CRAYONS, PAPER AND JELLY COOKIES

I remember Saturdays with sun that splashed down on my face until inside my eye lids turned red; then orange. And I'd get out of bed already impatient to be outside. Durkey would crawl from the end of the bed to where I'd slept as I put on my dungarees, being careful to turn the cuff up just right. I'd struggle with the worn bits of lace in my sneakers, my sleepy fingers missing the holes over and over. And putting on my flannel shirt, I'd feel for the tiny turtle stitched above the pocket. After I'd combed goo through my hair making it look boyish under my baseball hat, I'd 

grab for my Jacknife and run out the back with Durkey nipping and licking my hand to say good morning.

The grass was still wet and as I ran it spit water at my legs. I'd stop in front of my tree house to gain my breath before climbing the seven boards nailed across the tree trunk for steps. The floor was many boards, different sizes and colors fitted together to shape a square. There was a box at one end housing crayons and paper and jelly cookies. Sometimes I'd spend hours there pounding another rail into a step, riding the rope swing to the ground or bringing treasures up in the bucket that hung from a pulley on a rope. And sometimes I'd rock in one corner watching the maple leaves dimming the sun, and I'd wish I were a boy and think how I loved and envied them; I never would give a girl a chance that couldn't spit or whistle through her fingers.

But now I laugh quietly, my head light against his chest, and as he bends to kiss me I think, how wonderful to have had the best of both worlds.

MARY PELLETIER
CRAYONS, PAPER, AND LOLLIPOPS

I remember Saturdays with sun that splashed down on my face until my eyelids turned red—then pink. And I'd get out of bed already impatient to be outside. Foufou would crawl out from the end of the bed to where I'd slept as I put on my lace panties and shorts, being careful not to muss anything. I'd play with the gold buckles on my patent leather pumps. And putting on my white silk blouse I'd feel for the embroidered monogram above the pocket. After I'd set my hair with a blue ribbon I'd grab my dolly and kick Foufou out of the way when she bit me.

The grass was still wet as I skipped through it. I'd stop in front of my doll house to catch my breath before stopping across the threshold. There were little chairs and couches. There was a cupboard in the corner housing crayons and paper and lollipops. Sometimes I'd spend hours there dressing and undressing my dolls, brushing my hair, or cooking make-believe food. And sometimes I'd sit in a corner and rock my dolly to sleep, and I'd wish I were a girl and think how I loved and envied them. The boys would never give me a chance because I couldn't spit or whistle through my fingers.

And now as she spits in my face and tells me what a fag I am, I think, how wonderful to have had the best of both worlds.

DAVE MILLER
Smile
For the day is barely born
Grasp the trees in their
Shadows of freedom
Leaping like an independent
Nation, jovial in its new liberty
Watch the sun
Toss shadows across him.
His innocence captures
The birds silence
While God connects the
Thoughts of two
In peace
Blond moments blaze in
Gold sunlight aiming at
The moss that dresses the trees
Answers detract the stride of
Hope he knew
For people only crucify
His dreams
The light combs the shore
Of never ending solitude
Searching to collect the dead
For hate has torn their dreams
To glass fragments

MARTHA HART
sitting alone
brooding
too bored to do something
too set on being unhappy
to allow a book or a friend or a movie
to try and cheer me up

none of these things
will make me smile
they'll just make me forget
one has to want to be happy
but i don't know how
to want to be happy

i have to brood over happiness
in order to get it
but it's not something you have
it's something you are

right now i am nothing
not even sad
it's all the same
friends and enemies
stoned and sober
school and vacation
green leaves and gray buildings
i haven't a preference
no opinions on anything
not even myself
i don't even care
if i'm sick or i'm well
or happy or sad
i don't care where i am
or what i do...
but i've got to be something

i don't know what i want
the choices i see
can't really choices
choosing a new school
a new job a new town
or even new friends
won't change a thing
i'll make up my own choices
what do i care
for the others who offer me nothing
but then
why should they
for i accept nothing
i guess that i'll have to
make the decision alone
deciding for me
is dimming the lights
putting on music
(soft and soothing
or loud and exciting
it doesn't matter
i don't listen any way)
smoking whatever's around
(i only like to look at the smoke)
i'll stare at the little red light
on the amplifier
or sing along with the record
or draw pictures in the ashes
with a cigarette butt

