you must also learn to be on the receiving end, to accept unconditionally a true friend's tangible and intangible gifts. Remember, your friends need to give to you as much as you need to give to them.

When you fall in love with that special man, I hope that friendship will be the foundation of your love. Keep a clear vision through the heat of passion and the desire for acceptance. Passion waxes and wanes and there is no worse loneliness than that which comes from being with someone you no longer truly love. Never feel "obligated" to have sex or allow sex to be an end in itself. Making love should mean just what it says. If you must hurt someone by ending a relationship, do so gently and compassionately, for no one has the right to purposely undermine another's sense of worth. Above all, do not stay in a relationship that is destructive just out of fear of being alone. And when you are hurt, which you will be at times, I pray that you will realize that a relationship can crumble without your self-esteem crumbling with it.

When you marry, celebrate together the beauties of life. Above all, talk to your husband. Don't allow hurts to fester or loveliness to be lost in the frenetic activity of life. Make time for each

other. Realize, especially, that not every day will be perfect. There are so many pressures that can erode a marriage. Where there is love and communication, bonds grow stronger. Be aware also that people change. Hopefully you will change together and the changes will draw you closer. Work hard to make that happen. But if a time should come when for some reason it can no longer happen, do whatever you have to do to maintain your wholeness as a person.

Love your children but don't be afraid to say no to them. You will make mistakes, just as I have made mistakes with you. Be willing to admit them and learn from them. Ask for help when you need it, and your children will thrive. Take time to be a family, to share experiences together, for those are the memories you and they will have forever.

Have faith. Know that the Lord is with you even during the times when you doubt Him the most. We are all on a journey of faith; some people are just further along than others, and everyone steps backwards at times. If you feel separation from God, do not become overly anxious. Try to pray as best you can and keep the channels open. He will be there for you - He has already chosen you - you merely need to answer His knock. "And what is faith? Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see." (Hebrews, 11:1)

My special child, whatever paths you choose, remember I will always love you.

INTRUSION

By Robin Young

The fragrance entered like a package containing fragments of Sarah's past. It entered through an open window and was set down in front of her. As it spread itself open, it enveloped her and played with her mind. The fragrance faded in and out as did the clarity of her memories.

It was a faint fragrance that enticed a time of remembrance. Sarah's style was normally not to reflect but to labor forward onto the next task to be conquered. This time she dwelled on the memory longer than she would have liked to. The images penetrated along with the unwanted delivery of the sweet smell.

Sarah closed her eyes to destroy the vision but there behind her tightly drawn lids came to life the scenario. She imagined the frail hands furrowed with the etching of age caressing her face like a silken scarf. Their softness a surprising contrast to their withered appearance.

Her grandmother appeared in her head, blurred by the distortion of time. Her stamina and strength were disguised behind her small stature. The elderly face was lost to waves and folds, a difficult lifter's bestowal.

Sarah smiled at the image that took over her mind. Not out of connection, of course, but rather at the irony. Flourishing from infant anonymity, striving for accomplishment and eroding into obscurity. Eroding, she laughed. How apropos. She imagined eroding into a wave of wrinkles.

Good, the fragrance dissipated and so did the pictures in Sarah's mind. She wouldn't have to deal with them any longer. It was so draining. She sat for a moment to regain her strength but again it was a moment too long. This time the fragrance burst in and did not wait to be delivered. It rushed in and surrounded her until it transported her back into her past. Back to her bedroom where ballerinas filled her walls and the sweet smell of lilacs filled her room. Lilacs that her grandmother had placed on her dressing table.

She envisioned herself as a child. She watched herself with eyes focusing on another world. No sounds, just visions of the past. She saw herself walk down a long hallway past the pencilled lines on the wall that detailed her growth. Her finger tips stroked the chronology of her childhood, 1952, 1953, 1954... She walked down the hall toward the vestibule and up the stairs. She made sure to get to the top step before she took a breath and that would be a lucky omen.

She entered the second of three apartments in the building. She quietly approached the formica table where her grandmother sat. The wooden cabinets were shiny white. They reflected the glare of the kitchen light which made them look as if they were wet. Years of abrasive footstaps had erased most of the linoleum's pattern. The table was tucked into a corner of the room. Sarah too felt tucked in when playing cards with her grandmother and their special love.

The worn deck of cards was arranged for a game of solitaire. Fragile hands gathered the cards together collecting them into a deck. A warm smile invited Sarah to sit down.

The deck was dealt and the little girl spread the fan of cards carefully in her hands. She slowly raised her eyes from behind her cards trying to keep her gaze hidden as she studied her grandmother's face. Her grandmother stared at her own cards longer than usual as if to allow herself to be studied.

Young Sarah tightened her eyes closed and imagined the youth of her grandmother instead of the reality of her age. She willed her to live forever. She couldn't bear the thought of living without the gentle quiet place that existed only in the aura of her grandmother's presence.

The recollection was abruptly washed away by the burning of tears and the waning of the fragrance. Sarah sat with her eyes closed and was left in the darkness she had initially attempted to escape to.

Something remained, a moment to that was too real. The pain had not faded away with the scene. Just as she knew it wouldn't. The fleeting memory was not worth it. She wiped her eyes indignantly as she raised herself from the sofa. She shook her head as if to acknowledge a wasteful time spent.

Sarah was not normally one to reflect on things, just one to get things done. She walked across the room and closed the window.