maybe i'll think of
the last friendship i broke
with my silence
i'll wish i knew something
about love
and think of all the times
i refused to learn
but then i'll think
that people don't really
have anything to say to each other
i'll think of my friends
i'll smile even laugh
then i'll think more quietly
how much i need them
i'll get frightened by this
no i can stand on my own
alone is the way to be
the way i like
but right now
the way i wish i wasn't
of hers won't limit me
if i have any strength
but how feeble i feel
and how much
i feel i need them
i wonder how they feel about me
and i remember everything bad
that i've done
but i still decide they all need me
how can anyone
need an idiot
a sick fool who sits around
feeling sorry for himself
retreating from life
thinking thoughts like these
nobody does but
i guess that i have been
something somebody needs
i'll remember what's happened
what i did what i said
but not what i felt
a feeling is never recaptured
nor is it planned
it somehow just happens
i saw that just sitting there
sinking deeper in muck
a feeling of love
or of joy
or of a fresh sunny morning on the beach
couldn't happen that night

SIMONS LEONHARDT
LEATHERBOY

Tearin' down the highway, on a flathead he rode,
Really haulin' ass, he was moving a load.
Kelly Station, Iowa had never seen;
The likes of such a mother so mean.
Runnin' through the one red light they had in that town,
He pulled up in front of a co-op an' shut his chopper down,
I mean like, really down.
That big mother Harley scratched the asphalt and stopped,
An' ya could see the guy smile when the drag pipes popped.
None o' the rubes there would ever put him down,
'Cause they could tell that this leatherboy didn't fool around.
On the back of his jacket it was out plain to see,
This mother was a member, "Spartans, M.C."
He stepped off his flathead an' jus' stood lookin' down,
At the worst excuse he'd ever seen for a town.
Coughin' an' a spittin' he went into the State Store,
Bolstered down a pint, an' went an' got some more.
He came out shoutin' loud, "This here town's fulla shit!"
Then he straddled his chopper, fired up, an' split.

H.J. FEZZELL
SEA TIME DEATH

The birds bow to the setting sun
we were coming home to die.
The boat was full and the crew blessed.
The captain held the command as the wind pushed
for the grave.
All the timbers were sea swollen and pork was
dry with flame.
Our friends back home were set in black.
Earth was opened for our rest.
Holy was the Trinity at the waters edge.

G. DOLAN

Come be my friend for a dime
Be my lover for a dollar
I'm not ever coming back so
take the plastic Jesus off the wall
give away the work-a-day life
you have been my every day wife
god bless this food we eat and mark
time
so mail the flesh and find the spirit
marry me in his true light
it's time to plant our growing souls
mad men speak let us eat the bread
I hate the heart for bleeding

G. DOLAN

I look out to the light house
and her single eye wi.ks back
yet rats run in blind mens homes
after the sun has set. To be sure
no one will bee them
let us run Napoleon's dead soldiers
on white horses. Spinning and wheezing
we move to the rythme of times harp
hear the starless night tell our
fortune in it's crystal ball. Read me
dreams with childrens voice. And let
the sea be one and the same with
me.

G. DOLAN
Take it.

Inhale it.

Swallow it.

Sniff it.

Breathe it.

Snort it.

Hold it in,

Hard.

Exhale.

Through your nose.

Through your mouth.

Slowly.

Oxygen is beautiful

Do it again.

ROB MÜLLER
My backyard was
garbage strewn dream
The gutters held my
Mother's hopes and fears
Homeless, Loveless
God's children
We got tired of the dirt
Tired of living
The pavement could hold only
So much enchantment
The neighborhood squad car
Could keep me quiet only so long
You can never runaway from the pain
The sun is fighting the rats
But the peeling paint is winning
Not a week or a month of praying
Will help us escape
Oh God let us go

MARTHA HART

Flowers
Are my saviors
They cover
The paths that escape into the woods
And you will discover
They line the canyons of a child's mind

MARTHA HART
WAR:

An intriguing
Pattern;
Which divides
Families;
Death and strife
Don't matter
To av-ricious
Countries;
Oblivious to a
Baby's wail
From his mother's
Cold breast,
They leave a
Sordid trail
In their
Greedy quest
For glory
And power;
And all else,
That exists concomitant
With their
damned honor.

They blaze terrible orths
with militant
Fire; without
Percy;
Creating a dearth
Of food and souls
Previously unknown
To this land:
Inevitably destroying
Our earth.

LYN FRANCESCO
PETER...

Peter... he was a tall boy or so he seemed. He had that air about him - a certain air of superiority you can spot from quite a ways.

And he was handsome, too, Peter was. At least Mary Kellams thought he was handsome and Mary was one of the prettiest girls in the sixth grade... that's what Mrs. Kellams said, anyway. Oh, and Peter was smart. His hand always shot up when the teacher asked a question. He would wave it violently and his eyes would widen with excitement. There was that grin, too. The grin of satisfaction, of superiority after the teacher said, "Very good, Peter" or "Thank you, Peter." How I had hated his grin! And what an athlete he was! Why Peter could run so fast that his team always won the relays on field day. Everyone said he was a promising boy. When there was a contest you could be sure Peter would win - Peter always won.

Once, I saw him cheating on a test but when I told the teacher he denied it. I remember how Mrs. Jones looked up from her gradebook that day and said quietly to me, "Kenny, I'm sorry but I can't believe you. If Peter cheated, and he certainly doesn't need to, I'm sure he'd admit it. You must have thought you saw him looking at Billy's paper." When she said it she stressed the "thought" and gave me a hard, cool stare. Nobody ever caught Peter doing anything wrong. Or, if they did, I'm sure they would have ignored it.

I remember how Peter used to tell us about his horse and what a good rider he was. He told us about his trips to Europe, too, and we would sit there listening, entranced. I remember how I used to give him the candy bar that my mother always packed in my lunch, hoping that he would invite me to ride on his horse. But he never did. Then Peter went away to school and I forgot about him for a
long time.

I thought I'd always hate Peter. I certainly didn't think I'd ever shed a tear for him. But I did. At first when I found out, a year after Peter had left, I hated him even more. But, as I thought of him, sympathy swelled in me. You see, Peter never had a horse; he never even went to Europe. His parents had died long ago and he lived with his aunt, a witch of a lady. I looked back in my yearbook and saw that he had scrawled, "You're a lucky boy, Kenny. Peter." I remember how I had laughed when I first read it; how I had wondered why he had written such a thing. Lucky? Me? I had thought. I did not see Peter for quite a while. Some said he had run away from home and never came back. Others said his old aunt locked him up in his room one day and never let him out. But I saw him just yesterday. He was shining shoes for some man on a street corner. I thought I'd go over and ask him to shine my shoes. I thought I'd rub it in about the horse and the trips to Europe. Here was my chance for revenge. But, somehow, as the crowds of people pushed passed me, tears came to my eyes. And let me tell you that when you're a boy and you're thirteen years old, tears just aren't supposed to come to your eyes. I thought, then that I might say and just say a friendly hello, but I did not go over. I did not say hello.

NANCY DEBLASI
MADNESS!

Me thinks
That is
The pink
The mild
The freak
The ant

That carries
The burden
Three times
Too much
To hope
The truth.

The other
That is
The queen
The order
To kill
The wrong.

The lost
Two enemies
Or maybe
Two victims
The glory
The past.

The dead
The hero
That is
Too bad
The rest'
Do honor.

The young
A wish
The dead
The hero
The young
A wish.

THOM MOORE
LONER

A row of candles
burning bright
as you walk along
the dreary road
The candles you leave
behind
slowly dwindle out;
you cannot turn around
and look back
But the road ahead
is bright.
I turn around and
fade into the
darkness.
All of the candles have
gone out.

RONNIE FESTA

I. TRIP

A long journey
endowing each precious
moment
with the luxury of
a silken cloud
a haze
a silverish sparkling
haze
it covers you and
you relax
the shadow of a man
stretches his
long strides by you.
In the distance
a bell begins
to toll
the early morning fog
begins its journey.

RONNIE FESTA:

I don't understand.
A solar system
is found
in a can.
A hand fell
out of
the sky.
A pig is
next
to my car.

RONNIE FESTA:
INNOCENCE

You, with your damned wide-eyes.
You, who thought the world would end when the cat ran away.
You, who nearly die with each ill-chosen or harsh-spoken word.
You, who avoid a mirror because of the imperfection in your reflection.

I would envy you your happy wide-eyes if I did not pity you so much.
The years to come.

CHRIS COATES
Study Beaches,
    Faded Buildings,
Empty Water,
    Boarded Doorways,
Early Twilight,
    Broken Windows,
Honking Geese,
    Closing Signs.

NEAL CONNELLY
Starvation
Pulls the skin
Tight around my ribs
Hunger
Drives my face
Into the ground
Searching in the dust
For a morsel of food
Nothing matters anymore
Except whether I
Wake up tomorrow morning
Or will I just become
Another statistic
That fills the concrete buildings
My fate is no longer
In my hands
A man in a starched clean office
Too busy to really care
Will ponder over the question
Shall we pour food
Into those starving little mouths?
Bring some hope
Back into those emaciated bodies?
Those children covered with sores,
Are they worth saving?
Or does this Earth have
Too many humans on it already?
God, all I want is a little
Food
Can't they spare a dollar?
Starvation is such a slow way
To die

MARThA HART
unfinished dialogs
that rip through me
again and again and again;
pounding
bursting
weighing me down
until I can't hear anything else.
squinting
staring
scratching the inner walls
groping for decisions.

reoccurring scenes
that play with my conscience
at idle moments;
laughing
screaming
tearing me up
into scattered pieces of confusion;
pushing
pinching
stabbing my pride
with a guilty dagger.

NANCIE VAN SCIVAR

A silver mist floats about the morning
releasing a soft, buzzing hum.
Though you are quiet and still.

The golden arms of sunlight
reach through the translucent mist
to fondle the sleeping Earth.
like my fingertips that fondle your midnight hair.

Tiny dewdrops dwindle and fall
from the crisp grass
when the sunlight squeezes the early day.
Like my loving tears that fall and melt into your pillow.

Birds awaken with the sun
to ruffle and smooth their blankets of feather
and begin to sing their different ballads of life.
Unlike our lives that are sung as one.

NANCIE VAN SCIVAR
THE MODERN WARRIOR

Leaving family and friends behind,
He leaves to fight for his country
Heaviness of heart and mind,
The warrior is lonely.

He is programmed to work as a team
one mind, one soul, one heart
His true feelings are rarely seen,
The warrior does his part.

Only the passage of time will tell
What his eyes alone can see,
For the warrior, tolls the bell
Is peace his victory?

BOB PAPP
Nobody, I need somebody, I'll die alone. This god damned jungle.

Man I'm here.

David P. Wilcox I wish you'd died somewhere else, you stink. I gotta bleed to death anyhow, I shouldn't have to smell your god damned carrion. Carrion that's a god damned three dollar word, wonder why my god damned pro-fi-cient vocab-

ulary comes to me now, when I'm dying alone in the god damned jungle.

Man, don't you hear me, I'm with you, you're not alone.

Who, who was that, Christ, I'M SAVED... naw there's nobody around this damned place, imagine that, Christ, I'm go'in nuts dy'in and smellen David P. Wilcox's damn carrion at the same time.

No, man I'm really here.

Where? What?

Behind you.

Come in front, I can't turn, OH GOD, I NEED YOU, thank god, come in front I can't move, I'm god damned skewered on these bam-boo stakes! We was just walk'in along, David P. Wilcox and me when all offa a sudden these god damned bam-boo spikes fall on us. David P. Wilcox dies in a second, lucky god damned bastard, he's not so lucky now that you're here, anyway it just got my legs. They're poison you know, fast poison.

I know man.

What's you're name?

John

That's funny, god damned funny my name's Johnny too; John P.

Hold it, man I know your name. That's with your eyes baby you can't see so good. Must be the poison. GET ME OUT I'LL DIE. Get me outta this Chinese booby trap. Come on John. JOHN.

I can't, we have the same name; John P.....

I know but, DAMN JOHN I'm gonna die.

I came because a man can't die alone.

...die...With John...smell'in Davy.....in the god damned jungle.....but........not........alone.

H.R. ROOME
There they are
among the crowd
They are faceless
nameless
But they are there, I could feel them
Their love is so real
Look at them
Running
Laughing
Hugging
Kissing
They seem to be so carefree

Who are they? Who really cares?
No one sees,'
No one knows,
No one remembers.
Only we know they exist
Because
I am her,
and he is you.
And we are them.

JO-ANNE OPUSZENSKI

LONELINESS

Stand,
while Silence's gown twists around you,
and watch the sad rain drop down to earth.

Stand,
at the base of the mountain where Fear abides,
and sigh, and hold a dead dream in your arms.

Stand,
with hands clenched in yearning desire
and hear the empty echo of your steps.

JO-ANNE OPUSZENSKI
INCIDENT

The party had started at eight, but Devril didn’t arrive until nine. The moment he entered the dimly lit garage the hazy figures clustered in different groups around the room turned and greeted him. Everybody liked Devril because he was handsome and friendly, but mostly because he was unlike anybody any of them had ever known.

Devril came from somewhere in the Midwest where he lived with an aunt, and it was rumored that the authorities had forced him to move south and take up residence with an elderly but strict grandfather, because of disciplinary difficulties. Devril didn’t look like a disciplinary problem: he was well dressed and terribly polite. He was quiet – a loner by choice, but social by nature. He had long light hair and immense brown eyes that could look almost black when he was concentrating on something. Adults sometimes referred to him as "pretty". Usually his friendly nature and good looks got in the way of being a loner, and he had, but wasn’t aware of, a long string of both male and female admirers. In fact, Devril held a very low opinion of himself. In the course of a conversation he was liable to give the impression of a person fishing for compliments, but he really believed he was no good.

After the initial greeting in the garage Devril strolled outside, crouched behind a car, and pulling a flask from his blazer, he mixed himself a rum coke. After gulping it down he strolled, with added self-assurance back into the noisy garage. He walked over to the side of the garage, lit a cigarette, and sat down in a folding chair next to the snack table.

The garage was dark because candlelight was helping the atmosphere. Cigarette smoke swirled upward in lazy wisps, and the
air was thick with the odor of mustard, sandwiches, and liquor. The
dingy walls reverberated the syllables of a hundred conversations;
but Devril, unconsciously holding the cigarette so the ash dropped
in his lap, had withdrawn from the scene.

Devril hadn't had much of a life. His parents were killed in
an auto accident when he was a baby, and the aunt who brought him
up made sure he knew she was doing him a favor. His grandfather was
nice enough, but he was too old for fun, and besides, Devril
couldn't talk to him.

As the evening progressed several people talked to Devril, but
he never got out of his chair, and he always answered or laughed in
a detached, preoccupied manner. After a while everybody left him
pretty much alone except for a word or two when they walked over to
get something to eat. Several people mentioned that Devril seemed
even more quiet than usual, but no one said anything to Devril about
it, so he sat brooding over near the window with the half-light of
a candle flickering around his chin.

The party started breaking up around eleven and Devril still
hadn't moved from his chair. The number of people in the garage
had decreased and the air was clearing when Devril's mood rapidly
changed. One moment he was sitting oblivious to his surroundings;
the next he was hustling his party out the door with frightening
urgency. He seemed about to burst with electric energy.

Once in the car Devril hunched in the back seat and sat quiet-
ly, but he wasn't relaxed, he sat impatiently clenching his fists.
The conversation on the ride home was often directed at him, but
Devril didn't seem to hear it and he remained silent.

When the car approached his neighborhood Devril's mood changed
again. He seemed to choke up a little and when anything was said to him he looked hard into the speaker's face. Finally the station wagon grated to a halt in front of Devril's house and, with only a half mumbled goodbye, Devril disappeared through the front door. After Devril was gone somebody said he seemed awfully depressed, but everyone else was too tired to discuss it and, besides, as someone pointed out, Devril was moody. One by one the rest of the crowd went home to sleep as quickly as possible and reassemble in the morning.

When the crowd was reunited the next morning to make plans Devril wasn't present, but he was included, so everyone piled into the station wagon and drove over to pick him up.

At Devril's house they were met with a shocking scene. Four police cars were parked awry in the street, and an ambulance was backed up to the front door. Neighbors were clustered around the front door straining to catch a morbid glimpse of the action inside. Devril's friends stood apart and watched with horror stricken expressions as two white clad attendants struggled the laden stretcher down the stairs. A doctor, who had just arrived, pulled the sheet away from the face briefly, but let it drop again. The stretcher was loaded into the ambulance which pulled slowly from the curb, and moved quietly toward the hospital.

Devril's friends stood around helplessly for a few minutes waiting for a word with Devril's grandfather, but he wasn't in sight so they silently got into the car and prepared to leave. There was a knock on the window and Devril hopped into the car.

"Heart attack," he said simply.

GIVEN WILKINSON
I know not where to begin
   For this story has no ending
Like a candle
   I can look at you forever
And not know what I see
For at least a few moments
I feel as though I own the world
You have helped me stand up
   And accept what I see
Through cooperation
   I think I could show you something
Watch the sun as it falls below the horizon
   While someone else watches it rise
Everything is not the same under the sun.
   And as you change so will I
I feel like I need
something to hide behind

so I'll unfasten
my braided hair
any maybe you won't read
the hurt and need
for you,
in my eyes.

so I'll fasten
my buttoned vest
and maybe you won't see how
my body needs
your calming touch.

so I'll capture
an indifferent attitude
and maybe you won't feel
my ego
reaching out for secure awareness.

so I'll begin
to let your powerful image
evaporate into my numbed mind
and maybe you won't guess
the time it will take
before I heal.

I feel like I need
something to hide behind

but it can't be you.

CINDY NEVSOM

Can you imagine her
perched on the toilet
ready for a normal occasion
and feeling and seeing
a six-inch blob of cellulophaned skin
looking like one of those shrunk African figures that dangle from
car mirrors
drop from her insides
into the bloodied water?

Can you imagine her
recognizing this shriveled thing
that emerged from seemingly nowhere
and comprehending that life had been nourished within her
for two months - in ignorance
all the while
enfolded in a stilled booth
at Prep School?

CINDY NEVSOM
The big Christmas Eve party had started while the sun was still high, and everyone was drunk by sunset. The drink I'd been given when I came in a couple of hours ago still stood in front of me. The very atmosphere of the place intoxicated me - the roaring fire, cigarette smoke, the smell of alcohol, soft music; and the horrid people, particularly the giggling blonde who had flung herself sexily into my lap. It seemed that no one had anything better to do during the holidays than sit around and drink all day and go to awful parties at night.

I excused myself as politely as I knew how, and walked over to the box of cigars on the bar. I took one, thought for a second, and then took two more. I continued past the bar and out the back door.

I had gone to watch the sunset, which is nice to see from the beach. It wasn't very cold that day, about 40 degrees or so. The wind was blowing hard, and as I wandered into the labyrinth of sand dunes behind the house, I felt invigorated.

Drifting through the sand dunes, I remembered playing there when I was small. The dunes were topped with reed-like plants, which made good swords as I remembered. Where the dunes were tall we played war because there were good places for hiding. Feeling like a kid again, I started to run; pretending that I was the Swamp Fox escaping from the British, just as I had when I was six. I ran over, around, and through the sandy hills until I got tired. I found my way out of the maze to the beach, and collapsed onto the sand.

It felt good to smell the sea again; and see the huge waves crash in and rush up the beach, as if to tell me Merry Christmas. There were lots of sea gulls who seemed to be playing some sort of
game. At first I thought they were fighting each other, but I guess they were just having a Christmas party of their own. The beach was smooth and hard; and sand flew across its surface, trying to find a warm place to spend the holiday. The roar of the sea blotted out the sounds of partying from behind me, and I loved it.

I got up and decided to walk toward the sunset. The sun was a bright orange semicircle that was resting on top of the sea. The sky was covered with clouds, except for a spot over on the horizon where the sun was. That spot was a bright red hole in the light purple roof. I thought that there was someone above the clouds who was slowly sucking the color out of the sky through a straw. The clouds turned from purple to gray. The hole in the clouds turned from red to purple to blue. Just before darkness fell, the hole seemed to turn white. I guessed it was because the hole was in contrast to the dark greyness of the clouds around it. I liked to think that it was the climax to the symphony of colors I had just seen.

I kept on walking down the beach so I could have my second cigar. I was on an island, and when I was little I had always wanted to walk all the way around it. Now I was finally doing it. The walk was a pleasant and relaxing one. I thought about the childhood days I'd spent there, and wished I could return to them. Children are the only free people in the world, I thought. By the time I came to the rocks where we used to go crabbing (fish and shrimp, too, sometimes) I was tired, so I sat down. My childhood flashed through my head, and I told myself that I would stop growing up.

The uncertain future crept into my mind when I started walking
again, and I grew worried. What happens when I get out of school, and officially stop being a kid? When I came to the old fort, I lost myself in its maze of passageways and dungeons for a while. When I came out, the future still loomed in the clouds ahead of me.

I walked on, and lit my last cigar. I told myself to forget about it, and not to worry about life. I began to feel lonely, and told myself to hurry in order to get back to the party. Then I thought how I had hated the party, and longed for some escape from the life I knew. I wanted somebody to talk to, but figured that the person I'd want to talk to would be someone I'd find on the beach, and not in the party.

I came across a large pile of rubble from a building that had fallen down. I saw a car stuck in the sand, and also a bed. Then I saw a room that had fallen sideways into the sand. There was a hole to get in through. It was quite a cozy little place. I thought that everyone would move away from the island and I would live there. I would study up on birds, fish, plants, animals, shells, and so on. I could make clothes and tools. I'd make a hole in a wall for a chimney. I imagined myself as another Thoreau. I dug a little hole in the sand to place the remains of my cigar in, and lay down and went to sleep.

SIMONS LEONHARDT
NERVE GAS

The iron tongue
Of midnight has said its piece,
I don't remember
Anymore what reason I had for this
It must have been a good one.

I know I once thought I
could learn to love
the earth
Tonight I hug it tightly
And it draws the last
Warmth from my chest.

A chill grips
My body and shakes it like a sack
Of knives,
And then bringing up bile
From organs
I never knew I had.

My muscles tighten for the next
Spasm get ready
To kiss the bones goodbyes,
When suddenly a needle slips
Into my arm.

Sinews relax into their old
dream, and I see
My enemy for the first time
As he rolls me over,
And covers my rising heart
With his hand.
I embrace him
He is my country now.

RON FESTA
PRETTY PENNY RIDEBACK

Townsend Townsend
sought her hand,
And when he found it
upon the sand,
He bent to kiss'
The lovely limb,
Which took the heart
Fair out of him.

Enamoured by
The scent he smelled,
Again he stooped
But stood repelled.
Her flesh it seemed
Was in decay,
And rotting very
Fast away.

Townsend Townsend
Left her there,
Amid the stale
And reeking air.
No more the one
Upon the sand,
Would be the fairest
In the land.

RUTH SCHIFFER
eyes searching for something
that can't be seen
arms reaching for
someone to hold
eotions surging through
a meaningless body
ingers gripping vehemently
in the air
tears drying on a
taut face
a prisoner in nature's
vast expanse
the heat rippling up
from the sand
as the only chance for life
slowly fades away,
tired and windswept
lips cracked and dry
I decide to
die.

RONNIE FESTA
i like silence
    it quiets me
    and makes me think of you.

to hear you talk softly
    opens my mind.

feeling you lie next to me
    warm and gentle
    keeps me awake,
    although you are not.

i loved you
    for a night
yet with the gray of dawn
    you left
leaving only your impression in my bed,

BILL HAMLIN
The following staff members worked to compile this issue:

Nancy DeKlasi
Gerry Dolan
Bill Hamlin
Kathy Harrington
Simons Leenhardt
David Miller
Cindy Newsom
Ross Rhodes
Nick Roome
Gwen Wilkinson

Drawing by Paul Delinski

ABSTENTIONS  January 1970